

Boutique Litigation Firm Sets Industry-Leading Bonuses for Associates



Wilkinson Stekloff Introduces Seniority-Based Bonuses Up to \$201,250

In a bold move, Washington, D.C.-based litigation firm Wilkinson Stekloff has announced annual seniority-based bonuses for associates, outshining most larger U.S. law firms that have yet to disclose their bonus plans for the year.

Unveiling Unprecedented Bonuses

As a "boutique" law firm known for its tendency to offer higher bonuses than its larger counterparts, Wilkinson Stekloff has set a new standard. New York-based Milbank, the only major U.S. law firm to reveal bonus figures thus far, disclosed that bonuses will range from \$15,000 to \$115,000 based on seniority.

Generous Bonus Structure

Wilkinson Stekloff's bonus structure is set to reward associates generously, with first-year associates receiving a starting bonus of \$26,250. The bonuses will increase per the associates' class year. The firm plans to distribute these bonuses by December 15.

Recognition of Exceptional Contributions

In an internal email viewed by Reuters on Monday, Wilkinson Stekloff expressed its enthusiasm for recognizing the exceptional contributions of its associates to the success of both clients and the firm. The sentiment was conveyed through a statement: "We are delighted to recognize the phenomenal contributions our associates make to the success of our clients and the firm."

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Firm Profile and Bonus Distribution

Wilkinson Stekloff, housing 23 associates as listed on its website, also includes four counsel members. The internal email indicated that the counsel members would be informed about their bonuses separately from associates.

Extraordinary Year for Wilkinson Stekloff

The internal email from Wilkinson Stekloff's partners highlighted the firm's exceptional year, describing it as "extraordinary and unprecedented." The firm achieved a record by taking five separate cases to trial during the year.

Industry Comparison and Competitive Landscape

Milbank, having disclosed its associate bonuses on November 7, accompanied the announcement with an updated base salary scale ranging from \$225,000 for junior lawyers to \$425,000 for eighth-year associates. Milbank's bonus amounts for the current year mirror those given out in the previous year.

Anticipation in the Legal Sphere

Traditionally, major law firms adjust their salary scales in close succession to one another to maintain competitiveness. No other large firms have publicly matched or surpassed Milbank's salary scale, indicating collective anticipation within the legal industry as firms await their peers' decisions.

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In this dynamic legal landscape, Wilkinson Stekloff's pioneering bonus structure sets a new precedent, positioning the firm as a trailblazer in recognizing and rewarding the contributions of its legal professionals.

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