

Boies Schiller Flexner Leads with Generous Year-End Associate Bonuses



Record-Setting Bonuses Demonstrate Firm's Commitment to Associates

In a bold move that underscores its commitment to its legal team, Boies Schiller Flexner LLP has emerged as a leader in year-end associate bonuses. This year, the firm is offering substantial year-end payouts, with some associates poised to receive bonuses surpassing \$1 million. This initiative is a testament to the firm's dedication to rewarding the hard work of its lawyers and aligning their interests with the firm's success.

Exceeding Market Standards with Personalized Awards

Boies Schiller Flexner's bonuses are set to exceed or match the competitive market scale of \$21,000 to \$140,000, established by prominent firms like Milbank LLP and Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP. According to an internal memo obtained by Bloomberg Law, more than 95% of the firm's associates will see their bonuses align with or surpass these market levels. Managing partner and chairman-elect Matthew Schwartz, who was elected to succeed founder David Boies on January 1, 2024, emphasized that the decision to implement this strategy reflects the firm's recognition of associates' dedication.

"We wanted to ensure that our lawyers who were working incredibly hard for our clients were getting an incremental return," Schwartz said in an interview. This approach, he explained, focuses on rewarding value and contributions rather than just meeting an arbitrary number of billable hours.

A Shift in the Approach to Bonus Distribution

Unlike many firms that follow a standardized market scale, Boies Schiller Flexner has taken a more individualized approach to bonuses. The firm's method considers several factors, including client business origination, hours worked, and revenue generated from contingency cases. This tailored approach has led to a notable outcome: multiple associates have received seven-figure bonuses, showcasing how the firm's unique model can be highly lucrative for those who deliver exceptional results.

When Boies Schiller first offered associates the choice between the individualized formula and the market scale in 2021, the split was evenly distributed. However, since then, the vast majority of associates have opted for the more personalized approach, highlighting the firm's appeal and the satisfaction of its legal talent with this system. Schwartz indicated that the market-set bonus option will no longer be available to incoming associates and will phase out for current associates as they advance to partnership status.

Firm's Turnaround: From Decline to Success

The firm's ability to offer such robust bonuses comes after a financial turnaround. Boies Schiller experienced a significant drop in revenue, with figures plummeting from \$405 million in 2019 to \$220 million in 2022. However, in 2023, the firm rebounded with a reported revenue of \$246 million, according to data from the American Lawyer. This recovery has empowered the firm to invest back into its people, reinforcing its reputation as a top destination for ambitious lawyers.

New Initiatives to Recruit and Retain Talent

Beyond generous year-end bonuses, Boies Schiller has introduced other measures aimed at bolstering its associate base and ensuring long-term retention. In its memo, the firm outlined a \$25,000 referral bonus program designed to encourage associates to help bring in lateral recruits. Associates who successfully recruit new lawyers will receive the bonus provided both they and the newly recruited lawyer remain at the firm for at least six months.

Additionally, Boies Schiller is boosting signing bonuses for associates joining the firm from federal district or appellate clerkships. Starting this year, the firm will offer \$150,000 signing bonuses to those joining from a federal clerkship, and \$175,000 to those with multiple clerkships on their resumes. This is an increase from the previous \$110,000 signing bonus, reflecting the firm's ambition to attract top-tier legal talent.

Elevating the Firm's Prestige

Matthew Schwartz stated that these bonuses and recruitment initiatives are part of Boies Schiller's broader strategy to be the preferred destination for elite legal professionals. "Law clerks have the best experience in the courtroom, observing high-caliber litigation and receiving mentorship from judges," Schwartz noted. "We want to be the destination of choice for the top talent."

With these enhanced compensation strategies and a clear commitment to its associates, Boies Schiller Flexner is setting a new benchmark in the legal industry, reinforcing the value of its legal teams and positioning itself as an employer of choice in the competitive market.

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