


## Press Slams Freshfields for Trainee Layoffs [Update 2]

**FRESHFIELDS**

In May, London's [Freshfields](#) announced that only 14 of its class of 48 trainees set to start this Fall would be retained.

Now mainstream press sources are faulting Freshfields for the way it handled the firings. Trainees were telephoned by ~~partners~~ human resources with the news; and if the trainee was unavailable by phone, the message was left by voicemail.

Also, press reports say that those with their offers rescinded have been given a mere £700 (\$1,150) in severance pay.

London's [Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP](#)  is an international law firm with offices in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the US. In 2006 it was the world's fourth largest law firm by revenues.

### UPDATE

This story has not yet died, although the facts have been updated. Apparently, only four or five trainees were laid off by phone; and the calls were made by human resources, not by partners, who were apparently too busy, important or embarrassed.

### UPDATE 2

Freshfields apparently saw the press criticisms and thought, what can we do to make this worse, and keep the story in the news cycle? Hey, let's rescind our invitations to the remaining trainees for the firm's team-building retreat this Summer!

The firm sent out an email saying that the attendance for the event had reached its maximum, and that no further employees could attend. But this email was sent only to trainees -- including those who had already RSVPed.