

THE
AMERICAN LAWYERSkadden's Jeremy London on the
Mission to 'Evolve and Improve'

By Patrick Smith

May 29, 2026

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom created a nonequity tier for talent development and to provide earlier opportunities for its up-and-coming lawyers, said the firm's executive partner, Jeremy London, in an interview this month, noting the move was one of his "first major assessments" to review since he became firm leader in April 2024.

The nonequity tier, which the firm implemented this year, helped Skadden increase the number of partner promotions this year. Skadden announced 55 new partners in April 2026, up from 22 in 2025 and 21 in 2024.

London declined to say how many of the promoted lawyers this year were equity versus non-equity, but noted, "We will continue to promote to both income and equity tiers moving forward."

He also confirmed that the creation of the nonequity tier boosted the firm's partner promotion class. "Developing our talent and providing those opportunities earlier contributed to the larger class," he said.

Speaking on reaction among associates to the change, he said, "It's been broadly positively received," noting, "It adds more definition and clarity to the career track here at Skadden."

Skadden's single-tier partnership last year had about 346 equity partners, among its 1,756 lawyers, Law.com reported in May for the Am Law 100 report.

Law.com reported last year that Skadden, amid partner exits, was moving to a two-tier system, while the firm was also examining its partner pay system. Part of the firm's discussed changes include modifying its

compensation structure to allow for higher pay for certain partners, in a bid to attract and retain top-of-market talent, Law.com reported last year.

London's remarks to Law.com this month are his first public comments on the two-tier system. He declined to discuss details

about partner pay changes, but noted Skadden has "made the necessary adjustments to pay partners competitively at all levels of their careers."

The changes in the partnership ranks come as Skadden itself has faced more talent pressure from a free-agent era among top partners and the chipping away of partner loyalty toward any one firm. No firm is immune to partner departures now.

Several firms have lured top Skadden partners in recent years, including direct competitors like Kirkland & Ellis; Davis Polk & Wardwell; and Sullivan & Cromwell, among others.

Overall, London's mandate is to modernize and scale Skadden in a way that allows it to continue its culture but also allows it to evolve through market changes. That includes stepping up Skadden's recruiting.

"When I stepped into this role, we decided to scale and modernize the firm from a position of strength," London stated. "That includes recruiting top-tier



Jeremy London of Skadden.

Courtesy photo

lateral talent. We remain highly selective, and the hires have to be economically accretive. But we have been more active and added scale. We are also acutely focused on developing the talent we have here with internal promotions at the firm. We have also been hard at work looking at our business services functions, so our attorneys have everything they need to drive business.”

The firm’s lateral partner hiring recruits in the last year include Scott Heard from Paul Hastings, who now heads Skadden’s private credit practice; Sophie Lamb, who was the co-head of Latham & Watkins’s international arbitration practice out of London; and Harlyn Bohensky from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius in finance and securitizations in New York.

“The market is very competitive for lateral talent,” London said. “I can’t speculate how others operate or approach it, but we have the same standard for our partnership throughout the firm and remain highly selective in the lateral market. The hire has to be a cultural fit and being accretive to the firm.”

According to the firm, Skadden has hired 13 laterals thus far in 2026 after adding 11 in 2025. And the firm wants to continue to build scale.

“We need to be participants in the lateral market,” he said. “Partner compensation and expectations for that are a challenge for the whole industry. What I come back to is, we have to have that cultural fit and the economics, and we maintain that approach to growth.”

As part of that endeavor, the firm hired its first chief people officer, Annemarie Crouch, in June 2024 and has been adding bulk to its business services unit to ensure the firm’s attorneys, and laterals, have what they need to succeed.

The firm hired a new chief digital information officer, Vince DiMascio, in January this year and a new chief marketing and business development officer, Luke Ferrandino, in November 2024.

Growing Scale

London confirmed that the primary issues that he’s working through now are managing and implementing the firm’s growth, internal promotions and career attorney tracks, as well as changes on the business services team.

He returned to ideas of growth and scale, citing expansion in several existing markets as well as the opening of the firm’s first new office in over a decade (Abu Dhabi) as examples of Skadden executing on its growth mandate.

“In managing our growth, Houston is a good example. Since I took this seat, we have doubled our office space there. Our London office has grown exponentially, and we have opened in Abu Dhabi, our first new office in a decade,” he said. “We also moved offices in Chicago, Paris and Los Angeles recently, which is a demonstration of our commitment to those markets and our planned growth there.”

As for moving forward, London noted how periods of change, while at times trying, can also provide a level of excitement and motivation.

“We are always looking to evolve and improve the firm,” London said. “Coming back to the priorities for the firm, we are going to continue to evolve and modernize it. It’s an incredibly exciting time to be at the firm. We are as strong as we have ever been, but it is precisely from that position of strength that we can continue our market leadership.”

When asked about the firm’s evolution of the past 20 years, or roughly when he first became a partner there in 2006, London said he saw several similarities between how the firm was viewed in 2006, when it was No. 1 in the Am Law 100 rankings for gross revenue, and this year. The firm has held steady at No. 5 for most of the past decade in the revenue rankings, including for last year’s performance, when it grossed \$4.072 billion.

London pointed to a 2006 profile of Skadden in *The American Lawyer*, which pointed to the firm as a global giant acting like a boutique, by doing premium corporate work and having a measured approach to growth.

“Those things could also be written about us today. Think about the consistency in that time period. We are one of two firms that have been in the top five for revenue during that 20-year period. More importantly, our work still defines our success,” London said. “We have excellent clients and outcomes for those clients, both then and now.”