

Media Mention: NC Lawyers Weekly Reports on Law Firm Growth

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NC Lawyers Weekly recently released their annual report on the largest law firms in North Carolina. An accompanying article written by Jeff Jeffrey delved into factors that may impact a North Carolina law firm's growth and expansion. Ward and Smith's co-managing director Ken Wooten was quoted in the article. Ward and Smith added attorneys to the roster while other firms of similar size and services reduced headcount. Wooten attributed this growth to a continued focus on closely held business clients, robust recruiting strategy, and a firm culture that

is attractive to both lateral and new attorneys.

From the article:

Modest growth

Among the traditional law firms that reported growth last year, most added just a handful of attorneys in 2016.

Ward & Smith added five attorneys, which co-managing partner Kenneth Wooten attributed to the firm's focus on serving clients that tend to be closely held corporations.

"That's been our bread and butter for decades," Wooten said. "We tend to let our growth be driven by clients referring additional clients to us, so we really can grow alongside them."

Wooten said Ward & Smith has an edge in recruiting lateral hires because the firm's compensation structure emphasizes teamwork and collaboration over originating business. "We consider that too, but it's really a small piece of the compensation calculation," Wooten said. "We'd rather focus on teamwork because that serves our clients better than if people were compensated on what clients they brought in the door."

He added that the focus on teamwork is especially popular among Millennial attorneys.

In 2017, Wooten said, the firm intends to hire attorneys who will strengthen its construction, real estate, health care, intellectual property and business services practices.

"It's about diversification. Once you have a critical mass of attorneys, you have to have capacity in all those areas," Wooten said.

The entire article may be accessed with a subscription [here](#).