

Skadden Hires First Chief People Officer as More Law Firms Take Holistic Approach to Talent

By Patrick Smith

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What You Need to Know

- Skadden hires first chief people officer, Annemarie Crouch, from Fried Frank.
- Industry experts say the move and others like it, signals a recognition of the importance of talent development in the overall business structure.

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom has hired its first chief people officer, Annemarie Crouch, the firm said Wednesday, the latest law firm to adjust its C-suite to focus more on talent matters.

Crouch was the chief human resources officer at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson for most of the last decade. Her job now will be to “oversee Skadden’s people teams and will lead all aspects of the firm’s people strategy for lawyers and business professionals,” the firm said in a statement.

“Our firm has always recognized that our people are our greatest asset,” Skadden executive

partner Jeremy London said in a statement. “Annemarie’s exceptional track record of successfully creating and implementing integrated global talent strategies and her experience building credibility and connectivity within professional and financial services organizations will be tremendous assets to us.”



Annemarie Crouch

Crouch, who was not available for an interview, praised Skadden for its “commitment to its people, culture and values,” adding she looked forward to collaborating closely with colleagues.

Prior to her time at Fried Frank, Crouch held multiple HR positions at Barclays Wealth and Investment Management, ascending to human resources director.

Just in the last year, law firms such as Husch Blackwell, Hogan Lovells and Schulte



Roth & Zabel have all named new chief people officers.

Overall, more firms are rebranding their human resources personnel to titles such as talent managers and chief people officers, as HR is no longer a department limited to managing payroll and hiring and firing employees. Now, law firms are taking a more holistic approach to managing an employee's career life cycle

through integration, retention and professional development, Law.com has reported.

Of course, Skadden has an existing human resources structure, but the addition of the chief people officer appears to signal a change in the firm's perspective on the HR function.

For starters, the talent development aspect of HR is put in focus with this role. Calibrate Strategies managing director Haley Revel previously told Law.com that the best way to keep existing talent (and potentially recruit new talent) is to make sure that development is full spectrum.

"Talent management is not just encompassing a near-term directive to react to the needs of employees of the firm; it's also about looking at what is the long-term strategy and what are goals that we can set for the firm," Revel wrote. "When you think about the talent space, you're layering on the next step in talent management: employee wellness, integration and holding hands of employees from start to finish."