

# MINING THE SURVEYS: WHICH SPECIALTIES COMMAND THE HIGHEST RATES?

by **Ward Bower**

Copyright © 2003 Altman Weil, Inc., Newtown Square, PA, USA  
All rights for further publication or reproduction reserved.

---

The annual Altman Weil *Survey of Law Firm Economics* compiles billing rate information by geographic region, by state, by firm size, by size of population of the community in which the firm is located, by year admitted to the bar and by specialty, for both partners and associates. Specialty information is divided into litigation and non-litigation specialties.

## **Non-Litigation Specialties**

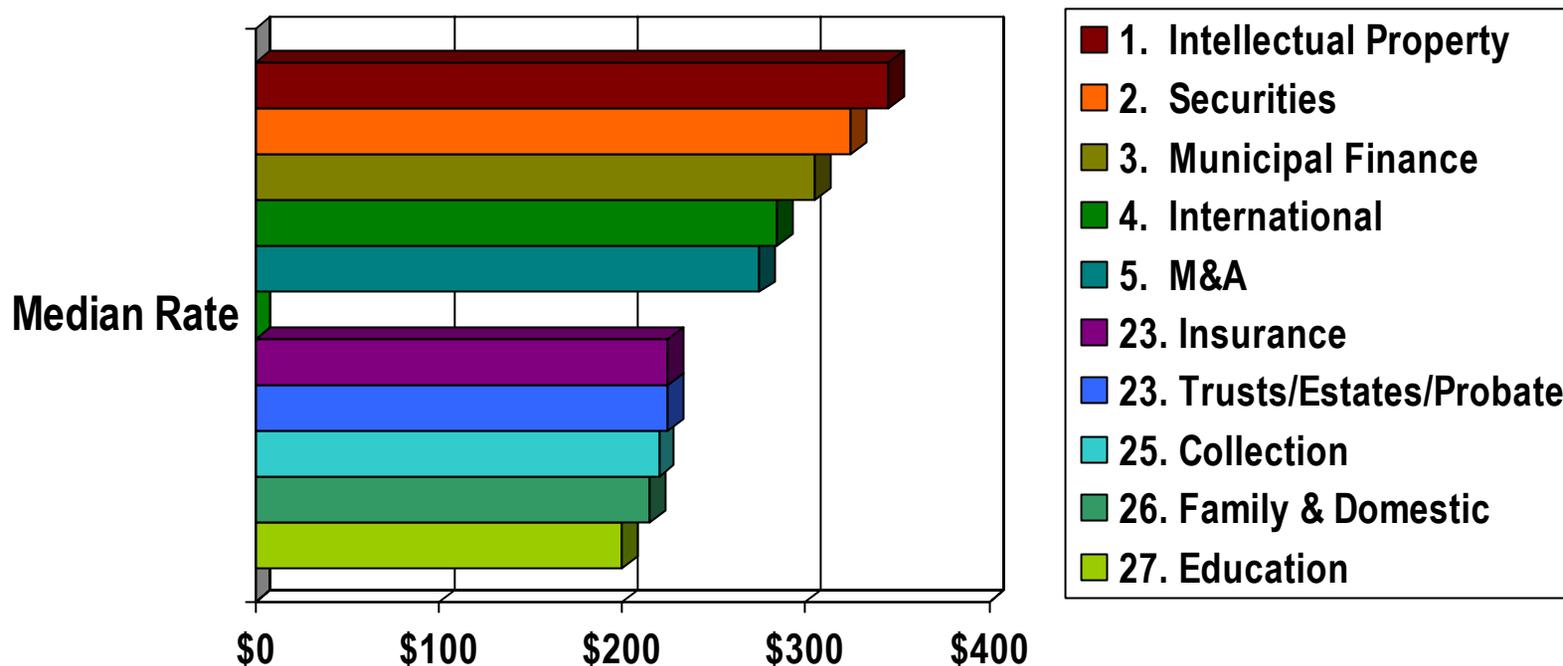
Twenty-seven non-litigation specialties are covered. The first chart (following) shows the top and bottom five non-litigation specialties, by median hourly billing rate for partners/ shareholders. The top median rate goes to partners and shareholders in intellectual property practice at \$345 per hour. The bottom goes to partner/ shareholders in Education specialty practice — \$200 per hour, less than 60% of the median rates of partners/ shareholders in intellectual property practice. On an 1,800 billable hour year, that would amount to a difference of \$261,000 in personal billings, annually.

## **Litigation Specialties**

In the 26 litigation specialties reported in the 2002 Altman Weil Survey of Law Firm Economics, there is even a greater difference — \$296 per hour between the highest (antitrust — \$430) and lowest (workers' compensation — \$134). On a 1,800 hour work year, that difference would translate to a staggering \$532,800 differential in personal billings!

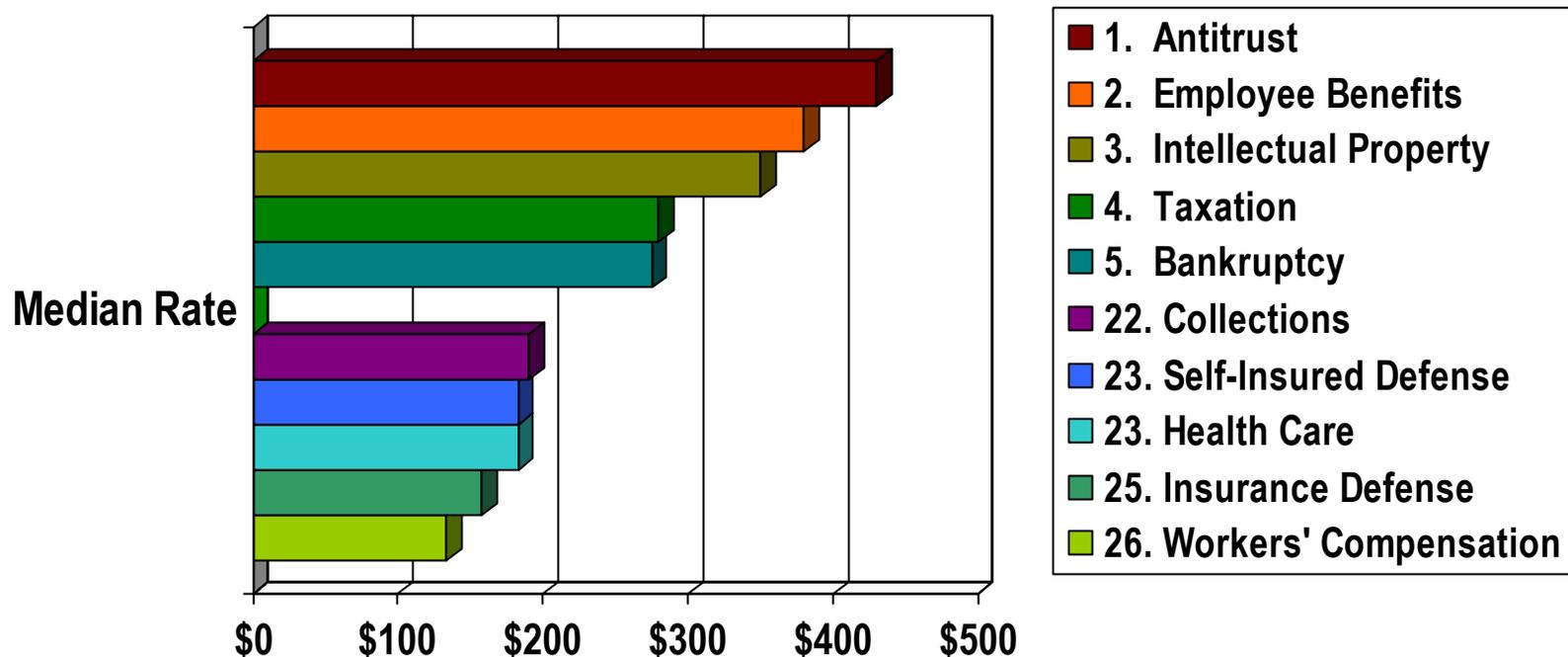
The second chart depicts the top and bottom five median partner/ shareholder hourly billing rates for litigation specialties reported in the 2002 Survey.

# Median Partner/ Shareholder Hourly Rates, by Specialty — Non-Litigation Areas (top five, bottom five)



Source: 2002 Altman Weil *Survey of Law Firm Economics*

# Median Partner/ Shareholder Hourly Rates, by Specialty — Litigation Areas (top five, bottom five)



Source: 2002 Altman Weil *Survey of Law Firm Economics*