Sona Spencer

Chief Legal Talent Officer

Charlotte

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Sona leads the firm's Legal Talent Department, a team that helps to build and retain a high-performing and inclusive talent pool with a focus on client service.

OVERVIEW

Sona leads the firm's efforts to attract and maintain an industry-leading bench that serves our clients' legal needs and highest business objectives. Her department includes the firm's legal recruiting, professional development, inclusion, and career coaching functions.

Drawing from more than 15 years of experience in *AmLaw* 50 law firms, she collaborates closely with stakeholders across the firm to implement training, compensation frameworks, as well as inclusion and retention strategies to ensure the firm can attract and retain talent at all levels to exceed client service goals. Her recent innovations include developing Troutman YOUniversity, the firm's first comprehensive and personalized professional development program that integrates resources, learning and development opportunities, and benchmarks to help attorneys navigate their career paths effectively. Sona has developed strategic initiatives dedicated to broadening career pathways for attorneys, ensuring intentional growth, evaluating the development and effectiveness of talent, and building a high-performance culture.

Sona is a passionate advocate for inclusion in the workplace and the next generation of women leaders. She recently served on the Board of EmpowHERment, a nonprofit focused on mentoring young girls in the Charlotte community. Sona has been appointed as the vice chair of the External Advisory Board for the Center for Leadership Science at UNC Charlotte and is also among the selected members of Leadership Charlotte's 41st class. As a recognized thought leader, she is frequently invited to speak on issues affecting the legal talent market, law firm culture, and the evolving workplace.

AWARDS

- Winner: Law Firm Talent Management; Women, Influence & Power in Law Awards, 2025
- Winner: Law Firm Innovations in Diversity and Inclusion; Legalweek Leaders in Tech Law Awards 2025
- Finalist: Law Firm Innovation Award; New York Legal Awards 2025

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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- Center for Leadership Science at UNC Charlotte, Vice Chair of the External Advisory Board 2026
- EmpowHERment, Charlotte, NC, Board of Directors 2019-2023; Leadership Team member 2013-2019
- Leadership Charlotte Class 41, Charlotte, NC

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- University of North Carolina at Charlotte, M.B.A., 2016
- Amherst College, B.A., 2004, psychology

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Panelist, “Sand and Sea: Engaging Lateral Talent Through Unified Communication,” Thomson Reuters Institute, Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer Forum, January 2026.
- Co-presenter, “The Death of the Apprenticeship Model: Reimagining Talent Development,” PDI Conference, December 2025.
- Panelist, “Building Inclusive Pathways for Growth,” PDC Summer Conference, July 2025.
- Panelist, “Lead or Lose: Why Leadership Development Can’t Wait,” The Tilt Institute, June 2025.
- Panelist, “Retaining Top Talent: How Exposing Unwritten Rules and Unspoken Expectations Can Illuminate the Path to Success,” Professional Development Institute, December 2024.
- Panelist, “Integrating DEI and Professional Development: Building Inclusive Pathways for Growth” and Panelist, “How Unwritten Rules and Unspoken Expectations Are Tanking Careers in Law Firms,” ALFDP, November 2024.
- Co-presenter, “Beyond the Surface: Unmasking the Subtle Roadblocks in Legal DEI Initiatives,” LMA Annual Conference, April 2024.
- Co-presenter, “Getting Beyond ‘Why’: How to Create Buy-In and Take Action Toward Inclusion at Law Firms” and Panelist, “An Integrated Talent Strategy: How to Weave DE&I throughout the Talent Engagement Experience Instead of Separate Tracks,” ALFDP, October 2023.
- Panelist, “Thinking Ahead of the Curve: Cultivating a Foresight Mentality,” Legal Foresight Summit, June 2023.
- Panelist, Culture Makers Keynote Presentation, LMA SE Regional Conference, October 2022.

PUBLICATIONS

- Author, “From Training Programs to Talent Strategy: A Case Study in Building Troutman Pepper Locke YOUniversity,” *NALP Bulletin*, September 2026.
- Co-author, “The Death of Apprenticeship: Reimagining Law Firm Talent Strategy for a New Era,” *The Legal Intelligencer*, September 23, 2025.
- Quoted, “For Phila. Summer Associates, AI Training Is a ‘Hot Topic,’” *The Legal Intelligencer*, June 5, 2025.
- Podcast, “Sona Spencer of Troutman Pepper on Being an Advocate for Talent,” Passle Podcast December 2023: CMO Series.
- Author, “Chief Talent Officer Reflects on Building Firm Culture During COVID,” *Bloomberg Law*, August 8, 2022.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Interviewed, “Innovation Award Firm Finalist: Troutman Pepper Locke,” *New York Law Journal*. August 26, 2025.

- Interviewed, “Leveraging Online Learning to Retain In-House Legal Talent,” *Legal Dive*, July 18, 2022.
- Featured, “Troutman Pepper Hires New Talent Chief In Hot Legal Market,” *Law360 Pulse*, June 23, 2021.
- Featured, “Troutman Pepper Promotes New Chief Legal Talent Officer as Recruiting Wars Heat Up,” *The Legal Intelligencer*, June 22, 2021.