



melius consulting
WORK: REIMAGINED

Senior Partner Talent Market Insights

UAE Consulting Landscape

Market Intelligence & Pipeline Analytics

Powered by Melius Consulting

meliusconsulting.me



Senior Partner Talent Insights



At Melius Consulting, we've conducted extensive market analysis across the UAE consulting landscape, with **700+ outreach efforts across 5 practices in 60 days**.

This means that we now possess the latest insights on what & how Partners are thinking before they consider an opportunity.

Partners are assessing opportunities based on three core criteria :

Prestige – brand, reputation in the market, client portfolio; latest wins (& losses 😊)

Growth – interest in growing a business, building verticals & service offerings they aren't able to offer to the clients in their present engagement

Specialization – clear interest in strengthening specialization, particularly in in-demand areas (explained later in the deck)

Partners, specifically from Big 10 have responded best to the 'entrepreneurial' spirit of a role. Flexibility & freedom to build & grow a business line with autonomy & ownership

This report offers strategic insights on senior partner talent acquisition, market mapping, and pipeline analytics to support your executive hiring decisions.

Market Trends & Talent Acquisition Strategy



Supply-Demand Gaps

Direct Tax & Risk partners are in shortest supply, with demand exceeding available talent by 3:1

M&A talent is abundant vis-à-vis demand but highly specific about opportunities. External Audit partners maintain longer tenures / firm & only consider opportunities at least 180 days ahead



Compensation Expectations

There is an increasing emphasis on non-financial motivators like P&L freedom & hybrid work arrangements. Sr. Partners rank Compensation as 4th in priority in their consideration of. Equity terms remain more important whereas salaried Partners focus on equity conversions.



Emiratization, DEI & Gender Representation

Female talent remains 15% below DEI targets across practices with Risk and Audit practices showing most promising ratios at 32% and 28% respectively.

There are 5 UAE nationals engaged as Sr. Partners in the UAE market currently all in Big 10.



Emerging Skills

ESG advisory, AI audit frameworks, tax analytics, & cyber risk management capabilities show highest premium.



Feeder Firm Sources

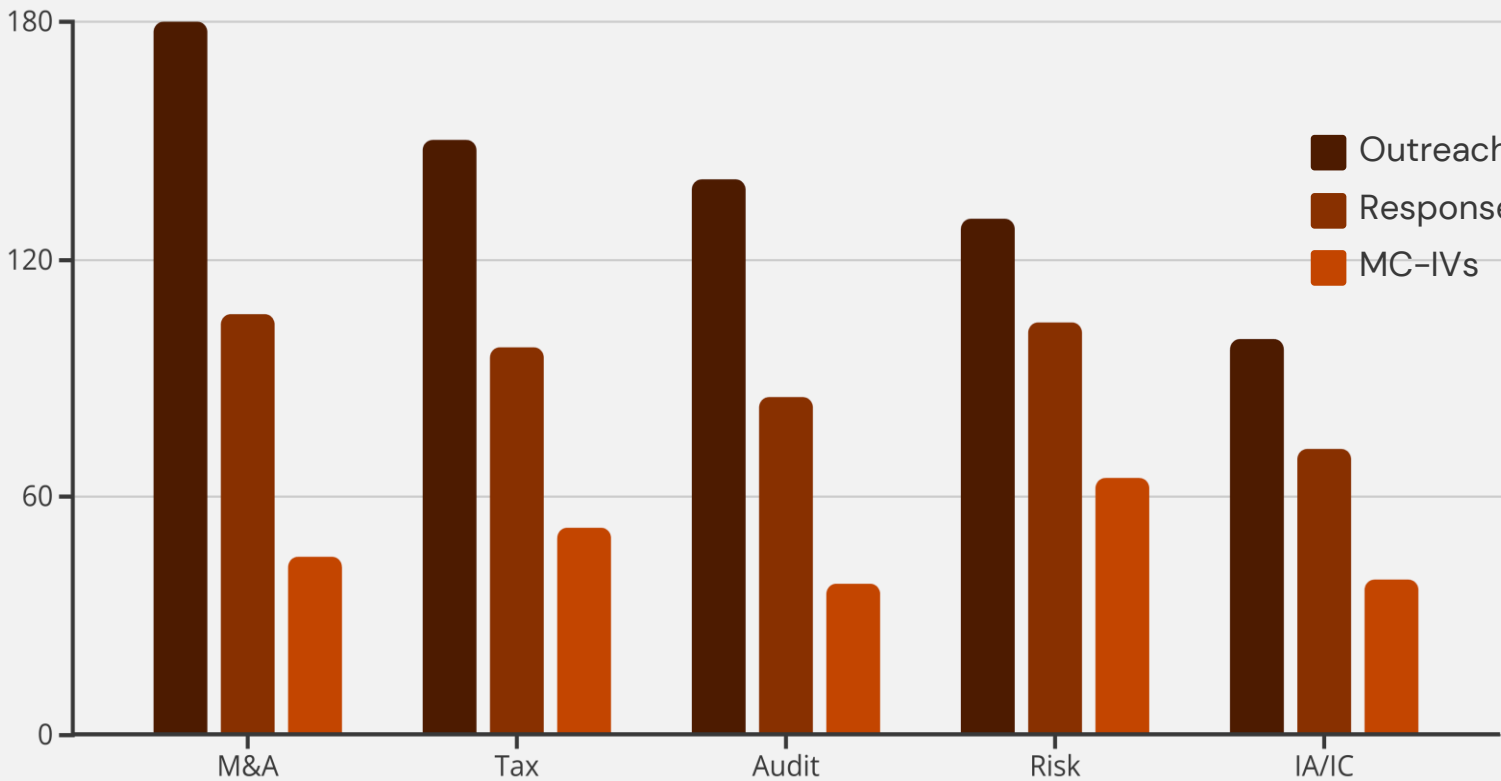
Big 4 alumni represent primary talent pools for senior positions.

Sectoral in-house industry leaders from FS, Reg Tech & Big data are highly sought after for Risk & Tax positions. While this is a great way to penetrate deeper into specific sectors; this is also considered a higher risk by most Managing Partners. Hence, Big 4 firms offer a variety of engagement options (fractional / contractual / fixed term / technical partner etc.) to mitigate the risk.

Talent Pool Availability

Even move-ready senior partners are not ‘ active to commit ’ to job posts or initial reach-outs.
Partners know *exactly* what they want from the next role & have a curated list of target firms but are not vocal about it (*obviously!*).

This talent pool is consistently being scouted & head hunted by the best talent scouts in the region (*aka Melius*), kept engaged long terms by senior leadership of target firms & offered a seat at the think tank to develop growth strategy before committing to a move.



But WHY TOP Talent?

The regional consulting market is set to grow at 6% – 9% over the next 5 years. Big 4 have shown high single digit growths consistently over the last few years, whereas boutique & (some) Big 10 firms have been able to capture a larger market share by growing at c30% YoY since 2022. 80% of Big 10 senior hiring is from Big 4. The aggressive & long-term scout & poach strategy has paid over a 3-yr period. The impact of onboarding a median player & the top talent in any consulting practice amounts to a 3-fold difference in growth over a mid-term period.

First Nudge vs Final Nudge

First nudge response rates tend to be 15% at best with +ve responses hovering at the 7% of total talent pool.

But we understand at **Melius** that Partner hiring is NOT about finding the best *available talent*.

It’s taken us consistent meaningful engagement & an unhealthy amount of *Americanos* to build & nurture relationships with top talent in the region.

This shows in the graph on the side (in case you hadn’t noticed it yet); that our +ve response rates have now stabilized at c45% mark

The Sell

Senior Partners will *not touch* an urgent to fill replacement role with a stick.

The role must bring meaning & purpose. The most effective way to scout this TOP talent is to build your strategy around them, with them.

The commit to sell the opportunity comes in from the Managing Partners; be it in the competitor firm or in yours's....

Key Insights: 50% conversion rate in Risk practice, highest rejection rate in M&A (41%)

Talent Heat Map

This map is your hiring radar.
This offers a unique opportunity to expanding firms & practices to plan & stay ahead of the increasingly narrowing talent market, hire not based on availability but on on long term strategy & goals.

It's like one of the day you avoid Hessa street traffic at 5.30pm & spend time with friends & family while the rest of the world just wishes they had started sooner.

Target Untapped Talent

Identify & target talent clusters by practice and feeder source.

Sourcing Effectiveness

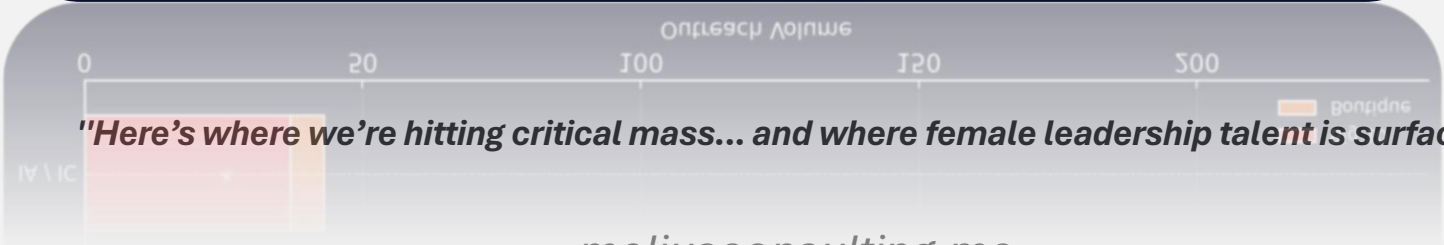
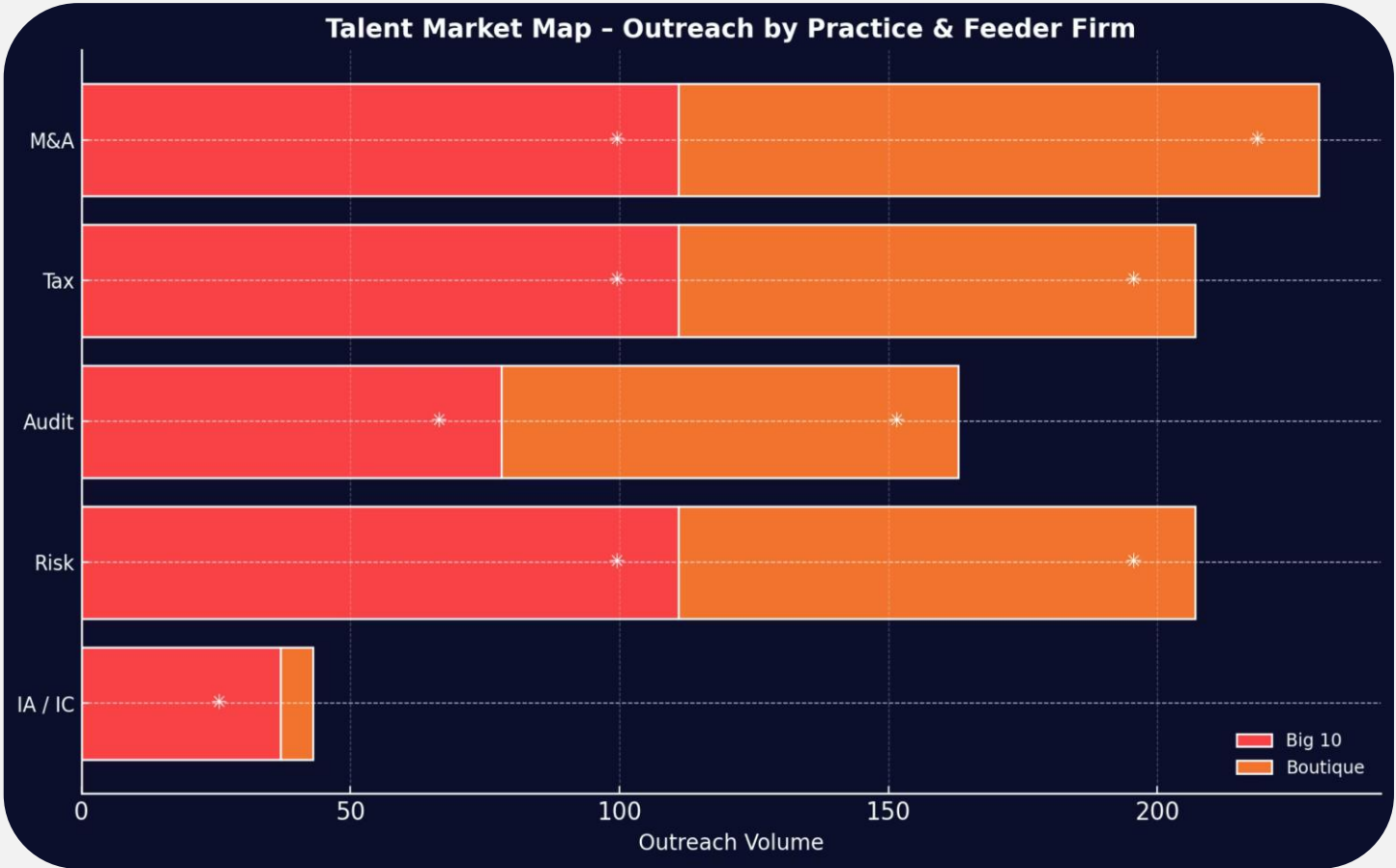
Monitor sourcing effectiveness and conversion trends over time.

Support Emiratization & DEI Goals

Aid DEI hiring goals through gender-based pipeline tracking.

Forecasting Capability

Predict talent availability & even churn based on outreach resonance.



"Here's where we're hitting critical mass... and where female leadership talent is surfacing."

Winning the Talent Race



Targeted Shortlists

Move-ready senior partner candidates pre-vetted for cultural and strategic fit, reducing time-to-hire by 40%.



Gender-Diverse Candidates

Pre-calibrated shortlists with minimum 35% female representation, exceeding industry benchmarks.



Real-time Insights

Continuous market intelligence on hiring patterns, compensation trends, and emerging skill demands.



Pipeline Intelligence

Ongoing tracking and analytics support to maintain competitive advantage in talent acquisition.



Custom Market Maps

Bespoke talent landscapes for strategic workforce planning and succession management.

🧐 Did You Know?

Most salaried Partners stay 3–5 years after making the leap from Director — the clock starts ticking once they turn Partner!

40–50% of Partner portfolios currently are rooted in **KSA & Qatar** — but the launchpad is almost always **Dubai**. No UAE success, no regional trust.

In consulting, **success in UAE = success in KSA**. Revenue, deal size, margins — all closely tied. Want to crack KSA? Start in the UAE.

Thinking of offering someone a Partner role? Their UAE track record might be your strongest case for market entry into KSA or Qatar.

Oman? Now that's a different story altogether... (Ask us why 😊)



Let's find your next A-list Leader

Melius Consulting offers unparalleled success to your practice with access to senior partner talent across the UAE consulting landscape.

Our data-driven approach ensures you connect with the right leaders at the right time.

Talk Soon?

[Schedule a Consultation](#)

