Coastal Partners

Q2 2026

Quarterly Private Equity Business Development Report

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QUARTERLY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT

About the Report:

This report summarizes hiring activity and the current landscape for dedicated business development and deal sourcing professionals within private equity. Our objective is to provide a reliable snapshot of how the function is evolving across firm sizes, strategies, and geographies.

Definitions & scope

- Coverage: Private equity firms, family offices, holding companies, and independent sponsors operating in the U.S. and Canada.
- Included roles: Professionals whose primary responsibility is origination / sourcing / business development at the firm level.
- Excluded: Roles primarily focused on Investor Relations/fundraising, portfolio operations, or full-time investing roles with heavy sourcing component.
- Timing: Activity reflects hires announced or confirmed through June 30, 2026 (Q2 2026 included).

Sources

Data is compiled from a combination of publicly available information and Coastal Partners' proprietary market tracking, including ongoing conversations with professionals and firms in the ecosystem.

Private Equity BD Hiring Updates

	Q2-2025	Q2-2026
Total hires	65	67
First dedicated BD hires	23	9
Existing PE BD Professionals	35%	51%
Remote hires	3%	16%

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

New Hire Titles Q2-2026

Analyst	9
Associate	17
Senior Associate	6
Manager	2
Vice President	15
Director	4
Senior Vice President	1
Principal	4
Head of BD	9
Managing Director	5
Partner	1

*Head of BD exists as a sole title and combination of 2 titles, e.g. "Principal, Head of BD"

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

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Q2 2026 was a steady quarter by the headline number. A total of 67 professionals joined dedicated BD teams, essentially level with the 68 we recorded in Q1 and the 65 hired in Q2 2025. Through the first half of the year, hiring is tracking almost exactly where it was a year ago (135 hires versus 132 in the first half of 2025), even after the swing from a record 84 in Q3 2025 to just 32 in Q4.

The composition, though, looks nothing like a year ago. Only 9 of those 67 hires were the first dedicated BD hires at firms standing up the function for the first time, down from 23 in Q2 2025. Put differently, nearly all of this quarter's activity came from firms adding to existing teams.

The other number that stands out is 51%. That is the share of hires who came from an existing PE BD seat, versus 35% a year ago, and the second straight quarter above half. Firms are increasingly hiring people who have already done this job somewhere else.

Whether the drop in first-time hires is a pause or a plateau is the question we'll be watching through the back half of the year.

- **Matt Rooney**

Managing Partner, Coastal Partners

Where are we now?

A lay of the land in PE BD, Q2 - 2026

999 Total Dedicated Business Development professionals at Private Equity firms in the US & Canada.

137 Heads of Business Development

292 MD, Partner, or Head of BD

450 Total PE firms with at least 1 dedicated BD professional

383 Analysts, Associates, Sr. Associates, Managers

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

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It's worth stepping back from any single quarter to take stock of how far the function has come. When we began tracking this data in Q1 2024, we counted 777 dedicated BD professionals across private equity in the US and Canada. Through the end of Q2, that number stands at 999, a roughly 28% increase in two and a half years and a clear sign of how quickly dedicated sourcing has moved from a niche experiment toward standard practice.

Just as notable is the shape of that population. Of the 999 professionals tracked through the end of Q2, 616 (roughly 62%) hold a title of Vice President or above. Some of that reflects the "title inflation" common to the function, where public-facing seniority can outpace actual tenure. But even discounted, the picture is clear: this is not a junior-weighted field with a thin layer of leadership on top. It has a broad, established senior cohort, including 292 professionals at the MD, Partner, or Head of BD level.

This squares with what we see on the ground at Coastal, where the majority of the searches we lead are first-chair hires, often targeting candidates at the VP level or above.

- **Matt Rooney**
Managing Partner, Coastal Partners

We tracked 35 junior BD hires in Q2, down from 39 a year ago. Junior roles accounted for 52% of total hiring, compared with 60% in Q2 2025.

The composition shifted more than the volume. Existing PE BD professionals became the largest single junior feeder by a wide margin, at 37% of hires (13 of 35), up from 18% a year ago, as firms lean toward prior sourcing reps even at the entry level. Taken together, finance and M&A backgrounds supplied just over half of junior hires, up from 44% in Q2 2025.

The sales pipeline, historically one of the most reliable sources of junior talent, continued to fade: 3 hires this quarter (9%) versus 9 (23%) a year ago. Undergraduate hiring held roughly steady in share (11%, from 13%), and continues to cluster among firms with an established, structured BD engine, the teams with the training, systems, and infrastructure to bring early-career talent in on a recurring basis.

Junior BD Hires

	Q2-2025	Q2-2026
Total hires	39	35
Existing PE BD Professionals	18%	37%

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

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Previous backgrounds - Junior BD Hires
Q2-2025 vs. Q2-2026

Finance & M&A	2025	2026	% of all hires
Existing PE BD	7	13	18% / 37%
Buy-Side Acquisition	2	1	5% / 3%
Commercial Banking	0	1	0% / 3%
Corp Dev	4	1	10% / 3%
Investment Banking	4	2	10% / 6%

Sales & Everything else	2025	2026	% of all hires
Consulting	2	2	5% / 6%
Expert Networks	4	2	10% / 6%
Private Equity	0	3	0% / 9%
Sales	9	3	23% / 9%
Something Else	1	2	3% / 6%
Undergraduate	5	4	13% / 11%
Wealth Management	1	1	3% / 3%

TOTAL	39	35	

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Mid-level hiring (VP and Director roles) was the standout of the quarter, rising to 18 hires from 12 in Q2 2025, a 50% increase in a quarter when overall hiring was flat.

Firms making their first dedicated BD hire continue to favor this level. These candidates are typically seasoned enough to run outreach independently, manage banker coverage, and stand up the operating cadence (the systems, processes, and discipline a new function needs), while still carrying meaningful runway and a more moderate comp profile than senior leadership.

Existing PE BD professionals again supplied the majority at 61% of mid-level hires (11 of 18), up modestly from 58% a year ago. The bigger change was in the rest of the pool. Finance and M&A backgrounds accounted for 17 of 18 mid-level hires (94%), versus 7 of 12 (58%) in Q2 2025, with corporate development the notable addition at three hires (17%). The consulting and PE investing backgrounds that supplied five mid-level hires a year ago were absent entirely this quarter. Only one mid-level hire came from outside the finance and M&A orbit.

Mid Level BD Hires

	Q2-2025	Q2-2026
Total hires	12	18
Existing PE BD Professionals	58%	61%

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Previous backgrounds - Mid-Level BD Hires
Q2-2025 vs. Q2-2026

Finance & M&A	2025	2026	% of all hires
Existing PE BD	7	11	58% / 61%
Buy-Side Acquisition	0	1	0% / 6%
Commercial Banking	0	1	0% / 6%
Corp Dev	0	3	0% / 17%
Investment Banking	0	1	0% / 6%

Sales & Everything else	2025	2026	% of all hires
Consulting	2	0	17% / 0%
Private Equity	3	0	25% / 0%
Sales	0	1	0% / 6%

TOTAL	12	18	

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Senior hiring (Principal, MD, Partner, and Head of BD roles) held steady at 14 hires this quarter, matching Q2 2025 exactly. In a function where senior seats turn over slowly, that level of consistency is itself notable: firms are continuing to add leadership at a steady clip rather than pulling back.

This sustained level reflects both the ongoing professionalization of BD and firms' growing willingness to invest in leadership capable of setting strategy, institutionalizing sourcing processes, and building durable intermediary networks.

Senior hiring remains the most concentrated by background. Existing PE BD alone accounted for 71% of this quarter's senior hires (10 of 14), up from 64% a year ago, and investment banking supplied the other two finance-side hires. Together, finance and M&A backgrounds made up 86% of senior hires, versus 79% in Q2 2025. The corporate development backgrounds that appeared at the senior level for the first time in Q1 did not recur this quarter, and only two senior hires (one from PE investing, one from sales) came from outside the PE-BD-and-banking pipeline.

Senior BD Hires

	Q2-2025	Q2-2026
Total hires	14	14
Existing PE BD Professionals	64%	71%

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Previous backgrounds - Senior BD Hires
Q2-2025 vs. Q2-2026

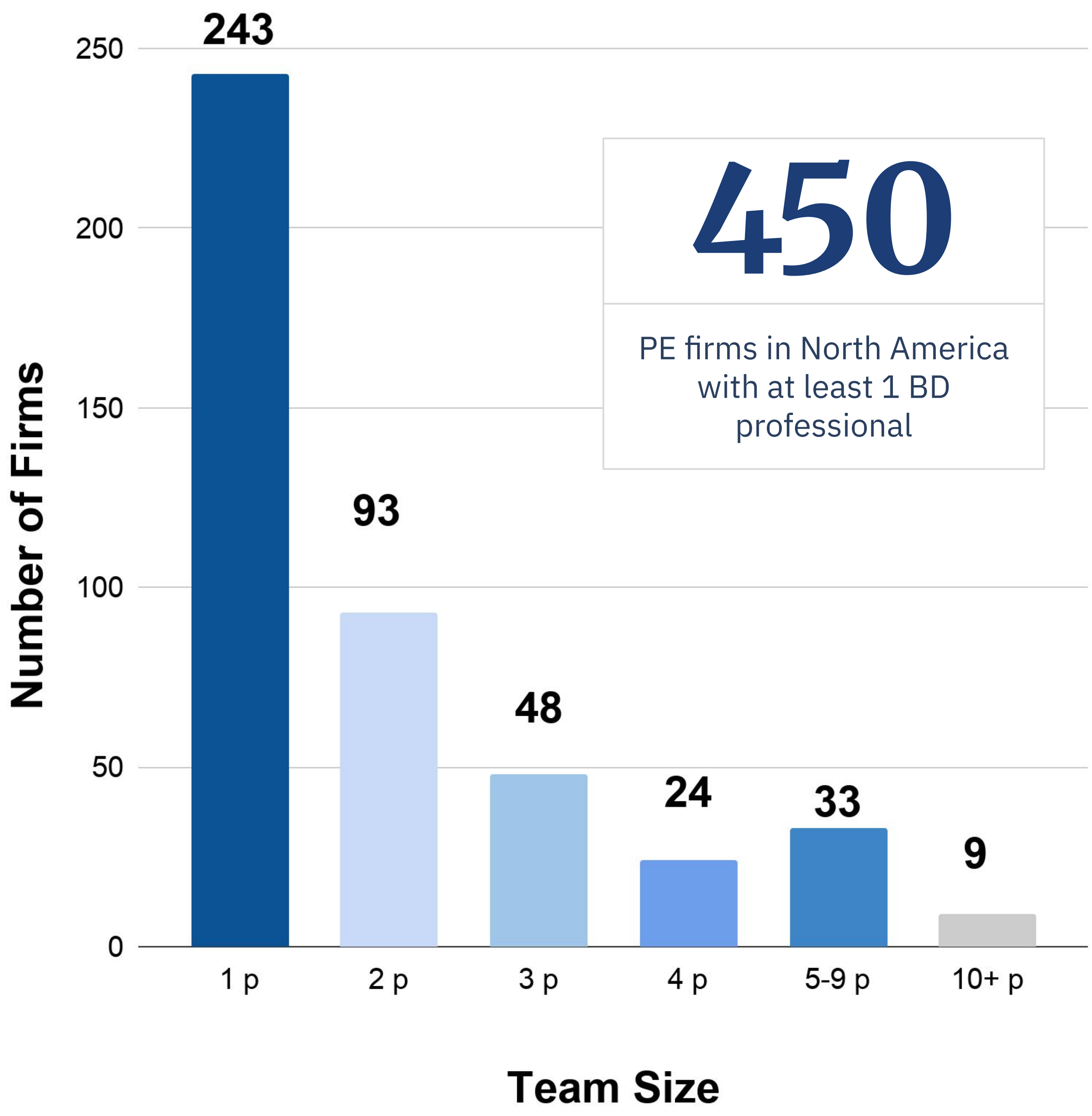
Finance & M&A	2025	2026	% of all hires
Existing PE BD	9	10	64% / 71%
Corp Dev	1	0	7% / 0%
Investment Banking	1	2	7% / 14%

Sales & Everything else	2025	2026	% of all hires
Private Equity	1	1	7% / 7%
Sales	1	1	7% / 7%
Strategy / Operations	1	0	7% / 0%

TOTAL	14	14	

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Private Equity Business Development: Industry Snapshot



*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

The number of private equity firms employing at least one dedicated BD professional now stands at 450, up from roughly 420 a year ago.

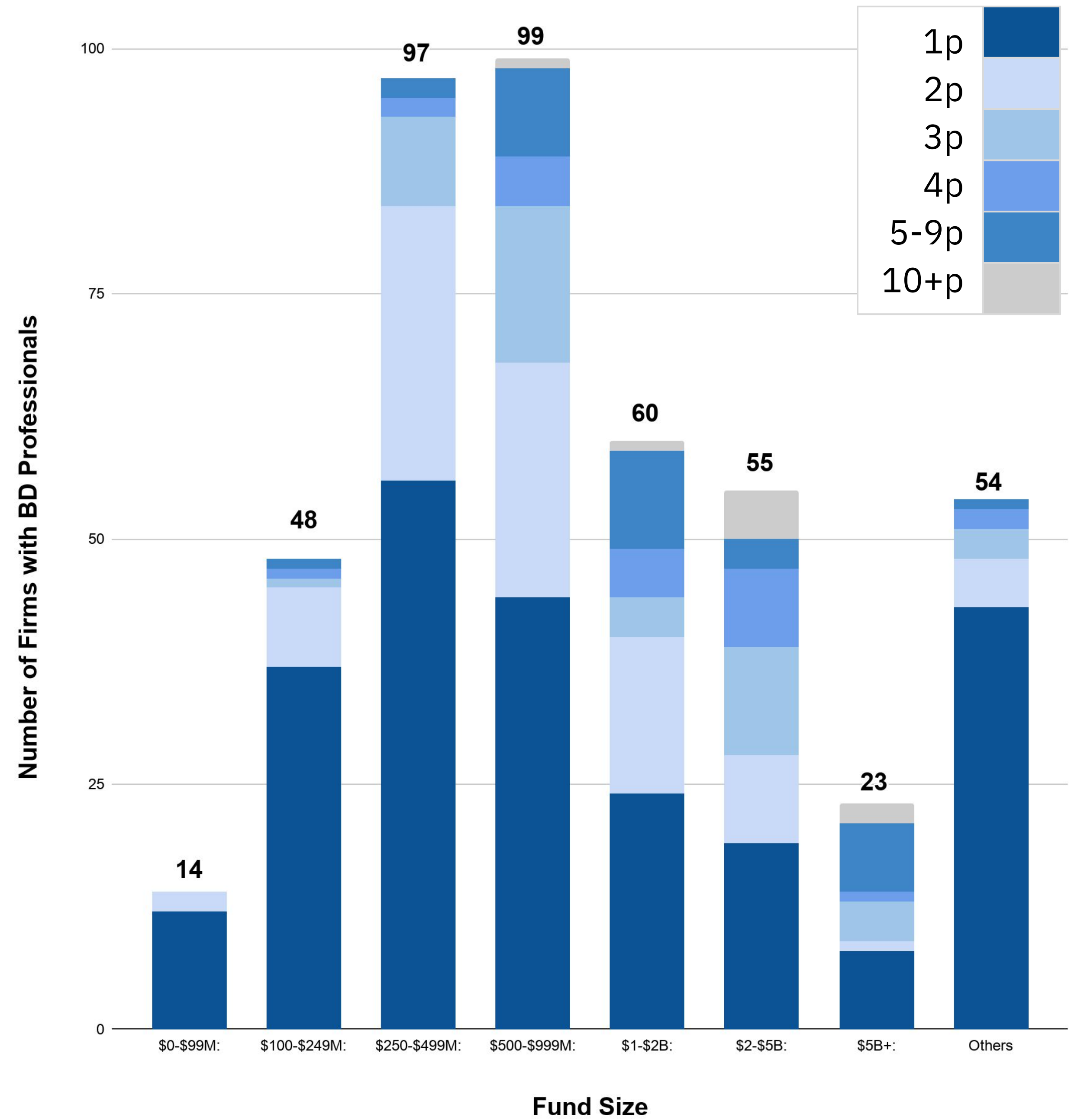
Growth continues to be concentrated in the lower- and middle-market. 71% of firms with dedicated BD have fund sizes of $2B or less—segments where the universe of target companies and intermediaries is largest, and where dedicated sourcing support can deliver the clearest ROI.

As the market matures, BD is increasingly viewed as a necessity rather than a luxury, reflecting the continued professionalization and institutionalization of sourcing across private equity.

Team build-outs are where the growth is now coming from. Only 9 firms made their first dedicated BD hire this quarter, yet overall hiring held steady, meaning the vast majority of activity came from firms adding to an existing team. 207 firms, or 46% of the total, now employ two or more dedicated BD professionals.

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

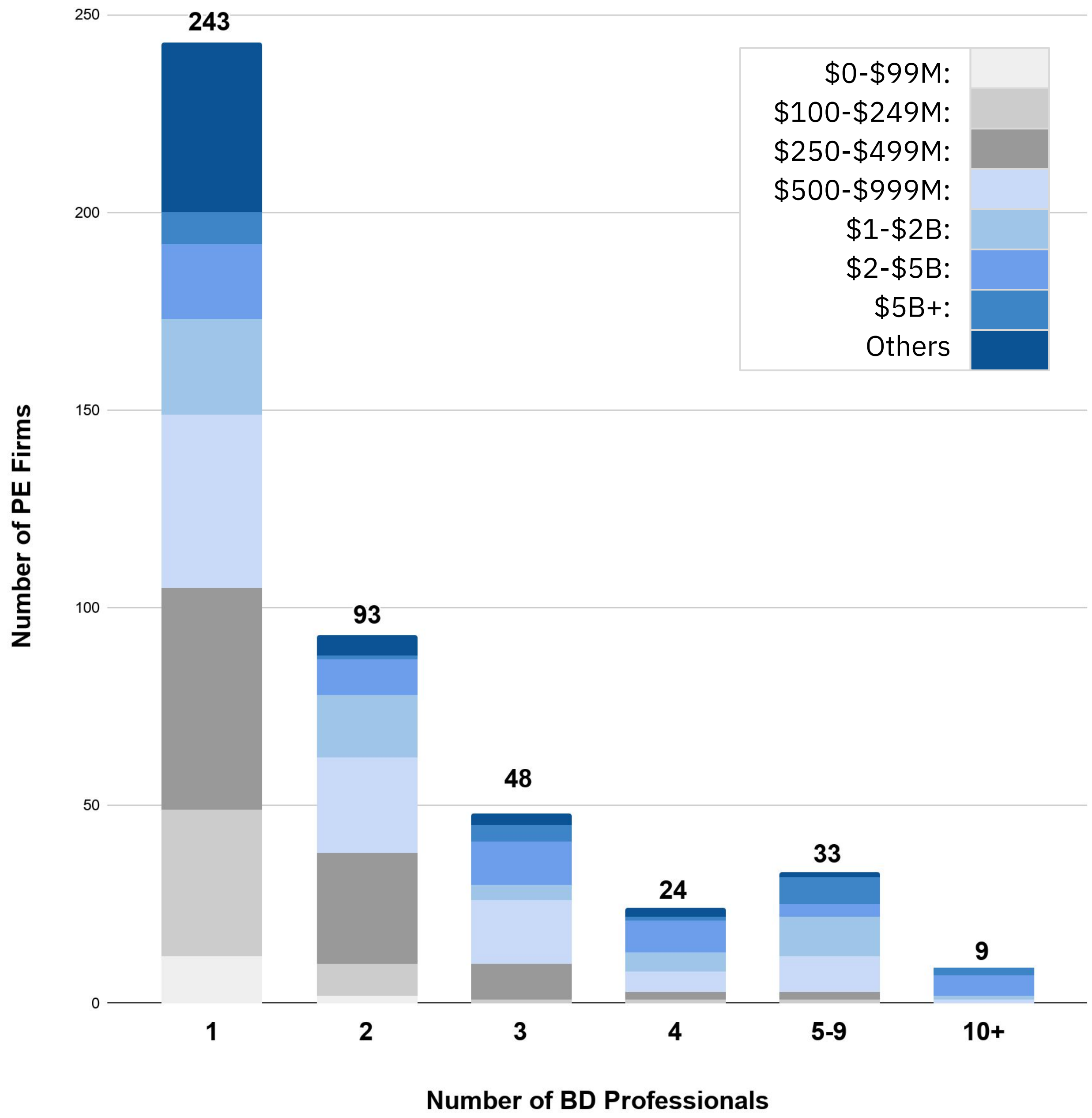
PE Firms with BD by Fund and Team Size



*Others includes Independent Sponsor, Family Offices, Fund Size N/A, etc.

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

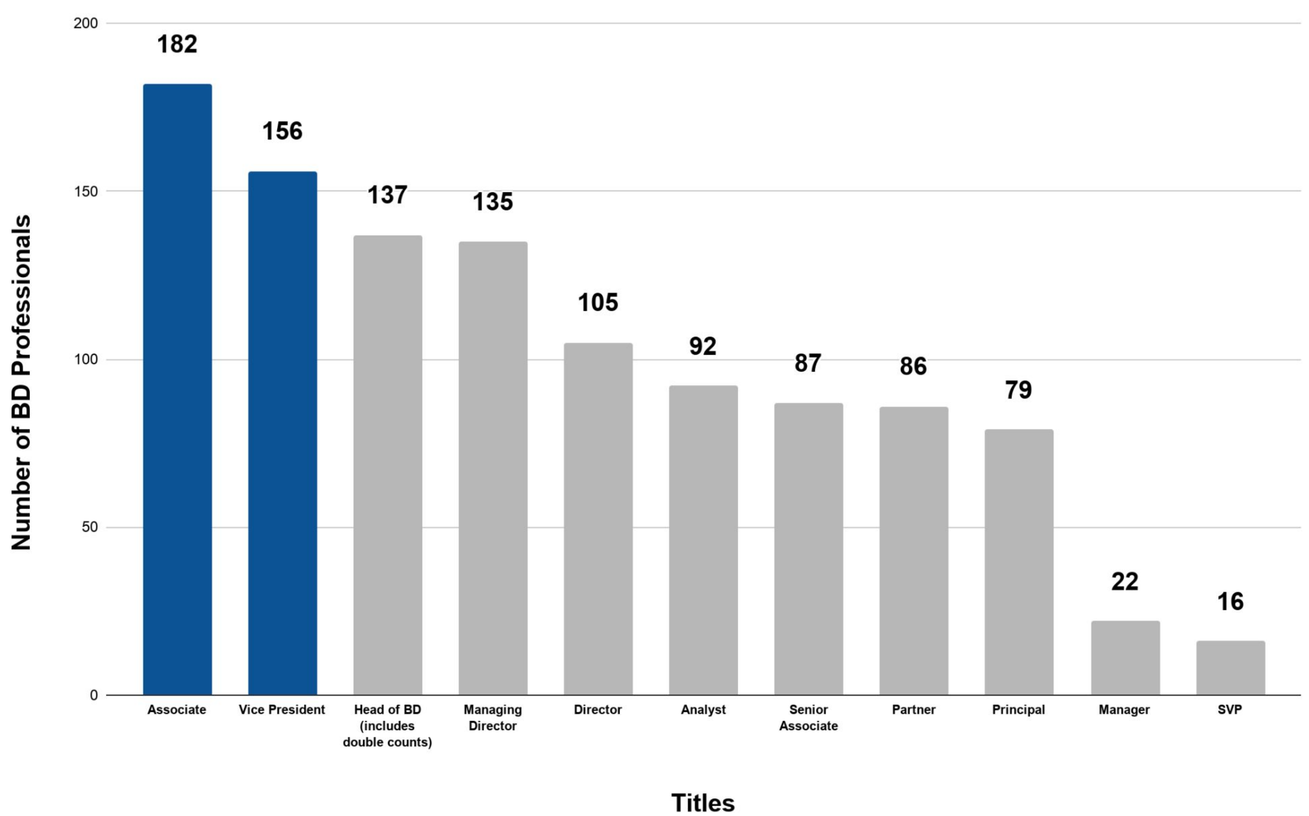
PE Firms by # of BD Professionals and Fund Size



*Others includes Independent Sponsor, Family Offices, Fund Size not Available, etc.

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Dedicated BD Professionals by Title



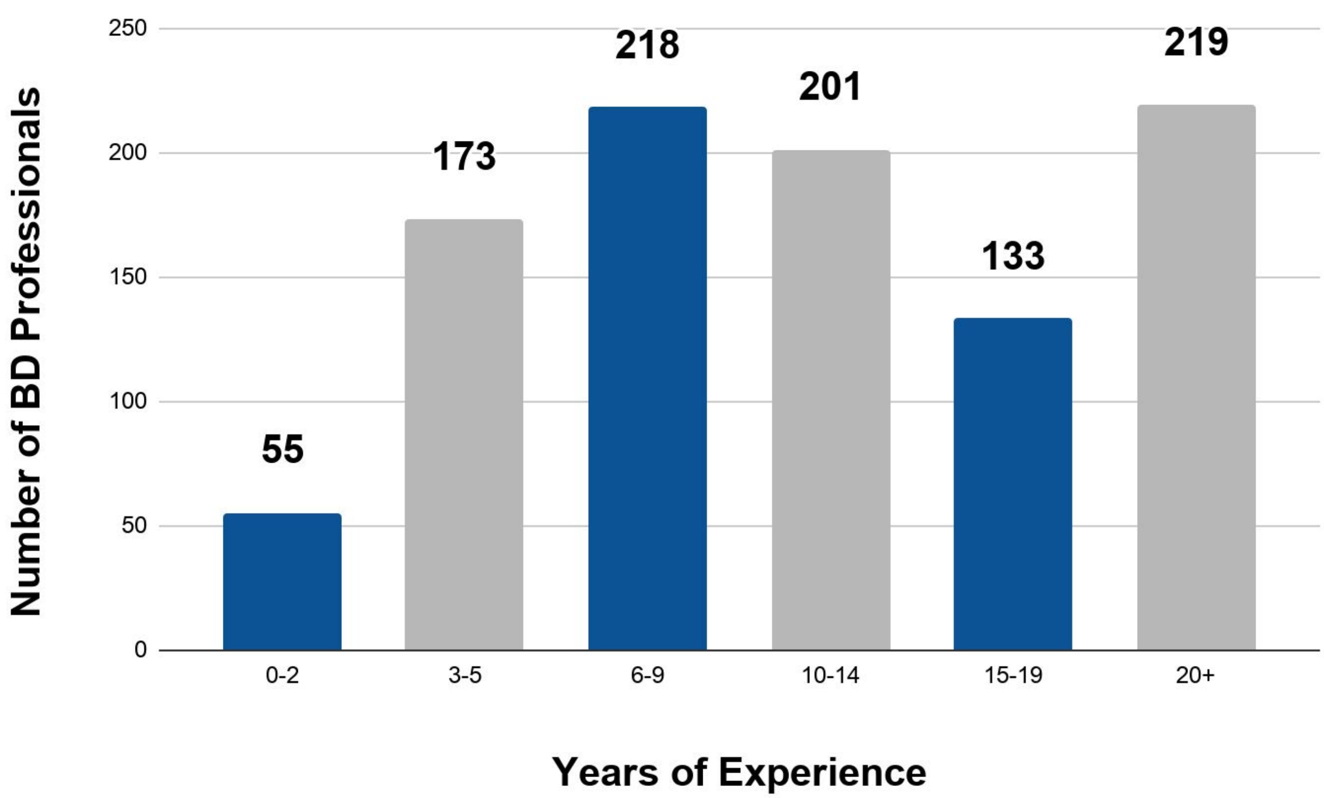
*Head of BD exists as a sole title and combination of 2 titles, e.g. "Principal, Head of BD"

BD titles continue to vary widely across firms. "Director" remains one of the most inconsistently applied designations, spanning professionals with as few as five years or as many as twenty years of experience.

This title inflation often reflects a strategic choice: credibility in front of investment banks, founders, and intermediaries can directly influence access to deals. As a result, some firms elevate public-facing titles to enhance market presence while maintaining internal hierarchy behind the scenes.

*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

Dedicated BD Professionals by Years of Experience



*Based on data collected through Q2 '26

WHY CHOOSE COASTAL PARTNERS?

We focus exclusively on private equity business development and deal sourcing.

Recent track record:

Over the past 24 months, we've helped 18 private equity firms scope and hire dedicated BD / sourcing professionals.

What that means for your search:

- Role clarity fast: we help you define the right profile, seniority, and success metrics before you start.
- Access to the market: we stay closely connected to the PE BD ecosystem—so we know who's active, who's credible, and why.
- Process that converts: structured outreach, calibrated messaging, tight cadence, and thoughtful evaluation through offer.

If you're considering a hire in 2026:

Reach out for a short conversation on profile, title, and team design (even if you're early).

Find out more about Coastal Partners:

- CoastalPartners.co - Official website of Coastal Partners
- Deal Sourcery Podcast - The only podcast exclusively about private equity deal sourcing
- PE BD Briefs - Newsletter dedicated to private equity deal sourcing
- Matt Rooney's LinkedIn - Business Development focus since 2023

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Thank You.