

Ripple Effect

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>>>> A RIPPLE COWORKING COMMUNITY UPDATE

WHAT'S CHANGING IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

FROM LARGE FIRMS TO SOLO OPERATORS—WHERE THE MARKET IS HEADING AND HOW SMALL BUSINESSES CAN STAY AHEAD.

We spoke with strategist **Shireen Hilal** about what's happening across professional service industries—from large firms down to small, independent businesses—and how those shifts are impacting growth, competition, and client expectations. The takeaway: while larger organizations are slower to adapt, smaller businesses have a unique opportunity to move faster, specialize, and win higher-value work.

MARKET SHIFT VS OPPORTUNITY VS CONSOLIDATION

Market Shift

Larger firms are evolving—but slowly. Many are relying on experienced hires, rethinking junior staffing, and gradually adopting AI and automation tools.

At the same time, clients are expecting more practical, business-focused solutions—not just technical expertise.

Opportunity

Smaller, specialized businesses are best positioned to capitalize. They can move faster, adapt to client needs, and deliver more tailored, high-value services.

In a slow-growth environment, businesses that focus, differentiate, and leverage technology have a real opportunity to gain market share.

Consolidation

With overall demand growing modestly, many firms are expanding through acquisitions, partnerships, and strategic hires rather than organic growth.

This trend is creating a more competitive landscape—and opening the door for smaller businesses to stand out through focus and agility.



SHIREEN HILAL
legal strategist

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

1. SMALLER BUSINESSES ARE MOVING UPMARKET

More businesses are targeting higher-value clients with bigger budgets. This creates opportunities to compete based on expertise and positioning—not size.

- Focus on a clear niche
- Offer specialized, high-value services
- Position yourself as an expert, not a generalist

2. AI IS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

AI and automation tools are allowing smaller teams to operate more efficiently and reduce reliance on additional staff.

- Streamline operations and workflows
- Improve service delivery
- Increase output without increasing overhead

3. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IS CHANGING

Many businesses are moving beyond referrals and building more consistent, intentional growth strategies.

- Develop repeatable marketing systems
- Stay visible in your market
- Build long-term pipelines, not just one-off opportunities

4. CLIENT EXPERIENCE IS A DIFFERENTIATOR

Clients want more than a service—they want insight, connection, and a better overall experience.

- Create more personal, high-touch interactions
- Educate clients and add value beyond the transaction
- Build stronger, long-term relationships

MARKET INSIGHT

The businesses that succeed are not the ones copying competitors—they build around their clients' needs.

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY

Decide what you want to be known for and build a clear, consistent presence around it.

You don't need to be the biggest—but you do need to stand out.

"BEST PRACTICES" ARE A PATH TO MEDIOCRITY. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES FOCUS ON WHAT THEIR CLIENTS ACTUALLY NEED—AND BUILD AROUND THAT.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW TO STAY AHEAD

- Define your niche – Clarify what you want to be known for
- Evaluate your clients – Identify opportunities to move upmarket
- Explore technology – Look for ways to improve efficiency
- Strengthen relationships – Create more intentional client touchpoints

Insights provided by **Shireen Hilal**, CEO of **Maior**, a consultancy focused on growth strategy for boutique and mid-sized law firms.