



Alternative Asset Managers Make IR Hires at Record Pace

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Managers are fortifying their marketing teams ahead of possible market volatility, says executive recruiter Sasha Jensen.

Alternative investment firms are [hiring](#) record numbers of marketing staff, according to new data from executive recruitment firm Context Jensen Partners.

Asset managers including hedge funds, private-equity firms, and multi-asset managers added 251 investor relations and fundraising professionals in the first quarter of 2017, a 14 percent increase from the same period last year. "These are the highest numbers we've ever reported," said Sasha Jensen, the headhunting firm's chief executive officer. Context Jensen Partners started tracking the data in 2013.

The trend is the result of alternative asset managers establishing more formal marketing and distribution practices over the years. Jensen said that even smaller managers have begun to replicate the models used by the largest firms, creating funds designed for specific investors such as public pensions or ultra-high-net-worth clients. The increased hiring is also a sign of firms' efforts to ensure clients stay with them in times of economic turmoil.

"There's an enormous amount of confidence in markets right now, but a potentially volatile environment ahead," said Jensen. "The reason we're seeing so much hiring right now is in the case of a situation where assets need to be retained. It's a fortification of the distribution platform."

Over the last three months Context Jensen Partners recorded 107 marketing hires at hedge funds and an all-time high 71 staff additions at private-equity firms. In private equity, specifically, the increase has been driven by the high number of funds being raised.

"Private equity firms are launching new funds that are differentiated from their other strategies, and they need to hire new individuals who can talk to those strategies," Jensen said. The fact that hedge fund hires were also up this quarter is "really good news— for investors, she added.

"It means hedge funds are responding to the fact that they need to think about retention of assets and how to serve to LPs and they're looking for expertise in launching new strategies," Jensen said. "That's all a positive for the hedge fund industry."