

WHITEPAPER

Powering your processes

How legal software can streamline
your practice





Powering processes with automation

Law firms are consistently under pressure to enhance efficiency while maintaining exceptional client service. Senior partners, managing partners, and IT decision-makers within law firms are continually seeking ways to optimise their operations, streamline workflows, and improve overall productivity.

As much of their fee earners' time and effort are spent on non-billable administrative tasks—document management, time tracking, client communication, and billing—that detract from the ability to focus on high-value legal work.

For many law firms, the need for maximum efficiency has reached a critical point and billable time needs to be maximised in order to realise revenue and growth. Clients expect faster turnaround times, accurate

billing, and seamless communication, all while competition and costs intensify. To maintain a competitive edge, law firms must prioritise efficiency in their internal processes. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by leveraging automation and time-saving workflows.

Automation can significantly reduce the time and resources spent on repetitive administrative tasks. It empowers legal professionals to focus on impactful work, enhances productivity, and ultimately improves client satisfaction. Explore how law firms can harness the power of automation to streamline processes, overcome challenges, and position themselves for success in the future.





Inefficiencies and workloads

Legal professionals across firms of all sizes are constantly grappling with administrative burdens that consume valuable time and resources. These challenges are often exacerbated by the high volume of documentation and the meticulous nature of legal work. Some of the most common challenges that law firms face include:

- **Document management:** Legal work involves a tremendous amount of paperwork, from contracts and pleadings to correspondence and research documents. Lawyers often find themselves sifting through large volumes of files, reviewing documents, and managing records. This process can be time-consuming and prone to errors, particularly when done manually.
- **Timekeeping and billing:** Accurately tracking billable hours is a critical task for law firms, yet it is also one of the most labour-intensive. Legal professionals must meticulously record the time spent on each client or case, then translate that information into invoices. Currently [66% of law firms](#) do not use time recording software, and relying on manual timekeeping can lead to errors, billing delays, and lost revenue.

- **Client communication:** Law firms must maintain clear and timely communication with their clients, which includes answering inquiries, scheduling meetings, and providing case updates. These interactions, while essential to client satisfaction, can become difficult to manage alongside other responsibilities. Missed emails, delayed responses, or inefficient scheduling can negatively impact client relationships.

These administrative tasks, while crucial, often detract from the primary focus of a law firm's operations: delivering high-quality legal services. The cumulative impact of these challenges is significant, as it reduces productivity, increases the risk of errors, and negatively affects client service. Routine tasks bog down lawyers and staff, resulting in inefficiencies and, ultimately, burnout.

Furthermore, the complexity of legal work demands a high level of attention to detail, leaving little room for mistakes. When administrative burdens pile up, it becomes harder for legal professionals to meet deadlines, provide timely legal advice, and maintain client satisfaction.

Given these challenges, law firms must explore solutions that enable them to balance their administrative tasks with their core legal functions. This is where automation can play a transformative role.



The role of automation

Automation, in the context of law firms, is becoming more and more important in order to streamline routine administrative tasks, reduce manual intervention, and increase operational efficiency. By leveraging automation tools, law firms can optimise their workflows, improve accuracy, and reduce the time spent on non-billable tasks.

The scope of automation in legal processes is broad, ranging from simple administrative tasks to more complex workflows.

In our [Legal Sector Trends Report 2024](#), law firms told us that document management automation made the biggest difference. With 32% of law firms saying they see the improvements of automation in document management.

Automation streamlines the drafting and formatting of legal documents using pre-built templates and auto-filling client information. Instead of manually creating documents from scratch, legal professionals can generate contracts, pleadings, and other documents in a fraction of the time.

Track the time spent on different tasks automatically and generate invoices based on billable hours. This not only reduces the burden of manual timekeeping but also minimises errors in billing, ensuring that law firms are compensated accurately for their work. Automation isn't just about accuracy and saving time; it's about creating more time for high-value work.

Complaints are also up - by around 50% compared to last year according to the law firms we spoke to. This evidently takes a drain on not only time but also revenue. Automation and more streamlined processes can lead to a more efficient legal service. Efficient legal services lead to higher client satisfaction and recommendations, with a [20% increase in both metrics](#) when clients rate a firm as efficient.

Manage routine client interactions, such as sending reminders for upcoming meetings, providing case status updates, or following up on inquiries. Ensuring that clients are kept informed without the need for constant manual intervention.

Through automation solutions, law firms can eliminate inefficiencies and allow their legal teams to focus on more valuable tasks, such as case strategy, legal research, and client advocacy.



The benefits for firms

The benefits of automation in legal practice are vast, extending beyond just time savings. When administrative tasks are automated, law firms can unlock new levels of productivity, reduce errors, and allocate resources more effectively. Some of the key benefits include:

1. Reduced manual workloads

One of the primary advantages of automation is the reduction of manual workloads, and currently AI tools can automate up to [44% of tasks](#) currently performed by legal professionals. Tasks like document generation and billing, when handled manually, are often repetitive and time-consuming. Automation can take over these tasks, freeing up legal professionals to focus on higher-value activities. For example, a legal assistant who would typically spend hours drafting contracts can now use automation tools to generate documents in minutes.

Automation also helps minimise the risk of human error. Manual data entry and document management are prone to mistakes, which can lead to costly errors, especially in the legal industry where accuracy is critical. Automated systems ensure consistency and accuracy by following predefined rules, reducing the likelihood of errors.

2. Improved time management

Time is the most valuable resource in any law firm, and automation helps legal professionals make the most of it. By automating routine tasks, lawyers can spend less time on administrative work and more time on substantive legal matters. This improved time management allows legal teams to take on more clients, handle more cases, and ultimately generate more revenue.

Automation can schedule meetings, file documents, and manage client follow-ups, freeing lawyers to focus on trial preparation and legal research. As a result, firms can achieve higher levels of productivity without the need to expand their workforce.

3. Better resource allocation

When administrative tasks are automated, law firms can optimise the allocation of their resources. Instead of assigning highly skilled professionals to perform routine tasks, firms can reallocate those resources to areas that generate more value. For example, legal assistants can dedicate their time to assisting with case preparation, legal research, or client engagement, rather than managing schedules or drafting repetitive documents.

Automation also allows law firms to scale their operations without significantly increasing their overhead costs. By streamlining workflows, firms can take on more cases without the need to hire additional staff, resulting in better profitability and improved service delivery.



4. Enhanced client service

Client satisfaction is a top priority for law firms, and automation can play a key role in delivering a superior client experience. Automated tools can improve the speed and accuracy of client communication, ensuring that clients receive timely updates, responses, and reminders. This helps build trust and confidence in the firm's services, as clients feel more informed and engaged throughout the legal process.

Moreover, by reducing the administrative burden on legal professionals, automation allows lawyers to dedicate more time to client-facing activities, such as providing legal advice, attending court hearings, and negotiating settlements. This ultimately leads to better client outcomes and stronger relationships.

5. Enhanced cost efficiency

Automation in legal practices not only streamlines operations but also significantly reduces operational costs, ultimately boosting profitability. For instance, the cost savings gained from automating document review processes or client onboarding tasks allow firms to redirect financial resources towards strategic growth initiatives.

Additionally, automation tools help prevent costly errors, and the expenses associated with correcting them. Precision and consistency lead to fewer compliance issues and disputes, saving money in potential legal fees and penalties.





How technology is adapting to streamline further

One of the main drivers behind the development of, and investment in, legal software has been to aid the streamlining of processes and drive forward efficiency to help maximise opportunity and business growth.

That still remains true decades on as legal software continues to evolve to utilise latest technologies and meet the expectations of both law firms and their clients alike.

Cloud technology, for example, has become a key facet in the development of the new-era of legal software. [OneAdvanced Legal](#), the latest software offering of OneAdvanced for law firms, is built on a cloud-native platform from which the vital legal software that law firms need to power their legal practice sits upon such as practice and case management, document and data management, forms, time recording, as well as performance and talent.

This idea of a single, centralised platform where all tasks can be managed seamlessly takes streamlining processes to a new level where fee-earners are realising efficiencies within legal software, not just from the procurement of legal software over not having any at all.

What this does is drastically reduce the amount of time to serve. Provide a quote and onboard a new client in just five minutes. This rapid onboarding process means far less time is spent on administrative tasks and more time is invested in building new client relationships.

Similarly, with just two minutes needed to create and manage a bill, your firm can handle financial tasks with minimal effort, ensuring you stay compliant, and cash flow remains uninterrupted.

Drafting, reviewing, and sharing a legal form typically takes around five minutes using OneAdvanced Legal. If it previously took a fee earner 30 minutes to complete a form, they could now submit 2 documents in that time, along with onboarding three clients and creating and managing two bills.

Automation through AI is another area that many law firms are now exploring with up to three-quarters of law firms either adopting or researching legal AI tools to help them speed up their processes.

[PatternBuilderMAX](#) by [NetDocuments](#) has emerged as a tailored, measured approach to AI adoption within the legal sector, addressing the concerns of legal professionals while empowering them to harness the power of AI without the need for extensive coding knowledge.

By allowing legal teams to create custom generative AI prompts and automations, it puts legal experts in control of the customisation process. This ensures flexibility and agility in adapting AI to the unique needs of different practice areas and specific legal tasks.

One of the key features is its seamless integration of document assembly directly into the document management system. This eliminates the tedious “find and replace” methods traditionally used in document production, saving valuable time and minimising errors.

The real-world impact of PatternBuilderMAX is evident in the significant efficiencies reported by firms using the tool. With up to a 90% time saving in document preparation, legal professionals can allocate more time to serving clients and focusing on higher-level legal work.



Time recording for better processes

[Time Capture software](#) is adept at identifying and recording time entries that might otherwise go unnoticed. By automating this process, you ensure that all billable hours are accurately captured wherever your fee-earners are working. Minimising missed time entries and reducing the administrative burden on inputting time entries.

Implementing some form of time capture software can lead to a significant increase in billable hours. By automating time tracking and reducing admin tasks, fee earners can gain a potential additional 222 billable hours from missing time and gain back

66 hours that can now be spent on billable hours. Additionally, time capture software generates detailed, accurate invoices, increasing the likelihood of prompt payment by an average of 10%.

The adoption of time capture software can lead to sustained improvements in the firm's overall performance. Increased billable hours, improved accuracy, and enhanced productivity contribute to a stronger bottom line. Additionally, the firm's reputation for efficiency and accuracy can attract more clients, further boosting revenue.

Overcoming the barriers to automation

While the benefits of automation are clear, the adoption of automation in law firms is not without its challenges. Many law firms are hesitant to adopt new technologies, especially if they have well-established workflows, fearing that automation could disrupt their processes or reduce control over administrative tasks.

- Resistance to change
- Cost of implementation
- Integration with existing systems

Automation tools often require an upfront investment, which can be a barrier for smaller law firms with limited budgets. Additionally, firms may need to invest in training staff to use the new technology effectively, and the figures show this with 28% of legal professionals telling us that attachment to traditional methods is a barrier to implementing new technology.

Many law firms use a variety of software systems for document management, billing, and communication. Integrating automation tools with these existing systems can be complex and time-consuming.

To overcome these challenges, law firms should take a strategic approach to automation adoption. Engaging stakeholders early in the process and demonstrating the potential return on investment (ROI) can help gain buy-in. Starting with small, pilot projects in key areas of the firm can also help demonstrate the effectiveness of automation before rolling it out on a larger scale.

The landscape of automation in legal practices is evolving, offering unprecedented affordability and ease of integration. Cloud technology significantly reduces the upfront investment required, allowing law firms to adopt advanced automation tools without the burden of purchasing and maintaining expensive hardware. This is particularly advantageous for smaller firms operating with tighter budgets.





The need to streamline and automate

The future of legal automation is bright, with new technologies poised to further transform the industry. Automation is no longer optional for law firms; it is a strategic imperative. By embracing automation, law firms can transform their workflows, improve efficiency, and unlock new potential.

The integration of automation into legal processes has become essential for law firms aiming to remain competitive and meet evolving client expectations. By reducing the burden of administrative tasks,

improving time management, and enhancing client service, automation empowers legal professionals to focus on what truly matters—delivering high-quality legal services.

As technology continues to evolve, firms that embrace these advancements will be better positioned to increase productivity, reduce costs, and deliver more value to their clients. The path forward is clear: those who invest in automation today will lead the legal industry of tomorrow.



Powering the world of work

OneAdvanced is a leading provider of sector-focused software, headquartered in Birmingham, UK. Our mission is to power the world of work through software that effortlessly gets the job done for our customers giving them the freedom to focus on thriving for their customers and people.

Customers trust OneAdvanced to deliver digitalisation through innovative technology, addressing business problems through intelligent insight. Our years of sector knowledge means we are a strategic partner to our customers, who use technology that touches the lives of millions of people every day. From caring for patients in the NHS and social care to meeting tenants housing needs; supporting learners in education and apprenticeships to navigating complex legal matters; and making sure goods get to their destination on time navigating complex supply chains.

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