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Legal Industry Report 2024

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→ Introduction

For our third annual legal industry report, we surveyed over 2,600 legal professionals during August and September 2023. In this year's survey, we explored the types of technologies and services being adopted by law firms. One key area of focus in this year's report is artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GAI), a subset of AI focused on content creation that holds significant potential for the legal industry.

Specifically, we wanted to gain insight into:

- Lawyers' perspectives on adopting AI and GAI
- The technology adoption hurdles law firms face
- How law firms benefit from outsourcing legal billing solutions, technologies, and services

The report covers many topics, including how lawyers view GAI, how emerging technologies like AI and other cloud-based law firm technologies affect how work gets done, how lawyers track their time and bill for their services, and how offering billing convenience to clients impacts law firm revenue.

The survey responses showed that much has changed since the early days of the pandemic, not the least of which is how legal professionals view new technologies. The data showed that there was a clear interest in learning about emerging tools like AI and GAI, and the overwhelming sentiment of survey respondents was a genuine curiosity about the possibilities these technologies offer law firms.

Not surprisingly, concerns were expressed regarding appropriate usage and ethical compliance. Even so, the prevailing attitude was very forward-thinking, and legal professionals remained open-minded about the potential offered by AI. This perception was likely colored by their successful adoption of cloud-based software since the start of the pandemic and the many tangible efficiencies achieved as a result, which include significant time savings and increased profitability.

The practice of law is in the midst of significant change, driven by the continued adoption of cloud software and newly piqued interest in the possibilities of AI.

In this report, you'll learn about:

- How legal professionals view emerging technologies like AI and GAI
- The concerns legal professionals have about AI adoption
- Adoption plans for AI tools
- The roadblocks faced by law firms when exploring new software tools
- The increase in profitability achieved when law firms adopt legal online payment tools and offer payment flexibility to clients
- How certain law software features and legal services help streamline law firm workflows

Executive Summary

The practice of law is in the midst of significant change, driven by the continued adoption of cloud software and newly piqued interest in the possibilities of AI. In this report, we'll cut through the hype and provide a grounded, practical analysis that shows how these technologies are reshaping legal workflows and, by extension, affecting law firm productivity and revenue streams.

We'll start with a straightforward look at AI's role in today's legal environment. What are the real-world applications of AI in law firms, and how is this technology influencing the day-to-day work of legal professionals in firms of all sizes? We'll consider both the potential benefits and the legitimate concerns that legal professionals have about AI, particularly GAI, which can be used for tasks that were once the exclusive domain of lawyers.

Then, we'll turn our attention to technology adoption challenges. Choosing the right technology is a critical decision for any law firm, and is not without its obstacles. We'll discuss impediments faced by firms when moving to the cloud, including researching and selecting software, the hurdles of data migration, and the realities of implementation.

Finally, we'll examine the specific features of law firm software and billing technologies that are having a significant impact on the work being done in law firms. From rules-based calendaring and



client communication to online payments and pay-later options, we'll look at how these tools are saving time, simplifying processes, and potentially changing the way lawyers bill for their services by providing clients with more convenient payment options.

This report provides a look into what's happening on the ground in law firms across the country as they navigate the rapidly changing technology landscape and adopt new tools into their workflows. The data provides actionable insight that can be leveraged to enable the strategic implementation of new technology and processes, transforming law firm productivity and profitability.

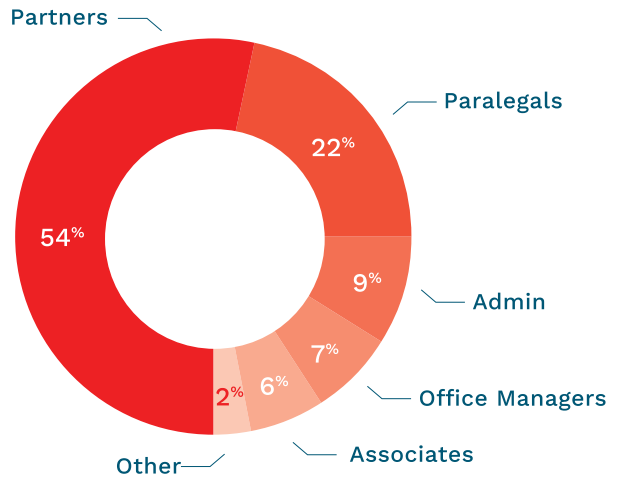
Demographics

The survey was conducted between August 14, 2023, and September 22, 2023. More than 2,600 lawyers and legal professionals took part.

The respondents represented many different roles within law firms. 54% were partners in a law firm, 22% were paralegals, 9% were administrative or support staff, 7% were office managers or IT staff, 6% were associates or of counsel, and 2% chose "other."

The survey results showed that 44% were solos, 43% of survey respondents were from firms with 2-5 lawyers, 10% were from firms with 6-20 lawyers, 2% were from firms with 21-50 lawyers, and 1% were from firms with 51+ attorneys.

What is your position in the firm?



How many lawyers are in your firm?



44%

Solos

43%

2-5 Lawyers

10%

6-20 Lawyers

2%

21-50 Lawyers

1%

51+ Lawyers



→ Artificial Intelligence Familiarity

Artificial Intelligence Understanding

The landscape of legal technology is changing quickly and artificial intelligence is poised to transform the way that legal professionals get work done. With the pace of announcements and releases of legal-specific GAI tools increasing exponentially, it's essential to understand how legal professionals—from solo practitioners to larger firm lawyers—think about and engage with this technology.

The landscape of legal technology is changing quickly and **artificial intelligence is poised to transform the way that legal professionals get work done.**

In this section of the report, we'll review the survey responses relating to legal professionals' familiarity and understanding of AI and GAI, and the perceived future impact of these tools on the legal profession. From this data, we'll learn more about the varying degrees of knowledge across different firm sizes along with plans for GAI adoption.

The survey results reveal a nuanced landscape of AI familiarity among legal professionals. Overall, a notable 73% of respondents report at least some familiarity with AI, highlighting its pervasive impact on the industry. Solo practitioners appear slightly more attuned to the nuances of AI, with 26% claiming to be very familiar, as opposed to 21% from mid-sized firms (6-20 attorneys).

How familiar with AI are you?

73%

of legal professionals are somewhat familiar

26%

solo practitioners are very familiar

21%

mid-size firms (6-20) are very familiar

These figures suggest that smaller firm environments may encourage more curiosity around emerging AI technologies, in part due to their agile nature and ability to easily pivot and explore new ways of working. Additionally, it's easier to implement new technology into a smaller firm, which in turn allows small firm lawyers to realize the potential of software adoption more quickly. The implications of these findings are notable and suggest that firm size and structure may influence the adoption and understanding of AI in legal practices.

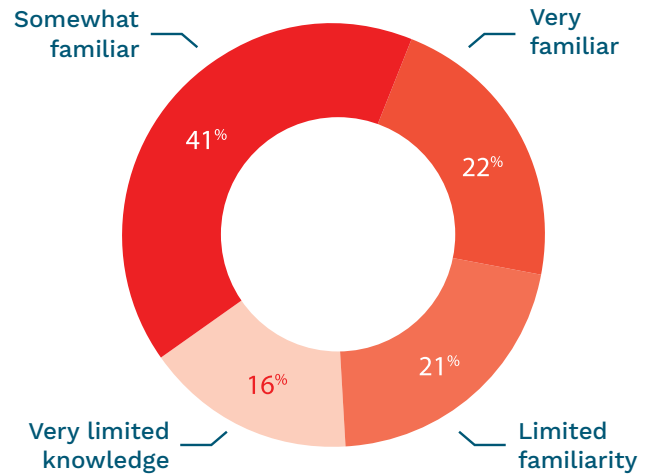
GAI Perception

Next, we sought to compare the survey respondents' familiarity with general AI technology to their knowledge of GAI. Our goal was to explore their understanding of this emerging technology before diving into some of the hurdles to adoption, as discussed more fully in the next section.

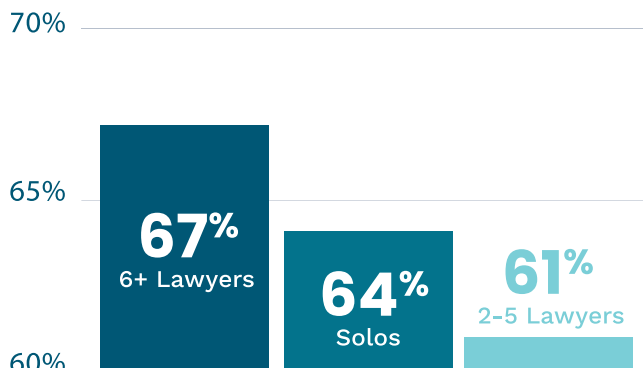
When we asked about knowledge of GAI, 63% of the legal professionals surveyed reported being somewhat or very familiar with the concept. Of those respondents, 41% were 'somewhat familiar' with GAI, accentuating the increasing awareness of this specific AI application within the legal field.

Broken down by firm size, solo and small firm practitioners (2-5 person firms) demonstrated a relatively high level of engagement with GAI, with familiarity rates at 64% and 61%, respectively. Notably, larger firms, those with 6 or more lawyers, showed a slight lead in GAI understanding, at 67%. This data suggests that while GAI is on the radar across the board, larger firm practitioners have a slightly higher level of interest in this technology. From that, it can be inferred that resource allocation, such as a dedicated legal technology staff, along with greater exposure to legal technology options, may contribute to the slightly enhanced GAI awareness in larger legal practices.

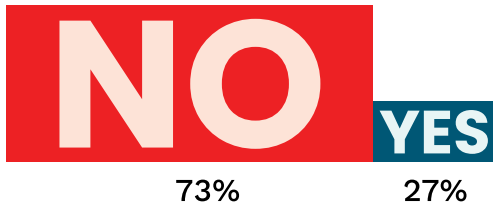
How familiar are you with the concept of generative AI (tools like ChatGPT)?



Generative AI familiarity by firm size

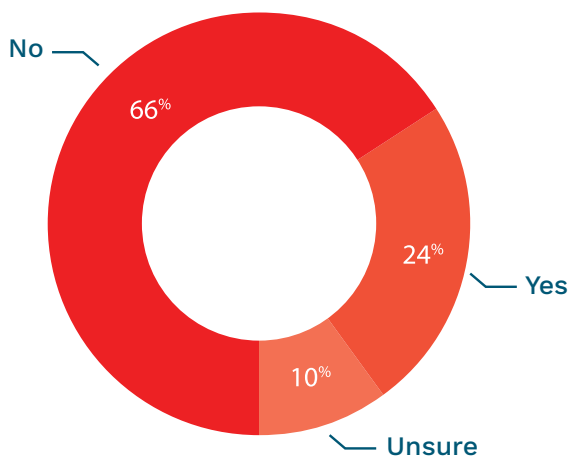


Do you use generative AI tools for work-related purposes?



Given the relative infancy of the technology and the very valid concerns surrounding its implementation, the fact that nearly a third of respondents use it at work is notable, especially since the technology was released publicly less than a year before the respondents were surveyed.

Has your firm adopted legal-specific generative AI tools, whether standalone or built into legal software platforms?



→ Current GAI Usage

Personal and Professional GAI Use

PERSONAL USE

We were also interested in understanding how more proactive and tech-savvy legal professionals are already incorporating GAI into their daily work. To that end, we first asked about how GAI was being used on an individual basis.

The data showed that although the majority of legal professionals have a general awareness of GAI, most are not personally using it, and the vast majority of respondents (73%) reported they did not yet use GAI tools for work-related purposes. As we discuss later in the report, hesitation to use this tool in the workplace centers around ethical concerns and a lack of trust in the results.

Given the relative infancy of the technology and the very valid concerns surrounding its implementation, the fact that nearly a third of respondents use it at work is notable, especially since the technology was released publicly less than a year before the respondents were surveyed.

PROFESSIONAL/FIRM USE

Next, we turned to law firm GAI adoption. We fully expected that the adoption rate would be lower than individual adoption rates due to the inherent complexities involved in firmwide technology implementation. Not surprisingly, the results supported our thesis.

The majority of legal professionals who did not yet personally use GAI for work-related reasons told us that legal-specific GAI software was not available in their firms. Less than a quarter (24%) reported that their firms had adopted legal-specific GAI tools.

These numbers comport with the reality that at the time of the survey there were very few publicly available legal GAI products; most were in beta and many are still not yet available for general use. Even so, that percentage is notable and reinforces the legal professions' evolving receptiveness to emerging technologies since the pandemic's onset.

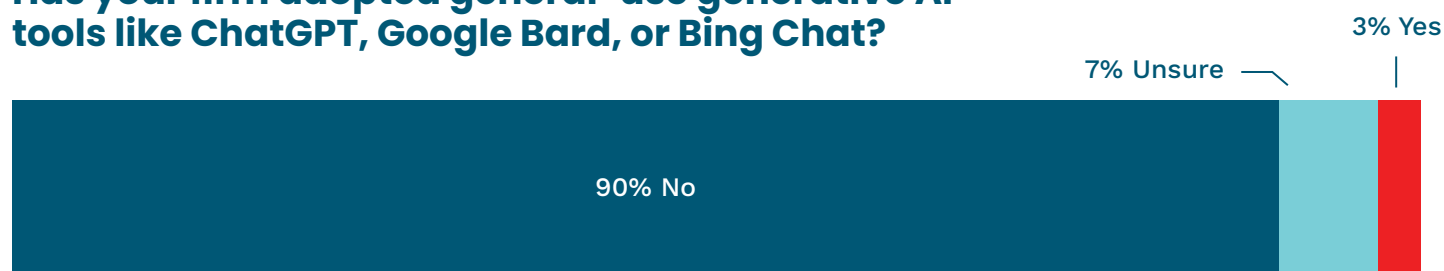
Next, we asked survey respondents whether their employers had adopted general-use GAI tools like ChatGPT in their firms. A mere 3% reported that their firms had done so compared to the 24% that had adopted legal-specific GAI. From this significant variance, we can surmise that there continues to be distrust of consumer-based products, fueled in part by press coverage of lawyers' improper use of tools like ChatGPT. In other words, the data shows that sourcing from trusted, legal-specific providers is an essential factor when adopting GAI technology in law firms.

The data shows that **sourcing from trusted, legal-specific providers is an essential factor** when implementing GAI technology in law firms.

Implementation of GAI into law firms doesn't necessarily correlate with usage levels so we wanted to more fully understand how often this technology was used after adoption. The data indicated that legal professionals whose firms had adopted GAI frequently relied on it throughout their workday, with 42% using it daily, 29% weekly, and 24% monthly.

In other words, nearly half of that segment of respondents used GAI daily. That's a lot of legal professionals, which begs the question: Why are so many legal professionals using such a nascent technology, and how does it impact their workflows?

Has your firm adopted general-use generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Google Bard, or Bing Chat?



How often do you personally use these tools in your work?

42%
Every day

29%
Once per week

24%
Once a month or less

5%
Never

Has GAI increased your productivity?



53%
Increased somewhat

24%
Increased significantly

We learned that three quarters found that GAI usage increased their efficiency. More than half (53%) said that their efficiency increased somewhat, and for another 24%, it increased significantly. **Given that this technology is relatively new, it's notable that legal professionals who have adopted it are using it frequently, and the majority of them find that it dramatically impacts their productivity.**

Reasons for Using GAI

Determining the how and why of GAI adoption is the key to forecasting its future value for legal professionals. For that reason, we sought to understand the reasons individuals and law firms utilized this technology, since identifying the specific goals of adoption and the most popular use cases helps to predict both short and long-term adoption plans.

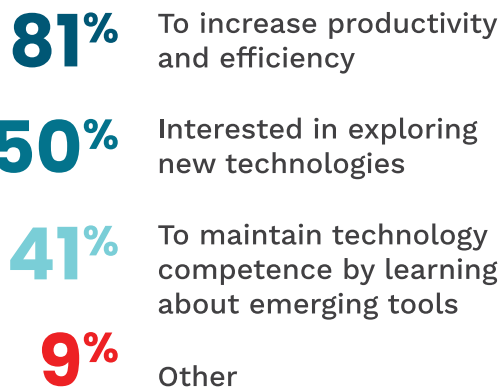
As you might expect from what we've learned so far, streamlined workflows are a key driver for both individual and law firm adoption. The top reasons cited for personal use of GAI were to increase productivity and efficiency (81%), explore new technologies (50%), and maintain technology competence by learning about emerging tools (41%).

The motivator for firms was time-savings, and like individual users, the key reason for law firm investment in GAI was increasing overall productivity, with 75% citing this goal, followed by increased cost-savings through greater efficiency (53%).

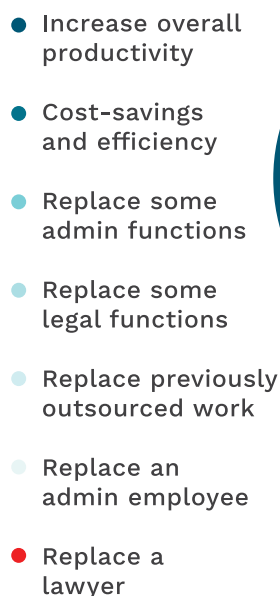
One common concern associated with GAI adoption is that it will eliminate job functions. According to the survey results, that fear is not unfounded. From the data, we learned that **in addition to seeking to increase productivity, some firms adopted GAI with the intent to replace either some job functions or entire positions, and administrative roles were most likely to be impacted.**

According to the results, 28% of firms also planned to replace administrative functions, followed by legal-specific functions (18%) and currently outsourced functions (13%). Notably, 10% were seeking to fully replace an administrative employee and a mere 2% hoped to replace a lawyer with this technology. In other words, one way or another, law firms and individual users hoped to increase productivity and reduce costs, whether through streamlined efficiency or by replacing some functions or roles entirely.

Why do you personally use general use generative AI tools?



Why did your firm adopt general use generative AI tools?



To gain additional insight into why early adopter firms jumped onto the GAI bandwagon, we asked respondents to share the reasons their firms were interested in incorporating GAI into their tech stacks. The perceived use cases varied and covered many different aspects of law firm management.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE RESPONSES:

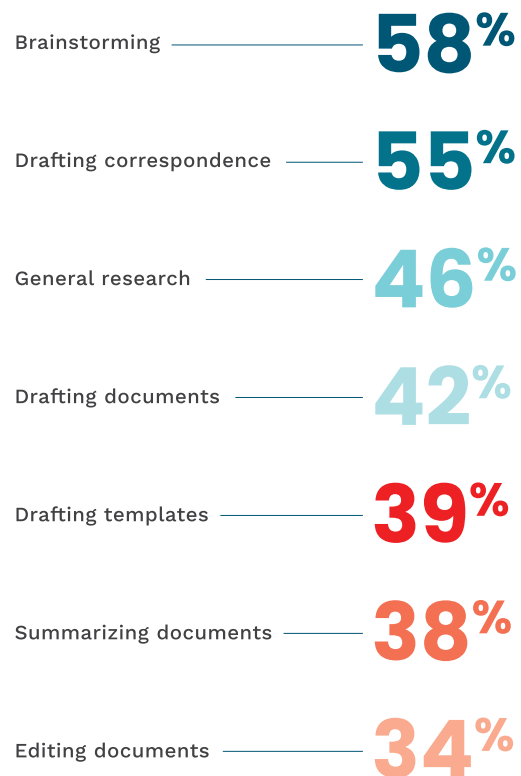
- “To expand our abilities to create better documents and better communication with clients”
- “To help analyze and prepare written briefs from large PDF files”
- “To provide legal information to non-English speakers”
- “To automate repetitive tasks”
- “For marketing ideas”
- “Effectively creating marketing plans for each practice area”
- “To save time with first drafts of different legal documentation”

Of course, the reasons for law firm adoption of GAI and the uses intended by a firm may not necessarily comport with the ways that individuals within firms incorporate the technology into their daily work. For that reason, we were also interested in exploring the ways that individuals applied this technology to their workflows.

Current use cases are undoubtedly significantly limited and **impacted by the security and confidentiality concerns** surrounding GAI.

The top use case reported was brainstorming, with 58% choosing that as a task they complete using GAI. Drafting correspondence followed closely at 55%, followed by general research (as opposed to legal research), with 46% choosing that option. Working with documents in various ways was also

What tasks do you use generative AI for?



popular, with document drafting at 42% usage, drafting document templates at 39%, summarizing documents at 38%, and editing documents at 34%.

Notably, current use cases are undoubtedly significantly limited and impacted by the security and confidentiality concerns surrounding GAI, a topic we’ll discuss later in this report. Over time, as the ethical obligations regarding GAI use become clearer and more legal software companies release secure GAI tools designed for legal professionals, we’ll undoubtedly see an increase in the use of GAI to process and analyze confidential data and documents.

We also asked respondents to share specific use cases and found that legal professionals were very creative in the ways they leveraged GAI tools to maximize productivity.

Below you'll see many different ways GAI is incorporated into various law firm tasks by the survey respondents. Hopefully, these ideas will serve as inspiration and encourage others to approach this technology with curiosity and an open mind.

HOW LEGAL PROFESSIONALS ARE USING GAI:

MARKETING

- “Marketing, scripts for videos, and post ideas for social media”
- **“Generating content for my website”**
- “Drafting marketing copy”
- “Translating web pages into multiple languages”

GENERAL RESEARCH

- “AI has replaced 70% of my use for Google. It sounds more professional and AI comes up with ideas I wouldn't have thought about.”
- “To answer general questions”

CORRESPONDENCE

- “Letters”
- **“Drafting emails”**

BRAINSTORMING

- “To create outlines of subject matter for presentations, to create art relevant to need”

WRITING ASSISTANT

- **“List of synonyms, titles for writing, etc.”**
- “I use it as a starting place only. It helps me when I'm having complete writer's block. I never rely on it as a final authority.”
- “Creating outlines for drafting”

TRIAL PREP

- “Creating examination questions”
- “Brainstorming for generating direct/cross questions”

PRACTICE/FIRM MANAGEMENT

- “Drafting job descriptions”
- “AI tool through case management software reads notices from USCIS Court and automatically inputs receipt numbers/dates/interviews/etc. into a case management system.”
- “Admin and business development projects”
- **“Intake evaluation”**
- “Document management and predictions”
- “Preparing task guides to train new employees on our systems and processes”
- “Utilize it to help with scheduling”
- **“Creating rough drafts of my firm's policies and procedures, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to complete certain tasks, and to draft checklists.”**
- “Consultation scripts and staff manuals”
- “Drafting documents for my position as Client Care Coordinator”
- “Knowledge management and database analysis”

LAW PRACTICE

- “Use it to translate for consults with good success”
- “Privilege review, PII identification, and data breach response”
- “I use GPT 4 to generate probate counterarguments to my strategies in litigation. I cannot yet trust it for legal research, but I can use it to get started.”
- **“If I am in a hurry to find a specific statute, ChatGPT is usually a reliable to locate it.”**

→ Future GAI Adoption

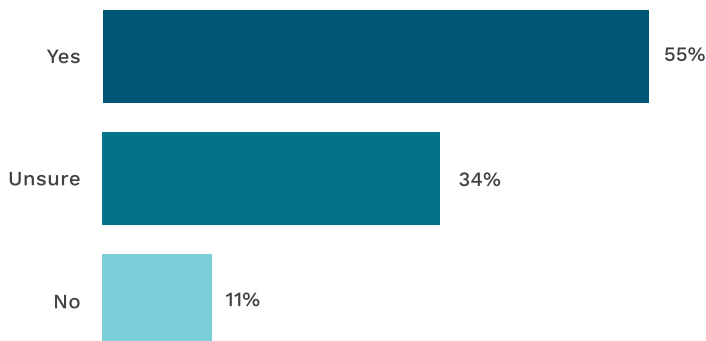
The final GAI issues we'd like to explore before moving on to other topics are 1) future adoption plans and 2) the stumbling blocks that prevent law firms from immediately jumping on the GAI bandwagon.

The legal professionals surveyed told us that although there was a prevailing interest in learning more about GAI, there was also a lot of uncertainty regarding the path to GAI implementation. The data we collected indicated that concerns about confidentiality and security were key hurdles that stood in the way of immediate investment in this technology.

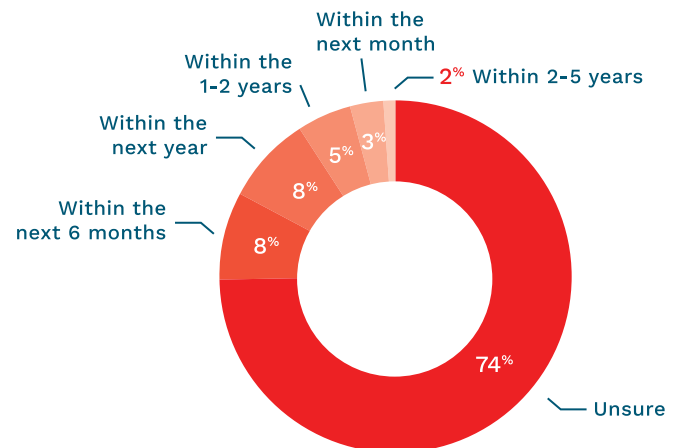
GAI Adoption Plans

Before tackling the AI adoption roadblocks, let's consider current implementation efforts. When asked about future AI adoption plans, the majority of respondents (74%) from firms that had not yet adopted AI tools into their firms told us they were unsure when their firms planned to add AI tools to their technology stack. A mere 8% shared that AI would be added within the next 6 months, and another 8% indicated AI adoption would occur within the next year.

Does your firm have plans to adopt additional generative AI tools?



When does your firm plan to adopt AI tools?



We also asked about GAI adoption plans. The data showed that for firms that had not yet adopted any AI tools, only 12% had plans to adopt GAI software. 45% of respondents were unsure what their firm's plans were, and a notable 43% reported that their firms had no immediate plans regarding GAI technologies.

In comparison, legal professionals from firms that had already integrated AI tools reported much higher rates of future AI adoption. A slight majority (55%) reported that their firms planned to adopt additional GAI tools. Only 11% had no plans in place to add more GAI technology.

The bottom line: There is a clear division when it comes to GAI adoption. A minority of firms are early adopters, fully understanding its value, and are embracing it with open arms. However, the vast majority of firms are approaching this fledgling technology with caution and a "wait and see" attitude.

A minority of firms are early adopters, fully understanding GAI's value, and embracing it with open arms.

GAI Adoption Blockers

The reason for their hesitancy? There are understandable concerns about this largely untested technology with a limited track record of implementation in the legal context. In light of the clear reticence to embrace GAI with open arms, we sought to obtain additional insight into the reasons behind the reluctance to implement GAI in law firms. We determined that across firms of all sizes, the top blockers revolved around concerns about ethical issues, trust, and the infancy of the technology,

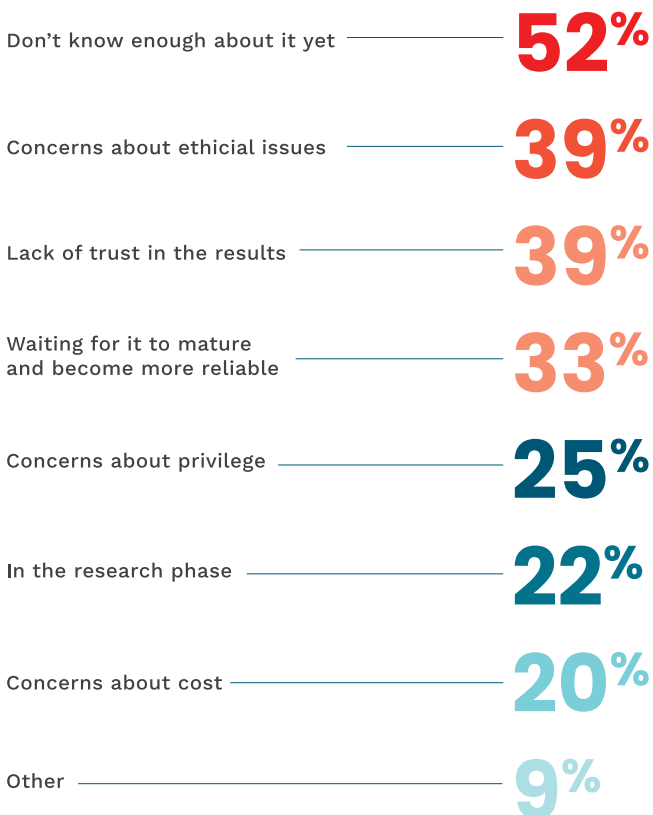
The top blocker cited was lack of knowledge about the technology, with 52% choosing that response. Concerns about ethical issues came in second at 39%, tied with 39% who didn't trust the output of these tools. Another 33% are waiting for the technology to mature, while 25% are concerned about privilege issues.

We also learned that the personal concerns of the respondents aligned with the primary hurdles cited for law firms. When we asked respondents to share their personal perspectives on the downsides of GAI, the data showed that the top three risks identified were ethical concerns and trust in the results, both at 53%, followed by concerns about liability issues (50%).

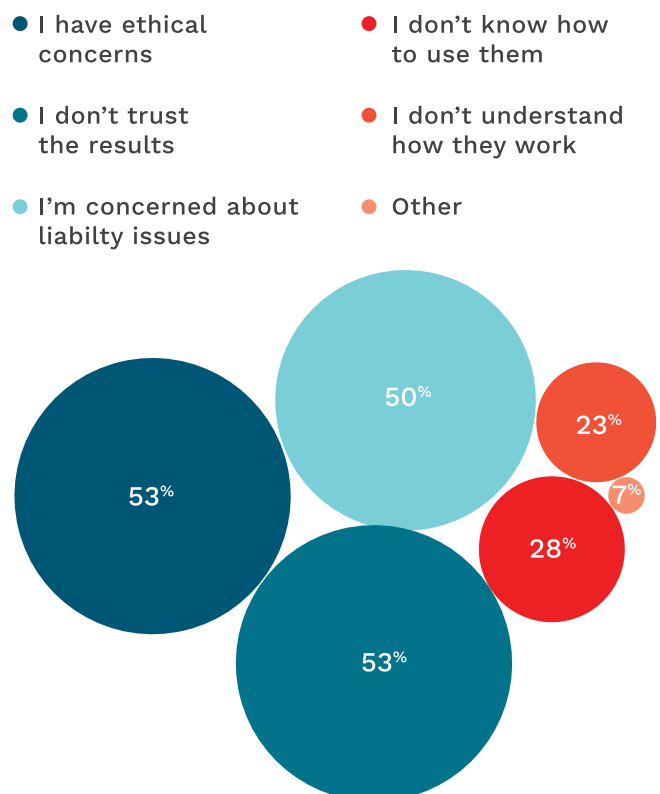
We expect that these **perceptions will undoubtedly change as more jurisdictions issue legal ethics opinions focused on providing lawyers with guidance to assist in navigating this emerging technology.**

As this occurs and GAI becomes more commonplace, reservations about GAI will decline, and most likely much more quickly than you might think, given its current rate of exponential advancement.

If your firm does not currently use generative AI technologies, what are the primary reasons?



What are the risks or disadvantages that you personally associate with the use of generative AI tools?



Last but not least, we asked for perspectives on the perceived limitations that prevented full-scale GAI adoption in law firms. The insights below offer a window into the mindset that has prevented many firms from adopting GAI at this early stage, along with the additional reasons that individual respondents are personally reluctant to use it.

WHY FIRMS AND INDIVIDUAL LAWYERS ARE HESITANT TO USE IT:

LACK OF TRUST

- “I do not trust the technology”
- “It doesn’t sound human and it makes errors. One good template can generally do better, at least for the law I practice.”
- “Certain partners are not well-versed or tech savvy, so they have a mistrust of the digital world and AI at this point. People who still keep paper calendars and don’t keep the digital calendars current with what’s in their paper calendar are not likely to be early adopters of new tools.”
- “Do not want it to have access to my info”
- “The risks are that it will fabricate things.”
- **“High potential for hiding human biases under the veil of an unaccountable algorithm”**

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS CONCERNS

- “Confidentiality concerns submitting privileged and confidential documents into a database. I would never even consider this with ChatGPT or other open-universe platform.”
- “We do not want to adopt anything that impacts ethical practices or that would harm the profession in the future.”

WAITING FOR IT TO MATURE

- “AI cannot yet adapt to the particulars of individual family law cases. And we already have document template platforms that are reliable.”
- **“I’m not sure how to integrate it into my practice yet.”**
- “Waiting for the copyright infringement issue to be sorted out”

- “Trying to identify where it can be applied in my business transaction, estate planning, and tax practice”
- “In family law, all pleadings and documents are extremely fact-specific.”
- “Feeling like it is not yet sufficiently mature to be relied upon within the tools we have tried”

WAITING FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- **“Lack of training for employees on how to use it”**
- “The firm as a whole has not issued guidance on or recommended use of GAI; however, individuals are using”

CONCERNS ABOUT ITS IMPACT

- “We do not like the idea of what AI’s impact would have on our paralegals’ and legal assistants’ confidence and abilities.”
- “I don’t need to help computers get better at replacing me in the workforce.”
- “Concerned young/inexperienced attorneys will become overly reliant on AI and not verify results”

AI CAN’T REPLACE LEGAL ACUMEN

- “AI technologies should not be used to create legal arguments - no matter how intuitive, there is no substitute for human reasoning.”
- “Lawyering is a human activity requiring analysis and making judgments by a human. No artificial “thing” should be included.”
- **“My chief concern is in serving the unique needs of clients with personalized service.”**

- While I do believe there is a role for technology to deliver such service more efficiently, my experience on the receiving end has been largely negative. I don't want that to be my clients' experience."
- "Law is an art, some things are formulaic, which can be helped by AI. But other things require intuition, critical thinking skills, and persuasiveness based on the intended audience; AI can't simulate that. Growth in the law won't come from AI, so there's no reason to become reliant upon it."

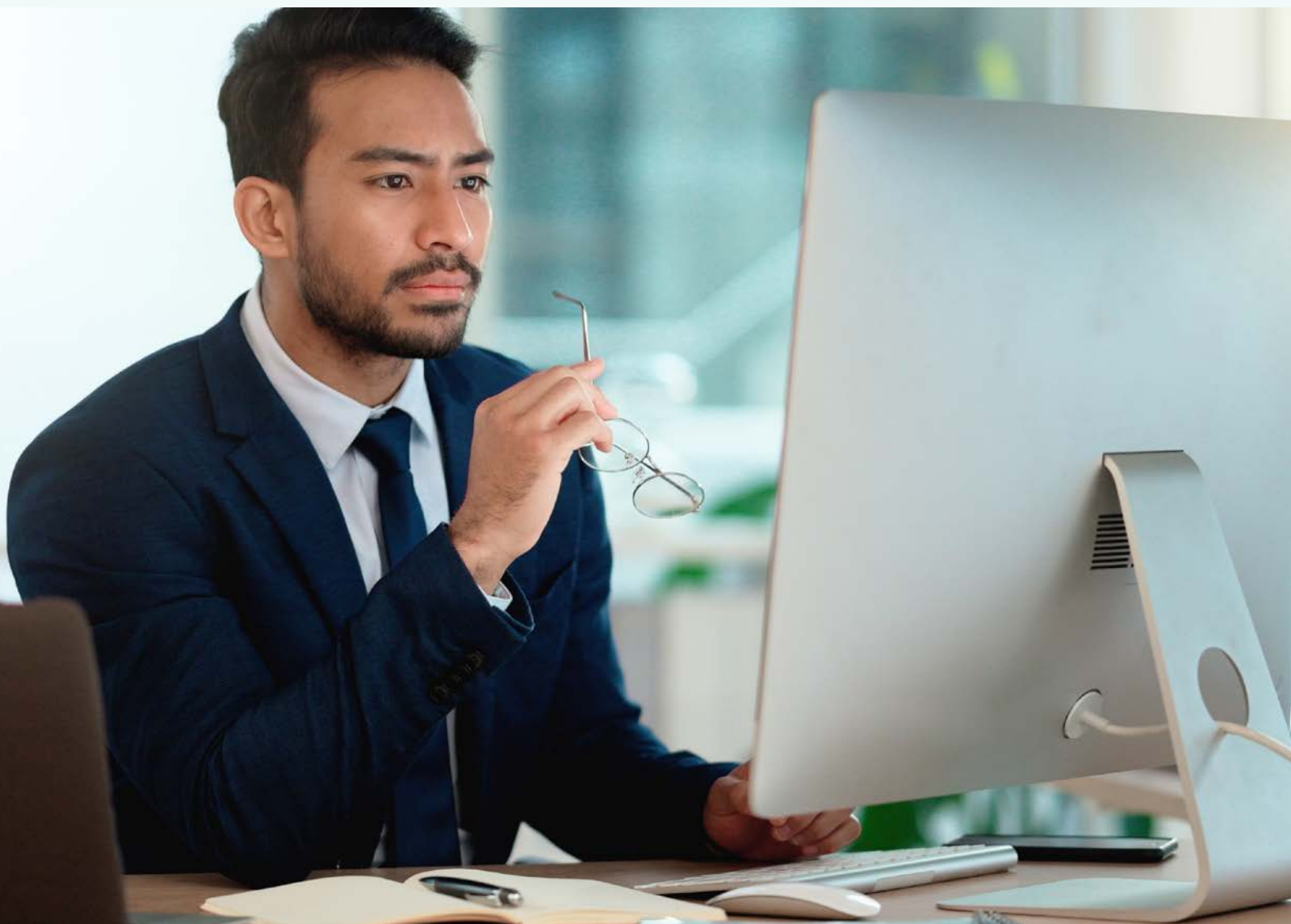
NOT NEEDED/MISC.

- "It's unreliable and unnecessary"
- **"I spend too much time trying to convince my law partner that it's not cheating."**

- "Many AI tools actually create more work by creating extra output to review. E.g., a response from a counterparty in a negotiation may be rapid, but sloppy (partly because of AI used), and this can require the use of more resources when responding, to ensure quality."

NO CONCERNS IF APPROPRIATE OVERSIGHT

- "One cannot immediately trust the results any more than one can immediately trust a paralegal's research. Used ethically, AI does not present ethical problems. There is no liability if a competent lawyer always signs off on the work product. People raising these concerns do not know what the tool is. They will be looking for a new profession soon."
- **"I don't personally have any concerns about the use of GAI tools if used with appropriate oversight."**



→ Technology Adoption and Research

Technology Adoption Blockers

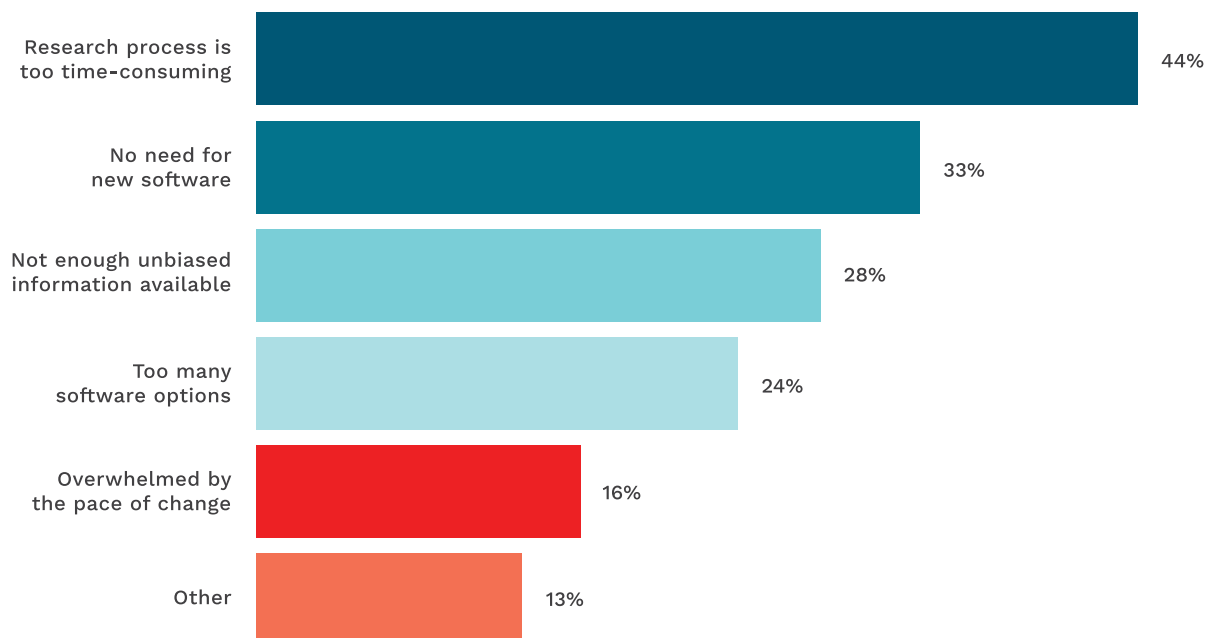
Even when law firms aren't considering GAI tools, they nevertheless encounter roadblocks when researching and implementing any type of new technology. As the respondents shared with us, there are many perceived hurdles involved in adopting new software. For some law firms, those challenges, whether real or not, prevent them from updating their firm's IT stack.

Top three blockers that impacted new software adoption: the research process is too time-consuming, no current software needs, and a lack of unbiased information.

Regardless of firm size, the top three blockers that impacted new software adoption were the same: the research process is too time-consuming, no current software needs, and a lack of unbiased information. The fact that these roadblocks were universal across firm sizes reinforces how challenging it can be to make informed technology decisions, regardless of the complexity of your firm's technology needs.

For nearly half of firms (44%), the time-consuming research process was a significant barrier to learning about and researching new software. For 33% of respondents, there was no urgent need for new software, and thus no need to learn about new options. Another 28% reported frustration with a lack of unbiased information sources, while 24% were deterred due to the sheer number of tools available. A sense of overwhelm due to the pace of change was cited by another 16%, a factor likely to be amplified over time given the rapid advancements in GAI and technology in general.

What prevents you from learning about and researching new software tools for your firm?



Technology Research Challenges

We wanted to obtain a more nuanced view of the perceptions of the various factors that prevented legal professionals from adopting new technologies. We asked about specific roadblocks encountered during the technology-buying process.

The three most significant challenges identified were choosing new software, locating trustworthy and unbiased information, and obtaining unbiased reviews of software. For each category, “not a challenge” was chosen by only 16% of respondents.

The three most significant challenges identified were choosing new software, locating trustworthy and unbiased information, and obtaining unbiased reviews of software.

Interestingly, of all the remaining roadblocks to adoption—researching technology providers and researching software options—caused the least amount of friction. 23% and 20%, respectively, noted that neither category presented a challenge.

These results suggest that legal technology buyers have less of a problem with the research process, but encounter issues when trying to make sense of the research due to a lack of trust in the sources and information provided. Those challenges, in turn, impact their ability to make informed decisions when ultimately choosing tools for implementation in their firms.

That’s the bad news. The good news? **Once firms select and transition to new software tools, they enjoy higher productivity, more streamlined communications, and increased revenue, as you’ll see in the next sections.**

However, if those tools are not in use, law firms often encounter significant workflow challenges. We asked legal professionals to identify functions that were most challenging within their firms. When interpreting these results it’s important to keep in

mind that one reason for the data showing low levels of friction encountered when solving these tasks is that, as we’ll learn below, many survey respondents’ firms have already solved the problems presented by adopting software to address the potential friction each function presents.

The legal professionals surveyed told us that eFiling was the least challenging, with 75% reporting it was not a challenge. Taking online payments was next in line as the least challenging at 70%, followed by secure texting (62%), time-tracking (55%), creating payment plans (53%), collecting consultation fees (52%), tracking court rules and deadlines (44%), getting paid (43%), law firm accounting (42%), and tracking online leads (40%).

Which functions are the least challenging for your firm?

75%

eFiling

52%

Collecting consultation fees

70%

Taking online payments

44%

Tracking court rules and deadlines

62%

Secure texting

43%

Getting paid

55%

Time-tracking

42%

Law firm accounting

53%

Creating payment plans

40%

Tracking online leads

On the flip side, while getting paid doesn't present a challenge for the majority of firms, it was the most significant challenge cited by a small number of respondents, with 15% choosing this option. Another 12% indicated that law firm accounting was a significant challenge, followed by tracking online leads (11%) and tracking court deadlines (10%).

Which functions are the most challenging for your firm?

15%

Getting paid

11%

Tracking online leads

12%

Law firm accounting

10%

Tracking court deadlines

Consider adopting legal software to solve workflow and process challenges.

So, while many firms have solved most of the key pain points addressed in this report, largely through technology adoption, some firms nevertheless struggle with those very issues. That segment may need to reassess how they approach their firms' workflows and processes and consider adopting legal software to solve those challenges.



→ Getting Paid

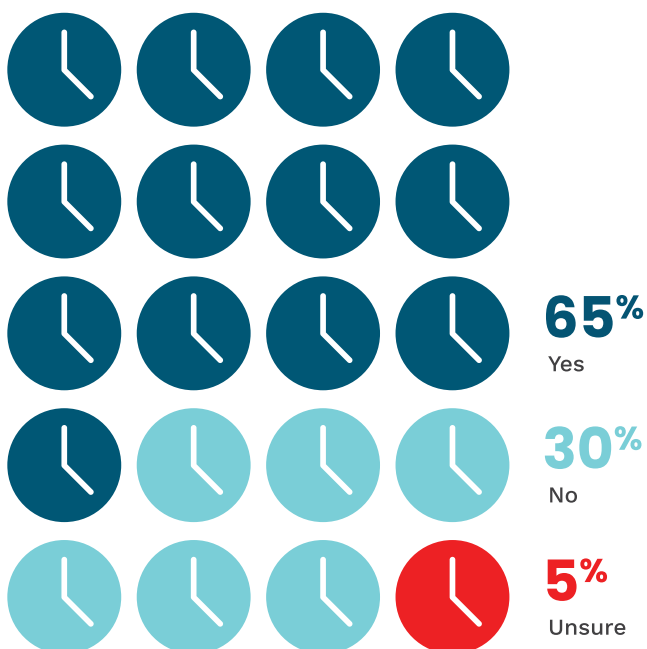
This section of our report examines the impact of software solutions on firms' profitability and how this can increase access to justice for potential clients. The survey data provides insightful perspectives on how the adoption of advanced payment software not only influences the efficiency and reliability of attorney compensation but also significantly broadens the spectrum of payment options available to clients. This, in turn, helps to bridge the gap between legal services and those who need them the most.

Online Time-Tracking Tools

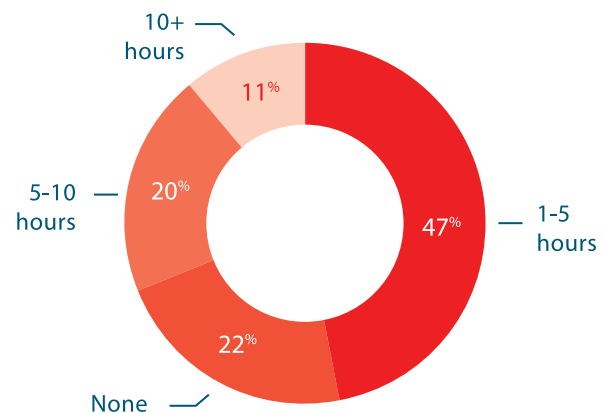
Online time-tracking software has emerged as a key tool for enhancing the efficiency and profitability of law firms. Our industry report survey data shows that a significant majority of firms (65%) have adopted it, yielding tangible results. This notable adoption rate highlights the effectiveness of this software for firms that prioritize comprehensive and accurate billing practices.

Firms that used online time-tracking software achieved compelling results, with the majority of respondents (78%) reporting that their firms captured additional billable hours each week. Nearly half (47%) reported tracking an additional 1-5 hours, followed by 20% clocking in at 5-10 hours, and 11% realizing a gain of 10 hours or more. In other words, online time-tracking tools yielded tangible results, with the majority of firms reporting the capture of additional billable hours each week. The effectiveness of this software in ensuring comprehensive and accurate billing practices is unmistakable.

Does your law firm use online time-tracking software?



If your firm uses time-tracking software, how much additional time does your firm capture each week?



PASSIVE TIME TRACKING

The adoption of passive time tracking lags behind that of traditional online time-tracking software. Passive time tracking is a valuable tool that runs in the background to track all work done on a computer or in a software program. It then provides a list of work done but not yet billed. In comparison, traditional online time-tracking tools require the user to manually input billable time as it's completed.

Our survey results showed that only 36% of those surveyed reported that their firms have this technology enabled. This relatively low adoption rate is unfortunate since passive time tracking can dramatically affect a firm's bottom line. By capturing time that would otherwise have been lost, law firms can maximize the value of legal tasks performed and ensure that clients are accurately billed for all legal work done on their behalf.

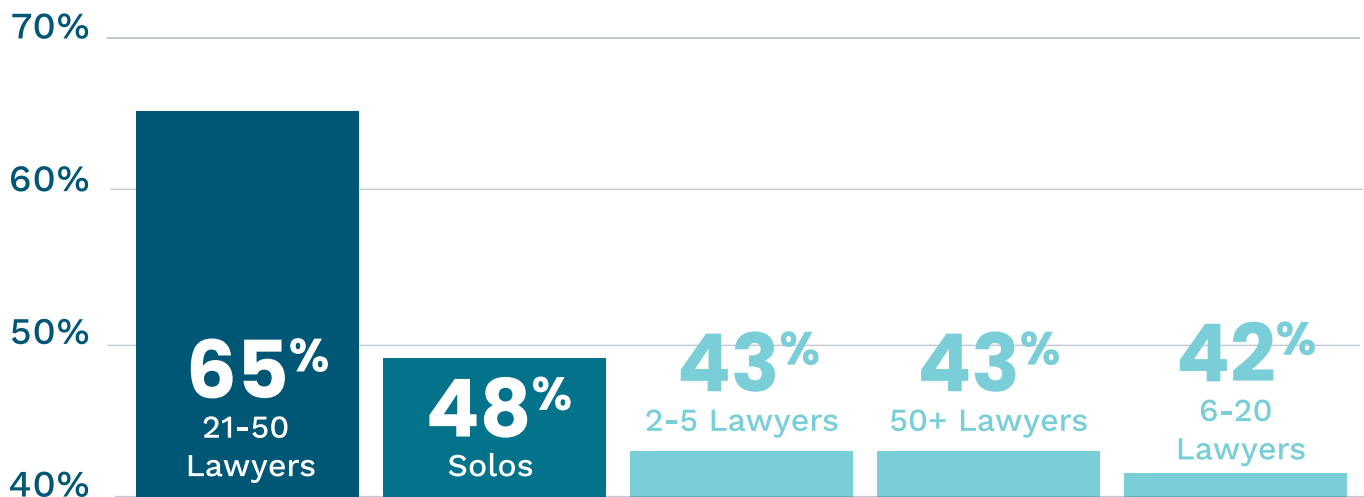
By capturing time that would otherwise have been lost, law firms can **maximize the value of legal tasks performed.**

Passive time tracking adoption is one area where there was a significant variance in usage by firm size. Law firms with 21-50 lawyers were least likely to use passive time tracking tools, with 65% sharing that their firms did not use this technology compared to 48% of solos reporting lack of use, 43% of firms with 2-5 lawyers, 42% of firms with 6-20 lawyers, and 43% of larger firm lawyers with 50+ lawyers. This variance could be attributed to several factors, including the specific needs and structures of the mid-sized firms, or perhaps a greater reliance on traditional time-tracking methods.

Firm size least likely to use passive time tracking tools

36%

reported that their firms have time-tracking technology enabled





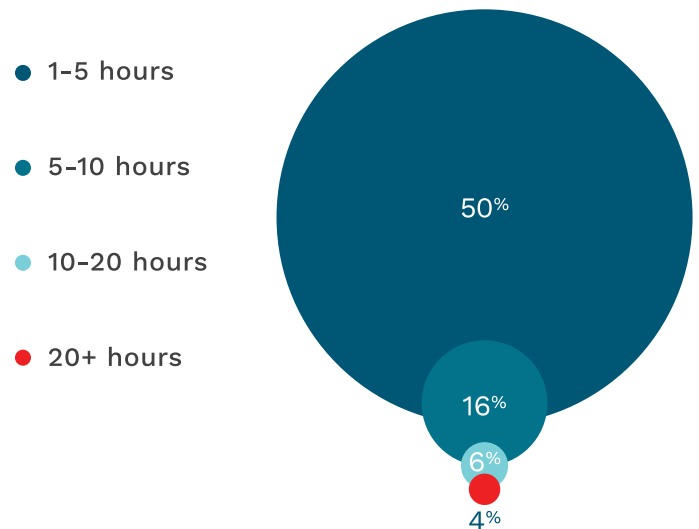
For firms that have adopted passive time tracking, the time savings are significant. 50% report capturing an additional 1-5 hours per week, and 16% logged another 5-10 hours weekly. Finally, 6% increased hourly billing by 10-20 hours and 4% by 20+ hours per week.

Further emphasizing the impact of online time-tracking, our Benchmark Report data offers a more granular view of its rewards.

When it comes to traditional online time-tracking features, our customers captured over 18 million hours over the course of the year, and legal professionals who used Smart Time Finder, the passive time-tracking tool built into MyCase, captured an additional 579,665 hours. This amounts to an additional \$22,425 in billable hours per lawyer (assuming a conservative \$330 billable hour rate).

These staggering figures underscore both the sheer volume of billable hours that might otherwise have gone unrecorded and the significant financial boon this software offers law firms. The ability to meticulously track every billable minute translates into enhanced revenue streams and operational efficiency, a testament to the financial windfalls gained from integrating these tools into law firm workflows.

If your firm uses passive time-tracking software, how much additional time does your firm capture each week?



Smart Time Finder users captured an additional

579,665

hours

\$22,425

in billable hours per lawyer

Online Payment and Accounting Tools

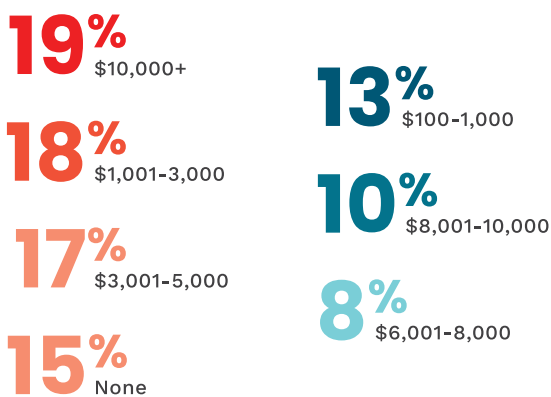
This section of the report examines the adoption and impact of digital financial tools in the legal industry, focusing on online payment methods, flexible payment plans, and advanced legal accounting software. The survey results indicate that these tools streamline transactions, enhance client satisfaction, and improve financial management within law firms. The integration of these technologies into law practices is reshaping the financial landscape of law firms, making them more efficient and client-friendly.

The survey results show that **online payment platforms are widely used in the legal industry.**

Does your law firm accept online payments via credit/debit cards?



Increase in monthly collection rates, on average



ONLINE PAYMENT SOFTWARE

The incorporation of online payment software in legal practices, particularly among smaller law firms, represents a noteworthy shift in how legal services are billed and paid for, a trend clearly evident in the data from both the results of this survey and our Benchmark Reports. Below we'll focus on the adoption of online payment tools and their impact on collection rates and payment efficiencies, especially within smaller legal practices.

The survey results show that online payment platforms are widely used in the legal industry, with 78% of respondents sharing that their firms permitted the ability to accept credit and debit cards from clients. Given the prevalence of credit use in our culture, combined with the increased uptick in contactless payments driven by the pandemic, this isn't a surprising finding.

What was notable, however, was that the survey findings indicated a pronounced likelihood that smaller law firms would incorporate online payment software into their operations. This trend is likely influenced by the client composition of these firms, which are made up of mostly individual clients rather than businesses. In contrast, larger firms often represent business clients that typically settle invoices via wire transfer or checks, whereas individual clients often prefer the convenience and immediacy of credit card payments.

Online payment platforms cater to this preference, offering a seamless and accessible method for clients to fulfill their financial obligations. The ease of use and accessibility of these systems not only align with the expectations of individual clients but also streamline the payment process by reducing administrative overhead for the firms. This payment method also increases collection rates, as borne out by the survey results. 19% of the legal professionals surveyed reported that their firms collected an additional \$10,000 each month by accepting online payments. Another 10% collected \$8,001 to \$10,000 more monthly, and 8% collected \$6,001 to \$8,000.

Data from our Benchmark Reports support the finding that online payments impact a firm's bottom line. The Benchmark data shows that our customers collected 33% more from their clients by accepting online payments, and legal bills were paid nearly four times faster by clients using online payment methods compared to those paying by cash or check. Clients are more inclined to settle their invoices promptly when presented with a straightforward and convenient online payment option.

The ease of use and accessibility of these systems not only align with the expectations of individual clients but also streamline the payment process, reducing administrative overhead for the firms. As the legal industry continues to evolve, the adoption of online payment solutions is likely to become increasingly prevalent, reflecting a broader trend toward modernization and efficiency in legal practice management.

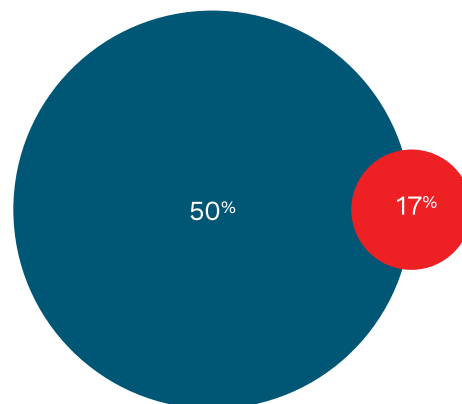
Clients are more inclined to settle their invoices promptly when presented with a **straightforward and convenient online payment option**.

ONLINE PAYMENT OF CONSULTATION FEES

Payment data from consultation appointments reinforces the value of online payments in law firms and reveals insightful trends in billing practices. According to our survey, 51% of lawyers now charge for consultations. Nearly half of lawyers still refrain from charging for initial consultations, and as you'll see below, this common practice results in a notable loss of revenue for those firms. However, firms that do require a fee during that first meeting, while also providing flexible payment options, derive clear financial increases.

A significant percentage of firms that accept online payment for initial consultations—89%—accept online payments for these services. **This high adoption rate of digital payment methods at this stage of client engagement underscores a shift towards more modern, client-friendly billing practices at all stages of representation.**

Invoice recovery rate

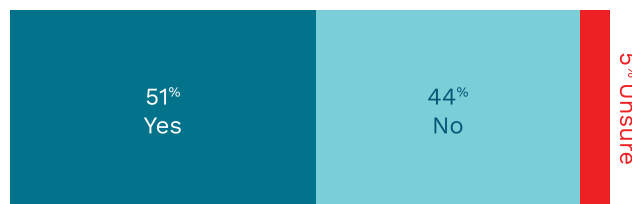


● Online payments ● Checks and cash

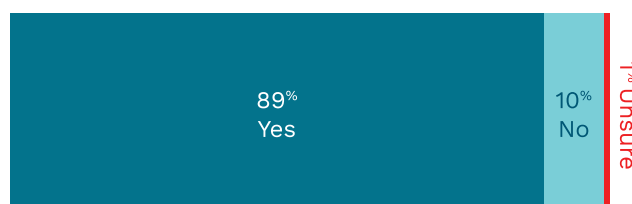
33%

Our customers collected 33% more from their clients who paid using online payments

Does your law firm charge for consultations?



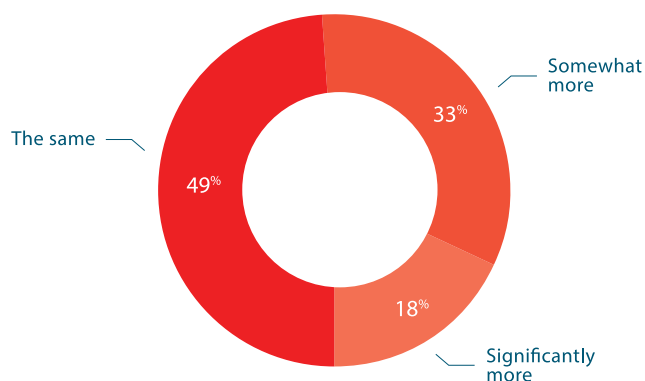
If yes, do you accept online payments via credit/debit card?



Furthermore, 51% of these lawyers report collecting higher fees as a result of accepting online payments, indicating the financial gains from this approach. This data once again showcases the advantages of offering current and prospective clients flexible payment choices. By providing them with convenient methods for the payment of legal fees, firms are more likely to be retained and clients can more easily pay their ongoing legal bills.

Supporting the survey data, findings from our Benchmark Reports provide further evidence of the growing preference for online payments. During the first half of 2023, our customers collected nearly \$17 million from online payments for consultation fees. This figure starkly contrasts with the \$2 million collected via traditional methods, such as cash or checks. This substantial difference not only demonstrates the convenience and efficiency of online transactions but also reflects a broader trend of digital adoption in the legal industry.

How much money do you collect each week for consultations compared to check or cash payments?



Consultation fees breakdown

\$16,952,753

online payment processing

\$2,064,754

collected by cash and check



PAYMENT PLANS

Another way to increase law firm revenue is to offer payment plans to clients. By offering flexible payment plans, including “Pay Later” options, law firms can meet the diverse financial needs of clients. These options not only facilitate access to legal services for a broader spectrum of clients but also ensure a steady cash flow for legal practices, so it’s no wonder that survey results show that they are on the rise in law firms.

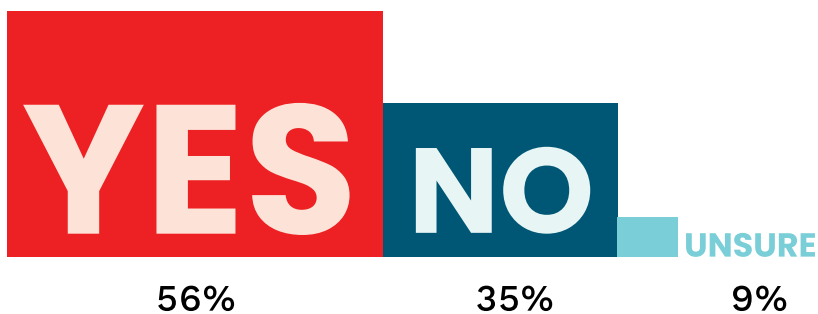
By offering flexible payment plans, including pay later options, law firms can **meet the diverse financial needs of clients.**

The data showed that 56% of law firms offer payment plans to clients, with effectiveness varying by firm size. Larger firms, with 50 or more attorneys, were less likely to offer these plans (36%), while smaller firms showed higher rates: 65% for firms with 21-50 lawyers, 60% for those with 2-5 lawyers, 55% for 6-20 lawyers, and 54% for solo practitioners. This trend suggests a correlation between firm size and the likelihood of offering payment plans, likely influenced by differing client demographics.

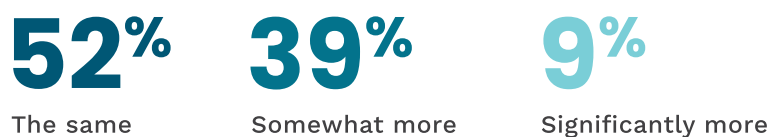
Our Benchmark Reports also provide insight into how payment plans affect cash flow and revenue. Payment plan data from MyCase showed that the average length of payment plans in MyCase was 258 days, and the average number of payment plan invoices and reminders sent to customers was 37.

If your firm doesn’t already allow clients to set up payment plans, there’s no better time than now to adopt this practice. The reason? Many firms that provide this payment option to their clients reap rewards from this choice by increasing money in the door. In fact, **our survey results showed that nearly half collected more money over the course of a case by allowing clients to set up a payment plan.**

Does your law firm set up payment plans for clients?



If yes, how much more money does your firm collect over the course of a case compared to cases where payment plans are not offered?



How payment plans affect cash flow and revenue



258

Average length of payment plans



37

Average number of invoices and reminders

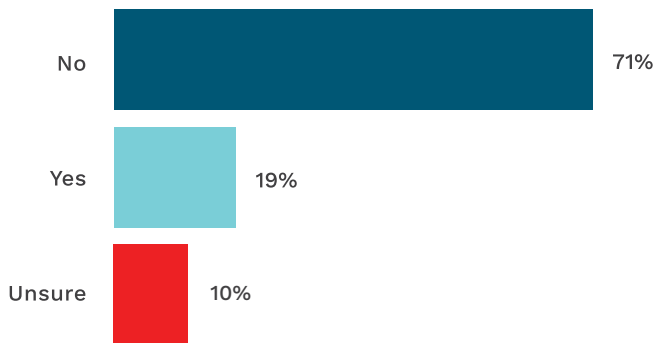
PAY LATER

Another innovative way to provide legal clients with payment flexibility is by making “Pay Later” options available. This financial model provides clients with the ability to defer the full payment of legal fees while simultaneously enabling attorneys to increase their collection rate dramatically. Under this arrangement, lawyers refer clients to a third-party lender at the start of a legal matter. Once the client’s loan is approved, the lawyer receives the entire fee upfront from the lender, with the client subsequently making regular payments over an agreed-upon period.

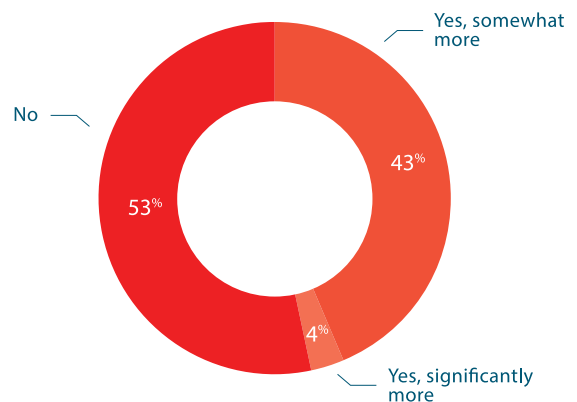
As a reference point, according to our Benchmark Reports data, the average loan term was 16 months, and the average amount loaned to clients was \$2592. Our customers receive their full legal fee within three days of a loan’s approval. **These figures underscore the practicality and appeal of this option for law firms seeking to further bridge the access to justice gap by ensuring that potential legal clients can afford legal fees.**

“Pay Later” is very common outside of the legal industry, and it is already gaining ground with law firms. 19% of survey respondents told us that their firms were already offering legal clients the ability to pay for legal fees using a “Pay Later” option. Of those, 46% reported that doing so allowed their firms to sign on more new cases. So while this is still a relatively newer way to assist potential clients in paying for legal fees, you can see that even if your firm isn’t yet offering it, some of your competitors undoubtedly already are.

Does your firm offer legal clients the ability to pay for legal fees using a “Pay Later” option?



Is your firm able to accept more cases by offering “Pay Later” options?



LEGAL ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Finally, let’s take a look at legal accounting software. Adoption of this software ensures compliance with the unique ethical regulations that govern the handling of law firm finances. In this section, we’ll examine usage rates and time-savings achieved, whether standalone or when integrated with law firm billing or law practice management software.

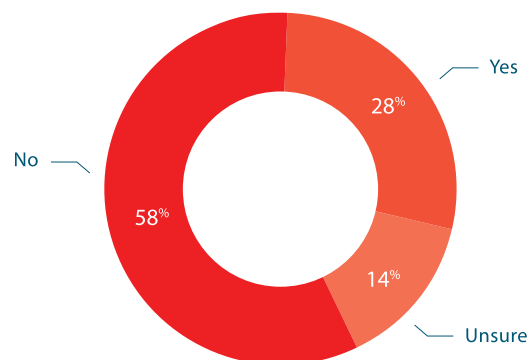
Despite its clear value, only about one-third of law firms (28%) currently utilize legal-specific accounting software. This adoption rate denotes a significant gap in law firm financial management that most likely exists due to the preferences of the professionals to whom firms outsource bookkeeping and accounting. This hypothesis is supported by data from the survey, which showed that solo and small firm lawyers who often don't employ bookkeepers due to cost constraints are less likely to use this specialized software compared to their larger counterparts. Only 20% of smaller firms with 5 or fewer lawyers reported legal accounting adoption compared to 38% of firms with 51+ attorneys.

Legal accounting software is designed to ethically handle the intricate financial operations of law firms, and its integration into broader law firm management systems streamlines financial processes, from client billing to internal accounting.

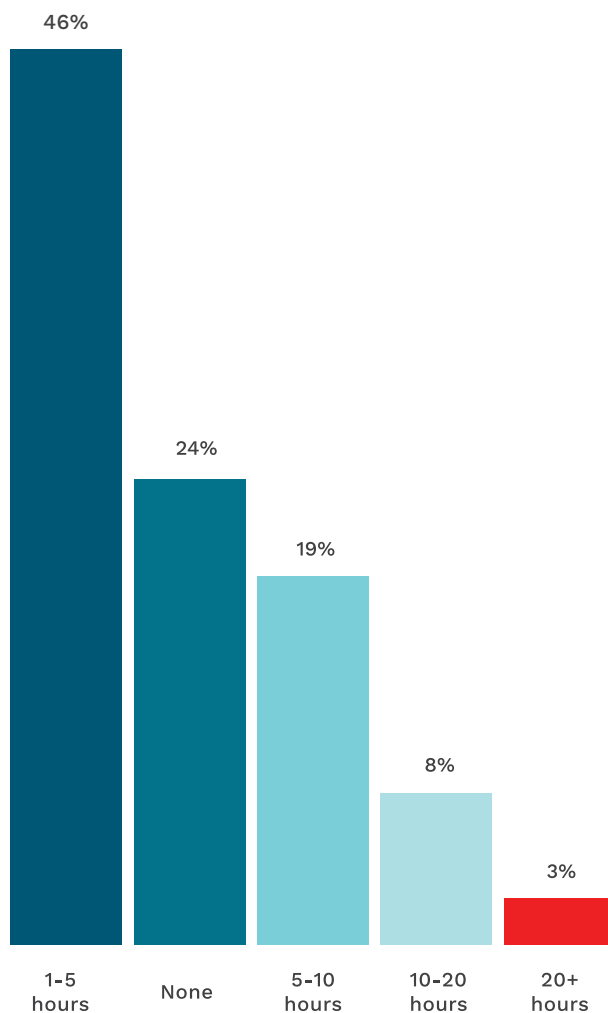
The time-savings reported by respondents were significant, with nearly half (46%) increasing efficiency each week by 1-5 hours. Another 19% saved 5-10 hours, followed by 8% gaining back 1-20 hours each week, and 3% at 20+ hours, proving that **this technology not only simplifies complex financial tasks and ensures ethical compliance, but also allows lawyers to focus more on their legal practice and less on administrative tasks.**

In conclusion, the legal industry's embrace of digital financial tools marks a significant shift towards more efficient and client-oriented practices. Online payment systems, flexible financing options, and sophisticated accounting software collectively contribute to the modernization of legal financial management, ultimately benefiting both law firms and their clients.

Does your firm use legal accounting software rather than consumer accounting software like QuickBooks?



If yes, how much time does it save each week?



→ Key Law Firm Management Software Features and Services

In this section, we explore how firms are leveraging advanced technologies, like secure texting and rules-based calendaring, while also outsourcing key functions to virtual receptionists and eFiling companies. These strategic adaptations not only enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of legal practices but also redefine traditional operational models, allowing firms to stay competitive and responsive to their clients' needs.

Essential Software Features

As firms routinely incorporate new software and outsource functions to streamline operations, the adoption of innovative tools is revamping law firm workflows. Whether it's secure texting and court rule calendar tracking applications, or eFiling and virtual receptionist services, investment in new ways of working is not only enhancing efficiency but also significantly reducing time spent on routine tasks.

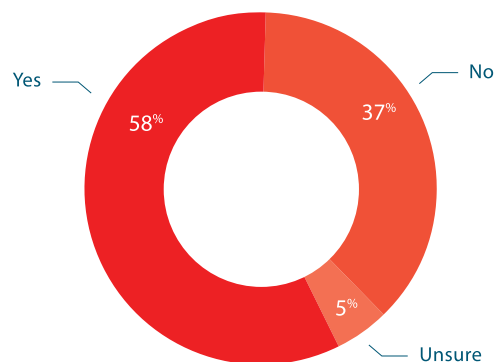
Our analysis reveals that while these tools are valuable for firms of all sizes, there is a difference in the time savings gained by larger firms (with 6 or more lawyers) compared to their smaller counterparts. In this section, we'll delve deeper into how each of these tools contributes to productivity gains. We'll also explore the correlation between time savings and firm size, providing a detailed understanding of the impact of these technologies across different-sized firms.

ONLINE TEXTING

The first technology we inquired about was online texting, a functionality sometimes built into law practice management software. With online texting, lawyers can easily communicate with clients via text without sharing their personal cell phone numbers. All text messages are associated with client matters and stored online in a centralized, easily accessible location.

We asked respondents whether their firms provided online texting, and overall 58% answered in the affirmative. Interestingly, solo and small firm law firms were significantly more likely to use this technology. Nearly half of those lawyers—45% of solo lawyers and 48% of those from firms with 2-5 attorneys—told us they used online texting tools. In comparison, approximately one-third of lawyers from firms with more than six lawyers had online texting available. Presumably, the reason for this disparity has to do with the client bases served by smaller firms, which tend to cater to individual clients. Larger firms often represent business clients who prefer other less personal methods of communication more common in the business world, such as email, Slack, and video conferencing.

Does your law firm use an online texting tool so you don't have to use your personal cellphone?





Next, we asked about the time-savings gleaned from using online text messaging. Of those who used online text messaging, nearly half (44%) saved 1-2 hours each week, 17% gained 3-5 hours, and 9% increased efficiency by 5 hours. The benefits of centralizing all law firm communications and securely storing them in one location can clearly be seen in the efficiencies gained from this one feature.

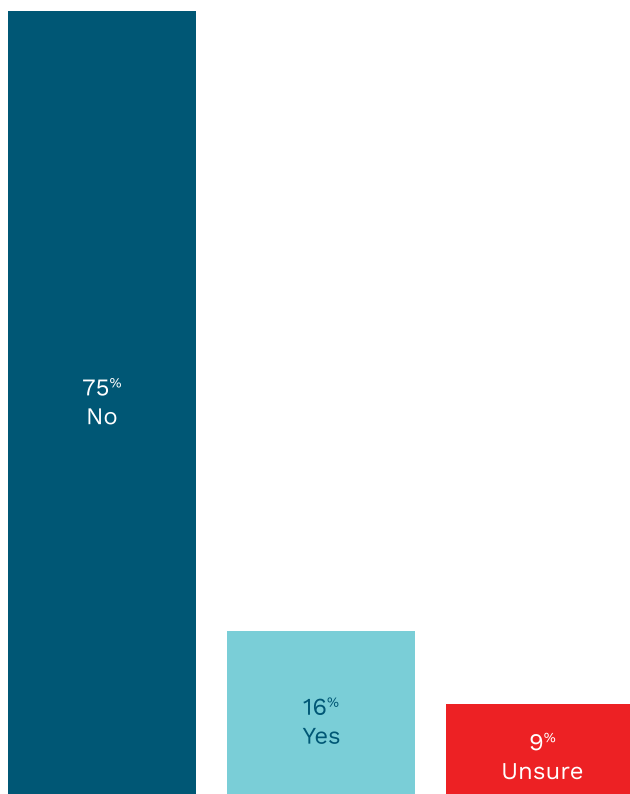
RULES-BASED CALENDARING

Another tool we asked about was rules-based calendaring. This is typically a standalone feature that integrates with your firm's calendaring or law practice management software, and it automatically applies the court rules and statutory deadlines of specific jurisdictions to the due dates of a particular matter. It removes the need to manually enter this information and automatically recalculates deadlines if key due dates change.

The data showed that 16% of those surveyed used this software. Larger firm legal professionals were more likely to do so, with 35% of lawyers from firms with 51+ attorneys reporting availability of this software, and 19% of lawyers from firms with 21-50 lawyers. The other three segments weighed in at approximately 10% usage. Larger firms often have many different litigation practice groups, in addition to much larger litigation teams for some matters, thus requiring robust software tools to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Given the reduced need for repeated manual and tedious entry of court deadlines, it's not surprising that more than half of respondents reported that their firms saved time as a result of using rules-based calendaring software. More than a third of firms saved 1-2 hours each week (37%), followed by 15% that saved 3-5 hours, and 10% that saved 5+ hours weekly.

Does your firm use rules-based calendaring software?



Essential Law Firm Services

VIRTUAL RECEPTIONISTS

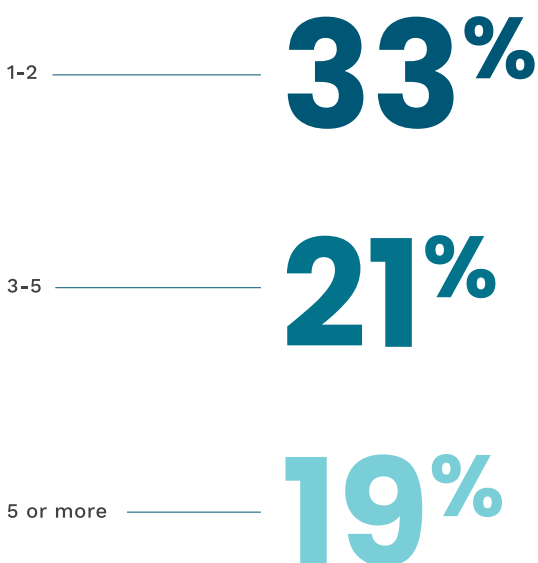
In addition to taking advantage of legal software features to streamline operations, many law firms opt to outsource key functions. Some of the easiest functions to delegate are reception and intake services. This is because in-office law firm receptionists aren't typically available to answer phone calls 24/7, so law firms may rely on website intake forms and an outsourced answering service to handle client intake. Doing so increases the firm's responsiveness to new and current clients. When these types of services integrate with a firm's lead management tools, it helps to further streamline the client intake process.

Anonymized data from our 2023 Benchmark Reports series addressed the leads gained from website lead intake forms. Our customers captured 58,395 leads from MyCase's customized lead intake forms that were embedded in their websites. Of those leads, 10,286 ultimately became law firm clients, resulting in a lead conversion rate of 18%.

Virtual receptionists are another way to increase both intake efficiency and the number of prospective client leads. Although only a small percentage (16%) of legal professionals reported that their firms relied on a virtual receptionist, those firms derived tremendous gains from doing so.

According to the survey results, 19% of firms using a virtual receptionist service in 2023 gained 5 or more leads each week, 21% acquired 3-5 leads, and 33% obtained 1-2 leads. **This data offers indisputable evidence of the benefits arising from having a virtual assistant available at any time, day or night, to respond to inquiries from prospective clients is readily apparent from this data.**

On average, how many leads a week did your firm gain by using a virtual receptionist service?



Those same firms also observed notable time efficiencies by incorporating the use of a virtual receptionist service to handle leads from legal clients. Approximately 23% reported a reduction exceeding 10 hours monthly. Another 20% experienced 6-10 hours saved each month, while 43% saw an efficiency increase of 1-5 hours. Overall, the integration of a virtual receptionist service significantly enhanced lead acquisition and operational efficiency for these law firms, demonstrating its effectiveness for both client engagement and time management.

eFILING INTEGRATION

Another outsourced function that we inquired about was eFiling services. During the pandemic, eFiling was increasingly relied upon due to social distancing requirements. As a result, it is now a commonplace occurrence and is sometimes even a requirement in many jurisdictions.

The increase in eFiling rates was apparent in the results of our survey. The vast majority of legal professionals (91%) reported that their firms now have the ability to eFile. The data also established the advantage of eFiling compared to the more traditional method of filing paper pleadings with the court. Most eFiling law firms saved time as a result. 34% reported a 1-2 hour weekly efficiency increase, followed by 27% coming in at 3-5 hours, and 26% saving 5 or more hours each week.

That's the good news. The bad news is that although eFiling is on the rise, court websites can be outdated and clunky, which significantly complicates the eFiling process. For that reason, **more firms are choosing to outsource this often arduous and confusing task to companies that provide modern web-based interfaces that often integrate with law practice management software.** This is another example of how outsourcing can improve workflow efficiency for firms.

→ Conclusion

The survey data and subsequent analysis paint a vivid picture of an industry at the cusp of a significant transformation, driven by advancements in AI and GAI, in step with evolving practices in legal billing, software adoption, and outsourcing services. **The adoption of these technologies is not only streamlining legal processes but also giving rise to new avenues for innovative legal services and client interactions.**

The increasing adoption of online payment tools and flexible payment options, such as payment plans and the “Pay Later” model, indicates a **movement towards more client-centric and efficient billing practices.**

In the midst of these technological advancements, there has been a marked shift in payment methods and financial management approaches within law firms. The increasing adoption of online payment tools and flexible payment options, such as payment plans and the “Pay Later” model, indicates a movement towards more client-centric and efficient billing practices.



Also evident is the growing reliance on specialized legal software, particularly in areas such as legal accounting and rules-based calendaring, to ensure compliance with ethical standards and court deadlines. However, the lower adoption rate of this software, especially among solo practitioners, suggests a need for increased awareness and accessibility of these tools.

The trend towards outsourcing services, such as virtual receptionists and eFiling, reflects a broader move towards efficiency and specialization within the industry. These services allow law firms to focus more on their core legal activities while ensuring that burdensome and time-consuming administrative tasks are handled effectively.

Overall, the practice of law is at a pivotal juncture, with AI and legal cloud technologies playing a key role in shaping its future. The insights from the survey indicate there is a growing need for legal professionals to embrace technological advancements that enhance efficiency, improve client services, and ensure competitive footing. A proactive approach toward technology adoption and a commitment to lifelong learning will be essential for legal practitioners to thrive in the midst of rapid change.

A proactive approach toward technology adoption and a commitment to lifelong learning will be **essential for legal practitioners to thrive in the midst of rapid change.**



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