THE LEGAL AI ROI GUIDE FOR LAW FIRMS

How law firms can turn AI adoption into measurable business impact.

Contents

A structured path from ROI fundamentals to firm-wide implementation and client acquisition.

6 SECTIONS | 26 PAGES | LEGAL AI ROI GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Legal AI Is No Longer Theoretical.

AI is already changing how law firms research, draft, review information, serve clients, and manage their businesses. The opportunity goes beyond simply completing tasks faster.

What ROI Means for Legal AI

Time saved is an important starting point — but the real value for law firms comes when that efficiency translates into greater capacity, stronger margins, faster responses, and more time for high-value work.

REVENUE

Greater efficiency can give lawyers more capacity for billable work and allow firms to respond faster to revenue-generating opportunities.

PROFITABILITY

When repetitive and time-intensive tasks can be completed faster, firms can reduce non-billable effort and improve leverage on fixed-fee matters.

TALENT

By accelerating first drafts, research, matter-context retrieval, and repetitive review workflows, AI allows lawyers to spend more time on strategic and higher-value work.

The goal isn't simply to save time.
It's to turn that time into business value.

WHY ROI FOR LEGAL AI MATTERS NOW

The Business Case for Legal AI Is Becoming Impossible to Ignore.

Law firms are navigating increasing pricing pressure, growing client expectations for speed, and competition on both cost and quality — often with limited resources. Generative AI represents a significant opportunity.

STAKEHOLDERS DON'T WANT TO KNOW	"What can AI do?"
THEY INCREASINGLY WANT TO KNOW	**"What results can AI deliver?"**

For those championing AI inside their firms, feature lists aren't enough. A successful AI strategy requires a clear and defensible business case.

FOR LAW FIRMS, ROI ULTIMATELY COMES DOWN TO THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE:

MORE WORK + HIGHER-QUALITY WORK + IN LESS TIME

The original guide frames ROI around increasing output per lawyer while maintaining or improving quality.

WHY ROI FOR LEGAL AI MATTERS NOW

A Framework to Quantify Time Saved

Time savings are one of the clearest starting points for evaluating the potential ROI of Legal AI. Research and customer data presented in the original guide indicate:

TYPICAL USERS

15–25 HRS

saved per month

POWER USERS

30–50+ HRS

saved per month

depending on role and matter mix.

But efficiency alone isn't the end goal. Time savings become valuable when firms use that additional capacity to:

- → Increase matter capacity
- → Accelerate client delivery
- → Improve margins
- → Shift lawyers toward higher-value work

Results naturally vary depending on practice mix, AI access, workflow design, and integration depth.

PROVEN ROI LEVERS FOR LAW FIRMS

Time Saved Is Only the Starting Point.

Real ROI happens when law firms turn saved time into economic impact. When lawyers can accelerate repetitive tasks, they have more capacity to focus on strategic work and improve client outcomes.

FOR FIRMS, RECLAIMED TIME CAN TRANSLATE INTO:

01

Additional Matter Capacity

Take on more work without proportionally increasing headcount.

02

Faster Client Response

Respond to client requests and opportunities more quickly.

03

Greater Revenue Capacity

Create more room for billable and strategic work.

04

Better Margins

Reduce the amount of manual effort required to deliver the same result.

This follows the original guide's distinction between simply saving time and converting that time into additional capacity, faster turnaround, or work that otherwise might have been declined or delayed.

PROVEN ROI LEVERS FOR LAW FIRMS

6 Ways Legal AI Can Create Business Value

01 REVENUE WON & RETAINED

LEVER **Faster response times**

Faster research, analysis, and drafting can help firms respond more quickly to RFPs, urgent client requests, and new business opportunities.

02 UTILIZATION IMPROVEMENT

LEVER **Less non-billable time**

Reducing repetitive manual work allows lawyers to spend a greater percentage of their day on valuable client work.

03 CLIENT SERVICE

LEVER **Faster turnaround**

Greater throughput can improve responsiveness and increase the number of matters a team can manage.

04 MARGIN IMPROVEMENT

LEVER **Lower delivery cost**

Efficiency becomes particularly valuable when firms operate on fixed-fee or alternative-fee arrangements.

05 TALENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

LEVER **More meaningful work**

Reducing repetitive tasks allows associates and other legal professionals to focus on work that requires judgment and expertise.

06 PARTNER LEVERAGE

LEVER **More strategic time**

AI can reduce time spent on lower-value tasks and allow partners to focus more heavily on strategy, clients, and business development.

PROVEN ROI LEVERS FOR LAW FIRMS

Turning Inspiration Into Adoption

Real ROI from Legal AI comes from moving beyond broad enthusiasm toward focused execution. The strongest opportunities aren't necessarily isolated tasks. They're repeatable, high-impact workflows where AI can materially change how legal work is delivered.

Leading teams look for situations where:

Time Saved + **Quality Improved** + **Speed Gained** =

Greater Client Value

Instead of deploying AI everywhere at once, firms can identify workflows where improvements can be clearly measured. Litigation is one example.

From intake through appeal, AI can support lawyers as they analyze records, organize facts, develop arguments, and prepare legal work.

COMING UP — MANAGING A CASE FROM INTAKE TO APPEAL

01 Initial Case Assessment

02 Discovery & Fact Development

03 Briefing & Motion Practice

04 Trial Preparation & Presentation

05 Post-Trial & Appeals

MANAGING A CASE FROM INTAKE TO APPEAL

How Litigation Teams Can Use Legal AI

01

INITIAL CASE ASSESSMENT

Early Case Theory & Chronology Development

AI can help synthesize client materials, pleadings, and early evidence into structured summaries and chronologies. This can help lawyers surface legal issues, potential defenses, and strategic leverage points earlier.

02

DISCOVERY & FACT DEVELOPMENT

Discovery Drafting & Deposition Preparation

Teams can use AI to assist with discovery requests, objections, responses, deposition outlines, and transcript summaries.

03

BRIEFING & MOTION PRACTICE

Motion Drafting & Argument Development

AI can accelerate initial drafting while helping lawyers explore arguments, identify potential weaknesses, and consider questions that may arise from opposing counsel or the court.

MANAGING A CASE FROM INTAKE TO APPEAL

From Trial Preparation to Appeal

04

TRIAL PREPARATION & PRESENTATION

Cross-Examination & Evidentiary Analysis

Legal AI can assist lawyers in developing cross-examination questions using materials such as:

EXPERT REPORTS | DEPOSITION TESTIMONY | EVIDENTIARY MATERIALS

It can also help surface documents related to specific factual or legal assertions as trial strategy develops.

05

POST-TRIAL & APPEALS

Trial Record Analysis & Appellate Preparation

AI can help teams organize large trial records around potential appellate issues. That can include:

TESTIMONY | EXHIBITS | RULINGS | RELEVANT EVIDENCE

The objective is to reduce manual organization and support faster development of appellate arguments.

LEGAL AI IN PRACTICE

Embedding Legal AI at Firm Scale

Implementing Legal AI successfully requires more than giving lawyers access to another piece of software. The technology needs to become part of everyday legal workflows.

AT FIRM SCALE, THE GOAL IS TO REDUCE REPETITIVE WORK WHILE GIVING LAWYERS MORE TIME FOR:

- **Strategic Analysis**
- **Client Advice**
- **High-Value Legal Work**
- **Business Development**

A successful implementation can create a foundation for long-term productivity and competitiveness.

Key Indicators to Track

Daily active usage	*Are lawyers actually incorporating AI into their work?*
Power-user adoption	*Which lawyers are developing advanced AI workflows?*
Time saved	*Where are the largest efficiency gains appearing?*
Workflow penetration	*Which practice areas are benefiting most?*
Expansion	*Are successful pilots translating into wider adoption?*

LEGAL AI IN PRACTICE

Boutique Scale. Measurable Efficiency.

Legal AI isn't valuable only for the world's largest law firms. For boutique and smaller firms, efficiency can be even more important. Lean, partner-led teams often need to handle complex matters while operating with limited resources.

LEGAL AI CAN HELP THESE FIRMS:

01

Reduce Repetitive Work

Spend less time on routine and data-heavy tasks.

02

Accelerate Document Review

Process and analyze information faster.

03

Improve Turnaround

Complete complex analyses more quickly.

04

Create Partner Capacity

Shift valuable partner time toward:

STRATEGY · ADVOCACY · CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS · BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

For lean firms, efficiency can translate directly into greater capacity — without immediately expanding headcount.

PROOF POINT

Time Saved → Business Value

Consider a hypothetical litigation team of:

5 Lawyers
Litigation team size

30 hrs
Saved per lawyer, per month

50%
Of saved time reallocated to billable work

15 hrs × 5 lawyers = **75 Billable Hours**

75 hrs × $400 blended rate = **$30,000 / Month**

BILLABLE VALUE CREATED, VS. ILLUSTRATIVE LICENSE COST

$30,000
BILLABLE VALUE / MONTH

÷

$1,500
(5 USERS x $300)

20× RETURN

BASED ON TIME SAVINGS ALONE

This illustrative U.S.-dollar example is provided for planning purposes only and should not be treated as pricing guidance or a guaranteed return.

ROI IS A CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Legal AI Doesn't Create ROI on Its Own.

Technology is only part of the equation. Turning experimentation into lasting business impact requires a thoughtful and structured rollout.

FIRMS SEEKING STRONGER ROI SHOULD TREAT AI ADOPTION AS A COMMERCIAL INITIATIVE, CONNECTING IMPLEMENTATION WITH:

01

Pricing Models

How does greater efficiency affect fixed-fee and hourly work?

02

Capacity Constraints

Where could additional lawyer capacity create the most value?

03

Client Demand

Where are clients demanding greater speed, responsiveness, or efficiency?

04

High-Value Use Cases

Which workflows provide the clearest opportunity for measurable improvement?

The process starts with experimentation.
But it shouldn't end there.

EARLY ENGAGEMENT BUILDS MOMENTUM

Start With a Targeted Pilot

A well-designed pilot allows legal teams to identify where AI can create meaningful value before expanding adoption. It creates room for experimentation while generating early wins that can build internal momentum.

WHAT STRONG PILOTS INCLUDE

01 A high-impact, high-volume use case

02 Alignment with one or more measurable KPIs

03 Engaged users across roles and levels

04 Clear expectations for participants

05 Defined pre- and post-pilot benchmarks

06 Training, playbooks, usage targets, and implementation support

WHY IT MATTERS FOR ROI

A successful pilot doesn't simply prove that the technology works.

It Defines What Success Looks Like.

And provides the evidence needed to decide where to expand next.

SCALING WITH CONFIDENCE

Enablement That Works

A pilot is only the beginning. To realize the full value of Legal AI, firms need to turn initial adoption into consistent usage.

EFFECTIVE ENABLEMENT CAN INCLUDE

01

Role-Specific Training

Training designed around the work lawyers actually perform.

02

Workflow-Specific Playbooks

Clear examples showing how AI fits into specific practice areas.

03

Internal Rollout Support

Processes for expanding adoption across offices, teams, and practice groups.

04

Usage & Performance Reporting

Visibility into adoption and results for firm leadership.

THE ENGINE BEHIND SCALED ROI — POWER USERS

One of the strongest indicators of successful AI adoption is the emergence of power users. Research cited in the original guide indicates approximately:

20–30 %

OF LAWYERS CAN DEVELOP INTO POWER USERS

37 HRS

SAVED PER MONTH FOR THESE USERS

Power users don't simply use AI more frequently. They redesign workflows around it — using AI earlier in the process to structure thinking, test arguments, and reduce downstream rework.

The 20–30% and 37-hour figures come from RSGI research presented in the source material.

CONNECTED LEGAL AI

One Platform. Fully Contextualized.

Legal work happens across:

EMAILS | DOCUMENTS | PRECEDENT | CASE FILES | CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS | RESEARCH

When these systems are fragmented, context can get lost and collaboration becomes more difficult. A connected Legal AI environment should help lawyers work across existing systems while maintaining relevant matter context.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR ROI

- ✓ Less wasted time
- ✓ Fewer disconnected workflows
- ✓ Better client outcomes
- ✓ Stronger collaboration

SECURITY BY DESIGN

- ✓ Data privacy
- ✓ Secure permissions
- ✓ Information barriers
- ✓ Controlled collaboration
- ✓ Enterprise-grade security

Trust and security are particularly important when AI is being used for confidential legal work.

05 - AI VISIBILITY & CLIENT ACQUISITION

FROM LEGAL AI TO CLIENT ACQUISITION

THE CLIENT DISCOVERY SHIFT

How Prospective Clients Search for Lawyers Now

A legal need often becomes a search before it becomes a phone call. Google Search and Maps remain important, but clients can also use AI assistants and AI-generated search experiences to ask detailed questions, compare options, and build a shortlist.

01

LEGAL NEED

A problem creates urgency.

02

INTENT-RICH QUESTION

The client describes the situation.

03

SEARCH + AI DISCOVERY

Systems surface possible answers and firms.

04

TRUST + COMPARISON

Expertise, location, and reputation are reviewed.

05

CONSULTATION

The client calls, submits a form, or books.

EXAMPLES OF HIGH-INTENT QUESTIONS

- "Who is the best immigration lawyer near me?"
- "Which attorney handles complex custody cases in my city?"
- "Who should I call after a serious car accident?"

THE MOMENT OF CHOICE

The opportunity is not to be everywhere. It is to be visible, relevant, and credible when the client is deciding whom to contact.

Sources: OpenAI ChatGPT Search; Google Search Central.

ILLUSTRATIVE AI SEARCH EXPERIENCE

What an AI-Assisted Search Can Look Like

A prospective client can describe the legal problem in natural language and receive a shortlist before visiting a law firm's website.

AI SEARCH ASSISTANT

ILLUSTRATIVE

YOU

Who are the best personal injury attorneys near me?

AI

AI RESPONSE

Here are three fictional firms that appear relevant based on practice focus, local information, and public web sources:

01 **Harbor & Stone Injury Law**

Personal injury | Local office | Car-accident focus

WEBSITE LOCAL SOURCE

02 **Westbridge Legal Group**

Personal injury | Trial-focused content | Strong reviews

WEBSITE LOCAL SOURCE

03 **Summit Trial Attorneys**

Personal injury | Local FAQs | Consistent firm information

WEBSITE LOCAL SOURCE

Results can change by location, wording, available sources, and time.

CONVERSATIONAL INTENT

The client explains the need in a complete question.

MULTIPLE SOURCES

The response can reference websites, profiles, and third parties.

SHORTLIST FIRST

Comparison can begin before the first website visit.

Illustrative mockup only. Firm names and results shown above are fictional.

HOW AI-ASSISTED SEARCH WORKS

A Recommendation Is Built From Available Evidence

AI-assisted search does not rely on one universal directory or ranking formula. Depending on the question, a system may use search indexes, law firm websites, local listings, third-party pages, and current web sources to assemble an answer.

01 **CRAWL & INDEX**

Can search engines and AI search bots access the firm's pages and important text?

02 **UNDERSTAND**

Are practice areas, locations, attorney credentials, and services explained clearly?

03 **CORROBORATE**

Do reviews, directories, associations, media, and other credible pages support the firm's claims?

04 **MATCH TO INTENT**

Does the available evidence fit the user's legal need, location, and decision criteria?

IMPORTANT

There is no guaranteed way to earn an organic AI recommendation. Different systems use different sources and signals, and their results can change as the web and the query change.

OPENAI SEARCH

Websites that block OAI-SearchBot are not eligible to appear as cited sources in ChatGPT search answers.

GOOGLE LOCAL

Google says local results are mainly based on relevance, distance, and prominence.

Sources: OpenAI crawler documentation; Google Search Central; Google Business Profile Help.

VISIBLE. RELEVANT. CREDIBLE.

What Strengthens Attorney Visibility

The strongest visibility is usually built across several connected signals. The goal is to make the firm's expertise easy for people and search systems to find, understand, and verify.

01 CLEAR PRACTICE-AREA EXPERTISE

Helpful pages, attorney bios, FAQs, and original insight that answer real client questions.

02 LOCAL RELEVANCE

Accurate business information, appropriate categories, locations, and content tied to the market served.

03 REPUTATION & TRUST

Authentic reviews, ratings, credentials, and consistent third-party references.

04 TECHNICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Crawlable text, clear internal links, a strong page experience, and accurate structured data.

05 AUTHORITY BEYOND THE WEBSITE

Credible directories, professional associations, media citations, and relevant links.

06 ACCURACY & CONSISTENCY

Current attorney, office, service, and contact information across the web.

A CUMULATIVE ADVANTAGE

No single signal guarantees a recommendation. Visibility grows when clear information, local relevance, reputation, and authority reinforce one another.

Sources: Google Search Central; Google Business Profile Help; Bing Webmaster guidance.

FROM DISCOVERY TO BUSINESS VALUE

How AI Visibility Can Become Signed Cases

Visibility is valuable when it creates qualified opportunities. The complete path should be measured from the moment a firm appears in search through consultation, intake, and the signed matter.

AI / SEARCH VISIBILITY > **RELEVANT VISIT OR CALL** > **QUALIFIED INQUIRY** > **CONSULTATION** > **SIGNED CASE**

ILLUSTRATIVE MONTHLY CASE FLOW

20	12	9	3
QUALIFIED INQUIRIES	CONSULTATIONS BOOKED AT A 60% BOOKING RATE	CONSULTATIONS ATTENDED AT A 75% SHOW RATE	NEW MATTERS AT A 33% SIGN RATE

3 new matters x $10,000 average matter value = $30,000 in potential matter value

VISIBILITY

AI citations and mentions
Search and Maps coverage
High-intent query visibility

CONVERSION

Qualified inquiries
Booking and show rates
Signed-case rate

ECONOMICS

Cost per qualified inquiry
Client acquisition cost
Expected matter value

Visibility creates opportunity. Intake and follow-up determine how much of it becomes revenue.

Illustrative scenario only. Actual results vary by practice area, market, intake performance, case value, and competitive conditions.

06 - CONCLUSION

FROM AI ADOPTION TO MEASURABLE BUSINESS IMPACT

CONCLUSION

From Proven ROI to Firm-Wide Impact

The potential value of Legal AI extends beyond simply saving hours. The broader opportunity includes:

Greater Capacity

Enable lawyers to handle more valuable work.

Stronger Margins

Reduce unnecessary manual effort and improve leverage.

Better Client Delivery

Respond faster and provide more efficient service.

Client Acquisition

Increase visibility and create more qualified opportunities.

MORE STRATEGIC LAWYER TIME

Move valuable lawyer and partner time toward work that requires judgment, relationships, and expertise.

The firms positioned to capture the greatest value from AI will be those that think strategically:

- **Deploy it where it matters.**
- **Measure the results.**
- **Expand adoption thoughtfully.**
- **Enable lawyers to produce higher-quality work, faster.**

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Start Scoping AI ROI for Your Firm

Before implementing or expanding Legal AI, ask:

01 **What are your firm's top business priorities?**
Could AI support profitability, growth, capacity, or client acquisition?

02 **Which practice areas or workflows should you focus on first?**
Transactional work? Litigation? Research? Client onboarding?

03 **Where could your firm improve competitiveness or client delivery?**
Look for high-volume, repetitive, or time-sensitive workflows.

04 **What would meaningful improvement look like?**
Higher matter throughput? Fewer write-offs? Faster turnaround? More partner capacity?

05 **What pain points are slowing your team down today?**
Identify the work consuming valuable lawyer time without creating proportional client value.

AI ROI can also be measured through visibility, qualified inquiries, consultations, and signed cases.

TURN LEGAL AI INTO MEASURABLE BUSINESS VALUE.