



## **Building an Agile Legal Department**

**Law Department Management**

**Technology, Privacy, and eCommerce**

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Remote work has become such an integral part of our daily lives that it is difficult for many people to imagine a world without it.

The foundations of remote work include:

- Communication tools for messaging and video conferencing;
  - Collaboration tools to facilitate file sharing, project management, and document cooperation;
  - Security and remote access tools for virtual private network software (VPN) and antivirus software; and
  - Productivity tools to help track time and manage tasks.

The new tools and methods of working have changed how legal work is completed. They have also shifted how legal departments manage the needs, perspectives, and skills of legal professionals.



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The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to change the way they operate; some temporarily and others for the long term. Now is the time to evaluate the needs of your legal department to ensure it is ready for the future of work.

## Gaining efficiency through technology

The pandemic has challenged us to adapt to new ways of living and working, showing that we can overcome difficult circumstances with technology's help. Now as then, legal departments are faced with increasing and complex regulation, business uncertainty, and budgetary pressures to deliver legal services more efficiently.

Two-thirds of [CLOs believe industry-specific regulations will pose the biggest legal challenges](#) in 2023. The biggest part of the legal department's spend is internal staff and outside counsel, with

- 44 percent of companies spending more than US\$10 million dollars on outside counsel and
- 22 percent spending more than US\$10 million dollars on internal staff in 2022.

Tools and technology can recognize and create efficiencies in processes and help legal departments organize their work in a more cost-efficient manner.

Two examples include:

- **Automation:** Technology to automate routine tasks and processes, such as document management, contract review, and billing.
- **Knowledge management:** Tools to store and organize legal documents and information, making it easier for staff to find and access the information they need.



Technology can be beneficial to lawyers by improving efficiency, saving time, and alleviating stress.  
Andrey\_Popov / Shutterstock.com

## Gaining efficiency through people

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The legal profession involves the application of complex laws, regulations, and principles to specific situations and issues. This requires an analytical understanding of relevant legal principles and how they apply to the specific facts and circumstances at hand. Further, lawyers must also be able to communicate effectively with clients and other stakeholders, and to advocate on behalf of their clients in a variety of settings.



Lawyers must possess the ability to effectively communicate to ensure others have a better understanding of difficult legal information. fizkes / *Shutterstock.com*

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Leaders who wish to achieve efficiencies, create team cohesion, and foster productivity in the future, must implement a productivity plan centered on people and objectives and key results — not micromanagement. This opens the door for the adoption of new working methods, including short-term legal support for an in-house legal department.





Micro-managing can be detrimental to a company if staff do not feel trusted to complete their tasks.  
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## **Integration and flexible work arrangements for legal professionals**

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ALSPs are companies that offer legal services to clients outside of the traditional law firm model. Organizations of all sizes and industries can benefit from the solutions offered by ALSPs. From small companies with annual revenue under US\$25 million, to large multinational corporations exceeding US\$50 billion, as well as nonprofits.

ALSPs typically provide specialized legal services on a project basis, adding value to legal departments through driving technology, improving quality and speed of legal service delivery, and optimizing processes for optimal delegation of legal work within the organization. They bring a wealth of tools and solutions to legal departments, enhancing agility and variability. ALSPs support the trend toward flexible, distributed work teams and are an ideal solution for modern legal operating models that prioritize people, process, and technology.

One way ALSPs augment technology is by implementing contract management systems to streamline contract workflows and delegate work to a hybrid legal workforce. They improve

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processes by implementing project management tools that delegate work to the appropriate seniority and experience level within the legal team. Furthermore, ALSPs can flexibly augment the legal team — that is people — by adding new skills or expanding capacity on legal projects and daily tasks to effectively manage in-house legal workload.

An ALSP might be hired to:

- Review and redact documents for a large-scale discovery process, or to assist with contract review and drafting for a specific business transaction.
- Provide translation services for legal documents, in context of a regulatory initiative, in multiple languages.
- Provide paralegal support and legal project management and coordination services for a complex legal matter.

ALSPs integrate their lawyers into the legal department of the client. This can involve assigning specific lawyers to work on a full-time or part-time basis with the client's legal team.

This allows ALSPs to provide clients with legal teams that are tailored to their specific needs and requirements, bringing in additional skills and expertise as needed on a project-by-project basis.

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Legal departments have the opportunity to attain more knowledge and develop a better understanding of legal issues by collaborating with multiple lawyers. Ground Picture / Shutterstock.com

Many legal professionals are enjoying this trend as it allows them to discover career paths, enhance their skills, and change the meaning of the traditional legal office.

It offers them:

- Increased autonomy and provides a greater sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Tailored learning and development to their own individual needs and interests.

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- Project management experience, across different product types, organizations, and sectors.
  - Improved soft skills, such as fostering improved communication skills, being able to empathize with others, exhibiting independent legal judgment, and having a strong/self-driven work ethic.

## The office needs a clearly defined purpose

In the past, it was common for individuals to rely on their line manager or supervisor to provide direction and guidance on how to succeed in their role. However, it is now becoming increasingly important for individuals to be able to define their own time, roles, and success as well as to take control of their own learning and development. Specifically, the ability and option to work remotely — wholly or in part — has won staying power for lawyers.

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To be sure, an office will need to provide opportunities for employees to learn new skills, attend training sessions, and engage with their peers and mentors. It will need to provide a space for employees to interact with one another and build relationships. In a word, it will need a clearly defined purpose.

Overall, defining the purpose of the office will be an important factor in shaping the future of legal work, as it will influence the way that legal professionals learn and collaborate.

## Flexibility increases inclusivity and diversity in legal departments

Distributed teams which draw on flexibility and remote work as well as focus on pragmatic skills and experience, provide a supportive environment for greater inclusivity and diversity within legal teams.

### Working parents

Remote work can provide greater flexibility for work schedule and location, which can be especially useful for parents who need to balance work and family responsibilities. This can allow parents to work around their children's schedules and to take care of their children while still being able to work.

- **Reduced childcare costs:** Remote work can also help to reduce childcare costs, as parents may not need to pay for childcare or other forms of supervision while they are working from home.
- **Better work-life balance:** Remote work can enable parents to achieve a better work-life balance, as they are able to work from home and be more present for their children. This can help fathers and mothers feel less overwhelmed and stressed, and to have more time to spend with their children.
- **Improved mental health:** Remote work can also benefit the mental health of parents with kids, as it can reduce the stress and demands of commuting and working in an office



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environment.



Remote work provides many benefits for working parents including flexibility, work-life balance, and reduced childcare costs. DimaBerlin / *Shutterstock.com*

Further, focusing on skills as a hiring criterion helps to remove biases based on pedigree and heritage, as it allows legal departments to make hiring decisions based on abilities rather than their background or personal characteristics. This can create a more diverse and inclusive workplace, by allowing candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to be considered for positions based on their skills and expertise. This can help create a more merit-based work environment.

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It removes traditional hierarchy in an office and enables fewer layers of management and more direct communication between employees and decision-makers. This can help to break down traditional biases and create a more collaborative and egalitarian work culture. It increases accountability: In a remote work environment, employees may be held more accountable for their results, rather than relying on their perceived standing in society to determine their value and contributions.

## **Remote work isn't going away**

Looking towards the future, it is likely that technology will continue to evolve and improve the way

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lawyers work remotely. With the increasing use of cloud computing, virtual meetings, and advanced communication tools, it is likely that remote work will become even more commonplace in the legal profession.

While tools and technology can help to streamline processes and create efficiencies, the legal profession relies heavily on human knowledge and expertise to effectively execute legal work. Therefore, it is important for legal departments to focus on integrating their staff and finding ways to effectively utilize their skills and knowledge in order to achieve efficiency goals.

ALSPs can provide specialized legal services on a project or task-based basis, allowing legal departments to access expertise and resources as needed. By considering the needs, perspectives, and skills of their legal professionals, legal departments can effectively manage their work and achieve efficiencies while also maintaining the high standards of professionalism and service that are expected in the legal field.

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