



# Embracing AI in the Legal Profession

A Human-Centric Transformation

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## Foreword

As artificial intelligence transforms industries, the legal profession faces a critical moment of change. AI is fundamentally reshaping how legal services are delivered and experienced.

This white paper examines how legal professionals can harness AI's potential while preserving the human elements that define the profession. Through research and real-world examples, we provide a framework for thoughtful AI integration that enhances rather than diminishes legal practice.

Our analysis emphasizes the human dimension of technological change, offering practical guidance for legal professionals at all levels, from global firms to solo practitioners, to navigate this transformation confidently while maintaining high standards.

The future of law lies in finding the right balance between human expertise and responsible artificial intelligence, using technology to augment rather than replace professional judgment.



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# Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is shifting rapidly from hype to real-world impact in the legal sector. Over the past 18 months, adoption, particularly of generative AI (like GPT-4-based tools), has surged across law firms and in-house legal teams.

Recent studies show that 41% of UK lawyers are now using AI for legal work, up from just 11% in mid-2023<sup>1</sup>. Active GenAI usage amongst legal professionals has nearly doubled in the last year from 14% in 2024 to 26%<sup>2</sup>. In North America, mid-sized firms have seen a fivefold increase in adoption<sup>3</sup>, and 75% of General Counsel (GCs) view GenAI as a transformative force within their organisations<sup>4</sup>. Despite this momentum, only 15% of legal professionals see Gen AI-related job impact as a major risk<sup>2</sup>.

The benefits are clear: 71% of lawyers cite faster service as GenAI's top advantage, followed by improved client service (54%)<sup>1</sup>. Efficiency gains are already evident: for example, Allen & Overy deployed an AI assistant to 3,500 lawyers for drafting and research, with one in four using it daily within months<sup>5</sup>. Yet, concerns remain. Around 75% of practitioners worry about accuracy or "hallucinations", and ethical misuse is a top concern<sup>1</sup>. Strikingly, just 10% of firms have formal GenAI policies in place<sup>6</sup>.

The message is clear: successful AI adoption isn't just about technology. It requires organisational readiness, strong governance, and a human-centric change management approach.

Forward-looking legal leaders are responding decisively, establishing ethical guidelines, investing in targeted training, and assigning clear accountability for AI oversight. Some firms have gone further, appointing dedicated AI leads or even "Chief AI Officers" to drive responsible, strategic implementation.<sup>7</sup>

**41% of UK Lawyers are already using AI**

**85% increase in active adoption of Gen AI amongst legal professionals in the last year**

**75% of GCs foresee Gen AI as transformative**

**Only 15% of lawyers are concerned about the impact of Gen AI on jobs**

**Only 10% of law firms have AI-related policies**





## Key Takeaways

**AI adoption in legal practice is accelerating:** The shift from experimentation to integration is clear. In the UK, lawyer use of AI grew from 11 percent to 41 percent in a year. <sup>1</sup> This surge reflects rising demands for speed, efficiency, and competitiveness. <sup>8</sup>

**Generative AI is reshaping legal workflows:** AI now supports core legal tasks including drafting, research, and client service. By handling routine work, it allows lawyers to focus on higher-value strategic activities and client engagement. Case studies show AI adoption across firm sizes and geographies. <sup>3</sup>

**Governance and ethical preparedness lag behind:** Many firms have yet to establish adequate policies or oversight for AI. Risks such as data security, bias, and accountability make ethical frameworks and human review essential. <sup>1</sup> Lawyers remain the ultimate reviewers to prevent errors or ethical breaches. <sup>2</sup> Organisations are drafting usage policies, establishing oversight, and demanding transparency in AI tools.

**Effective change management is people-first:** Successful adoption relies on structured pilots, cross-functional teams, training, and communication. <sup>7</sup> These efforts foster a culture that embraces innovation and adapts to change. <sup>6</sup> Leading teams start with pilots to build momentum. <sup>7</sup> They form cross-functional task forces and offer training so attorneys can confidently use AI.

**The legal workforce is evolving:** AI is not yet replacing lawyers but is redefining roles and required skills. Junior tasks are shifting, new tech roles are emerging, and skills like prompt engineering and AI literacy are increasingly vital.

**Strategic alignment is key:** AI initiatives must address real business challenges, be grounded in data quality, and be rolled out deliberately. Success depends on clear goals, ethical safeguards, and a human-centred approach.



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# The Context for AI in Law



# Legal leaders are unlocking real value from AI, as adoption scales across the sector

## AI in Law: Significant Market Momentum

Legal AI adoption has progressed from experimental to widespread across geographies and firm sizes. In 2024, 41% of UK lawyers used AI, up from just 11% the previous year.<sup>1</sup> This is mirrored globally, with 85% of legal professionals now seeing AI as applicable to their work.<sup>2</sup>

Adoption began with generative AI tools like ChatGPT, and shifted toward legal-specific platforms like Harvey, CoCounsel AI, Newcode.ai, Legora (previously Leya), and tools integrated into LexisNexis and Westlaw.<sup>5</sup> These tools support tasks like legal research, document summarisation, and drafting standard agreements.

Case studies illustrate a range of adoptions:

- Allen & Overy deployed Harvey AI across 3,500 lawyers for drafting, research, and due diligence, with 25% of lawyers using it daily.<sup>5</sup>
- Ashurst became the first global law firm to implement Harvey across all its offices, providing access to over 4,000 lawyers and business services staff, supporting tasks like document review, due diligence and drafting, delivering significant efficiency gains—including an 80% reduction in drafting time for UK corporate filings.<sup>9</sup>
- Helton Law Group, a mid-size US firm, implemented the Newcode.ai platform to accelerate insurance claim analysis, enabling them to handle more cases with fewer resources.<sup>10</sup>
- Wiersholm is a Tier-1 Norwegian law firm which rolled out Newcode.ai to the whole firm to drastically reduce time and manual effort required for disputes and due diligence.<sup>11</sup>
- A Fortune 500 in-house team reduced contract review time from days to hours using AI integrated with its contract management system.<sup>12</sup>





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## Workflow Transformation with AI

The integration of AI into legal workflows is not merely about introducing new tools. It represents a profound shift in how legal work is structured, delivered, and experienced. AI technologies, particularly generative and reasoning AI, are automating repetitive and data-intensive tasks, enabling lawyers to focus on strategic and high-value activities. However, for this transformation to be sustainable, law firms must align AI capabilities with operational objectives, ensure high-quality data practices, and cultivate a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Example applications of AI in the legal sector include:

- **Legal Research:** Traditional legal research is time-consuming and requires sifting through vast amounts of case law and legislation. AI tools streamline this by responding to natural-language queries and instantly retrieving relevant case summaries and citations. This not only accelerates the research process but also helps lawyers identify critical precedents more efficiently.<sup>13</sup> However, human verification remains essential to ensure the relevance and accuracy of AI-generated results, maintaining the integrity of legal analysis.<sup>14</sup>
- **Drafting and Review:** Drafting contracts, pleadings, and correspondence can be labour-intensive. AI systems can generate first drafts based on predefined templates or natural language prompts. These tools can also compare new documents against standard clauses, flagging deviations and inconsistencies to support redlining and compliance checks. By automating routine drafting tasks, lawyers can devote more time to customising content and advising clients. Nevertheless, oversight is vital, as final responsibility still lies with the human practitioner.<sup>15</sup>



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## Workflow Transformation with AI

- **Due Diligence:** AI accelerates legal due diligence (especially in M&A) by scanning large volumes of documents and extracting key clauses like change-of-control and indemnity terms. This cuts manual effort, shortens turnaround time, and enhances consistency, allowing legal teams to focus on higher-order judgement and negotiation. Deployed systematically, it also improves risk forecasting and data reporting.<sup>16</sup>
- **Litigation Support:** In discovery, AI classifies, summarises, and flags relevant content across vast datasets. It aids early case assessment by spotting patterns and suggesting likely outcomes based on precedent. These insights inform strategy and resource planning but must be interpreted carefully to avoid overreliance on statistical outputs or correlations.<sup>17</sup>
- **Client Self-Service:** AI chatbots now handle routine queries, provide matter updates, and guide users through standard processes like NDAs. This boosts responsiveness and lets lawyers focus on complex needs. Regular updates and oversight are essential to maintain quality and compliance.<sup>18</sup>
- **Knowledge Management:** Firms are training AI on internal precedents, case data and internal insights to unlock institutional knowledge, retrieve strategies, and suggest approaches for new matters. This supports junior staff onboarding, ensures consistent advice, promotes efficiency and turns internal data into a competitive asset.<sup>19</sup>
- **End-to-end Legal Workflows:** To deliver sustainable impact, these AI capabilities must be embedded into end-to-end legal workflows, integrating with contract lifecycle platforms, matter management systems, and document repositories. This interoperability is key to reducing friction, driving adoption, and surfacing insights at the right moment in legal processes.



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# Example Use Cases



At Newcode.ai, we co-create with our clients to ensure our tools are aligned with their unique workflows. Whether it's through tailored onboarding, pilot programmes, or workflow-specific workshops, our goal is to make the transition to AI-supported legal work feel empowering—not overwhelming.

Majid Helmy, CEO and Founder at Newcode.ai

It complements you but does not replace you. Once the tool is integrated into your work processes, the value is obvious. As a lawyer in a reputable firm, you need to use AI in a way that gives you a competitive advantage.

Head of Innovation, Partner at Wiersholm



## Case Study: Implementing Newcode.ai

Newcode.ai, founded by AI Ph.D. Dr. Maged Helmy is an AI platform delivering tailored generative AI solutions for legal professionals with an emphasis on security, accuracy, and efficiency. Newcode.ai partners with firms and in-house legal teams to offer structured onboarding, training resources, and adoption strategies tailored to practice groups and workflows.

**Newcode.ai** supported **Wiersholm**, a tier-1 law firm, through a phased implementation of AI. The process involved:

- **Increased efficiency in day-to-day operations:** A firm-wide roll-out of the platform, with gradual introduction of new features. Each stage was accompanied by guides, tutorial materials and practice group specific support
- **Sharing experiences to drive usage:** Presentations of concrete examples, where the lawyers themselves shared the use cases that had the highest impact in their work.
- **Tailoring of tools to concrete processes:** Practice group specific projects to tailor the AI tools to their specific workflows. Starting with dispute resolution, these tools were embedded into their existing process with tailored templates and system integrations.
- **Identifying potential to keep innovating:** Workshops for the lawyers to identify use cases where AI can improve speed and quality and reduce manual work.



**We're seeing our trainees bring fresh perspectives on how AI can enhance, rather than replace, the human elements of legal practice, which shows how our next generation of lawyers is thoughtfully incorporating AI while maintaining the highest standards of legal excellence we're known for.**

Steve McGuigan, VWV Managing Partner

**We want AI to help make being a lawyer more rewarding, so it's exciting to see those ideas come to life under the forward-thinking approach of VWV. These are the sorts of opportunities I dreamed of as a junior lawyer stuck doing tedious, repetitive work late at night.**

Richard Robinson, CEO and Founder



## Case Study: Robin AI

Robin AI, founded in 2019 by former “Magic Circle” lawyer Richard Robinson and machine learning and AI expert, Dr. James Clough. The company has established itself as a leader in the enterprise legal AI market, which it asserts is larger than the market for AI tools targeting law firms.<sup>20</sup> The company's AI-powered platform, available as a Microsoft Word add-in, combines advanced AI with deep legal expertise to streamline contract creation, review, and negotiation, enabling legal teams to operate more efficiently. It serves clients including Pfizer, GE, KPMG, PWC and UBS. Robin AI has further innovated by introducing "Robin Reports", which enables the summarisation of thousands of legal documents simultaneously, providing actionable insights for use cases such as M&A due diligence and incident response.

### The Next Generation of Lawyers using Robin AI

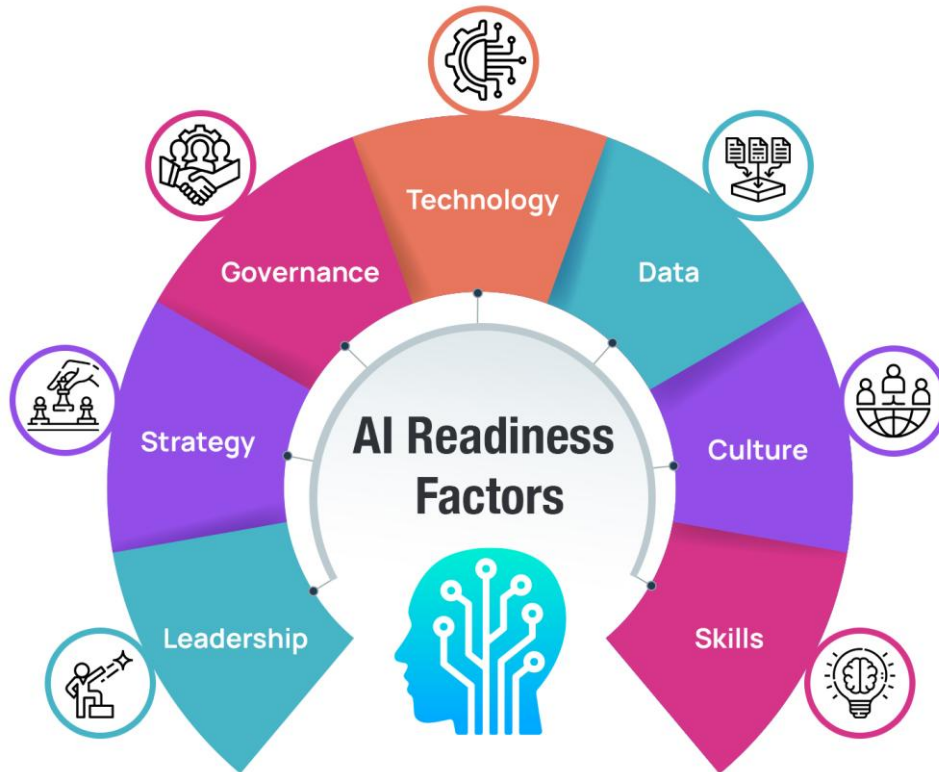
As covered by The Times<sup>21</sup>, Robin AI partnered with mid-sized UK firm VWV on a first of its kind initiative which focuses on getting Legal AI into the hands of all VWV's trainees so they can help to shape the firm's innovation agenda. The trainees pitch to the partners, build proof of concepts and are at the forefront of driving AI innovation across the firm.





# Key Steps for Law Firms





## A Holistic Approach

A holistic approach to managing AI-related disruption and implementing an AI-ready transformation is underpinned by Mehtadology's AI Readiness framework. Regardless of industry, a systematic approach to AI implementation relies on readiness factors.

The success factors are shown in the diagram to the right, and are:

- **Leadership:** the vision, ownership, accountability and endorsement that supports an AI-ready business
- **Strategy:** defining business problems to solve with technology and ensuring measurable success criteria against a defined business case.
- **Governance:** the guardrails and risk management, and the operating model for successful implementation
- **Technology:** ensuring that AI applications are compatible and interoperable with the existing technology landscape
- **Data:** the fuel for the AI engine, and the value chain that leads to insight and strategic advantage
- **Culture:** innovation and experimentation, supporting incremental evolution with AI, including change management
- **Skills:** data and AI literacy that mobilises the organisation to be AI ready.

Specific to the legal sector, AI transformation has specific impacts on governance, change management, and talent lifecycles, which we describe in more detail on the following pages.



Scan here for a copy of the AI Readiness Framework © Mehtadology 2025

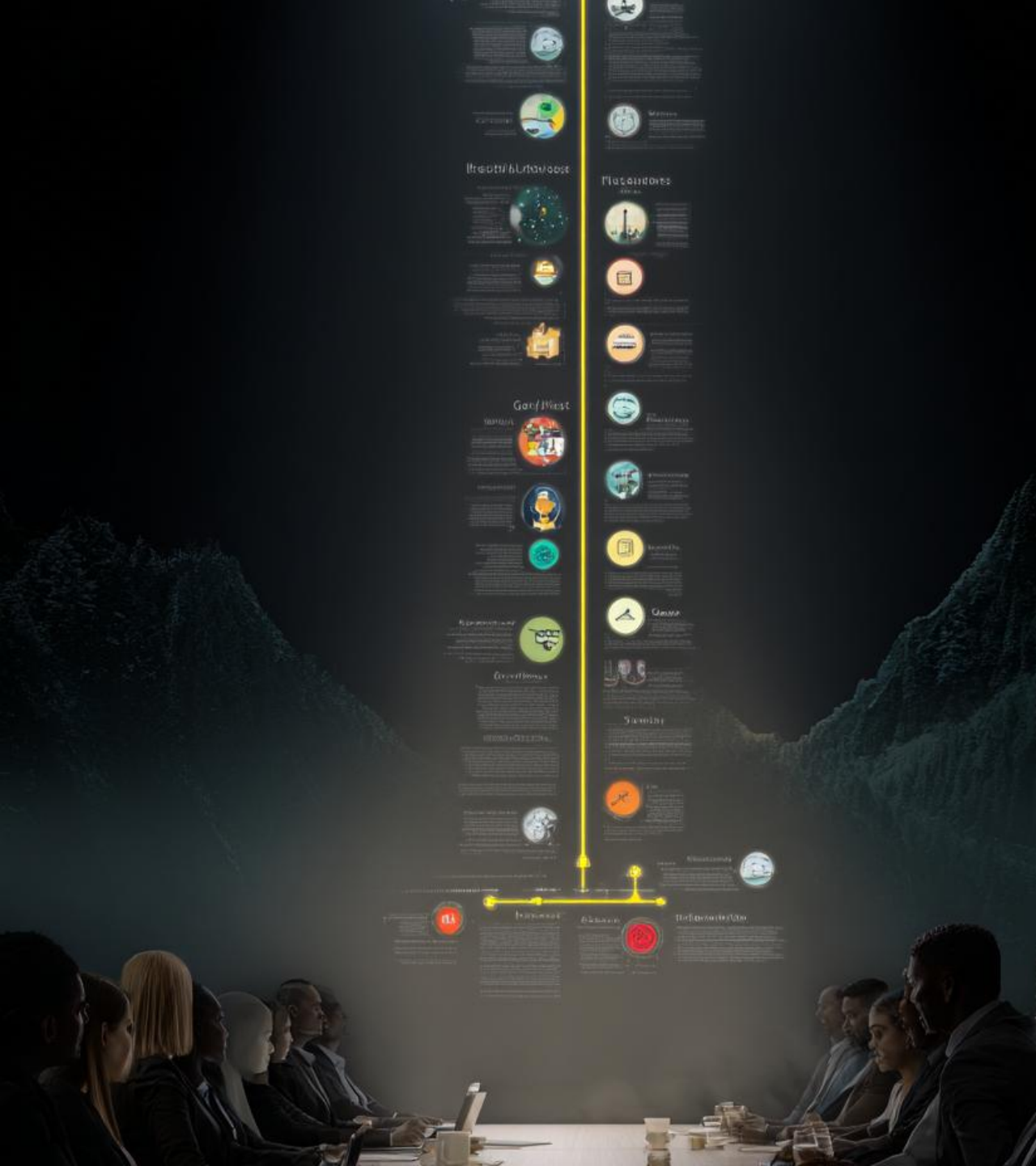


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# Governance

Despite rapid deployment, legal AI adoption remains incremental and governed by risk awareness. To ensure sustained AI adoption, legal organisations must take a holistic and systematic approach that aligns technology selection with strategic business challenges, underpinned by robust data hygiene and literacy. A culture that anticipates and embraces sector-wide transformation is critical. Disruption arising from changes in the AI market is inevitable, but to mitigate its risks and preserve institutional credibility, law firms must implement AI in a controlled and governed manner. This requires a clear framework for managing risk, ethics, and compliance from the outset. Core areas of focus include:

- **Data Confidentiality:** Legal work often involves highly sensitive client information, such as personal data, trade secrets, and privileged communications. Using public AI tools for these tasks introduces potential confidentiality risks. To address this, many firms are choosing private cloud or on-premises AI solutions that ensure better control over data. In addition, due diligence on third-party vendors, which includes checking for regulatory compliance, cybersecurity measures, and contractual safeguards, is essential to protect both clients and the firm.<sup>22</sup>
- **Accuracy and Hallucinations:** AI systems can generate incorrect or misleading outputs, commonly referred to as hallucinations. In legal contexts, even minor inaccuracies can have serious consequences. To mitigate this, firms are implementing human oversight procedures<sup>1</sup>, such as requiring lawyers to verify AI-generated outputs before client use. Some platforms also include features like embedded legal citations. This improves traceability and confidence in the AI's recommendations. Using focussed assistants, RAG systems, and tightly controlled workflows can provide a legal firm with competitive advantage and intellectual property in their ability to leverage AI compared to using off-the-shelf SaaS solutions.<sup>23</sup>







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## Governance

- **Professional Ethics:** The ethical obligation of lawyers to act competently and responsibly does not change with AI. While AI can assist in tasks, it cannot be held accountable in the same way a human can. This means lawyers must always remain the final reviewers and hold liability for final work products, including any AI-generated content, as emphasised by the ABA<sup>23</sup> and EU AI Act. Firms are creating policies that reinforce this responsibility and are offering training to help lawyers understand where and how AI can be used ethically.<sup>24</sup>
- **Bias and Fairness:** AI models can inadvertently perpetuate bias, especially when used in predictive legal tasks such as assessing litigation outcomes or risk scoring. To counteract this, firms are adopting practices like bias audits and the use of explainable AI. This allows users to understand and challenge the rationale behind AI outputs. AI should be used to support human decisions and not to replace them, particularly in matters with ethical or legal implications.<sup>25</sup>
- **Regulatory Readiness:** Legal frameworks governing AI are rapidly evolving, particularly in jurisdictions such as the European Union. Law firms must stay ahead of regulations such as the EU AI Act, which imposes strict requirements on transparency, risk classification, and accountability. By preparing now, through documentation, compliance protocols, and continuous monitoring, firms can reduce future regulatory risk and demonstrate a commitment to ethical AI use.<sup>26</sup>





# Change Management

Embedding AI in legal workflows isn't just about tools or data. It's about people. Success demands more than rollout plans, it requires a shift in mindset, culture, and behaviour. To drive meaningful adoption, firms must build confidence, reduce friction, and help people see AI as a trusted enabler, not a threat.

Here's what works:

- **Start Small, Prove Value.** Don't launch, but pilot. Low-risk, high-learning pilot projects are the most effective way to explore AI's potential. They allow teams to test in real-world scenarios, adapt workflows, and collect data that builds trust. Pilots reduce fear, spotlight what works, and generate the internal case studies needed to scale with confidence.
- **Make It a Team Sport.** AI doesn't belong only to IT. Real impact happens when legal, ops, HR, tech, and innovation teams co-create solutions. Cross-functional squads bring together legal expertise, user insights, and technical know-how, ensuring tools are practical, compliant, and get used. These teams move faster and embed change more deeply.
- **Build AI Confidence, Not Just Competence.** Upskilling isn't just technical. Lawyers need to know how to prompt, probe, and question AI outputs, and how to spot when it's wrong. Build literacy through practical learning that blends tools, ethics, and strategy. Understanding how AI thinks is key to using it wisely, and to preventing misuse.
- **Don't Bolt It On: Build It In.** AI must live in the workflow. For long-term value, AI tools need to be where the work happens, in matter templates, contract tools, or case systems. If AI sits off to the side, it gets ignored. Integrated AI drives consistency, saves time, and reinforces its role as a core part of modern legal service delivery.



## Change Management

- **Spotlight People, Not Just Platforms.** Change spreads through people. Identify early adopters and let them lead. When colleagues see peers succeeding with AI, it drives belief and momentum. Support these champions to demo tools, run clinics, and share stories. Layer in transparent communication through newsletters, quick wins, and open forums to keep the energy up and the fear down.
- **Culture is the Bedrock.** Culture is the Bedrock. Psychological safety is the foundation of innovation. People must feel safe to ask questions, experiment, and admit what they don't know, especially when navigating unfamiliar tools like AI. This can be especially hard in the legal profession, where a deep-rooted focus on precedent, precision and risk aversion often reinforces a fixed mindset and resistance to change.<sup>27</sup> To reframe this, legal leaders must model curiosity, openness, and a willingness to learn. Create space for exploration without fear. A culture grounded in psychological safety and growth through continuous improvement is the strongest platform for lasting AI transformation.
- **No transformation sticks without visible leadership.** When C-suite and partner sponsors actively back AI adoption, not just endorse it, change accelerates and embeds more deeply. According to Prosci, the global leader in change management research, projects with strong executive sponsorship are **3.5 times more likely** to succeed.<sup>27</sup> Leaders who talk about AI, use it themselves, and champion experimentation build confidence across the firm. *Bottom line: if you want adoption to land, put a senior name (and face) behind it.*



# Organisational Structure and Talent

AI is not yet replacing lawyers, it's reshaping how legal work gets done. As routine tasks shift to intelligent systems, the value of human judgement, strategic thinking, and client relationships becomes more pronounced. To stay competitive, firms need a future-focused talent strategy that blends legal expertise with technological fluency. This requires deliberate investment in role design, career pathways, and the systems that support a hybrid human-AI workforce. Key focus areas include:

- **Workforce Planning:** AI adoption brings structural implications. Firms must reassess workforce composition, recruitment profiles, and succession strategies. Scenario planning, internal mobility, and new performance metrics are essential for aligning people strategy with a technology-enabled future.
- **Task Fit and Role Clarity:** Effective legal operations will depend on matching the right task to the right agent: human or machine. Task-fit analysis helps identify where AI can reliably execute repeatable work, and where human oversight and legal judgement remain critical. This sets the foundation for redesigned workflows and clearer role expectations.
- **Workflow Redesign:** Legal work is increasingly collaborative between human and digital actors. Firms need to re-map legal processes to reflect this new dynamic, building workflows where AI handles the heavy lifting and lawyers focus on complex, strategic, or client-facing tasks. This requires cross-functional coordination, change management, and tools that enable seamless integration.
- **Reskilling:** Tomorrow's legal talent will need more than black-letter law. Data literacy, legal tech fluency, and prompt engineering are fast becoming baseline skills. Firms that invest in reskilling, through structured programmes, simulations, and stretch assignments, build confidence and capacity for AI-powered practice. Some are already linking AI literacy to promotion pathways and competency reviews to signal its strategic importance.<sup>21</sup>



## Organisational Structure and Talent

- **New Roles:** As AI takes on routine legal tasks, new specialist roles are emerging to manage, monitor, and continuously improve these systems. Titles such as AI Counsel, AI Governance Lead, and Data Scientist (all with law degrees) are becoming part of the modern legal ecosystem.<sup>29</sup> These professionals ensure AI tools are effective, ethically deployed, and aligned with legal risk standards and firm strategy. To fully realise value, in-house legal and legal ops teams must treat AI not as a tool—but as a core capability. That means investing in talent that understands both legal context and data-driven optimisation.<sup>14</sup>
- **Redesigning Junior Roles:** Traditionally, junior lawyers cut their teeth on high-volume tasks like document review and legal research. As AI automates much of this foundational work, junior lawyers are being exposed earlier to more strategic, client-facing responsibilities. This shift is an opportunity, but also a risk. Without thoughtful redesign, firms may lose vital training grounds. Structured mentorship, shadowing, and simulation-based learning will be essential to ensure junior talent still develops deep legal reasoning and judgement.<sup>30</sup>
- **Talent Attraction:** Top graduates increasingly want to work in tech-forward legal environments. Firms that visibly invest in AI signal a commitment to innovation, relevance, and continuous learning, qualities today's digital-native professionals expect. Legal employers that embed AI into their brand narrative will be more attractive to ambitious, entrepreneurial lawyers looking for meaningful, future-facing work.<sup>31</sup>





## Conclusion

In 2025, AI is no longer a novelty but a strategic necessity in legal services. Legal teams are using it to improve speed, service quality, and internal efficiency. Success requires a balance of vision and vigilance. Legal leaders must:

- Align AI with strategic goals and identify high-impact use cases.
- Build governance from day one to uphold client trust.
- Invest in training and new capabilities to future-proof teams.
- Foster innovation and cultural readiness through open dialogue.
- Lead by example to normalise responsible AI use in everyday legal practice.

Firms that do this will not only survive the AI transformation but lead it. The goal isn't to replace lawyers – it's to free them to do what only humans can: apply judgment, empathy, and creativity to complex legal problems.

The most visionary legal leaders know that in the age of AI, mindset is the real frontier. Effective change management means creating clarity of strategic vision, psychological safety, and a culture of curiosity, shifting teams from risk-averse to resourceful, from precedent-bound to possibility driven.

AI is a powerful ally. The legal teams that embrace it responsibly and strategically will define the future of the profession.



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# Your strategic partner in the AI revolution

**Dr Ashwin Mehta**

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# Your strategic partner for people & change in the AI revolution



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## Contact us

For further support on AI-driven transformation, please contact us.



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