

The Value of Enhanced AI Workflows for In-House Legal Teams

The wave of business innovation coupled with new technology and use of artificial intelligence (AI) is having a significant impact on how legal departments operate. AI is reshaping the way law firms function. Legal teams are seeing demand from clients to understand how AI is used and what tangible benefits there are for both parties. There is now a drive to show the value that can be achieved by utilising AI, not only to aid improvements in efficiency but also a reduction in cost.

It is important to establish what we mean by enhanced AI workflows. It refers to the integration of AI into legal processes. These workflows go beyond individual prompts and involve the automation of routine tasks, standardisation of processes and implementation of automated checks and controls. Enhanced workflows can have a big impact on the way firms operate. AI can play a crucial role in meeting these demands by streamlining processes, improving collaboration, and leveraging technology to drive efficiency and remain competitive. One example is the use of a workflow to analyse data, review key information, extract the correct relevant fields and add this information into multiple specific templated emails ready to send internally to or externally. The human aspect would come in the final stage to ensure all necessary reviews and approvals are completed before clicking the 'send' button.

In essence, the use of AI can bring huge benefits via the application of both Human + Machine. A report by Thomson Reuters (Future of Professionals) last year highlighted that nearly three-quarters of GCs recognise that AI has the potential to improve efficiency. Nearly as many highlighted that using technology to simplify their workflows is a high priority for their departments. A recent PwC article published in May 2025 (PwC's AI Agent survey) highlighted that of the 300 senior executives questioned, 88% say they plan to increase AI related budgets in the next 12 months due to Agentic AI.

It is crucial that we assess our confidence in the data used and the processes implemented. Strong governance measures are in place to ensure that there is still a necessary human element involved to provide assurance in the system. It is important that law firms are also changing the way they operate including offering additional bonuses encouraging the use of AI, to encourage collaboration, learning and momentum. Recently, the SRA authorised the country's first purely AI-based firm to provide legal services.



Benefits

The use of AI, particularly in relation to specific workflows can lead to multiple benefits. One of the most significant benefits of enhanced AI workflows is the improvement in efficiency and time savings. Lawyers routinely manage vast volumes of information and time-consuming tasks. By automating the routine tasks and standardising processes, legal teams can reduce the time spent on administrative activities and focus on higher-value work. For example, at CMS, AI tools such as Harvey have been implemented to assist. Harvey can sift through vast amounts of information and provide concise summaries. The use of prompts and workflows not only reduces the time spent on managing work but also ensures that they are handled consistently and efficiently. By using AI-powered tools, legal teams can set up automated filters and routing rules to ensure that documents are reviewed by the appropriate individuals and approved in a timely manner. This reduces bottlenecks and ensures that legal work progresses smoothly.

Data

The ability to process large amounts of data quickly dramatically increases efficiency and reduces risk. Enhanced AI workflows play a critical role in managing risk and ensuring compliance. By standardising processes and implementing automated checks and controls, legal teams can reduce the risk of errors and ensure that all work complies with regulatory requirements. For example, AI can be used to ensure that all necessary approvals are obtained before a contract is finalised, reducing the risk of non-compliance.

In the future, many firms will use workflows to analyse historical data. This can range from specific types of work and processes through to write-offs. Enhanced AI workflows can also improve data management within legal teams. By centralising data and providing tools for tracking and analysing legal work, teams can gain better insights into their operations and make more informed decisions. AI can identify patterns that will help the legal team to further understand where potential process improvements are required and further mitigate risk.

Collaboration

Enhanced AI workflows also facilitate improved collaboration between legal team and business services. The use of AI workflows for managing legal work enables several members of different teams within the firm to easily access up-to-date information and collaborate on workflows and tasks. Integrating AI workflows with existing collaboration tools already embedded within the firm can enhance communication and coordination. This also encourages training and development and ensures that everyone can focus on improving service delivery and value. This will eventually lead to the development of an AI-driven culture for the firm.

Cost savings

Implementing enhanced AI workflows can lead to significant cost savings for legal teams. By automating routine tasks and improving efficiency, legal teams can reduce the need for additional resources and minimise the time spent on low-value activities. This allows legal departments to operate more cost-effectively and allocate resources to higher-value work. For example, automating the process of reviewing and approving invoices can reduce the time spent on this task and ensure that invoices are processed accurately and promptly. This not only saves time but also reduces the risk of errors and potential disputes with vendors.

To conclude, enhanced AI workflows offer significant value for legal teams by improving efficiency, collaboration, risk management, and compliance. By leveraging technology and standardising processes, legal teams can reduce the time spent on administrative tasks, improve communication and coordination, and ensure that all work complies with regulatory requirements. Additionally, enhanced AI workflows can lead to significant cost savings and provide valuable insights through better data management and reporting.

As the demands on legal teams continue to grow, implementing enhanced AI workflows will be crucial in enabling these teams to operate more effectively and support their organisations' strategic goals.

Whilst AI workflows can bring immediate benefits, this can also be a time to focus on further transformation opportunities. AI can assist with optimising processes but there may now be an opportunity to review the process in its entirety and find new ways of doing work.

By embracing AI and leveraging technology, legal teams can transform their operations, drive efficiency, and deliver greater value to their organisations.

Contact details



Philip Alexander

Senior Legal Operations Business Partner

T +44 20 7367 3179

E philip.alexander@cms-cmno.com



David Dennis

Partner

T +44 141 304 6088

E david.dennis@cms-cmno.com



Paula Kidd

Partner

T +44 1224 267179

E paula.kidd@cms-cmno.com



Caroline Maciver

Partner

T +44 131 200 7544

E caroline.maciver@cms-cmno.com