

# Increase Legal Team Productivity with These 5 Proven Methods



In the legal profession, productivity equals revenue. Law firms run on billable hours. And in-house legal departments directly affect the bottom line of the corporations they serve. A combination of improved information governance, automation, collaboration, and strategic adoption of [legal technology](#) can increase legal team productivity by 23 percent or more.

## Determine Your Baseline Legal Team Productivity

To map the route to a more productive future, the legal team must first determine its starting point. For instance, a team that lacks effective strategy will operate reactively, scrambling with every request for information and turning immediately to outside counsel.

Somewhat more strategic teams have incorporated technology, but they use a variety of tools on numerous platforms. And they depend heavily on IT departments for eDiscovery and other tech-heavy tasks.

As teams evolve, they use more integrated technology and depend less on IT. They know where their data lives, and they remain control over that data. Because they manage their data effectively, they are able to make data-driven decisions, drive strategy with effective early case assessment, and reduce eDiscovery costs.

Highly productive legal teams use advanced artificial intelligence (AI) to automate routine tasks and drive analysis. They benefit from highly efficient eDiscovery and reduced dependence on outside counsel. Additionally, they produce consistently defensible results and free up time for billable work.

Legal team employees can provide valuable feedback to identify pain points and possible solutions. Take time to gather input from the team and administrative personnel as well as lawyers. Have them identify bottlenecks and suggest solutions. Remain open to new ideas.



## Take the Next Step to Strengthen Information Governance

Next to people, data may have the biggest effect on productivity. For instance, [early case assessment](#) plays a critical role in determining case strategy. And because nearly 98 percent of all cases settle out of court, streamlining the data assessment phase reduces costs. Solid information governance simplifies that process.

Information governance involves knowing what data the organization stores, where it lives and who has access to it. It guides the data lifecycle, including data retention and deletion, and it works hand in hand with data security.

Organizations with a low information governance maturity prefer to keep all data forever. However, this introduces risk. Poorly managed data proves difficult to secure, opening the door to hackers and making regulatory compliance difficult. It also leads to over-collection of data in eDiscovery, which significantly increases the time and cost involved.

Information governance next steps might include conducting a comprehensive data audit, for example, or refining [retention policies in Microsoft 365](#). Successful organizations will leverage automation and AI to drive information governance at scale.

## Use Automation and AI Where Possible

Automation of information governance tasks like data classification and metadata management illustrates just a few of the ways to save time and money. In fact, a study by McKinsey Global Institute suggests that 23 percent of an attorney's job could benefit from automation.

For example, automating time-consuming but crucial tasks such as billing and conflict checking makes time for more focused, case-related work. Legal holds present another area where automation delivers benefits.

Automation and AI also bring significant improvement to the [eDiscovery process](#). In the first place, AI tools can find data across multiple data platforms much more quickly. AI can also suggest related documents that manual searches might miss. And with in-place searches, the legal team can quickly identify relevant documents, reducing the over-collection of data.



## Facilitate Collaboration

Organizations hire outside counsel for several reasons. For instance, the organization may need specialized expertise or more extensive courtroom experience. Increasing the collaboration between in-house and outside counsel improves productivity for both legal teams.

A shared eDiscovery platform drives collaboration. Instead of collecting vast stores of data and transferring them outside the organization, a shared eDiscovery platform allows for in-place searches. This eliminates unnecessary file transfers, decreases risk, and allows the team to leverage in-house counsel's understanding of the data.

## Increase Legal Team Productivity with Wise Technology Choices

In the past, law firms have demonstrated a reluctance to adopt new technology. However, the hybrid workplace, the explosion of data and increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks make embracing technology a necessity.

Driving information governance, streamlining legal holds, and taking the pain out of eDiscovery offer just a few examples of legal technology benefits. Practice management software simplifies case management, scheduling, billing, and accounting. Microsoft even offers a version of [Microsoft 365](#) geared specifically for law firms.

The [legal technology experts](#) at Messaging Architects can help legal partners and business leaders choose and implement the best options to increase legal team productivity in the organization.