

AI LEADERS **COMMUNITY** **INDEX**

Tracking latest directions in legal genAI adoption, success measures
and the introduction of strategic business change

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GENAI OUT OF THE BOTTLE

Strategic teams have had to learn to grow more comfortable with ‘constant’ change in the last five years, and nowhere does this seem more clearly evident than in the realm of deciding exactly what to do with generative artificial intelligence.

New models and capabilities keep coming, teams regularly regroup on where best to focus efforts for maximum business impact and, clearly, firms must balance the client view of what’s most important, multiple internal stakeholder perspectives on priorities, critical security and other governance considerations and, of course, perhaps the ultimate risk of being left behind as tech marches on.

It’s why, in December 2025, **Briefing** decided to launch an AI Leaders community index. For almost a year we’ve been

regularly polling to track whether and how approaches to some big questions are shifting, and hopefully helping leaders to compare positions and progress in the process – from adoption, use case identification and best success metrics, to managing the client-value conversation and potential business model change beyond. All responses come from a figure in senior leadership responsible for landing effective rollout, growing and focusing adoption, and/or carefully planning next steps. Of course, this may cover many official firm functions – indeed, genAI choices and organisational challenges faced often appear to be bringing these together. The data collected is all in aggregate, and we hope this summary of what we’ve uncovered about typical directions in thinking and acting to date proves genuinely valuable.



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About Briefing

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About Harvey

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Research methodology

- Three online surveys carried out in November-December 2025, March-April 2026 and June 2026. The total response base for each successive round varies: 70, 30 and 49.
- To qualify as an ‘AI leader’ respondents will have a C-level or equivalent responsibility for genAI investment planning/strategic decision-making or subsequent adoption management and business/workflow transformation.

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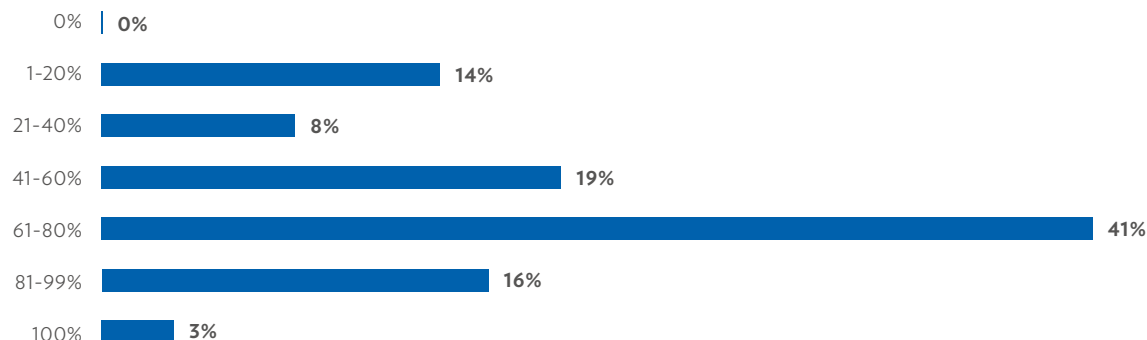
Firms double down on understanding and articulating changing client outcomes where genAI is a factor and what they are worth

MODELLING MOMENTUM

More leaders are starting to plan for strategic ramifications of genAI at work, from transformation tracking and workflow definition to considering the workforce and client-facing complexities of the future

Three-fifths of leaders believe over 60% of their people are using genAI every week

What percentage of the firm's people, approximately, are using a firm-approved genAI tool every week?



As of July 2026, the **Briefing** AI Leaders community index finds three-fifths of law firm AI leaders believed more than 60% of all their people were using a firm-approved genAI tool at least once a week. Almost a fifth felt the 'adoption' figure was closer to at least 80%.

UNDERSTANDING ADOPTION

Of course, this can only be so useful as a measure on its own — it cannot say anything about the appropriateness and quality of each use, nor the measurable difference contributed to a team's productivity, efficiency, client satisfaction scores or creativity. We know some are now also beginning to track not only the most frequent, likely enthusiastic, adopters (with potential then to become champions, sharing successes and helping to build wider engagement), but also those most effective at involving AI on a piece of work (or the converse, those needing more support) and how often use cases are shared. From a profitability point of view, there is then also potential to measure growing adoption levels in different parts of a firm/practices, use applied to specific parts of processes, or the use cases that emerge to be the most effective over time.

LONGER-TERM LEVERS

Including use case sharing, the chart on p5 highlights how the number of firms engaging in a range of genAI-connected adoption and planning activities has changed since this index launched in December 2025, according to those leaders. An acceptable-use policy is now a given to manage risk, and 92% have published a list of tools permitted. Fewer than in December (84%) now say that they have one named owner for AI, or a working group, perhaps as more responsibilities

have arisen and grown more embedded across the firm. However, training tailored to role is on the rise (89%), and over two-thirds also continue to establish genAI contributions within workflows (70%) and watch the market for what's coming next. But the very biggest shifts are increases in the numbers tracking performance/outcomes of a rollout (49%), documenting the impacted workflows (35%), and already actively planning for skill transitions that will be needed (54%) or any number of new commercial models (38%).

INNOVATION UNDER CONTROL

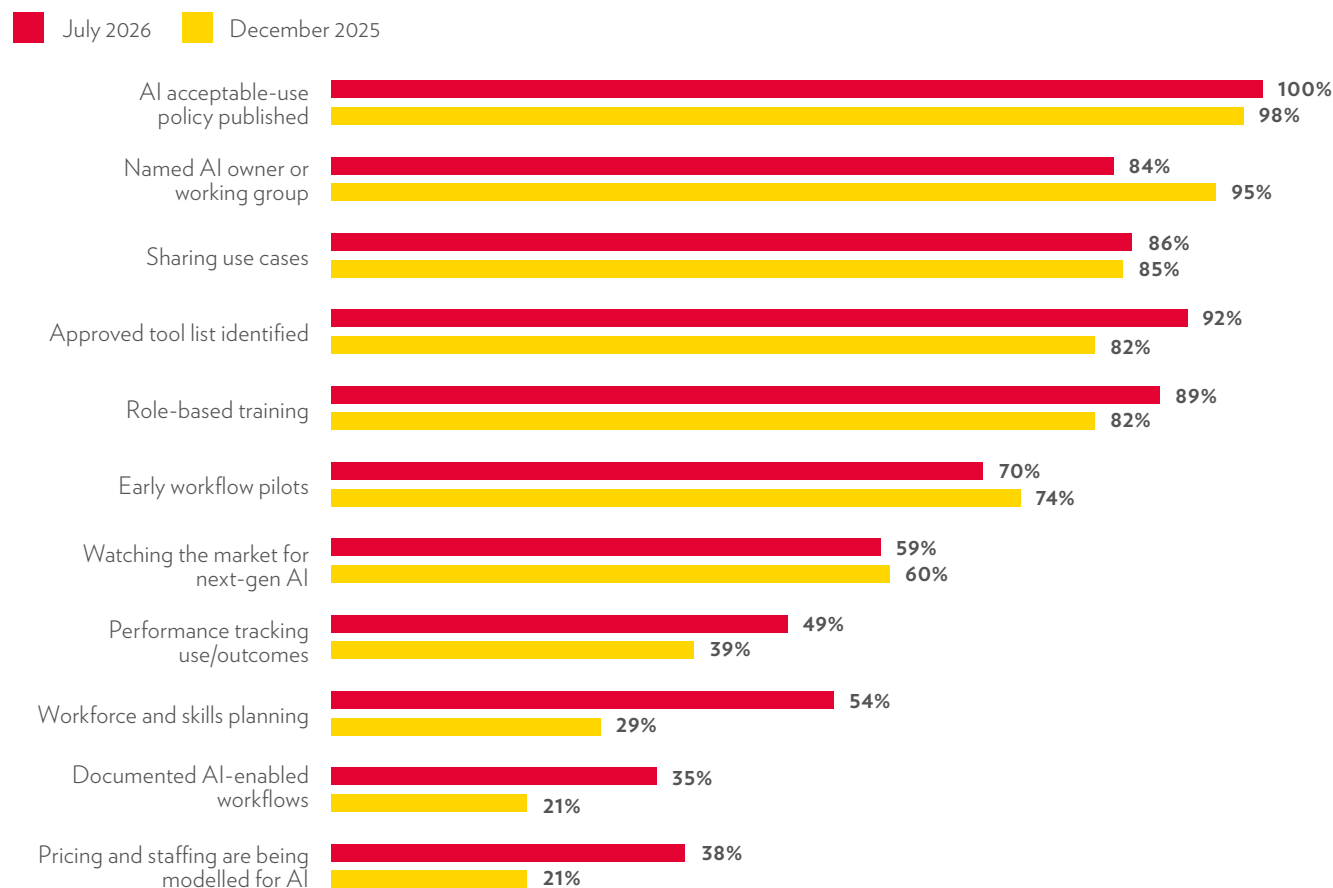
Maurice Tunney, director of technology and innovation at Keystone Law, says: “Using a genAI drafting tool with human review and building a workflow that joins several actions together carry very different risks and need different levels of sign-off. A single AI policy document tends to either over-restrict the safe use case or under-restrict the risky one. We are keen on our lawyers using these tools to innovate but they need to do this in a controlled and safe manner. Our AI policy puts in place guidelines on how best to do this, and we have an internal team that can assist lawyers as and when they need help. Ultimately we need our lawyers to experiment with new technology or we learn little and fall behind, so ensuring the firm is flexible enough to let self-starters get started is key.”

Aileen Johnson, director of knowledge at Charles Russell Speechlys, adds: “The progression is rapid and adaptability and comfort with change and uncertainty are key.

There is one enduring theme: ensuring the development of the knowledge, skills and judgement needed to use genAI creatively, effectively and responsibly.” 

Rise in numbers planning for AI impact on the business model and outcome-tracking since December 2025

Which levels of ‘AI readiness’ activity are already underway at your firm?



“The progression is rapid and adaptability and comfort with change and uncertainty are key.”

AILEEN JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF KNOWLEDGE,
CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS

AGENTS READY FOR DUTY

Majority of firms are already exploring where genAI agents can contribute to efficient work management say leaders, but most also believe a human manager must still set the ground rules and grant permission

With one third of leaders now overseeing some documented AI-enabled workflows (up from a fifth in December 2025), they could take a further transformative step – introducing agents. This research defined an agent as “a genAI tool/capability that has a user-defined goal but can plan and progress work by taking multiple steps on its own – with access to one or more systems/sources of information – before a human reviews the result”.

PILOTS IN PROCESS

Clearly a step on from AI in the hands of individuals, two-fifths of leaders report their firm is at the very least already piloting an agent (13% have them at work on production workflows) – more than say that this direction is currently only being “explored conceptually” (p7). And one quarter of those deploying/experimenting say use is already widespread, while 15% and 10% can see “mature”

use in several or just a few areas respectively. On the other hand, one fifth are at firms where use is confined to specific functions and 15% say any developers or users must be formally approved.

Mirroring genAI trends **Briefing** has previously identified, areas of legal business where leaders indicate their firms are most likely to be exploring the potential are working efficiently with large volumes of documents, such as review (70%) and drafting (55%), business development (60%) and knowledge management work (55%) – followed by risk and matter management (p8). While immediately client-facing outcomes are an obvious space where firms are likely to remain more cautious, it’s perhaps surprising they are less likely to be focused on avenues of internal communication/triage, such as the traditional helpdesk to handle user queries in a more efficiently automated manner (35%). Specific examples that leaders offer up include large-scale document review

before this is passed to lawyers for human review, and mass data-extraction from documents to compare term changes across versions. As with workflows, there is also a focus on enhancing productivity, team efficiency or growth potential across business services, such as simply collecting fee-earner credentials for sharing or managing new business enquiries.

MEMORY AGENTS

Agents can also potentially take on more work – or carry it out more effectively – with access to broader context from previous work completed. For example, they no longer need to start from scratch when processing initial instructions, but can refer to trajectories of past matters, the different parties involved and the relevant walls and permissions. They can also retain ‘memory’ of individuals’ prior work patterns, communication preferences, and learnings established through successive

corrections, to reach a higher-quality result faster. First drafts are more templated for entire teams and, indeed, tasks might be efficiently handed between agent and owner to complete respective parts of a process in a shared space.

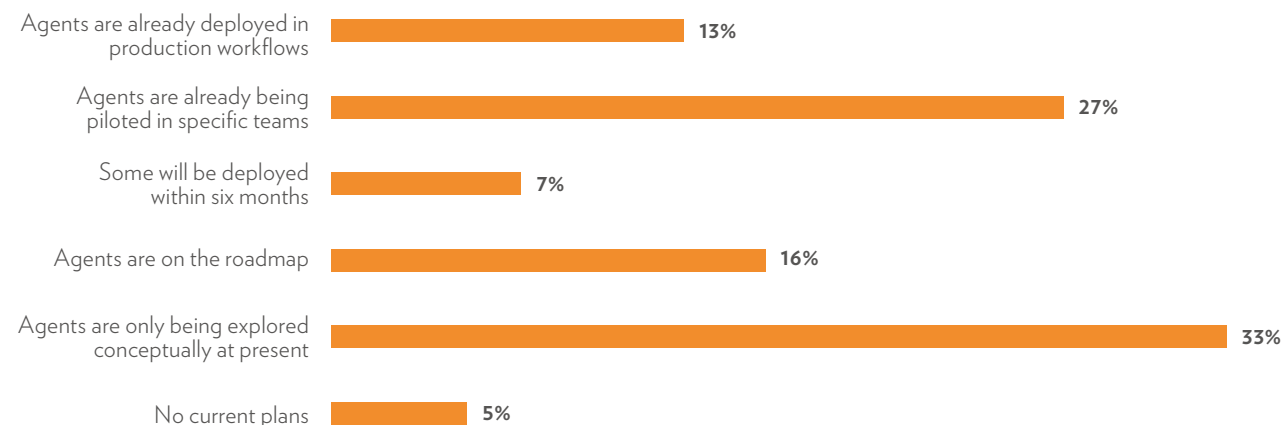
Catherine Jackson, head of knowledge and chair of the innovation group at Clarke Willmott, says: “While AI assistants are well embedded across the firm, agentic exploration is still at an earlier stage, with some controlled activities in specific areas. We have also started some early training and natural language use cases with lawyers as part of a discovery exercise around where groups could possibly own their own agents.” As well as automatic triage of new website enquiries for business development to pick up, she also highlights an agent that is continuously checking on business data quality and for enrichment opportunities. There are examples emerging in back-office teams, including around application-development projects and IT application upgrades, with agents helping to create more efficiency and consistency.

“Critical is monitoring for governance – understanding exactly where agents are appearing, and who is checking. In addition to agent sprawl, risks could include data oversharing or incomplete data. Those are the foundations. Content and knowledge are key.”

Evan Morgan, head of bids and client innovation at DAC Beachcroft, adds: “Underlying data needs to be as bulletproof as possible. The more reliable, the greater the

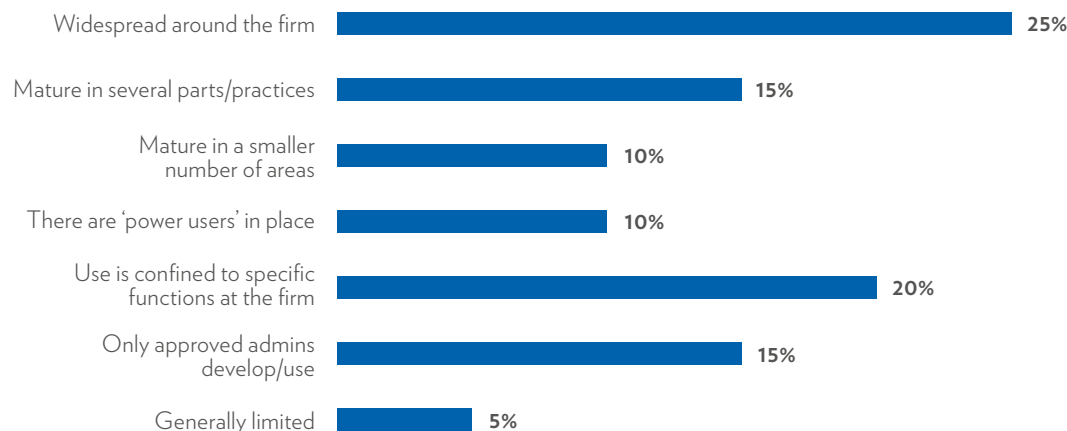
Two-fifths of leaders say the firm already has agents in pilot for specific teams, if not already fully deployed in workflows — more than indicate that these are still at a ‘conceptual’ stage

How would you describe the firm’s current position on genAI agents?



One quarter of these also describe their adoption as widespread around the firm

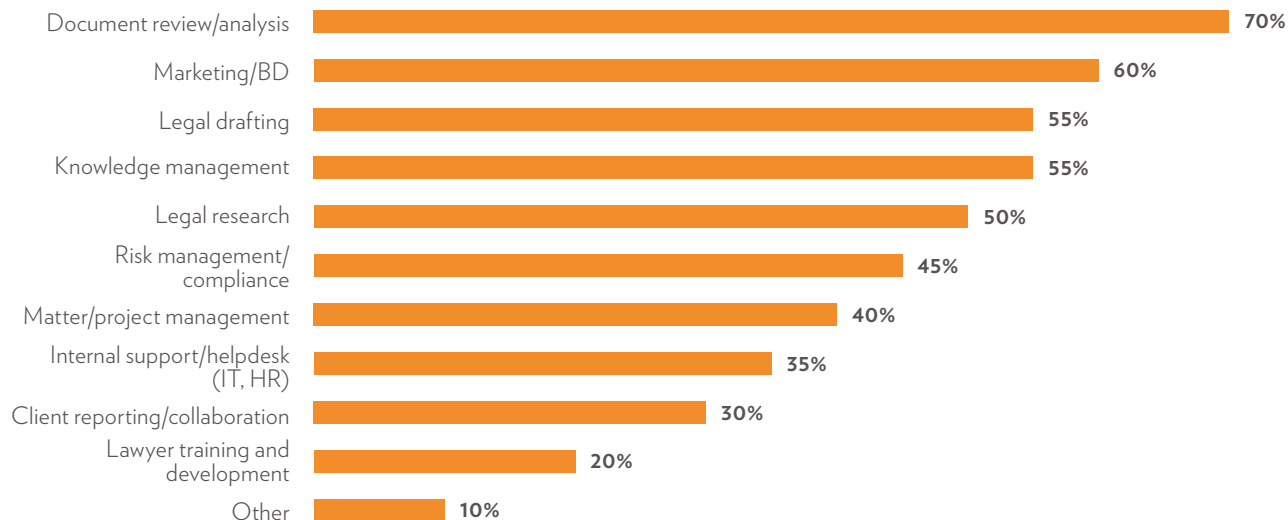
Whether already deploying or experimenting, how would you describe the use of these tools?



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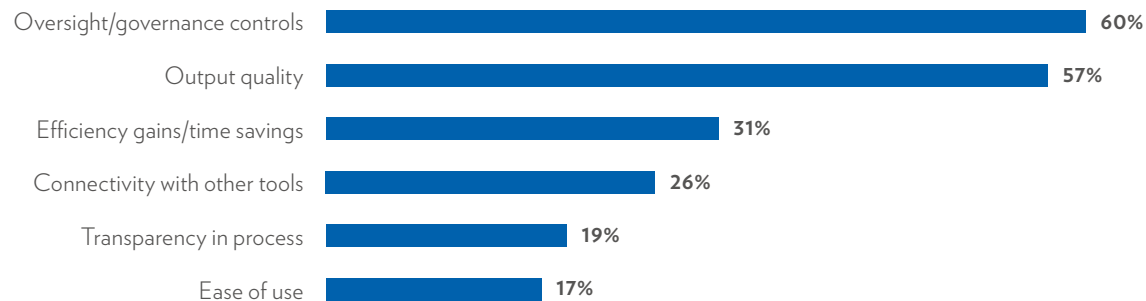
Half or more of leaders say the firm is developing or exploring use cases across document review, drafting, research, knowledge management and business development

In which areas is the firm currently exploring or developing agents? Choose all that apply



Effective human oversight of agents is the factor most leaders will prioritise before implementation — twice as many as believe efficiency gains are most important

Which TWO factors are most important when evaluating potential agentic genAI tools?



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quality and consistency of agentic output. Then it can start to add real value in quality of output but also time and efficiency savings.”

OUTPUT OVER EFFICIENCIES

Indeed, it's striking that leaders are much more likely to pick strong output quality (57%) than potential efficiency gains (31%) as a top priority when evaluating these opportunities — and clearly appropriate oversight and control is the factor that features most prominently in discussions and decision-making. In passing work to agents, additional human responsibility and review is likely to be required elsewhere. A third say they have already made some changes to governance, and over half (57%) are reviewing the situation (p9). Agents may touch more systems and information repositories to complete tasks effectively than AI assistants — by extension they may also need more controls. Agents can be restricted not only from accessing systems or sources, but also in terms of the actions permitted where this access is granted. A human, of course, should carefully establish the parameters within which AI can operate and provide the supervision and points of potential intervention. At the same time, where deployment/use is not limited to named individuals, firms may need to invest in new types of training and a communication programme to increase awareness and appreciation of agent best practice.

RESPONSIBILITY UNDER REVIEW

Maurice Tunney, director of technology and

innovation at Keystone Law, says: “Everyone assumes a human is reviewing output before it goes anywhere, which is the current safety net. Once an agent is carrying out numerous connected actions — triaging correspondence, scheduling, maybe even sending routine communications — without a human touching each step, the question of who is professionally responsible for this action becomes a lot more difficult to answer. Firms will need very clear rules about which categories of action require human sign-off versus those that can run autonomously. They will also need a full audit trail of what the agent did and why, as regulators and insurers will ask for it.”

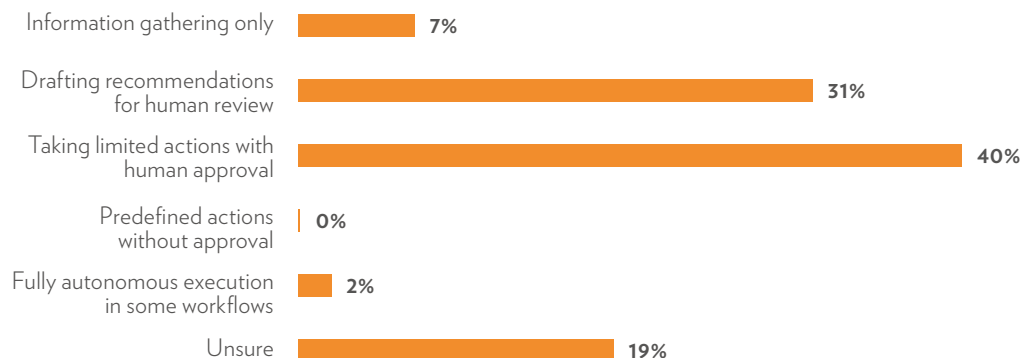
Aileen Johnson, director of knowledge at Charles Russell Speechlys, says: “The challenge is to keep thinking far ahead and it will be increasingly important to keep other issues in mind at every step, such as confidentiality, privilege and data protection. Each can be complex in the context of working with AI agents.

“Firms need practical, role-specific guidance in addition to policies and templates. For real benefits to be delivered to clients this means having those responsible for agent development truly embedded within fee-earning teams.”

Morgan agrees: “The human side of the equation needs to understand ‘what good looks like’ and be able to quickly identify irregular output before that goes in front of a client. Longer term, there are some interesting questions around training of junior fee earners and how we inject that knowledge into them when automation has replaced some of the

Most leaders believe agents should still be restricted to taking human-approved actions or less — with almost one fifth unsure how much autonomy to extend

What level of autonomy do you currently feel confident giving to an agent?



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A third have already made some changes to their governance frameworks to ensure agent control

Has the firm made changes to any governance frameworks or resourcing to ensure processes, control levels and auditability are right for agentic work?



valuable experience-building work.

“Potentially, agentic AI will lessen the need to be brilliant at prompting, but technical fluency, critical thinking, judgement and supervision of AI-enabled workflows will likely rapidly become core professional skills.” 

“Firms will need very clear rules about which categories of action require human sign-off versus those that can run autonomously.”

MAURICE TUNNEY, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, KEYSTONE LAW

WORKFLOWS WANTED

Capability in workflow-building is second only to multi-system integration on leaders' genAI wishlists, and one third already see at least a moderate impact on their margins

After integration with other core firm management systems, AI leaders are most likely to report seeing value in 'practice-specific workflows and playbooks' (72%) — ahead of the discussed 'next-gen' agentic deployment (67%). In short, they want tools that will sit inside the way that legal work is institutionally managed, governed and delivered, embedded in the wider world of matter management, for example, woven into how knowledge systems surface what lawyers need to take next steps in the moment, and easily in reach across document lifecycles. It's a strong signal the next phase of defining and mining genAI value is indeed likely to be a workflow-led one. Leaders want AI to connect to how different practices actually work, contributing through specific repeatable steps. Emphasis is moving from the individual lawyer experimenting, continually learning and identifying what works for their work types,

to-do lists and cognitive preferences — within the parameters permitted — to scaling up consistently structured, repeatable processes.

CONNECTED CAPABILITY

But the fact integration is particularly highly valued also seems significant (p11). Leaders appear to acknowledge AI must become part of the legal operating environment, not another disconnected tool. Integration with practice management, document management, knowledge and collaboration systems could reduce inefficient duplication, improve understanding of context across those systems and perhaps strengthen governance in the process if there is sufficient visibility.

Kam Patel, commercial and innovation director, residential development, at Gateley Legal, says: "AI is only as useful as the information it can securely access. The majority of valuable information sits within case,

document and practice management systems. If AI cannot interact seamlessly with these, fee earners find manual workarounds, reducing both efficiency and adoption.

"Integrated systems help to ensure consistency, reduce duplication, improve governance and maintain robust audit trails. Importantly, clients expect firms to manage their information securely and responsibly, and integrated AI solutions also help to provide the controls and transparency needed to meet those expectations."

LIMITED PLAYBOOKS IN PLACE

Although firms are identifying legal domain-specific genAI workflow use cases, they appear still to be relatively early in the journey. The majority say that playbooks are available for up to 10% of use cases (p12), just a quarter that it's between 11 and 40%, although 6% appear to be much further along than the others (perhaps

connected to work type, client mix or available resources). Examples that were given by research respondents include due diligence in contract review, legal and client industry research, creation of timelines and application to business service workloads such as pitch/bid building and reviewing service level agreements.

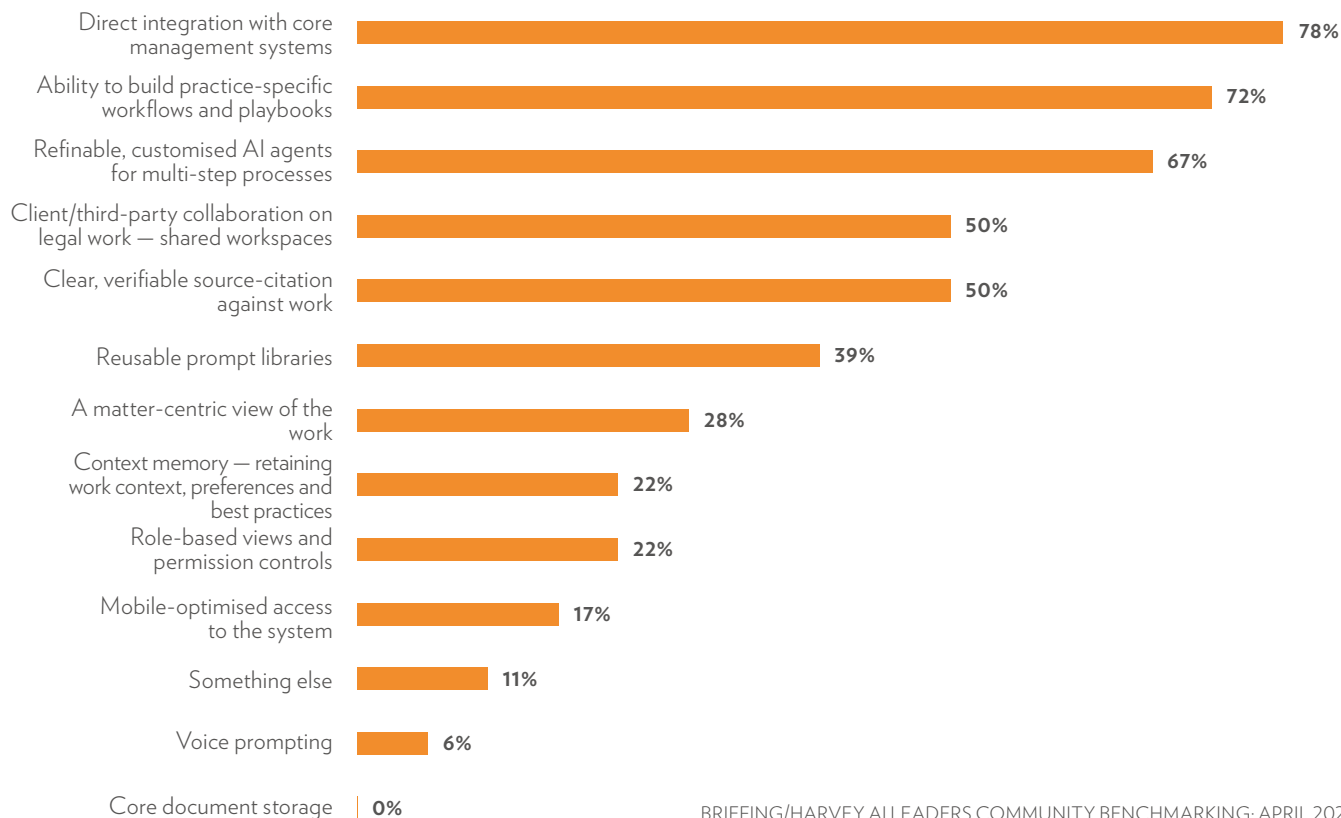
MARGINAL COMMERCIAL GAINS?

Connected to this, management of the commercial impact of genAI-enabled workflows is also uneven across the market. The most likely response is that there has been only a minimal impact on either pricing strategy or margin movement to date (50%) — although fewer than one fifth (19%) would say there has been no impact at all (p12). Significant or transformative effects on the business model are clearly unusual as yet. Firms may not feel they have enough measurement data to reprice many services. They may also be cautious about changing commercial models without better understanding how clients will react and how best to price for ‘value’ rather than time taken. The variable levels of activity highlighted in the graph on p5 shows that the sector is evaluating and investing in new delivery capability faster than it’s changing the fundamental economics of legal service.

Catherine Jackson, head of knowledge and chair of the innovation group at Clarke Willmott, says: “We’ve implemented a structured way to start to capture use case successes, and so assess return on investment.

More than multi-step AI agents, almost three-quarters of leaders indicate they want more progress in the creation of practice-specific workflows or playbooks for people to follow and so scale adoption

Which of these features do you, or would you, MOST value in legal domain-specific AI tools?



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And that isn’t just measuring efficiency, it’s also feedback — from partners as well as their clients about the perception of quality improvement.

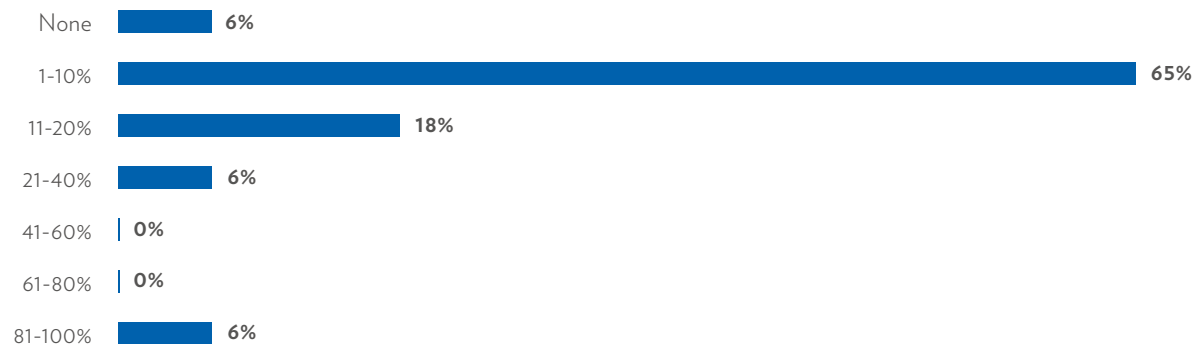
“But at the moment the priority is helping people to become confident and competent in using the technology, as that really is a bedrock

“We’ve implemented a structured way to start to capture use case successes, and so assess return on investment.”

CATHERINE JACKSON, HEAD OF KNOWLEDGE,
CLARKE WILLMOTT

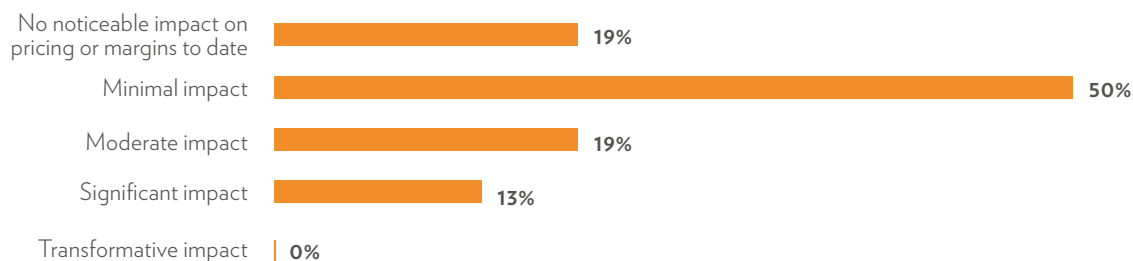
Around two-thirds of leaders say the firm already has playbooks in place for up to one in 10 legal-specific genAI use cases that people are adopting

Approximately how many of the legal domain-specific genAI use cases your firm has identified now have at least some playbooks (or similar process guides) available to drive more consistent adoption?



One third of leaders say workflow-building is already having at least a ‘moderate’ effect on some pricing conversations or outcomes

To what extent has the adoption of genAI-enabled workflows affected pricing expectations or margins at your firm?



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skill of the future.”

Innovation champions will share examples of successes seen at a weekly ‘drop-in’, for example. However, this could be as simple as an individual lawyer explaining a substantial time saving experienced in the course of their work — while she finds those that are outlined in a regular CEO update may “lead others to feel like they’re missing a trick and ask for their own access”.

Team-specific feedback sessions then take on a more interactive workshop format, and she adds: “There’s a role for knowledge lawyers in the knowledge sharing — focused on understanding use on very specific matters and what has worked best in practice. These could include building a particular playbook.”

TASKS AND TIME ON TRIAL

Drew Winlaw, global large language model (LLM) lead at Simmons & Simmons, adds: “Traditional measurement of ROI is complicated by the fact that no two matters are exactly alike and often have different data and different issues at stake. Establishing a direct comparison often requires additional resource and can be difficult to do in a meaningful way.

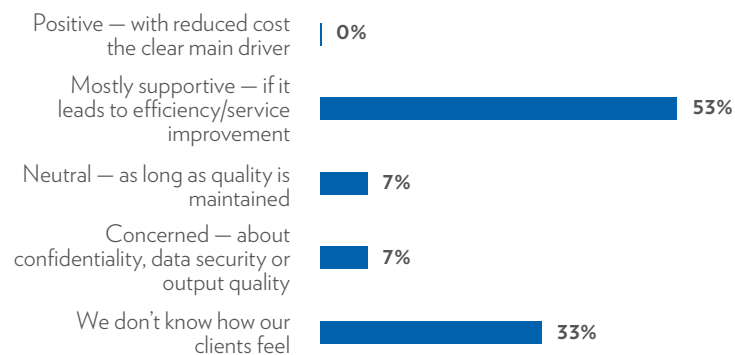
“Workflows are where it becomes more interesting. Where there is a series of connected, repeatable tasks, you can gain interesting information about the process and time inputs needed in each phase. Then you can more sensibly look at some questions about relative time saved. 

A CHANGING VIEW OF VALUE

More leaders identify improved outcomes for their clients as the very best marker of rollout success, rather than time savings achieved by individuals

One third admit they don't know how clients feel about new opportunities for collaboration using genAI

Do you know how your clients feel about collaborating on legal work using a platform that includes genAI-augmented workflows?



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It's now possible for firms to collaborate with clients on parts of work using common platforms in real time — for example, as well as more efficient drafting of documents or updates with multi-party access, they could work together to develop and manage triggered chains of approval, set up shared libraries with details of past work, and establish key terms for reuse that genAI can recognise and apply in the correct context. More collaborative legal project management could also be a big beneficiary, such as offering more transparency around major milestones in a piece of work, perhaps with decisions to be made, to deliver on the overall goal. One leader says that they would also value the opportunity for more shared “management information about matter data, such as fees and hours progress”.

KNOW YOUR CLIENTS?

However, while half of leaders say clients are

broadly supportive of this idea if it clearly leads to some tangible improvement for them, a third simply don't know how their own firm's clients would feel about such an approach.

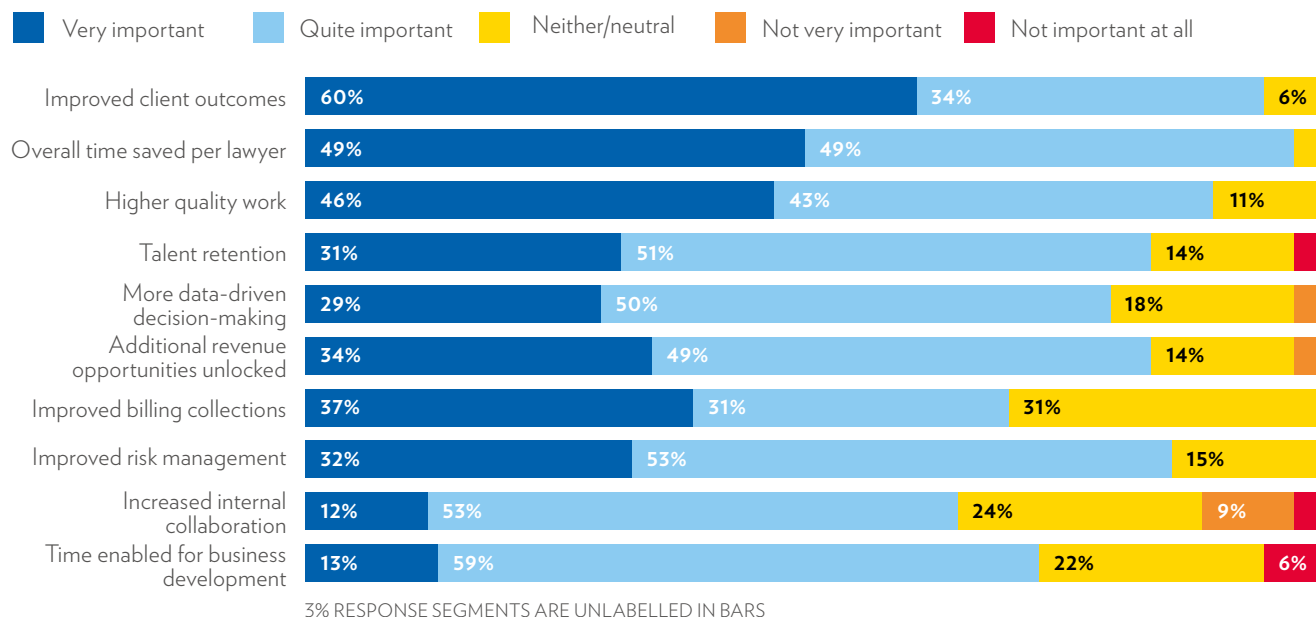
This potentially points to a need for more proactive or structured client engagement and listening around appetite for introducing more AI-augmented ways of working. Although only 7% believe that their client base is predominantly “concerned” about paths their data takes with such processes and/or the final quality produced, it's possible firms will need to offer greater reassurance or information when it comes to features such as audit trails of the different contributions, information barriers, permissions and policy compliance. Clients may welcome higher-value work, however that manifests, but of course they also expect reassurance that any AI-enabled delivery of it is fully secure, verifiable and professionally supervised to guard against error.

COSTS IN QUESTION

More generally, it's clear to see that AI capability and approach is a discussion point firms must be able to satisfy when invited to pitch for work or during other appointment conversations and

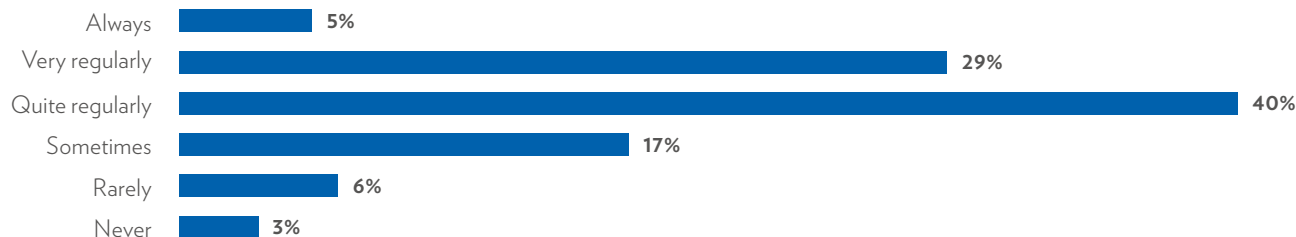
Three-fifths of leaders indicate the most important possible result of any AI implementation project is better outcomes for their clients — half say time saved is only ‘quite important’

How important are these results as measures/markers of a successful AI implementation for your firm?



One third find clients will ask for information about investments/choices as part of the pitch or other process for awarding work very regularly — fewer than one in 10 say it is a rare occurrence

To what extent are clients asking about your AI capability/investments when inviting to pitch and deciding whether to work with you or appoint your firm?



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negotiation. Although only 5% say clients will absolutely ‘always’ ask for details of the firm’s position, more than two-thirds (69%) say they will do so either very or quite regularly. Under a fifth (17%) suggest this only happens ‘sometimes’.

Susan Ford, knowledge director at DAC Beachcroft, says: “Clients often ask how AI tools can improve operational efficiency, what cost savings those efficiencies deliver, and whether those savings can be passed on. Some clients take a more conservative, risk-averse stance. They seek reassurance about oversight and safeguards against inaccurate outputs, and this can extend to contractual clauses restricting AI use or prohibiting it in sensitive contexts. At the other end of the spectrum, some view AI as a baseline capability. They expect suppliers to be fluent and to proactively demonstrate how it can enhance their outcomes. Some will seek co-development opportunities.”

PRICING PARTNERS AND OUTCOMES

It can’t be denied — according to this research — that the average client’s leading concern is the impact they could expect to see on the final price paid. Almost half (48%) of leaders find clients apply more weight to this than any other single factor (p15). It is then a significant drop down to the fifth who believe data handling is an even bigger concern. This of course raises questions about how proactively firms are adapting their pricing models in response.

Catherine Jackson, head of knowledge and

chair of the innovation group at Clarke Willmott, says her team will frequently share the clearest use cases and any playbooks created with the finance team too – for example, around the average time a piece of work like a lease review takes and proportion of the team that is using an AI tool for that. She explains: “We’ll then prioritise particular partners and teams for considering the pricing impact of a use case and how they could help to change some conversations with clients. It might not change the entire model; there may be a fixed-fee or value-based element for specific tasks.”

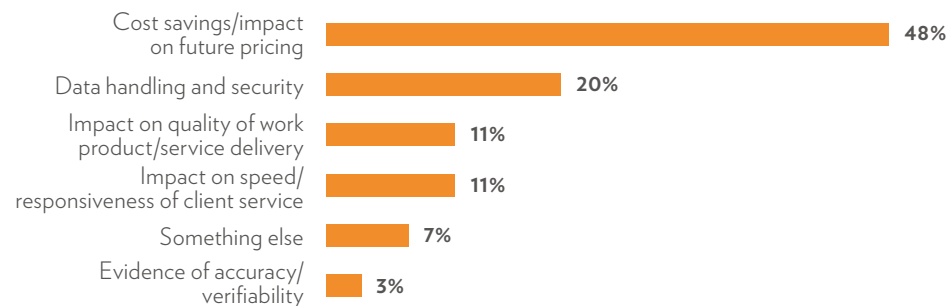
Kam Patel, commercial and innovation director at Gateley Legal, says: “Firms that embrace AI effectively will be able to deliver routine work more efficiently, allowing client-facing teams to dedicate more time to strategic advice, negotiation and risk management. The real opportunity is not reducing fees, but redefining what clients receive for those fees.”

Drew Winlaw, global LLM lead at Simmons & Simmons, adds: “Firms and clients will achieve the best outcomes by working together to make the most of technology. Excessive pressure on costs can be counterproductive, and the normal operation of a competitive market should ensure good value.

“More interesting than efficiency alone is using the technology to consider what more you could do for a client. Can we know more? Could we check from more angles? If this can be done at a viable cost, that creates real value.” 

Even if firms are most focused on AI successfully changing client outcomes, cost impact is the question most commonly heard from clients themselves

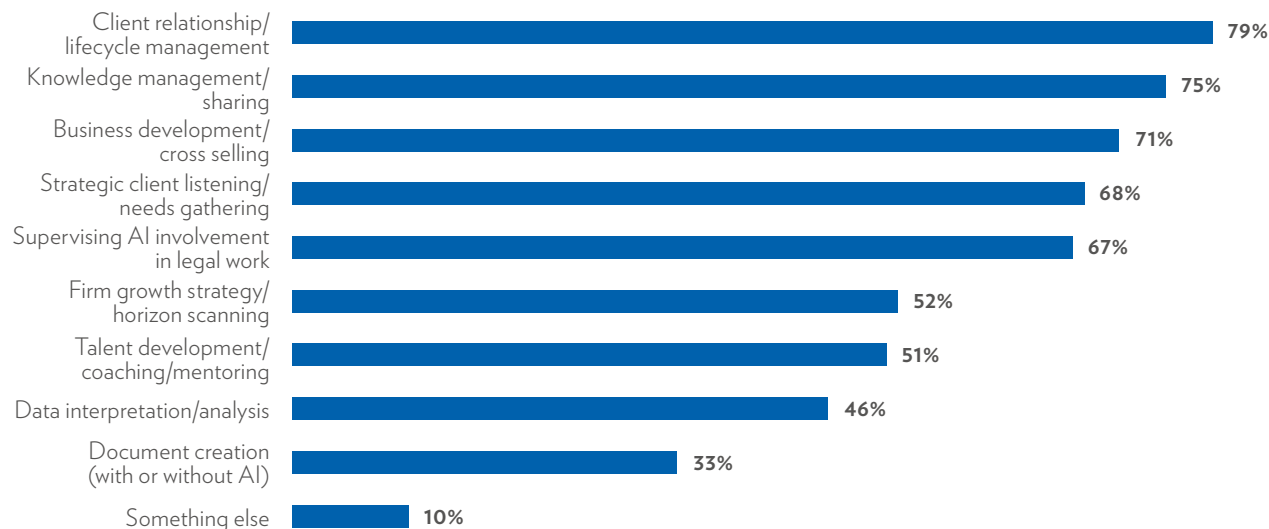
Which ONE factor do you find clients apply most weight to when asking your firm about genAI?



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Leaders believe the lawyer role will have more client and collaboration focus if genAI leads to the expected set of opportunities for business improvement

Where will lawyers in your firm be contributing more within three years if you get benefit from implementing genAI tools?



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Harvey II

Harvey Works *The Way You Do*

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Context

Outputs

Memories

Sources

- ⌘ Always use concise nontechnical lang...
- ⌘ User's team usually pushes back on so...
- ⌘ The document does not outline negoti...
- ⌘ When summarizing terms, put in a tabl...
- ⌘ Frame recommendations in terms of c...