

LEGALTECHTALK

LEGALTECHTALK 2024 WRAP-UP REPORT

A complete overview of what was
discussed at LegalTechTalk 2024,
Europe's event for Legal Transformation
- insights from 300+ industry leaders

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FOREWORD

It is with great enthusiasm that I present the wrap-up report from LegalTechTalk 2024, an event that has already begun to reshape the legal industry on a global scale. As the CEO of LegalTechTalk, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the transformative discussions and innovations that emerged from this inaugural conference. The insights captured in this report are not just a summary of the event; they represent a blueprint for the future of legal practice.

LegalTechTalk 2024 brought together over 300 speakers & 2,500 attendees from 65 countries, offering a diverse and comprehensive perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the legal profession today. With more than 90 panels, fireside chats, and keynotes, the conference served as a melting pot of ideas, where legal professionals from law firms, in-house teams, and LegalTech startups could share their experiences and visions for the future.

The report you see before you is the culmination of these discussions, providing key takeaways that are essential for anyone involved in the legal industry. Whether you are a legal professional within a law firm, an in-house counsel, or a LegalTech entrepreneur, the insights captured here will help you navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of our profession.

One of the most striking themes that emerged from LegalTechTalk 2024 was the imperative for change and transformation. Across every session, speakers highlighted the need for the legal industry to evolve in response to technological advancements, shifting client expectations, and broader societal changes. From the rise of generative AI to the increasing importance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations, the legal profession is at a crossroads. Those who embrace these changes will be well-positioned to lead their organisations into the future.

For law firms, the discussions centred on the evolving client-attorney relationship, the future of the billable hour, and the need for greater efficiency. As the report highlights, the traditional ways of doing business are being challenged like never before. Law firm leaders must now consider how to implement AI effectively, rethink billing practices, and better understand their clients' businesses to provide superior service. The insights shared by our speakers offer practical advice on how to navigate these challenges and seize new opportunities.

In-house counsel are also facing unprecedented challenges as they grapple with the demands of digital transformation and the need to become strategic advisors within their organisations. The report captures the wisdom of industry leaders who are pioneering new approaches to legal work, from leveraging AI in contract management to building cultures of innovation within their teams. These insights are invaluable for any general counsel looking to stay ahead of the curve.

Finally, for LegalTech entrepreneurs, the conference provided a glimpse into the future of Legal Technology and the investment trends that will shape the industry in the years to come. As the report illustrates, there is a growing recognition that technology is not just a tool for efficiency but a driver of strategic value. Entrepreneurs who can harness the power of technology to solve real-world legal problems will find themselves at the forefront of this exciting and rapidly changing industry.

In closing, I want to emphasise that this report is more than just a reflection on what was discussed at LegalTechTalk 2024. It is a call to action for all legal professionals to embrace the opportunities presented by change. The legal industry is on the brink of a revolution, and those who are prepared to innovate and adapt will be the ones who not just thrive in the years ahead, but also to have the best chance of surviving (think Kodak, Blockbuster & Blackberry).



I encourage you to read this report with an open mind and a readiness to take action. The insights contained within these pages are not just for reflection but for implementation. Whether you are leading a law firm, guiding an in-house team, or developing the next big thing in LegalTech, the time to act is now. Together, we can drive the legal profession forward into a new era of innovation and excellence and thus help drive positive change within society as a whole.

BRADLEY COLLINS
CEO, LegalTechTalk

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing how the insights from LegalTechTalk 2024 will inspire change in your practice.

Until next year... when we will come back with a bigger event and an even more insightful wrap up report.

A NOTE FROM OUR REPORT PARTNERS

PAUL WALKER, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF SOLUTION OUTCOMES, IMANAGE

A revolution in the legal industry is underway, and it was vividly on display at LegalTechTalk 2024, where AI experts offered fascinating insights into how the technology landscape is evolving around us. As a trusted technology partner to the legal industry for over 25 years, we at iManage share the excitement around AI and its power to transform how the industry works.

We also appreciate that the human element is an essential part of the legal profession and will not—and should not—be removed from the equation. iManage has developed our AI solutions with an intense focus on the human component and with the goal of empowering legal professionals, regardless of their role or the size of their team, to perform their day-to-day work more efficiently.

Tailored to meet the specific needs of the legal industry and developed based on feedback from partners around the globe, iManage AI services are natively integrated within the iManage knowledge work platform, which is already in use today by more than one million professionals worldwide. Thanks to the transformative power of AI, iManage AI introduces new ways to more efficiently manage documents and emails, protect vital information assets, and access and share knowledge.

There was a sense of optimism throughout LegalTechTalk 2024, and it was thanks in large part to the detailed vision shared by speakers of how technology can work in tandem with legal professionals to create better outcomes

for everyone. Their vision: the right LegalTech should streamline workflows and introduce efficiencies that make it easier for legal professionals to reinvest more of their efforts into the tasks that truly demand their expertise.

We at iManage share that vision and look forward to continuing to collaborate with the industry in the spirit of continuing the intelligent, responsible application of AI to strengthen our shared goal of moving the legal industry forward.



MARK O'CONNOR, PARTNER AND GLOBAL CO-CHAIR OF TECHNOLOGY, DLA PIPER

It was a privilege to partner with LegalTechTalk on their inaugural event. There was a tangible buzz of excitement around the possibilities of LegalTech throughout the two days. But not without a healthy dose of scepticism and concern for the practicalities around this transformational time. The setting allowed a great opportunity for speakers to share their views from how to practically select and implement the right tools, to ethical decision-making and important regulations in the legal industry and beyond.

Reflecting over the conference, it became clear that it's not just about implementing the latest technology as quickly as possible, but making sure that the human qualities that are needed are taken into consideration. Empathising and being curious with your clients about what's at the heart of their challenges; understanding your values and how to make life better for the people delivering the work; and the power of communicating that change in a simple and transparent way.

There will always be a need and role for legal professionals, and by thinking innovatively and utilising LegalTech tools proactively we can make a positive impact on the legal industry. My hope for the future with LegalTech is to have more time to think.

Thank you to LegalTechTalk for hosting this conference and fostering such meaningful discussions as well as building new relationships – looking forward to the next one!



THE MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS OF THE YEAR



LegalTechTalk 2024 hosted more than 300 speakers, with participants coming from across the globe and hailing from private practice, in-house, LegalTech start-ups and solutions providers, chambers, consultancies, and many more.

Spanning two days of intense discussion across five simultaneously-running stages, there's no doubt that a lot of topics were tackled – meaning that no matter which facet of the legal sector you're coming from, there's bound to be something that sparks your interest.

Across the conference, approaches to ESG and generative AI were front and centre, with multiple sessions debating the myriad concerns and opportunities. Some of the biggest topics of the year socially and politically also made their way onto the agenda, including sessions diving into the Post Office scandal, the digital divide and access to justice, the Ukraine war, and aligning law with business and social transformation.

Above all else, the common thread linking up every single session across the two days was that of change and transformation. Speakers debated the intersection between law, technology and culture, the evolving role of general counsels, shifts in legal education and the roles of the future lawyer, the current and incoming leadership challenges in the industry, and many, many more.

From a private practice perspective – the most significant topics focused on issues like the future of the billable hour, the challenges faced by law firm leaders, how to successfully implement AI in a law firm, the future of navigating client-attorney relationships, and more.

For the in-house crowd, speakers discussed how GCs can think more like start-ups, which LegalTech tools are the must-haves, and how to navigate AI innovation within their own departments.

ON THE MINDS OF LAW FIRMS...

Today, law firm leaders, partners, associates, and business professionals alike are grappling with a myriad of challenges as well as opportunities. With such a rapidly evolving legal landscape, we dove into some of the most prescient questions on the minds of private practitioners.

HOW WILL THE CLIENT-ATTORNEY RELATIONSHIP LOOK IN THE FUTURE?

Traditionally, an easy distinction between US and UK-based law firms has been the way that they handle their client relationships. But, this may now be changing – with a move away from key partners keeping their best relationships private.

The role of the 'trusted advisor', historically withheld for only the most revered lawyers, in possession of long-standing personal relationships with their clients, is also expanding.



"Historically, the divide has been that US law firms tend to focus more around one partner getting the relationship, versus UK law firms having more of an institutional approach. I think this is all merging... the holy grail is still to be a rainmaker, but not only to bring work for yourself, but also for others in the firm", says **Jonathon Salvadoray**, CEO at Zaven.

Chris Grant, Head of Legal Market Engagement at HSBC, also noted the move away from individual relationships: "We're not just buying into the individual, we're buying into the firm. It's a very deep and very engaged relationship we have with our firms."

"Many lawyers see themselves as trusted advisors... but my view now is that it's not just lawyers who hold these trusted roles. Until around 5-10 years ago, law firms were very traditional in the way that they were delivering legal services, and partners tended to lead those relationships. What I'm seeing now, and what I'm trying to promote in the industry, is a multidisciplinary approach, where data scientists, designers, business people and technologists all hold those trusted roles as well", says **Peter Lee**, CEO at Simmons Wavelength.

HOW CAN MY LAW FIRM WIN MORE CLIENTS?

Winning more clients begins with changing the way your lawyers are trained right from the outset, with a much more significant focus on law as a business. Rather than simply teaching junior lawyers to do the work put in front of them, their training should focus on the business side of law – essentially – lawyers (before they become partners) – need to be taught how to win work. Statistically, going for more work from your existing book of business, rather than constantly chasing the next big client, can also be much more lucrative as a means of winning more work.

Other than that, lawyers can tend to shy away from personal branding, which is something they should be getting a lot more comfortable with, particularly with the growing importance of LinkedIn and even the likes of social media apps like Instagram and TikTok. Though some law firms do now make use of these platforms, individual lawyers, not only for their own sake, but also for the sake of their firm, should be leveraging them much more.



“Lawyers aren’t taught that law is a business. We’re taught from day one to do the work that’s put in front of us, and that if we keep doing more and more of that, we’ll rise through the ranks... it’s only when you get to partnership that they ask you to go and win work”, says **Scott Simmons**, Legal Trainer and Coach at Legal Balance.

He added: “Research shows that it’s six to seven times cheaper to win more work from existing clients than it is to win new work from brand new clients... your success rate and your ability to build your confidence in the market is so much greater through a customer base who knows who you are, than it is when going straight for new business opportunities.”

Sally Craxton, Regional Vice President of Professional Service at Salesforce, says on individual branding:

“Leverage social media, whether that’s Instagram or LinkedIn, or whichever. Every time you say no to [using] social media, you’re saying no to a free means of reaching thousands and thousands of people... I think law firms that don’t leverage their partners’ personal profiles are doing themselves a disservice.”



“We all get the shiny toy syndrome. ‘Oh look, there’s a new client – let’s go for them.’ But actually, your solid foundation comes from institutionalising your clients, and having them be your raving fans.”

– **Sally Craxton**,
Regional Vice President of Professional Service at Salesforce

HOW CAN MY FIRM BECOME MORE EFFICIENT, AND PROVIDE OUR CLIENTS WITH A BETTER SERVICE?

Measurement and metrics are increasingly relevant for law firms, particularly when assessing their efficiency. Being data driven not only helps law firms to achieve this, but will also support their ability to adopt new technologies.

When it comes to providing clients with a better service, understanding clients’ businesses will be key, as well as being experts in the law. Other means of innovation, such as alternative fee arrangements, will also become ever more important.



“Law firms are bad at measuring things full stop, including efficiency”, says **Dan Hoadley**, Head of R&D at vLex. “The revolution that we’re seeing at the moment with genAI, I think, has thrown into even starker focus just how unprepared law firms are at understanding what they actually do.”

If you’re considering implementing any kind of tech to become more efficient, he notes that it’ll only work if you’re sure it’s flexible. In litigation, for example, “very often, what solves the problem for matter A probably won’t adapt well to matter B. Don’t fall into the trap of saying if we can define the process, we’ve got it all solved. In my experience, that doesn’t go very far.”

Another way to truly track efficiency and drive change from that is through internal data, says **Adeniyi Adebayo**, Chief Technology Officer at Bennett Jones. “You have to leverage your internal data. I’ve not seen a single tool out there in my 25 years of working in law that allows lawyers to actually track their efficiency.”

Kristóf Ferenczi, Managing Partner at Kinstellar, says “it’s a mindset change we really need to achieve. It concerns the practice of law itself, because law firms by definition are conservative places, conservative organisations. We have a ‘this is how we used to do it’ approach, and think of that as a guarantee of success. As a matter of fact, **the practice of law firms and their delivery of legal services are fundamentally challenged at the moment.**”



“One thing that would really drive change”, says **Daniel Halmer**, Founder and Managing Director of CONNY, is fixed fee arrangements. “But, for as long as clients don’t ask for this kind of fee arrangement, there’s no real merit in driving efficiency and changing the business model.”



“The expectation from sophisticated clients who are undergoing transformation, is that their professional advisers need to be on that journey with them. They need to be able to advise in that same context, to say we’re familiar with the change, the same struggles, and we’re going through it with you.”

– **Jeremy Coleman**
Director of Innovation, Norton Rose Fulbright

HOW SHOULD I APPROACH THE BILLABLE HOUR ISSUE?

Many law firms continue to rely on the billable hour model as the foundation upon which to measure individual performance and revenue. Although the billable hour may never disappear entirely, law firms who are interested in maintaining strong client relationships will need to show that they are at least somewhat progressing in this area, whether that be through the traditional model being augmented by alternative fee arrangements, or whether that means simply being more transparent about the numbers involved.



"I don't think the billable hour is going to die... It has a place, but we can augment that with subscription models or fixed-pricing models, fee models that involve sharing success. We have a range of different tools in our box at radar, but we still do have a place for the billable hour. It's just one item on a fixed to mixed sliding scale, so that we give clients choice as to how they choose to pay for different types of service", says **Gary Gallen**, Founder and CEO at Rradar.

Would an outcome-based approach make more sense? "To me, it's a matter of 'quote the right fee for the outcome that the client wants, understand the client's priority and what it is they want to achieve in a timely fashion,'" says **Gary**.

For **Shruti Ajitsaria**, Head of Fuse at Allen & Overy, "the billable hour discussion is often about bargaining power with a client. Some clients say they'll never pay for trainee time, so then all of a sudden the law firm is effectively incentivised to not let a trainee do the trainee work."

But, the incentive might lie in the potential damage to the client relationship. "A lot of it is that **they can see that we're not changing fast enough**", says **Tamara**, adding: "If we bring competitive tension into that relationship, then we law firms are forced to think harder about how we deliver value."



"It's been flogged longer than the proverbial dead horse, and it's been talked about since I entered the profession. So I think it will remain."



"There's an assumption that the billable hour allows you to deliver some kind of transparency - it's just an hourly rate. But, I think the biggest issue is how we're measuring value. **Often, because lawyers hate talking about money, we don't find out about those red lines and those real value issues until we've crossed them** or until we're really in a space where clients are forcing those conversations. I think there's a lot of work to be done in that back and forth, figuring out whose value we are actually trying to measure."

- **Tamara Box**
Former Managing Partner and Head of Structured Finance at Reed Smith

ON THE MINDS OF IN-HOUSE COUNSEL...

HOW SHOULD GCS ADAPT TO THEIR SHIFTING LANDSCAPE AND INCREASED USE OF TECHNOLOGY?

General Counsels are facing a rapidly changing landscape due to technological advancements such as AI, and an unpredictable economic and political environment. To adapt, GCs must embrace these changes and lead digital transformation efforts within their legal teams. This involves rethinking traditional approaches to legal work and training, including developing new skills such as legal prompting for AI tools.

The adaptation process is not just a technical challenge but a strategic imperative. GCs need to position their legal departments as forces for innovation within the business, building trust and demonstrating their ability to keep pace with and support business objectives. Furthermore, this presents a prime opportunity to elevate the office of the GC to be seen as partners in growth and innovation rather than just risk mitigators. This shift requires a balance between leveraging new technologies and maintaining professional standards and ethics.



"As long as the legal department is able to show that we know the business and we follow the business, we can be forces for innovation instead of the opposite."

- **Eleonora Melato**
General Counsel - Corporate & Commercial at Generali

"We have to do more, we have to do faster. We have to do with less resources."

- **Anastasiya Shkarina**
General Counsel - Beauty & Wellbeing at Unilever



HOW CAN IN-HOUSE LEADERS BUILD A CULTURE OF INNOVATION?

Building innovative legal teams requires a multifaceted approach that aligns innovation efforts with business priorities. In-house leaders should set innovation-related objectives for team members and encourage creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. This involves shifting the perspective of legal teams from risk management to business enablement.

The composition of legal teams is also changing to drive innovation. Leaders are incorporating diverse backgrounds, including technologists, paralegals, and project managers. There's also a growing focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to bring varied perspectives and foster innovation. Giving team members strategic projects that contribute to company growth can help cultivate an innovative mindset.



"Innovation isn't just a buzzword. It's a critical driver for success."

- **Lewis Bowman**
Director - Axiom

"The function of legal is not risk management. It's business enabling. If we have this other perspective, it opens so much innovation."

- **Peter Wozny**
Senior Legal Counsel at Btomorrow Ventures

"Every single one of my team members that has joined has been given the strategic projects that help the company grow, whether it is helping us apply for a certain licence in a certain jurisdiction, helping us problem solve regulatory issues and payments in the US, launching into new countries or implementing LegalTech."

- **Yara Owayyed**
General Counsel at YouLend

HOW CAN IN-HOUSE TEAMS ADAPT TO THE DIGITAL FUTURE?

Adapting to the digital future requires a strategic and measured approach. In-house teams should start by understanding business needs and processes before implementing LegalTech solutions. It's crucial to define the problems you're trying to solve and desired outcomes before selecting tools. Communication throughout the transformation process is vital, engaging with team members to get buy-in and understand their needs.

A practical approach involves starting small, prioritising efforts, and considering leveraging existing enterprise tools before investing in new legal-specific technology.

Teams should challenge assumptions about current work processes to identify areas for improvement. While AI offers powerful capabilities, it's important to be realistic about its limitations and ensure proper implementation and management. Securing budget for LegalTech can be challenging, requiring creative approaches and clear demonstration of business value.



"I think it's about getting everyone on the journey. So creating excitement around how things are going to be better for the business but also for legal and commercial as well."

- **Kate Tyers**
Global Legal Director at Ricardo Plc

"I think the legal team needs to be flexible. They need to be prepared to change their ways because that's where we are heading anyway."

- **Andrej Sovik**
Head of Legal - Europe at Howden Industries

"I think if you as a team should start asking yourself what is it we want to do and not be led by the technology."

- **Alex Herrity**
Director of Legal Solutions at Adidas

HOW CAN AI BE USED TO IMPROVE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT?

AI presents exciting opportunities in the contracting process, offering potential for time savings, improved efficiency, and the ability to focus on higher-value work. It's important to recognise that contracting is a business process involving multiple stakeholders, not just the legal department. Therefore, successful implementation of AI in contracting requires collaboration across departments.

One of the key benefits of AI and digitisation in contracting is the ability to extract valuable business insights from contract data that were previously difficult or impossible to obtain. This can provide a strategic advantage and help legal teams contribute more directly to business objectives. However, it's crucial to approach AI implementation thoughtfully, considering the potential risks and ensuring proper governance.



"Well over half of the member companies in our association acknowledge there is a real lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities in the contracting process."

- Tim Cummins
President at World Commerce & Contracting

"Lawyers are very intelligent, very articulate. But the reality is a lot of the work that lawyers have to do is really low value, admin work a lot of the time. Lawyers don't need to be doing that type of work."

- Peter Duffy
Founder & LegalTech Innovation Consultant at Titans

HOW CAN GCS BECOME STRATEGIC ADVISORS?

To become strategic advisors, GCs need to transition from being purely legal advisors to trusted business partners within their organisations. This involves developing a deep understanding of the business, communicating effectively across all levels of the organisation, and providing commercial insights alongside legal guidance. Building strong relationships with colleagues across the business is crucial, as is the ability to adapt communication styles to different audiences and corporate cultures.

GCs aspiring to be strategic advisors should focus on providing clear, actionable advice rather than just outlining legal risks. This requires developing strong commercial acumen and the ability to contribute to strategic decisions at the executive level. Being proactive, assertive, and demonstrating the value of legal input in business decisions is key. Additionally, GCs must maintain discretion and trust, often acting as the "knower of all things and keeper of all secrets" within the organisation.



"I joke that my job is to be the knower of all things and the keeper of all secrets. But I made sure that smooth decision making happens and that I keep you all on the right side of things whilst simultaneously keeping you focused all the way out on delivering on our strategies."

- Kelly Young
General Counsel at Marie Curie

"I think being able to communicate across the whole of an organisation is massively important... You're talking about being able to talk to everyone across the business in a language that they understand and will appreciate and listen to."

- Francine Godrich
General Counsel at Focusrite

Kelly added: "I'll find in meetings with our executives now that I'll be really pushing and I'll, oddly, be one of the really commercial voices around the table saying, come on, let's be braver."

Francine added: "The key words were can I buy you lunch? And I spent a lot of time early on in my in-house career having lunch with people, talking to them, asking, what do you do? What's important in your role? What disasters have you had? What have you learned from it? And I took that knowledge and then I applied it to other people and that really helped me gain commercial acumen."



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN M&A?

In the digital era M&A activity in the tech sector remains strong, with software M&A forming about 75% of all transactions. However, this landscape is becoming increasingly complex due to heightened regulatory scrutiny, particularly in areas like merger control and foreign direct investment. Early involvement of legal counsel is crucial in international transactions to navigate these regulatory challenges and protect deal timelines.

Due diligence in tech M&A is becoming more intricate, especially regarding AI and data usage. Post-merger integration, particularly in technology and talent retention, is critical for deal success. The deployment of AI solutions in M&A processes presents both opportunities and risks, highlighting the importance of careful implementation and consideration of AI regulations to avoid potential reputational and financial losses, as well as ensuring it's deployed correctly.



"Tech throughout 2023, and absolutely in the first half of 2024 has been a huge bright spot where other sectors have been a little bit more depressed."

- **Laura Ackroyd**
Corporate Partner at Herbert Smith Freehills

"Make sure you get counsel involved really, really early on. Any international transaction contract, anything that you're going to be entering into."

- **Jenny Luckham**
Former Legal Director - Group Commercial Technology, Corporate and M&A at Ascential

"An unprepared deployment of AI solution can expose our company to both reputational and financial losses and highlights the importance of AI regulation."

- **Jessica Leroy**
Group Real Estate & Energy General Counsel at STEF

THE OUTLOOK FOR LEGALTECHS

LEGALTECH INVESTMENT TRENDS

The LegalTech landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, largely driven by advancements in AI technology. These developments are making previously challenging tasks more feasible and cost-effective, leading to increased investor interest in the sector. There's a growing recognition that AI will augment rather than replace lawyers, particularly in tasks involving large-scale information processing. This shift has made LegalTech an increasingly attractive investment area, with some investors even describing it as "sexy" now.

Investment trends in LegalTech are diverging between solutions aimed at large law firms and those targeting increased access to legal services for consumers and small businesses. While selling to law firms can be challenging due to slow adoption rates, consumer-focused LegalTech solutions are seen as potentially offering the biggest investment returns and scaling potential. Investors are particularly interested in "AI agents" that can handle multiple steps in legal processes, viewing these as potential game-changers for law firms and legal departments. Overall, the market is seeking solutions that can scale quickly and provide significant returns.



"AI is not going to kill law firms, AI is going to kill law firms that don't have AI."

- **Raj Kulasingham**
Senior Counsel at Dentons

"I think for the first time lawyers and the legal industry are a little bit afraid of being left behind."

- **Vedika Mehera**
Director of Orrick Labs at Orrick

"I think it's going to be a consumer LegalTech company. I don't think you're going to create a unicorn selling to Orrick."

- **Martin Tobias**
Managing Partner at Incisive Ventures

HOW TO BUILD A LEGALTECH UNICORN: INSIGHTS FROM CHRIS COMBS, CO-FOUNDER AT LINKSQUARES

According to **Chris Combs**, LegalTech founders should prioritise addressing specific pain points or use cases rather than developing broad, general applications. The experience of successful companies like LinkSquares demonstrates the importance of focusing on customer needs and satisfaction as a key driver of growth. This customer-centric approach not only helps in product development but also attracts investor interest and facilitates scaling.

Another crucial focus area for founders is team building and creating the right incentives. Hiring for "start-up aptitude" and offering equity to all employees can help align interests and promote long-term commitment. Additionally, founders should be prepared for a potentially long journey to secure institutional funding, with a focus on revenue and customer growth as key metrics. Embracing new technologies, such as AI and cloud-based solutions, can also provide a competitive edge in the evolving LegalTech market. Ultimately, maintaining a strong focus on solving customer problems and continuously adapting based on feedback appears to be crucial for long-term success in the LegalTech industry.



"We knew that we didn't know all the answers to how to build these tools, and we knew that we needed experts to help us find those answers."

"All the employees at LinkSquares own stock in the company. And we believe that was super important to make sure that people understand that we're building something not just for ourselves and not for our customers, but for all the employees as well."

"It sounds like a broken record, but I do really believe focusing on your customers and working with them as closely as possible is the most powerful thing you can do for your business."

- **Chris Combs**
Co-Founder at LinkSquares

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG)

ESG has become a crucial consideration for businesses across all sectors, with legal teams playing a pivotal role in navigating the complex landscape of ESG regulations and reporting requirements. The evolving nature of ESG presents both challenges and opportunities for legal professionals, who must stay abreast of rapidly changing regulations and stakeholder expectations. Legal teams are increasingly involved in developing ESG strategies, ensuring compliance with disclosure requirements, and managing ESG-related risks.

The implementation of ESG initiatives requires a cross-functional approach, with legal teams collaborating closely with other departments such as finance, operations, and human resources. Legal professionals are tasked with not only ensuring compliance but also helping to drive value creation through ESG initiatives.

This includes advising on sustainable business practices, developing robust governance structures, and helping to align corporate strategies with ESG goals. As ESG continues to gain prominence, legal teams are becoming key strategic partners in shaping their organisations' approach to sustainability and responsible business practices.



"Sustainability is really the broader concept. So as a business, how do we embrace responsible and ethical business practices and balance short term needs of the business against longer term needs of future generations?"

- **Kelly Thomson**
Partner at RPC

"I believe that if you invest responsibly, you're going to get better risk adjusted returns. It's not either or. We've gone past that."

- **David Thompson**
Chief Investment Officer,
Zurich Insurance

GENERATIVE AI: CONCERNS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Technological developments and new tools have, at various junctures in recent history, propelled the legal industry forward – from the dictaphone to email, online dispute resolution automated case management and e-discovery software, to name a few. Since the end of 2022 with the launch of ChatGPT, the advent of generative AI has taken the legal industry by storm – with equal levels of trepidation and excitement informing various approaches to the latest tools.

Although generative AI has, and will continue to, impact the ways of working of the entire legal industry, in-house teams may be under more pressure to deploy them – with reduced budgets adding extra pressure to reducing costs and improving efficiencies.



“iManage agrees with the consensus that the advent of generative AI will have a transformative effect on how legal work gets done. Our focus is on applying AI technologies to solve real-world business challenges and streamline workflows, so professionals have more time to spend on more meaningful work.”

– **Paul Walker**
Senior Director of Solution Outcomes,
iManage



Olivia Vaughan, Head of Legal at RobinAI, says: “For the first time, we have something that’s available to us that is instantaneous. Traditional automation was amazing... when it was the only thing we had.”

Shilpa Bhandarkar, Head of the Client Tech & AI team at Linklaters, says: “It’s so easy to use, almost too easy. I’ve never had a piece of technology that I can give to every single person in my firm, with no extra training needed.”

“One of the most interesting and fun things of the last 18 months or so,” she continued, “has been genuinely collaborating with clients on what we’re seeing, and then we can build a sort of ecosystem together because, at the end of the day, we’re on different sides of the same coin.”

Olivia: “In-house teams do tend to be more stretched. They have less resource, and less budget. The headcount can also be limited. So I think by virtue of that fact, in-house teams are actually under a lot more pressure to explore these generative AI solutions.”

When we can promise efficiencies within a workflow, they’re almost under an obligation to review tools on the market... my phrase regarding generative AI with the current limitations we know, is trust, but verify. It absolutely will speed up your workflow, but we should not rely on it as a complete oracle of total correctness.”

Olivia: “Accuracy is definitely a hugely legitimate concern. But, I think we have to realise what we’re working with – we know that current LLMs hallucinate, we know they sometimes get things wrong. There is inherent bias in them... so defining accuracy here is really important. We know it is not 100% effective, but at RobinAI, we actually benchmark against a human lawyer.”

Daniel Rood, Head of Cloud AI for the UK and Ireland at Google : “AI is probably overhyped in the short term, but it is greatly underhyped in the long term... the rate of innovation is only going to increase. So, if you feel like we’re currently looking at a rapid pace, **brace yourselves for what’s coming in the next year or so, because it’s only going to accelerate.**”

WHERE WILL THE LAWYERS OF THE FUTURE BE?

Shilpa Bhandarkar: “I think lawyers will be doing more law. Whether you’re in-house or in private practice, I think we’ll all get to do more law.”

Olivia Vaughan: “Echoing that, I think lawyers are going to be operating more at the top of their licence, and at least 90% of lawyers will have a generative AI workflow within their day-to-day.”

Jon Machtynger, Consultant and Technical Strategist: “I think what AI has provided now is immense flexibility. So you can choose to do it through language, through voice, through image or sound. I think that’s far broader and far more flexible than it has been in the past.”



HOW CAN LAWYERS PUT USING GENERATIVE AI INTO PRACTICE?

Amidst the excitement of generative AI, there are still concerns, particularly around accuracy. A well planned and patient approach, however, may well enable lawyers across the industry to make the most of the new technologies coming into the fold, and allow them to focus on the more 'human' aspects of being a lawyer.

Ana Buitrago, Senior Advisor for NewLaw, PwC Tax & Legal, and Ex-Former General Counsel at Amazon: "One of the methods/types of approach [to getting started] I would recommend is a two-way approach.

Don't do anything that you cannot then undo if necessary. Take baby steps, little by little, pilot things, align internally with the C-suite team, and also get the external support you think you might need, because none of us are alone in this journey."

Paul Walker, Senior Director of Solution Outcomes, iManage says: "Sharing the sentiment of the panelists here, iManage recommends a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to applying AI to legal work, with an emphasis on the user experience, accuracy, and security. The human element of legal work will require that AI solutions deliver highly accurate and reliable results that enable users to focus on higher-value work."



David Jackson, CEO at Shoosmiths, says: "There are obviously some real concerns that need to be addressed as this technology becomes more commonplace. But, I see the power and the opportunity that this technology creates in terms of how we all work."

David added: "I think we also need to think about the human elements that this tech will enable us to do more of. We know that our businesses want us to be more strategic in the advice that we give them."

They want us to spend more time building those personal connections and relationships, so that the advice we give is more meaningful. Hopefully this technology will free us up from some of the drudge work, some of the more boring stuff, and we can do that more personal strategic stuff."



"There is no more time to wait. This is a reality - this is in the market. Your people will be using it anyway. So start, start small, because we can no longer afford to wait."

- **Ana Buitrago**
Senior Advisor for NewLaw, PwC Tax & Legal, and Ex-Former General Counsel at Amazon

HOW SHOULD LAWYERS NAVIGATE THE ETHICS OF AI, AND REGULATIONS SURROUNDING IT?

The ethics of implementing AI are a significant concern across the industry, with considerations such as bias and fairness, accuracy, privacy and transparency. The explainability of the algorithms, as well as the highly regulated nature of the legal industry, are also at the top of people's minds when it comes to implementing such tools.



"The legal industry also has one very specific challenge, and that is that it's highly regulated. A lot of the tasks that you can do within a legal framework are simply uninsurable."

Jon Machtynger
Consultant & Technical Strategist

"Ethics is probably one of the biggest topics when it comes to developing AI. Unfair bias is of course something that we want to avoid in developing our models. We also want to be supporting the open source community, so we're doing that... when we think about more vulnerable groups as an example also, I think explainability [of the algorithms] is really critical."

Daniel Rood, Head of Google Cloud AI GTM, UK&I at Google

HOW SHOULD IN-HOUSE LEGAL DEPARTMENTS GO ABOUT IMPLEMENTING GENAI?

The most important element, said our speakers, is to first outline a vision before even thinking about implementing any new tool. First and foremost, lawyers should be looking to make sure to align any approach to genAI with the company's overarching strategic goals, rather than simply focusing on cutting costs or improving efficiency.



Bill Deckelman, Former General Counsel at DXC, said: "You've got to have a vision, you have to know where you're headed. What is the north star? Because these projects don't usually happen overnight.

They don't usually happen within a matter of months. They are a continuous journey for a number of years. So, if you don't have a very clear vision at the beginning, you're certainly going to drift."



Tanja Podinic, Generative AI Lead at PwC, added: "It's not just about efficiency. It's not just about cutting costs. It's also about providing strategic value to your organisation in a way that was not otherwise possible, and generative AI really enables us to do that."

AND IN PRIVATE PRACTICE?

With the ever-increasing array of options available, aligning technology choices with the firm's overarching strategy and business drivers is increasingly important, and understanding where automation and augmentation can provide the most value is crucial before narrowing down the vast array of vendor options available. The necessity of building awareness, and upskilling employees is also highlighted, as well as the psychology of change itself.



“Because there are now so many opportunities to engage with vendors, it can be overwhelming. I think the way to make it simple and really reduce your options, and not have it be confounding or confusing, is to figure out – what is your strategy, what are your business drivers? Where do you see automation and augmentation? From there, you can figure out the leading use cases you want to go after, and then look at the universe of vendors.”

– **Ilona Logvinova**

Director of Practice Innovation at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

“Psychological capital is a really important thing, as is resilience. There is a huge amount of fear and anxiety around this technology, around job displacement, and changing ways of working that have been in place for years. Then, finally, the systemic element. How does what we’re asking them to do fit into the larger system of reward and social contracting? That’s not a two minute job.”

– **Mark Smith**

Director of Strategic Markets at LexisNexis

“For any technology, but in particular for AI and genAI, we focus first on awareness and then on upskilling... We’ve implemented mandatory learning, so that in order to get any access to our AI tools, our people have to first complete that. That covers our new policy, all the do’s and don’ts, and making sure they’re clear on what the risks are and the role they play in being able to mitigate them.”

– **Tara Waters**

Group CDO at Ashurst

THE JOURNEY: HOW CAN LAWYERS MOVE FROM LEARNING ABOUT AI, TO CREATING?

Scaling AI within legal organisations presents various challenges, particularly when it comes to the complexities introduced by open solutions and large language models. The notion that a single AI tool can revolutionise an entire legal practice is also met with scepticism, as speakers highlight that instead, progress comes through incremental, marginal gains that collectively create significant advancements.



“I’m quite sceptical about the idea that you can just go and buy one AI tool and that will transform your entire legal practice, and then we don’t need lawyers any more. But, what we are seeing is just point by point, marginal gains in some places, being able to do things we could never do before in others. It really is that exploration into creating, that’s where we’re seeing the progress and the scalability.”

– **Alex Bazin**

COO & CTO at Lewis Silkin

“There are of course the open solutions out there now, and that’s fantastic because large language models are really cool, but, it can also introduce a lot of complexity. There’s a lot of onus on the end user to understand prompt engineering, so that can be a little tricky when you’re trying to scale AI in a legal organisation.”

– **Jill Schornack**

Vice President of Product at NetDocuments

Jill: “One barrier that is standing in the way of people moving from learners to creators is the security aspect. Most vendors will say that their large language models don’t use the information you put in, so that’s great and helps you get over the first security barrier. But, something that people don’t hear about very often is abuse monitoring. Let’s take Microsoft OpenAI as an example.

What you may not know is that even though the information you input is not used to train the LLM, they do run abuse monitoring algorithms, meaning the content can be flagged. If that is the case, it’ll go into an abuse monitoring path, where an actual person at Microsoft could then see that content. That’s something to bear in mind when considering the security side of it.”

Alex: “I’m really excited about the role of professional support lawyers, practice development lawyers, how the people with the real legal expertise really embed themselves within that knowledge space, and work with the client, other lawyers, and technology teams to build out those use cases. That’s where I think we’re going to see the most value.”

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION



MINDSET

The transformation of the legal industry requires a fundamental shift in mindset among legal professionals. This shift involves developing a clear understanding of the purpose behind transformation efforts, focusing on improving outcomes for clients, businesses, and legal professionals themselves. It's crucial to cultivate an innovative mindset that embraces continuous change and adapts to evolving technologies and business needs.

Central to this mindset shift is the development of curiosity and client-centric approaches. Legal professionals need to move beyond traditional risk-averse thinking and actively seek out opportunities for innovation. This involves questioning established practices, being open to new ideas, and consistently considering how changes can benefit clients and the business as a whole.



"My question would first be do you really want to change the way you work? How willing are you really?"

- **Chris Obdam**
CEO & Founder at Betty Blocks

"I often hear it said to me that lawyers don't like change. And I actually I don't agree with that assertion at all."

- **Sarah Chambers**
Director - Digital Experiences at Ashurst

PEOPLE AND SKILLS

The transformation of the legal industry necessitates a significant focus on people and skills development. Legal professionals need to upskill in specific tools and technologies to remain relevant in an increasingly digital landscape. This involves not only learning how to use new software and systems but also understanding how these technologies can enhance legal work and client service.

Attracting and retaining talent is another crucial aspect of this transformation. Legal organisations need to create work environments and practices that appeal to a new generation of legal professionals who expect more flexibility, technological integration, and opportunities for growth. Additionally, involving diverse teams, including non-legal professionals, can bring valuable perspectives to legal operations and drive innovation.



"In 12 months time, I don't want my team to actually be doing any traditional legal work any more... I see us as strategic advisors to the business."

- **Sarah Zaman**
General Counsel at Hyve Group



"Please include everyone from the beginning. You need that 360 degrees point of view and you need to have the feedback."

- **Isabel Cervantes**
Legal Innovation at Volkswagen

"It's really important to take people along the journey. Be very clear. What is the problem that you're trying to solve?"

- **Vinaya Ganesan**
Europe General Counsel and Head of Compliance, Firstsource

PROCESS OPTIMISATION

Process optimisation is a key component of legal transformation, with Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) systems playing a central role. Implementing these systems requires a strategic approach, often involving a phased implementation starting with pilot groups or specific use cases. This allows organisations to test, learn, and refine their approach before full-scale rollout.

The focus of process optimisation should extend beyond mere efficiency gains to delivering tangible value to the business. This involves leveraging AI and other technologies to shift the focus of legal work from routine tasks to more strategic advisory roles. By doing so, legal teams can position themselves as valuable partners in achieving business objectives, rather than being seen as a cost centre or bottleneck.



"Don't just look at your processes. You just look at the process and tools which are surrounding you."

- **Gaurav Gupta**
Global Head Contract Operations & Digitalization at Nokia



OVERCOMING INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

The transformation of the legal industry faces several significant challenges, particularly in changing traditional mindsets, especially at higher levels of organisations. There's often resistance to change and technology adoption, rooted in long-standing practices and risk-averse cultures. Additionally, managing expectations and addressing confidentiality concerns, especially with AI implementation, presents another layer of complexity.

To address these challenges, legal teams need to adopt a strategic approach. This involves presenting LegalTech transformation as

beneficial to the entire business, not just the legal department. Persistence and stakeholder engagement are crucial in pushing for change. Implementing proof of concept (POC) phases with clear success criteria can help demonstrate value and build buy-in. A strong focus on change management and cultural adoption, including clear communication about the reasons for implementing new tools and processes, is essential. Finally, adopting a mindset of starting small, experimenting, and learning from failures can help overcome resistance and build momentum for change.



"You need to meet people where they're at. And I think you need to demonstrate the value to the business as business transformation, not as LegalTech transformation or in-house legal transformation."

- **Sarah Zaman**
General Counsel at Hype Group

On creating an environment where failure is acceptable: "My big advice would be just to help your colleagues in failing and make sure that you're there when they are failing and support them in failing as well."

- **Chris Obdam**
CEO & Founder of Betty Blocks

"Change management is really the key and there are different ways of change management."

- **Rachita Maker**
Global Head of Legal Ops at DWF

"Don't get yourselves pushed into the situation of being the bottleneck."

- **Andreas Lamping**
Chief Legal Officer at Hellman Worldwide Logistics

PEOPLE

WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

In 2024, issues surrounding mental health and wellbeing in the legal industry are as pressing, if not more so, than ever before. In the aftermath of Covid, a stronger spotlight has been shone on the mental health challenges faced by those across the sector.

According to The Law Society, 2023 saw lawyers report increases in stress, anxiety and depression. Approximately 71% of the nearly 3,000 lawyers surveyed in ALM and Law.com Compass' mental health survey said that they had anxiety - a 5% increase from 2022.

In the same year, there was also a 24% rise in the number of people contacting LawCare, the mental health and wellbeing charity for legal professionals.

Why Are The Stats So Bad, And What Can We Do About It?

Amongst the varied challenges facing lawyers in 2024, one of the most pressing is the demand to always be 'on', and this has only been further exacerbated by the technology available to us today. Presenteeism is discussed as an ongoing issue, with junior lawyers feeling pressure to be in the office, often until the early hours of the morning, for the sake of 'showing face', and even going so far as setting alarms late into the night in order to send emails and appear to be online.



Jodie Hill, Managing Martner at Thrive Law, says: "There is the requirement to always reply straight away, and the expectation from clients that you'll respond immediately because you've always got a device on you."

Helen Pamely, Executive Coach and Ex Law Firm Partner, felt the same pressure throughout her career. "It was expected that I would email back whatever the time of day or night. There is also massive toxicity in the industry. We have managers who've had zero management training, they're not incentivised to look after the junior lawyers."

"Someone I heard of in a junior position actually set their alarm for an email to be sent at midnight, because they wanted to come across well to their boss, and that was seen as a badge of honour", says **Chloe Thompson**, Board Member of LegalTech in Leeds.



"It's a profit-driven industry, which is of course understandable but I think mental health comes at the bottom of the pile a lot of the time."

- **Helen Pamely**
Executive Coach and
Ex Law Firm Partner

Is Technology Making The Mental Health Debate Even More Urgent?

Given the constant availability granted by mobile phones and other devices, extra caution is urged, and the need for clear boundaries is highlighted. Not only that, but the extra pressure placed on senior management within law firms is also underscored, as they not only move through such changes themselves but are also under pressure to guide younger generations through the same changes.



Jodie says: "We have everything on our phones now, and the ability to work from anywhere, which I do think is great, but it also means you've always got your device on you and everyone knows it. I think we have to put boundaries in place and be more intentional about how we use technology, because **it can make us so accessible that we don't rest.**"

"You don't need to have notifications on your phone, your laptop and everything around you for emails", says **Ryan Hopkins**, Chief Impact Officer at JAAQ. "Close the little pop-up in the corner, create space to focus on quality work. Consider how you use the technology, create space for what's important, and get leadership to exemplify those behaviours."

"There is also a rising concern", says **Elizabeth Rimmer**, CEO of LawCare, around whether tech will replace at least part of what it means to be a lawyer. "I think that puts a lot of pressure, particularly on senior managers, and I think we sometimes overlook the growing burden that is placed on their shoulders to carry people through this era of change."

What Can Be Done About It, From A Management Perspective?

From the perspective of senior leadership, speakers highlighted the important role they play in modelling the right behaviours, drawing clear boundaries and not constantly being online, as well as being sure to call out unwanted behaviour when they see it.

The progression pathway, particularly within a law firm, is also called into question, as our speakers discuss the progression to partnership. Though this continues to be the predominant means of advancement at most law firms, it may not necessarily be the best fit for everyone. Not only this, but those who do want to become partners often don't receive the necessary training to manage a group of people, and are left to grapple with this alone, whilst also adjusting to their own increased responsibilities.

Having the confidence to sometimes push back on client expectations is also important, particularly for managers. If, for example, a client-imposed deadline is going to put a strain on an associate's mental health or their own boundaries, it should be up to their manager to prevent this from happening.



"The problem is that, oftentimes, managers become managers because they're really good lawyers, but they're awful with people! They only wanted to be a partner to earn X amount, or to have the status that comes with it, but they often don't actually want to manage people."

- **Jodie Hill**
Managing Partner at Thrive Law



"As an organisation, you should be asking how people can advance through the firm, without necessarily becoming people managers. One of the things I'm looking at is how we can create different types of senior roles that don't require people management - if that's not your skill set", adds **Jodie Hill**.

According to **Helen Pameley**, "People should consider the job description of the role (partner) more carefully, because often, if they did - they'd realise it's not what they want. They don't want to do the people management, or even the business development associated with being a partner, but in law, we have so much of our identity wrapped up in status and in what we think we need to be doing. I think we should be questioning those desires more."

It's also a matter of pushing back on client expectations, says **Caroline Turner-Inskip**, Partner and Global Head of Wellbeing at Simmons & Simmons: "For many, many years, we have been seen as the humble butler of our clients. We'll come in, do what we're told and deliver, and that's all clients wanted, but now - it's about being more. It's not just being a yes person, but building relationships. Moving away from the humble butler to a genuine partnership arrangement and the kind of relationship where I can turn around to my client and say to them, 'No, I can't do that this weekend because I'm not willing to ruin my associate's weekend. Is Monday at 4pm ok?'" Generally the answer is yes. It's levelling the playing field of the relationships we have."



"It's really important that they're modelling the right behaviours. The other part of it is actively calling things out when they see them, because being a passive participant is effectively condoning the behaviour. Managers need to step up, and understand why people might be feeling certain ways, rather than assuming someone isn't capable of their job because they're struggling."

- **Jodie Hill**
Managing Partner at Thrive Law

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In recent years, all facets of diversity have rightfully become an increasingly important priority across the legal industry. According to a report from the SRA, covering firms in England and Wales, in 2023: 53% of lawyers were women, 19% comprised Black, Asian, and minority ethnic lawyers, and 6% identified as disabled.

The representation of LGBTQ+ lawyers has also been on the rise (albeit slowly), says the report. Lawyers who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or who prefer another description, have grown from 3% in 2015 to 4.4% in 2023.

The ratio of women in law firms has risen 5% between 2015 and 2023, now standing at 53%, but the seniority gap for women largely remains. Only 32% of full-equity partners are women, compared to 62% of solicitors.

The proportion of lawyers entering the profession from a 'professional' socio-economic background has decreased - from 60% in 2019 to 57% in 2023. At the same time, lawyers from an 'intermediate' socio-economic background has increased, from 5% to 13%. **But, those who entered from lower socioeconomic backgrounds has reduced, from 21% in 2015 to 18% in 2023.**

At the largest law firms, the greatest proportion of lawyers from a professional socio-economic background is still found (65%), with 28% coming from independent/fee-paying schools.

Amongst the barriers to achieving diversity within the profession, say our speakers, is that diversity efforts cannot just come from the newly qualified (NQ)/entry level, they need to come from the top down to be truly transformative.

Complicating the issue further, speakers raised the possibility that even when people from diverse backgrounds do advance to the partnership or management level, there is a chance that, on the journey to achieving this, they may have been 'groomed' by the industry and the peers surrounding them, such that their voice no longer reflects that of the background from which they entered the profession, calling into question how much diversity of thought there would be in these cases, even firms may appear diverse.



"The main barrier", says **Leila El Gharbi**, Founder of Beautiful Souls in LegalTech, "is that you're so groomed that, even though you are diverse - you look and sound diverse. Once you finally manage to get a seat at the table, you're so used to blending in that actually your voice isn't representative of any diversity, because you're embodying years of taught behaviour."

Despite efforts at the NQ recruitment level displaying results, "for anything to change in any industry", says **Ayaz Saboor**, Founder and Mentor at The Commercial Law Pathway, "it has to come from the top down." Rising through the ranks is still an ongoing issue, says **Dana Denis-Smith**, CEO of Obelisk Support: "When I left my law firm, none of the women in my intake were partners. That can't be right. All the men I knew were going up, and all the women I knew were leaving."

SO WHAT CAN THE INDUSTRY DO?

Leaders spotlight the responsibility that falls upon those who currently have the privilege of holding senior positions within the industry, to act bravely and ensure a better future for the generations to come, stressing the importance of leading with courage and taking bold actions to drive change. They discuss the importance of individuals embracing their own differences in order to foster true change, and emphasise that organisations must actively listen to their people and acknowledge any diversity issues they may have.



"I'm a big fan of leading with courage myself", says **Dana Denis-Smith**, CEO of Obelisk Support: "I think it's an incredible cultural moment now. If we give up now, it'll be another slide in history. If we don't do something different, nothing different will emerge. So we owe it to the next generation to act with courage."

According to **Ayaz Saboor**, Founder and Mentor at The Commercial Law Pathway, change comes from the individual level as well: "Embrace your own differences, be positive about them and continue having the discussion, continue talking about it openly. Social media is also great for that. A lot of us can share our own individual stories, our trials and tribulations, and hopefully that will inspire others along the way to embrace it and show that it's possible for them also. Succeed where others might think they can't."



THE FUTURE OF LEGAL TRAINING

In September 2021, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) launched its new pathway to entering the law, a centralised assessment named the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE). The SQE assessments, which take place in two parts: SQE 1 and SQE 2, include two functioning legal knowledge assessments, an oral assessment and a written legal skills assessment.

Apprenticeships are also an increasingly popular route into the legal profession, with this route being more and more favoured by both law firms and in-house legal teams, as well as providing a much more financially accessible route into the sector.

According to the SRA, the purposes of the SQE include: greater assurance of consistent, high standards at the point of admission, and the development of new and diverse pathways to qualification, promoting a diverse profession by removing artificial and unjustifiable barriers.

But, have they achieved this?



"Gen Z want a very different learning experience, so we're seeing much more opportunity for hybrid learning, for tech-enabled and flexible opportunities to earn while you learn, which all increase access to the profession, which is one of the main aims of the new pathways in."

– **Victoria Cromwell**,
Head of New Business and Account Management at BARBRI Global



"When the SQE was first discussed by the SRA, one of the aims was to increase access to the profession. I think the jury is out on whether that's actually being achieved, but what it is able to do is increase the flexibility. Now we have the qualifying work experience route, which enables students to qualify much more easily. Whether that results in newly qualified jobs is a different matter", says **Victoria Cromwell**, Head of New Business and Account Management at BARBRI Global.

Not only this, but apprenticeships are also becoming an ever-more-popular route into the profession. **Patrick McCann**, CEO of City Century and Director of Learning at Linklaters, says: "the numbers of people coming through solicitor apprenticeships and the impact they're having within their organisations is really disruptive to the entry routes into the profession, in a really positive way."

In-house teams are also increasingly relying on apprenticeship routes: "In-house teams often have more pressure on budgets and headcount, but they can utilise the apprenticeship levy, and nurture home-grown talent to upskill and retain paralegals. There are now a wealth of opportunities to train in-house, which is definitely something that we're seeing as a result of the SQE."

One of the main aims of the SQE, to diversify the backgrounds of those entering the profession and make the legal industry more accessible, is long overdue. "It's no surprise that a student's socio-economic background affects their early education options and experiences, and being part of a minority group increases the likelihood of experiencing discrimination and bias", says **Victoria Cromwell**. Not only that, but "a lack of representation and diversity of both staff and curriculum in legal education can impact students' feelings of belonging, and lead them to question whether they fit within law (as a sector). Frankly, we need to look at all the things we can do collectively to change this."

WHAT OTHER CHALLENGES ARE LEGAL EDUCATORS FACING?

Content:

"It's no longer sufficient to just teach the black letter law. I think in order to ensure that lawyers continue to be trusted legal advisors, we've got to focus on the soft skills of lawyering. That's not something that legal educators traditionally associated with imparting."

Adapting to a hybrid format:

"The pandemic was terrible in many ways... but it did, however, lead to the maturity of remote delivery of learning systems. Unfortunately, I think a lot of our curriculum is not yet adapted for hybrid delivery – so that's currently the challenge for legal educators."

Teaching Methods:

"If we're going to use hybrid delivery as a primary mode going forward, I think we need to find ways to engage the audience more. For example, when we ask students to watch a video, the concern is that someone will just play the video and leave their dog watching it. How do you ensure there's actual absorption of the content?"

"Virtual reality can also play an important role in making sure that the kind of training, especially for those practice oriented skills like advocacy, can now be done by students from the comfort of their own homes. With VR and AI, these kinds of LegalTech tools can make remote learning more effective", says **Patrick McCann**.

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION

"There's an increased appetite for dual qualification", says **Victoria Cromwell**. "From an education perspective, I think what we're going to see in the coming years is a blended programme, where different universities collaborate to provide a qualification that incorporates more than one legal system."

Paul Neo, COO and CFO of the Singapore Academy of Law, agrees: "For an open international commercial hub like Singapore, lawyers who can deal with cross-border contracts coming from diverse legal systems will have a clear competitive advantage. We're trying to build into our legal education system more exposure to legal systems beyond our own."

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Navigating intellectual property in the digital age, particularly with the advent of AI, requires a comprehensive and proactive approach. Organisations need to develop strong data governance frameworks that address both existing data protection laws and emerging AI-specific considerations. This involves carefully reviewing terms of service for third-party AI tools, particularly regarding IP ownership and liability, and building AI management systems centred on risk assessment and mitigation.

Cross-functional collaboration is key to effective AI governance. Legal teams should aim to be enablers rather than blockers, providing guidelines and risk assessments to empower business decisions. Companies should be proactive in developing AI policies and procedures, even if not currently using AI extensively. Existing frameworks like GDPR can provide a starting point for AI governance strategies, but organisations must also stay abreast of evolving regulations specific to AI.



"AI is not a completely unregulated market because indeed training the algorithms involves a lot of data and that is all regulated already, especially because there is a lot of personal information also used to train the data."

– **Paul Breitbarth**
Data Protection Lead at Catawiki

"We're really careful about what tools we're using and we've got policies around that, but also we check in with our clients and make sure they're happy for us to use their data for a specific tool for a specific purpose."

– **Natasha Ahmed**
Technology Transactions Partner at Orrick

"Legal is not going to be the blocker in the business. We want to be the enabler. So we want to be upfront in the process."

– **Paul Breitbarth**
Data Protection Lead at Catawiki

"I think it's really important for each organisation to take best practice and advice and adapt it to your specific organisation."

– **James Winters**
AI Governance Officer at Deeper Insights



AI, PRIVACY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The rise of AI is challenging traditional concepts of intellectual property rights, particularly in areas of creation, ownership, and enforcement. Large language models are raising questions about copyright implications of using data for AI training. There's ongoing debate about balancing the protection of creators' rights with allowing societal benefits from AI innovations. The copyright status of AI-generated content remains uncertain, with courts and regulators grappling to apply traditional IP concepts to these new outputs.

Access to large datasets for AI development is becoming a crucial issue, raising concerns about competition between large tech companies and smaller startups. This has led to initiatives

like the EU's Data Act, aimed at creating a more open market for non-personal data.

In the realm of patent law, there's a need for clarification on how AI assistance affects patent eligibility and inventorship. As the regulatory landscape evolves, with comprehensive regulations like the EU AI Act emerging, there's a growing need to balance new regulations with existing laws and focus on specific harms rather than broad technology regulation.



"We believe that everyone has the right to learn from publicly available information and to use technology to do so."

– **Krishna Sood**
Assistant General Counsel at Microsoft

"If we want to regulate AI, we should be focusing on the harms, not the technology."

– **Amir Ghavi**
Partner at Fried Frank

E-DISCOVERY, DISPUTES AND LITIGATION

E-DISCOVERY

Approaches to e-discovery are evolving, with a growing importance being placed on integrating e-discovery as a strategic asset that complements external partners, instead of merely viewing it as an external service or cost. By understanding and leveraging e-discovery as both a technology and a specialised expertise, firms can enhance their service offerings and better meet client needs.

Although unforeseen challenges are an inevitability when implementing e-discovery solutions, having reliable support and a focus on the human side of implementation can help to ensure that there are people to turn to when problems arise.



“We are currently working to reshape the way we relate to e-discovery, how we think about it and build an internal capability as a complementary asset to our external partners... Understanding that the e-discovery element, both as a technology and as an expertise, is not to be thought of as part of the cost of a matter, but as part of the value proposition itself.”

– **Nick Pryor**
Director of Knowledge Management and Innovation at Freeths

“Our guiding star is that client experience always comes first. So what we’re trying to do now is pivot, so that we have built frameworks that allow us to use our eDiscovery platforms to build excellent client experiences.”

– **Kyle Gribben**
Head of Digital Services at Matheson

“If you implement an e-discovery solution, something will go wrong. There will be a mistake. There will be something that does not go to plan, and that’s ok. But what you do need is someone that you can talk to, to turn to to resolve those problems quickly. So I think focus on the people, the support, and the human side of implementation.”

– **Chantelle Jalland**
Managing Director of Digital Investigations and Discovery at J.S. Held

“iManage is deeply committed to providing industry-leading security for all information on our platform. Our AI approach builds capabilities directly on the iManage platform and leverages the secure and curated data stored there. Our unique approach to AI ensures that our customers are able to leverage AI securely and ethically.”

– **Paul Walker**
Senior Director of Solution Outcomes, iManage

DISPUTES AND LITIGATION

AI and other technologies are bringing both new challenges and new opportunities to the field of dispute resolution, particularly in handling large amounts of information, improving case preparation, and enhancing litigation funding decisions.

While there is a demand for increased technology in order to reduce the costs of litigation and other dispute resolution methods, so far, it appears that technology has often increased the costs, primarily due to the sheer volume of data that often needs to be managed.

On the flip side, when it comes to litigation funding, AI and other technologies can benefit both the funders and those seeking funding, by speeding up the analysis of a given case, determining whether a case is worthy of funding much more rapidly than before.

Meanwhile, a rising number of cases threatens to challenge the European court system, and the importance of soft skills in negotiation, as well as the need for innovation in the legal field, to enable a shift from a litigation-focused culture, to one of mediation and agreement, may go some way in allaying this.



Andy Moody, Head of Dispute Resolution at Baker McKenzie: “The sorts of cases I do involve phenomenal amounts of information, technical information, emails, documents, all of which has exponentially grown over the last 20 or so years, as email and everything else has come along. The profession is, in some ways, screaming out for a tech solution that is going to bring down the cost. But, so far, all I’ve seen is that it has increased the cost, because there’s just so much more information that is out there that you have to access and get to grips with.”

Olivia Dhein: “We now have computers for the first time ever that can really read, write documents, can answer questions on documents, and nobody has programmed them to do it. We’ve never had that before. For disputes, that is a big turning point. I think we could now use that to prepare cases, or to run a different strategy on cases, because we’re not necessarily dependent on humans sitting down, sifting through evidence. We can now get a computer to do a first cut of that.”

David Dhanoo: “I’ve come across litigation funding for these big cases. In terms of how it can assist litigation funders, I think we can certainly use AI and other technology in terms of analysing cases much earlier, so that it gets to the investment committee sooner, rather than a person having to laboriously go through everything.”

Andy: “Hopefully, I think the goal here is better and earlier decision making. So, whether it’s deciding to fund a piece of litigation, or knowing whether, if you’re seeking the funding, whether

your case is one that’s going to be attractive to a funder, using an AI tool can help to pare things down. That’s only going to be beneficial and should really help grow alternative models for financing claims, which in turn has the benefit of being a real tool for access to justice, if we get it right.”

According to **Marlen Estévez Sanz**, Partner and Board Member at RocaJunyent and President and Founder at Women in a Legal World: “If we look at data about European courts, it shows that the number of cases we are submitting to the courts is increasing year on year. Last year was the year with the highest number of cases across Europe. This is expensive, it’s time consuming, it’s mentally draining. This is a lose-lose scenario.”

“When I teach at university, I always ask my students - what would be the best possible agreement that you can obtain? My students say ‘get everything you want’. I tell them that they’re wrong, because the most optimal agreement you can get is to obtain the maximum that the other party can give you.”

“We have not yet been trained to obtain all those soft skills which are key to getting really good agreements. We need to embrace innovation. I mean this not only from a technological point of view, but also as a new way to find solutions to needs that have not yet been covered. There are a lot of needs right now in this world that have not been covered, and I think lawyers can play an important role in transitioning from a culture of litigation, to one of agreement.”

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Today, approximately 11 million people across the UK have an unmet legal need annually, with around 83% of people in England and Wales not getting the access they need to legal services.

Only around 25% of businesses who have a legal need actually get access to a legal service.

Access to justice is fundamentally about addressing unmet legal needs. It involves empowering ordinary people to understand, protect, and defend their human rights. But, the introduction of more technology in the legal space could unintentionally create new barriers, especially for the 11 million people who currently struggle with legal access. Many of these individuals may not be equipped to use new technologies, which could exacerbate existing inequalities rather than alleviate them. Bridging this gap requires careful consideration and action, and investment, of not just money, but of time and resource, will play a vital role in improving this.



What does access to justice mean? – “For me, it’s about an unmet legal need. It’s enabling people, ordinary people in this country, to be able to first of all understand, and then to protect and defend their human rights. It’s really about their fundamental human right for access to the law and to justice”, says **Christina Blacklaws**, Former President of the Law Society.

We have to be careful, and encourage transparency, says Christina. “Of course, the more vulnerable the consumer, the more likely they are going to be to be duped, perhaps into giving away their data, which is perhaps the most valuable thing that they might have.”

“Investment is super, super important. That doesn’t necessarily just mean money, it can also be an investment of time and resource. That’s where the legal profession has something incredibly valuable to offer.”

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL?

Although the Post Office case brought to light an extreme example of scandal and corruption, there is a risk of the rest of the legal profession distancing itself from such extreme scandals. All lawyers are trained, to a degree, to be adversarial by nature, and so can sometimes fall into the trap of having an excessive focus on winning at all costs. Instead, the legal profession should use this moment to reflect on this adversarial mindset, and consider its potential ethical implications for the profession at large.

In the aftermath of the scandal, there is an urgent need to rebuild public confidence in the legal profession. Whilst the industry itself is not entirely broken, the trust has been damaged. Our speakers call for lawyers to calibrate their thinking, recognise ethical boundaries, and ensure that those who crossed such boundaries in the Post Office case are held accountable.



One of the things I worry about with the post office and any such scandal, is that they seem too extreme, that it’s easy to distance yourself from them... but we’re all taught to be adversarial by nature as lawyers. This adversarial nature can sometimes lend itself to an excessive definition of winning – so what is it we can learn from this case, as a profession?”, asks **Jenifer Swallow**, award-winning lawyer, business leader, innovator and coach.

“We now need to rebuild confidence in the legal profession”, says **James Hartley**, Head of Dispute Resolution at Freeths and lead lawyer for those affected by the post office scandal. “I’m not suggesting it’s necessarily wholly broken, but confidence has been knocked, understandably and rightly so. So there is a need for all of us lawyers to recalibrate our thinking and remind ourselves of where the lines are. For those who have stepped over the red line in that case... they need to be held to account.”

“What the lawyers tended to do was drift towards winning by any means”, says **Richard Moorhead**, member of the supervisory board GLO compensation scheme and professor of law and professional ethics, which is what also happened in this case. “Any clever argument, any way of representing the facts, any way of not disclosing information that we probably should disclose. Taking that to an extent where it becomes not only unfair, but it’s actually misleading.”

“Leadership is so important”, says **Richard**. “And then we need mechanisms of accountability and reporting within the firms of the teams to make sure they’re well managed, but also at the level of regulators and courts – they need to be able to step in there as well.”

THE WORD ON THE STREET – ONSITE INTERVIEWS



"There is still trepidation towards AI. As much as there's lots of people discussing it and talking about potential applications, people are still vetting their options. Legal professionals are known for their due diligence, but I think that we will definitely move now from a place of just scoping to a place of action. Collaboration is what I see for the future, instead of it being closed off and guarded, the information is going to be democratised."

– **Ryan T. Wightman**
Springbok AI



"AI is definitely a journey, there's a lot of different phases! I'm excited because a lot of folks are moving from that learning phase of 'what's a large language model', 'how do I use it', to actually identifying high-value use cases. It's the organisations that are really leaning in, not waiting for the dust to settle... who are going to see the most effective and rapid value from AI."

– **Jill Schornack**
NetDocuments



"For us... we started out just talking about how to solve a problem for a blind lawyer, and we ended up with a solution that actually saves a pain point for every lawyer that has to review any document. At the end of the day... what it means is that, I'm being given the tools to do my job, that's it."

– **Feargus MacDaeid**
Definely



"I think the role of technology is growing in practically every single vertical. Now, about half of the code that we write at Leya is starting to be written by AI – so with the way that we can take that learning and apply it in the legal space, the potential is huge."

– **Max Junstrand**
Leya



"In the genAI space, I think we'll continue to see consolidation, we've already seen some acquisitions this year, I think we'll see more of that. It's an exciting time to be building a company in this space."

– **Chris Combs**
Linksquares

TREEHOUSE INNOVATION: THE FUTURES LAB

The Futures Lab by Treehouse Innovation: **BUILDING THE FUTURE OF LAW, TOGETHER**

How will new technologies change the way legal work is done? What impact will this have on legal operation and resource models? What skills will be most essential to success for the future lawyer?

These are just some of the questions many of the people who attended LegalTechTalk 2024 explored in the Futures Lab – an immersive experience created and run by Treehouse Innovation.



Treehouse Innovation – the innovation consultancy that created and ran the Futures Lab – has collated the myriad views and predictions visitors shared about how they think the legal sector will look by 2035.

As anyone who visited the lab will remember, at the heart of the experience was a set of 40 possible futures, illustrated in the style of a graphic novel.

ADAM BILLING
Founder, Treehouse Innovation



Watch The Video →

These future 'vignettes' addressed questions related to the future of technology and talent, operating and financial models, and how the overall legal market landscape might evolve.

People were invited to review each possible future, and share their reactions via QR codes.

In this report, Treehouse Innovation shares:

- The futures which generated the most debate and discussion amongst attendees.
- The skills you thought would be most and least important to lawyers in the future.
- Other possible futures predicted by you, and visualised by AI.



BRING THE FUTURES LAB TO YOUR ORGANISATION

Could your law firm or in-house team benefit from thinking beyond the here and now?

Want to engage your people in exploring what opportunities and threats the future may hold and how to prepare for them?

Following a great response at LegalTechTalk, Treehouse is now running tailored Futures Lab experiences for individual law firms and in-house teams to get more people thinking about the future and taking proactive steps to thrive within it.

Email hello@treehouseinnovation.com to find out more.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

MERLIN BEYTS

Content Director, LegalTechTalk

Since I joined the LegalTech ecosystem earlier this year, I have been taken aback by the desire from all areas of the sector to start accelerating change across the many facets that comprise it.

Whoever I speak to, I hear the same sentiments: excitement, intrigue and determination to name but a few. And it's just what the industry needs. Of course, the naysayers remain but in time their voices will be drowned out by the innovators who will have my permission to feel very smug indeed if they so desire.

Of course, it would be foolish of me to assume that the path forward is linear. There will be acceleration and stagnation, boom and bust, silver bullets and damp squibs, and many a failed prediction that will leave even the most trusted legal soothsayers flummoxed.

However I'm confident that the overall trend will remain positively in the direction of change for the better.



In my limited experience, the most successful leaders not only recognise that change is inevitable but embrace it and find ways to work it to their advantage. Those who are able to proactively engage in the transformation of the legal sector will end up benefiting the most and even, to some extent, shaping it to their advantage. The time to act is now. If you don't, someone else will.

CHARLOTTE JOHNSTONE

Senior Content Manager, LegalTechTalk

The ability of the law to touch absolutely everyone's lives in myriad ways, both seen and unseen, and to act as one of life's few equalisers, has remained a constant privilege for me to witness throughout my career. Writing this report, and getting the chance to pore over the wisdom shared at LegalTechTalk 2024 has been a true joy. I can only hope that the lasting impact these conversations have had on me throughout this process will resonate with those who read it just as much.

One key element that continued to occur for me throughout the entirety of the report, was not necessarily the tech itself that is now increasingly available, but rather the role of the people behind it in bringing its possibilities to life. I have walked away from this year's event (and from this report), with higher hopes than ever for the future of the legal industry, and cannot wait to see how emerging trends in AI and LegalTech investment will continue to allow the entire legal sector to enhance the impact it



can have across society. I hope that this event and the findings from it can serve as a catalyst for further innovation, and I look forward to seeing how the conversations sparked within these pages inspire ongoing change across the legal profession.

A SNIPPET OF OUR SPEAKERS
SEE YOU IN 2025

[SEE ALL SPEAKERS](#)



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DLA PIPER



Alison Malin Zoellner

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