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### Inside this issue

- 01 **What Record Legal Employment Growth Means for Staffing & Recruiting**
- 04 **MANAGER'S TOOLBOX**  
Mastering the Small Law Office: Your Essential Cheat Sheet
- 05 **Preparing for More Law Firm Mergers – Are You Ready?**
- 06 **Why “Thank You” Matters More Than You Think**
- 08 **Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs): Friend or Foe?**
- 10 **Cybersecurity Awareness for Offices During Tax Season**
- 11 **Legal Tech Trends That Matter Right Now**



## What Record Legal Employment Growth Means for Staffing & Recruiting

Right now, the U.S. legal labor market is unusually strong—even when other sectors slow down. In 2024, legal sector payrolls hit record highs, with total employment in the legal services industry reaching around 1.19–1.20 million jobs, a peak not seen in years according to U.S. Department of Labor data.

Additionally, law school career outcomes have been historically positive. Recent surveys show that 93.4% of 2024 law graduates landed jobs within 10 months of graduation, the highest employment rate on record since the National Association for Law Placement began tracking in 1974. These signals—strong employment, low unemployment among legal

professionals, and a robust pipeline of new talent—have direct implications for how you hire, retain, and deploy your legal staff.

### Hiring Strategies When Demand for Paralegals & Assistants Is Strong

Even though long-term growth in support roles like paralegals and legal assistants is projected to be modest compared with other fields, demand remains real today because firms of all sizes need help managing caseloads and rising client expectations. In this competitive market:

continues on page 2

Law Office Manager

## WEBINAR

### Trends, Valuations & the Future of Compensation

Join **Brenda Barnes** and **Camille Stell** on February 26 for Trends, Valuation, and the Future of Law Firm Compensation, and discover how to leverage current compensation trends and practices to reinforce firm strategy, identify and mitigate compensation biases, and stay ahead of evolving trends in lawyer compensation.

Thurs., Feb. 26, 2026 at 1 pm ET

# What Record Legal Employment Growth Means for Staffing & Recruiting

continued from page 1



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## How to Train New Staff Effectively

Once you hire great people, training quality determines how quickly they become productive—and how long they stay. Effective training also feels less like onboarding and more like investing in your team’s success.

### 1. Structured onboarding & role immersion

- Provide a clear first-30-60-90-day plan with benchmarks and check-ins.
- Pair new hires with experienced team members for shadowing on real tasks, not just orientation videos.

### 2. Document processes and expectations

Use playbooks or standard operating procedures (SOPs) for recurring tasks, such as drafting documents, client correspondence, billing procedures, and filing. This minimizes repeated questions and standardizes quality.

### 3. Build continuous learning into your culture

Provide access to legal education resources, encourage certification programs, and hold internal workshops on emerging tools (including AI applications in legal research and drafting).

### 4. Gather feedback early and often

New team members frequently have fresh perspectives on workflows. Ask them where bottlenecks or uncertainties exist — and incorporate improvements.

### 1. Build a multi-channel talent pipeline

- Don’t rely solely on traditional job boards. Instead, partner with law-specific recruiting groups, legal education programs, and bar associations to tap emerging talent early.
- Consider internships, externships, and part-time roles that can feed into full-time hiring. These help you identify motivated candidates before competitors do.

### 2. Sell your firm’s strengths

Highlight aspects that matter to candidates: work-life balance, mentorship opportunities, clear career paths, flexible scheduling, and investment in professional development.

### 3. Be proactive about diversity and equity in hiring

Setting goals and tracking progress not only broadens your applicant pool but also elevates your firm’s reputation in a tight market.

### 4. Use data when recruiting

Track time-to-hire and source effectiveness so you know which recruiting channels yield the best fits and adjust budget or effort accordingly.



continues on page 3

# What Record Legal Employment Growth Means for Staffing & Recruiting

continued from page 2

## Demand Forecasting & Capacity Planning

In a high-employment environment, **predicting workload and staffing needs** becomes essential to avoid burnout and unplanned hiring costs.

### 1. Track workload trends

Review past months/years of case volume, billable hours, and peak periods. Build simple forecasting models (e.g., average cases per quarter) to anticipate hiring needs rather than reacting when backlogs form.

### 2. Align staffing to seasonality

If your firm sees predictable peaks (e.g., litigation spikes in certain months), plan recruitment and training before those periods so staff are ready when demand rises.

### 3. Monitor talent retention metrics

High demand means candidates have options. Track turnover rates, exit interview feedback, and reasons for departure. If people are leaving due to workload or unclear advancement paths, address those root causes quickly.

### 4. Cross-train and build flexibility

Encourage attorneys, paralegals, and assistants to develop versatile skills so you can shift staff between practice areas during busy times without hiring extra headcount.

## Retention & Mentorship: Keeping Top Talent

In a tight labor market, your best hiring tool is often your existing staff.

### Mentorship builds loyalty

- Formal mentorship programs help newer staff feel supported and connected.
- Pair mid-level team members with junior staff for regular coaching sessions.

### Career pathways limit turnover

- Map clear advancement options, such as from assistant to senior assistant to paralegal roles, and tie progress to training milestones.

### Work-life balance matters

High employment often means heavier workloads. Be intentional about



workload balance, flexible scheduling, and policies that prevent chronic overwork. Offering remote or hybrid options where feasible can be a differentiator.

## In Summary

Record levels of legal employment and historically strong job placement for new lawyers mean your recruiting and staffing environment is competitive. By:

- ☑ Broadening recruiting channels and employer branding
- ☑ Building strong onboarding and training systems
- ☑ Forecasting workload instead of reacting to it
- ☑ Investing in retention through mentorship and career development

you'll ensure your firm not only attracts top talent but also keeps it—even as other firms compete for the same professionals. ■





## MANAGER'S TOOLBOX

# Mastering the Small Law Office: Your Essential Cheat Sheet

**R**unning a small law office means wearing a lot of hats — often at the same time. It’s a balancing act of managing tasks, supporting your team, keeping clients happy, and somehow finding time to breathe. This cheat sheet is your go-to guide for making it all run smoother. Whether you’re a seasoned office manager or stepping into the role for the first time, these quick tips and strategies will help you stay organized, keep the team humming, and lead with confidence.



### Small Law Office Cheat Sheet

#### Juggle Multiple Roles Smoothly

- ✔ **Time Block Management**  
**Tasks:** Reserve calendar time for payroll, billing, and important admin work.
- ✔ **Prioritize Wisely:** Tackle urgent and high-impact tasks first every day.
- ✔ **Stay Flexible:** Plan your day but expect interruptions.

#### Cross-Train and Share Duties

- ✔ **Everyone Learns Core Skills:** Phones, billing, filing — no silos.
- ✔ **Rotate Tasks:** Swap weekly duties to keep everyone sharp.
- ✔ **Create Quick Guides:** Easy reference sheets for recurring tasks.

#### Communicate Like a Pro

- ✔ **Daily 5-10 Minute Huddles:** Keep everyone aligned.

- ✔ **Clarify Priorities:** Each person knows their focus.

- ✔ **Encourage Questions:** Build a supportive environment.

#### Lead by Example

- ✔ **Set the Standard:** Professionalism, energy, and flexibility start with you.
- ✔ **Address Issues Promptly:** Friendly but firm.
- ✔ **Celebrate Wins:** Even the small victories matter!

#### Delegate and Empower

- ✔ **Train and Trust:** Hand off what others can handle.

- ✔ **Monitor Progress:** Regular, light-touch check-ins.

- ✔ **Avoid Micromanaging:** Let your team shine.

#### Pro Tips for Sanity

- ✔ Always prep a backup plan for staff absences.
- ✔ Document simple processes to speed up future training.
- ✔ Stay proactive—anticipate problems before they land.
- ✔ Build trust—small teams depend on it to thrive!

### Weekly Quick-Action List

Task	Action
Phone Coverage	Train all staff for backup coverage.
Billing Review	Set a weekly 30-minute review slot.
Calendar Management	Keep a shared, updated calendar.
Office Supplies	Assign a monthly “supply captain.”
File Tidying	30-minute weekly digital/physical tidy session.
Tech Troubleshooting	Keep simple guides at every station. ■

# Preparing for More Law Firm Mergers — Are You Ready?

If 2025's merger activity was any indication, 2026 is shaping up to escalate law firm consolidation even further. According to industry tracking, law firm mergers increased sharply in 2025—with activity up about 21% in the first half of the year compared with 2024, and 47 mergers of all sizes completed through the first three quarters—keeping the sector on a clear upward trajectory of consolidation.

A key driver is the competitive environment facing firms today: slow demand growth paired with rising costs for talent and technology investment is prompting many firms—both large and mid-sized—to use mergers as a strategic tool for scale, reach, and efficiency. Recent high-profile deals, like the announced combination of Hogan Lovells and Cadwalader into a 3,100-lawyer firm with roughly \$3.6 billion in revenue, highlight how widespread and significant this trend is shaping up to be.

For law office managers, mergers bring operational impacts across systems, culture, workflows, and communications. Being proactive can make the difference between a smooth transition and chaos.

## Operational Pitfalls to Avoid in Firm Combinations

### 1. Systems and Process Integration Failures

One of the most common post-merger operational headaches is integrating disparate systems. Firms often operate on different case management platforms, billing systems, file storage, timekeeping workflows, and document templates. Without early alignment and a detailed transition plan, these gaps can cause confusion, dropped work, billing errors, and frustrated staff.



**Pitfall to Avoid:** Moving headfirst into a merged IT environment without a documented reconciliation of workflows. Build a detailed map of both firms' systems early and designate transition leads for each functional area.

### 2. Culture Clash and Morale Erosion

Merging firms bring together people with different routines, expectations, and values. Culture

clashes — from how staff communicate to how partners make decisions—can fracture morale and impact productivity.

**Pitfall to Avoid:** Assuming culture will magically align after the contract is signed. Instead, facilitate honest discussions about expectations and norms early and often.

### 3. Talent Attrition and Unclear Roles

Transitions often create uncertainty. Some staff leave voluntarily; others feel unclear about roles or reporting structures. Without thoughtful planning, attrition can spike just when institutional knowledge is most needed.

**Pitfall to Avoid:** Waiting until after the merger to define staffing and leadership responsibilities—by then, key people may already have exited.

### 4. Client

#### Communication Gaps

Your clients care about continuity. If they hear little about how the merger impacts them—from billing practices to team contacts—their confidence can erode.

**Pitfall to Avoid:** Treating clients like an afterthought. Instead, integrate client communications early into your change management plan.

continues on page 6

## Preparing for More Law Firm Mergers — Are You Ready?

continued from page 5

### Leadership Roles for Office Managers in Merger Success

#### 1. Lead Operational Alignment

You are the nexus of day-to-day workflows. Build a cross-functional integration task force that includes leadership from IT, finance, HR, and practice teams to ensure workflows don't grind to a halt.

Encourage early documentation of all procedures before they change.

#### 2. Champion Clear, Consistent Communication

Change fatigue is real. Staff will feel unsettled if they don't understand what's happening and why. Set regular update rhythms—weekly team briefings, written FAQs, or intranet announcements—to keep everyone informed and involved. Transparency reduces rumor mill anxiety.

**3. Protect Culture and Morale**  
Organize informal touchpoints—town halls, lunch forums, or open office hours—where staff can voice concerns. Consider small-group discussions bridging legacy firm teams. Actively listening and acknowledging concerns builds trust and helps meld cultural norms.

**4. Coordinate Training & Workflow Harmonization**  
In the midst of combining firms, support staff often have to learn new systems, templates, and policies. Organize training sessions early—even before go-live—and provide job aides, cheat sheets, and peer mentoring to boost confidence and adoption.

**5. Engage Clients Strategically**  
Clients want certainty. Draft clear, client-facing materials explaining what the merger means for them—new billing codes, new contacts, unified service teams—and roll them out in a coordinated way. Assign client liaisons to field questions and maintain service quality.

### Practical Steps You Can Take Now

#### ➤ Audit Your Current Workflows

Document your firm's systems and practices today—before transition pressure hits. This baseline will be invaluable when reconciling with another firm's processes.

#### ➤ Build an Integration Playbook

Include checklists for technology, HR, billing, time entry, document management, and client onboarding. A playbook turns abstract plans into executable action.

#### ➤ Set Metrics for Success

Track key post-merger indicators: system adoption rates, timekeeping accuracy, client inquiry resolution times, and staff engagement survey scores. These metrics help you course-correct quickly.

#### ➤ Prepare Clients for Change

Draft client letters or FAQs outlining what they can expect in terms of service continuity, billing practices, and key contact points. ■

## Why “Thank You” Matters More Than You Think



It's easy to get swept up in the to-do lists, reports, scheduling, and troubleshooting that fill an office manager's day. You're juggling a hundred moving pieces, and just getting through the day without a printer jam or a staff meltdown feels like a win. But amid the whirlwind,

there's one small habit that can make a big difference—for morale, for relationships, and even for productivity: saying “thank you.”

Let's be clear—this isn't about performative gratitude or throwing a pizza party every Friday.

continues on page 7

## Why “Thank You” Matters More Than You Think

continued from page 6

It’s about authentic, everyday acknowledgment. And as the office manager, your words carry weight. People notice when you notice.

### It Costs Nothing, But Pays Off Big

A simple thank you doesn’t take more than a few seconds, but it can shift the tone of an entire interaction. When your front desk person stays late to help a last-minute walk-in, acknowledging it matters. When your coworker catches a payroll error before it becomes a problem, that deserves more than a nod. When your maintenance person shows up early to fix the broken A/C before anyone else arrives—it’s thank you time.

What happens when you make this a habit? You create an environment where people feel seen. When people feel seen, they show up more fully. Morale improves. Loyalty increases. Communication opens up.



### Say It Like You Mean It

The key is sincerity. “Thanks” muttered while scrolling your phone doesn’t count. “Thank you for handling that tricky vendor situation—I know that took patience,” tells someone exactly what you’re grateful for and why it mattered.

You don’t have to get flowery. You just have to be real.

Here are some simple examples:

- “Thanks for jumping in during the lunch rush today—I noticed and I appreciate it.”
- “I really appreciate you taking care of the toner issue before it became a crisis. That saved us a headache.”
- “Thanks for getting that report done early—it gave me time to review it before the meeting.”

### Don’t Just Thank Down

It’s easy to remember to thank the people who report to you. But don’t forget to thank sideways and up, too. Thank your coworkers, your boss, the IT guy who reset your password again. Gratitude isn’t just a management tactic—it’s a cultural one.

And yes, say thank you to the people you don’t work with directly: the delivery driver, the temp who helped for a week, the cleaner who comes after hours. These moments build goodwill and, let’s be honest, they just make you a better human.

### Written Thanks Can Go Even Further

A handwritten thank-you note is rare these days—and that makes it powerful. Leave a sticky note on someone’s monitor. Send a quick email



with “thank you” in the subject line. Drop a postcard in someone’s mailbox. These don’t go unnoticed. In fact, they often get pinned to bulletin boards or tucked into desks for rough days.

### You Set the Tone

As the office manager, you’re in a unique position. You touch almost every department, interact with almost everyone, and have a bird’s-eye view of what’s going on. That also means you’re in a prime position to shape culture.

If you build a workplace where appreciation flows freely—up, down, and sideways—it will come back to you, too. People will be quicker to support you, to offer help, to go the extra mile. Why? Because you made them feel like it mattered.

And it did.

So today, find a moment. Look around. Someone did something that made your job a little easier, your day a little better. Go thank them. Out loud. With meaning.

It really is that simple. ■

# Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs): Friend or Foe?

## What Law Office Managers Need to Know

**A**lternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) are no longer on the fringes of the legal industry. They are now a core part of how legal work is delivered and purchased, especially by corporate clients focused on cost, speed, and predictability.

Industry research from organizations such as Thomson Reuters, Georgetown Law's Center on Ethics and the Legal Profession, and the Legal Services Board consistently shows that ALSPs represent a multi-tens-of-billions-of-dollars global market, with steady year-over-year growth. Many corporate legal departments now use ALSPs alongside traditional law firms rather than instead of them.

For law office managers, this shift raises an important question: Are ALSPs a threat — or a tool?

The answer is often both, depending on how well your firm understands and responds to the change.

### What Are ALSPs — and Why Clients Use Them

ALSPs typically focus on high-volume, process-driven legal work such as:

- Document review and eDiscovery
- Contract management and lifecycle services
- Legal research and drafting support

- Compliance monitoring
- Legal operations and project management

Clients use them because they offer:

- Predictable pricing
- Technology-enabled workflows
- Scalability
- Faster turnaround for routine or repeatable work



This has reshaped client expectations—even when clients continue to hire traditional firms for complex legal judgment.

### Partner Opportunity or Competitive Threat?

#### The threat:

ALSPs directly compete with firms for work that used to subsidize higher-margin matters. Routine tasks once billed hourly by junior attorneys or paralegals are now frequently carved out and sent elsewhere.

#### The opportunity:

Many firms are learning that ALSPs can be strategic partners, not just competitors.

Examples include:

- Outsourcing document review to free internal teams for higher-value work
- Partnering on large-scale matters that require surge capacity
- Using ALSPs' tech platforms instead of building everything in-house

For office managers, this creates a new operational reality: coordinating blended delivery models that include outside providers without compromising quality, confidentiality, or client service.

### Pricing Dynamics: Why This Affects Your Role

ALSP growth is accelerating the shift away from purely hourly billing.

Clients increasingly expect:

- Flat fees
- Phase-based pricing
- Transparent cost allocation between firms and providers

This affects:

- Timekeeping and billing workflows
- Matter budgeting and forecasting
- How staff time is allocated and evaluated

As office manager, you may be asked to:

continues on page 9

## Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs): Friend or Foe?

continued from page 8

- Track which work is outsourced vs. handled internally
- Monitor margin impact
- Adjust staffing models accordingly

Understanding ALSP pricing structures helps you support leadership with realistic operational data rather than assumptions.

### How ALSPs Are Changing Client Expectations

Even clients who prefer traditional firms are influenced by ALSP standards.

They now expect:

- Faster turnaround on routine tasks
- Clear process explanations
- Technology-enabled communication
- Predictable billing

This puts pressure on internal operations. If your firm's workflows feel opaque or manual by comparison, clients will notice — even if the legal advice itself is excellent.

### What This Means for Staffing and Workflow Planning

ALSPs are quietly reshaping **how firms staff work**, even when no formal partnership exists.

Common internal shifts include:

- Fewer junior staff dedicated solely to repetitive tasks

- Greater emphasis on project management skills
- Increased need for oversight, coordination, and quality control

For law office managers, this means:

- Rethinking job descriptions
- Supporting cross-training
- Identifying which tasks truly require firm resources

Your role becomes less about headcount and more about capacity design.

### Practical Steps Law Office Managers Can Take Now

1. **Map work by value, not tradition**  
Identify which tasks are high-judgment vs. process-driven. This helps leadership decide what should stay in-house and what could be outsourced.
2. **Document workflows before outsourcing**  
If work is sent to an ALSP, you still need clear standards, checkpoints, and accountability. Poor documentation leads to rework and client dissatisfaction.
3. **Build internal coordination protocols**  
Decide who manages ALSP relationships, who reviews outputs, and how issues are escalated. This prevents confusion and finger-pointing.
4. **Educate staff — don't alarm them**  
ALSPs often create anxiety among support staff. Clear communication about how roles are evolving — not disappearing — helps maintain morale and trust.

### Friend or Foe? The Real Answer

ALSPs aren't going away. In fact, most industry analysts expect their role to expand further in 2026 and beyond, particularly as clients push harder on cost control and efficiency.

For law office managers, the question isn't whether ALSPs matter—it's whether your firm is reacting to them or strategically accounting for them.

Handled well, ALSPs can:

- ☑ Improve scalability
- ☑ Protect internal staff from overload
- ☑ Support predictable pricing
- ☑ Strengthen client relationships

Handled poorly, they can:

- ☒ Erode margins
- ☒ Create workflow confusion
- ☒ Undermine staff confidence

Your operational leadership is what makes the difference. ■

### Related Reading

- <https://www.lawofficemgr.com/payroll-part-1-in-house-or-outsource/>
- <https://www.lawofficemgr.com/regularly-review-your-vendor-contracts-for-cost-savings-and-compliance/>
- <https://www.lawofficemgr.com/dont-put-your-vendor-contracts-on-auto-pilot/>

# Cybersecurity Awareness for Offices During Tax Season

*Why February Is a High-Risk Month for Phishing—and How You Can Protect Your Organization*

**F**ebruary may feel like a quiet, in-between month, but from a cybersecurity standpoint, it's one of the busiest—and riskiest—times of the year for offices in every sector. As an office manager, you're right at the center of this risk. Tax season is ramping up, financial data is moving back and forth, and cybercriminals know it. They take advantage of the increased activity, tighter deadlines, and general stress that come with this time of year to launch phishing attacks that are surprisingly effective.

Understanding why February is such a high-risk month is the first step. The second—and more important step—is making sure your office is prepared.



During tax season, your organization is handling more sensitive information than usual. Payroll records, employee Social Security numbers, vendor payment details, and tax documents are all in play. That creates the perfect environment for phishing emails that look

legitimate. Messages claiming to be from the IRS, a payroll provider, a bank, or even your own leadership team can slip past a busy employee who's focused on getting things done quickly. One click on a fake link or one reply to a fraudulent email can expose your entire organization.

What makes February particularly dangerous is timing. Many offices are finalizing W-2s, responding to employee questions, and coordinating with accountants or tax professionals. Phishing emails are often crafted to match these exact scenarios—"urgent payroll correction needed," "updated tax form attached," or "immediate action required to avoid penalties." When an email aligns perfectly with what your team is already working on, skepticism tends to drop.

As an office manager, you don't need to be a cybersecurity expert to reduce this risk. You do, however, need to set clear expectations and put simple safeguards in place. One of the most effective things you can do is remind your team—early and often—that tax season scams are real and common. A short email or quick staff meeting in February that says, "This is peak phishing season—slow down and double-check emails," can make a real difference.



Encouraging a culture of pause is key. Let your staff know it's okay to take an extra minute to verify a request, even if it claims to be urgent. In fact, that pause should be expected. If an email asks for sensitive information, changes payment details, or includes attachments related to taxes or payroll, employees should know to verify it through a second channel, such as a phone call or direct message to a known contact.

You'll also want to make sure your internal processes support safe behavior. If only one person handles payroll or tax filings, that person becomes a prime target. Consider adding a verification step for any request involving financial or personal data. Dual approval for payment changes or document transfers can stop a phishing attempt in its tracks, even if someone clicks before realizing something is wrong.

continues on page 11

## Cybersecurity Awareness for Offices During Tax Season

continued from page 10

Technical protections matter too, but they don't have to be complicated. Make sure software updates are current, antivirus tools are active, and multi-factor authentication is enabled wherever possible—especially for email and financial systems. Many phishing attacks succeed simply because an attacker gains access to an email account and then uses it to

target others internally. Extra login protection can prevent that domino effect.

Don't overlook the importance of reporting. Your team should know exactly what to do if they suspect a phishing attempt—or if they think they may have clicked something they shouldn't have. Removing fear or embarrassment from the equation is critical. The faster an issue is reported, the easier it is to contain. Make it clear that reporting a mistake quickly is far better than staying quiet and hoping nothing happens.

Finally, use February as a checkpoint. Tax season is a natural reminder that your

office handles valuable data year-round, not just during filing deadlines. Take a moment to review your policies, refresh training, and identify any weak spots before a real incident forces the issue.

Cybercriminal count on distraction, urgency, and routine. As an office manager, you're in a unique position to interrupt that pattern. By raising awareness, reinforcing simple habits, and setting up practical safeguards, you can significantly reduce your organization's risk—not just during tax season, but all year long. ■

## Legal Tech Trends That Matter Right Now

**L**egal technology is no longer about experimenting on the edges. In 2026, the firms gaining ground are the ones making deliberate, coordinated tech decisions that improve efficiency, client experience, and management visibility.

As a law office manager, you sit at the center of this shift. You're not just supporting technology—you're translating it into workflows, policies, and day-to-day operations. The trends below are shaping how firms operate right now, and understanding what they mean for you will help you lead smarter, not harder.

### Cloud Ecosystem Consolidation

For years, many firms accumulated a patchwork of tools: one system for



billing, another for document management, another for intake, another for timekeeping. In 2026, that approach is losing ground.

#### What's happening:

Vendors are consolidating services into unified cloud platforms that combine case management, billing, document storage, calendaring, and client communication in one ecosystem.

#### What this means for you:

- Fewer disconnected systems to manage
- Less duplicate data entry

- Fewer training gaps for staff
- Improved data consistency across departments

#### However, consolidation also raises important questions:

- Which systems become your "source of truth"?
- What data needs to be migrated—and cleaned—before transition?
- How do you manage permissions across roles?

#### Your opportunity:

You can lead system audits, identify redundancies, and help leadership choose platforms that support workflows, not just features.

continues on page 12

## Legal Tech Trends That Matter Right Now

continued from page 11

Firms that skip this step often end up paying for tools they don't fully use.

### Enhanced Client Experience Tools

Client expectations continue to rise—and they're shaped by experiences outside the legal industry. In 2026, clients expect transparency, responsiveness, and self-service where appropriate.

#### What's trending:

- Secure client portals for document sharing and messaging
- Automated status updates and reminders
- Online intake and scheduling tools

These tools reduce administrative burden and improve client satisfaction when implemented thoughtfully.

#### What this means for you:

- Fewer inbound "just checking in" calls and emails
- Clearer audit trails for communication
- More consistent client onboarding

But tools alone don't fix experience issues. Without clear standards, client portals can create confusion instead of clarity.

#### Your opportunity:

You can define:

- What information goes into the portal (and when)
- Response-time expectations
- Which staff manage portal communication

Done well, client experience tools free up staff time and reinforce professionalism.

### Workflow Automation That Actually Helps

Automation in 2026 looks different than it did a few years ago. Instead of replacing roles, firms are using automation to remove friction from routine tasks.

#### Common use cases include:

- Automated document generation from templates
- Task triggers based on case milestones
- Standardized intake and conflict checks
- Billing and time-entry reminders



#### What this means for you:

Automation creates consistency—but only if workflows are well-defined first. Automating a broken process just makes mistakes happen faster.

#### Your opportunity:

Before automating, you can:

- Map existing workflows
- Identify bottlenecks and duplication
- Standardize steps across practice areas

This positions you as the architect of efficiency, not just a system administrator.

### Data-Driven Decision Making for Managers

One of the most impactful—and underused—trends in legal tech is manager-level analytics.

#### What's changing:

Modern platforms now surface real-time data on:

- Case duration and bottlenecks
- Staff workload distribution
- Billing realization rates
- Client response timelines

This data turns gut feelings into actionable insight.

#### What this means for you:

You no longer have to rely solely on anecdotal feedback to answer questions like:

- Are certain teams overloaded?
- Where are cases slowing down?
- Which processes are costing the most time?

#### Your opportunity:

You can use data to:

- Support staffing requests
- Justify technology investments
- Identify training needs
- Forecast capacity and growth

Data gives you a stronger voice in leadership conversations.

### Pulling It All Together

The most successful firms in 2026 aren't chasing every new tool. They're aligning technology with strategy, workflows, and people.

As a law office manager, your role is to:

- ☑ Evaluate tech through an operational lens
- ☑ Balance efficiency with client experience
- ☑ Ensure staff adoption and training
- ☑ Use data to guide smarter decisions

Legal tech is no longer just "IT's job." It's a management discipline—and you're already doing more of it than you might realize. ■