

The future of the legal director in the age of AI



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1. Introduction



The legal function. Such a complex and poorly understood task within organizations. The legal department is, at times, seen as an independent bubble, an entity you must go to for permission before anything else. **Legal is, to a large extent, responsible for the corporate brand,** for the efficiency of internal processes and, above all, for preventing risks and contingencies whenever the company closes a deal.

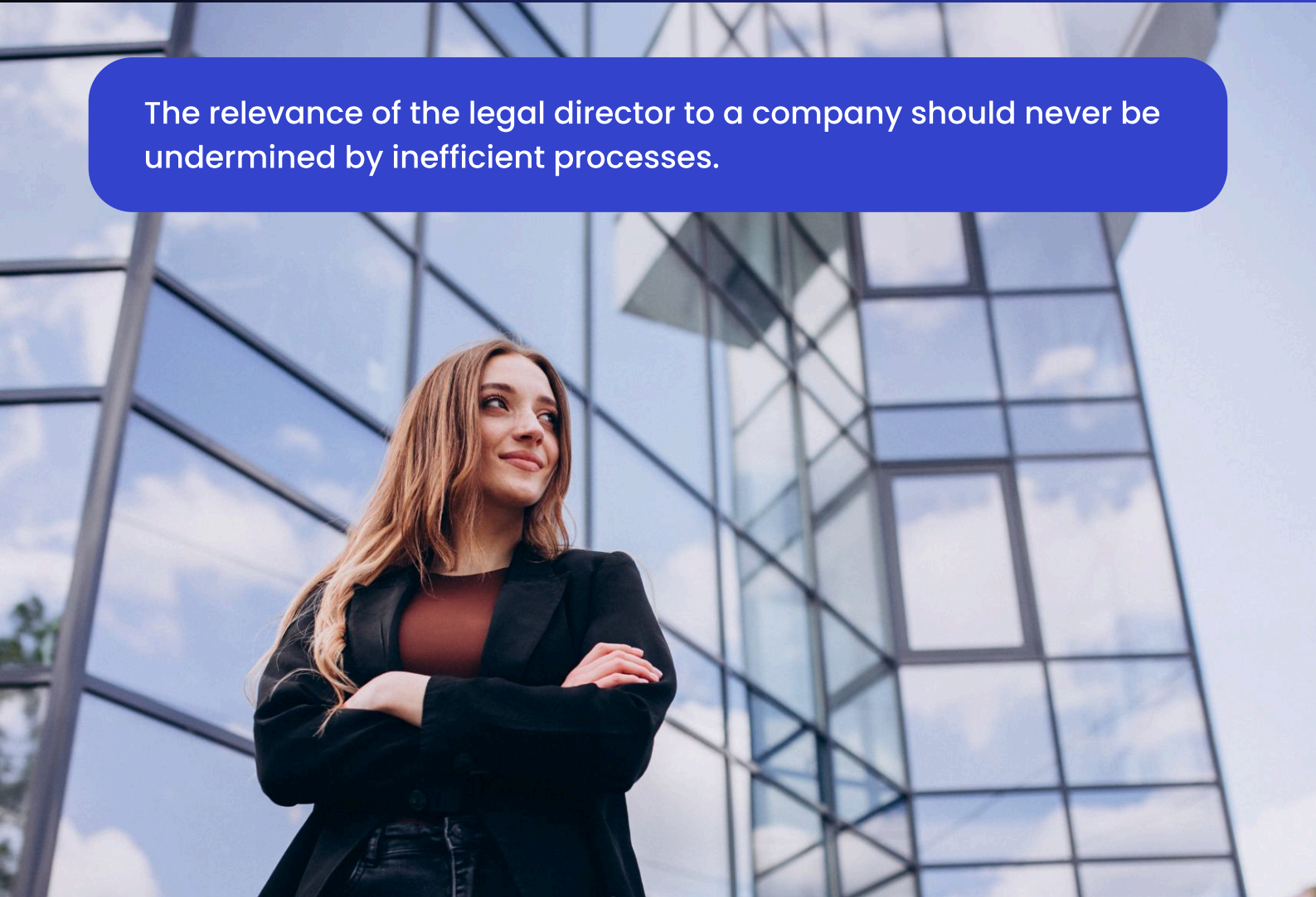
At the head of the department sits **the legal director, a decisive figure by position, yet cornered by deadlines and KPIs that grow ever more demanding.** The documents their department delivers must be flawless, error-free, clear, and detailed enough for internal clients, the rest of the company's departments, to use immediately without exposing the company to risk. Whatever Legal contributes in its writing and actions must offer the certainty that it will protect the company against any unforeseen event down the road.

The legal department has stopped being the company's "police" and has become its enabler: instead of putting up barriers, it speeds things up and makes them easier, and that requires new skills, starting with mastering technology and AI. But how?

Find out, in this ebook the advice every legal director needs to ride the wave of legal operations. **Learn how to make the legal department more efficient and secure its processes, while adding value to your company's growth and competitiveness.** Take the reins of the company's legal operations while minimizing its exposure to legal contingencies.

2. The evolution and importance of the legal director in companies

The relevance of the legal director to a company should never be undermined by inefficient processes.



Law schools of the past gave today's legal leaders solid foundations. Good universities taught logical thinking and argumentation, and laid the groundwork across the different branches of law that let professionals perform brilliantly. But after decades of major technological change, a profession as old as law is now facing an era of transformation.

Even so, knowledge about innovation in the legal field still hasn't taken hold in law schools: lawyers are far from entering the profession with any grounding in legal tech. For that reason, they're forced to catch up and seek out that learning on their own, in a **context that increasingly demands technological know-how in the world of Law**. But what happens to those who are already leading legal teams in today's organizations?



The efficiency loss affecting the legal director

Today's legal directors carry a responsibility that goes far beyond the legal department itself. Their role has taken on strategic weight for the company, since their functions no longer end with legal advice on the documentation the company handles, but extend to being key advisors to executive teams and to company strategy.

And yet, the day-to-day of the legal leader and their team is bogged down in slow workflows and routine tasks that drag down their pace and hold them back from helping other departments or managing claims. **The legal director watches their team get buried in cases while faster solutions are demanded more and more.** In that situation, with a bottleneck choking critical contracts in the legal department's hands, the value of every contractual deal drops sharply.

Every contract or legal document is the tool needed to close a sale, a purchase, a merger, or any number of other actions, across every kind of business and sector. But that **cost isn't always visible, even though it's there: it's the value a contract should generate that leaks away through outdated clauses, unreviewed renewals, or unmet obligations. That contractual "value erosion" sits at an average of 8.6%, according to WorldCC, with the best-prepared companies below 3% and the least mature above 20%, absent an efficient process powered by technology (WorldCC, 2026).**

On top of that, however common it may be, a constant funnel of tasks breeds frustration, and it's worth remembering that a team's discontent converges into poor outcomes.

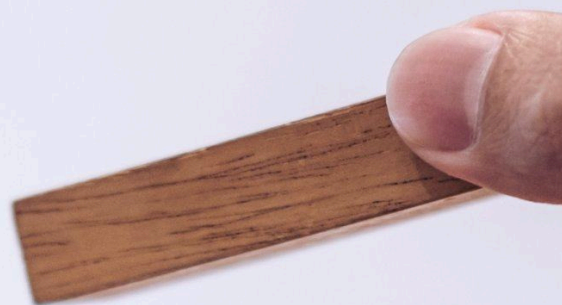
A recent study on the legal industry in Latin America confirms this tension with hard numbers: **40% of lawyers report high levels of stress, the direct result of that discontent.**

The cause isn't just workload: 66% already use AI without any governance framework to guide its use, while investment in training teams runs into two barriers: limited budget and cultural resistance.

It's the same bottleneck that clogs up contracts, now applied to people (2nd Study on Innovation and Outlook of the Legal Industry in Latin America, 2026).

The evolution of the legal director

Faced with a relentless world of rising demands, the legal director needs to evolve and figure out what changes are needed so their department can thrive, and their role isn't drowned by demands it can't keep up with. It's not just about rethinking their tasks, capabilities, and legal tech tools. They must embrace the vital role they play for the company and adapt to a reality that calls for them to **step forward and join the company's digitalization efforts**, contributing to its competitiveness.



3. From blocker to enabler: the legal department's new role

Traditional know-how must be paired with the best technology so legal operations can take their next evolutionary step.



Key indicators for the legal department

The legal director must make sure their department delivers precise, useful, error-free advice. One of the essential gauges for assessing the legal department's performance is client satisfaction. To score it, one key measuring stick is **how long the legal department takes to respond to each request from other departments, or better still, how long a request sits on the legal department's desk**. Another is **the quality of the final product** and, above all, whether it matches what each internal client actually asked for.



The company's police officer

A huge weight rests on the legal director and their department. With scattered, sometimes incomplete information, and deadlines that are anything but forgiving, amid a steady stream of clients wanting a solution as fast as possible, the legal department has to deliver something precise, quick, and solution-focused. Otherwise, an accusing finger points its way: the department gets branded the police officer, the one who always says “no,” the blocker of initiatives, as requests from other departments pile up waiting for legal's approval before they can move forward.

But in this conflict, the other side isn't wrong either: HR, sales, marketing, procurement, finance... all of these departments need the legal department to review and draft contracts daily, or need legal's sign-off on their legal reports as soon as possible.

The legal department, **overwhelmed by requests and open cases, has no choice but to prioritize, leaving behind matters that actually matter to the business.**

Among the many challenges the legal director faces is this: to handle a high volume of requests, more staff are hired, growing the team, which in theory should solve the efficiency problem. But what happens instead? New hires need training, so the director has to spend already-limited time passing on know-how about the company and the department, on top of the hiring costs and the time HR spends on recruitment.

Fortunately, technology is now available to make what used to be hard simple. With a Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) platform, there's no longer any need to grow headcount to handle operational tasks, since it can meet current and future demand by automating work that used to be unthinkable.

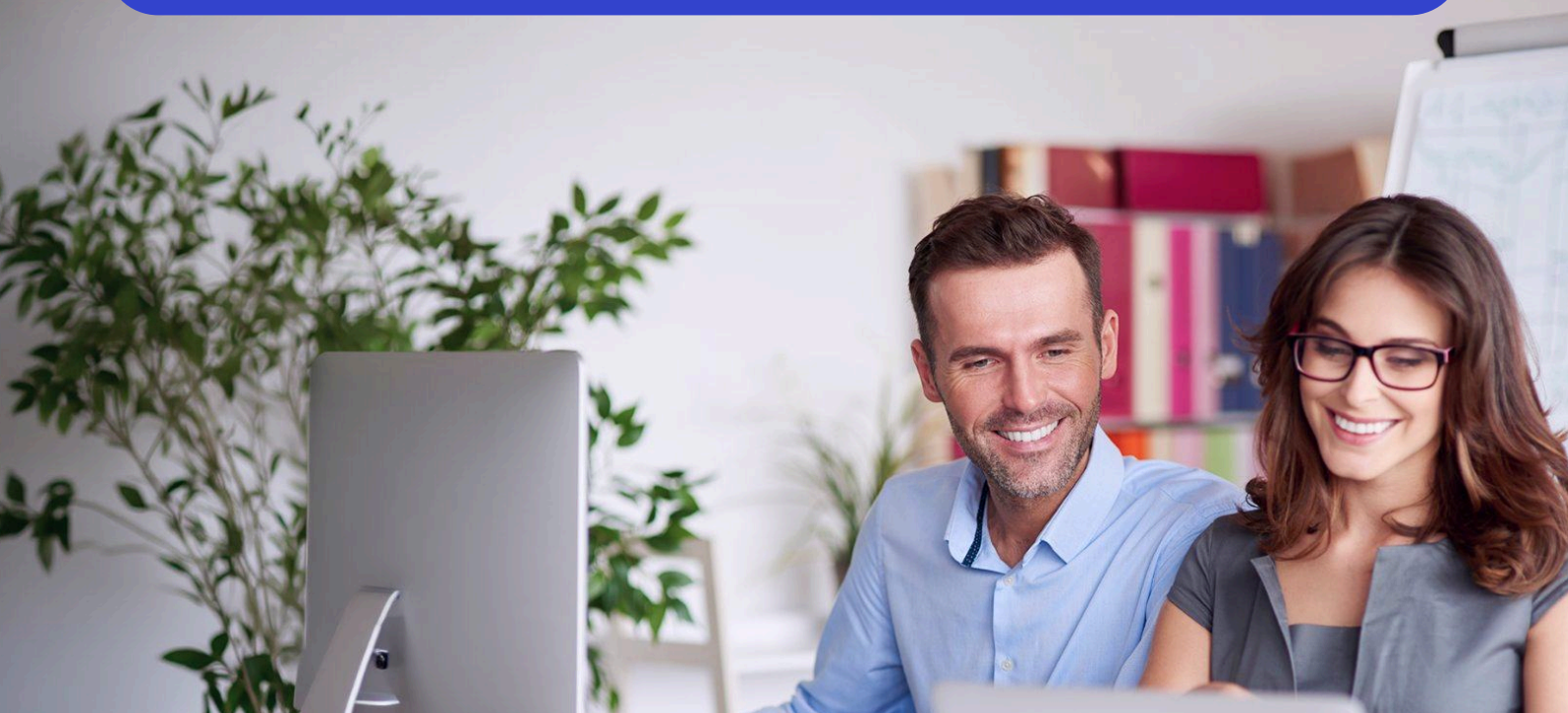
Stuck vs. empowered

The legal director has all the skills needed to coordinate their team and get the work done well, but their way of working needs a push to stop being seen as a blocker and start becoming an enabler in every task they perform for other business areas. Thanks to innovation, that shift is possible, turning legal into a genuinely effective, solution-driven service department, as well as a strategic one for senior leadership. An AI-powered Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) system is precisely one of those tools that unblocks: it lets the legal department go from saying “no” to saying “here's how,” clearing out processes that used to depend on manual work.

To do that, the director must stay on top of the latest trends in managing and understanding legal tech, to give their team the best tools to work effectively.

This won't just help meet every KPI the team is tracking; it will also let them offload certain KPIs that will, going forward, fall to other departments. How is that possible? Because the legal department sets up the systems and standardizes the process, but from then on the interested departments become the users, leaving legal to hold onto only the oversight and upkeep of the operation.

Rolling out legal self-service systems for departments that need certain standard services, such as drafting template documents, frees the legal department from mechanical, repetitive tasks.



4. The evolution of legal operations and its integration with AI

The reinvention of legal services is a reality. It's been a while since the legal team took on coordinating legal operations on top of simply processing legal matters. It's time to give that work its due.



New competencies in legal operations

Legal operations at companies have taken an evolutionary leap that has let them grow closer to their clients, whether internal or external. And as part of this ongoing process of evolution and transformation, the legal department has moved from being a center for “advice and guidance” to being a **department directly involved in company decision-making. Artificial intelligence accelerates that leap: it automates repetitive tasks and frees up time for the strategic analysis that used to have no room in the day-to-day.**

Today's legal operations are multidisciplinary, touching both the inside of the legal department and the rest of the company, and covering a wide range of areas. Today's legal director must make sure they have the skills needed to keep legal operations developed and up to date. These include:

- Basic **financial** knowledge.
- **Team** management.
- **Project** coordination.
- **Vendor** coordination.
- **Coordination** and corporate strategy skills.
- **Technological knowledge**, artificial intelligence, and, specifically, legal prompting.

Using technology, and increasingly AI, isn't an add-on to legal operations: it's part of their very DNA. It underpins project coordination, vendor management, and teamwork, and it's the reason these operations can scale without having to scale headcount along with them.

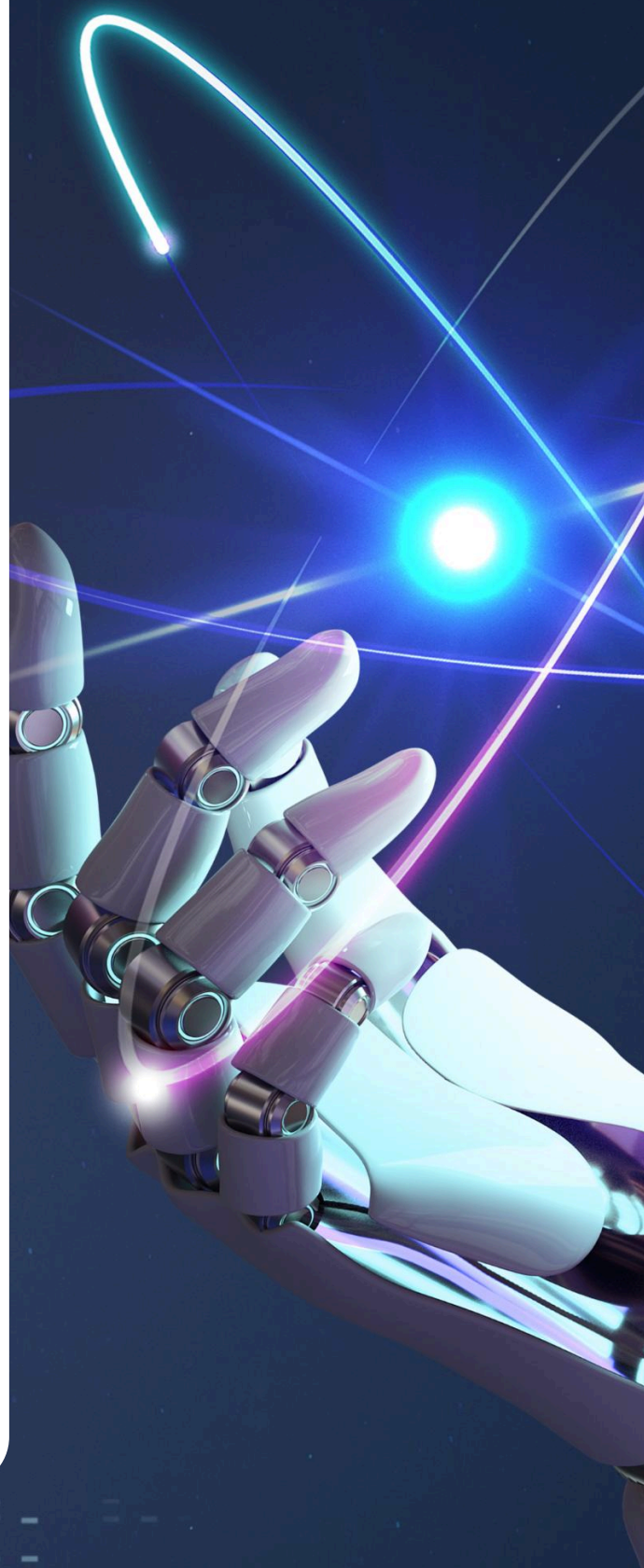


Time to lead the change

Today's legal director knows they need to modernize legal operations. The challenge remains the same as ever: sizing the workload correctly and having the right number of professionals, but today there's a real way out: according to the report "The AI Imperative: Reshaping of the Legal Industry" by Deloitte Legal (2026), practically every legal department has now adopted some form of AI, though only 7% has invested in training their teams to use it. The gap is no longer about having the technology, but about knowing how to make the most of it.

The opportunity still lies in technology, and the pace is picking up: according to The General Counsel Report by FTI Consulting and Relativity (2026), **generative AI adoption in corporate legal departments jumped from 44% to 87% in a single year, and 39% of legal leaders already rank it among their strategic priorities.** The report itself speaks of a new era of the "TechnoLawyer": it's no longer enough to use technology; you have to lead it.

At the same time, the study explains that the opportunity, the solution, lies in technology: 91% of respondents say legal service delivery can be modernized. It's time for leaders to act on innovating legal operations, given that **76% of those interviewed say new technology now needs to be implemented.**





Improving competencies and scaling collaboration

The legal director needs to connect their department's needs with the company's business strategy in order to propose innovation, always from a thorough knowledge of the legal tech ecosystem.

That means going beyond solving one-off cases: connecting with the company's full strategy, contributing KPIs and key results that can now be quantified and measured thanks to technology and legal operations. A legal director who measures their impact in concrete figures, response times, contracts managed, and risks avoided, speaks the same language as the rest of the executive committee.

Finding and pursuing allied solutions

Legal directors need to see legal tech as an ally, not a change imposed on them. The push for efficiency in teams is a growing demand; doing more and doing it better is asked for more and more, and legal operations are the driving force traditional law needs to hit that desired volume without sacrificing quality or security. To that end, the legal director has two clear paths for improvement: the first is technological: a CLM (Contract Lifecycle Management) with integrated AI supports the entire life cycle of a contract, from drafting to signature, and frees the team from repetitive tasks. The second is organizational: rethinking how work is split between the legal department and the rest of the company, something that same technology makes possible.

Unclogging cross-departmental work with the legal department

A multidisciplinary team is key to carrying out the legal function of the future, but more isn't always better. **Teams with the right working system can be more effective than others with dozens of professionals but inefficient processes.** The legal director has to squeeze the most out of their team and must cover any gaps by building effective collaboration with the rest of the company's departments.

Tips for boosting the legal department's work with internal clients:

- Implement **Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM)** + AI.
- Set up a **self-service system for drafting legal documentation.**
- **Standardize processes** such as automated document generation.
- **Implement an automated reporting system** for tracking KPIs and process status.
- Set up an automated documentation **validation workflow.**
- Establish **feedback** and continuous improvement methods.



Management competencies: Is the legal director up to date with the latest technologies, processes, and methods?

Staying up to date requires embracing the evolution of legal operations. **The legal director must demonstrate the value of legal innovation for the business**, which calls for the persuasive skills and know-how needed to stay current on legal tech. They can't afford to miss what's shaping progress; they have to stay on top of change and keep their team at the cutting edge of innovation.

Tips for staying current on the latest trends:

- **Training:** blogs, news, success stories, attending in-person, online events and webinars.
- Seeking out **technology advisory services**.
- Analyzing **the department's needs** and mapping its processes.
- **Connecting with peers** in the field and sharing the success of initiatives carried out
- Studying **technology adoption** in the market.
- Laying out a **technology roadmap**.
- **Rolling out** improvements.
- Setting up **feedback** and continuous improvement systems.



5. The technology tools every legal director should master

Mastering technology is no longer optional for the legal director: it's a condition for leading with sound judgment.

Fully delegating technology decisions to the team leaves the department with no voice of its own in front of the rest of the company, right when technology is shaping so much of legal strategy.

Understanding it properly means knowing which tools actually move the needle in the legal department's day-to-day, and why each one earns its place in the budget: not as a maintenance expense, but as **an investment with a measurable return in time, risk, and cost avoided**. In practice, the baseline is managing these tools:

CLM with AI

Software that manages the entire contract life cycle, from negotiation through to archiving. It's no longer just a repository but **the engine driving the legal department's negotiation and analytics**, thanks to AI capabilities built into every stage of the workflow, not as an outside assistant you consult, but as intelligence that anticipates, suggests, and executes: it drafts clauses, extracts metadata and key data from contracts, and turns that information into actionable intelligence. Together with predictive governance and data readiness, it lets legal teams steer the process with intelligence, not noise, gaining speed and traceability with every contract.

Generative AI assistants

Technology applied to drafting clauses, producing case summaries, and mass document review in due diligence processes. Their value lies in **freeing the team from hours once spent on repetitive tasks, so that time can go toward the legal judgment that genuinely requires human expertise.**

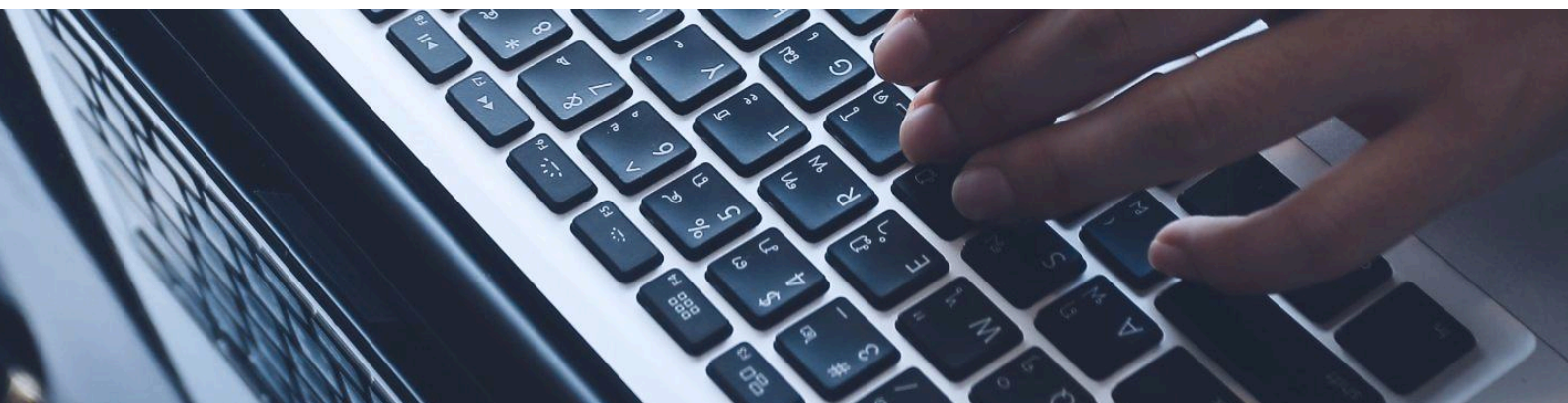
AI-powered legal research platforms

These combine legal databases, such as case law, legislation, and doctrine, with generative AI. Rather than just locating documents, the system reads them, analyzes them, and answers in natural language with verified citations, working as a **legal copilot that cuts down on outside counsel for questions the team can answer itself.**

E-signature integrated into the full CLM workflow

AI-assisted negotiation, drafting, approval, signature, and post-signature management, with expiration alerts, renewals, and analytics, all on one platform. Its value lies in **removing the friction of jumping between scattered tools, shortening closing cycles and avoiding the time and money costs of fragmented management.**

These tools aren't adopted the same way at every company: a scaleup with three lawyers is not the same as a multinational with a presence in ten countries. But at any stage, they add value: they go beyond what's already taken for granted, like Excel or email, ground every legal department has long since covered, and move into territory where real competitive advantage is now being decided.

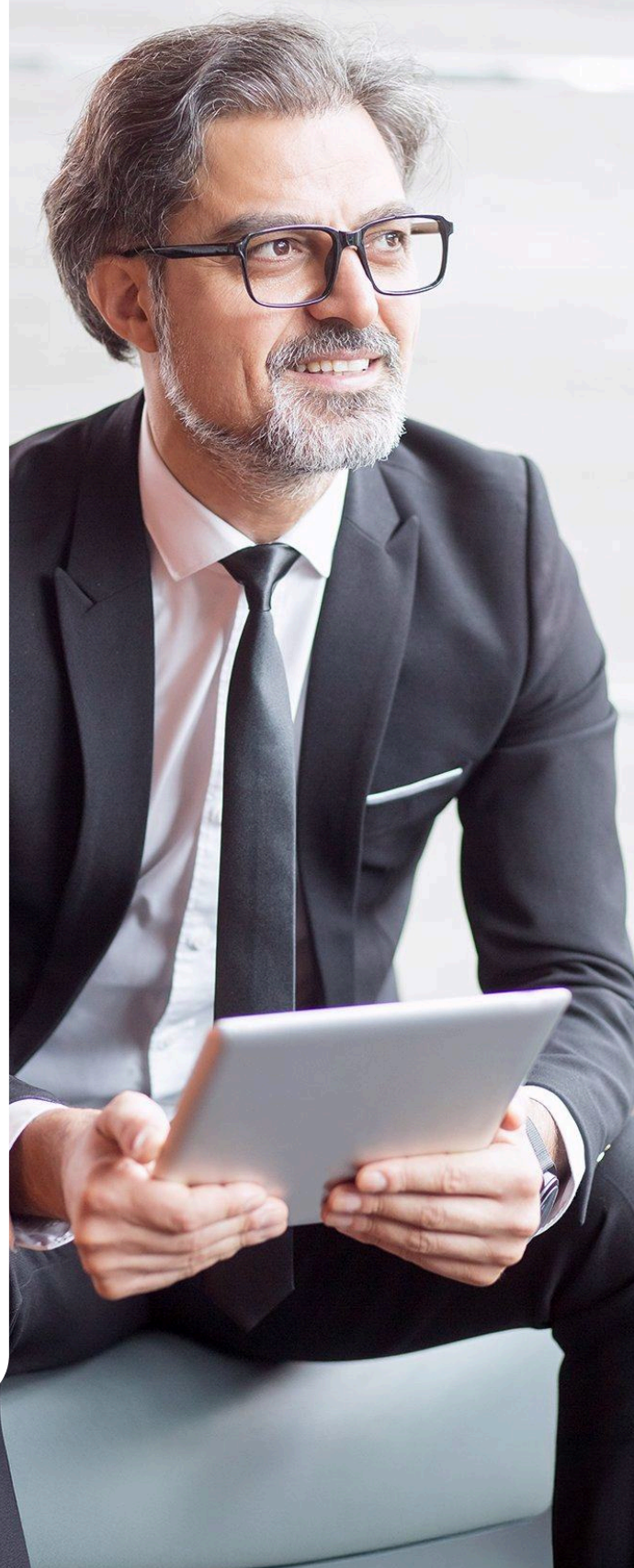


That value, to truly count in front of the rest of the business, has to be provable, and that's where justifying the investment comes in. The same tools that handle day-to-day work also **let you measure indicators that directly impact revenue:** contract closing time, the volume of work resolved without turning to outside counsel, or risk avoided before it becomes a cost. The legal director who masters technology doesn't just use it: **they know how to translate its impact into the language the executive committee understands.**

Technology skills and AI literacy are no longer a nice-to-have; they've become a core competency of the role, one that calls for a mindset shift and staying current at the same pace technology evolves. **Understanding how an AI-powered CLM platform, like Bigle, takes part in drafting, reviewing, and signing contracts puts the legal director in a stronger position to make informed decisions and lead the transformation, rather than simply signing off on it.**

Gartner backs the trend with a concrete forecast: **legal technology budgets will double by 2028**, driven by specialized legal AI platforms already delivering gains in productivity, reduced reliance on outside counsel, and improved compliance (Gartner, May 2026).

And that requires letting go of control over the operational, not over judgment on what matters.



6. Next steps: what is expected of the legal director today?

The present and the future are full of opportunity. The head of the legal department must guide their team through the digital transformation of legal operations.



The legal director must get familiar with what's new, stay on top of change, and keep in mind that the right technology, well chosen, is key to their team's development. It's their responsibility to put it where it belongs.

Guide the way to the legal operations of the future

As the head of the legal department, drive the shift toward the digitalization that will transform how Legal's contribution to business growth is understood. To do that, pay attention to your team: analyze their needs, the pain points in their day-to-day work, and, above all, listen to them. Get solid feedback on how they think the department should run, where the opportunities for improvement are, and take the first steps toward automation.

Set clear goals

Organize the change. After listening to your team's latest needs, put together a plan: write down the areas for improvement, set the goals you want to reach, and lay out a roadmap. To do that, think carefully about where you want to position the legal department: which key indicators do you want to improve once the improvement plan is in place? Which specific functions should your team perform? How do you want the service you provide to the company to improve?

Commit to legal tech know-how

Instill in your team the same vision you hold yourself: encourage them to learn about the new technologies and news shaping the legal field. Staying on top of the latest innovation trends will help your team understand how a legal sector that's growing less and less analog keeps evolving. Embracing legal tech is no longer something only left to early adopters; we're now at a point where the vast majority of legal departments worldwide are adopting it, so it's an initiative you can't afford to ignore, since your competitors are likely already rolling it out and gaining an edge because of it.





Trust only cutting-edge technology

Choose software that fits your needs, one that covers your processes end to end. Avoid at all costs having to piece together separate solutions, since you'll then have to deal with integrating systems and managing multiple vendors. Picking the right vendor can seem complicated, but there's one fundamental thing to look at: the pace of their innovation.

That should be the fuel driving the vendor: ask for a detailed list of the software's features, references on how their platform has evolved and where it's headed, so you're sure it's genuinely innovative and stays ahead in its market. Sometimes just a look at the software's look & feel is enough to tell whether it's built on cutting-edge technology or on yesterday's.

Find out what users say about the software

When choosing a technology, it's essential to check that it matches the features the legal department is actually looking for, but **you also need to check the vendor on software directories like Capterra, Software Advice, GetApp**, and others, where actual users leave reviews of the software. Among the details worth weighing, how the vendor treats its clients is one of the most important.

Make sure they offer **customer service in the local language and that their support is responsive**. It's also key that they provide an **online training platform (also known as a knowledge base) that's kept up to date**, to make learning and adoption easier for users.

Bet on people

Fair enough. Technology matters a great deal, and it's essential that it comes packed with the right features, but none of that means anything without the best talent behind it. Make sure the vendors you choose have lawyers on their teams, because only they will truly understand what your team needs and how to deliver a tailored solution. And keep this in mind: **no technology will ever replace a motivated team**. It's just a tool for gaining efficiency, but it's people who will actually carry digitalization across the finish line.



7. About Bigle

Bigle is the legal AI platform that covers the entire contract life cycle. 4 products. One single ecosystem:

Bigle CLM, the legal AI Bigle Libra, Bigle Sign, and Bigle Academy. The company's mission is **to make companies' legal operations more efficient, improving security and minimizing the risk of legal contingencies.**

The platform lets professionals automatically create documents, share them for review, validate them in real time, collaborate virtually, negotiate, and sign with its own e-signature.

Bigle has developed a generative artificial intelligence assistant, Libra, connected to its CLM platform, built for legal departments, expert in legal matters, and **offering a secure environment with maximum confidentiality, minimizing the hallucinations typical of other general-purpose tools.**

The company is a pioneer and a leader in no-code document automation, with a global presence, and its clients include major corporations and large law firms.

To learn more about Bigle, visit: biglelegal.com

For other inquiries, contact communication@biglelegal.com

By using Bigle, you contribute to saving natural resources



323 million
kg of wood



7.1 billion
litres of water



725 million
kg of CO₂



47 million
kg of waste