



Legal Ops from scratch

A practical guide for corporate
legal teams

How to launch, structure and scale your legal operations with the right technology, what legal leaders need to know about the current state of AI, and how to build an effective change management culture.

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1. Getting started:

Why Legal Ops matters and why change management is critical to legal transformation

Legal Operations is not a technology project or an internal efficiency initiative.

It is a management discipline that transforms how the legal function operates in order to create greater business value: a more strategic way of working, supported by technology, processes and metrics, that demonstrates through data how the legal team contributes not only to compliance, but also to business growth.

One of the most common mistakes is to assume that implementing tools is the starting point. Technology alone does not transform a legal team. **The decisive factor is changing how the team understands its own work.** That is why the greatest obstacle is not technical – it is cultural.

When Legal Operations projects fail, the cause is often not the tool, the budget or the timing, **but how the team relates to change.**

Trained in precision and precedent, legal professionals can naturally gravitate toward inertia and fear that technology may replace the legal role rather than enhance it.

This is where Legal Ops becomes essential: **it is a lever that connects legal work with business value and evolves the lawyer's role into a more strategic function.**

The data confirms it: **61%** of failed technology implementations are due to poor change management, not technical problems (CLOC, 2024).

The success of Legal Ops does not depend on the tool itself, but on how the team redefines, measures and communicates its value.

What does a mindset shift mean?

A mindset shift in Legal Ops means redefining how legal work is understood within the business: moving from doing things “the way they have always been done” to questioning processes and seeking more efficient ways of working.

It also means seeing **technology as an enabling tool**, not a threat – one that removes low-value tasks and allows legal professionals to focus on higher-value activities that require legal judgment. And it requires moving away from siloed work toward shared, standardised processes that scale efficiency and impact.

Taken together, this shift turns Legal Ops into a strategic function that connects legal work directly to business outcomes.

Quick assessment: Is your team ready?

? Is there someone who **challenges** the “we’ve always done it this way” mindset?

🕒 Does leadership dedicate **time** – not just budget – to the initiative?

👉 Can inefficiencies be discussed openly without assigning **blame**?

📱 Is there genuine willingness to learn **new tools** and ways of working?

If your answer is “no” to one or more of these questions, **cultural work is not an add-on – it is the starting point** before any technology implementation.



2. Legal Ops vs. Legal Tech: understanding the difference



Legal transformation does not begin with technology. It begins with understanding how the legal function operates and how it contributes to the business. Legal Operations provides that strategic perspective: **it analyses the operation, identifies sources of value and inefficiency, and sets priorities** to improve the performance of the legal team.

That is why it is important to distinguish between the two:



Legal Ops

Diagnoses, measures (through the creation of KPIs) and designs the legal operation, identifying needs, inefficiencies and opportunities for improvement.



Legal Tech

Implements the technology that responds to those needs, enabling the organisation to execute, scale and optimise the operating model that has been defined.

3. Legal operations: a practical roadmap from assessment to value creation

This guide is not about isolated improvements. It presents a **structured model for transforming the legal function**. Its objective is to show how to build a legal department that is more efficient, predictable, measurable and aligned with business objectives. The content follows a progressive journey, where each stage builds on the previous one: from understanding the current operation to demonstrating the value generated.

Define the objectives of the transformation

Before analysing processes, data or technology, it is essential to define what the organisation aims to achieve through Legal Operations. This step is often overlooked because transformation is frequently associated with technology or automation. However, without clear objectives, initiatives tend to become isolated projects with little measurable impact.

Legal Operations is not simply about accelerating tasks. Its purpose is to increase the value delivered by the legal function through an operation that is more efficient, predictable, measurable and aligned with business priorities.

The starting point is **understanding the organisation's strategic objectives and how the legal team contributes to them**: accelerating commercial processes, optimising costs, managing risk, supporting growth or improving the internal client experience.

Defining these objectives from the outset provides direction for the transformation and establishes the criteria against which processes, initiatives and outcomes will be evaluated. Without a clear definition of success, it is impossible to determine whether value is being created.

Assign an internal leader with real authority (Legal Ops owner) and align key stakeholders

Transformation is not achieved through the accumulation of initiatives. It requires clear operational leadership: **a dedicated owner who connects legal operations, strategy and execution, ensuring efforts remain coordinated and focused.**

This role should combine legal operational knowledge, analytical capabilities and a strong orientation towards process optimisation and automation. Its responsibility is to identify inefficiencies, redesign workflows and select the right technology, acting as a bridge between the legal team, management and transformation initiatives.

Equally important is stakeholder alignment. **Understanding the needs, expectations and pain points of internal stakeholders significantly improves adoption and engagement.** This requires strong cross-functional communication: engaging with business teams, gathering feedback, translating insights into actionable improvements and ensuring that legal initiatives support broader organisational objectives.



Measure the current state of the legal function

Before changing anything, it is necessary to understand how the legal operation actually performs. In many organisations, there is a general perception of overload or inefficiency, but without objective data, it is impossible to distinguish symptoms from root causes.

Legal Operations replaces assumptions with evidence by establishing a baseline against which future improvements can be measured.

The assessment should be built around specific operational variables, each designed to answer a **key question**:

- ? **Volume of requests by matter type:** where is demand coming from?
- ? **Response times by category:** where do delays occur?
- ? **Number of iterations per process:** how much rework does each workflow generate?
- ? **Workload distribution by individual or function:** is capacity allocated effectively?
- ? **Time spent on repetitive versus strategic work:** how much value is lost to activities that could be automated?
- ? **Variability in execution:** do outcomes depend on the process or on the individual performing the work?

This information is rarely available in a single source. Data may come from email, contract management platforms, matter management systems or other organisational tools. Where formal records do not exist, a representative sample of recent work combined with team interviews is often sufficient. Absolute precision is less important than consistency and reliability.

A proper assessment does more than identify inefficiencies. It reveals gaps in standardisation, excessive reliance on individuals and a lack of operational visibility. Both the ACC Legal Operations Maturity Model and CLOC identify data-driven management as a core capability of mature legal operations. Without a baseline, impact cannot be measured. With one, the legal function moves from defending its value through anecdotal evidence to demonstrating it through data.

Analyse and structure legal demand and work intake

Before designing intake processes, it is necessary to understand the nature of the demand received by the legal team and how that demand is distributed across the organisation. While most legal departments have a general sense of the work they receive, many lack a structured analysis that answers fundamental questions:



What types of requests are being submitted?



Who is generating those requests?



How frequently do they occur?

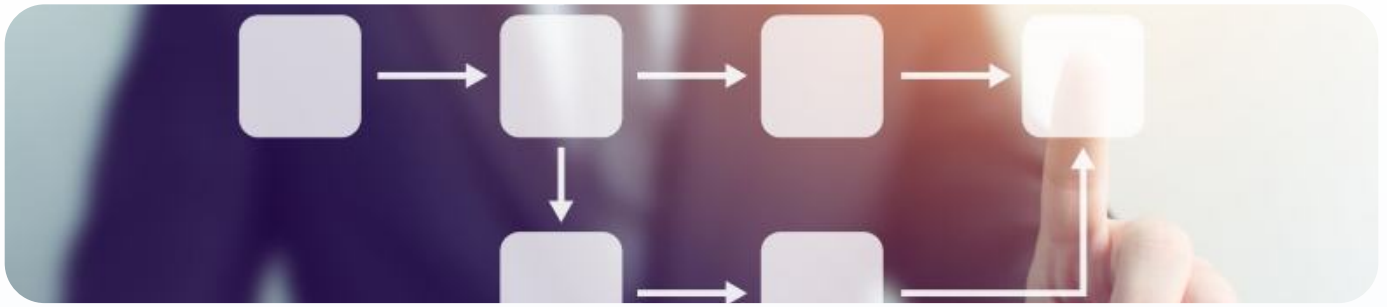


What level of effort does each request require?

This analysis helps identify patterns, including concentrations of specific request types, recurring legal needs and workload distribution. **The objective is not simply to measure volume, but to understand demand in order to prioritise more effectively** and shift from reactive work management to a more strategic operating model.

The next step is to structure how that demand enters the legal function. In many organisations, requests arrive through multiple channels without a defined intake model. This requires establishing request categories, intake channels and prioritisation criteria, transforming a fragmented flow of work into a controlled and transparent process.





Map legal processes

Once work intake has been structured, the next step is to map the complete journey of each request, from submission to completion. Every type of legal matter follows its own path. Reviewing a sales agreement, negotiating a supplier contract or approving a non-disclosure agreement each involve different workflows, timelines and stakeholders.

In practical terms, this means selecting representative examples of each matter type and measuring every stage of the process:

/// **How many steps does the request go through, and how long does each step take?**

🔄 **How many reviews are involved, and who performs them?**

✉ **Is the process supported by technology or managed primarily through email?**

📄 **Are templates available, or is each document drafted from scratch?**

Mapping processes using real data and actual workloads exposes what theoretical process designs often conceal: non-value-added activities, duplicated reviews and delays between stages. For example, a sales contract may take ten days to complete, while only two days involve actual legal work. In such cases, the problem is not workload volume but the design of the system processing the request.

Once the assessment is complete, the next step is not to address everything simultaneously, but to determine where intervention will generate the greatest impact. **Legal Operations prioritises initiatives based on factors such as process volume, standardisation potential, business impact and the degree of operational friction they create.** The loudest problem is not always the most important one.

The goal is to identify leverage points where relatively small improvements in high-volume processes can generate significantly greater value than complex initiatives focused on low-impact activities. Effective prioritisation transforms legal transformation from a collection of projects into a structured and sustainable operational evolution.

Evaluate and select the right technology

Once the operating model and priorities have been defined, the next step is to select the technology that will support execution. Technology should not be chosen in isolation, but as part of the operating model design. It must address specific operational needs, whether related to contract lifecycle management (CLM), matter management or workflow automation.

At this stage, artificial intelligence is no longer an optional enhancement. **It is the layer that makes the operating model scalable.** Without AI, activities such as request classification, contract review and information extraction remain dependent on limited human capacity. With AI, these tasks can be performed with a level of consistency, speed and scale that is impossible to sustain manually.

Leading platforms are already demonstrating this shift by embedding AI directly into legal workflows. In these environments, AI does not operate alongside the process – it operates within it, becoming an integral part of how legal work is executed.

Technology selection should be guided by operational criteria, including integration capabilities, ease of adoption, measurement and reporting functionality, scalability and the provider's maturity within legal environments. A common mistake is selecting technology based on its potential rather than its operational fit. Technology does not define the operating model – it enables it, with AI increasingly acting as its engine.





From design to execution: building and implementing the new operating model

Transformation requires defining how the legal function should operate in the future. **This means building a clear operating model with defined working principles,** responsibilities and service levels, transforming activities that currently depend on individual knowledge into sustainable organisational capabilities.

Once this vision is established, the next step is to translate it into an actionable roadmap. The roadmap should prioritise initiatives based on impact, complexity and dependencies, combining quick wins with longer-term structural changes. It is not simply a list of projects; it is a sequence of actions designed to progressively deliver value.

Quick wins are often found in high-volume processes that have a direct impact on the business. Commercial contract management is a common example.

By standardising risk criteria and **leveraging AI to review clauses, identify deviations and automate repetitive tasks,** organisations can significantly reduce review and approval times.

This enables agreements to be executed more quickly while allowing legal teams to focus on complex negotiations and higher-value strategic decisions.

Executing the roadmap is the point at which the operating model moves from theory to reality. It is also where many transformation efforts fail: processes are designed but not followed, and tools are implemented but not adopted.

For this reason, success should not be measured by the number of initiatives completed, but by the extent to which the new operating model becomes embedded in day-to-day operations.

Establish a continuous measurement framework (Legal Operations KPIs)

As the operation evolves, organisations must establish metrics that make it possible to assess whether the transformation is generating meaningful impact. Without this layer, the transformation remains incomplete. KPIs are not simply reporting tools. They are a continuous management mechanism used to support decision-making, identify deviations and refine the operating model based on evidence.

The measurement framework should be structured around three dimensions:



Operational efficiency: Turnaround times, work volumes, backlog levels, responsiveness and service capacity



Resource efficiency: Workload distribution, internal versus external resource utilisation, cost per matter.



Business impact: Commercial speed and deal velocity, risk reduction, internal client experience and satisfaction


The objective is not only to measure performance, but to **ensure that metrics accurately reflect operational reality** rather than simply capturing what is easiest to track. Without metrics, transformation remains open to interpretation. With metrics, it can be actively managed.

Demonstrate the value of Legal Operations to the business

The final stage is translating operational improvements into tangible business value. At this point, Legal Operations ceases to be an internal legal function and becomes a strategic business enabler. Demonstrating value goes beyond internal efficiency gains. It connects the evolution of the legal function with **measurable business outcomes**, such as faster commercial processes, lower operational costs, improved risk management and a better experience for internal stakeholders.

The challenge is not only generating impact but expressing that impact in business terms. Operational metrics must be translated into strategic outcomes that resonate with leadership: greater speed, increased revenue enablement, reduced risk and improved scalability. This final step validates the entire transformation journey. It demonstrates that Legal Operations does not simply optimise legal work – it creates measurable value for the organisation as a whole.

4. Positioning the legal function as a strategic business partner



One of the most common misconceptions is that Legal Operations only transforms the legal department. In reality, its impact extends across the entire organisation by **creating processes that are more measurable, predictable and aligned with business objectives**. When legal work is supported by data, processes and technology, the legal function moves beyond a reactive role and becomes a strategic business partner. Conversations are no longer limited to compliance and risk management; they increasingly focus on business metrics such as cost efficiency, turnaround times, operational performance and return on investment.

The impact can be seen throughout the organisation:

- **Finance:** Greater visibility into costs, risks and resource allocation.
- **Sales:** Faster contract turnaround and reduced friction in closing commercial opportunities.
- **Procurement:** Standardised processes that accelerate supplier onboarding and contract management.
- **Human Resources:** Greater speed, consistency and efficiency in internal processes.
- **Marketing:** Reduced contractual risk, faster agreement execution and more efficient approval workflows.
- **Executive leadership:** Better information to prioritise investments and support strategic decision-making.

This transformation also reshapes the role of the in-house lawyer. Legal expertise remains essential, but it is increasingly complemented by **capabilities in operations, data analysis and technology.**

The result is a legal function that is more efficient, measurable and closely aligned with business strategy—one that can clearly demonstrate its contribution to organisational growth.

The market is already reflecting this shift. Legal departments are hiring professionals for roles that barely existed a decade ago, including Legal Operations leaders, legal project managers and legal technology specialists.

At the same time, lawyers with hybrid skill sets are becoming increasingly valuable and in demand.

This evolution is no coincidence.

When operations are structured, and technology absorbs repetitive work, lawyers can focus on what technology cannot replicate: **judgment.**

They move beyond reviewing documents and become strategic advisors—professionals who anticipate risk, enable business decisions and contribute to the conversations that shape the future direction of the organisation.





5. What legal leaders need to know about the current state of AI

The conversation is no longer about whether artificial intelligence will reach the legal sector. The real question is how to integrate it safely, responsibly and in alignment with legal operations. The challenge is no longer adoption—it is operational design.

According to a Deloitte survey of legal leaders at large organisations, **79%** believe that generative AI will have a moderate or significant impact on how legal work is performed, while **87%** expect widespread adoption within the next two to three years (Deloitte, 2024).

AI adoption and vendor selection require a structured approach

Successful AI adoption depends on people understanding how these tools apply to real legal work. Team discussions, shared examples and curated use-case libraries allow legal professionals to learn from one another and identify practical opportunities for implementation. Vendor selection requires the same level of discipline. The AI market is evolving too quickly for long-term commitments to always make sense, particularly when capabilities overlap and change from one product release cycle to the next. **Short pilot programmes using real data**, combined with security assessments and structured evaluation criteria, **provide a more reliable basis for comparing solutions** and making informed decisions.

AI does not transform the legal function as a standalone tool. Its real value emerges when it is **embedded into the systems and workflows that structure legal work**, including contract management, legal intake, document review and knowledge management.

AI is not a substitute for legal professionals. It accelerates work, automates repetitive tasks and enables organisations to capture and reuse institutional knowledge more effectively.

Managing AI costs: a new responsibility for legal teams

The costs associated with artificial intelligence are becoming an increasingly important aspect of operational management within legal departments.

Long prompts, extensive interactions and the use of more advanced models can quickly increase costs when deployed across large groups of users. As a result, Legal Operations teams must treat AI spend as a strategic area of oversight.

Effective AI cost management requires attention to three key factors: **how prompts and instructions are designed and used, which AI model is selected for each task, and how AI tools are deployed and adopted across day-to-day legal workflows.**

At the same time, **the use of AI is beginning to be addressed within the policies and guidelines governing relationships with external legal counsel.**

Engagement letters, outside counsel guidelines and billing policies are increasingly specifying when AI may be used in legal matters, how clients should be informed about that use and what level of human review is required before work product is delivered.





Real-world example: AI in contract management

A practical example comes from Grupo Azvi, which implemented Libra, Bigle's AI solution, to automate parts of its contract management processes and strengthen risk identification capabilities. According to its legal team, **the technology helps identify issues that could be overlooked during manual reviews while allowing lawyers to dedicate more time to analysis and decision-making.** The value lies not in replacing lawyers, but in enhancing their ability to manage higher volumes of work with greater speed, consistency and accuracy.

“Bigle's AI, Libra, is highly intuitive and easy to use. It does not require any integration with our company's systems, allowing it to be operational from the moment it is activated.”

Francisco de Borja Rodríguez García
Chief Legal Officer - Grupo Azvi

Azvi //

Despite these advances, many organisations remain unprepared to take the next step. While most legal departments expect AI to significantly transform their function, only a minority have developed a clear strategy for implementation. As a result, the key question is no longer whether AI will impact legal departments, but whether organisations have the processes, capabilities and operating model required to capture its full value.

Ultimately, organisations that achieve the greatest benefit from AI will not necessarily be those with access to the most advanced technology, but those that have built the operational foundations needed to integrate it effectively into the way legal work is performed.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this guide, we have seen that Legal Operations is not about purchasing technology. It is about designing how the legal function operates: **culture first, then the operating model, and finally the technology**. When this sequence is respected, the legal department moves beyond being perceived as a bottleneck and becomes a true business enabler.

In this context, technology acts as a force multiplier. Automation, artificial intelligence and data analytics do not replace legal judgment; **they take over repetitive and low-value tasks, allowing legal professionals to focus on strategic work** that requires expertise, critical thinking and business insight. Research shows that organisations with mature Legal Operations capabilities spend 31% less on external legal services and reduce their cost per matter by 22% within 18 months (Deloitte, 2024). The difference between leading organisations and those that fall behind is increasingly operational.

The good news is that getting started does not require transforming everything at once. It begins with three elements: a dedicated owner, a clearly defined challenge, and a measurable pilot initiative. From there, transformation becomes a continuous process of improvement, measurement and value creation.



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About Bigle

Bigle is a legal tech company that offers a software suite with 4 products: Bigle CLM, the legal AI Bigle Libra, Bigle Sign and Bigle Academy. The company's mission is to **streamline the legal operations of companies, improving security and minimising the risk of legal contingencies.**

The platform allows professionals to automatically create documents, share them for review, validate them in real-time, collaborate virtually, negotiate and has its own electronic signature.

Bigle has developed a generative artificial intelligence assistant, Libra, which is connected to its CLM platform, developed for legal departments, which is an expert in the legal field and **offers a secure environment of maximum confidentiality, minimising the hallucinations typical of other generalist tools.**

The technology company is a pioneer and leader in the field of no-code document automation, has a global presence and its clients include large corporations and large law firms.

To learn more about Bigle, visit the website: biglelegal.com

For other enquiries, please 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