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Scale your legal caseload,

not your headcount.

"The fastest-growing firms nearly doubled revenue over four years while growing their client base by only 50%. They didn't hire. They automated."

— Clio 2025 Legal Trends Report

AI in legal practice · 2026 insight series · door3.com/d3-labs/ai-legal

THE CAPACITY PROBLEM

Lawyers bill $400/hr but average just 3 billable hours a day.

Studies consistently show that lawyers spend roughly two-thirds of their day on non-billable work: administrative tasks, scheduling, intake processing, document management, and low-value repetitive activity that could be handled by a well-configured system.

That leaves about three billable hours per day on average. For an attorney billing at $400/hr, this means the firm is leaving significant revenue on the table every single day — not because the attorney lacks skill or work ethic, but because the workflow is clogged.

AI does not replace the attorney. It clears the pipe.

2/3

of the day
non-billable

admin, intake, doc management

~3 hrs

billable per day
on average

at $400/hr per attorney

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WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

Not marginal. Transformational.

82%

of legal professionals using AI report increased efficiency

AffiniPay 2025 Legal Industry Report

1–11+ hrs/wk

saved per attorney using generative AI

Everlaw 2025 Ediscovery Innovation Report

260+ hrs/yr

reclaimed per attorney at the high end

= 32 full working days per attorney

WHERE THE HOURS COME BACK

High-volume, rules-based, repetitive — these are the highest-ROI targets.

01 **Document review & coding**

An Am Law 100 firm used AI-powered coding to process 126,000 documents in complex litigation — work that would have required ~20 contract attorneys over 4 weeks. Result: two-thirds reduction in review time, with more consistent output.

⅔ review time reduction

02 **Contract analysis & extraction**

Firms handling high-volume NDAs, MSAs, and compliance documents use AI to extract key clauses, flag anomalies, and summarize terms. Hours per contract become minutes, with attorney review focused on exceptions and judgment calls.

Hours → minutes per contract

03 **Legal research synthesis**

Platforms like Lexis+ AI and Westlaw compress the research cycle — from hours of case law review to minutes of AI-assisted synthesis, followed by targeted human verification. Output quality is comparable. Time investment is not.

04 **Client intake & triage**

Legal Aid of North Carolina deployed an AI voice agent for 24/7 intake across multiple languages, serving 300,000 people annually with 200 attorneys. Their CIO called AI a "force multiplier to scale our services."

24/7 intake, zero new hires

05 **Correspondence & drafting**

54% of legal professionals already use AI to draft correspondence. Another 47% are interested in AI for financial data insights. These are throughput tasks — they consume attorney time without requiring attorney judgment.

54% already using it

Sources: Everlaw 2025 Ediscovery Report · AffiniPay 2025 Legal Industry Report · NLADA Survey 2025

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THE REVENUE IMPLICATIONS

Firms with wide AI adoption are nearly 3× more likely to report revenue growth.

Clio's data is unambiguous. Among firms with wide AI adoption, 69% reported that AI had a positive influence on revenues, compared to 36% overall. Growing firms leverage automation at twice the rate of stable firms and nearly three times the rate of shrinking firms.

3×

more likely to report revenue growth

wide AI adopters vs non-adopters

69%

of wide AI adopters report revenue growth

vs 36% overall

2×

automation rate vs stable firms

growing firms vs stable firms

Source: Clio 2025 Legal Trends Report

The billable hour is already under pressure

If AI compresses a ten-hour task into two, billing ten hours becomes difficult to justify. 59% of firms now offer flat fees exclusively or alongside hourly rates. The firms that get ahead of this shift — pricing on expertise and outcomes rather than time — will capture the value AI creates rather than watching it evaporate.

64% of corporate legal departments expect to bring more work in-house — and are adding provisions to outside counsel guidelines requiring AI-driven time savings be reflected in billing.

Source: Bloomberg Law / ACC-Everlaw survey 2025

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR FIRM LEADERSHIP

The strategic question isn't whether to adopt AI. It's how.

01 **Start with the bottleneck, not the technology**

Identify where your attorneys are losing the most hours to non-billable or low-judgment work. That's your highest-ROI deployment target. Technology is the answer — but only once you know the right question.

02 **Measure time recaptured, not just cost avoided**

The goal isn't to reduce headcount. It's to redirect attorney time from $0-value activities to activities that generate revenue, deepen client relationships, or win cases.

03 **Rethink pricing before your clients do**

In-house counsel are already watching. Corporate legal departments are adding provisions to outside counsel guidelines requiring that AI-driven time savings be reflected in billing. Get ahead of this shift — price on expertise and outcomes.

04 **Treat governance as a prerequisite, not an afterthought**

More than half of firms report having no AI policy in place. In an industry built on professional responsibility, this gap needs closing before scaling. Governance isn't a constraint — it's the foundation for sustainable AI adoption.

Over 50% of firms have no AI policy in place. Governance first — then scale.

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"The firms that will define the next decade of legal practice are not the ones with the most attorneys."

They're the ones that figured out how to get the most out of every attorney they already have.

Ready to scale caseload without scaling cost?

DOOR3 specializes in AI integration for legal, insurance, and manufacturing. We start by identifying where your attorneys are losing the most time — then build the workflow to reclaim it.

Contact us