

Rules for AI tools: how can legal teams source suitable tech?

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Further reading:

- [What are the new best practices for AI for legal teams?](#)
- [Opportunity costs: Artificial intelligence in the legal industry](#)
- [I, Robot-Reviewer? Generative AI and the future of e-discovery](#)

The rapid advancement of AI, particularly generative AI, has sparked incredible interest across many industries. As the capabilities of these tools become better understood, and as they are increasingly incorporated into more organizations, legal departments are asking how AI can improve their business outcomes.

With so many different AI tools and applications available, it can be difficult to know where to begin. We provide practical guidance to help you start thinking about the best and most useful ways to incorporate AI into your legal department to ensure you're getting the most value for your investment (for other insights on AI within the legal field, read [“What are the new best practices for AI for legal teams?”](#) and [“How will AI change my practice?”](#)).

1. Start with a business problem

Hundreds of AI tools are available in the legal technology space—some designed to solve very specific problems (e.g., expediting NDA review) and others designed to solve very general ones (e.g., chatbots to help draft documents and emails). With such a dizzying array of options, a reliable starting point can help narrow the field of potential tools to those that can ultimately be most useful to you and your organization.

As a first step, start with the problem you are trying to solve, rather than the technology you are trying to deploy. For instance, are there repetitive tasks that you would like to automate, or are there processes prone to error that you would like to improve? By first identifying the key business problem you want to solve or the objective that you want to accomplish, you will narrow the field of potential solutions and increase the likelihood that you will end up with a solution that delivers tangible and measurable value to your organization.

2. Find the right fit for your organization

Before implementing any new tool in your organization, consider how it will fit within the context of your organization and its objectives. To drive value to your organization, the tool will need to align with your organization's circumstances, goals and requirements. The following questions may help you determine where to start:

- **What are your specific challenges and pain points?** Are there issues or pain points unique to your business or organizational structure? Collect input from all levels of your organization to uncover potential issues from a variety of stakeholders and understand where challenges overlap or diverge, and which tools would be best suited to provide a solution.
- **What sets your legal department apart?** Does your legal department excel in a particular area of law or employ a particular process effectively? Focusing on what you do best can help you leverage AI to accelerate these functions, or capture valuable data, and thereby create (or maintain) a competitive advantage.
- **What value can AI provide that traditional methods cannot?** A key question that is often overlooked is: "why use AI in the first place?" In many cases, the answer to this question is that AI's simplicity and flexibility allow it to do things many other tools cannot. Identifying why an AI-powered tool is the right choice can help ensure you will use it to greatest possible effect and get the most value for your investment.

3. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

Investigating new tools and solutions can be very time- and resource-intensive, and it should come as no surprise that not every attempt will be successful. To mitigate this, you may want to try a few different approaches in case certain tools or technologies don't live up to their promise or aren't widely embraced by your organization's end users.

- **Take a balanced approach.** Of course, pursuing multiple solutions at once can be quite resource intensive. To help manage workload, consider varying the types of problems you are trying to solve at the same time. For instance, if you are looking to solve a large, resource-intensive process, balance that with a more out-of-the-box solution that won't require as much time or investment from you or your end users.
- **Leverage vendor resources.** It is important to be careful when selecting a software vendor. When you are investigating a piece of software, you can often make the most of vendor resources and materials for testing, validating, training or promoting the application throughout your organization. Don't be afraid to ask your vendors about similar implementations or use cases they have executed with similar organizations, or ask them about problems that other clients have encountered. Indeed, the vendor's experience should be one of the first areas of inquiry you pursue to ensure the vendor has the experience you need.
- **Use pilots and proofs of concept.** It is essential to carefully test and validate any new tool or technology; this is particularly true of AI, given that it is a relatively new and often unpredictable technology. A good way to do this is to insist on a thorough pilot or proof of concept with the users who will actually be using the tool so that you can get their input on its utility and effectiveness. Never rely on a software demo alone to determine whether a technology is worth implementing. Software demos are designed to enhance the benefits and suppress the limitations of the tool. Furthermore, you can never know how a tool will perform in your environment until you test it out.

Conclusion

AI's capabilities can be alluring, but hastily deploying tools without a clear purpose can lead to wasted resources and missed opportunities. By ensuring that you address tangible business problems, manage your investment, and responsibly balance the resources required to foster this development, you can make sustained progress

investigating and implementing AI tools, and drive meaningful change, in your organization.

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