

The business of law, *in numbers.*

This year, operations, finance, and IT leaders at law firms told us what the work around the practice really takes. None of these numbers are about practicing law. All of them are about the time, intake, conflicts, email, and billing that keep a firm running.

TIME ENTRY

45 min / week

Per attorney, rebuilding time

From timers, handwritten notes, and a scroll back through Outlook and the calendar. At a large firm.

PARTNER, LARGE LAW FIRM

14 days

Before some timekeepers post their time

Work in progress and receivables wait right along with it.

INNOVATION LEADER, LAW FIRM

1 in 5

Attorneys who enter their own time

Secretaries key in the rest from spreadsheets, handwritten notes, and voice memos.

COO, LAW FIRM

INTAKE AND CONFLICTS

140

New matters a week, opened by hand

The intake memo is transcribed manually, then typed in again by the conflicts team.

CIO, LAW FIRM

70–90%

Of each new patent matter, retyped into docketing

Hundreds of patent matters a month, at five minutes or more each.

IP OPERATIONS, LAW FIRM

50–100 pages

In a single conflict report

Built from every name variation. Most of it is noise that someone still has to read.

PRACTICE OPERATIONS, LAW FIRM

EMAIL AND DOCUMENTS

2,500+

Emails a day, filed to a client and matter by hand

2,500 to 3,000 across the firm. Each professional handles 100 to 200 of them.

IT LEADER, LAW FIRM

25%

Of lawyers who file their email properly

Classifying email is one of the biggest time sinks lawyers have.

TECHNOLOGY LEADER, LAW FIRM

30–45 min

Per USPTO form, filled by hand

And one patent filing can set off about 30 follow-on tasks.

IP OPERATIONS, TWO FIRMS

BILLING AND STAFFING

30–40k

Prebills a month to review

At a large firm.

FINANCE LEADER, LAW FIRM

1½ FTE

Every day, on cash application

Four hours a day matching 20 to 40 payments, some against hundreds of invoices.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS LEADER, LAW FIRM

6–9 months

A legal assistant requisition stays open

Long-tenured staff are retiring, and attorneys pick up the admin in the meantime.

OPERATIONS, LAW FIRM