

Constructing the AI-Ready Legal Department

What You Need to Implement AI in Legal:



Success with AI depends on coordinated people, processes, governance, technology, and expertise.

Modern legal departments are investing in AI, but effective performance depends on the operating model that supports it. Leadership, skilled professionals, connected technology, governance, and flexible expertise all contribute to sustainable adoption.

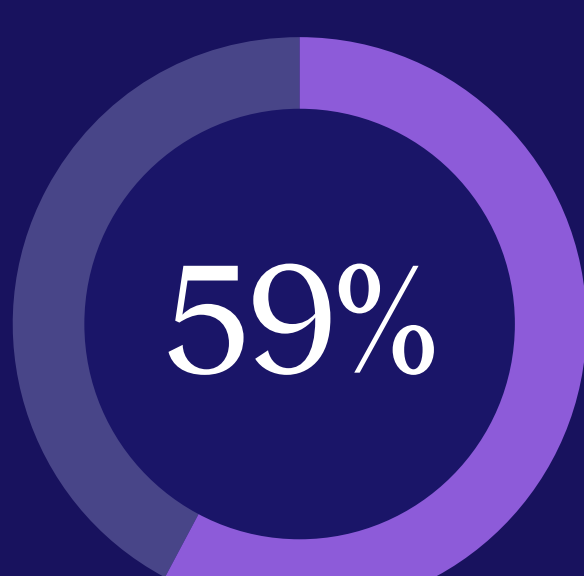
The Foundations of AI Success

The 2026 Global Survey Report shows that organizations currently making the greatest progress with AI are investing in the capabilities that support productive execution. The following foundations help legal departments build an operating model that enables AI to deliver long-term value.

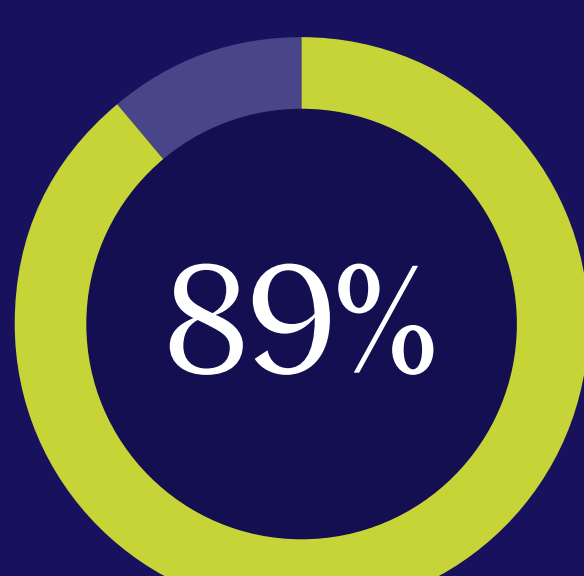
Foundation	Description	Supporting Data
Leadership	Executive sponsorship establishes priorities, secures investment, and encourages adoption across the legal department.	41% of legal professionals say leadership vision is driving change and innovation within their legal function.
Primary Purpose	Lawyers, Legal Operations professionals, technologists, project managers, and AI specialists all contribute to a favorable AI outcome. Ongoing training and collaboration are essential.	57% of companies developed AI evaluation or prompt engineering skills over the past 12 months.
Processes	Standardized legal workflows create opportunities to embed AI into everyday work, improving efficiency and consistency.	65% of legal teams intentionally redesigned how AI is used within their legal function.
Technology	Connected systems improve collaboration, reduce manual work, and enable AI to access the information it needs.	41% cite fragmented technology as a major challenge, while 39% report relying on manual workarounds because of disconnected systems.
Governance	Clear policies, oversight, security, privacy controls, and human accountability help businesses deploy AI responsibly.	Only 7% report having a documented AI governance framework that is actively followed.
Flexible Expertise	Specialized legal professionals provide additional capacity and technical expertise during the application of AI, technology rollouts, process redesign, and organizational change.	52% of in-house legal teams use flexible legal talent, yet 57% say it is not part of their long-term strategy. Source: 2026 Lawyers on Demand Global Survey Report: The Integration Imperative Optimising the legal engine for the future

Legal Departments are Evolving through the Integration of AI

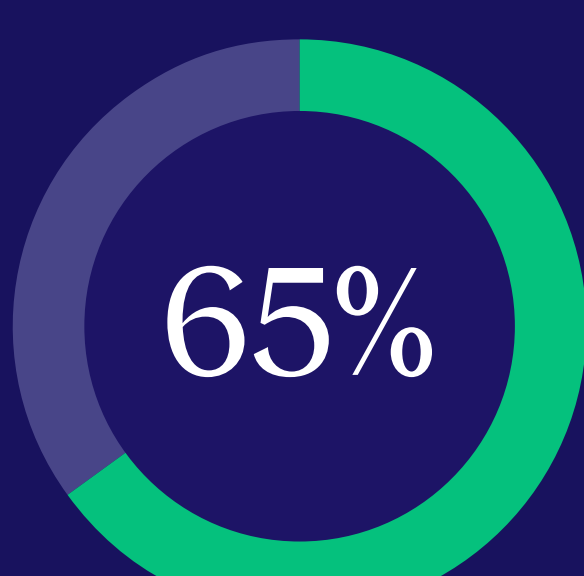
Legal departments are evolving as AI becomes more deeply integrated into everyday legal work. Organizations are rethinking workflows, redesigning operating models, and identifying new opportunities to improve efficiency and deliver greater business value. The statistics below are derived from the Consilio 2026 Global Survey Report and highlight how legal teams are adapting to this shift.



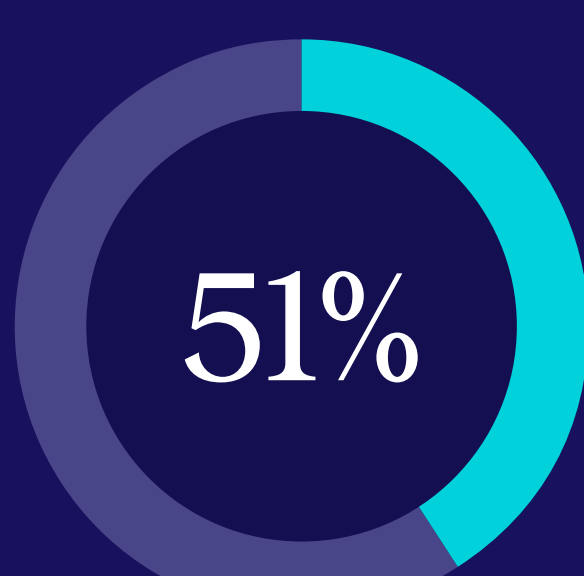
Legal professionals reporting increased efficiency and productivity from AI



Legal professionals identifying AI as the area with the greatest opportunity for innovation (in-house)



Legal teams intentionally redesigning how AI is used



of the respondents cited emerging technology opportunities as the strongest driver of innovation.

An Industry Perspective

Research from across the legal industry highlights many of the same priorities. These findings provide additional perspective on how businesses are investing in the people, processes, governance, technology, and data needed to support implementing AI for their legal departments. These findings align with broader trends across the legal industry.

77% of legal professionals believe generative AI will have a high or transformational impact on legal work within five years.¹

Nearly half of legal departments are actively using or piloting generative AI.²

Key Findings

Businesses with mature AI governance are more likely to achieve measurable value from AI initiatives.³

Investment in legal operations continues to grow as departments modernize technology, workflows, and service delivery.⁴

AI Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Executive sponsorship is in place
- ☐ Governance policies are established
- ☐ Legal workflows have been documented
- ☐ Technology systems can integrate
- ☐ Information is well organized and accessible
- ☐ Lawyers and staff have received AI training
- ☐ Specialized expertise is available to support execution

AI Implementations for Legal Practitioners are a Strategic Investment

Building an AI-ready legal department requires coordinated investment across leadership, people, governance, technology, data, and processes. Strengthening these capabilities helps legal teams accelerate adoption, improve operational efficiency, manage risk, and create a strong foundation for long-term innovation and business value.

Footnotes:

1. LexisNexis: <https://www.lexisnexis.com/html/lexisnexis-generative-ai-story/>
2. ADAI: <https://adal.news/resources/statistics/legal-ai-statistics-2026/>
3. IBM: <https://www.ibm.com/thought-leadership/institute-business-value/en-us/report/ai-governance-trends>
4. ACC Chief Legal Officers Survey: <https://www.acc.com/about/newsroom/news/changing-c-suite-clos-grow-strategic-leadership-ai-and-global-uncertainty>