



The ROI of Great Legal Writing

How precision, clarity, and persuasion drive business success
for law firms and legal departments

Brief**Catch**

Impactful legal writing is persuasive, succinct, credible, and compelling.



Summary

Legal writing is more than a skill—it's a strategic business asset. The greatest legal writers demonstrate that impactful legal writing is persuasive, succinct, credible, and compelling. In an industry where precision defines success, great legal writing doesn't just communicate ideas—it drives outcomes.

Whether drafting contracts, briefs, or client communications, superior legal writing delivers tangible benefits: more wins for the firm, streamlined and consistent language, elevated prestige, reduced write-offs, and more revenue. Moreover, it upskills attorneys, empowering them to operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness. This whitepaper explores the measurable ROI of great legal writing and why it's an investment that pays dividends.

Key Takeaways

More wins for the firm.

Persuasive and precise legal writing strengthens arguments, enhances clarity, and improves case outcomes.

Reduced write-offs and increased revenue.

Clearer, more concise drafting minimizes revisions, and increases realization rates.

Upskilled attorneys.

By mastering effective legal writing with advanced tools, attorneys improve their craft and deliver more value to the firm.

Increased prestige.

Producing consistently polished, credible, and compelling legal documents enhances a firm's reputation, attracting high-value clients.

Great writing builds brands.

Attorneys Are Defined by Their Writing

Winning Cases, Building Reputations

In courtrooms and boardrooms, writing is often the deciding factor. Persuasive and precise legal writing wins motions, closes deals, and secures favorable outcomes. Each victory enhances your firm's reputation for excellence.

Attracting High-Value Clients

A strong reputation built on consistent, high-quality writing acts as a magnet for discerning clients seeking the best legal representation.

Commanding Premium Billing Rates

Clients equate clear, compelling writing with expertise. A firm known for delivering polished and persuasive documents can charge rates that reflect its elevated stature.

The Long-Term ROI of Great Writing

The impact of great legal writing extends far beyond individual cases or transactions. It shapes how your firm is perceived in the marketplace and ensures sustainable growth.

Brand Equity

Just as writing defines individual attorneys, it also defines your firm's identity. Consistent, credible, and compelling writing solidifies your brand as a trusted authority in the legal landscape.

Client Loyalty and Referrals

Clear and effective communication fosters client trust. Satisfied clients are more likely to return for future matters and recommend your firm to others, amplifying your brand's reach.

Thought Leadership

Firms known for great writing often become thought leaders. By producing persuasive briefs, insightful publications, and polished client materials, you position your firm as an innovator in the legal field.



Better Writing Reduces Write-Offs

Poorly written documents often require extensive revisions, and clients are increasingly unwilling to pay for the learning curves of junior attorneys. In an era where AI tools like BriefCatch are readily available, the expectations for polished work have never been higher.

The Write-Off Problem

Time-consuming revisions often result in partners reducing billable hours on pre-bills.

Software Solutions

Writing assistants allow young lawyers to draft better documents faster, helping them learn while they work. These tools free mentors to focus on higher-value collaboration rather than basic edits, reducing the need for write-offs.



The Motion to Dismiss Maze

A first-year associate is tasked with drafting a motion to dismiss for a new high-stakes case. The associate, eager to impress, dedicates 18.5 hours researching case law, drafting arguments, and polishing the document. The motion argues that the plaintiff's claims fail to meet basic legal standards under Rule 12(b)(6), but it also includes redundant case citations, lengthy arguments on less relevant points, and a lack of focus on the strongest grounds for dismissal.

When the supervising partner reviews the draft, they find that while the research is thorough, the motion lacks the precision and persuasiveness expected by the court and the client. The partner spends an additional 6.7 hours rewriting the motion to streamline the arguments, refocus on the most compelling legal theories, and ensure compliance with local court rules.

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On the pre-bill, the associate's 18.5 hours and the partner's 6.7 hours are listed. The client balks, questioning why over 25 hours were necessary for what they perceive as a straightforward motion. To maintain the client relationship, the firm adjusts the bill:

Associate's time reduced:	FROM: 18.5 hrs.	TO: 8.0 hrs
Partner's time reduced:	FROM: 6.7 hrs.	TO: 3.0 hrs
Total time billed:	11.0 hrs.	

Time written off: 14.2 hours

If the blended hourly rate for this motion is \$450, the firm loses \$1,440—on a single motion. Multiply this scenario across multiple cases, and the financial impact becomes significant.

The result? The supervising partner delivers feedback to the associate but is frustrated by the inefficiency. The associate, meanwhile, struggles to balance learning the nuances of legal writing with the pressure of meeting client expectations. Both realize the need for tools or processes to make drafting more efficient without sacrificing quality.

The most common reason law firm partners write down time for those they supervise is the junior associate learning curve.

—Thomson Reuters



The Case of the Careless Brief

John Bertelman, a junior associate at a mid-sized law firm, was handed a high-stakes motion for summary judgment to draft with only 48 hours before filing. The case involved a Fortune 500 client facing breach of contract allegations, and the stakes were enormous: a dismissal would save millions and bolster the firm's reputation. Failure, however, could lead to damaging litigation and a tarnished image.

Relying on his research skills and limited experience, John worked tirelessly but struggled without a firm-wide tool to support consistent and professional writing. His draft was riddled with issues:

- **Inconsistent Formatting:** Headings and citations didn't meet Bluebook standards.
- **Wordiness and Jargon:** Phrases like "in light of the foregoing" cluttered arguments.
- **Typos and Errors:** A critical statutory citation was incorrect, and grammatical mistakes weakened the motion's credibility.
- **Lack of Clarity:** The motion lacked the persuasive tone needed for a high-profile case.

Despite John's efforts and a harried partner's cursory review that missed key issues, the motion was filed as-is. Opposing counsel exploited the errors, and the judge openly criticized the submission's lack of clarity and professionalism. The client, unimpressed after multiple incidents, began questioning its partnership with the firm.

John was disheartened, and the firm's leadership recognized that their current processes left associates unsupported under tight deadlines. The incident underscored the critical need for better quality control and support systems to maintain their reputation and deliver excellence in high-stakes cases.

A Critical Example: The ROI of Writing Excellence

Let's break down the financial impact of improving legal writing with a hypothetical ROI calculator:

FIRM SIZE

250

legal professionals



BILLABLE HOURS PER YEAR

2,134

per professional



AVERAGE BILLING RATE

\$458/hr

(industry average)



TIME SPENT REVIEWING AND EDITING DOCUMENTS

30%

of time worked



CURRENT WRITE-OFF RATE

16%

of time billed



Now, imagine the firm implements tools like BriefCatch and reduces write-offs to 11% of time billed through better drafting and fewer revisions. Here's what happens:



Time Recovered

107 hours per professional annually.
Across 250 legal professionals, that's **26,570 recovered hours**.



Additional Revenue

At \$458/hour, that's **\$12,251,500 in additional billable time**.



Operational Efficiency

Attorneys can reallocate time from revisions to billable work, further boosting productivity and client satisfaction.

This small improvement demonstrates how investments in writing tools and training can deliver significant returns for the firm.

“Technology alone is not enough.”

—Steve Jobs

How to Achieve These Gains

Here's how your firm can implement strategies to replicate these results:

1. Invest in Writing Technology

- Tools like BriefCatch provide real-time feedback, reducing errors and improving drafts before they reach partners or clients.
- Use document automation to eliminate repetitive formatting tasks, letting attorneys focus on substance.
- Leverage AI to assess clarity, tone, and consistency, ensuring documents meet client expectations.

IMPACT:

Faster workflows,
fewer revisions,
and reduced
write-offs.

2. Prioritize Skills Development

- Provide training in persuasive and concise legal writing.
- Offer on-demand resources like guides and templates to help associates improve independently.
- Introduce mentorship programs that focus on high-value feedback rather than basic edits.

IMPACT:

Associates
produce stronger
drafts, reducing
partner time spent
on revisions.

3. Adopt a Writing Excellence Culture

- Set firm-wide standards for document quality, ensuring consistency across all client communications.
- Reward attorneys who consistently deliver clear, high-quality work to encourage excellence.
- Gather client feedback to refine processes and further improve clarity.

IMPACT:

Better writing
becomes the
norm, reinforcing
the firm's brand.

About BriefCatch

BriefCatch is the premier legal writing assistant, seamlessly integrating with Microsoft Word and Outlook to deliver real-time editing suggestions tailored specifically for the legal profession. Trusted by 45+ of the Am Law 200, 80+ federal and state judicial chambers, and tens of thousands of attorneys across the private and public sectors, BriefCatch is the go-to tool for those who crave precision and clarity in legal writing. Created by Ross Guberman, a globally recognized authority in legal writing who trains all new federal judges, BriefCatch harnesses a proprietary, patent-protected algorithm built on years of in-depth analysis of leading legal and judicial writers. Our focus is on helping lawyers achieve better outcomes, improve efficiency, and eliminate unnecessary write-offs.

BriefCatch

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