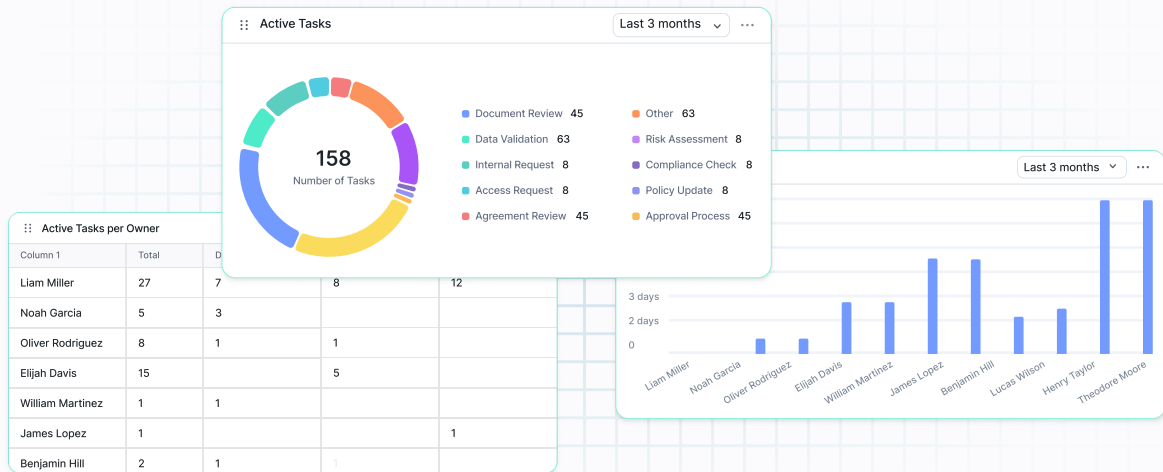


Legal Operations Intelligence

# Contracting Metrics That Matter

Turning contract data into action - a practical framework for legal teams ready to move from anecdote to evidence.



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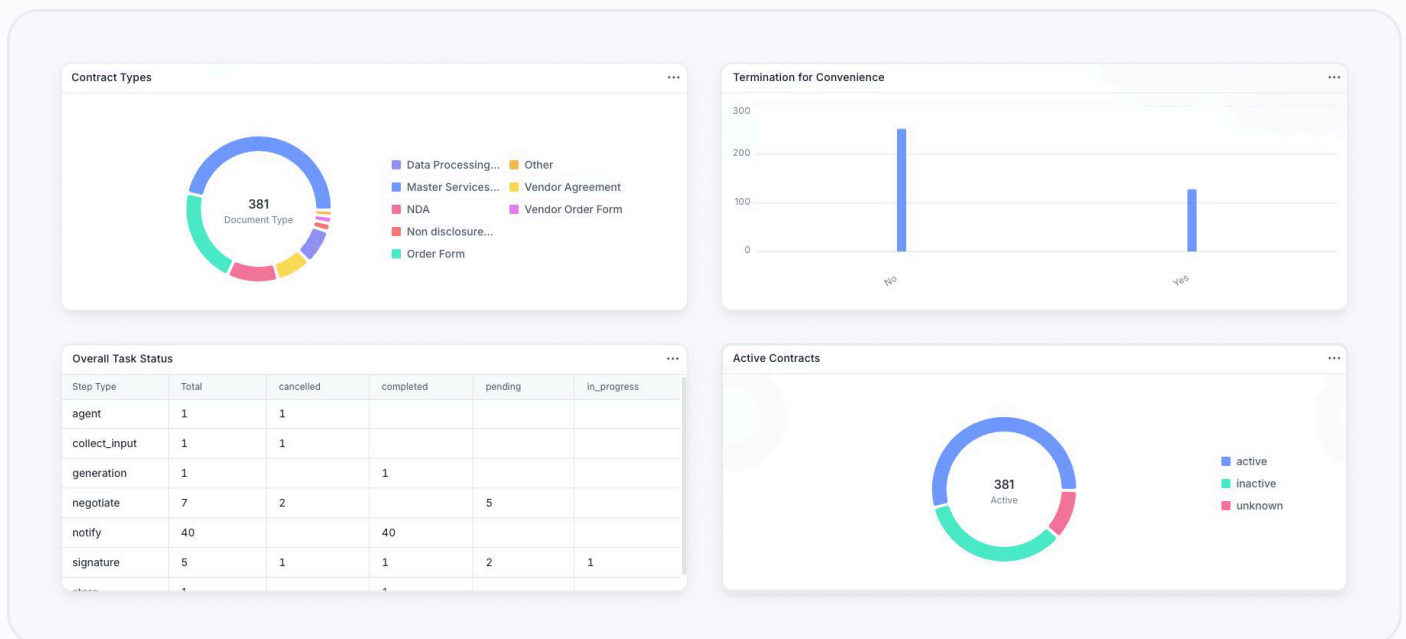
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Introduction

## Contracting Metrics That Matter: Turning Contract Data into Action

Legal departments increasingly say they want to be “data-driven.” But when it comes to contracting, many teams are still unsure what that actually means. While some may be manually tracking general insights, they still struggle to make impactful changes from the learnings from those data points. Often times the effort to gather data insights outweighs the benefits, leaving teams with lots of data points and still little relief.

Effective contracting metrics share one common trait: **they are actionable.** If a metric does not inform a staffing decision, a policy change, a template update, or a business conversation, it is not doing its job. As contract volumes continue to rise and businesses demand speed, legal teams must focus on the right data and be careful avoid getting lost in the sea of possible (yet, unimpactful) data points.




## Foundation

## Why Contract Metrics Exist at All

Contracting sits at the intersection of risk, revenue, and speed. Business stakeholders rarely debate legal quality, but they consistently care about **how long contracts take, where deals stall, and why exceptions happen**. Metrics provide a shared, objective way to answer those questions.

Contracting is a cycle of events and activities that can improve through repetition. Without tracking what happens at each stage of that cycle, improvement is guesswork. Data allows legal teams to move from anecdotal explanations (“It was a tough negotiation” or “the other side was difficult to deal with”) to informed decisions grounded in facts.

Before outlining which data points to track, it is essential to establish a rule that applies to **every** contracting metric:

 If you do not know what you would change based on the data, you should not track it.

Collecting data “just in case” creates noise, overwhelms dashboards, and erodes confidence in reporting. Mature contracting organizations start by tracking only what they intend to use, and then they expand intentionally over time.

## Core Metrics

## The Core Metrics Every Contracting Operation Needs

Regardless of company size, industry, or technology maturity, certain data points are table stakes. A legal team that cannot answer these basic questions will struggle to respond credibly to business demands or justify investment in people or technology.

### 1 Contract Volume and Types

Every legal department should know:

- How many contracts it processes
- Over what period
- By contract type (e.g., NDA, MSA, order form)

Volume data is foundational. Without it, staffing discussions, prioritization decisions, and automation strategies have no foundation or baseline. Importantly (and some good news!), this data can be tracked manually; technology is helpful but not required to get started. Often it is a vicious cycle of needing data to justify investment in technology and needing technology in order to easily gather data points. But for the initial core metrics, even manual tracking is worth the effort, in order get that baseline.

### 2 Turnaround Time

Perceived speed (or lack of it) is one of the most common sources of business frustration with legal. Tracking turnaround time allows teams to move from defensiveness to diagnosis.

Turnaround time should be broken down into:

- Intake or response time
- Negotiation time
- Approval and signature time

This level of detail enables targeted improvements rather than blanket mandates to “go faster.” It also helps identify where the slowdowns occur. Hint – it isn’t always Legal!

## Core Metrics

### 3 Why Contracting Slows Down

Knowing that contracts take 25 days on average is not nearly as helpful as knowing why.

Minimum operational insight includes identifying:

- Bottlenecks by phase
- Contracts that sit idle
- Frequent review loops
- Unclear language

This data supports workload balancing, clearer policies, and better alignment with the business.

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### 4 Who Is Doing the Work inside Legal

At a basic level, legal teams need visibility into:

- Internal resource allocation
- Use of outside counsel (if applicable)
- Volume per reviewer

This is not about performance scoring; it is about understanding capacity and constraints. Data helps leaders justify hiring, process changes, or self-service approaches.

## Advanced

## Moving Beyond the Basics: Advanced Contract Metrics

Once core metrics are stable and reliable, teams can layer in more advanced insights. These data points have become easier to access with the latest advances in contract intelligence automation. In years past, legal teams would have to painstakingly comb through prior versions of negotiated contracts to extract deviations and trends.

### 5 Deviation from Standard Terms

Tracking where contracts deviate from approved templates or playbooks provides powerful insight into risk and friction. Over time, this data can reveal:

- Clauses that slow negotiations
- Terms that frequently require escalation
- Standards that no longer reflect market norms

This type of data that directly informs review thresholds and template improvements and is necessary for continuously improving the contract terms to be aligned with industry standards.

### 6 Contract Value and Risk Alignment

Advanced teams correlate contract value with:

- Level of legal review
- Time spent negotiating
- Approval paths

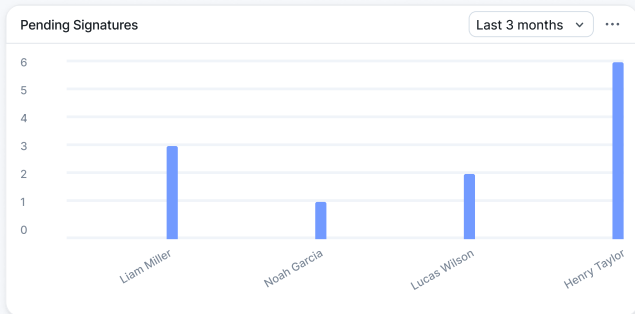
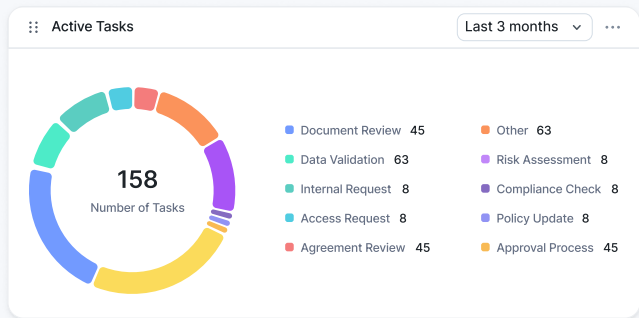
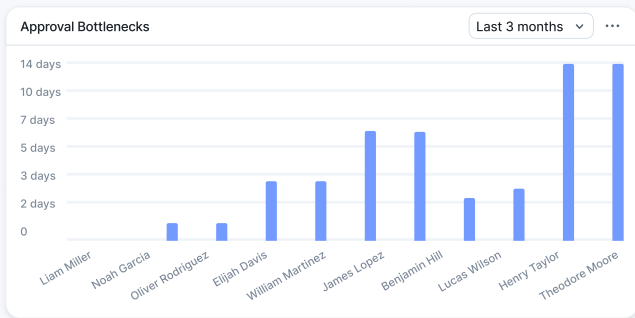
This insight enables proportionality, such that teams are reserving intensive legal effort for high risk or high value agreements while accelerating routine deals.

Change Management

# Quick Note About Change Management

Once core metrics are stable and reliable, teams can layer in more advanced insights. These data points have become easier to access with the latest advances in contract intelligence automation. In years past, legal teams would have to painstakingly comb through prior versions of negotiated contracts to extract deviations and trends.

## Operational KPIs



**Active Tasks per Owner** (Last 3 months)

Column 1	Total	Data Validation	Agreement Review	Other
Liam Miller	27	7	8	12
Noah Garcia	5	3		2
Oliver Rodriguez	8	1	1	6
Elijah Davis	15		5	10
William Martinez	1	1		
James Lopez	1			1
Benjamin Hill	2	1	1	

## Change Management

**Faster deals**

Identify the top delays (intake, negotiation, approvals) and fix the real bottleneck by working collaboratively across departments.

More predictable timelines: set realistic expectations based on actual cycle times by contract type, region, and risk profile.

**Fewer escalations and fewer “fire drills”**

Spot recurring clause issues early and update playbooks/templates so the same debates don't repeat.

**Clearer tradeoffs**

Use data to decide when to accept risk, when to escalate, and when to simplify (especially for low-risk, high-volume work).

**Stronger business cases for investment**

Volume and time data make it easier to justify headcount, self-service, or contract automation.

**Shared accountability**

Metrics make it visible where delays come from across the workflow, so improvements are a joint effort, across the enterprise.

**Conclusion****Measure to Improve**

Contracting metrics are not about surveillance or reporting for its own sake. It's easy to get excited about all of the possible data points. But it is important to demonstrate the purpose for data gathering and to prioritize what information is truly necessary. Metrics should be gathered to support better decisions, faster contracting, and smarter allocation of legal effort. When teams focus on actionable data by starting with a strong foundation and expanding intentionally, they transform contracting from a perceived bottleneck into a measurable business enabler.