

Does Your Law Firm Need a Legal Project Manager?

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If you're asking yourself whether your law firm needs legal project management (LPM), you may already have a few clues that you do. Perhaps you're overwhelmed with client calls and emails. Maybe you're swimming in case files, documents to review, and looming trial dates, and wonder how your staff will do it all.

The truth is, as a law firm, you're also a business—one that requires a few crucial systems to run as optimally as possible. A legal project manager can help you set up those processes. They can help you boost productivity, retain your staff, and leave your clients glowing about the five-star experience.

What Do Legal Project Managers Do?

A project manager is a strategic thinker focused on optimizing your law firm's performance, both in the short and long term. They think in terms of deliverables, budget, assumptions, and benchmarks.

Every project manager has their own unique skill set. However, the [American Bar Association \(ABA\)](#) says they should be able to:

- Develop a legal calendar, set timelines for cases, and oversee your cases' budgets
- Coordinate workflows for all your teams to ensure that cases are handled smoothly and according to an established timeline
- Ensure your firm works to meet its revenue targets
- Analyze your firm's processes and develop better systems for customer relationship management, case intake, and more
- Help your firm optimize efficiency and legal service delivery over time
- Assist with [growing your firm](#)

Legal project management is a bona fide career. Professionals receive practice-specific training and [earn tiered certifications](#) based on their level of expertise.

What Skills Should a Legal Project Manager Have?

Any project manager—in the legal industry or otherwise—must wear many hats and use a lot of different skills, including:

- Organization
- Communication
- Case management
- Task management
- Team management
- Law practice management software
- Reporting
- Calendaring

Most legal project managers also have some legal background. With a lawyer's skills and experience, a project manager can readily manage cases, create legal documents or understand the nuanced challenges of legal issues.

Project managers may also use software tools as they manage these core aspects of any given project. Among the many hats that legal project managers take on, they could also be responsible for reviewing your firm's technology needs and introducing new tech.

Often, bringing in legal technology strategically for targeted needs can help you save labor, time, and money. Plus, having someone implement those new systems means one less thing to worry about for busy lawyers.

What is Legal Project Management?

While the idea of legal project management might make you think of lawyers in hard hats, the purpose of LPM boils down to efficiency. Legal project management aims to increase your firm's productivity, serve your clients better, improve profitability, and ensure that your firm runs smoothly.

Attorneys are rightly focused on litigation, negotiation, and other crucial matters in clients' cases. You may have paralegals handling document discovery, client communications, and other tasks. Without a skilled manager overseeing each project or task, it can be easy for organizational details to slip through the cracks—and for inefficiencies to crop up unchecked.

Why is Legal Project Management Important?

According to the ABA, the importance of project management boils down to:

- Helping firms do their work more efficiently
- Managing the uncertainty that comes with legal business

Becoming more efficient could mean a host of chances to improve your existing systems that you may not even be aware of.

Maybe you have more case review requests than your staff can respond to, and you're losing cases. Maybe your firm regularly sends invoices weeks after a case concludes, and you're losing revenue. Whatever the issue, it's costing you your clients, your staff, and your dollars.

The answer to most of these concerns is creating (and sticking to) standardized processes. A legal project manager can help firms identify where they're lagging, make necessary changes, and ensure the entire firm is on board with those improved systems.

How Do I Determine if My Firm Needs a Legal Project Manager?

Ask yourself these questions. Is your firm:

- Struggling to manage tasks (like client intake and invoicing) or meet case deadlines?
- Receiving poor reviews and feedback from clients?
- Losing revenue and failing to capture payment from invoices?
- Having trouble organizing your case files and client data?
- Experiencing significant growth without a strong plan to meet the need?

If you're identifying with any of these issues, you could likely benefit from a legal project manager

Again, these are all symptoms of inefficiency, a lack of modern processes, or an inability to maintain those processes over time. Maybe your law firm started out with excellent client communications and personalized attention to case updates, but your case volume has grown and now you're struggling to keep up with the basics.

That's not a sign that your law firm is failing. It's a sign that you need someone to manage it all for you.

How to Hire a Legal Project Manager at Your Firm

Law firms aren't just legal service providers, they're businesses. Whether your firm is large or small, you'll need to ensure that you run a smooth operation to succeed as a business and keep your clients happy.

If you need someone to manage your firm's legal tasks, keep all your teams on track, help you grow as a firm, and drive your revenue over the long term, your law firm may need to [hire or outsource](#) a legal project manager.

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