



Maturity Model 2026

UpLevel Ops

Take Legal to the Next Level

**MATURITY MODEL
INTAKE & WORKFLOW/DEMAND MANAGEMENT**

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state



	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Legal Request Intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct business stakeholder to legal interaction, mostly through email or unstructured channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some enablement resources (e.g., SharePoint accessible matrix to assist “who to call” for what, FAQs, process explanations, shared inbox) in place, but most work still managed through email or unstructured channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated legal front door to triage work and routing to appropriate party (e.g., a standard intake form with limited conditionality) Back and forth emails still necessary to understand full extent of work request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated workflow & intake, including self-service & auto-assignment based on coverage, type, complexity and urgency Centralized portal captures majority of work entering the Legal Department, usually with all relevant detail required to meet request
Self-Service Contracts & Client Enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited self-service contracting, generally via manual provision of templates (without automated controls or insights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing self-service contracting opportunities for first draft doc generation, accompanied by limited playbooks and enablement training; partial process coverage and limited integrations into downstream tooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broader range of self-service contracts, including required approvals, pre-approved fallbacks, escalation pathways; more complete process coverage, with e-signature integration and automated contract data flow to central repository; limited integrated enablement support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadest range of self-service contracts, including required approvals, pre-approved fallbacks, escalation pathways; end-to-end process coverage, with e-signature and other integrations, and automated contract data flow to central repository; automated enablement with AI chatbots
Request Tracking & Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited understanding of the universe of work the department is managing; all managed in email or via individual preferred project management/tracking methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant time/effort spent manually tracking tasks undertaken by the Legal Team staff using foundational tools (e.g., Excel) with little analysis of data available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is manually but systematically categorized and organized and tracked, partially supported by technology (e.g., project management or matter management tools including MS Teams/Planner, Smartsheet, etc.); baseline data on volume of work available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matter tracking (tasks, documents, decisions, etc.) are captured and memorialized automatically through a workflow tool, allowing for data analysis Metrics: turnaround time, volume, requestor, request type, etc.
Transparency & Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients have no visibility into matter status and require manual email updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients have partial visibility into matter status through collaborative methods (shared tracker, ServiceNow or project management tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients are given access to and utilize collaborative tools to see project status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full client visibility into project status including when the request sits with stakeholders outside of Legal (e.g., Finance, Risk, external party); end-to-end status visibility

MATURITY MODEL CONTRACT LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT (CLM)

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state



	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Contracting Operations & Infrastructure/Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited or no use of templates Use personal or siloed library(s) of contracts to reference previous clauses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Templates for common contract types; stored centrally but may not be consistently used Consolidated contract library & preliminary enablement resources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Templates are widely adopted for most contract types with defined ownership for maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Templates are optimized based on data analytics and feedback from users. Culture of continuous improvement – goal setting, management decisions about practices; playbooks, approval matrices largely automated into contracting tools; leveraging contract AI to do clause-level variation analysis to drive template refinement and process improvement
Centralized, Searchable Repository & Doc Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executed documents stored in multiple locations, with limited or inconsistently tracked contract metadata. Lack of consistent process to drive contract return post-execution. Regular challenges in locating executed contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated system of record for key sets of executed documents, but other repositories may still exist. Standard metadata model and naming conventions have been established, but may not be consistently applied or validated. Contract return requirements defined but not consistently enforced. Contract searches still do not provide complete, trusted, consumable results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More complete set of currently-active executed contracts have been centrally stored and consistently profiled, with a minimal set of essential metadata (generally oriented toward Legal team use), contract hierarchies established. Basic contract searches achievable for core contract types on key metadata elements (e.g., counterparty, contract type, term expiration, renewals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete set of current and legacy contracts centrally stored, with generally complete and validated metadata meeting needs of legal and business. Metadata extraction largely driven by AI extraction + human quality control to drive confidence. Metadata automatically feeding in for self-service contracts. Both basic and advanced search capabilities return trusted results. Relevant contract data available to business decision-makers
Contract Obligations Management & Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking contract obligations considered a business-only task, usually due to both lack of centralization, completeness of repository, and lack of data analytics capabilities. Legal can provide limited insights and reporting tends to be manual effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract management and contract reporting obligations defined, but may not yet be automated or fully achievable without manual efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some metrics readily available for defined, key collections of contracts. Some level of reporting (core contract expirations, renewals) reportable without significant manual efforts. Contract data may not be centralized, leading to reporting from multiple systems and manual reconciliation efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All core contracting metrics established with trustworthy and complete data sources. Little to no manual intervention required. Often available via permissioned management dashboards and BI layer
Clause Library, Playbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited or no clause library or playbooks. Individuals maintain their own or rely on precedent agreements. Lack of consistency across legal team members. General lack of tooling to assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key company-wide clause banks/positions agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playbooks, approval matrixes & process maps for main contract types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture of continuous improvement – goal setting, management decisions about practices; playbooks, approval matrices largely automated into contracting tools



MATURITY MODEL OVERALL CONTRACTING MANAGEMENT

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Roles & Responsibilities Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent legal & business responsibilities for contracts lifecycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal partners with business & supporting functions to develop clear governance, contract lifecycle processes, and risk standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimization of contract lifecycle with business teams • Clear understanding of contract risks & consistent application of tools, processes & standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on value creation through contract analytics, obligation management programs
Contracting Resourcing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies with lawyers, business & contract specialists playing different roles that are not generally aligned • Procurement not integrated with legal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist contract teams in major areas • Use of paralegals/ contract negotiators/ alternative providers for some contract admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear bifurcation of tasks to appropriate level of internal legal resources • Increasing use of paralegals/ contract negotiators/ alternative providers for contract admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business self serves where appropriate, legal manages exceptions/ bespoke/strategic agreements • Extensive and appropriate use of paralegals/ contract negotiators/ alternative providers for contract admin
Technology Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by spreadsheets, word processing tools, (i.e. email & MS Office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central contract repositories • Contract generation or contract request tools in place • Limited self-service tools • Use of eSignature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End to end CLM tools fully embedded to facilitate workflow, escalations & data capture • Extensive self-service tools • Consistent use of eSignature across org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI and/or Machine learning capabilities to drive improvements • Robust KM system linking all members of ecosystem
Dashboard Management & Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None or Limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic KPIs established & measured • Spend with outside providers tracked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated KPIs established & measured • Total Cost of Ownership measured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of continuous improvement – goal setting, management decisions about resourcing, risk management, business enablement



MATURITY MODEL DOCUMENT & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No personnel with DM & KM program maintenance or governance included in responsibilities Personnel make ad hoc contributions expected to KM program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portion of someone's role includes DM & KM governance and maintenance expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated resource to drive KM culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated team driving KM best practices & actively publicizing lessons learned
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal process to capture & reuse knowledge Documents managed in an isolated or sporadic manner; no overarching design/strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic expectations and communication around use of KM tool and DM protocols Basic document management strategy defined and deployed Document naming conventions established but not universally adopted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined & documented expectations for work product reuse and document storage, including meta-tagging for easier search/retrieval; bolstered by consistent training Naming conventions engrained in company DNA and reliable usage of central repository Consistent communication around new KM content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal, consistent use of central repository and naming, storage and tagging protocols Active process to identify, capture, link & publicize best practice materials & content KM update is agenda point in all key items for proactive KM
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KM driven by spreadsheets & word processing tools, i.e., email & MS Office or google suite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central access to knowledge repositories with foundational self-service resources in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End to end tools (I/W, SharePoint) fully embedded to facilitate workflow, escalations & data capture; Extensive self-service tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machine learning & AI capabilities to drive further efficiency & improvements w/ robust workflow & KM system linking all members of ecosystem



MATURITY MODEL RECORDS MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information governance resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone has responsibility for information governance but not a formal title 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information governance lead with visibility across law department & company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records & information governance, & disposition process
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No defined records processes outside of Retention Schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data governance processes defined but no accountability for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes defined & implemented • Monitoring for compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough data classification, governance, & disposition process • Fully enforced through technology & management oversight
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic file management system in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated enforcement of retention schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced tools for both records' retention & email archiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading edge tech for information governance & records retention; integrated with all relevant legal systems for automated disposition



MATURITY MODEL OUTSIDE COUNSEL MANAGEMENT

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Number & Types of Firms Retained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many firms used; highly distributed spending Use of major firms for lower-value work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer major firms; perhaps 70-30 split 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Consolidation & concentration; firms matched with the nature of the work</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidated to core teams that know your business very well at few law firms
Retention Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unstated criteria for retention; siloed decision making</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines, approved counsel list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic RFPs & competitive bidding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred Provider Program, historical data used to drive selection process
Fee Arrangement & Invoice Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hourly billing with some discounts <i>Invoices reviewed manually without eBilling</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive use of discounts, plus some fixed fees & incentives Invoice reviewed via eBilling by internal team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non hourly arrangements consistently considered First pass eBilling invoice review done by finance team; attorney review time reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-defined, data-driven process to identify AFA opportunities & measure their success Invoice review optimized through use of dedicated teams and full potential technology
Rate Review Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No standardization or centralization; no benchmark data; rates at TK level</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined timeline, but allow exceptions; no tools; some benchmarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No exceptions to defined timeline, centralized review team; tools used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized team utilizing automated tools to negotiate using benchmarks/analytics
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No consistent process for communicating feedback</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporadic meetings with vendors to discuss goals & feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined process & cadence to provide feedback & lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent sharing of vendor scorecards, meetings to conduct after action reviews; aligned with CLOC guidelines



MATURITY MODEL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Scope of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undefined & ad-hoc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on external spend management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on internal & external spend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on total cost internal, external, settlements, headcount
Budgeting & Forecasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-standardized criteria for when budgets & forecasts need to be set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria set for which matters require budgets & forecasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard process, frequency & dedicated team for external spend management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully comprehensive internal & external budgets & forecasts
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually managed spreadsheets & decentralized tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized spreadsheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External spend & budgets managed within eBilling/MM tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized dashboard & targets for internal & external spend management
Visibility & Tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undefined metrics & lack of access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined metrics but difficult to AIn access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined metrics & frequent access, but manually generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined metrics, frequent access & automated dashboard-driven
Identifying Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reactive analysis & fire extinguishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent frequency & scope of macro-analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent frequency & scope of micro-analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated scorecards & alerts (traffic lights)



MATURITY MODEL DATA ANALYTICS & METRICS

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Analysis of Departmental Data & Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undefined scope of metrics &/or performance measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined set of metrics & performance measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly generation & review of departmental metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated & real-time visibility into key metrics / variance; aligned with CLOC guidelines
Analysis of Industry Data & Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to industry data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access into general departmental surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access into peer aligned departmental surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access into area-specific analytics & benchmarking (spend, contracts, IP, e-discovery, etc.)
Dynamic Dashboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad-hoc & de-centralized reporting from legal applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust dashboards for a single legal application (likely MM/e-Billing first) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust dashboards for each legal application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated & centralized single-point of reporting across the department
Data-Driven Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reactive request & analysis of information relevant to the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established knowledge bank or data with manual search 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established analytics platform boasting relevant metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated data recommendations based on work at hand

MATURITY MODEL STRATEGIC COVERAGE



Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent legal responsibilities for various types of work; roles vary by situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal partners with business & supporting functions to develop clear governance, processes, & risk standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive legal support tailored to specific business needs; refined engagement based on complexity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully collaborative partnership, accessibility & interaction points depending on type/complexity of work
Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All work handled by in-house teams or external firms as overflow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic internal and external staffing models established; use of outside counsel for specific areas of expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation of tasks to appropriate level of internal and external resource, with OC targets established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic resource model with business self-service where appropriate; legal manages exceptions or high-risk matters; strategic partnerships with external providers.
Use of Alternative Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No use of alternative providers; heavy reliance on traditional law firms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of secondees for specific individual gaps &/or large low complexity projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular use of ALSPs for specialized services (e.g., document review, eDiscovery). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized and strategic use of ALSPs and technology-driven solutions across a range of services (e.g., contracts, compliance).

MATURITY MODEL: AI MANAGEMENT

Items in blue reflect [Company]'s current state

	Ad Hoc	Defined	Tactical	Strategic
Legal Team AI Training & Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of internal expertise when it comes to AI, with little to no training available. No formal strategy in place for how to leverage AI within the organization. No understanding of AI limitations, autonomy risks, or data exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training focused on use case design and AI-assisted workflows Business units and IT working in silos, with limited coordination. Training focused on use case design and AI assisted workflow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A formal request system in place for AI tools Training on building and managing custom GPT assistants Introduction to agent concepts and workflow automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI orchestration, not just usage Managing AI agents and multi-step workflows Training on supervising AI, designing AI driven processes and identifying failure modes and escalation points
Presence of AI in Legal Tech Stack & Technology Roadmap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of internal expertise on the potential applications of AI technology within the legal department. No roadmap on how to incorporate AI into the organization's tech stack to address specific pain points. Use of public tools outside governance (shadow AI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early adoption of enterprise level AI pilots and standalone tools Some internal discussion on how to integrate AI into the organization's tech stack, but limited progress made to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of custom chat assistants AI embedded in legal tech platforms in use Initial workflow integrations (document review, intake, knowledge retrieval) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI embedded across the legal tech stack with interoperability and API driven integrations Deployment of AI agents capable of executing multi-step workflows Legal ops actively managing tool ecosystem, vendor AI capabilities, performance and reliability
Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No defined policies around AI use. Recognized need to have policies in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited policies and practices to guide the use of AI in the legal department. Policies not comprehensive for use of all AI systems. Policies begin to differentiate between public models and enterprise-secured environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal policies in place and established AI governance processes inside the legal department. Policies address use of general and legal specific AI tools, data input restrictions, approved tools and human in the loop requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic governance model that includes real time policy enforcement and role-based AI permissions Policies addressing AI agents and autonomous actions and data lineage and traceability Integration with enterprise controls
Oversight & Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no oversight in place around AI. Decisions typically made ad-hoc by individual stakeholders. No visibility into AI usage across the org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal structure in place for overseeing the use of AI. Designation of key decision makers, or established oversight committees Initial tracking of AI use cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear governance structure in place to monitor use of AI that includes legal, IT and InfoSec Continual refining of policies and practices based on feedback and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous oversight model for performance monitoring Governance extends to AI agents and automated workflows Decision making supported by metrics
Risk Monitoring & Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness of the specific risks posed by AI such as over reliance, hallucinations No processes in place to manage risks associated with AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting to discuss potential risks associated with AI within legal. Limited internal coordination across business units and IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal risk categories defined AI monitoring mechanisms in place such as output testing and escalation workflows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous monitoring of AI outputs and workflows Focus on autonomous AI, system failures and vendor instability Implement AI fallback processes

Contact Information

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Take Legal to the Next Level

