

2021 State of Corporate Law Departments

Key Insights

ACRITAS SHARPLEGAL WITH THOMSON REUTERS INSTITUTE

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic accelerated major shifts impacting corporate legal departments:



More with less

58% of law departments reported increased workloads and **29%** experienced budget cuts.



More disputes and safeguards

Law departments reported an unprecedented strain on contracts, causing:

40% to anticipate increased spending on legal disputes and to implement safeguards to prevent them.

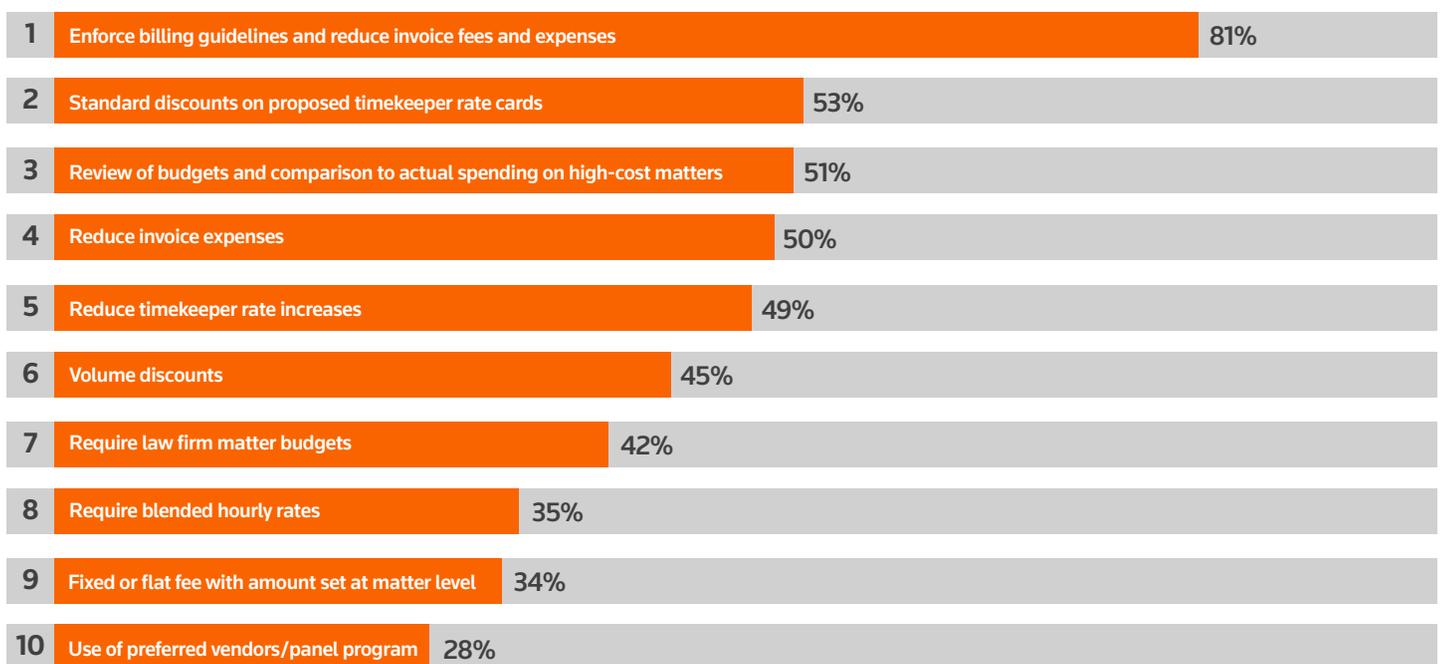
More oversight



A top priority for law departments was to control the cost of outside counsel — understandable given the size of this spend:

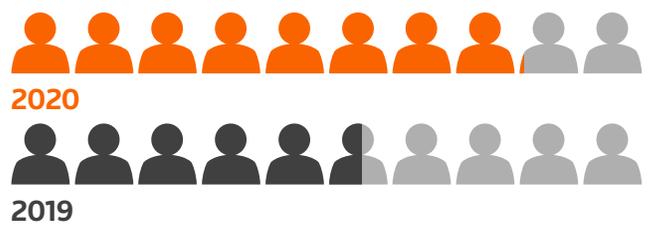


THE TOP 10 MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO MANAGE EXTERNAL COUNSEL COSTS IDENTIFIED BY LAW DEPARTMENTS:



More legal ops

81% of new hires were in legal operations — up from 57% the previous year — to bolster process optimization, technology adoption, budget management, strategic planning, and other factors essential for success.



More tech



30%

of departments are increasing their spend on technology



44%

are increasing their use of tech tools



THE TOP FIVE MOST IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGIES CITED BY CORPORATE LAW DEPARTMENTS:

- eBilling/spend and matter management
- Contract management
- Legal research
- Document management
- Legal hold



THE FIVE MOST COMMON TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS THAT LAW DEPARTMENTS INTEND TO PROCURE:

- Legal business intelligence
- Contract AI for analysis, risk assessment, or due diligence
- Contract management
- Legal workflow automation
- Document management

[Download the full 2021 State of Corporate Law Departments Report](#)