

# Closing The Gaps: How CLM And Spend Management Drive Next-Gen Legal Ops

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## Modernization Imperative For Legal Operations

In the race to modernize legal operations, corporate legal teams face a transformative imperative: adopt smart, scalable tools that revolutionize collaboration, rein in spend, and fortify governance and security. Without proper modernization efforts, legal teams face fragmented workflows, slow collaboration, and security gaps caused by manual processes and overlapping tools. Legal ops functions, from contract lifecycle management (CLM) to spend management, must become more systematized with tools that help legal departments stay agile, compliant, and cost-effective. These platforms streamline contract negotiations, compliance, invoice tracking, and approval to give a clear, unified picture of the department's work. Automated workflows streamline negotiations and compliance, which work with spend management solutions to improve efficiency. Enhanced security controls mitigate risk and ensure data is stored and managed securely.

## Key Findings



Corporate legal teams are prioritizing centralized legal operations in the coming year, but manual processes and legacy tooling stand in the way.



Overlapping point solutions and proliferated manual processes are causing bottlenecks in legal proceedings and contract management, and leaving legal teams open to governance and security vulnerabilities.



A centralized approach to legal operations — one powered by the right tools — is crucial to improve employee productivity, manage spend and security, and establish legal teams as trusted advisors to business leadership.

## Siloed And Redundant Solutions Undermine User Experience

Legal team operations are hampered by having too many tools with overlapping functionalities that are unintegrated and spread across disparate systems. Yet, even with duplicative functionality, these tools still don't allow legal team users to address the full contract lifecycle — a key priority of respondents in the coming year.

When legal teams operate in silos using multiple point solutions with overlapping functionalities, they are unable to fully optimize their workflows, maintain effective version control, or minimize errors. This leads to a poor user experience, with respondents indicating their current tech solutions have poor usability across too many point solutions (45%). Overlapping functionality also leads to disjointed workflows (51%), opening dead space for errors and frustration.

## Top Legal Operations Tech Stack Challenges

Disconnected or disparate systems **52%**

Overlapping functionality leads to disjointed workflows **51%**

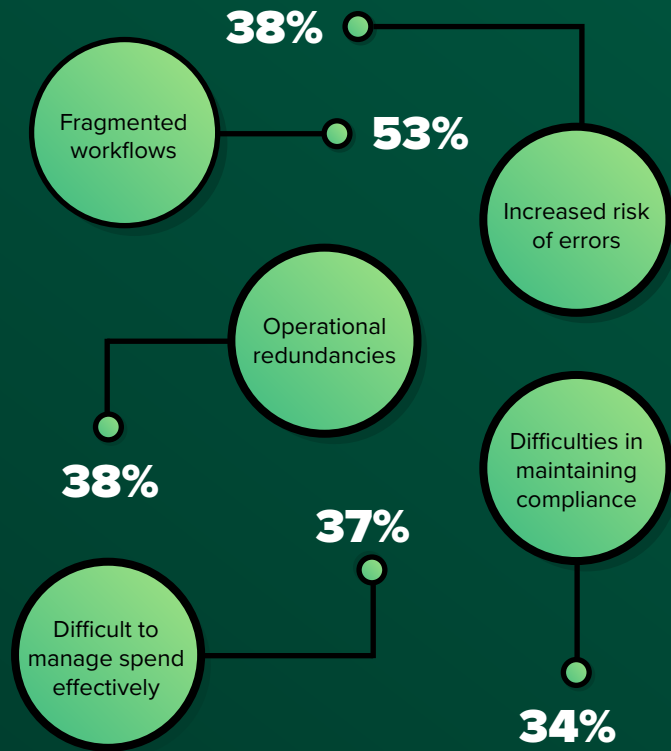
Technology solutions have poor usability **45%**

Too many point solutions **26%**

## Delaying Tech Modernization Increases Spend And Compliance Risks

Disconnected legal operations systems contribute to fragmented workflows (53%) and increase the likelihood of paperwork inaccuracies. These issues can adversely affect legal teams' ability to manage spend effectively. Organizations that delay modernizing their legal operations technology stack will persistently experience disjointed workflows, heightened risk of errors, and operational redundancies — challenges that the demands of legal proceedings cannot afford. But legal teams are concerned with more than just impacting the user experience; business leaders also expect difficulty in managing spend and maintaining compliance. As global compliance continues to evolve, legal teams can't afford to persist without a meaningful change to their legal ops systems.

## Consequences Of Having A Disconnected Legal Ops System

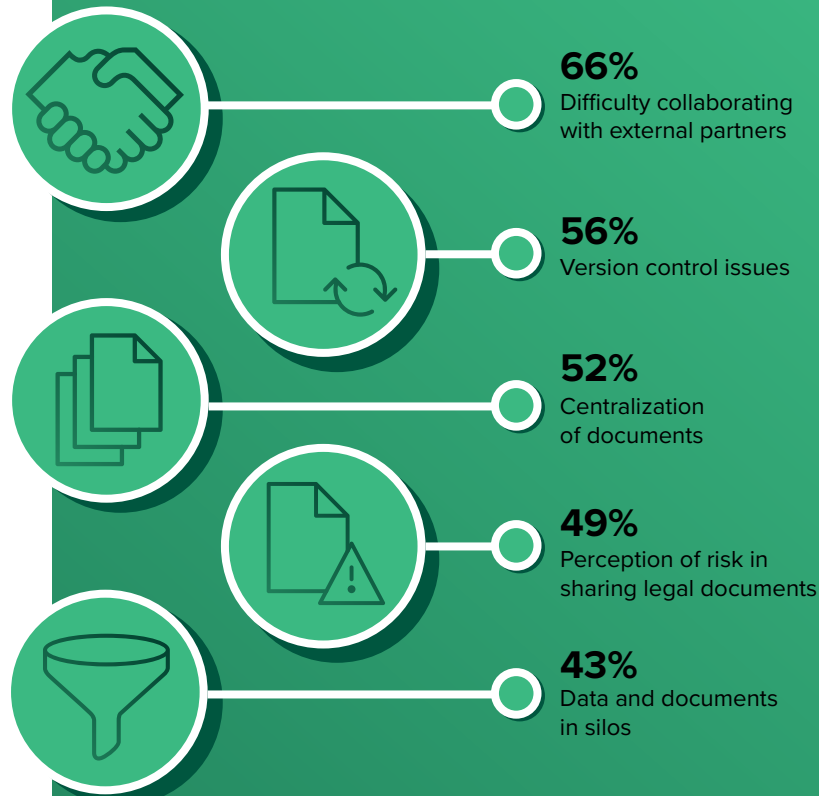


## Collaboration Barriers Limit Legal's Strategic Impact

Legal teams are expected to operate as agile, business-aligned partners, yet collaboration across business teams remains a persistent challenge. Sixty-six percent of legal team leaders cite difficulty working with external partners, while 56% struggle with version control and 52% lack centralized access to key documents. Nearly half (49%) say perceived risks around sharing legal content further stall collaboration across business functions.

Persistent data silos and tools that are unable to scale with business growth compound these issues. Without modern platforms to connect people and processes, legal departments are constrained by siloed processes and solutions that limit their ability to drive strategic value.

## Top Legal Department Collaboration Challenges



## A Shift Toward Unified Legal Operations

As legal teams look for ways to improve collaboration and productivity within their organizations, they are setting their sights on a more streamlined operations experience. To achieve these initiatives in the coming year, respondents are prioritizing the adoption of a technology solution that centralizes legal operations across business units while also centralizing the management of the contract lifecycle. Their emphasis on automation will likely manifest as additional AI adoption within their tech stack to improve administrative work experience, as well as process automation. CLM platforms streamline contracts from drafting to renewal, automating key steps and boosting efficiency. They centralize management; analyze terms, risks, and obligations; and integrate with other tech to enhance compliance and reduce operational friction.

## Legal Team's Key Priorities Of The Next Twelve Months

Adopting a solution that centralizes legal operations — **51%**

Improving collaboration across business units — **41%**

Increasing AI adoption within the stack — **36%**

Centralizing management of the contract lifecycle — **36%**

Assisting in improving the organization of the larger business — **31%**

## Current Tech Stacks Fall Short On Integration And Security

For legal teams, every word and process milestone holds weight — accuracy, security, and usability are paramount. While satisfaction with the capabilities of their current stack is generally high, legal teams are least satisfied with integration, accuracy of data, contract repository, and redlining and security capabilities. Their biggest qualms are not with more advanced capabilities but with the basic qualities that make a tool secure and usable. Legal teams hope emerging automation capabilities can address these concerns; for instance, some CLM platform vendors have also expanded self-service capabilities, such as role-based repository search or an AI-powered chatbot or virtual assistant to guide business users. But, while automation for legal processes is gaining steam, format tracking and contract adding are lagging. Teams need more robust tools that can tackle these legal operations challenges from all sides.

## Most Manual Processes In Legal Department

Format tracking

1



2



Contract adding

Reporting

3



4



Renewals

## Centralized Platforms Enable Collaboration, Compliance, And Growth

Legal departments are under increasing pressure to do more with less. They must expedite informed decision-making, strengthen compliance, and mitigate risks without sacrificing efficiency. Centralized legal operations platforms address these challenges head-on: nearly two-thirds (63%) of surveyed legal leaders cite improved collaboration, while 50% report better compliance. Forty-eight percent highlight improved usability and streamlined workflows that reduce administrative burden. Others point to gains in risk mitigation (42%), speed, and traceability, which are critical for litigation and contract readiness. By improving visibility, consistency, and speed, these platforms help legal teams reduce risk and operate with greater confidence at scale.

## Benefits Of Adopting A Centralized, Streamlined Platform For Legal Operations

Improved overall collaboration **63%**

Improved compliance **50%**

Improved usability of tools **48%**

Enabled more streamlined workflows **48%**

Mitigated risk **42%**

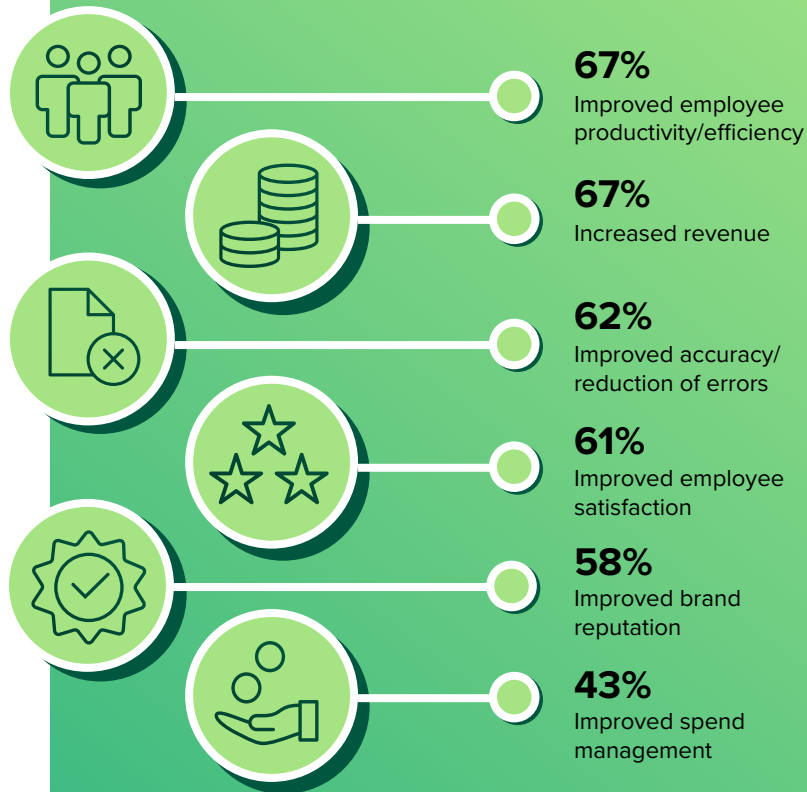
Reduced time to delivering advice/ documents **37%**



## Legal Ops Investments Drive Productivity And Revenue

Overcoming operational challenges allows legal teams to free up time to focus on more strategic work that enables them to evolve into a more strategic business partner to the wider enterprise. These tools not only streamline day-to-day tasks but also empower legal to drive both top-line growth and bottom-line impact. Sixty-seven percent of legal leaders report improved productivity and efficiency and an equal share attribute increased revenue to legal ops investment. Additionally, 62% see accuracy and error reduction improvements accelerating decision-making and reducing costly missteps. These improvements contribute to leaner operations through reducing noncompliance fines (49%) and improving spend management (43%). By breaking down silos and elevating their role as a trusted advisor to other business units, legal teams position themselves as essential partners in driving enterprisewide collaboration and long-term value.

## Business Impacts Of Centralized Legal Ops Platform Adoption



Note: Showing top six responses  
Base: 262 legal department respondents in Europe and the United States  
Source: Forrester's Legal Ops Survey 2025 E-59465

## Key Findings

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## Conclusion

Legal teams are essential as organizations navigate today's volatile business landscape, but they face challenges from outdated, fragmented systems. To unlock strategic value, legal must embrace modern technology to:

- **Centralize and rationalize legal operations, starting with spend and contract management.** Eliminating silos ensures seamless collaboration with other business units.
- **Invest in better integration and usability to improve the user experience and deliver business benefits.** Contract tools that integrate with spend tools and existing tech stacks boost transparency, enhance compliance, and position legal as a strategic partner.
- **Invest in AI/automation to improve spend management, accuracy, and increase revenue.** Pairing the right emerging tools can streamline workflows, accelerate decision-making, and free up time for strategic work.



## Resources

### Related Forrester Research:

[Establish Technology Lifecycle Management To Control Technical Debt](#), Forrester Research, Inc., September 5, 2024.

[The Revenue Technology Management Framework: Govern](#), Forrester Research, Inc., February 20, 2025.

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## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Thomson Reuters. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 262 legal department respondents in Europe and the United States. The custom survey began in April 2025 and was completed in May 2025.

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## Demographics

GEOGRAPHY	
United Kingdom	23%
United States	21%
Germany	13%
Denmark	7%
Sweden	6%
Italy	6%
Belgium	6%
The Netherlands	5%
Luxembourg	4%
Spain	3%
France	3%
Norway	3%

INDUSTRY	
Technology and/or tech services	6%
Retail	6%
Healthcare	6%
Telecommunications services	5%
Manufacturing and materials	5%
Travel and hospitality	5%
Government	5%
Financial services and/or insurance	5%
Electronics	5%
All others	52%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	
20,000 or more	15%
5,000 to 19,999	18%
1,000 to 4,999	29%
500 to 999	19%
250 to 499	19%

ROLE LEVEL	
Full-time practitioner	20%
Manager	29%
Director	22%
Vice president	16%
C-level executive	13%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.



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