



2021 LEGAL INDUSTRY REPORT

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC

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Introduction

We surveyed over 2,000 legal professionals who shared their experiences and insights gleaned since the start of the pandemic and summarized the findings in this Report. The survey respondents explained how the pandemic impacted law firms, the steps that lawyers took to sustain and grow their practices during uncertain times, and how those strategic decisions helped build the foundation for long-term sustainability.

The questions asked covered lots of ground, and the results provide a window into how law firms weathered the pandemic. Whether it was the shift to remote work, choosing new technology, or implementing and using the legal software, the survey respondents provided a fascinating look into the inner workings of law firms struggling to stay afloat and find their footing in the midst of a rapidly shifting legal landscape. You'll see that many law firms were able to adapt and provide their clients with the best possible service in the face of significant challenges. And some were even able to thrive in the ever-evolving "new normal" that we now find ourselves in.

That's where studies and surveys like this one come in – they offer insight and analysis that can be used to help lawyers and their firms prepare for whatever may come. The findings from this Report include lots of actionable data that law firm leaders can use to inform their legal technology decisions and provide the foundation for long-term sustainability. By learning how other law firms have flourished despite challenging times, lawyers will be better able to make informed, strategic decisions that will set their firms up for future success.

In this Report, you'll learn about:

- The impact of the pandemic on the practice of law.
- The change management hurdles law firms overcame.
- How lawyers successfully implemented new technology into their firms.
- The strategies lawyers adopted to increase remote-working productivity and profitability.

Executive Summary

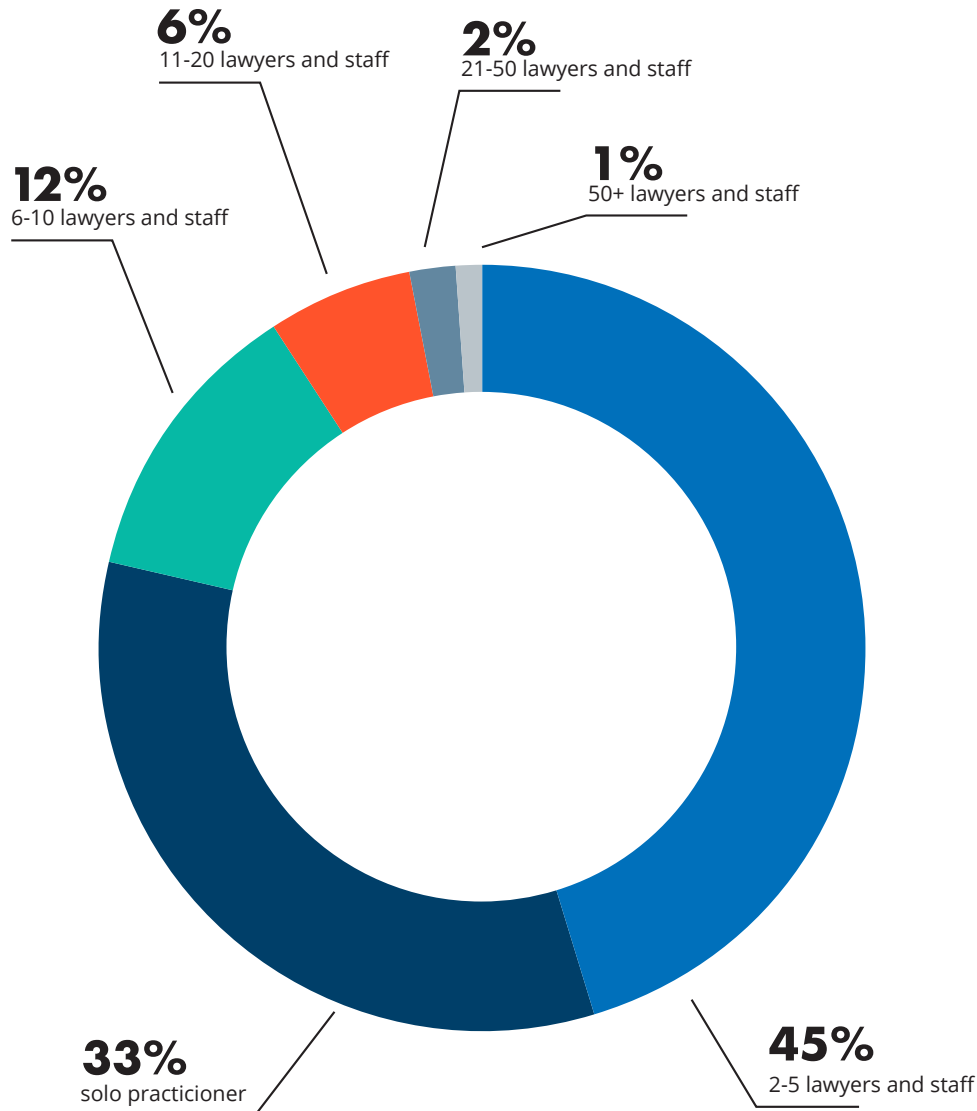
The past year has been a long and uncertain one. COVID-19 impacted the world in many ways, some of which were predictable, while others were completely unexpected. The legal profession was certainly not immune, and the pandemic disrupted many of the ways that attorneys worked, communicated, and collaborated.

Most notably, in 2021 more lawyers than ever are regularly working remotely. Practicing law virtually is occurring at rates never before seen, and cloud-based software has become commonplace. As a result, many legal industry pundits are predicting that the practice of law won't be the same on the other side of the pandemic.

Now that we're well into the second year of the pandemic we can see the changes taking place in real-time. Law firm leaders continue to adjust to the rapidly changing legal marketplace, and factors beyond their control are impacting the demand for legal services. As a result, lawyers have had to experiment with new practice areas and ways of working that are ultimately more efficient and effective. This ability to pivot has been an important part of building business resiliency into law practices despite the many challenges presented when trying to run a law firm amid a global pandemic.

In this survey, we asked lawyers to share what they'd learned during this uncertain time. One of the key takeaways is that lawyers who put the right technology in place were able to ensure that their firms continued to operate despite the many challenges encountered along the way. A large part of their success involved implementing new remote working tools into their law practices. By doing so they were able to streamline their law firm's work processes and collaborate more efficiently - saving time and money regardless of whether their staff was working from home or the office.

Survey respondents also shared that their experience in setting their firms up for remote work was easier than expected and that cloud-based software was one of the key drivers of their firms' success during the pandemic. After hitting the ground running, and then making further investments in their IT stacks, not only were the majority of lawyers able to sustain and grow their firms during the pandemic, they also set their firms up for long-term business continuity and continued success, even in the face of future uncertainties.



Demographics

The survey was conducted between the dates of August 31, 2021 and September 9, 2021. 2,060 lawyers and legal professionals took part in the survey.

The respondents represented the perspectives of a variety of different roles within law firms. 47% were partners in a law firm, 11% were associates or of counsel, 22% were paralegals, 7% were office managers, 9% were administrative or support staff, and 4% chose "other."

The survey results showed that 45% of survey respondents were from firms with 2-5 lawyers, 33% were solos, 12% were from firms with 6-10 lawyers, 6% were from firms with 11-20 lawyers, 2% were from firms with 21-50 lawyers, and 1% were from firms with 50+ attorneys.



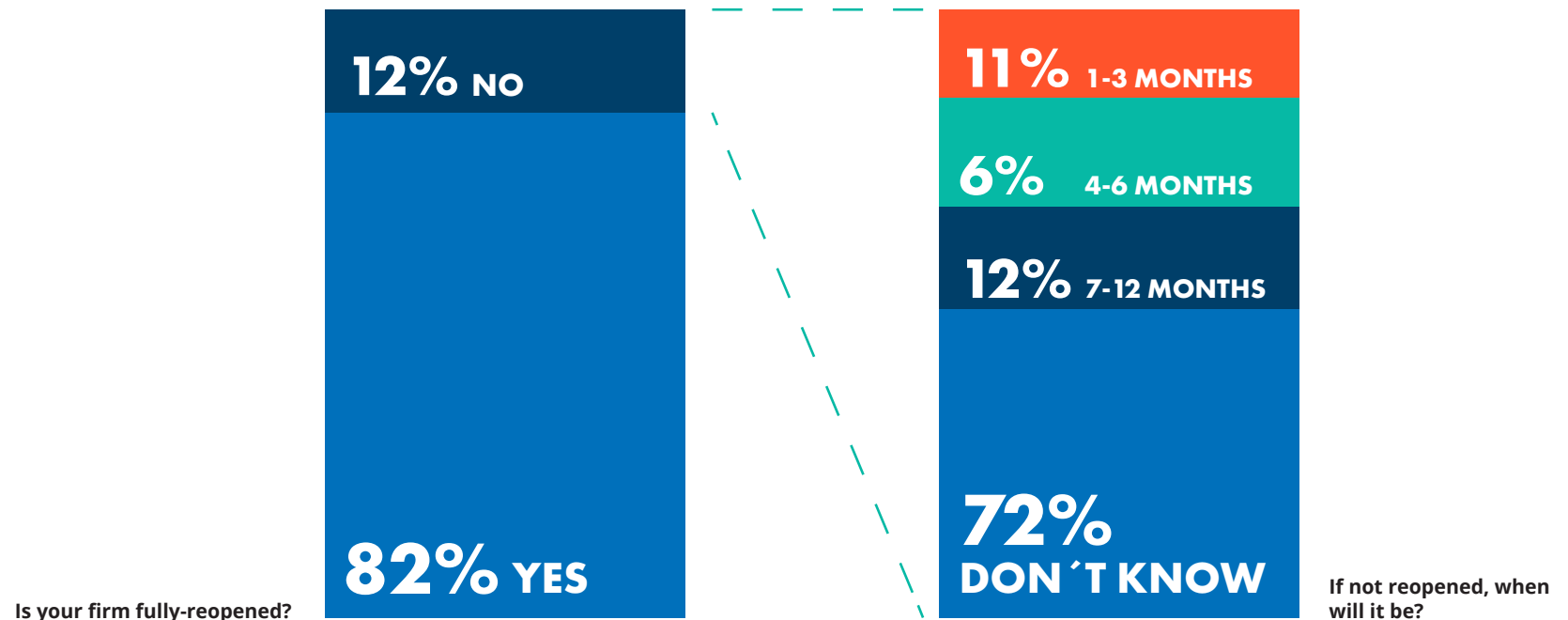
The Evolving Law Office

In the first section of this Report, we'll be focusing on the pandemic and its impact on both the practice of law and legal professionals' perspectives about the future. We'll review data regarding the types of technology adopted by law firms. You'll also learn about the remote working tools that firms invested in the most often that helped to bridge the IT gap during this challenging time.

The Move to Remote Work

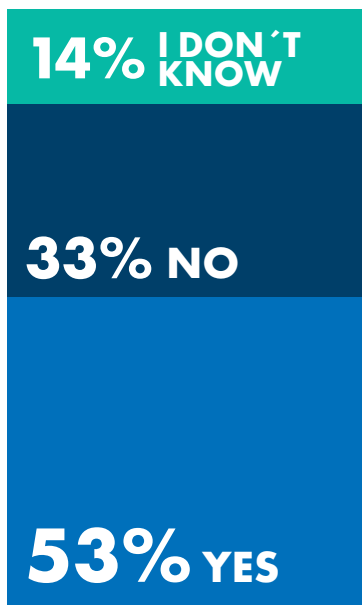
Before we dive into the results on technology adoption, let's take a look at the data relating to law firm reopenings. According to the survey results, at the time of the survey, 82% of respondents reported that their firms had fully reopened. Of the 18% who said their firms had not yet fully reopened, 77% were unsure when their firms would fully reopen.

5% reported it would take 6 months or more for their firms to reopen, another 6% said it would take between 4-6 months, and 11% indicated offices would reopen within 1-3 months.



Next, respondents were asked about their firms' remote working practices moving forward. 53% reported that their firms would allow lawyers and law firm staff to work remotely full-time upon the reopening of their offices. 70% shared that their firms would allow attorneys and staff to work remotely part-time once their offices were fully reopened.

Will your firm allow some lawyers and/or law firm staff to continue to work remotely full-time once the office reopens?



Will your firm allow some lawyers and/or law firm staff to continue to work remotely part-time once the office reopens?



From these responses, one thing is certain: remote working is here to stay even as law firms begin to reopen. The effects of the pandemic have changed how legal professionals view the concept of "work" and where they get it done. Full-time remote work won't be the norm once the immediate effects of the pandemic recede. But working from home a few days each week? That will undoubtedly be much more commonplace for legal professionals in the years to come.

Accelerated Technology Adoption

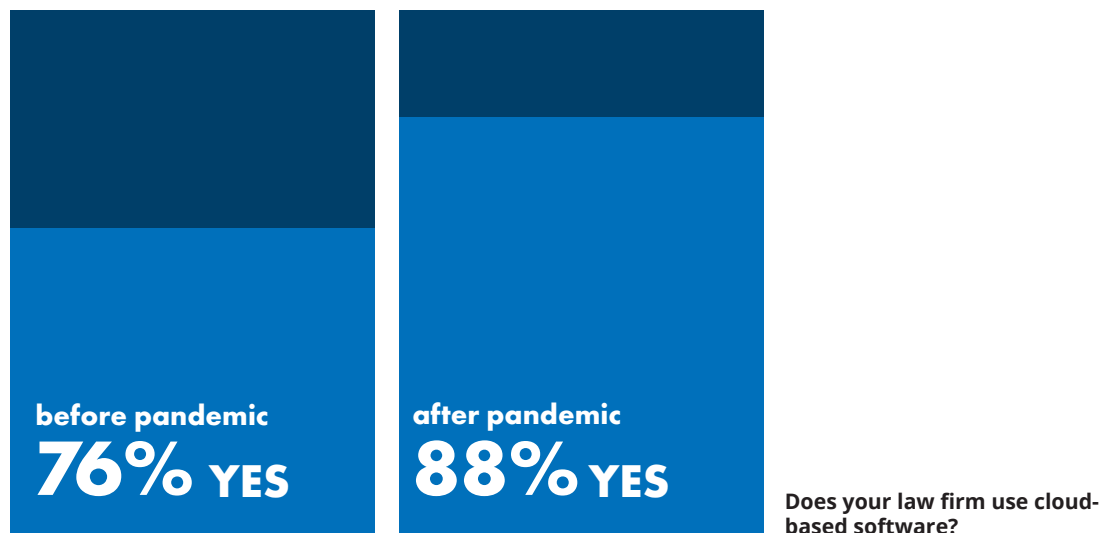
There's no dispute that the pandemic ushered in a remote working revolution. As a result, the adoption of cloud-based software increased significantly due to social distancing requirements.

After all, lawyers had no choice but to transition their law firms to remote work using cloud-based legal software and remote working tools; it was the only way to get the job done. For firms that did not already have those technologies in place when the pandemic hit, it was a matter of playing catch up by jury-rigging disparate systems together in order to remain operational until more robust remote-working systems were put into place.

ACCELERATED TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Cloud Technology

There were several different tools adopted by firms that helped them weather pandemic-related uncertainty. One of the key technologies in this regard was cloud computing software, and the survey results showed that many firms that had been cloud computing holdouts before the pandemic made that transition to the cloud out of necessity after the pandemic struck.



The pandemic-related stressors had the end result of pushing the vast majority of law firms into the cloud, as borne out by the survey results, which showed that at the time of the survey - more than a year after the onset of COVID-19 - the vast majority of respondents' firms (88%) used cloud computing software, up from 76% before the pandemic.

For those firms, the types of cloud computing software tools in place ran the gamut. Law practice management software was the most popular, with 23% reporting that their firms used cloud-based law practice management software. This was followed by document management software (13%), calendar management software (12%), and credit card online payment tools (12%).

ACCELERATED TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Remote Working Tools

46%

of respondents reported that their firms invested in remote working software because of the pandemic

The survey results also showed that law firms relied on remote working tools to keep their firms afloat, with adoption levels increasing significantly compared to pre-pandemic levels. Notably, 46% of respondents reported that their firms invested in remote working software because of the pandemic.

Additionally, according to the survey respondents, the top remote-working tools that gained the highest levels of usage as a result of the pandemic were: video conferencing tools (32%), e-signature (22%), law practice management software (14%), time and billing software (13%), and communication software (16%).

The good news is that for the vast majority of firms, their investment in cloud-based remote working software made a difference. Nearly three-quarters - 73% - of survey respondents indicated that the remote working tools their firms invested in had increased productivity, and 80% reported that remote working tools were part of their firm's long-term business continuity strategy.

In other words, over time most law firms were able to implement technology stacks that supported remote working since doing so was the only way to ensure continued operation. The up-front investment paid off, and according to the survey respondents, these technologies now help to protect their firms from the effects of another unplanned disruption.



Managing the Evolution

Historically, technology adoption has been an uphill battle in the legal industry. And while the pandemic certainly helped to set the stage for increased technology usage, it did not singlehandedly solve the technology adoption problem. Rather, it simply moved the bar forward faster than anyone could have predicted. There are hurdles to overcome, however, and change management can be difficult even under the best of circumstances.

Because of the technology implementation hurdles law firms face, one of the goals of this survey was to more fully understand how the technology transition was accomplished during the pandemic and what steps could be taken to help legal professionals with future change management. From the survey results we learned that while change management can sometimes be challenging, the right support can make all the difference. According to the survey respondents, one of the keys to the successful transition to new software typically involved support from the software provider with both the data migration and implementation of the software.

64%

of the survey respondents indicated that change management presented obstacles for their firms

Barriers to Change

As expected, the survey respondents reported that their firms encountered some bumps along the way when adopting new technologies. They shared that many different factors presented barriers to change and technology adoption, and contributed significantly to the change management issues that firms encountered.

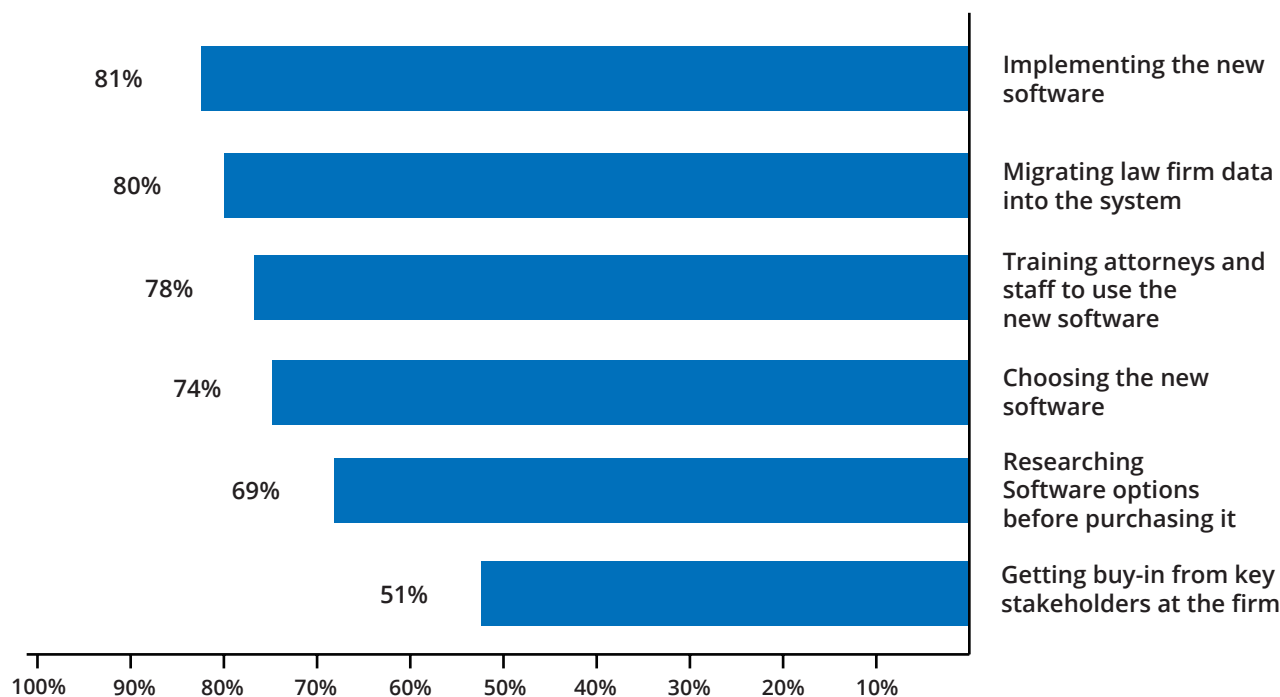
For starters, 64% of the survey respondents indicated that change management presented obstacles for their firms, ranging from slightly challenging to extremely challenging. When asked what prevented their firms from transitioning to new software, 78% of respondents shared that concerns about cost presented either a moderate or significant challenge. Other top challenges reported were concerns about: 1) the ease of software adoption (76%), 2) the lengthy implementation process (75%), 3) data migration (71%), 4) change management and buy-in (56%), and 5) security issues (49%).

Change is never easy, and trying to transition to new technology during a worldwide pandemic was no small feat. That being said, the pandemic was also a driver of change and provided firms with an unprecedented incentive to adapt, as you'll learn in the next section.

Evaluating and Implementing Technology

Given the many barriers to technology adoption cited by the legal professionals surveyed, it wasn't surprising to learn that the factors that reduced friction the most when transitioning to new software related to ease of use.

For example, according to the respondents, the top consideration that was either significantly or somewhat important when choosing new software for their firms was that the software is easy to use (98%). Others cited the ease of migrating firm data into the software (97%), that the software is easy to adopt into firm processes (97%), and the ease of training staff and lawyers to use the software (95%).



When it came to choosing and adopting new software into law firms, the respondents reported that the most challenging part of the process was implementing the new software, with 81% sharing that it was either a significant or moderate challenge. Other key challenges law firms faced when transitioning to new software included: migrating law firm data into the system (80%), training attorneys and staff to use the new software (78%), choosing the new software (74%), researching software options before purchasing it (69%), and getting buy-in from key stakeholders at the firm (51%).

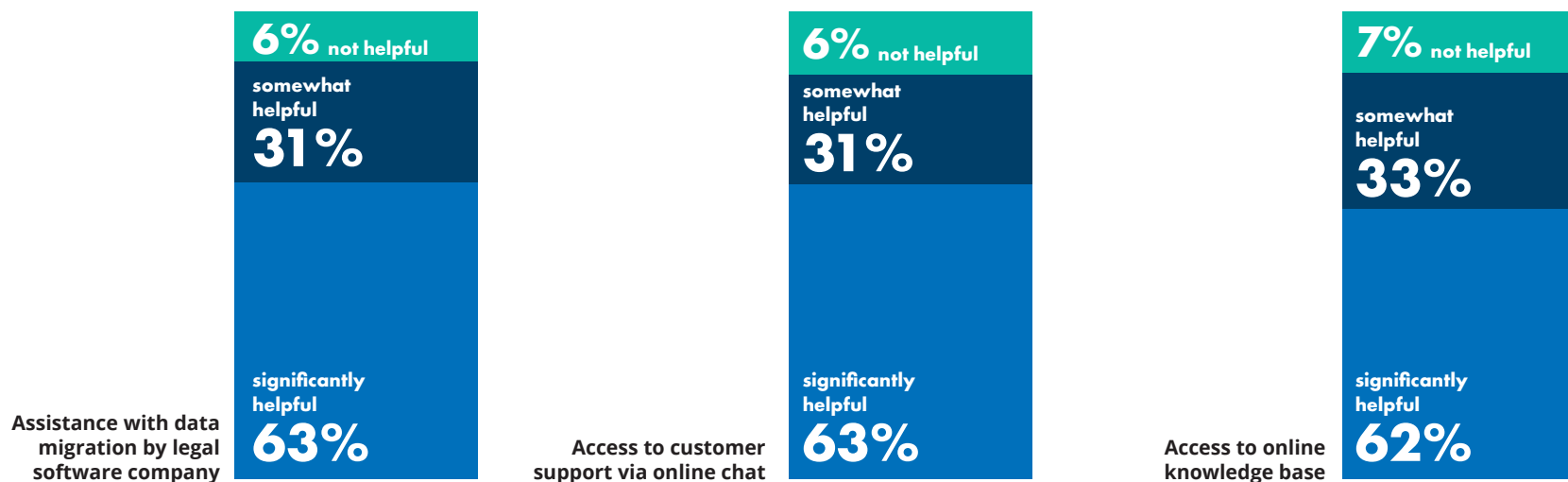
Partnering with Providers: Guided Implementation

Despite the change management challenges that law firms faced during the pandemic, many nevertheless adopted new software. Because we wanted to better understand what steps could be taken to assist law firms when implementing new software into their firm's workflows, we asked survey respondents to rate how legal software companies could help to ease the transition to new software.

For starters, they shared that assistance with data migration by the legal software company was significantly helpful when transitioning their firms to new software (63%). Another 31% found it to be somewhat helpful. Online chat was the next most helpful way that software companies could assist firms in implementing new software, with 63% finding that to be significantly helpful, and 31% finding it to be somewhat helpful. Next was assistance with software implementation by the legal software company, with 57% finding this to be significantly helpful while 37% shared that it was somewhat helpful.

Other helpful steps legal software companies can take to onboard new law firms that respondents said were somewhat or significantly helpful include: Live training sessions (88%), providing recorded training sessions that are accessible online 24/7 (92%), and access to an online knowledge base (93%).

The results show that change is possible, and as you'll discover below, not only did the technology that was implemented provide firms with built-in business resiliency, it also resulted in increased productivity, efficiency - and in many cases, profit and growth - ultimately setting firms up for long-term success.



The Impacts of Technology Adoption

In this section of the Report, we'll take a look at how law firms are using legal software to get work done in the face of uncertainty. The last few years have been challenging for all business owners, and as the survey respondents shared, the legal profession has not been immune.

However, as the survey results show, law firms were able to overcome many of the productivity and profitability obstacles encountered during the pandemic by implementing new processes into their firms, including the adoption of new software, that streamlined law firm operations and ensured resiliency in the face of uncertainty.



Increased Efficiency

Managing a busy law firm isn't easy - and it's even more difficult in the middle of a pandemic.

The day-to-day tasks involved in managing a successful law practice, which include tracking deadlines, staying on top of client communications, overseeing firm finances, and business development, can take up significant amounts of time. When law firms don't have processes in place that streamline law firm management, it can be difficult for lawyers to find the time to do what they do best: represent their clients.

As you'll see below, the survey respondents reported that as their law firms shifted to remote work, the adoption of legal software helped to alleviate friction by providing lawyers with the tools and functionalities needed to ensure that the business end of the practice operated smoothly and efficiently even when their firm's workforce was geographically dispersed.

The survey results showed that law firm efficiency is a challenge for 86% of law firms. However, we also learned from the survey respondents that with the right legal software, law firms ran more efficiently during the pandemic, whether firms were operating remotely or in-office. When select productivity features were included in the software that law firms adopted, key efficiency drivers could be utilized to streamline law firm processes. The software that was most effective in this regard included document management, automation, and collaboration tools along with communication tools such as secure client portals, text messaging, and in-firm chat apps.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

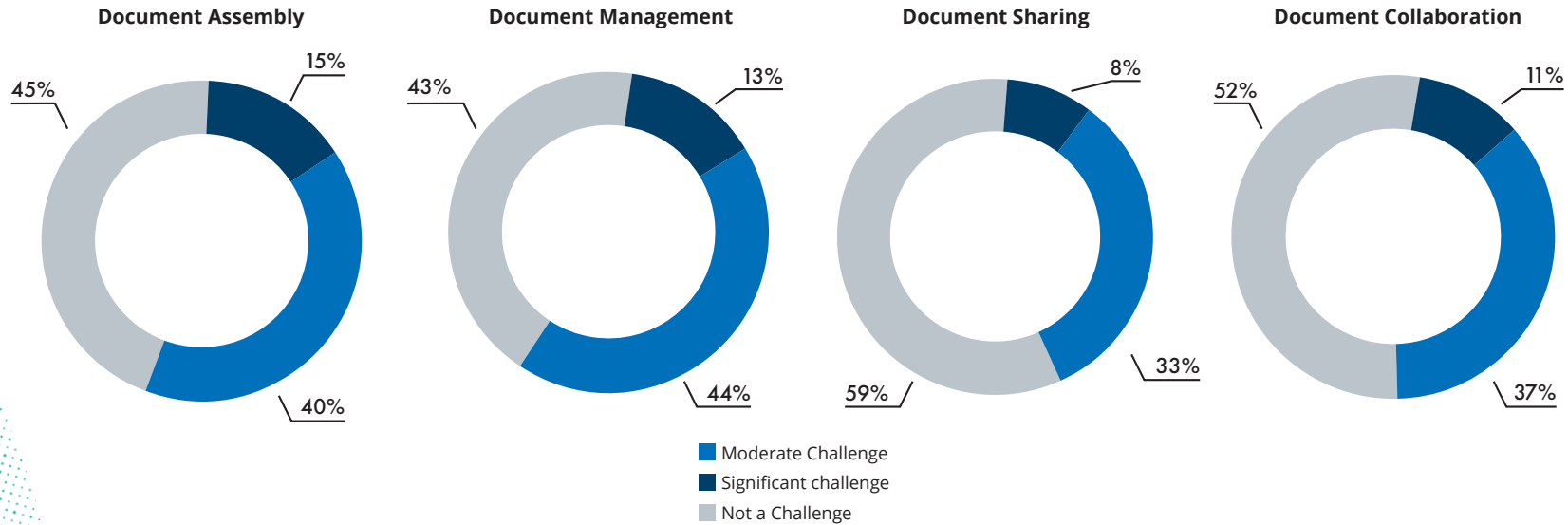
Document Management Tools

A top productivity hurdle that many lawyers face every day involves documents, both creating and managing them. One reason for this is that in recent years, courts in many jurisdictions have begun the transition to e-filing for court documents, and the pandemic only served to accelerate this trend. For that reason, many law firms had already started the transition to a paperless office before the pandemic, while others began this process once their firms shifted to remote work.

Digitizing documents necessarily requires investing in hardware and software designed to facilitate this process. That's where document management or law practice management software with built-in document management tools comes in. This type of software makes

it easy to store and quickly access law firm documents from any computer. From there, documents are easily accessible by law firm employees and clients to whom you've granted access, and digital pleadings can easily be e-filed with the courts as well.

Because document management can be problematic when law firms don't have effective tools in place to facilitate working with documents remotely, it's not surprising that the survey results showed that the majority of legal professionals (57%) reported that managing documents was a significant or moderate challenge for their firms. Document assembly came in next (55%), followed by document collaboration (48%), and document sharing (41%).



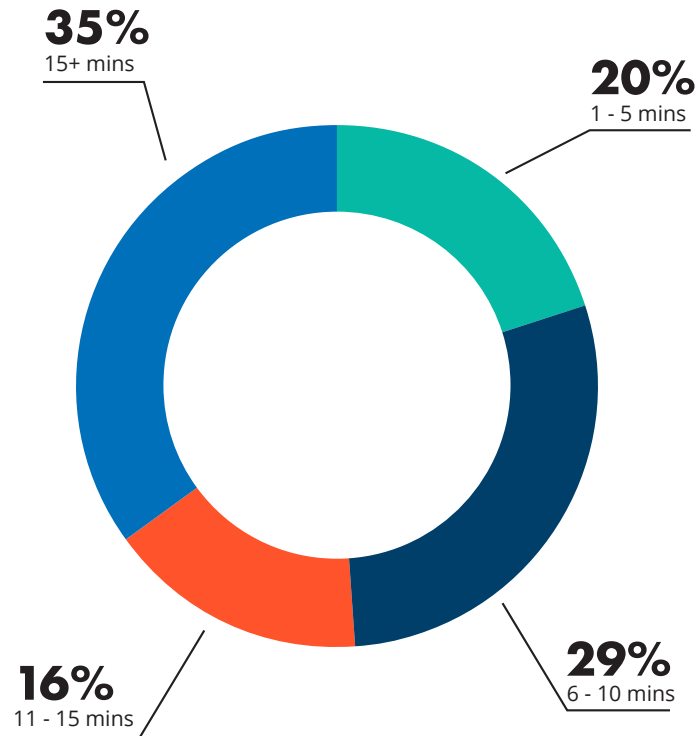
**Document management software
makes it somewhat or significantly
easier to locate documents?**

**94%
YES**

Given the increased need to digitize documents due to e-filing demands and dispersed workforces during the pandemic, that the majority of survey respondents (66%) shared that their firms now use software to manage their firm's documents was not unexpected.

Notably, of the firms that had document management software in place, the majority of legal professionals surveyed shared that it was a big time-saver.

Nearly all respondents whose firms used document management software (94%) reported that because of this type of software, it was somewhat or significantly easier to locate documents as a result.



How much time is saved every time a document is created from a template using document assembly software?

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Document Assembly

Of course, there are lots of other ways to increase efficiency when working with documents, including document assembly tools. With this software, document templates can be created by taking advantage of document automation features, thus reducing the time needed to create frequently-used documents. As a result, re-typing an entire document is no longer necessary; instead, all that needs to be done is to simply fill in the appropriate fields.

This process is simplified even further when document automation is built into law practice management software. Using this software, document creation is simple and streamlined, since relevant data, including case numbers, client information, party names, and necessary dates, are automatically populated into the document, saving time and increasing productivity.

In other words, document assembly software increases efficiency. Given that fact, it makes sense that according to the survey results, more than half of the respondents (54%) reported that their firms take advantage of this automation tool.

Of those respondents whose firms use document assembly software, 50% reported that their firms saved more than 10 minutes every time a document was created using a template. Nearly another third (29%) saved 5-10 minutes each time.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Document Sharing and Collaboration

How much easier is it to share documents now that your firm uses software with document sharing features?

94%
SIGNIFICANTLY OR SOMEWHAT EASIER

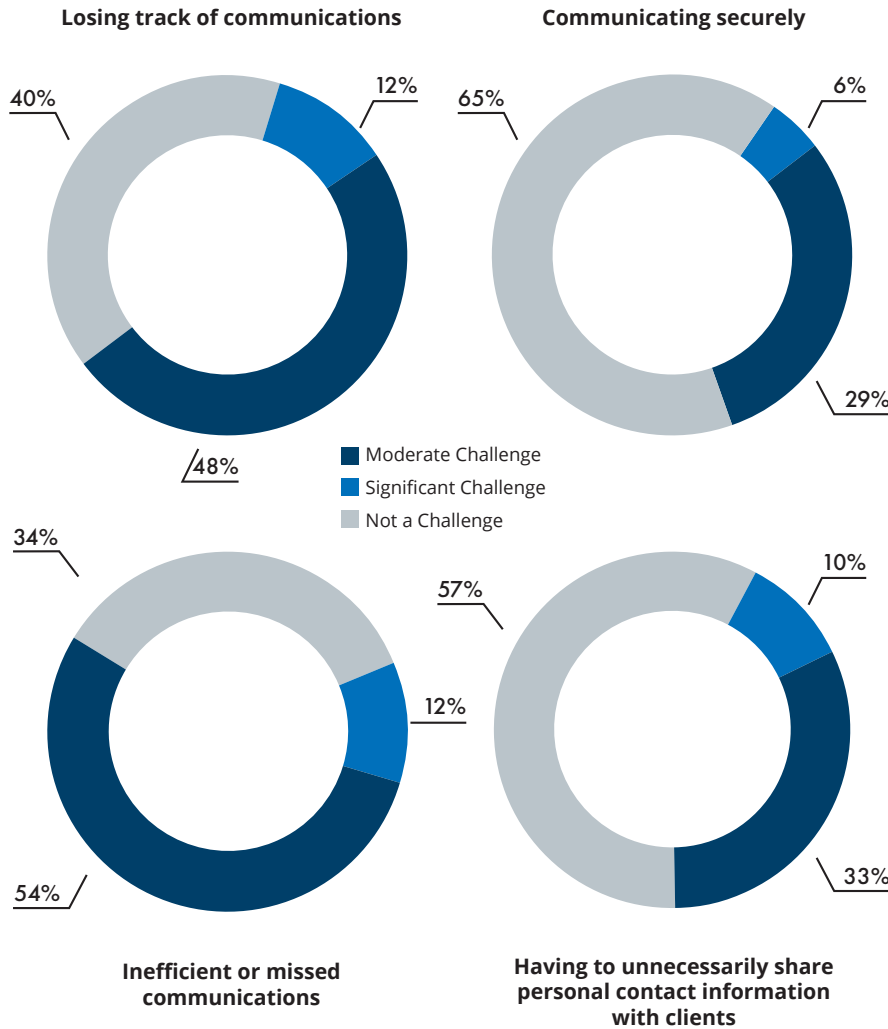
How much easier is it to collaborate on documents now that your firm uses this software?

92%
SIGNIFICANTLY OR SOMEWHAT EASIER

Another way that legal professionals can increase efficiency whether working remotely or in the office is by using software that facilitates document sharing and collaboration. These tools have been popular in law firms for years, and the survey results reflect this fact.

For example, the survey respondents reported that document sharing software is very common in law firms, with 79% indicating that their firms have this tool in place. Of those respondents, only 6% indicated that this software didn't make sharing documents any easier. The remaining 94% said it made sharing documents somewhat or significantly easier.

Additionally, more than half of respondents (52%) shared that their law firms used document collaboration software. The vast majority (92%) reported that using that software made it easier to collaborate, of which more than half (52%) shared that it was significantly easier.



INCREASED EFFICIENCY Collaboration Tools

Next, let's take a look at other types of collaboration and communication tools. These tools have taken on an increased significance throughout the pandemic now that many lawyers and law firm staff have worked remotely over the past year – and many continue to do so. For that reason, law firms have increasingly relied on online communication and collaboration tools when interacting with their teams and with law firm clients.

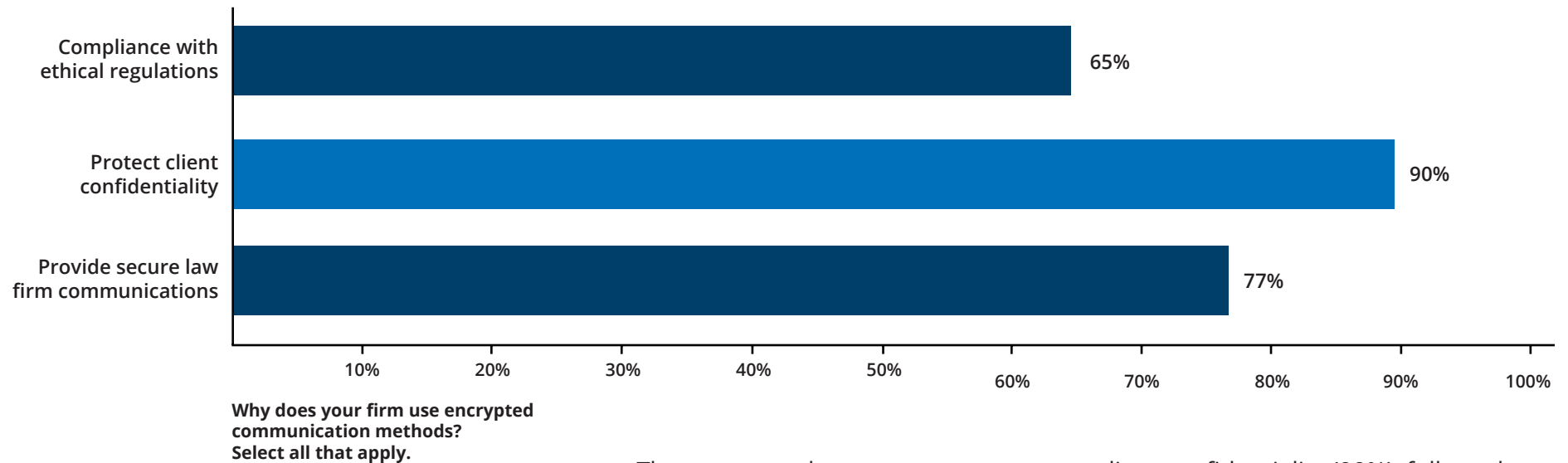
When it comes to collaboration, the survey respondents indicated that their firms encountered many different communication and collaboration hurdles, with 66% reporting that client communication was a challenge.

At the top of the list of hurdles encountered was inefficient or missed communications with 66% sharing that it was a moderate or significant challenge. Losing track of communications came in second (60%). For 42%, a key communication challenge was having to share personal contact information with clients (such as a personal cell phone number). Finally, for 36%, communicating securely was a challenge.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Secure Communication and Client Portals

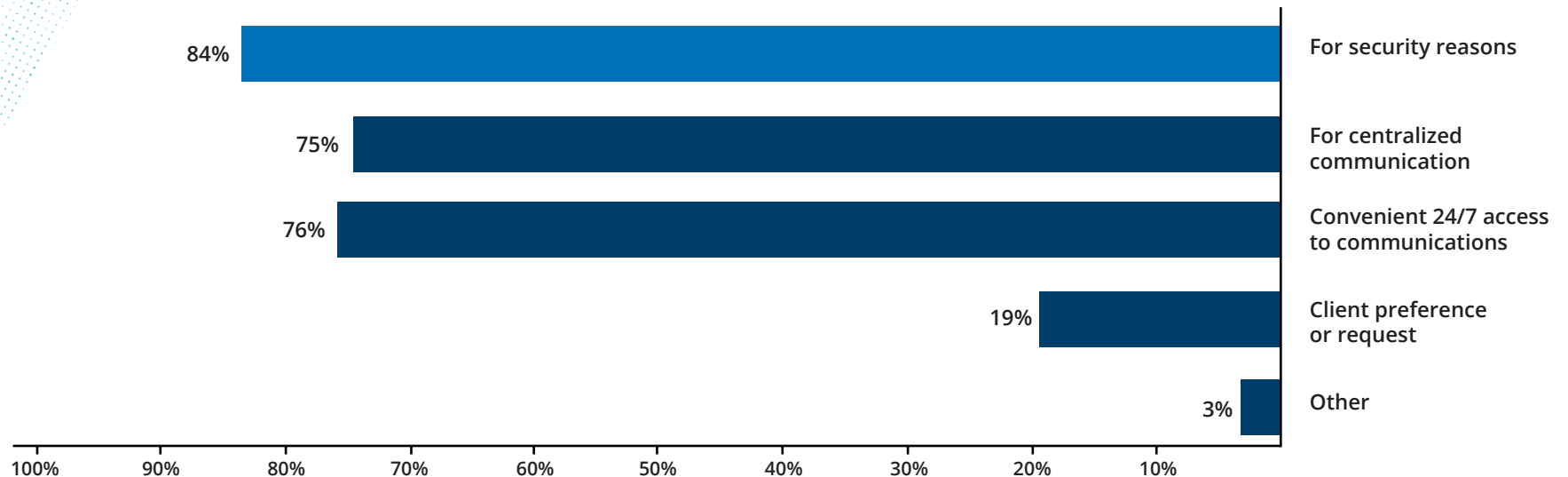
Survey respondents reported that for their teams to successfully work remotely, secure forms of communication were essential. That's why, according to nearly half of the respondents (49%), their firms used encrypted communications. However, the reasons for doing so varied.



The most popular reason was to protect client confidentiality (90%), followed by providing secure law firm communications (77%), and complying with ethical obligations (65%).

When respondents whose firms used secure communications tools were asked which tools their firms relied on, the top method chosen was online client portals, with 68% of survey respondents choosing this option. This was followed by encrypted email, used by only 29% of respondents' firms. This significantly lower number isn't surprising since encrypted email is often difficult to set up, whereas secure client portals tend to be much more user-friendly for both the clients and attorneys.

When it came to client portals, the top reason law firms chose this option for client communications was security, with 84% citing this as a top factor. Next up was the convenience of 24/7 access (76%), followed by centralized communication (75%), client preference or request (19%), and other (3%).



Because client portals centralize law firm communications in one location that is easily accessible by all parties 24/7, it should come as no surprise that using secure portals saves firms significant amounts of time. In fact, 14% of respondents shared that client portals saved their firms more than 10 hours each month. Another 19% saved 6-10 hours each month, while nearly a third (29%) saved 1-5 hours each month.

Of course, lawyers also rely on other methods for communicating with clients; this is especially so now that working from home has become commonplace. According to the survey results, the tools legal professionals used ran the gamut, from videoconferencing and fax to chat and text messaging. And not surprisingly, reliance on certain categories of communication increased quite a bit over the last year and a half compared to prior years.

For example, text messaging is on the rise. The majority (79%) of respondents reported that their firms used text messaging with clients. Notably, online text messaging tools are more popular with lawyers compared to texting via cell phones, with 55% using online texting compared to 45% using cell phones to text.

What kind of text messaging tools do lawyers in your firm use?

55%

**ONLINE TEXT
MESSAGING TOOL**

There were many reasons that lawyers chose online texting over cell phone texting, the most common of which was the ability to avoid sharing personal cell phone numbers with their clients (78%). Other reasons were that doing so provides a centralized location for client text messages (74%), text messages are associated with client matters (74%), and there's more control since it prevents intrusive communications (60%).

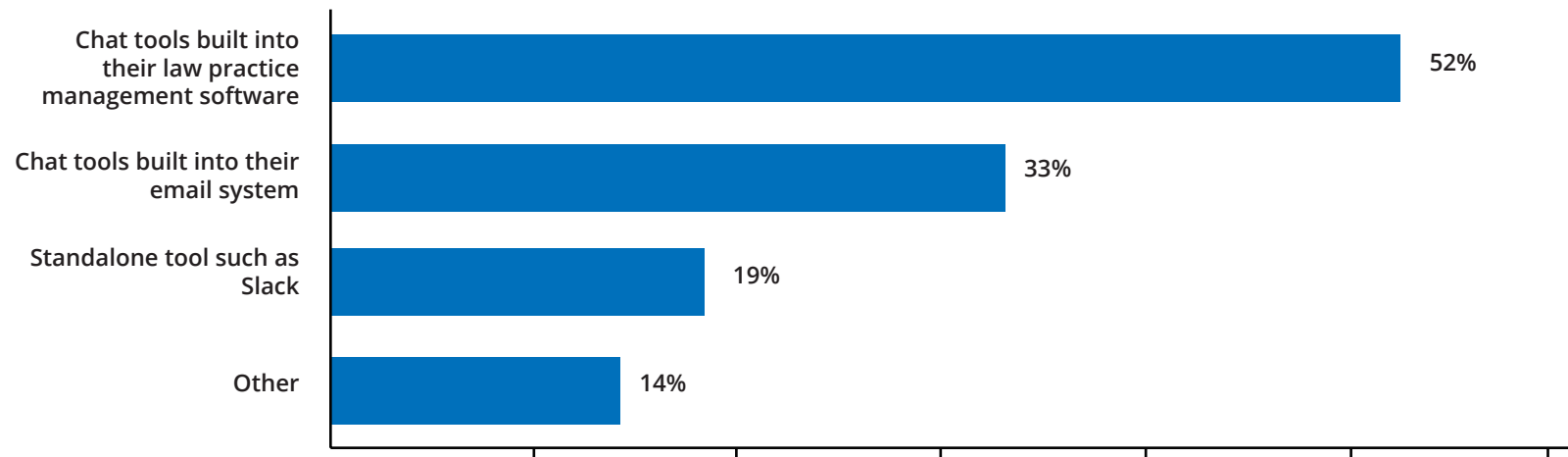
INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Internal Law Firm Communication

Of course, internal communication is just as important as external communication whether your firm's workforce is dispersed or is working from the office since your firm's employees need to be able to quickly and easily communicate with each other. As the results show, in 2021, email alone simply isn't sufficient; law firm employees need multiple ways to communicate and collaborate remotely to work effectively and efficiently. This is because some communications might warrant an email or a phone call, while others are simple enough that a quick message is all that's needed.

That's why law firms rely on a variety of ways to communicate online with other team members. Survey respondents reported that some of the key internal communication tools law firms are implementing include law firm direct messages or internal chat (oftentimes built into law practice management software), with the results showing that the majority of law firms (57%) now use internal chat tools. This trend is most likely driven by the social distancing requirements of the pandemic.

What type of internal chat tool does your firm use? Select all that apply.



Next, according to the survey results, more than half of the firms that used internal chat tools relied on chat tools built into their law practice management software (52%), followed by chat tools built into their email system (33%), a standalone tool such as Slack (19%), and some other type of chat tool (14%). Half of the respondents shared that internal chat tools saved their firms time each month.

Increased Law Firm Profit and Growth

Growth and profitability are top concerns for law firm leaders, as the survey results showed. According to the legal professionals surveyed, law firm profitability is a key challenge for 80% of their firms. Another 74% reported that law firm growth is a key challenge for their firms.

That being said, during the pandemic, the use of software that increased productivity, as discussed above, often had the result of helping to increase profit or stabilize revenues for some firms. According to the survey results, in 2020 60% of law firms' revenue stayed the same or increased. And, looking forward, the survey respondents felt good about the future, with more than half (59%) expecting their firms' revenue would increase in 2021.

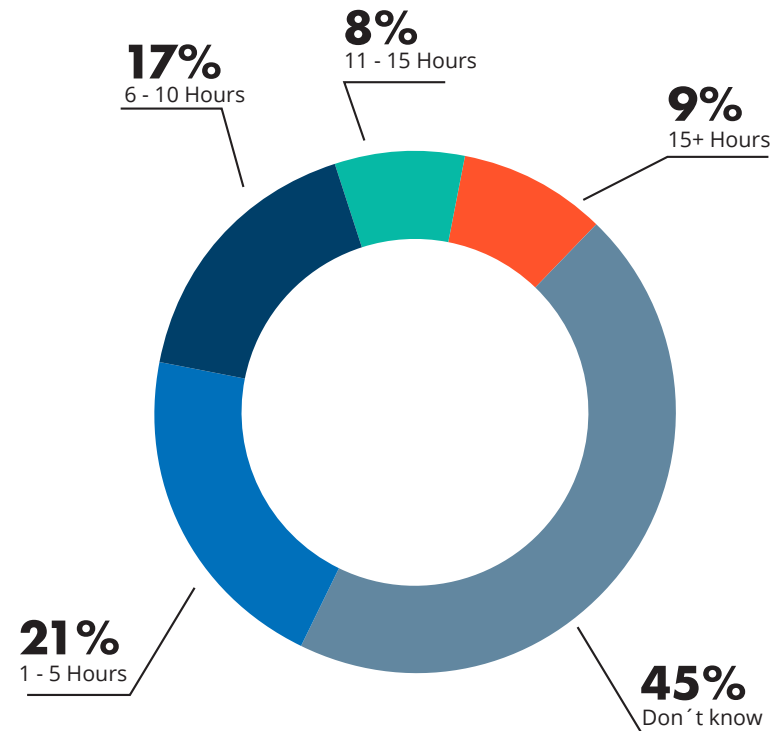
One of our goals with this survey was to better understand how newfound technology implementation impacted law firms. To gain more insight on technology adoption and its effects, respondents were asked about the revenue challenges their firms faced daily.

INCREASED LAW FIRM PROFIT AND GROWTH

Time-Tracking Tools

61% of survey respondents reported that capturing billable time was a challenge for their firms. One way law firms can increase billing efficiency is by simplifying the steps needed to convert billable activities into billable time on an invoice. Oftentimes, the billing software that law firms use can accomplish this goal in any number of ways. For example, with built-in passive time tracking tools, all it takes is the click of a button to convert events or tasks into billable time. Another legal billing software timesaver is the ability to take advantage of default billing activity descriptions when entering billable time. After all, the easier it is for your attorneys to create a time entry, the more likely they are to do it.

Given the benefits of time-tracking software and the fact that most firms prioritize capturing billable time, it's not surprising that the survey results show that the vast majority of law firms use time-tracking software (81%).



How much additional time is captured each month per lawyer because lawyers in your firm use software with time-tracking features?

For those law firms, the software investment has paid off, and the additional time captured each month per lawyer is significant.

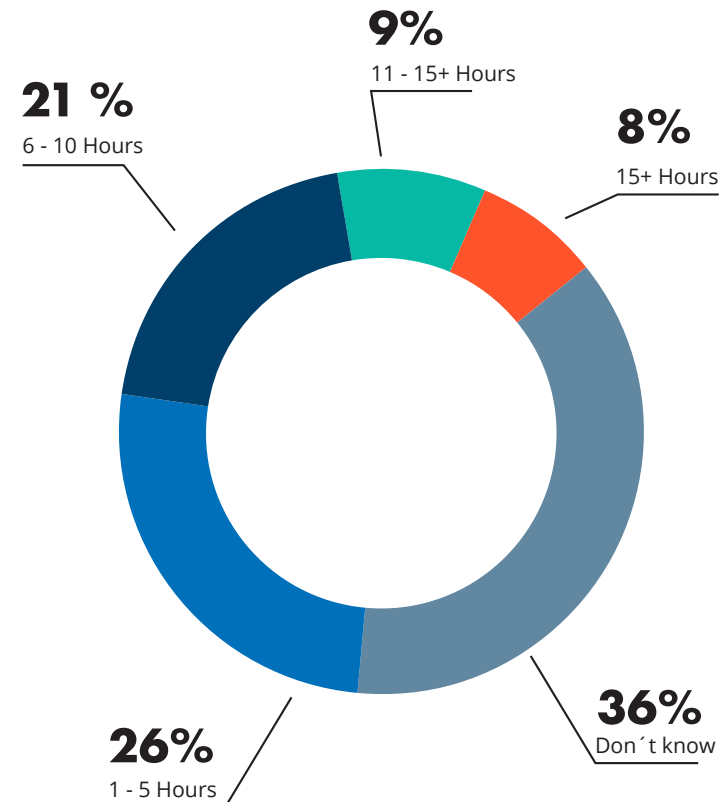
INCREASED LAW FIRM PROFIT AND GROWTH

Legal Billing Software

Other top billing struggles identified by the survey are 1) time-consuming invoice creation (52%), and 2) difficulties with reconciling trust accounts (47%). Given these statistics, it only makes sense that in the face of uncertainty, a key priority for law firms has been to invest in efficient legal billing software that allows clients to be remotely invoiced.

One notable trend in 2021 was the increase in the use of cloud-based, contactless billing and payment processing systems, with 13% of respondents indicating that their firms invested in this type of software as a direct result of the pandemic's effects. This is because law firms need to get paid, regardless of where their employees are working, and this problem is easily solved when online billing and payment processing tools are put in place. By doing so, it no longer matters where employees are located since all invoices and payments are easily accessible online and can be processed from any location.

Given all of the benefits offered by legal billing software with invoicing features, it only makes sense that, as the survey results showed, the vast majority of law firms - 87% - now use this type of software. Again, as was the case with time-tracking software, more than half of firms using this software saved time every month.



How much time does your firm save each month by using software with invoicing features?

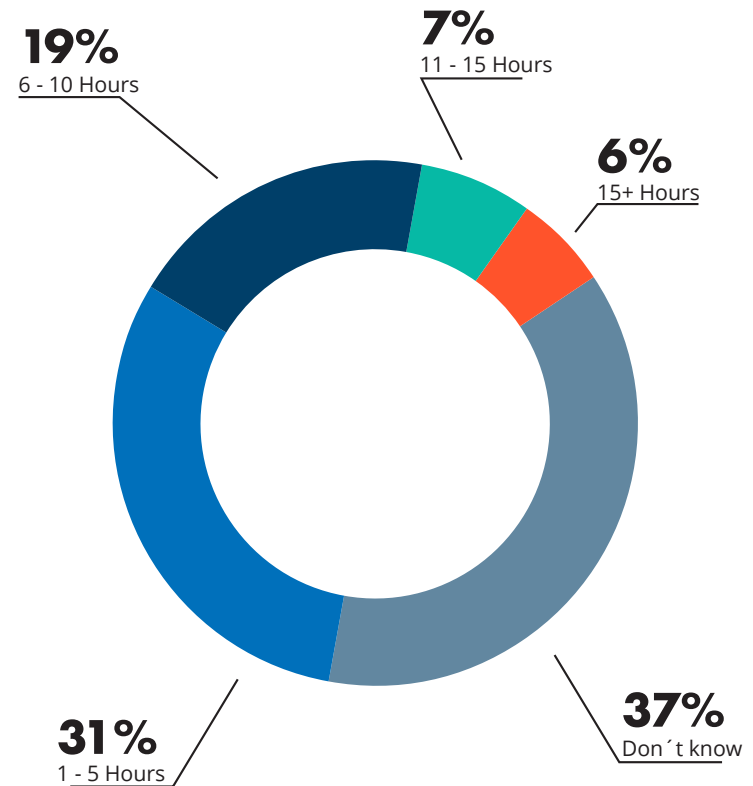
INCREASED LAW FIRM PROFIT AND GROWTH

Online Payment Processing Software

According to the survey respondents, getting paid was a challenge for 73% of their firms.

That's why the ability to make online payments has become all the more important in recent years due to the social distancing requirements of the pandemic, and as discussed above, touchless payment processes have been key to keeping firms profitable during the pandemic. For that reason, when respondents were asked if their firms used online payment processing software, the vast majority - 77% - replied in the affirmative.

Next, respondents were asked how much time was saved using online payment processing tools to accept payments. The majority shared that their firms did indeed save time, but the amount of time saved varied.



How much time is saved each month using online payment processing software?

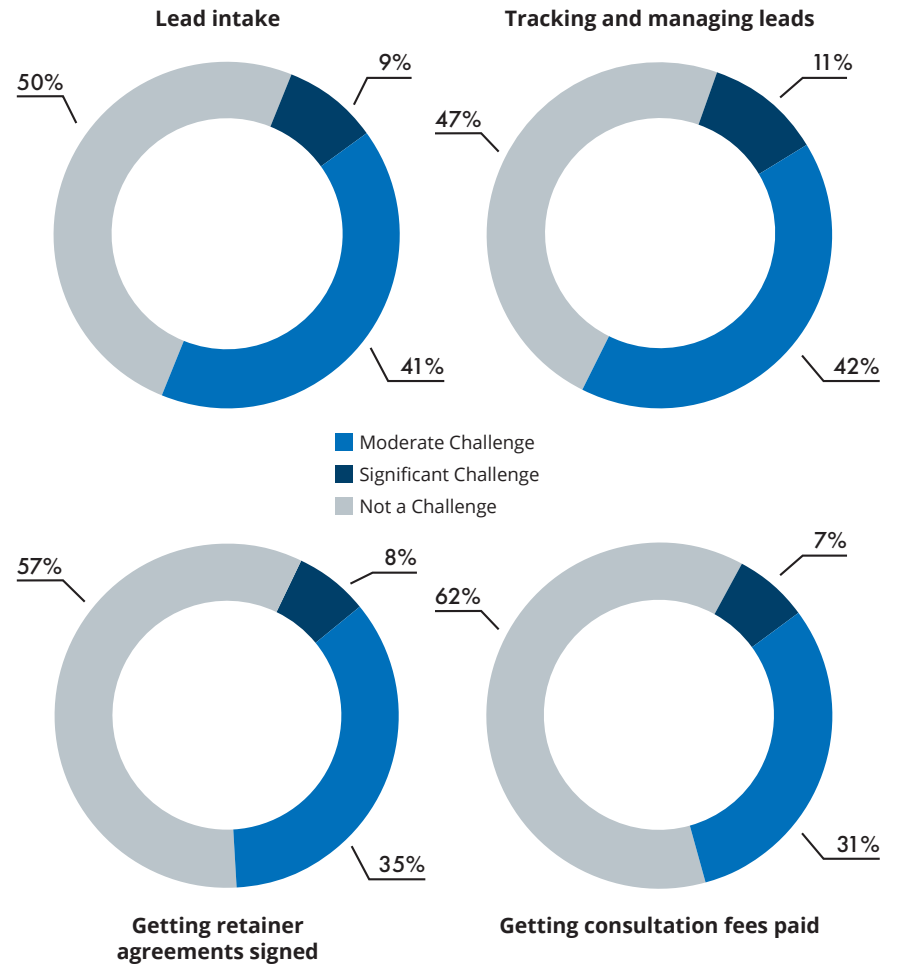
They were also asked how much additional money is collected by their firms each month due to using online payment processing software. More than half (61%) of respondents shared that their firms collected more money because of online payment processing software. 36% collected "somewhat more money," while 25% collected "significantly more money."

INCREASED LAW FIRM PROFIT AND GROWTH

Lead Management Tools

Lead management tools play an important part in maintaining law firm profitability by helping lawyers make informed decisions about their online lead pipeline. With these tools, law firms can measure the effectiveness of their online marketing using data that includes lead source and conversion rate details.

To better understand how lawyers use these tools, one of the questions asked in the survey was how challenging law firms found different aspects of lead intake and lead management. As the survey results show, law firms face several hurdles when it comes to the lead management process.



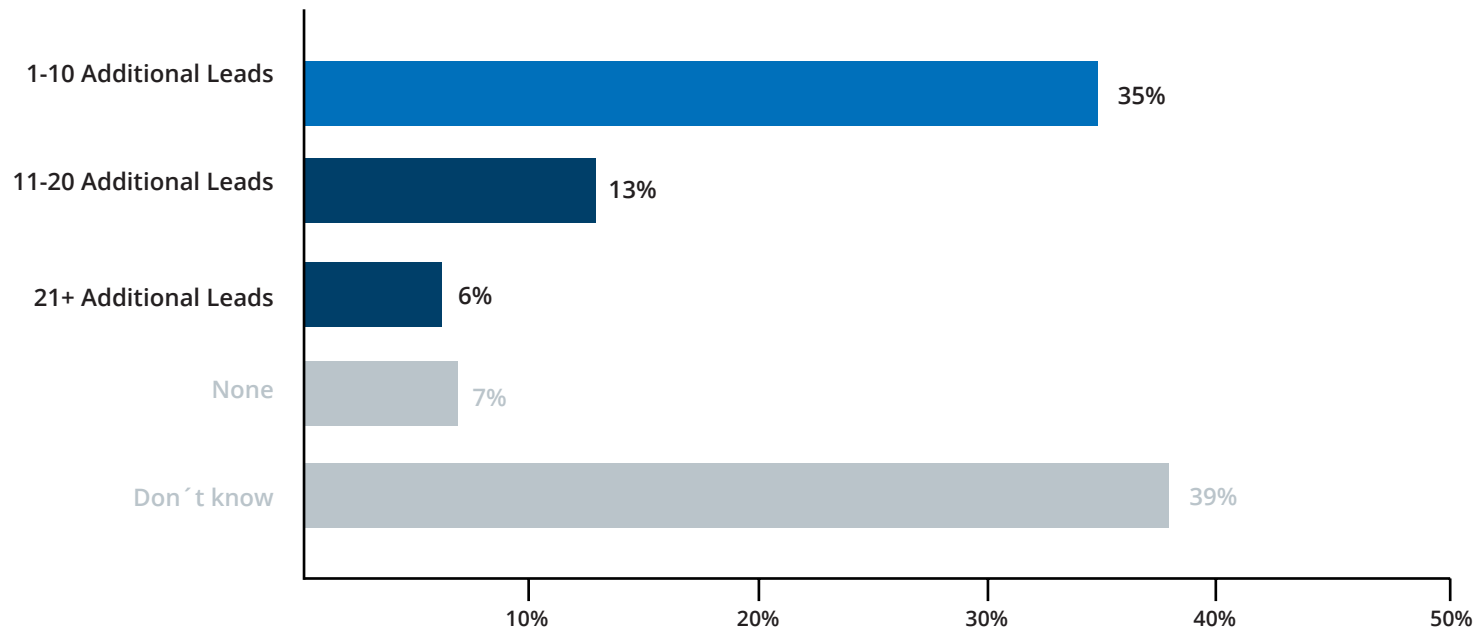
68% of the legal professionals surveyed reported that getting clients was a challenge for their firms.

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Online Lead Intake Tools

When asked about lead intake, 50% of respondents shared that it was challenging.

However, despite the fact that law firms admittedly face significant obstacles with lead intake, less than half of the legal professionals surveyed reported that their law firms used online lead intake forms (42%). Of note, however, is that as the chart below shows, the firms that used online legal intake forms captured significantly more leads compared to manual lead intake.



How many more leads does your firm capture per month compared to manual lead intake?

Notably, more than half of lawyers surveyed (54%) reported that their firms captured increased leads using online intake forms, with 13% reporting that their firms captured 11-20 more leads each month using online intake and 6% sharing that their firms captured 21 or more leads each month.

So for those firms, online intake forms increased their firm's lead pipeline by simplifying client intake and making it easy for potential clients to provide contact information at any time, day or night - something that has been particularly impactful during the pandemic.

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Lead Management Software

Law firms are also increasingly utilizing lead management tools to track leads from prospect to client. This type of software enables firms to better understand new leads and ultimately convert them into paying clients.

When asked, more than half of the legal professionals surveyed, 54%, admitted that tracking and managing leads was a challenge for their firm. But, according to the survey results, firms that used lead management tools to streamline the entire lead process reported that they were a valuable time-saver.

When asked about the lead management tools that their firms used, 53% of the legal professionals surveyed indicated that their firms used lead intake management software. 20% reported that their firms saved 6 hours or more each month as a result. Another 32% saved between 1-5 hours each month.

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eSignature Tools

The survey results showed that another time-saver that survey respondents' firms increasingly relied on in recent years was eSignature since this tool reduces the costly delays and health risks of getting a wet signature in person — particularly during pandemic shutdowns. eSignature software makes it easy to securely share and collaborate on documents with clients, co-counsel, experts, and more by streamlining the process of preparing, signing, and countersigning routine legal documents.

When respondents were asked about eSignature adoption, 43% shared that getting retainer agreements signed was a challenge. So it's no wonder that the overwhelming majority - 79% - reported that their firms used eSignature tools. Of those firms, 67% saved time as a result, and 28% saved 6 or more hours each month.

67%

**saved time as a result of using
eSignature tools**

INCREASED LAW FIRM PROFIT AND GROWTH**Online Payments for Consultation Fees**

And last, but not least, 38% of respondents shared that getting paid for consultations was a challenge. When asked whether their firms accepted consultation fees via credit card payments, the vast majority indicated that their firms did (72%). Of those firms, the turnaround time for receiving consultation fees was reduced for 50% of the respondents, with 26% reporting that the turnaround time was reduced by 2-5 days and 13% sharing that it was reduced by more than 5 days.

Accepting online credit card payments at the very start of a case in the consultation phase, right through to the final stage of a matter is something that more and more law firms are doing. And the reason is simple: it's convenient for the client and is a time-saving process that pays off in the long run and results in more payments collected from clients.

Conclusion

The practice of law is always changing. Courts hand down new decisions, laws are revised or re-written entirely, new regulations are enacted, and technological advancements occur that necessarily affect the way that lawyers work and law firms operate. But when it comes to impactful change, the last few years have been unique, and the effects of the pandemic on the legal industry have been far-reaching, and likely long-lasting.

One of the top findings from this survey was that the pandemic was the tipping point needed to greatly accelerate law firm technology adoption. And notably, although many law firm leaders expected change management to be difficult - and this fear prevented them from implementing new technologies into their firms in the past - incorporating new software into their firms during the pandemic was much easier than expected. And their efforts often resulted in increased productivity and profitability.

No matter how you look at it, the pandemic had - and continues to have - a significant impact on the legal profession and the practice of law. Some of the effects were welcome, including technology and change adoption, while others were less so, not the least of which was the unexpected stress and disruption it caused. While we're not yet on the other side of this once-in-a-lifetime event, the light at the end of the tunnel is at least visible now, and there's no better time to reflect on the lessons learned.

At this stage of the game, it's clear that remote work is here to stay in the short term, and will most likely become commonplace in the long term. Because of the pandemic, many firms now have the necessary technology in place that enables remote working, ensuring that resilience is built into their firms for the long term. No matter what happens down the road, their firms will be fully operational despite unforeseen circumstances, and they're better prepared for the future, whatever it may bring.