White Paper

5 Benefits of Project Management Software

How Project Management Heals Pain Points

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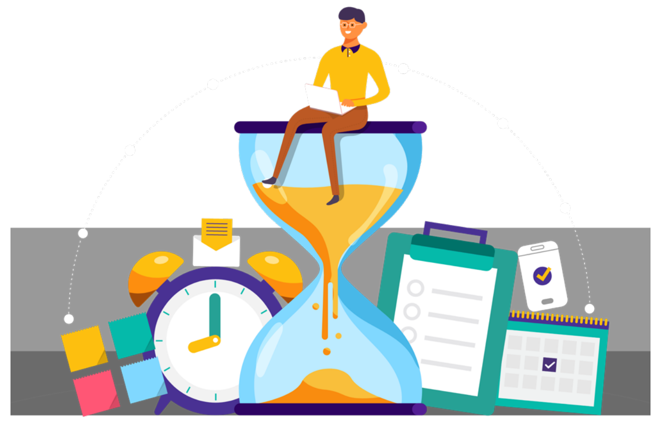
Project management boasts major benefits for team organization, including time management, project progress monitoring, reporting, and task management. Legal teams are now being asked to excel in all of these areas, which makes applying project management to your legal department a no brainer.

There are many project management methodologies that you or members of your team might be familiar with or prefer, including methods like Lean, Six Sigma, Agile, Scrum, or Critical Path Method **(CPM)**. For the purposes of this white paper, we're going to focus on simple, generic project management methodologies, however, you can apply this thinking to any system of project management that you like.

Throughout this white paper, we will consider how project management can be applied to legal operations. Many of the benefits of using project management come in repetitive processes like contract creation, negotiation, and post-signature management. Litigation processes in which you're managing timelines, documents, and many



other items relevant to a case. Along with recurring projects like audits, licensing/state registrations, IP reviews, and compliance reviews can also be eased utilizing project management practices.

Team Organization | 1

Project management relies on each team member understanding what they are responsible for and how it plays into the overall project. Since legal teams are service departments, there's a consistent flow of work coming in and going out at all times. Your "Project" might not be a singular item you're working on, but rather an overall workflow that you're managing over time. What does this look like?

1. Assignees – everyone should know what they are responsible for and what they are not.

2. The "Right" person – this relies on work being assigned to a person who knows how to complete a task or has the time and resources to learn it. Additionally, assigning to the right person ensures that work is doled out fairly to the team and some team members aren't being burned out while others are bored.

3. Dependencies – team members will have to rely on each other through different processes. Regardless, if they are working on a contract or case, their reports (we cover this later) should reflect the overall function and attitude of the department.

Time Management | 2

Many in-house attorneys move away from firms to escape the 6-minute time tracking increments, but that doesn't mean that all time management should be thrown out the window. In-house attorneys who don't manage their time well may end up working even more hours. The goal in time management is to maintain productivity while not focusing on 6-minute increments.

A time management system helps team members develop the understanding of what is urgent and what is not, along with any items that need to be completed in order to move forward with other elements of the project. One legal example of this is getting approvals before sending the contract for review from the external party. How can you apply this?

1. Due Dates – create due dates to let team members know when something must be completed. This can be based on an SLA that you want to hit for your internal customers, based on the type of work being assigned, or based on quarterly or annual goals to name a few.

2. Priorities – setting priorities for team members or others involved in your work helps make sure the most important work is done on time. Whether you're setting priorities for a team member or asking approvers to respond within 24 hours, clearly communicating expectations and priorities is a critical part of time management

3. Flexibility – however you choose to communicate time management, you need to establish a process to be flexible. We have all been on a call or in a meeting where every priority changes at the drop of a hat – it's important to be able to adjust as you go so your team has a clear path forward in times of turbulence.

4. Time Investment Awareness – as in-house counsel, while you aren't tracking your time as diligently as in firms, it's very important that you understand where your time is being spent; whether that's in contracts, litigation, business support, or administrative tasks.

Project Progress Monitoring | 3

A major tenant of project management is knowing where you are in your progress at any given time. Who are you waiting on? Is a deadline/due date going to be missed? Who's completing items faster than expected – can they pick up any slack? Have any issues been raised? Many highly capable attorneys keep this information in their head which, while impressive, doesn't allow them to fulfill their full potential on legal matters. Finding a central location for these details to be housed frees them up to:

1. Only be part of meetings where their legal skills are required.

2. Focus on other areas of specialty.

3. See the bottleneck in projects.

How can you do this?

There are lots of ways to monitor progress. The easiest way is to invest in technology that is designed to track this for you. Interim options if you're not prepared to get a tool are shared spreadsheets in Google or SharePoint, a shared document with statuses and responsibilities, or a dedicated team member (typically a legal ops professional, paralegal, or assistant)

who maintains communications and details of progress amongst the team.

Reporting | 4

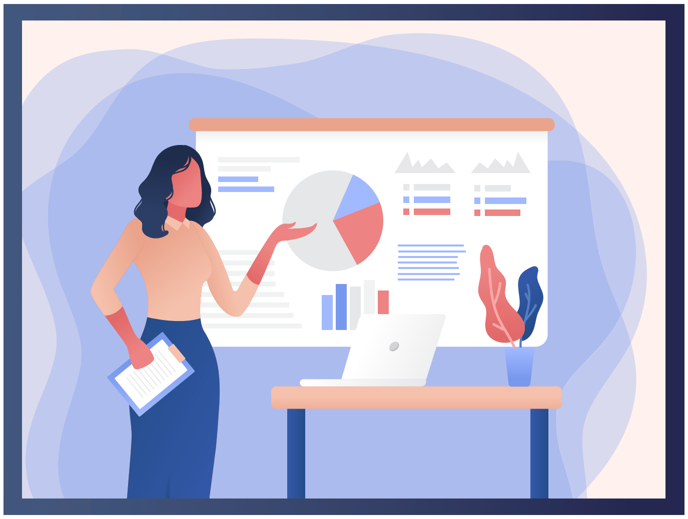
One of the the most significant values of project management is the ability to measure and report on your work and to prove the value of your team. When building a project management system, consider **what data you want to have in your reports** and set yourself up for success in your tracking. Remember, when it comes to the accuracy of your reporting, garbage in, garbage out!

Let's go back to our legal team example: because legal teams are not direct revenue generating departments, they must prove their value-added. **Reports give a snapshot of workflow**, where improvements can be made, and where your processes are working.

When determining what reports you need for your legal team, consider if these questions are relevant to your leadership and internal customers: How have you improved turn-around times? How much contract value has your department closed? How are you managing inside/outside resources and costs? What is your monthly contract volume? **Reporting should provide a high-level overview** that offers the critical data the project generates in a simple, easy-to-use format.

Breaking Up Tasks | 5

When approaching legal operations through the project management lens, breaking up a big task into multiple tasks or due dates can be very useful. For example, you might have a case to litigate. Approaching it as one item is too overwhelming and is not specific



enough to let the individual contributors know what you need from them and why. Breaking this up into the individual matters of various documents, depositions, etc., allows you to assign each matter to an individual user and track the due date for that item separately. If you're working alone, you have a more organized "to-do list" that leads to one final goal.

Another way a legal team might break up tasks is when managing acquisitions. One **Bigfork customer uses ALOE** like this to manage not only the many legal elements of the acquisition, but also communicate with their IT, Operations, and Site Managers so they know there are new tasks coming for them once the documents are signed.

When selecting your project management system, make sure it helps organize your team, manage your time, track your progress, improve reporting, and simplify your to-do list.

Bigfork Technologies

Bigfork Tech's legal automation software, ALOE, is the only fully customizable contract lifecycle management and project management workflow solution that you will actually use.

Why are we the leaders in workflow automation? Because we have more than 50 years of combined business and legal technology experience working for Fortune 500 companies, law firms, technology companies, government agencies, and nonprofits. Our legal operations software is proved through trial and error in many different settings over many years.

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