5 Project Management Tips for Law Firms

Attorneys have to carefully juggle a number of various tasks throughout the day, from advising clients on legal concerns to discussing legal proceedings and issues with colleagues.

All these tasks are accompanied by the need to manage the costs, time, scope, and resources involved in completing legal matters. And with the growing client demand for transparency, efficiency, and accountability, keeping projects on track and on budget requires strategy.

In this article, we'll look at five tips you can easily incorporate into your law practice to increase efficiency.

What is project management for law firms?

According to the [International Institute of Legal Project Management (IILPM)](#), legal project management is the "application of project management principles and practices to enhance the delivery of legal services."

This is the activity of strategically structuring and organizing processes and resources by applying specific knowledge, skills, methodologies, and tools. It's an important aspect of running a legal practice as it ensures the project scope and results are in line with business goals.

The IILPM introduces a four-phase framework of matter management:

- **Defining the project**, including collecting information about the client's business and industry, discussing their needs and expectations, agreeing upon project deliverables and billing arrangements, and discussing project scope, time, cost, and potential risks
- **Planning the project**, including project budgeting, phases, tasks, timeline, and milestones

- **Project execution**, including assigning the right tasks to the right lawyers, managing and monitoring performance, and providing objective feedback
- **Closing the project**, including evaluating project outcomes against the agreed scope, exchanging feedback with the client, identifying the areas that need improvement, and using that data to provide for cumulative learning

Project management tips for law firms

1. Keep detailed logs of conversations with the client

You should clearly discuss key issues with your clients, such as their specific needs and expectations, the project scope, and the billing method. Not only does this allow you to agree upon important terms, such as working on fixed fees or an hourly-based billing arrangement, but it also provides the foundation of your project management.

Keeping detailed notes of requirements, pain points, expectations, and arrangements will:

- Provide the left/right parameters for what work you'll be conducting for your client
- Help you establish a clear timeline for tasks
- Keep other members of your team informed

Another point to consider? If you fail to comply with your client's requirements and expectations, you risk losing their trust. And that can easily lead to the loss of a client.

2. Avoid rushing through planning

Identifying a detailed project scope in discussion with the client is an essential aspect of successful project management. It ensures the correct identification of requirements, allocation of resources, assigning of tasks, and their proper execution. This should include the following steps:

Define project objectives and processes
Clearly articulate the objectives that correspond to your client's desired

project outcomes and decide on the processes that will best suit the particular matter.

Create a timeline and set your project milestones
Define time frames for your project and determine individual milestones along with interim objectives. Using the task planning features included in a good [legal time and billing software](#) can facilitate this process by allowing you to outline your tasks and specify the time of their execution. It also allows you to set billable hours limits.

Plan the project budget carefully
A [budget](#) is important to any business endeavor, legal or otherwise. But for your budget to be effective, you have to take into account all foreseeable and unforeseeable expenses.

Having finished your project planning, review the scope along with the project timeline and budget with your client. Explain the process and procedure to ensure that you're on the same page. This will save you from any misunderstandings and confusion during the course of project delivery.

3. Streamline project execution with the right project management tools

The right [project management solution](#) can facilitate your project delivery by automating repetitive manual tasks, helping you move toward a paperless practice, improving productivity, and offering greater transparency across your law firm. The implementation of dedicated software will also help you avoid human error, maintain compliance, and enhance your security.

With the right project management software tools in place, your firm can enjoy all of the following benefits.

Keep track of time
A law firm time tracking software helps you record every minute worked, so you can budget more effectively, invoice accurately, and stay profitable.

Leverage mobile technology
The right software can also allow you to [capture time and expenses on the go,](#) even when you don't have a reliable internet connection. This prevents

your attorneys and staff from missing hours worked while traveling or working from home and helps you invoice more effectively.

Measure your progress and stay on track

Closely monitoring your progress will allow you to avoid "scope creep" and adjust accordingly. By using time tracking and budget analytics tools, you can keep an eye on your project budget and ensure that your matters remain profitable.

Optimize invoicing and billing to get paid faster

With automated invoices and billing, you can get bills out faster with batch billing and flexible invoice templates. This will improve transparency so that clients never question an invoice.

Evaluate project results and learn your lessons

In-depth reporting and analytics empower you with valuable insights into your performance. Use the data to identify your efficiency bottlenecks and address them as you turn to future projects.

4. Avoid multitasking when possible

Research shows that switching between tasks could lead to a [40% loss in productivity](#), so try to minimize multitasking.

And if you do find yourself needing to switch between multiple tasks, using a dedicated time tracking software can help. Tools like TimeSolv allow timekeepers to automatically pause time tracking for the rest of the tasks on their list.

5. Make it easy for your clients to get information

Providing [a client portal](#) keeps your clients updated at all times without the need to call the office. Access to a client portal empowers your clients to check on important information like:

- Status updates
- Details of work in progress
- Work completed
- The balance of their trust account
- Invoices

- Payment history

Not only will your clients be happier with your services, but you'll also save time by fielding fewer calls and emails from clients looking for the latest updates from your firm.

Stay on top of projects with TimeSolv

Managing legal matters is complicated, especially when piled on top of your day-to-day operations, but with the right tools at your disposal, an intentional approach to project management can help you boost your productivity and profitability.

In addition to industry-leading time tracking and billing features, TimeSolv includes project management, document management, budgeting, and analytics capabilities to help your law firm plan and complete matters profitably and efficiently. To see the difference TimeSolv can make for your practice, [start your free trial](#) today.