

MITR/TECH

AUTOMATING WORKFLOWS FOR LEGAL OPERATIONS

Learn the key benefits to expect from adopting the right Cloud-based workflow automation solution for your organization.

TAP WorkflowAutomation

OVERVIEW:

The Urgency of Transformation

Across every kind of enterprise, processes are ripe for transformation via workflow automation. That's particularly evident in legal firms and corporate legal departments, where the everyday challenges they confront include...

- The dangers of risk exposure and liability
- The burdens of corporate, regulatory and statutory compliance, with penalties for mistakes and delays
- The costs of repetitive, high-frequency manual processes with multiple steps, which engender errors
- The need for scalability to meet higher-volume demands without attendant increases in costs or mistakes
- The demand for transparency, centralization and collaboration, particularly as an organization grows

Manual workflows are rife with opportunities for delays, inefficiencies and errors. Any time a document needs to be routed or searched for, or signed by hand, or whenever an email has to be sent to chase down approvals, or a meeting convened, there are potential pitfalls involved.

The processes that Legal Operations teams address are confusing to the uninitiated, or are paper-based or Excel-based, have a high failure or incompleteness rate, or are non-standard and lack controls.

By automating legal workflows, these processes can be extraordinarily improved, ensuring they're faster, more precise and less prone to errors and delays. That usually translates into immediate ROI, as well as into better client service and improved employee morale.



A COMPETITIVE NECESSITY

Just as importantly, workflow automation is becoming a competitive mandate everywhere, even for law firms and legal departments. As Justin Hectus, a two-time International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) Distinguished Peer Award winner and Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at Keesal, Young & Logan explained it:

“Change is coming for us all, and those of us who are able to pivot quickly and adapt are going to do very well. Businesses, and I include law firms in that, that choose to maintain the status quo are going to be marginalized, will struggle and perhaps even go out of business.”

Another key consideration? As clients adopt workflow automation, they're increasingly expecting their internal legal departments and outside law firms to follow suit.

What a Workflow Automation Platform should deliver:

A workflow automation software solution ideally addresses several areas:

- It provides a secure yet collaborative workspace/environment to build workflows
- It supplies self-service forms for users to access these workflows
- It has a central repository of existing workflows and documents, as well as data on their utilization
- It delivers process visibility/transparency for tracking workflows
- It provides performance/auditing data on these processes
- It integrates as needed with electronic signatures.
- Its dashboards fit seamlessly with the users' legacy platforms and infrastructure

WHAT'S COMPELLING Legal Workflow Automation?

What are the concerns that keep – or should keep – Legal Operations managers up at night? For one thing, many existing workflow approaches – a reliance on Excel being the most prevalent – mean many legal professionals within the same enterprise operate only in silos, dealing with specific problems while segregated and sealed off from collaboration.

This increases costs as users work independently, without any cohesive structure for collaboration and elimination of redundancies. For Legal Operations teams, this (and any potential liabilities it can create) just one cause for concern.

Legal Operations has responsibility for setting up and managing a wide range of processes for a wide range of groups. Some of those?

- **Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs):** In many companies, different locations often require different NDAs for different situations and different classes of contractors/employees. It's important to use the right template for each jurisdiction, in the right language. This often also requires the costly involvement of staff lawyers to check over what should be a fairly rote process.
- **Document signing,** including electronic signatures.
- **Matter management:** Any sizable company is likely to be involved in dozens of lawsuits or potential litigations at any given time, each with its own filing deadlines and complex workflows.
- **Other high-stakes workflows:** IP licensing and patent applications, e-vendor billing onboarding, project management, Board of Directors approval, contract management and loan agreements for product evaluations.
- **Disclosures and comments** contained in mandated financial reporting.

Some of the pitfalls and headaches that loom when dealing with these processes?

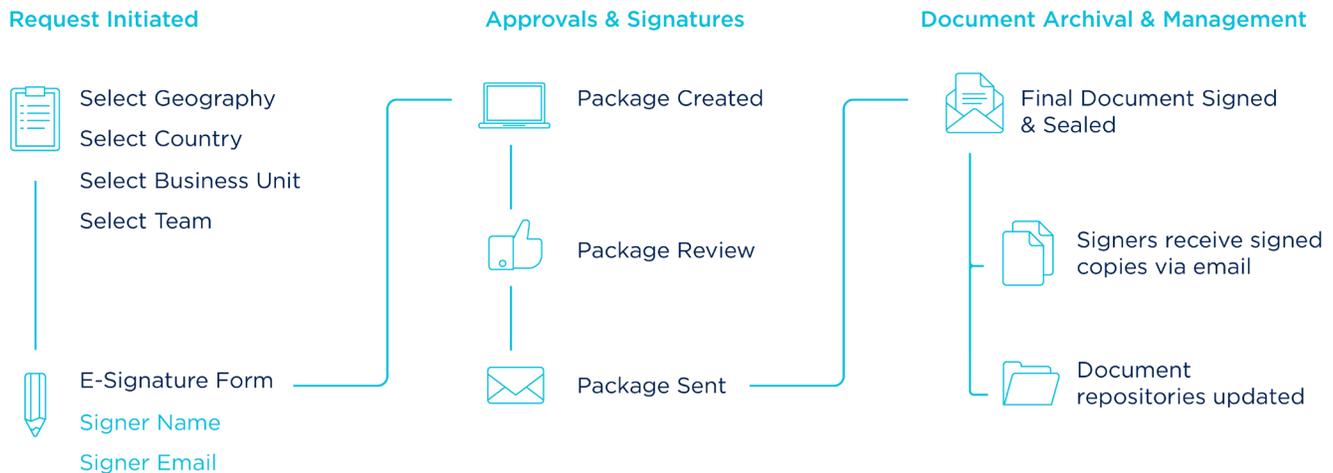
- **Maintaining compliance** in properly completing all aspects of each process, especially if executed by personnel who don't know the implications and consequences of an error, or simply aren't familiar with the required steps and paperwork.
- **Human errors** caused by fallible memory, lack of knowledge about proper protocols, and confusing (and often lost) paper forms.
- **Potential penalties** for submitting the wrong form (or one that contains errors) in legal processes can be positively draconian.
- **Lost assets** such as mislaid documents, especially without centralized backup and secure storage of those assets.

A CASE STUDY IN COMPLEXITY: An NDA Workflow

NDA's are a good illustration of how workflow automation can transform a process for the better. NDAs, especially in a mid-to-large-sized enterprise, are usually high frequency/low risk tasks, and most users probably perceive the process behind them as being relatively simple.

But as the flow chart below demonstrates, there are multiple steps involved in processing an NDA. If done manually, using paper-based processes, this workflow would be tedious, time-consuming, and full of opportunities for error.

Self-Service NDA Workflow



- Automation of this process **eliminates the potential for errors and delays** at every step in the process, effectively compressing the time needed to accomplish an NDA.
- Since automation now allows self-service access on the part of users and can allow standardization and quality control across the entire enterprise, it also **eliminates the need to have lawyers involved** in review of each NDA, or otherwise involved in costly engagements with the process.
- A 2011 study by LegalFutures found that taking instructions and drafting one of three types of common legal document manually required an average of 46 minutes. By manually producing just three documents a week, a senior attorney could be wasting **\$1,350 per month** in lost billable time versus using automation.

THE BENEFITS of Legal Automation

Workflow automation gives Legal Operations a cohesive framework to oversee and control risk, and centralizing workflows provide an upgrade that's of real consequence to corporate governance, among its many other benefits:

- **Centralization and process standardization** now work hand-in-hand, providing a framework for control and tracking.
- **Core data alignment from a single source of truth**, making it far easier for employees anywhere to locate, manage, share and report on casework.
- **Efficiency is increased**, now that users always follow a predefined work path.
- **Verifiable execution** of each process, with near-complete transparency into any workflow.
- **Higher completion rates** (process success) for even simple workflows.
- **Clarity, visibility and reportability** for every process.
- **Scalability** - with workflow automation, if the process is correctly established in workflow, it can run as well one thousand times as it does once.
- **Self-service productivity boosts**; by using automated notifications to remove the job of chasing down colleagues to sign off or provide information, major productivity upticks can happen.
- **Minimization of costly attorney engagement** from mundane/repetitive tasks.
- **More precise data inputs**, since the most accurate source is often the individual served by the workflow or the employee closest to the process, whose performance is judged by its outcome; giving them self-service access to the workflow drives input accuracy.
- **Compliance rates increase** as liabilities are minimized. One simple example: an automated workflow won't forget a deadline, so late penalties can be lowered or eliminated.
- **Improved auditing** at a level sufficient for evidentiary purposes.
- **End-to-end process support**, as we replace the limited process knowledge that each individual participant along the chain may (or may not!) possess.
- **Seamless ease of integration** with the right SaaS workflow automation platform, eliminating the need for costly rip-and-replace installation or for consulting with IT or developers.
- **Improved client relations/retention** thanks to increased agility, accuracy and reduced costs, as well as potential integration with client-side systems.

“UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES” of Legal Automation

Connie Brenton of the legal technology advocacy group Corporate Legal Operations Consortium (CLOC) first used the phrase “unintended consequences” about the effects of workflow automation. They’re the very real yet often unforeseen benefits that have arisen from introducing it in legal operations environments:

- **Positive morale:** Legal firms that have deployed workflow automation have seen employees, especially Millennials, acquire a more positive view of the organization, as younger attorneys feel they’re being supported by their firms and made part of a collaborative team.
- **Stronger client & customer ties:** Teams have been able to establish stronger ties with clients and customers, once repetitive tasks have been automated, removing burdens on everyone involved. More examples of this have included more attorney/client partnering on pro bono work and greater transparency in budgeting and forecasting thanks to automation tools, both helping with client retention.
- **Job creation:** This has happened as departments have moved tech-heavy jobs in-house to customize tech tools to fit specific needs. By creating in-house positions, creation and deployment of these solutions is accelerated, equaling better collaborations with clients, employees and end users.
- **Higher-quality work:** A 2006 review of healthcare providers who had installed workflow automation found that not only were there expected benefits like time savings, reductions in staff stress and improvements in morale, but the actual quality of care being given to patients had improved.



EXPEDITING ROI

Here's a model of how quickly the right workflow automation solution can deliver payback for a law firm or LegalOps department.

Based on data from customers using our TAP Workflow Automation solution, the average cost of completing an NDA in a corporate setting was determined to be \$129.81 in terms of employee time.

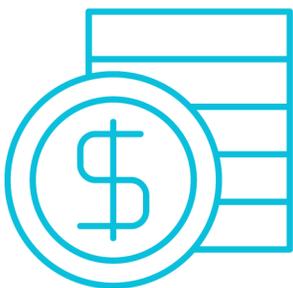
Based on that, workflow automation delivered these efficiencies:



Employee time devoted to workflows was **reduced by 75%, saving \$97.36** every time an NDA is initiated.



ROI climbs with the number of NDAs; at 2,000 annually, the ROI is **over 300%**.



If a company executes 1,000 NDAs annually - about four per business day - it would see an **ROI of just over 100%** on its investment in the platform.



Another key metric? NDA completion time is cut 95%, meaning the average NDA is completed **20 times faster** when the workflow is automated.

PLATFORM BENCHMARKS

for Legal Workflow Automation

There are key deliverables you should look for from any prospective workflow automation platform that's intended for legal operations needs. It should...

- **Be integrated** with widely-used electronic signature solutions such as Adobe Sign and DocuSign.
- **Use a graphical IU** that allows easy mapping and design of workflows.
- **Be customizable** to meet your exact requirements.
- **Provide simplicity of operation** for administrators and end users, with a minimal learning curve.
- **Require little or no involvement** from IT or developers.
- **Utilize a Cloud-based/SaaS architecture** for ease of adoption and quick scalability.
- **Be device-agnostic**, accessible from any device, including smartphones and tablets.
- **Deliver transparency** across multiple platforms, and the ability to pull in data from a range of ERP, CRM, and electronic signature software applications.
- **Allow centralization** of all information on workflows held in a single data repository.
- **Provide high visibility** into each individual workflow, as well as groupings and aggregates of workflows, for authorized users; this can be provided through reports and dashboard.
- **Enable auditing**, with secure tracking of changes.
- **Provide out-of-the-box integrations** that are ready to use immediately, both with your own systems and with third party platforms or tools.
- **Supply security** to protect existing processes, preventing them from being hijacked or inadvertently damaged.



SUMMARY:

the Automation Imperative

Legal workflows are among the most important processes in any enterprise, and assuring their efficiency and accuracy is critical. As compliance challenges multiply, and grow in potential impact, especially as an organization becomes larger and more diverse, the need to make these processes as efficient and error-free as possible becomes even more important...even as the challenges involved in doing so get more complex.

Moreover, it's not just internal stakeholders and managers who are expecting legal operations departments to execute flawlessly, but clients as well.

Workflow automation is the best possible means of meeting all these mandates.

It allows LegalOps processes to be accomplished in a fraction of the time as traditional processes, but with much higher precision and cost-effectiveness, reducing the potential for compliance and liability issues. And, as we've seen, offering immediate ROI benefits.

In the end, law firms and legal departments are going to be held to many of the same standards for efficiency, agility and performance that other businesses are measured by – either by their clients, or by the competitive pressures of the marketplace.

Adopting workflow automation, it could be argued, is even an **ethical mandate** for legal professionals, who are charged with providing clients the best possible legal representation. Workflow automation allows them to combine the best of what they already do with technological means that enable them to provide those services at an even more capable level. As time goes on, clients will demand they make that evolution...or else.



ABOUT MITRATECH

Mitratech is a proven global technology partner for corporate legal professionals who seek out and maximize opportunities to raise productivity, control expense and mitigate risk by deepening organizational alignment, increasing visibility and spurring collaboration across the enterprise.

With Mitratech's proven portfolio of end-to-end solutions, operational best practices permeate the enterprise, standardizing processes and accelerating time-to-value. By unlocking every opportunity to drive progress and improve outcomes, we're helping legal teams rise to the challenge of serving the evolving needs of the modern, dynamic enterprise.

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