



**Law Firms – Every Minute Counts**  
The Complete Tech Playbook to  
Unlock More Billable Time

2024 Edition



## Introduction

How much does your firm lose to inefficiency?

**Data highlights a concerning trend: the average partner leaves nearly £155,830 (\$190,000) on the table each year.**

The relationship between efficiency and billable hours is clear. If an invoice shows 15 hours, any extra effort in that case is unpaid, wasting your team's talents and eroding profits.

The good news? Technology helps address these challenges. From robust case management platforms and eDisclosure applications to accurate time-tracking tools, technology provides a pathway to enhanced efficiency. These tools free solicitors from administrative headaches and inefficient workflows so they can focus on generating revenue.

## Why AAG?

You might be wondering what gives us the authority to offer guidance on how to leverage technology in your firm.

Of course, you know your firm best. Our mission is to provide you with the best IT support and cyber security services, so we specialise in partnering with law firms. That's why we don't adhere to a 'one-size-fits-all' model for the firms we work with.

Our security-led and strategic approach enables us to understand the intricacies of your firm's operations, and suggest the technology that aligns with your needs and priorities.

We've spent 14 years in the industry, and helped over 150 businesses with their IT needs – from security to digital transformation.

With that in mind, we've put this guide together to help your firm take its first step towards successful digital transformation.

PROUDLY INDEPENDENT  
IN BUSINESS FOR 14 YEARS



## The Tech Mindset

**Technology is a necessary part of modern business, and a powerful asset for those who can maximise its potential. The legal sector is starting to realise this – 95% of firms have found that implementing technology has made them more responsive to client needs. But traditionalist attitudes are still a barrier to many firms unlocking their true billing potential.**

Viewing technology as a strategic investment rather than an expense is the first step to changing that attitude. Firms that adopt a tech-forward approach avoid many of the pitfalls that impact billable time and are well-positioned to tackle future challenges.

The term 'digital transformation' often raises concerns about complexity and high costs. Notably, **73% of such projects** fail or don't deliver the expected business value.

Aside from a lack of planning or defined goals, one of the main reasons why digital transformation projects fail is the company culture. If the senior leadership team has the attitude of doing 'what's always worked', they'll see any change as disruptive, rather than an investment in productivity and the future health of the firm.

Changing this mindset is key. It won't guarantee success (you still need a clear vision and plan) but your firm will be better prepared for the digital transformation journey.

### Here's how to achieve it:

**Initiate Dialogues:** Begin conversations within your firm about the benefits of technological adoption and integration. Clear communication is the foundation for change.

**Offer Training and Resources:** **41% of UK lawyers are older than 44**, a demographic that is typically less tech-literate. Training and resources help everyone understand the benefits of new tech and ensure they can use it effectively.

**Prioritise Strategic Planning:** This is key. You need to know the inefficiencies affecting your firm to implement the right tools to help your team. A strategic approach ensures aligned goals and efficient execution.

### How this affects billable time:

The right technology increases efficiency, which in turn means solicitors can focus more time on billable tasks. Changing a firm's mindset to a tech-focused one means opening new opportunities for productivity and profitability.



## Tech Mindset Comparison

Variables	Tech as Investment	Tech as Cost
Perspective	Long-term growth	Short-term expenditure
ROI	High (over time)	Limited or negative
Adoption Approach	Strategic & proactive	Reactive & sporadic
Training & Development	Comprehensive	Minimal or none
Client Satisfaction	Enhanced by efficiency	Potentially compromised
Operational Efficiency	Optimised	Often stagnant
Future Readiness	Prepared & adaptable	Resistant to change



## All-In-One vs. Multiple Tools

### More isn't always better – especially when considering digital tools.

There are plenty of options that promise to streamline workflows, remove headaches and save time. But, using a different tool or piece of software for every workflow – or worse, using multiple tools for the same thing (like Slack and Teams for messaging) – can hamper productivity and risk errors and miscommunication.

One of the primary pitfalls of tool overload are the costs associated with it. On top of the subscription fees are the hidden costs, like time spent on training staff for different platforms and the lost hours due to inefficiencies.

Consolidation is one way to deal with this. Firms should seek out software that integrates key capabilities like case management, time tracking, document management, client portals, and matter management.

Cloud-based tools, in particular, offer a number of advantages. They provide access from any location with an internet connection, offering flexibility for solicitors. For instance, they could access work files from home if necessary.

### But tools are only useful in the right hands...

While the Microsoft Suite is designed to make work easier for firms, it's crucial to note that the success of any tool or platform hinges on its proper utilisation. The goal is to ensure that the team is not only familiar with the tool's functionalities but also adept at leveraging them for maximum efficiency. Regardless of the chosen platform, its effectiveness is determined by the firm's commitment to understanding, adapting, and integrating it into their daily operations.

### How this impacts billable time:

Technology is a powerful asset, but only if all elements integrate and support each other. Using multiple tools and software from different suppliers risks complications and needless inefficiencies – this in turn impacts your billable hours. Whichever solution you choose, ensure that all elements of your infrastructure can integrate without complication.



# Cyber Security: A Non-Negotiable in Modern Law

## 78% of the top 100 law firms in the UK are concerned about cyber threats.

Cyber threats pose a significant risk to businesses across all sectors, and law firms are no exception. The legal sector is an attractive target for cyber criminals – 75% of surveyed UK law firms suffered an attack in 2020.

### The Growing Threat Landscape

The cost of a data breach goes beyond the immediate financial implications. Firms face potential reputational damage, loss of client trust, and legal repercussions. Regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) mean law firms have a legal obligation to protect client data and ensure compliance, risking heavy fines if they break the rules.

## Phishing: The Most Common Threat

Phishing is used by cyber criminals to trick victims into providing sensitive information, like passwords or credit card numbers, or download malicious software that allows for further attacks. It's the most common form of cyber crime – an estimated **3.4 billion phishing emails are sent every day**.

Where it used to be easy to spot a phishing email – full of grammatical errors and from suspicious-looking addresses – hackers today are far better at disguising their intentions.

**Traditional Phishing:** Generic attacks where hackers send unsolicited emails in mass, hoping that a small percentage of recipients fall for the scam.

**Spear Phishing:** Targeted attacks directed at specific individuals or companies. The attacker gathers information about the target to make the scam more convincing.

**Whaling:** A form of spear phishing that specifically targets senior executives and other high-profile targets within an organisation, aiming for financial gains or sensitive information.

**Smishing:** Phishing carried out via SMS. The attacker sends fraudulent SMS messages to get the victim to provide sensitive information or download malware.

**Vishing:** Voice phishing where attackers use phone calls to trick victims into giving away sensitive information.

The contents of these emails can vary, but we've listed some common themes:

- **CEO Fraud:** An email appearing to come from the senior partner or CEO of the firm, urging immediate action on a matter.
- **Invoice Scams:** Emails that look like they're from a trusted vendor, asking for payment on an attached invoice.
- **Account Verification:** Messages prompting users to 'verify' their account details or 'reset' their password.
- **Tax Scams:** Emails around tax return time, appearing to be from tax authorities, asking for personal information.

## What Happens When It Goes Wrong?

**Imagine a scenario at “LegalTrust LLP,” a mid-sized law firm. Sarah, a junior associate, receives an email late one evening. The email appears to be from the senior partner, urging her to open an attached document and provide feedback immediately.**

The financial and reputational damage is staggering, and the path to recovery is uncertain.

One of AAG’s clients suffered a data breach from a Russian hacking group. The client was only concerned something was wrong when they couldn’t access a couple of files – but the hackers gained access to the systems about 3-4 weeks earlier. Even with anti-virus software (that protected against an initial attack), the hackers circumvented security through a remote network.

This same group was responsible for a recent attack on an American energy pipeline that caused the loss of 1.2 million barrels of oil a day. As such, national security agencies from 2 countries were involved as AAG tracked the source of the issue.

Our engineers discovered and addressed the source of the breach and secured all remaining data. In under 9 hours, we could report the violation as closed to the security agencies. The client didn’t pay any ransom, and only lost 2 days of business.

This time, the hackers weren’t able to complete their aim. But this does highlight the dangers all businesses face, no matter how small. Find out more information about this incident [here](#).



## SIEM and Network Security Monitoring

Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) systems play a crucial role in a law firm's cyber security strategy. SIEM systems collect and analyse activity from various resources across an organisation, providing real-time analysis of security alerts. By monitoring network security, firms can detect suspicious activities early, potentially preventing breaches or minimising their impact.

### Cyber Security Checklist for Law Firms:

**Note:** Note: This checklist is a guide and not a replacement for robust cyber security operations.

- Regular staff training on the latest cyber threats and protocols.
- Implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for all systems.
- Regular data backups and ensure encrypted storage.
- Conduct frequent cybersecurity audits and reviews.
- Ensure compliance with regulations like GDPR.
- Use advanced security tools like SIEM systems, intrusion detection systems, and firewalls.
- Encrypt sensitive client data both in transit and at rest.
- Stay updated on emerging threats and adapt cyber security measures accordingly.

Law firms handling private client information must prioritise cyber security, ensuring that they remain compliant and that client data is protected at all times.

### How this impacts billable time:

The consequences of a data breach are severe. Downtime and financial damage are the most immediate, followed by the risk of reputational damage and a potential fine from regulators. Ensuring your firm has robust cyber security measures in place minimises the risk of attack and allows your team to focus on billable tasks.



## The Cloud Revolution in Law

Almost everyone uses the cloud in some form, whether it's using a streaming service or storing photos with iCloud. It's revolutionised the way we use the internet, and has opened up new opportunities for businesses to work and collaborate.

One benefit is enhanced security. Today's security demands mean on-premises systems can struggle, whereas cloud platforms have the capital to invest in cutting-edge defences. These platforms invest heavily in encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regular security audits, ensuring that sensitive data remains protected.

### Benefits of Cloud Computing for Law Firms:

Cloud computing offers law firms several distinct advantages:

- **Accessibility:** Solicitors can access crucial documents and data from anywhere, ensuring work isn't confined to the office.
- **Scalability:** Firms can adjust their resources based on demand without incurring significant infrastructure costs.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Firms transition from capital expenditure models to operational expenditure models, paying only for the resources they use.
- **Security:** Advanced encryption, multi-factor authentication, and continuous security audits protect sensitive legal data.
- **Compliance:** Cloud providers often adhere to global compliance standards, ensuring that law firms meet regulatory requirements.

### How this impacts billable time:

The cloud allows for a huge range of services to be provided over the internet, from storage to applications. Solicitors can access these services from anywhere with an internet connection, ensuring productivity without location constraints.

## Best Current Tools for Law Firms

### Case Management Software

Case management systems hold all your case information, tasks, and documents in one unified hub. This gives you easy and instant access to crucial data, saving you from trawling through several sources to find information.

Examples:



### Data Rooms

The rise of eDisclosure and increasingly online operations means that firms need secure digital storage for case documents and other information. Digital data rooms allow for efficient access by authorised personnel to view, edit and collaborate on case work. As these are stored virtually, lawyers can view and work anywhere, increasing efficiency and their billable time.

Examples:



### CRM Systems

CRM systems are crucial for client interaction and retention. They often include messaging systems for contacting clients, as well as containing contract management, lead management and options for automated follow-ups. Analytics allow firms to see how satisfied their clients are and action changes to increase retention and boost growth – and billable time.

Examples:



### Time Recording Systems

Time recording systems are straightforward. They offer a comprehensive overview of each solicitor's time allocation, allowing for optimal task management and productivity analysis. This helps them identify inefficiencies that could affect billable time, ensuring that teams are as productive as possible.

Examples:



## Getting Started with the Cloud: Embracing Azure and OneDrive

**Microsoft's Azure and OneDrive are two powerful cloud solutions that can serve as the backbone for a law firm's digital transformation.**

**Azure:** Azure is Microsoft's cloud computing platform, offering a wide range of services from data storage to machine learning. For law firms, Azure provides secure and compliant solutions tailored to the legal industry's needs. With Azure, firms can host their applications, databases, and tools in a secure environment, ensuring data protection and regulatory compliance. Azure's scalability means that as a firm grows, its cloud infrastructure can adapt without significant overhauls.



**OneDrive:** OneDrive, Microsoft's cloud storage solution, seamlessly integrates with other Microsoft products like Office 365. For law firms, OneDrive offers a secure place to store, share, and collaborate on documents. Its real-time collaboration features mean that multiple solicitors can work on a single document simultaneously, ensuring efficient workflows. Additionally, OneDrive's robust security features, like file encryption and advanced threat protection, ensure that sensitive legal documents remain protected.

Azure and OneDrive give law firms a solid foundation for their cloud journey. They can operate with confidence, knowing they're using robust and secure platforms tailored to their industry's unique needs.



## Client Relations and Maximising Billable Minutes

In the wake of technological advancements and the global shift brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, client expectations have evolved. Today's clients have become accustomed to digital conveniences in their lives and expect a similar level of digital sophistication from their legal representatives. Law firms that cling to outdated practices risk alienating current clients and will struggle to attract new ones.

Cyber threats pose a significant risk to businesses across all sectors, and law firms are no exception. The legal sector is an attractive target for cyber criminals – 75% of surveyed UK law firms suffered an attack in 2020.-

### Modern Client Expectations:

**Accessibility:** Clients expect easy information access and communication with their legal team anytime, anywhere. This demand has led to the rise of client portals and secure communication platforms that ensure clients are always in the loop.

**Transparency:** Modern clients value transparency. They want real-time updates on their cases, making it essential for law firms to provide regular updates and maintain open channels of communication.

**Efficiency:** The convenience of digital signatures, online appointments, and virtual consultations all enhance the client experience. Tools like DocuSign and video conferencing platforms have revolutionised how law firms interact with clients, making processes faster and more efficient.

**Security:** With the rise of cyber threats, clients want assurance that their sensitive data is protected. Law firms must prioritise cyber security measures, ensuring that client data remains confidential and secure at all times.



## Client Relations and Maximising Billable Minutes

### The Digital Client Experience

However 'traditional' a law firm claims to be, it needs a digital presence. This means optimising every stage of the client journey, from initial consultation to case resolution, for the digital age. Consider CRM systems that consolidate that journey and make it easy for solicitors and their clients to track progress.



### Maximising Billable Minutes through Time-Saving Client Relations Tools

In the legal profession, time is precious. Every minute saved from administrative tasks, redundant communications, or inefficient processes translates into potential billable minutes. By leveraging modern client relations tools, law firms can significantly reduce non-billable hours, ensuring that their time is spent on high-value activities that directly benefit clients and the firm's bottom line.

- **Automated Communications:** Tools that automate routine communications free up significant time, allowing attorneys to focus more on case strategy and client consultations.
- **Centralised Client Data:** CRM systems eliminate the need to search through disparate sources, ensuring quick access to client information and more time on execution.
- **Digital Document Management:** These reduce time spent on manual document handling.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Understanding client needs in real-time allows law firms to proactively address issues, ensuring that client meetings are more productive.
- **Virtual Consultations:** Video conferencing tools eliminate the need for physical meetings, saving travel time and allowing more consultations in a day.
- **Secure Client Portals:** These portals reduce the back-and-forth communications often required to share or receive documents, allowing lawyers to review them without delay.

Integrating these time-saving tools into their operations increases the efficiency of firms. Every minute saved adds up, leading to a substantial increase in billable minutes. In a competitive legal market, optimising for time efficiency is necessary to ensure profitability and client satisfaction.

# The Digital Law Firm: Embracing Remote Work for Enhanced Efficiency

The global landscape of legal services underwent a significant transformation with the onset of the pandemic. This unforeseen event accelerated the shift towards remote work, pushing law firms to adapt quickly and integrate digital tools into their daily operations. The result? A more flexible, efficient, and globally connected legal industry.

## Pandemic-Prompted Digital Transformation

The pandemic compelled firms to adopt digital tools so they could continue working outside the office. These platforms enabled firms to facilitate client meetings, document signings, and even notarization without the need for physical interactions.

## The Power of Flexibility

The ability to work remotely has provided legal professionals with unparalleled flexibility. This shift has led to increased job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and the potential for a better work-life balance. Moreover, with the barriers of geography removed, firms can now tap into a global talent pool, ensuring they hire the best minds irrespective of location.

## Digital Collaboration

Cloud platforms, such as Microsoft's OneDrive and Teams, have revolutionised collaboration. They facilitate real-time document co-editing, ensuring that teams can work together seamlessly, even if they're continents apart. Additionally, AI tools like chatbots automate basic client interactions, providing quick responses so solicitors can focus on more complex tasks.

## The Direct Impact on Billable Minutes

Every tool and strategy adopted in this digital shift has a direct impact on a law firm's billable minutes. By reducing manual tasks, minimising errors, and streamlining processes, solicitors can dedicate more time to client consultations, case strategies, and other billable activities.

For instance, instead of spending hours coordinating a physical meeting, tools like Zoom allow for instant virtual consultations. Similarly, platforms like DocuSign reduce the time spent waiting for physical document signatures, accelerating case progress.

The ability to tap into global talent means that firms can have professionals working across different time zones, potentially offering 24/7 services. This extended availability leads to increased client engagements and, consequently, more billable hours.

## Security in the Age of Remote Work

As legal professionals access sensitive client data from various locations, it's imperative to prioritise data security. Robust cyber security measures, combined with regular staff training, ensure that remote work doesn't compromise client data.

Easy steps you can take:

- Only use authorised computers at home – avoid using personal devices for work purposes.
- Use two-factor authentication for accounts.
- Ensure anti-virus software is installed.
- Use the latest security measures, like SIEM.

In this evolving landscape, law firms that proactively embrace digital tools and strategies position themselves for success, ensuring optimal efficiency and superior client service in the digital age.

## Seizing the Digital Future: Your Law Firm's Next Chapter

As we've explored in this guide, embracing a tech-centric approach can be the catalyst for growth, efficiency, and client satisfaction. From streamlining operations to maximising billable minutes, the advantages of digital transformation are undeniable.

Hopefully, this guide has given you some pointers and ideas for starting your own digital transformation journey. It may take time, but it's a worthwhile investment in your team, your firm and your future.

### If you haven't got time? We can help

Every minute of billable time counts. When you're focused on caseload, figuring out the right technology for your firm can feel like a distraction.

#### That's where AAG comes in.

We've got over a decade of experience helping firms like yours take the headache out of technology. With IT that just works, they can focus on their clients.

Let's work together to maximise your billable hours through tech. Contact us today.






How long can you put up  
with poor IT Support?

Your IT should just work.  
Contact our team today to see how we  
can help transform the way you work.

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