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Igniting change:

How IT and Legal are joining forces to spark innovation

A new survey finds that this historic partnership is ready to embrace new technologies in a wave of innovation.



CIO

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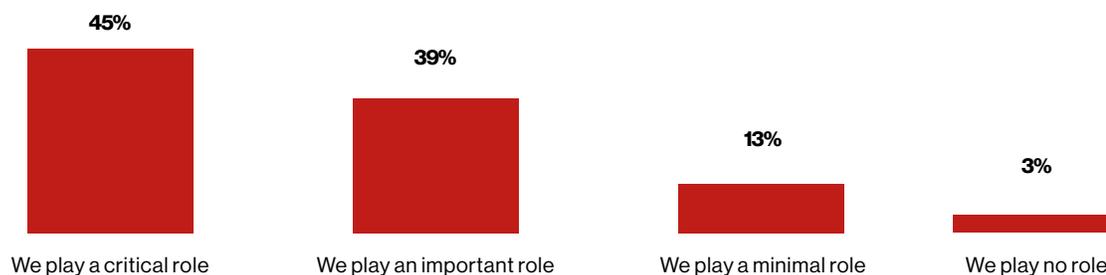
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Building on their existing partnership, IT and Legal are setting their sights on new strategic priorities. A new Foundry MarketPulse survey of roughly 200 senior IT professionals investigated the growing technology innovation relationship between IT and Legal. Results point to a future of even deeper collaboration as legal teams work with IT to drive strategic investments, especially those pertaining to generative artificial intelligence (GenAI).

A strong majority (84%) said IT delivers innovation in supporting legal department strategy, with the traditional goals of increasing productivity, streamlining workflows, and mitigating risk. And as the potential of GenAI continues to crystallize, more than half (57%) expect that IT will have a significant impact on legal department AI strategy.

This pivotal moment comes amid a larger trend among IT leaders revealed in Foundry's 2025 State of the CIO survey: 81% of the surveyed CIOs agreed that the CIO is becoming a change-maker who increasingly leads business and technology initiatives.

How heavily involved is your department in driving or supporting the legal department's innovation strategy?



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

State of the relationship today

Currently, legal departments depend on IT to provide a guiding hand in selecting legal technology (68%), mapping solutions to existing systems (60%), and evaluating ROI (59%), according to the MarketPulse survey. The involvement of IT in legal's digital transformation is both profound and multifaceted, with increased focus on new risk areas such as data privacy, cyberthreats, and regulatory compliance. These responsibilities are in addition to traditional digital evidence-gathering tasks for litigation and investigation, such as legal hold, data collection and forensics, and eDiscovery.

The Legal-IT relationship

Despite the interconnectedness of IT and Legal, the close relationship between the two faces challenges, the most significant of which is lack of communication (21%). The problem is more acute at larger rather than smaller companies (26% versus 11%).

An additional issue is an absence of dedicated IT support among 15% of the respondents. Perception may also come into play, as 15% said Legal sees IT not as a strategic partner but as merely a provider of application and network support, despite the emergence of technologies that are new and potentially transformative.

Although relationships between IT and Legal no doubt vary by organization, six in 10 (61%) said IT supports all phases of digital transformation for Legal and more than half (54%) said IT leads all digital transformation projects. In corporate legal departments, digital transformation often consists of eliminating manual tasks by automating processes. Evaluating and selecting technology vendors is also an important contribution of IT to legal departments (32%).

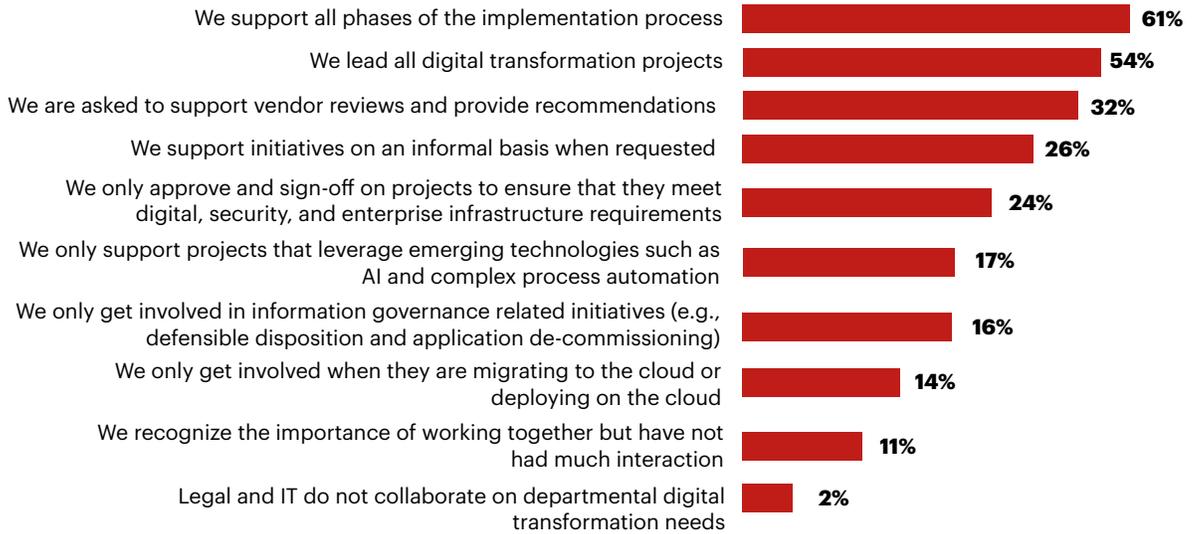
Survey demographics

Objective of Survey - The global Foundry survey explores the role of IT with respect to technology strategy, selection, and implementation for corporate legal departments.

IT decision makers - All 203 survey respondents are senior technology decision-makers, and a majority of the respondents (53%) are CIOs, CTOs, CDOs, and heads of IT. The rest are vice presidents of IT, directors of IT, and other key senior technology decision-makers.

Company size - Their companies vary in size, encompassing large, midsize, and smaller enterprises, with revenues of more than \$1 billion (28%), \$501 million to \$1 billion (33%), and less than \$500 million (33%), respectively. The industries represented include, but are not limited to, high tech, financial services, healthcare, and manufacturing.

How would you best describe your involvement in your legal department's digital transformation?



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

Digital maturity

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents reported a high level of digital maturity at their organization, with maturity defined as having technology deeply embedded in an organization's business models and culture. Meanwhile, 48% are using technology mainly to improve processes and operations. Only 4% reported low digital maturity. Digital maturity is more prevalent among large enterprises (56%) than smaller ones (33%). Notably, technology sector respondents reported the highest digital maturity rate (80%).

IT support for litigation and investigations

Over the years, IT has supported legal leaders with data-related governance, risk management, and operational activities to improve litigation and investigation strategy and outcomes. This remains true today, as survey respondents identified key areas where the IT-Legal partnership is in full force: data collections and forensics (57%), eDiscovery (43%), internal investigations (39%), and legal hold process management (39%).



GenAI builds on AI — a key priority for this growing partnership

AI is having a profound impact on corporate law departments and the IT departments that serve them. The survey results show that IT is engaged in AI-related technology initiatives at nearly four out of five organizations (79%), with three out of five (60%) having IT staff members who review all AI-related projects and 19% who support some but not all initiatives.

More than half (57%) expect that IT will have a significant impact on AI strategy within legal departments. Here, the CIO has an opportunity to be a change-maker, taking on the critical task of helping legal leaders assess GenAI tools and whether certain approaches can be deemed accurate, stable, auditable, and secure. CIOs can also apply their expertise in determining a solution's value and how it impacts current activities, and in assessing the challenges of integrating existing content or data from other systems.

One widespread AI-enabled methodology used to support eDiscovery activities is Technology Assisted Review (TAR), a process whereby humans leverage technology to efficiently identify specific documents in a vast and disorganized corpus. Every TAR system encompasses human review for a portion of a document collection to train computers that, in turn, extrapolate those human judgments to the balance of the collection, enabling faster and more cost-effective review. Using TAR has enabled document review teams to shorten their review times by 80% in many cases while improving accuracy and consistency.

Midsized+ versus smaller

The survey reveals major organizational differences depending on company size.

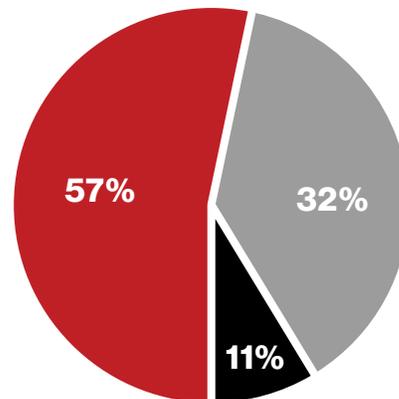
- **Midsized+ companies (revenues of more than \$501 million)** - 52% said IT plays a critical role in supporting innovation while 35% said IT controls the budget and investment for Legal's technology.
- **Smaller companies (revenues of less than \$500 million)** - 30% said IT plays a critical role in supporting innovation while 52% said IT controls the budget and investment for Legal's technology.

Can your department help lawyers understand the impact of AI on law?

57% Yes, we can have a significant impact

32% Yes, but the impact will be limited

11% No



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

With work in traditional AI, such as TAR, well established, many organizations are looking ahead to GenAI's large language models (LLMs) for further benefits, particularly when they are combined with human intelligence in human-assisted review (HAR). HAR uses natural-language prompts and continuous learning to improve investigation efficiency and further reduce the time and cost of document review and analysis.

GenAI to support litigation and investigations

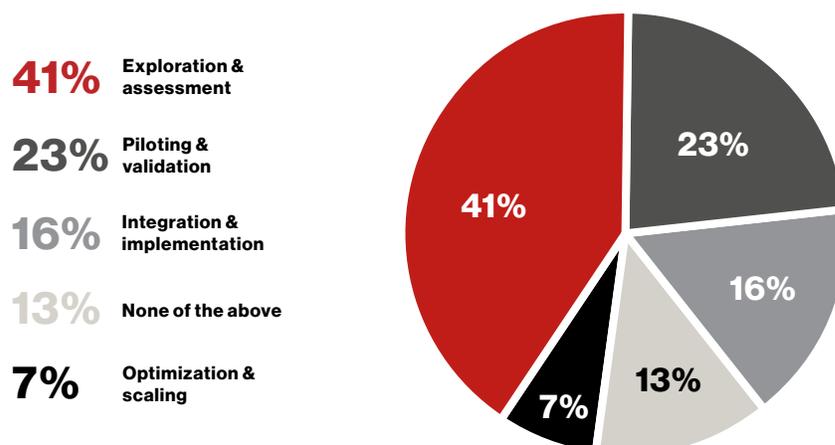
Among the areas that are expected to benefit from GenAI, eDiscovery (44%) stands out. When a legal action takes place, organizations must produce relevant documents. Performing eDiscovery with the aid of GenAI promises to save large amounts of time and money. Legal teams are also looking to GenAI to perform tasks such as creating summaries and narratives to educate reviewers on case details. GenAI can be used to inform case strategy by prioritizing documents to review and matters to investigate. And it can help by simply drilling into data sets expeditiously to get to key facts faster.

Legal departments are not sitting on the sidelines with GenAI

At many companies, awareness is leading to action: 64% are exploring or piloting GenAI. Although the largest group of respondents (41%) is still kicking the tires by evaluating the potential relevance of GenAI for Legal, and 23% are validating the effectiveness of GenAI through pilot projects. Smaller percentages are at the leading edge: 16% have full-fledged deployments, and 7% have implementations that are being optimized and scaled. Even so, these findings show that GenAI is not a pipe dream but a reality. Legal departments can look forward to a groundswell of GenAI deployments soon. Survey respondents said they will roll out GenAI to legal departments within 10 months on average. Large enterprises are moving faster than smaller ones (nine months versus 14 months).

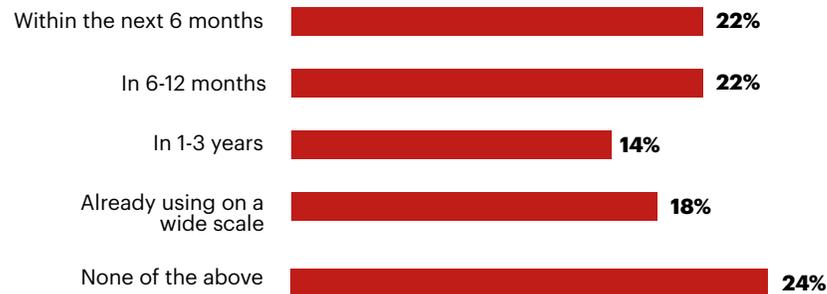
Although the advent of GenAI in legal departments will require teamwork between IT and Legal, there is good news: Despite the communication issues that some companies experience – discussed earlier in this report – a significant majority (79%) of the IT decision-makers are satisfied with their relationship with legal departments.

What is the current phase of your legal department's GenAI journey?



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

When will you roll out GenAI usage for the legal department?



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

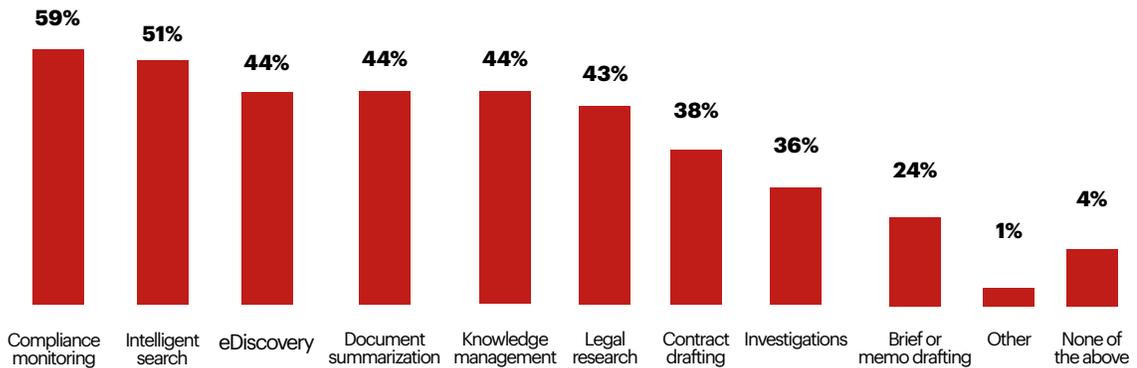
A rich past and a bright future

For all the improvement that is needed in departmental interaction at some larger enterprises, most legal departments rely on guidance from IT to implement technologies that help identify risks, increase productivity, and transform legal processes through innovation. The partnership between IT and legal departments appears certain to deepen in the months and years ahead, particularly at organizations with a high level of digital maturity and where a person or a team is assigned to focus on legal technology. Many companies have an opportunity to elevate legal departments from the status of cost center to become a strategic enabler of organizational success.

The results of the Foundry survey shine a spotlight on a critical moment in the IT-Legal relationship. Legal executives should move beyond reactive risk mitigation to embrace AI to provide predictive insights as well as increased operational efficiency. Organizations that implement AI are likely to find themselves well-positioned to take the next step by implementing GenAI for essential work such as eDiscovery.

Finally, the Foundry research illustrates that for many organizations, the future is now: Nearly four out of five (79%) of the respondents said IT is engaged in AI-related legal technology initiatives. That involvement should intensify over the months ahead as more forward-looking legal departments catch what promises to be a transformative wave of GenAI adoption.

In which areas do you anticipate supporting Legal with generative AI?



SOURCE: FOUNDRY

Today's CIOs must demonstrate both IT leadership and technical expertise to select solutions that mitigate organizational data risk, even as they keep an eye on the legal department's long-term vision. Tightening the Legal-IT bond by opening stronger communication channels will ensure proper guidance to navigate Legal/IT issues as well as the deployment of solutions that best support core legal strategies.

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