



The law firm of the future:

Building a blueprint for greater efficiency in your legal organisation



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Foreword

The global economic picture is challenging. Interest rates and inflation in the UK continue to peak and trough, while employment levels stutter.

But for legal firms, the overall outlook remains positive. Hourly billable rates continue to rise above inflation and 81% of the top 100 law firms saw profit growth in 2024, up from 56% the previous year.

In a challenging economic situation, legal firms still have the opportunity to grow.

But, to survive and to thrive in these conditions, law firms must remain efficient to stay competitive. Firms must look inwardly at how current processes can be streamlined or automated, to effectively harness the latest technology without increasing costs. A long-term view of your technology roadmap is essential in this context, as a quick fix today can be a problem tomorrow.

In years gone by the solution to driving revenue growth was to increase billable hours by growing headcount. Now, technology is helping firms maximise every minute of the billable hour, driving increased revenue without the requirement of increased staff costs.

LIMA's customers are already realising the new opportunities afforded to them by improved workplace processes and systems. End user experience for fee earners is being modernised, driving amazing efficiency.

With these new opportunities of course come new risks. With successful cyber-attacks rising by 77% in 2024, vs. the previous year, it is essential that law firms secure against undue exposure to these threats, and ultimately assure potential clients that they will receive the best possible experience, while their personal information remains secure.

Whether through greater integration of cloud services, or strengthening of security posture, there is a clear and present need for the IT team to help legal firms thrive.

This whitepaper discusses the IT challenges law firms face in 2025, addresses blockers and sets out practical steps to creating a successful digital future.

I hope you find the paper useful and I'd be delighted to hear from you with your thoughts.



Martin Ingham
CTO | LIMA

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A roadmap towards more efficient and effective systems

To attract top-flight fee-earners and big-billing clients, firms must modernise their approach to technology. Fee-earners expect the optimum working environment and tools to drive success for their clients, and your business.

So what is holding law firms back? Often, it's legacy technology running on platforms that are not optimised to drive performance.

In a world where cloud-based services and artificial intelligence are the peak of corporate technical evolution, presenting unlimited opportunities for scale and innovation, there is no room for negotiation when it comes to making it happen. By building the right foundations of platform, security and data, your firm can successfully reach these new heights.





What are the most common problems for law firms seeking to optimise their IT processes?



Unsuitable platform

An unsuitable platform – whether neglected, unpatched, old or badly configured – leads to downtime, poor performance, an inability to integrate new tools and greater risk of data breaches; resulting in potential fines.



Loss of billable hours due to poor application performance

There's a recurring theme here. Performance directly affects your bottom-line, and so it's worth investing in optimising the platform your key applications rely on.

When your business lives and dies by billable hours, don't leave the efficacy of your practice management systems to chance. If generating reports is taking minutes rather than seconds, the cost is lost time, lost clients and lost employees.



Lack of mobility

It's 2025. Remote working is no longer a luxury that an organisation can choose to provide its employees, but expected and essential. Firms must ensure that their case management and practice management systems are available quickly and securely when working at home, on the move, or in the office, without affecting overall performance.



Poor integration & collaboration

Operating across multiple systems that don't share data leads to inefficiencies and problems, including: lack of automation, increased risk of cyber-attacks, poor data quality and a need for manual processing.

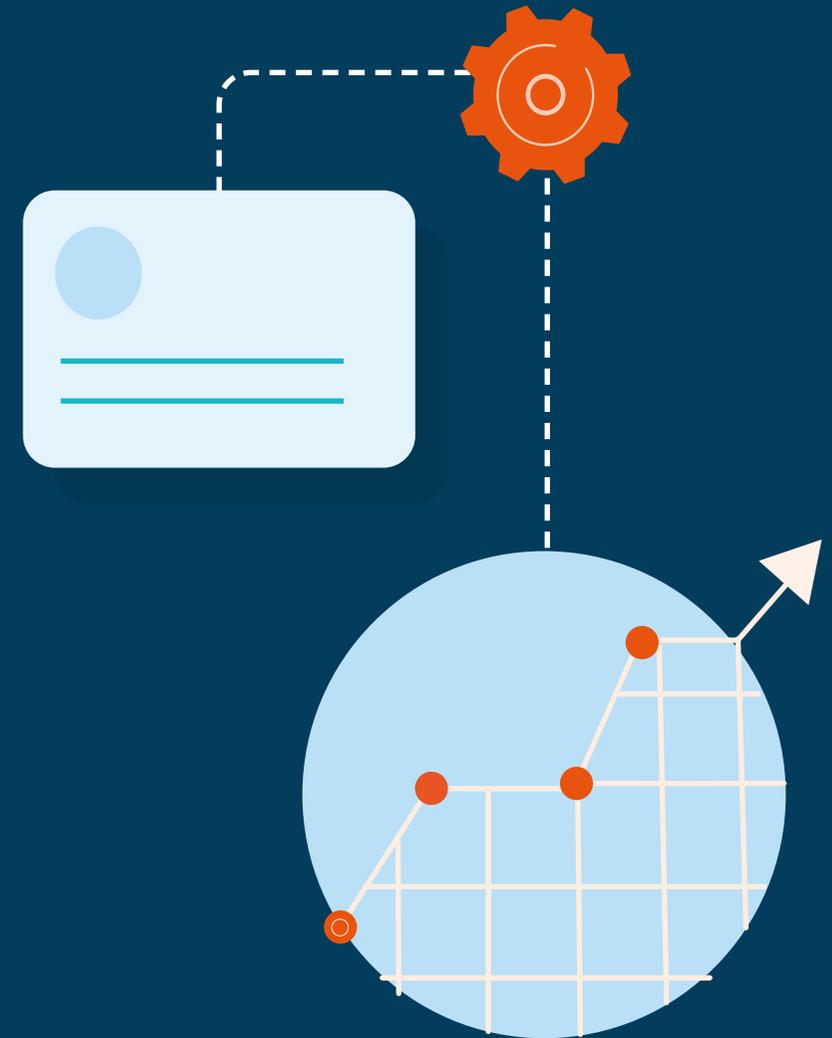
Teams throughout a firm must be enabled to work collaboratively, across multiple systems.

Integrating tools and services – such as customer relationship management (CRM) tools and human resources systems – facilitates a connected digital ecosystem, avoiding silos and ensuring that workloads are properly managed.

Building a transformation strategy

Firms need a comprehensive strategy that brings their systems in-line with modern, cloud-centric applications and automated practices, putting IT at the forefront of the business; while remaining cost effective for both the end user and the law firm itself.

The inner workings of an optimum strategy will differ from one law firm to the next, but the critical starting point is creating an efficient foundation. A platform architecture upon which all else can thrive.



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Creating a platform for greatly enhanced application performance

From client onboarding to document handling and compliance, your team relies on your case management system every day to deliver a high-quality service at speed.

But when your case management software lags, crashes or simply can't keep up, the impact is felt across the firm.

Productivity, user experience and client satisfaction all suffer. The IT team comes under strain as users log tickets because of unpredictable performance.

Moving your case management to SaaS is a complex, multi-year project. It's so disruptive that it simply isn't an option for many firms.

The alternative is to work with what you have to improve efficiency and drive better outcomes for your firm with your existing resources.

Whether you're running a fixed-fee model or billable hours, the only way to drive greater revenues without the cost of additional headcount or employee burnout is to make tools and systems more efficient for your fee-earners.

There are many factors that impact performance, from aging hardware, to misconfiguration, to inefficient network topology. Even different anti-virus software has been known to contribute to slow case management systems.

Only 15% of data in case management systems is regularly accessed. A well architected platform gives ultimate performance to active matters, driving huge efficiency gains for your fee earners.

When it comes to identifying a platform for your case management system, are you asking the right questions about how it's optimised for legal case management? Are general purpose clouds the best fit, or is there something out there that's more specialised?

Faster, better integrated technology enables legal firms to achieve more, but driving outstanding business outcomes from platform optimisation requires the experience and technical expertise that a partner like LIMA delivers. We've fine-tuned and customised platforms to drive case management systems for dozens of legal firms over the years, and we understand the delicate balance.



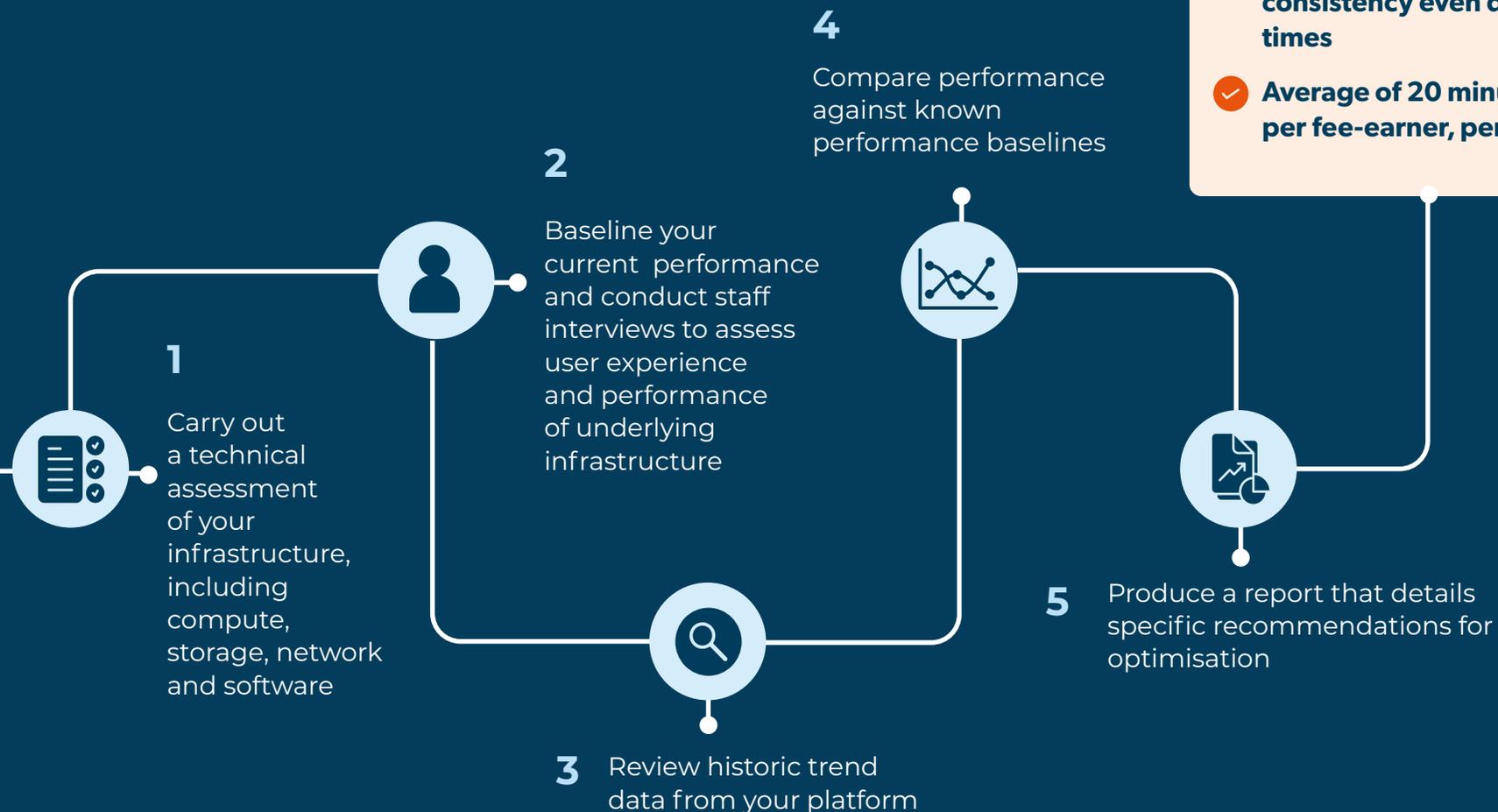
“Once upon a time, law firms did everything on paper. Thirty years ago, the advent of technology meant decisions had to be made about the software that would underpin their practice. This software needed to carry out functions and processes, while also pulling in data from internal and external sources.

“Today, law firms are plagued by decisions made years ago and, most notably, how those decisions still affect practice management systems. It’s often incredibly hard for a firm to migrate away from these systems because of the complex web of interdependencies connected to it.”

Ollie Potts, Head of Product at LIMA

LIMA case management assessment process

LIMA helps ensure your case management system is optimised to focus on profitability, enhancing your competitive edge and improving client experience.



The outcomes

- ✓ **383% improvement in system loading times**
- ✓ **Complex report generation more than 3x faster**
- ✓ **Availability and performance consistency even during peak times**
- ✓ **Average of 20 minutes saved per fee-earner, per day**



LIMA are more than a safe pair of hands. The maturity of their services means we have a predictable and reliable level of service when it comes to managing issues, and their understanding of the legal sector and of our business challenges gives them the ability to move beyond a service provider towards being a true strategic partner.

The improvement in our case management performance has been remarkable, resulting in huge gains in the efficiency of our fee-earners. LIMA's success is underpinned by their ability to work across multiple levels of their organisation, from managing partner to directors, into IT engineering staff.

Chris Gibbons, IT Director, Stephensons Solicitors LLP

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The tools and services revolutionising employee experience and increasing fee-earner potential

IT professionals have three key roles when it comes to end users. Empower the user with the tools that enable them to do their job better. Facilitate the user with help when they need us. Secure the user so that they don't endanger themselves or the firm.

In the SMB legal space, where firms often compete on service quality and agility, User Experience is a differentiator. A good technology experience for staff boosts productivity and efficiency, reduces onboarding time and reduces attrition.

LIMA's approach to end user experience in legal introduces new capability to measure the impact of improvements made. Improvements are then reported on, focussing on user experience using a dashboard specific to our service portfolio.

A 2023 Goldman Sachs study concluded that 44% of work tasks performed in the legal industry could be automated.

Where a process is predictable, automation reduces the risk of human error, minimises compliance risks and generally makes everything simpler and faster. Reducing manual processes instantly puts time back in the hands of your fee earners, and that's money that goes straight back to your firm's bottom line.

There are a variety of automated tools available to law firms that can both optimise performance and drive better results for the business. But the work doesn't end with integrating the tools. A technical partner will make the tools within Microsoft 365 work harder and better together, to deliver better results for the long-term.

Tools that transform

IT leaders are under pressure to increase productivity, for a workforce that requires more flexibility than ever. Employees must be able to access their devices and data just as securely from their homes, or in court, as at the office. Meanwhile, IT pros need systems to be easy to manage, update and secure, without disrupting users.



Improved productivity and focus

When technology supports rather than frustrates, staff can focus on legal work rather than navigating support processes. Reducing interaction with IT teams means more billable hours, better client outcomes and improved morale across the firm.



Consistent workflow across devices

Whether working from chambers, home or court, a consistent experience ensures that users can pick up where they left off – supporting hybrid work without productivity loss.



Streamlined access to tools and information

Intuitive collaboration tools reduce friction between fee-earners, support staff and partners. This ensures smoother collaboration, clear communication and faster case progression.

4

A strategic approach to security and compliance that futureproofs your firm

In April 2024, the Home Office's Cyber security breaches survey revealed that over 70% of all medium to large businesses had experienced some form of cyber security breach or attack in the previous 12 months¹

Thus far, GDPR and data security have made a cameo appearance in this paper, without great focus or practical insight into what firms need to do to sure up their data protection for the future.

But one key message should be shining through: legacy technology is not fit for purpose.

It's out-of-date, out-of-time and quite frankly poses a giant threat to the growth and success of your business. Not only does it become nigh-on impossible to integrate the tools you need to compete in today's market, but unpatched software becomes vulnerable in a nano-second. And, if you're holding vast quantities of tantalising client data, there is a digital target on your back.

Legal industry attack trends in **2025**

In 2024, the number of successful cyber-attacks against UK law firms increased by 77% vs. the previous 12 months, up to 954. This dramatic increase highlights the problem faced by firms, that are perceived as both lucrative and easy targets to attackers seeking to exploit vulnerable infrastructures.

Phishing, ransomware, DDoS, advanced persistent threats (APTs) and insider threats are amongst the common types of cyber-attacks targeting the legal industry in 2025, though the common challenge is the lack of dedicated cyber expertise within firms.

In a security landscape where threat actors are increasingly sophisticated, legal IT teams have an array of advanced protective technologies to choose from. Adopting core tools such as endpoint detection and response (EDR), multi-factor authentication (MFA) and privileged access management (PAM) is a common approach to safeguarding legal operations. These are increasingly supported by SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) platforms and zero-trust architecture, which treat every user, device and connection as untrusted by default, reducing the risk of lateral movement within networks.

For firms handling vast volumes of sensitive data, visibility of vulnerabilities is critical. That's where LIMA's Vulnerability Detection & Remediation (VDR) service becomes a key differentiator. VDR provides continuous, automated scanning of your environment to identify and prioritise known vulnerabilities, and our team of security experts fix them before they become active threats, in line with timelines mandated by Cyber Essentials Plus.

Coupled with cloud-native tools like Microsoft Defender for Endpoint, Purview, and automated patch management, law firms can embed a secure-by-design model that meets regulatory obligations, strengthens client trust and enables scalable, long-term protection, without compromising user experience or performance.



Away from technical solutions, the first line of defence against cyber-attacks for any business, is its team. That's why more organisations are placing greater emphasis on training to improve overall security and compliance. Employees must be made aware of the threats posed by cyber-attacks and the importance of their role in keeping systems and data secure.

Try and build some engaging elements into your cyber awareness training, beyond e-learning.

Why not try:



Gamifying the experience



Using real-world scenarios



Making it visual, interactive and personalised



Keeping it short and regular



Using humour and creativity

Taking proactive steps to **secure your business**

Protecting your law firm against cyber-attacks needn't become another burden for your team, but rather a task for a strategic partner to support with and ensure that your future is safeguarded.

A strategic IT partner can help you minimise risk with a proactive, secure-by-design approach that ensures your business runs smoothly and gives peace of mind.

- ✓ Understand who currently accesses your data and how
- ✓ Prioritise the most valuable or vulnerable areas of your infrastructure
- ✓ Ensure security updates and patching happen reliably and efficiently, aligned with Cyber Essentials Plus timelines
- ✓ Manage all devices centrally – including personal mobiles – with Secure SSO access methods to provide access to systems and data
- ✓ Keep data protected during transfer
- ✓ Embed resilience at a technical level in business-critical areas
- ✓ Harness the power of cloud-based backup

5 Unlocking the value of your data

Technology, and how we use it, has changed beyond comprehension since case management systems were initially implemented, decades ago, as has the way we work. Amongst the most significant changes is the introduction of the gargantuan amount of data, held by most businesses, who now need the tools to not only process and utilise it, but also secure it.

Your data should power intelligent decision making, leading to better outcomes for your clients and employees. However, having lots of data is meaningless without the appropriate platforms and systems to help you standardise and analyse it. Increasingly firms are turning to products like Microsoft Fabric to pull in data from different applications and present a unified view of it to facilitate data-led decision making. This section of your technology roadmap is enabled by the foundations laid in platform, security and M365 to organise and rationalise your firm's data.

Analytics turns this raw data into actionable insights. For small and medium sized law firms, this means identifying what is profitable, what's inefficient and how to better serve clients. This data is often trapped inside inflexible Case Management Systems. LIMA helps firms unlock data from case management systems and use a common data platform to drive insight, client experience, automation and reporting.

This part of your strategy is a fundamental building block in the move towards greater adoption of AI in your firm. The output of your AI tools will only be as reliable as the quality of the data it's looking at.

6

Driving AI adoption in legal

While AI technology is incredibly powerful, there is still a disconnect between its promise and the application of successful use cases in the legal sector.

Copilot boosts productivity and creativity when integrated across the Microsoft 365 suite. But effectively harnessing these AI tools takes time. The groundwork must have been done in advance to prepare your data, and the roll-out requires a significant level of engagement across your organisation to ensure it lands successfully and is widely adopted.

To maximise your return on investment, your law firm must first ascertain whether it is ready to effectively and safely activate AI tools.

LIMA has laid out an AI adoption blueprint and a series of assessments based on our own journey to AI adoption, and our own methodology for identifying use cases and driving engagement with the adoption process among our workforce.

Gen AI in law firms - A case study



Adopting AI within safe guardrails

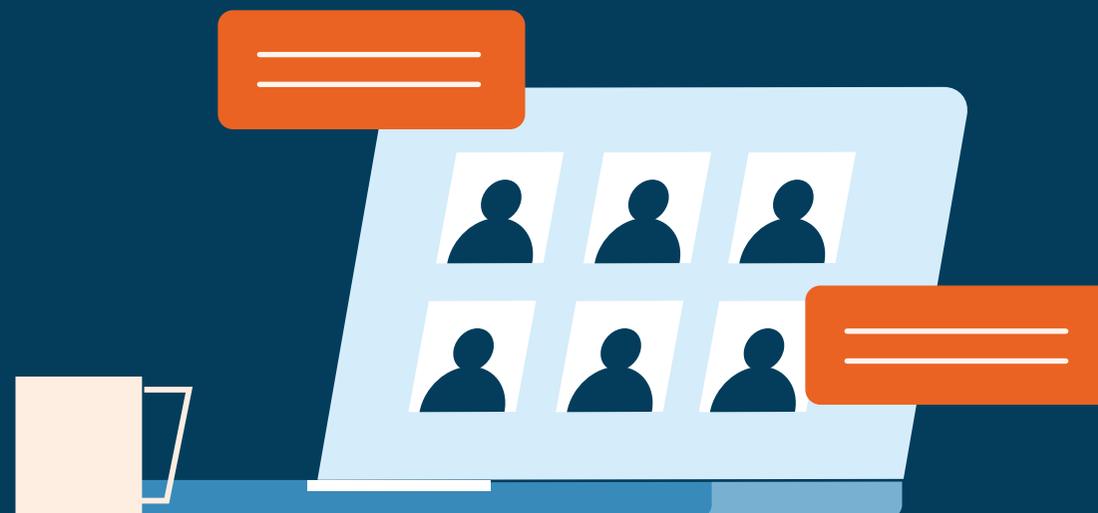
The legal firm Hill Dickinson made national headlines when it banned its workforce from using ChatGPT after a huge spike in usage of the service on employee devices. Concerns over data security and the accuracy of returned responses led the firm to restrict access to the service.

With a properly managed Copilot instance, trained on your firm's documentation and data across a range of services, your IT team can provide a monitored and accurate AI-powered assistant for the law firm, safe in the knowledge that data is not leaking out and that responses are based on accepted accurate data.

Is your law firm ready for Copilot?

LIMA works closely with legal teams to understand their business's unique requirements and assess whether they are ready to activate Copilot.

- ✓ **Licensing preparedness**
Examine the features of current Microsoft 365 license and review any required changes.
- ✓ **Organisation readiness**
Ascertain whether specific policies have been implemented to make sure that end users are using Copilot safely.
- ✓ **Data management**
Understand whether any changes required to your existing data topology.
- ✓ **Pilot rollout requirements**
Your strategic IT partner will provide recommended pilot rollout policies and plan to help you achieve a successful first-time pilot rollout, before you extend across your business.
- ✓ **Post-deployment monitoring**
Examine your Microsoft tenancy and the best methods of monitoring Copilot usage within your organisation, post rollout.



Taking your law firm to new heights

As an IT department it's your responsibility to facilitate, empower and secure your end users. By doing so you make your law firm more efficient, more effective and more resilient. You are preparing the ground for future success and laying a blueprint to take advantage of the opportunities of the coming years.

1

Future-proof your infrastructure

Deploying a converged infrastructure solution across storage, compute and virtualisation will ultimately improve availability, performance and scalability. General purpose clouds are not always optimal for law firms. Look for platforms specifically optimised for legal, that are built around the challenges and requirements of your sector.

2

Introduce effective case management software

Effective case management opens up a world of opportunity for your firm. It's the cornerstone of your responsibilities as an IT team. System performance improves, security and compliance are strengthened and processes can be streamlined or automated thanks to better integration with your other systems and data.

3

Secure and support your team

A strategic IT partner can help you provide the user experience and remote access to systems your team requires, while minimising risk with a proactive, secure-by-design approach that ensures your business runs smoothly and gives peace of mind.

Why LIMA for law firms and legal service providers?

- ✓ **Experience**
We have a proven track record in legal and many happy legal customers. We understand legal applications, matter management and the demands of today's legal workforce.
- ✓ **Partnership**
Your dedicated account team of legal sector experts support you throughout the length of our partnership, covering technical, commercial and customer success. Plus you get direct access to a named member of our C-suite and our wider senior leadership team.
- ✓ **Efficiency**
Through a combination of technical tweaks and process improvements, we've saved law firms and fee earners thousands of hours that go straight back to servicing clients and driving revenues.
- ✓ **Security**
Our services help you strengthen your security posture, while easing the burden of Cyber Essentials Plus compliance.
- ✓ **Strategy**
Our consultative, partnership-led approach will help you to clarify your technology roadmap, unpick legacy technology, adopt new systems and drive value.
- ✓ **Broad IT portfolio**
We won't push you towards a specific technology. We're vendor agnostic and have deep partnerships with a broad sweep of providers across infrastructure, platform, security and modern workplace.

Get in touch

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 LIMA.co.uk