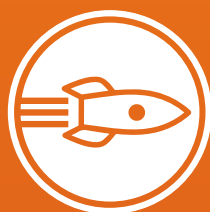


Legal Project Management: A Beginner's Guide to Boosting Productivity and Profitability



rocket matter

In an effort to improve productivity and profitability for their law firms, many attorneys have adopted legal project management (LPM) principles and tools. This approach to handling legal matters most cost-effectively and efficiently has proven invaluable within the industry. Of course, improving client experiences and outcomes is integral for a practice's success, but implementing an LPM requires insight into how it works and affects your law firm.



What is Legal Project Management?

Much like its name suggests, legal project management is all about applying principles related to project management to the services your law firm provides. This approach aims to improve the productivity of your law firm, which increases client outcomes and satisfaction, thus boosting profitability.

Regardless of your firm provides flat-rate estate trust services or specializes in criminal defense, LPM ensures it's handled correctly and efficiently from start to finish. So, how does it do that? Legal project management bases its process on the following phases:

- Definition of scope
- Project planning
- Conduction
- Process and outcome review



Benefits of Legal Project Management

As mentioned earlier, Legal Project Management (LPM) is essentially a framework that relies on techniques and technological tools to:

- Deliver services promptly
- Stay in budget
- Improve client experiences

This process isn't just a new buzzword in the legal industry. It's an expectation. Attorneys and their practice teams want their legal businesses to thrive, and using LPM software with the built-in automation and tools needed to achieve this goal is essential.

You may be wondering exactly how an LPM system benefits your legal service, and below are the top advantages you can expect when implementing this approach to manage your law firm:

Consistency

Think of all the time saved and reduced costs you can enjoy by organizing your data and documentation in a central location that is easily kept up to date using a consistent file structure. No more hours get wasted on searching for physical records in storage boxes full of old case files. LPM software like Rocket Matter makes it easy to go paperless and create an accessible management system for your entire team.

Predictability

Because the purpose of an LPM is to provide efficient scheduling, defined scope, and adherence to cost estimates of your legal matters, your law firm can predict completion time and expense. Additionally, with this newfound predictability, risks associated with your fee agreements are reduced, and your team can meet client expectations consistently.

Better Client Satisfaction

There are numerous ways that an LPM boosts your firm's ability to meet client expectations, including:

- Efficiency
- Service value
- Communication
- Predictability
- Interest alignment
- Improved client need understanding

Because Alternative Fee Arrangements (AFAs) are becoming more popular, legal project management provides the streamlining of service delivery and assessments and solutions. As a result, clients and stakeholders alike are more aware of how your processes work regarding time, project costs, and available resources.

Lower Costs

Combining consistency, predictability, and improved client experiences leads to cost containment and minimization of surprises during the legal matter life cycle.



How to Get Started with Legal Project Management

How much time would you save if your law firm could streamline its workflows? Would this boost client services and create a new level of efficiency that increases profitability?

Relying on an LPM software platform that handles the primary management functions of your law office can bring you those benefits. Companies like Rocket Matter include state-of-the-art features like time and expense tracking, client management, document storage, and so much more.

For many reasons, firms are turning to this software system to achieve a more streamlined approach to their day-to-day operations. This is why small start-up firms and multi-branched law practices have embraced this technology and have already improved productivity and profitability.

So, where do you begin? This process can be overwhelming if you aren't familiar with the features available in LPM software. Below are some important tips to consider before making the leap to centralized practice management:



Know Your LPM Software Options

It's important to know that LPM software can come in various forms, primarily on-premise or cloud-based.

On-Premise

If you want an LPM solution installed on every computer in your office, this is known as on-premise software. Typically, this requires the purchase of multiple software licenses so each user can access its full features. While this may sound inefficient and expensive, there are some benefits to this option:

Higher Level of Functionality

Because installed solutions have been developed and used for decades, the capabilities of on-premise software may be more robust than cloud-based versions.

No Need for Internet

One of the worst things any law firm can experience is an internet service outage. Yet, many practices depend on online resources to complete the most basic of case management requirements. LPM software that is directly installed on a PC doesn't need an internet connection to work.

Maintain Control

Another frustration is that law firms deal with updates to the software. This can greatly affect the functionality of your LPM system, but on-premise options give you more control over what changes get made or not.

One of the biggest factors that deter firms from using on-premise software for legal practice management is the upfront costs to install and implement it. You will need to have an on-site server to hold your data and integrate it with your LPM application. This is a significant investment that will require ongoing expenses for maintenance and repair.

This is also not an ideal solution for law firms whose attorneys and legal teams need remote access. On-site LPMs will require a virtual private network (VPN) to ensure client and case data have a secure channel for accessing this information. Finally, if you choose on-premise software, you will need an on-site server that is adequately secured to prevent unauthorized access and/or theft.

Cloud-Based Software

LPM software systems that are accessed through a web browser are cloud-based. Much like Google Docs, these services get hosted through remote servers operated by third parties instead of via one on-site at your business. You and your team will access this type of application through a web browser, where you will provide log-in credentials.

There are certain [legal practice management solutions](#), such as Rocket Matter, that offer LPM tools within their systems. This type of LPM solution is growing in popularity for a variety of reasons, including:

Access Your Client Data From Anywhere

Wherever you or your team has internet access, they can use these cloud-based applications. This means whether at a home office or in the courtroom, you can log in from the convenience of your favorite smart device or computer.

Minimal Maintenance

Because your law firm isn't physically hosting the server on-site, the vendor that hosts your LPM will handle all regular maintenance and updates. This is especially convenient since their teams often automate this aspect of their services so changes can get rolled out quickly and minimize or eliminate any downtime for your operations.

Nothing to Install

Cloud-based LPMs don't require you to download any software or buy any licensing keys. Both of which can be extremely costly to your budget and productivity time. After setting up your account, most LPMs get you up and running with their services almost immediately.

Predictable Pricing

Because many vendors of cloud-based LPM software offer subscription pricing for their applications, costs related to these services are predictable and easily forecasted.

That's a lot of pluses, right? However, there are a few downsides to consider about cloud-based legal project management software solutions. The first would be the functionality of the application you buy. Make sure you read the features list and integrations available carefully. While many of these programs regularly introduce new tools and functions, make sure your needs are met.

Another concern is potential downtime if your internet service experiences an outage or the server host experiences trouble. Because it's cloud-based, your LPM needs connectivity to function, which means you may need to go home or to another location

that has a signal. If there is a server issue, you have to wait on the vendor to correct the problem.

Finally, data security is critical to ensure the privacy and safety of your clients' data. While rare, breaches can happen, so you must research the type of encryption and malware protection your host uses.

Understand How an LPM Fits into Your Work Model

As an attorney in a busy legal practice, you know your work is ongoing and follows you everywhere. From checking emails while eating dinner to holding a conference call while traveling, having reliable remote access to your LPM is crucial.

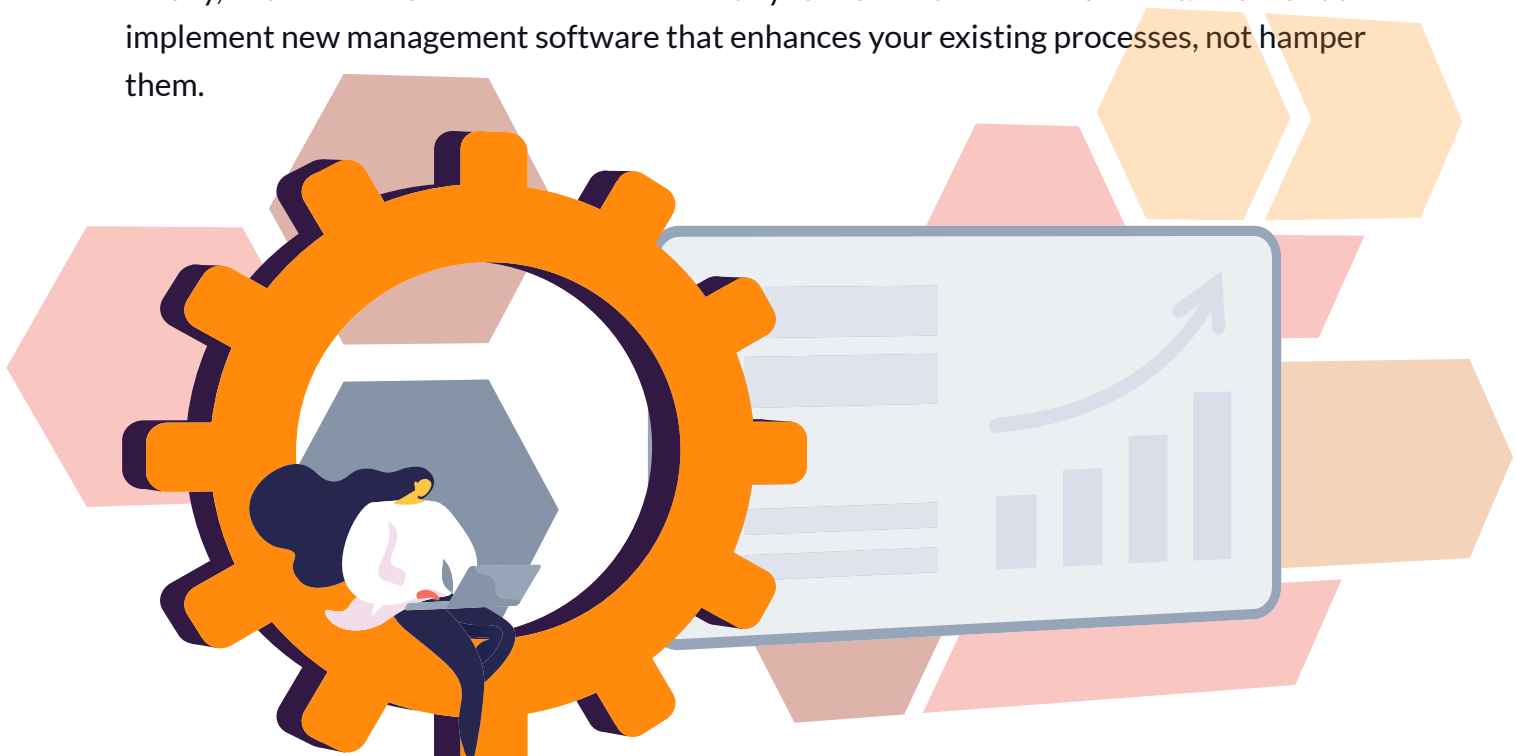
Cloud-based solutions are ideal for this work model because it allows you and your team to track hours easily, communicate with clients, pull up case data, and so much more. At Rocket Matter, we designed our service with this reality in mind.

Check Compatibility

Your law firm likely relies on several technological tools to handle your work. Maybe you currently use MS Access for communication and QuickBooks for accounting. If you want to keep using these tools, then double-check that any LPM you choose will integrate. This helps avoid creating siloed processes that can lead to errors, lost time, and confusion.

It would help if you also evaluated how your firm currently captures client data and information. For example, if you have a recording application, it's important to determine if an LPM you want will integrate and provide a seamless transfer of data between programs.

Finally, determine if a new LPM will work with your current workflows or not. You want to implement new management software that enhances your existing processes, not hamper them.



Include Your Legal Team

Everyone in your firm that will interact with or rely on an LPM should be part of the decision-making process. Because your team performs different functions, it's vital to get an accurate world view of how a new management application will impact their day-to-day lives.

Gather opinions from everyone about what features a new LPM system should provide and how that would benefit their own processes. Then, once you review their feedback, look for commonalities to pinpoint what they feel are important features for your law firm.

Gauge Ease-of-Use

You are considering a new legal project management tool to help your firm become more productive and efficient. When deciding on what option is best, take a close look at its interface and features and overall design and navigation.

Law firms researching LPM options should prioritize vendors that provide team training and ongoing support. But is it at a high enough level to meet the needs of your busy practice?

To find out, explore what type of support you predict is necessary to onboard your team and ensure they have a solid grasp of the software and its capabilities.

Make a Short List of LPM Software Options You Like

If you type in legal project management in Google, you will get pages upon pages of listings. To determine which option is best for your team, find a few that meet all of your expectations and needs. Once completed, start making calls and get clarifications on features, pricing, and more.

Remember, a robust legal practice management system will combine, integrate, and add tools to your operations that will improve productivity and profitability.

Helpful Legal Project Management Features

LPMs come with various tools and are usually customizable for the unique needs of the law firms using them. Whatever your choice, ensure that you achieve any goals by using this type of software to improve your current workflow.

Because there are a slew of features to choose from, you may be tempted to invest in some tools and capabilities that aren't helpful for your practice. Try to find an all-in-one solution that performs several key functions used in your law office.

To get a better idea of the features available, check out these key features Rocket Matter software uses to streamline workflows in the legal industry:

Time Tracking

Time tracking is often time-consuming and tedious for many attorneys. Fortunately, Rocket Matter LPM software provides a [time tracking tool](#) that helps you save hours of administrative time. In addition, with integrations for [Office 365](#) and QuickBooks, it's never been easier to record billable hours in real-time from the comfort of your home or office, on a phone or desktop.

Even better? This LPM solution utilizes multiple timers and enables the use of customized LEDES codes.



Legal Document Management and Automation

Save precious productivity time for you and your staff with advanced [document management capabilities](#) built into your LPM. From quickly digitizing documentation to power document organization features to ensure consistent filing structures, having the ability to search for assigned tags and access your files quickly is a must in any modern law office.

Managing your legal documents with automated technology will ensure you reduce human error. With legal templates and custom field options, you can quickly create all the documentation you need in a matter of seconds and move on with your day.

Kanban Boards- a MUST for Legal Project Management

Put away your sticky notes and pen! With Kanban board features built-in, Rocket Matter takes your legal project management to the next level! Create visual systems for your projects virtually to operate a lean law firm.

[Kanban boards](#) are an invaluable feature within any LPM you choose to achieve higher efficiency for your firm's routine operations. Not only can they help your legal team better optimize, organize, and visualize their workflow, but there are a variety of boards available to suit your needs.

Matter Automation

[Automation of your matters](#) portfolio can provide your team with real-time data on an intuitive dashboard. This provides better visibility of your matters and their life cycles while providing access to various metrics and other critical pieces of information. All of this is achieved through the collection of information, workflow data, and management insights.

File Storage and Sharing Capabilities

If your goal is to become a paperless law firm, then the LPM you choose needs state-of-the-art file storage and sharing capabilities. Companies like Rocket Matter provide collaborative tools such as secure 2-way sharing and direct uploads from Office 365, saving time and money while streamlining workflows.

Conclusion

Legal technology has been a boon for law firms and their teams and has benefitted the industry more than any other. Waiting to leverage cutting-edge legal project management software has proven costly for many lawyers and led to a surge in demand.

Rocket Matter has emerged as one of the top choices among attorneys and legal professionals wanting to boost the productivity and profitability of their firms. It's quickly become apparent that cloud-based legal project management software saves time and money, helping law firms perform their jobs more efficiently and promptly.

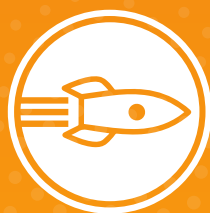
Learn more about how LPM software can help boost profitability and productivity. Then, book a free demo by speaking with one of Rocket Matter's management experts. Our team will assist you in determining the pain points your practice is currently experiencing and recommend practical solutions to help.

About Rocket Matter

Rocket Matter helps law firms offer better client service and also increase revenues by more than 20%. The company was the first cloud-based legal practice management software on the market, landing its first client in 2007. It has been a leader ever since.

Rocket Matter has the most powerful, easy-to-use time and billing software in the industry. Also, when law firms want to make more money, go paperless, or increase confidence in their trust accounting, Rocket Matter helps them achieve those goals. With award-winning customer service based in the United States, it's no wonder thousands of law firms swear by Rocket Matter.

For more information about how Rocket Matter can help you run a more productive and profitable law firm, visit www.rocketmatter.com today.



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