

Legal Project Management : A New Model for Enhancing Profitability & Competitive Edge

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Background

- LawVision history
- · Work in project and practice management
 - -2000 + trained in LPM
 - Over one hundred firms assisted with change management for practice or project management
 - Chair of largest, most prestigious conference on this subject
- Approach to / philosophy about legal project management – not PM "lite"
 - Input of academic institutions and PMPs
- LPM just a "fad" or the "new normal"?



What is Legal Project Management?

- A process for defining, planning, executing and evaluating matters / projects
- A more proactive, disciplined approach to the management of legal matters which includes application of specific knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to achieve project objectives
- Underlying principle: effective communication and setting and meeting of expectations



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How the client explained it



How partner envisioned it
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What the partner heard



How it was billed



How the lawyers planned it



Lawyer & client communications



How the matter was managed



What the client really wanted

Key Elements

- Upfront discussion of client's objectives / expectations
- Detailed "scoping" of the work whether on an AFA or to align with project budget
- Breaking down the work into component parts to develop more accurate budgets
- Development of budgets <u>and</u> management of the matter <u>to</u> the budgets
- · More active management of the matter throughout
 - Enhanced project team communication
 - Enhanced client communications
- · Dealing with scope changes throughout a matter
- · End of matter debriefing / lessons learned

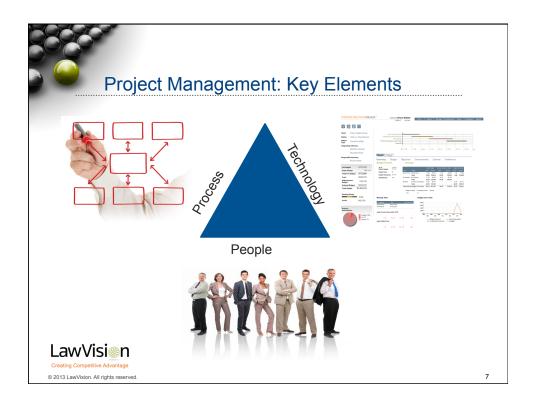


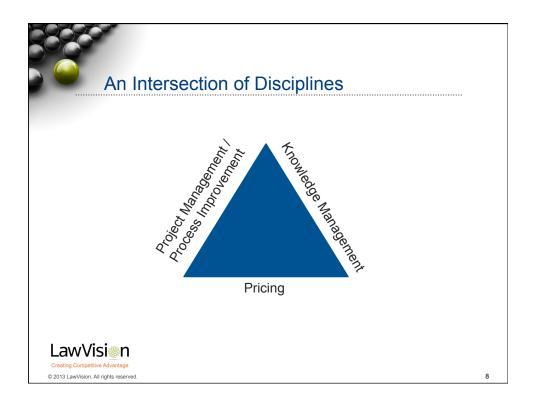
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What is Legal Process Improvement?

- Legal process improvement is a methodology for refining legal processes to improve <u>efficiency</u> and <u>effectiveness</u> to the benefit of the firm and / or clients
 - An approach by which you identify, analyze, and improve existing <u>processes</u> within the <u>organization</u> to meet new <u>goals</u> and objectives
- Underlying principle: identifying waste to streamline processes and / or make them more consistent in quality









- Changing client demands and expectations
 - Segmentation / disaggregation of work
- Increasing competition for legal work
- Changing profit equation in law firms
- Project management use in almost every industry / company





Trends Driving Law Firms To Use Project Management Approaches (cont.)

- Changing client demands and expectations – pressure to lower costs
 - Critical for their companies to compete
 - Pressure on in-house counsel to reduce legal costs – just like in every other part of their business
 - Role of procurement and finance personnel
 - Expectation for increased efficiency without loss of quality
 - Increased emphasis on non-hourly pricing (AFAs) and budgets
 - Clients trying to drive more predictability for their legal spend





The Clients' Perspective

- 90% of General Counsel said they were under internal pressure from their Finance Directors or equivalent to provide better value, efficiency and cost reductions
- · Corporate legal budgets are flat or shrinking.
- Many industries experience a continual downward pressure on price of their products and now expect law firms to do the same.
- With demand for legal services essentially flat and an abundance of legal services providers, clients are driving law firms to change the way they do business and reduce costs.
- In one survey, 83% of general counsel indicated that the way legal services are provided has changed forever, not simply a temporary change during the recession.



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In-house Counsel, Global Power Company

"There is pressure on in-house legal departments to show that they: (1) add value (are not a cost center) and (2) can budget and control costs (like all the other parts of a business).

The day that outside counsel can say 'it will cost what it will cost [based on how long the matter takes]' is over."

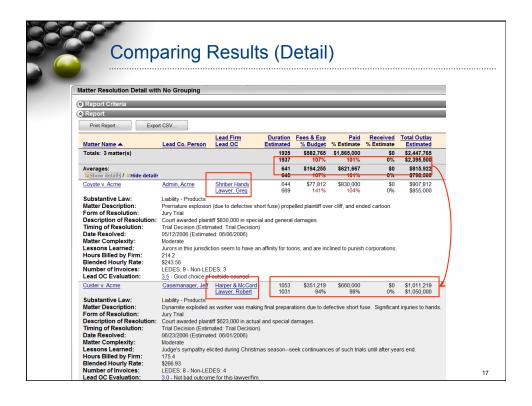


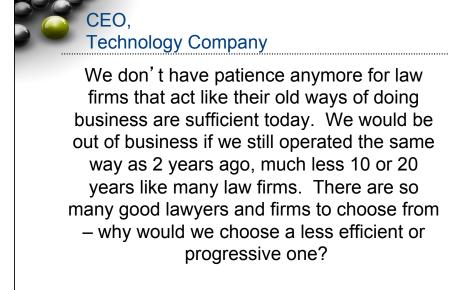






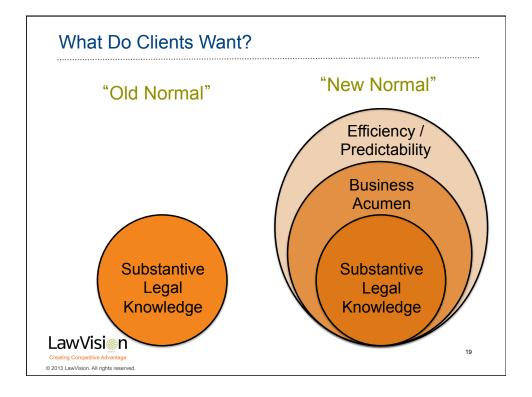






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Examples – What Are Clients Really Doing?

- Pushing law firms to provide more for less \$\$ because they are being measured by how much they can bring down costs of outside counsel
- Expecting law firms to assume more of the risks after all they hired you for your expertise in similar matters
- Expecting law firms to create economies of scale or efficiencies through handling of similar matters understanding that while some matters may be "first impression", most matters have many replicable pieces that can be quantified and better managed
- Expecting firms to pitch them using substance (case strategy and process), not simply marketing like bios and websites (that is the entry point)



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- Indicate the number of dedicated legal project managers employed by your firm.
- Indicate the number of dedicated legal project managers that your firm will commit to providing on our matters.
- Describe the key tasks performed by your firm's legal project managers.
- What were the quantifiable benefits achieved by utilizing legal project managers on these matters?



Language from a RFP from Major Corporation

"If the Responsible Attorney and appropriate Practice Group Head have determined that a project manager shall be utilized on a matter, only a project manager certified as a PMP from the Project Management Institute or other reputable certifying body, as determined by Legal & Compliance, may serve in such capacity. Project managers may bill on an alternative fee basis or an hourly rate basis, subject to any volume discount agreements then in effect with [Name of Organization] and Outside Counsel, if Outside Counsel is a Sourced Law Firm. Approved project management tasks shall be billed to the appropriate ABA Code series L600."



In-house Counsel, Global Pharmaceutical Company

"Law firms have always insisted that if you cut costs, you cut quality. But, if they invested in knowledge management and better technology and training, and their partners adapted, we believe they could increase their quality and cut costs. Maybe every firm can't be that innovative or progressive but if a few are, the rest will have to wake up."



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Trends Driving Law Firms To Use Project Management Approaches (cont.)

- Increasing Competition for Legal Work
 - Increasing use of non-law firm suppliers (outsourcing)
 - Aggressive price competition from law firms at all levels of the market
 - Some leading law firms pushing clients and competitors toward LPM
 - RFPs asking project management and process improvement or other efficiency initiatives
 - Increased need for real differentiation in a flat market
 - ° Opportunity for competitive advantage short- or long-term?
 - Grading of law firms by clients







- Changing profit equation in law firms
 - Lower demand for traditional legal services
 - Inability to rely on rate increases to maintain profitability
 - Loss of the "mid-sized firm" advantage
 - Need for greater productivity from firm resources to maintain or enhance profitability
 - Shift in clients' perceived value of legal work
- Recognition that the firm must be managed at the practice group and matter level to be profitable long-term
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Matters Evaluated at One Firm

- Analysis of matters in 2009-2011 with poor financial results.
- · Primarily hourly billed matters, not AFA's.
- · Matters not industry specific.
- Warning signs / red flags happen throughout the matter.



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Warning Signs – Prior to Being Hired

- Client fired prior attorneys or is suing prior attorneys
- Client did not pay prior attorney invoices
- Client informs firm that they expect to pay them out of the successful results of the case
- Key client personnel have little experience working with outside counsel.





- Client demands significant hourly discounted rates (20 -30%) but also demands seasoned attorneys be assigned
- Client does not request up front budget and no price expectations set with client.
- Internal estimate exceeds the amount the lawyers believe client will accept and so do not communicate
- Budget is prepared but is not used to manage actual time incurred on the matter.



Warning Signs – Communications

- Lack of internal communications
- Lead firm partner is unclear who the ultimate buyer / decision maker is in the client organization
- Limited communications with client at the outset of the matter (do not understand client objectives)



Warning Signs - Payment

- Monthly bills are held reluctance to communicate bad news
- Client goes several months without making any payment
- Client makes monthly payments that are significantly less than the monthly bills
- Client informs firm they cannot pay the invoices but they are in the process of obtaining financing



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What did these cases cost this firm?

- During 2008 July 2011 28 matters with pre-bill write downs (not discounts) and / or invoice write offs exceeding \$300,000 individually and amounted to \$16 million in total.
- Average write down / off = \$571,000 per case
- \$16 million in lost revenue potential





What matter and client management disciplines and tools could be employed to help prevent the poor financial outcomes and client relationship disasters in matters like these?



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Common Reasons for Write-offs / downs – Often Insufficient Project Management

- Communication
 - Lack of communication at outset of matter to clarify expectations
 - Assumptions not defined for scope of work
 - Lack of communication among project team to ensure no unnecessary work done
- Scope Changes
 - Lawyer does not discuss scope changes and impact on budget when they occur
 - Client assumed work was in the original budget because scope not clearly defined
- Budget is prepared but is not used to manage actual time incurred on the matter / not seen as a "cap" the way the client viewed it





Benefits to Firm / Team

- Improved profitability of matters
- · Greater client satisfaction
- Increased revenues from clients
- Enhanced risk management
- Greater differentiation from competitors
- Greater consistency across offices

Benefits to Client

- Greater predictability
- Improved communication / "no surprises"
- A more managed approach to legal work
- · On budget / on time
- · Greater efficiencies
- Enhanced quality of the work / greater consistency



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Bottom Line

- Clients want decreased legal spend and / or predictability
- Law firms want to maintain or increase profit margins in the new marketplace
- Matters need to be managed more actively to achieve both.





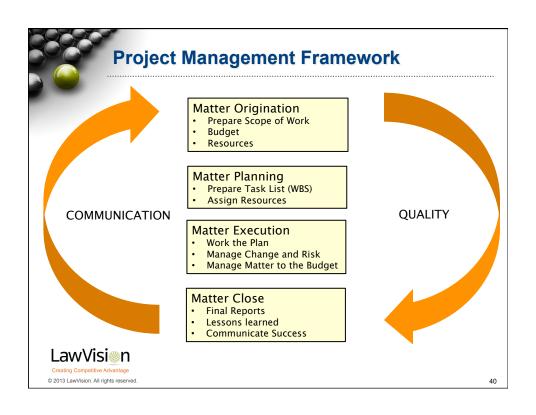
What trends do you see driving legal project management in your area of practice?

How can LPM help your firm provide value to clients?







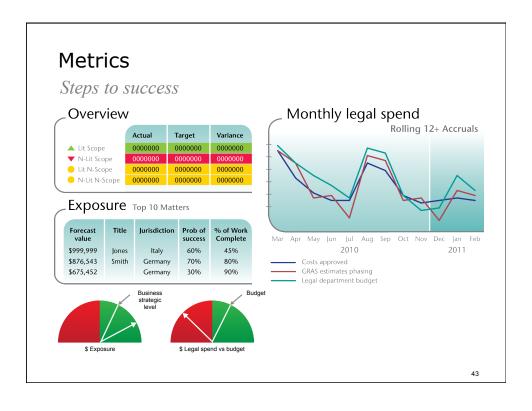




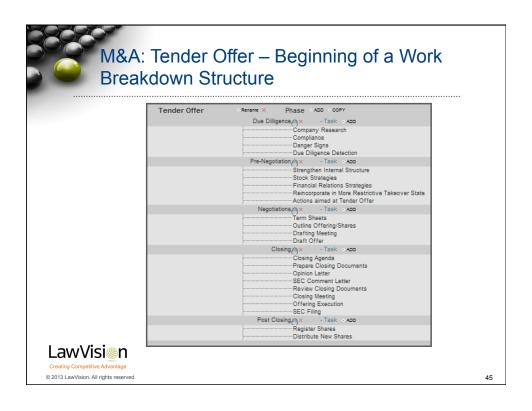
How Do You Implement These Key Elements?

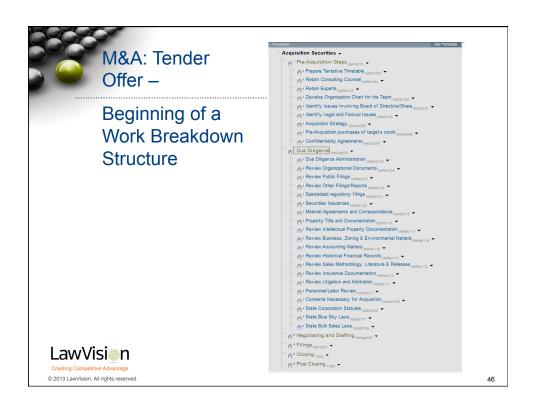
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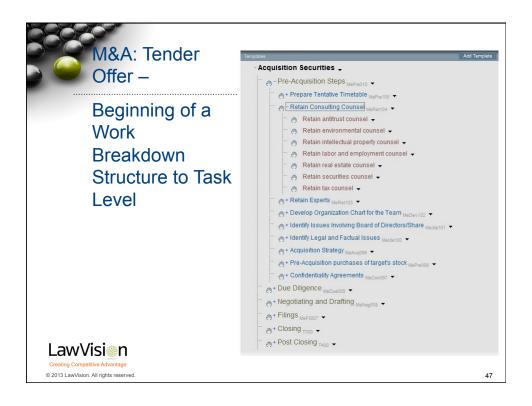


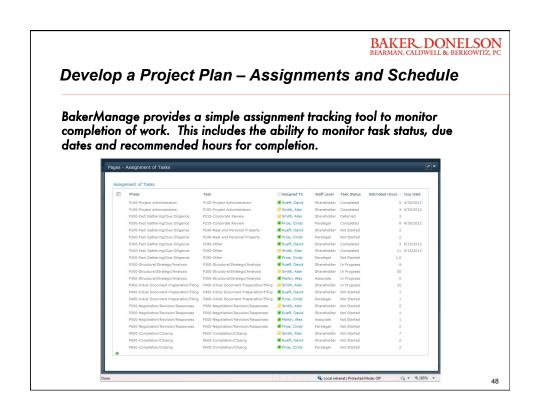


Develop a Project Plan – Identify Stakeholders Baker Manage captures and makes this information available to inside and outside counsel through the SharePoint collaboration site. • The Stakeholder list serves as a contact list and a clarification of roles • Evaluation of all Stakeholders presents opportunities to identify potential cost savings through shared responsibilities or vendors • Evaluation of all Stakeholders presents opportunities to identify potential cost savings through shared responsibilities or vendors

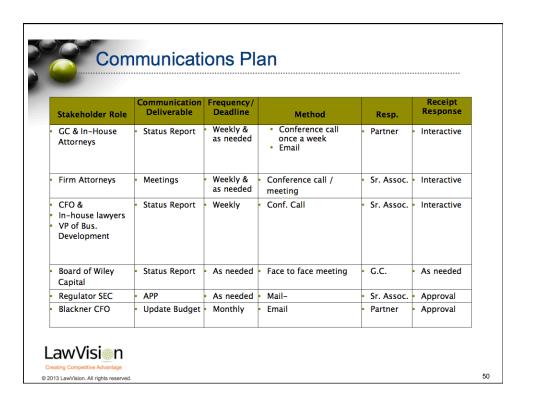








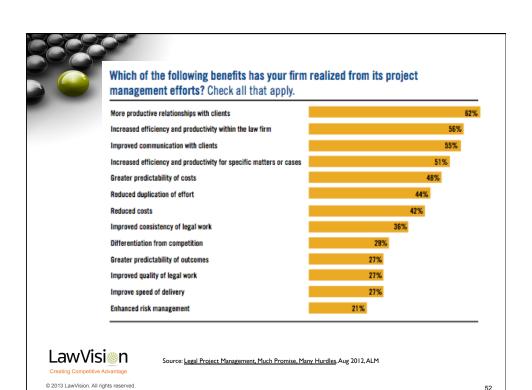




What Does Implementing LPM Require?

- Development of tools for budgeting, management of matters and monitoring
- Firm management support from the outset for firm-wide initiatives or pilots driven from firm level or more grass roots
- Training lawyers and other professionals and staff in LPM approaches
- · Behavioral shifts by lawyers and professionals
- Alignment of compensation incentives for profitable management of work
- Development of templates for different types of matters reusable assets for similar matters
- Integration of the matter management with practice group management, financial analysis and lawyer development







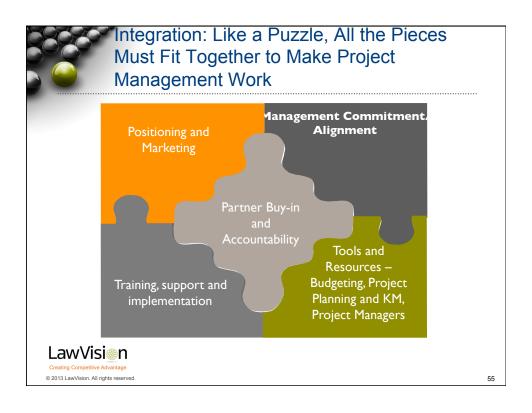
- Time spent developing budget, scoping and project plan expectation simply to win work
- "Service Delivery" as a method of differentiation
 - Process for more efficiently handling the work
 - Better understanding of client objectives and expectations
 - Delivery of work on time and on budget
 - Transparency to client of project course and outcomes
- Better budgeting and management of the work and project team
 reduced write-offs / downs and greater profitability

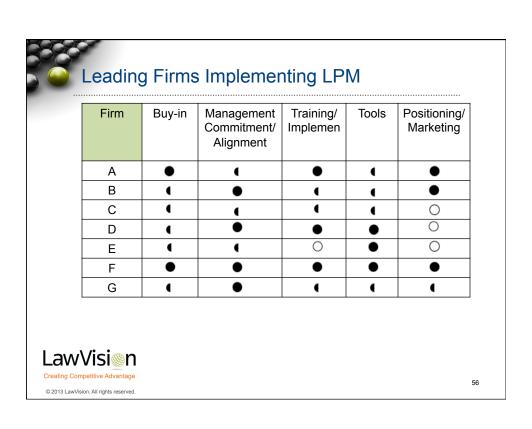


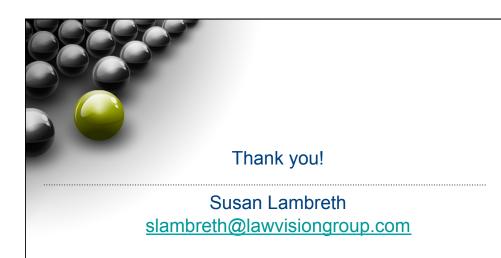
What's Different from A Year Ago?

- Continued lower demand for legal services has law firms increasingly aggressive in competing for work
- Law firms have tapped most of the easy areas of cost reduction / revenue enhancement – without major changes to their business model.
- Clients are increasingly asking about project management when hiring law firms
- Law firms that are implementing project management or other alternative delivery of services are winning business from law firms that are not
- Larger firms have been adopting changes more quickly than midsized firms and are competing on price with smaller firms











Examples of LPM Techniques

- Instead of just using Excel spreadsheets and yellow pads to make lists and map out costs, using tools for budgeting and project planning to:
 - Capture budgets created and manage to the budget (not just create it and put it in a file)
 - Re-use budgets for similar matters instead of starting from scratch
 - Know the costs of a "typical" deposition, expert witness preparation, draft of MSJ, etc.
 - Manage the cost and the profitability of the matter throughout the engagement not just evaluate it at the end
 - Provide clients 24 / 7 access to the budget and status of the matter
- Instead of hunting around the firm for prior work product, having it imbedded into the intranet / extranet site for a matter / client / project type
 - Where all members of a project team or practice group can access (unless password protected)





- Doing process "maps" of all the steps in a matter so that everyone on the team knows where matter stands, what their role is, what is next, etc.
 - Enables firms to cut steps or change staffing quickly to meet client's efficiency expectations or to manage to a fixed fee or cap
 - Helps ensure project team is on same page and reduces likelihood of redundancy, wasted work and miscommunication
 - Provides a way to educate clients about where a matter's costs arise, what can affect meeting the client's objectives, why changes in scope, schedule or timing affect budget or other results, etc.
 - Helps firms compete for work by showing their efficiencies



Examples of LPM Techniques (cont.)

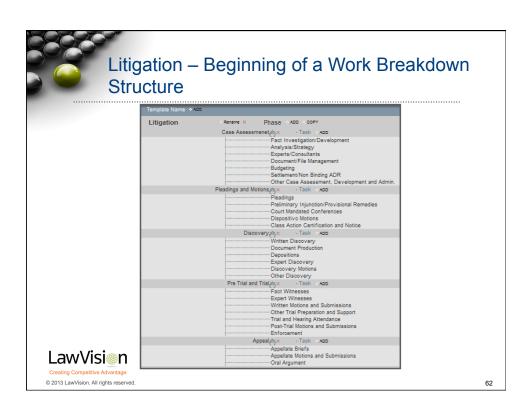
- Meeting with the client at the onset of a matter to present the project plan.
- Using extranets and similar tools that clients may consult for project status and information.
- Planning for regular updates with the project team, with the client and with both the project team and the client.
- Advising clients about issues or delays as they arise to permit client participation in course corrections.





- 55% (47%) of firms responding have a budgeting tool that compares budget to actual throughout a matter and 20% (9%) are developing one.
- 31% of respondents use project management software to manage projects (other than budgeting and financial software) – 2011.
- Approximately 30% of respondents require task codes for all matters and 35% for matters in certain practices (2011).
- 48% are requiring more detailed Engagement Agreements than in the past and, in more than 60%, they include a scope statement (2011).
- 45% require a budget for all major matters (2011).









Firm A – AmLaw 100 Firm

- Training of all lawyers in some basic PM and PI concepts
- In-depth training of a large group of selected legal professionals in PM and PI skills
- Buy in from a significant number of partners but still probably 25% not using in any meaningful way
- Basic tools for budgeting but sophisticated approaches to process mapping
- Strong links with knowledge management
- Some alignment with compensation incentives
- · Strong market position as a leader in this area



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Firm D – AmLaw 100 Firm (focused practice)

- Piloting of PM in several practice groups
- In-depth training of almost all partners and all senior associates in PM skills
- Very good tools for budgeting
- Terrific knowledge management support for leading edge model documents
- Beginning alignment with compensation incentives
- A little publicity in this area





- Piloting of PM in several practice groups
- In-depth training of new income partners in PM skills
- Beginning to get real buy in with the firm task force driving it, the pilot projects over past two years and a recent partner retreat with messages from firm chair and clients
- · Very basic tools for budgeting
- Developing links with knowledge management
- Beginning alignment with compensation incentives
- Beginning to get publicity as a leader in this area



A Mid-sized Firm

- Piloting of PM in several practice groups
- Very sophisticated tools for workflow and project management / advanced tools for budgeting
- Beginning to get real buy in with the roll out of the tools increasing percentage of matters using the tools
- Process mapping in selected practice areas
- Developing links with knowledge management
- Beginning alignment with compensation incentives
- Beginning to get publicity as a leader in this area



Concerns / Challenges in Implementing Project Management in Law Firms

- Natural cynicism of lawyers
- Time spent on project management who will pay for it? Who will do it?
- Making legal work too mechanical or rote
- Getting lawyers to work in teams
- Getting buy-in from people in the firm, especially senior partners
- · Lawyer discomfort with client communication
- · Perceptions of compensation incentives
 - Keeping billable hours high vs. increasing efficiencies
 - Individual production vs. matter profitability
- Investing in new approaches training, project managers, systems, etc.

