

Overcoming Counterproductive Behaviors that Impede Legal Automation

Automation initiatives have become a higher priority as legal departments seek to optimize their processes and reduce costs. However, there are certain counterproductive behaviors that can impede the success of these initiatives. This article discusses three such counterproductive behaviors and explores effective strategies to overcome them.

The first counterproductive behavior is resistance to change. Some people are comfortable with their current way of doing things and are resistant to change, even if it would be more efficient or effective. These inefficiencies often stem from a mindset of "we've always done it that way," where individuals prefer to adhere to familiar processes, even if they are not optimal. This can happen with paralegals and docketers if they are concerned that automation will reduce the importance of what they do or that their job will be replaced by automation. To overcome this behavior, it is critical to effectively communicate the benefits of automation to the legal staff, emphasizing how it will improve their processes rather than replace them. Also, involving the legal staff in the decision-making process and seeking their input during the planning and implementation stages of automation initiatives is important to create a sense of ownership and empowerment which increases their receptiveness to change.

The second counterproductive behavior is a reliance on outdated or inefficient tools. Many legal departments still utilize legacy systems or software that are ill-suited for automated legal workflows. For instance, using IP Management System software with an inefficient user interface or limited capabilities for automated data exchange with other systems can lead to extra effort and long-term inefficiencies. To overcome this behavior, it is crucial to evaluate the capabilities of current systems and assess their effectiveness. Legal operations managers need to stay up to date with the latest features in legal technology such as built in capabilities to automate routine tasks or interactive user interfaces. When considering software upgrades, prioritize systems with open APIs that facilitate automated data exchange between different systems, reducing the need for manual data entry. This approach not only opens up more opportunities to automate workflows but also enables seamless integration between systems within the legal department which ultimately enhances efficiency and productivity.

The third counterproductive behavior is relying on manual processes instead of automated ones. Some legal teams still heavily depend on manual processes for tasks that can be easily automated. This reliance on manual methods can result in unnecessary work, as well as errors and delays. To overcome this behavior, it is important to identify repetitive or manual-intensive tasks that are prime candidates for automation. Begin by pinpointing the most resource-intensive or time-consuming manual processes performed by the legal team.

Next, focus on redesigning these processes to incorporate legal technology effectively. This can involve leveraging existing tools within the organization or exploring new software and platforms available. The goal is to automate as much of the process as possible, and to ensure any necessary manual aspects are performed by the appropriate level person in the legal team.

Additionally, ensure that the legal team receives proper training and support to facilitate a smooth transition from the manual process to the automated process.

In conclusion, counterproductive behaviors can be a major obstacle to successful legal automation initiatives. This article has outlined three counterproductive behaviors and provided recommendations to overcome them.