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AI and the personal-injury practice

AI ALLOWS SMALL PI FIRMS TO ENHANCE THEIR EFFICIENCY AND LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD AGAINST LARGER COMPETITORS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept but a practical tool that can empower small personal-injury firms to compete effectively in today's legal market. By embracing AI, our firms can enhance efficiency, improve client outcomes, and compete effectively against larger competitors. While the initial investment in AI may seem daunting, the long-term benefits are substantial, making it a crucial investment for the future of small personal-injury practices.

The legal industry is undergoing a rapid transformation driven, in part, by AI, and we stand to gain significantly from its adoption. Traditionally, our firms have faced steep challenges competing against larger, resource-rich competitors. With limited staff, constrained budgets, and increasing caseloads, we often struggle to keep up with the demands of legal research, case management, and client communication.

AI presents an opportunity to level the playing field, enabling PI firms to enhance efficiency, improve client outcomes, and reduce operational costs. This article explores the key benefits of AI adoption and highlights some of the most promising AI-driven legal tools available to smaller firms along with a risk or two.

The benefits of AI for small personal-injury firms

Enhanced efficiency and automation

Small firms often juggle multiple cases with limited personnel, making time management critical. AI can automate labor-intensive tasks such as document review, legal research, and case filing, freeing attorneys and paralegals to focus on high-value strategic work.

For instance, AI-powered tools can automatically sift through legal documents, identify key clauses, and summarize case law. Of course, you must be vigilant to guard against what has become known as an AI hallucination (AI has been known to literally make up a case, citation and fact pattern, including the attorneys handling the "case.") AI can also handle basic tasks, such as scheduling appointments and managing client intake. It can also be automated, allowing firms to handle a higher caseload without additional staff.

Improved case management

AI-driven case-management software streamlines workflows, organizes documents, and tracks deadlines more efficiently than traditional manual systems. These platforms ensure that attorneys never miss important court dates, client meetings, or filing deadlines.

Additionally, AI-powered analytics can provide predictive insights into case timelines and potential outcomes, helping attorneys develop better strategies. For example, by analyzing historical case data, AI can estimate how long a case may take to settle and suggest the most effective negotiation tactics.

Faster and more accurate legal research

Conducting legal research can be time-consuming, but AI-powered research tools significantly accelerate the process. These platforms can quickly analyze case law, statutes, and regulations, helping attorneys build strong legal arguments.



AI legal research tools also improve accuracy by identifying relevant precedents that may otherwise be overlooked. They can assess legal trends and suggest strategies based on previous rulings, which is particularly beneficial for firms without extensive research teams.

Enhanced client communication

AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can handle routine client interactions, such as answering common legal questions, scheduling consultations, and providing case updates. This improves client satisfaction by ensuring timely responses while freeing up staff for more complex client interactions.

Moreover, AI can personalize communication by analyzing client data to anticipate needs and preferences. Personalized updates and tailored legal advice strengthen client relationships and improve overall service quality.

Data-driven decision making

AI can analyze vast amounts of case data to provide insights into successful litigation strategies, jury behavior, and settlement trends. Predictive analytics help attorneys evaluate the likelihood of winning a case, assess potential settlement amounts, and determine whether to go to trial.

By leveraging AI-powered insights, firms can make more informed strategic decisions, improving case outcomes and client satisfaction.

Cost savings and competitive advantage

Embracing AI helps firms stay competitive against larger firms that have more resources. By streamlining operations and improving efficiency, small firms can handle more cases with fewer resources, leveling the playing field against bigger competitors.

Reduced errors and increased accuracy

Human error in legal work can have serious consequences, from missing filing deadlines to misinterpreting case law. AI can reduce these risks by automating repetitive tasks, ensuring greater accuracy in document review, case filing, and legal research. But be mindful of the caveat above – of "hallucination." Broadly stated, AI has, on occasion, made up cases and fact patterns that appear to be real published opinions, but which, on a closer inspection, are not real.

Every month there is another example of firms, big and small, who unwittingly cite authority that simply does not exist. While human error has always been a problem, computer fabrication is an emerging challenge for lawyers relying on AI. The hallmark of this technology is “do not fully trust” and please “verify” before submitting.

Nevertheless, AI tools can identify inconsistencies in legal documents, flagging potential issues before submission. This reduces the risk of errors that could lead to unfavorable case outcomes or malpractice claims.

AI vendors for personal-injury firms

There are a growing number of AI-driven legal tools tailored for small firms. Below are some of the most effective AI vendors across key categories, along with reasons that small personal-injury firms should consider them.

Legal research platforms

LexisNexis

LexisNexis offers AI-powered legal research tools that analyze case law, statutes, and legal documents. The AI-driven search function allows attorneys to find relevant legal precedents quickly, saving valuable research time.

Westlaw

Westlaw uses AI to enhance legal research capabilities, providing predictive analytics and insights into legal trends. Its advanced search features help attorneys find the most relevant cases and statutes with greater accuracy.

Casetext

Casetext’s AI-powered research tool, CARA, helps attorneys find similar cases, analyze legal arguments, and generate relevant citations. It is a cost-effective alternative to traditional legal research platforms.

Case-management software

FileVine

FileVine is a cloud-based legal case-management software that centralizes case information, automates

workflows, and enhances collaboration for law firms. FileVine incorporates AI to assist with tasks like document analysis and information extraction.

This platform streamlines operations from document management to client communication, ultimately improving efficiency and organization. We use FileVine at Kiesel Law and have been very happy, for a myriad of reasons, with this product.

Clio

Clio is a cloud-based case-management platform that integrates with AI tools to streamline case tracking, document management, and client communication. Its automation features improve efficiency for smaller firms.

MyCase

MyCase offers comprehensive case management, billing, and client communication tools. It helps law firms manage their workload more efficiently while ensuring seamless client interactions.

PracticePanther

PracticePanther provides AI-powered case management with workflow automation, document tracking, and real-time client updates, making it a valuable asset for small firms handling multiple cases.

Document review and automation

Everlaw

Everlaw’s AI-powered e-discovery platform streamlines document review, using predictive coding and clustering to categorize relevant case information. It is particularly useful for firms dealing with large volumes of legal documents.

DISCO

DISCO is another AI-powered e-discovery platform that automates document review and legal research, reducing the time spent analyzing complex case materials.

LawyerBot

LawyerBot uses AI chatbots to answer frequently asked legal questions and assist with initial case intake, freeing attorneys to focus on complex legal work.

Predictive analytics and case evaluation

Premonition

Premonition analyzes litigation trends and judge behavior to predict case outcomes. This helps attorneys develop winning strategies based on historical data.

Lex Machina

Lex Machina provides AI-powered insights into litigation trends, helping firms evaluate case strengths and weaknesses, making it particularly valuable for settlement negotiations and trial strategies.

Conclusion

AI is no longer a luxury reserved for large law firms – it is a practical necessity for small personal-injury practices looking to stay competitive. By leveraging AI, small firms can streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and provide better client services, all while keeping costs under control.

From legal research and case management to predictive analytics and client communication, AI tools offer tangible benefits that allow small personal injury firms to level the playing field against larger competitors. The key to success lies in choosing the right AI solutions that align with the firm’s needs, budget, and growth strategy.

As AI technology continues to evolve, small firms that proactively integrate these tools will be well-positioned for long-term success in an increasingly competitive legal landscape. Be best positioned for success in the years to come.

Paul Kiesel’s practice is devoted to representing consumers in personal injury, class action, pharmaceutical and environmental tort litigation. He is a Past President of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. He writes and speaks on technology-related subjects and is a co-author of two legal treatises for LexisNexis, “California Pretrial Civil Procedure” and “California Civil Discovery.” 📖