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# LAW DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS SURVEY

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## The Transformative Fabric of Law Department Operations: **Technology is Foundational**

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Legal operations is all about optimizing the law department's ability to help grow the company. This requires a higher level of operational excellence, as evidenced by the embracing and reliance on innovation, increasing demand for automation of repetitive tasks and a workflow-centric approach. Simply put, law department operations professionals turn to technology to create operational wins.

The need to drive efficiencies and contain costs are two key reasons that the legal operations function is growing so quickly. That growth is no longer only in the Fortune 500 companies; smaller companies are saddling up as well.

Many believe, and rightfully so, that legal operations will be responsible for some of the biggest changes in the legal ecosystem. In fact, according to the Annual Law Department Operations Survey, 85 percent of LDO professionals believe that corporate law departments will be the primary driver of innovation and change in the legal sector. In fact, change is so prevalent in the minds of LDOs that 62 percent of them believe their jobs to be "primarily change management."

Technology will increasingly play a prominent role, as the only way for LDOs to fulfill their mission is by leveraging well-chosen technology solutions to automate processes, track legal spend and deliver key decision-ready information. Again according to the Survey, LDOs split their time on more than a dozen different tasks, leading with outside counsel management and technology (14 percent of their time each), law department administration (13 percent), process improvement (12 percent) and financial reporting (11 percent).

One good example is the contract management system that LDO Survey Advisory Board Member Aaron Van Nice implemented while at Baxter Healthcare Corporation, where the process was time consuming and lacked transparency and the law department had been perceived as a bottleneck.

To streamline the process, an input request app was created that allowed sales reps to submit requests for non-standard contract creation or redline review of standard agreements. Completing the fields, many of which were auto-populated, helped to automate, simplify and standardize the workflow. A dashboard tool with email options was also developed so anyone involved in the process can access the request and see where it is in the process. The dashboard eliminated the need for status updates. And the data collected showed that more than 80 percent of the cycle time was being spent by other parties — the law department had never, in fact, been the bottleneck. Automated systems, like the one implemented at Baxter, are often the force multiplier that allow the LDO to deliver on his or her mission while also allowing the law department to do more with less.

