



THE AI PLAYBOOK FOR LAW PRACTICES

Your guide to safe, governed, productive
AI adoption for law firms

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CHAPTER 01

Executive Summary

AI is already inside your firm. Here's what you need to know.

AI is already inside your firm. Your attorneys are already using it, whether you know it or not.

According to recent industry data, 75% of U.S. lawyers are using AI tools today, but only 25% have received any formal training on the ethical implications. They're pasting case details into free chatbots. They're running contract language through consumer platforms with no data protection guarantees. They're conducting legal research on tools that hallucinate citations 69% of the time. And 43% of law firms have no formal AI policy and no plans to create one.

The intentions are good. The exposure is enormous. And the stakes for law firms are higher than for almost any other type of business.

In February 2026, the *United States v. Heppner* ruling established that using consumer-grade AI platforms can waive attorney-client privilege by eliminating the reasonable expectation of confidentiality. That ruling examined provider terms of service that permitted data collection, retention, and model training, and found that confidentiality was compromised the moment the data was entered. ABA Formal Opinion 512 already made clear that lawyers have an ethical duty under Rule 1.1 to understand AI's benefits and risks, and under Rule 1.6 to protect client confidentiality when using any AI tool. Over 30 state bars have now issued their own AI guidance.

This isn't a technology problem. It's a professional responsibility problem. And the gap between "using AI" and "using AI ethically and effectively" is where most firms get stuck.

This playbook exists to close that gap.

Over the following chapters, you'll learn what AI actually is and what it can do for your practice today. You'll see how law firms are using AI to reclaim hours on document review, contract analysis, legal research, client intake, and dozens of other tasks that consume attorney and staff time. You'll understand the security, governance, and ethical questions you need to answer before scaling AI adoption, and you'll walk away with a clear, phased roadmap for getting there.

This playbook is a law firm leader's guide to making AI work inside your practice: safely, with structure, with measurable results, and in compliance with your professional obligations.

Framework IT has spent more than 16 years managing technology for small and mid-sized businesses across the United States, with law firms among our primary verticals. We've watched every major technology shift from cloud migration to cybersecurity to unified communications. AI is the next one, and it's moving faster than anything that came before it. We built Managed Framework AI because we saw our clients struggling with the same set of problems: they knew AI mattered, but they didn't know where to start, who to trust, or how to do it without creating new risks.

For law firms, those risks carry a weight that other industries don't face. Your data isn't just sensitive. It's privileged. Your obligations aren't just best practices. They're enforceable ethical rules. And your exposure isn't just a breach notification. It's a malpractice claim.

This playbook gives you the starting point. Managed Framework AI gives you the partner to execute it.

CHAPTER 02

About the Author



Adam Barney

President and Managing Partner, Framework IT

Adam Barney is President and Managing Partner of Framework IT, a premier managed IT and telecommunications firm based in Chicago. With more than 15 years of executive experience in managed services and telecommunications, Adam leads with a core philosophy that technology should be user-friendly and approachable, empowering businesses to thrive in their respective industries. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance and Business Administration from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude.

Since assuming the presidency in April 2022, Adam has led a team of over 40 professionals spanning sales, information technology, operations, marketing, human resources, and fulfillment. Under his leadership, Framework IT remains committed to its inverted-pyramid approach, which ensures clients' needs and aspirations are always the company's top priority.

"People say we're a technology company. I think we're a customer service organization first and foremost that serves companies' technology needs."

In recent years, Adam has spearheaded the adoption of artificial intelligence in Framework IT's internal operations and service delivery, positioning the company at the forefront of AI-driven IT management. He has pioneered the launch of Managed Framework AI to help clients implement AI and AI-based automation in their own businesses, enabling organizations to unlock new levels of efficiency and competitive advantage. Adam is also a founding member of The Forge AI Alliance of MSPs, an alliance of managed service providers working to accelerate the adoption of AI and automation in their own companies and those of their clients. He is a frequent speaker and panelist on AI adoption at industry events, sharing practical insights on how small and mid-sized businesses can implement AI safely and effectively.

Under Adam's leadership, Framework IT earned a spot on the **Inc. 500 Fastest Growing Private Companies in America** twice and the **Inc. 5000** list at least 5 times. The company ranked as one of the **Best and Brightest Places to Work in Chicago** for 5 consecutive years and in the **Nation** twice. Framework IT has maintained a BBB complaint-free record since 2008. Adam's insights have appeared in the **Harvard Business Review**, the **Washington Post**, and **Fox 32 Chicago**.

CHAPTER 03

AI Is Here. The Question Is How Your Firm Uses It.

Understanding the technology, the opportunity, and the risk

What Is AI, Really?

Strip away the hype and AI is a category of software that can process language, recognize patterns, generate content, and make decisions based on data. The most visible form of AI today is the Large Language Model (LLM), the technology behind tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini. These models were trained on massive amounts of text and can understand context, follow instructions, and produce human-quality writing, analysis, and code.

But AI goes well beyond a chatbot. Modern AI platforms combine multiple capabilities into a single environment:

Conversational AI (Chat). Ask questions, draft documents, summarize case files, brainstorm arguments, analyze data, and get research-backed answers in seconds. This is the capability most people encounter first, and it's immediately useful.

Workflow automation. Connect AI to your existing business systems (your practice management software, email, document management, file storage, and more) and build automated processes that run on their own. No coding required. A visual, drag-and-drop builder lets anyone design multi-step automations.

AI agents. Purpose-built AI assistants trained for specific tasks: conducting legal research, reviewing contracts, triaging NDAs, writing SOPs, analyzing financial statements, generating marketing content, and dozens more. Agents go beyond chat by following structured processes with built-in guardrails.

AI phone agents. Voice-based AI that handles inbound and outbound calls, understands natural language, routes calls intelligently, and integrates with your business systems. Available around the clock.

Why This Matters Now for Law Firms

The window for competitive advantage is open, but it is narrowing. 42% of law firms are now using AI, up from 26% in 2024. Among firms with 21 or more attorneys, only 17% report feeling no pressure to adopt. And an emerging trend is accelerating the timeline: small and midsized firms are deploying AI faster than large firms, using it to compete on complex matters without the overhead that slows bigger organizations down.

Consider the math. If AI saves a single attorney 30 minutes per day on routine tasks like research, document review, and drafting, that is 10 hours per month, or 120 hours per year. At a blended billing rate of \$300 per hour, that is capacity worth \$36,000 annually from a single attorney. For non-billable work (client intake, conflict checks, administrative tasks), the savings show up as reduced overhead and faster turnaround.

Now multiply that across a firm of 10 or 15 attorneys. The numbers get serious fast.

Firms reporting revenue growth after AI implementation reach 52%, with some seeing 11-20% increases. Time savings of 6-20% weekly, averaging about 10% of the workweek, enable a shift from routine work to the high-value strategic work that clients actually pay premium rates for.

The Real Risk Is Not AI. It Is Unmanaged AI.

The biggest threat to your firm doesn't come from AI itself. It comes from attorneys and staff already using AI without your knowledge, approval, or oversight.

This is called Shadow AI, and it's happening in most firms today. Associates are pasting case details into free chatbots. Paralegals are running contract language through consumer tools with no data protection guarantees. Staff are uploading client documents to platforms whose terms of service allow the provider to use that data for model training.

The intentions are good. The risk is enormous. And for law firms, the consequences go far beyond what a typical business faces.

Privilege waiver. The *Heppner* ruling made clear that entering client information into consumer AI tools can waive attorney-client privilege. If the platform's terms of service allow data collection, retention, or training, the reasonable expectation of confidentiality is gone. That privilege doesn't come back.

Ethical violations. ABA Formal Opinion 512 established that attorneys must understand AI's benefits and risks (Rule 1.1, Competence), protect client data from exposure through AI tools (Rule 1.6, Confidentiality), and supervise AI use within their firms with adequate understanding and accountability (Rules 5.1 and 5.3, Supervisory Duties). Over 30 state bars have issued their own guidance, and the requirements are only getting more specific.

Malpractice liability. Generic AI models hallucinate legal information at a rate of 69%. If an attorney relies on fabricated case citations or incorrect legal standards from an unvetted tool, the liability falls on the attorney and the firm. Courts have already sanctioned lawyers for filing AI-generated briefs with nonexistent citations.

75%

of U.S. lawyers using AI today

43%

of firms with no AI policy

\$1.24M

avg breach cost from unmanaged AI

69%

hallucination rate in generic AI

Banning AI doesn't work, and it puts your firm further behind. Attorneys will use it anyway, just without guardrails. The real move is replacing unmanaged, ungoverned AI usage with a structured, partner-led program. Same productivity. Zero exposure. Full compliance with your ethical obligations.

CHAPTER 04

What AI Can Do for Your Law Practice

Practical applications for the work your firm does every day

AI is a set of tools your attorneys and staff can use today, for work they're already doing, to get better results in less time. The key is knowing where to point it.

Below is a practical look at how AI applies across law firm operations, starting with the legal work that defines your practice and extending to the business functions every firm needs to run well.

Legal Research

Legal research is one of the most time-intensive activities in any practice, and one of the areas where AI delivers the most immediate value. AI can conduct preliminary research across publicly accessible sources with confidence scoring, multi-jurisdictional coverage, and structured citation verification. It won't replace an attorney's judgment, but it dramatically compresses the time between "I need to find relevant authority" and "here are the cases, statutes, and secondary sources worth reviewing."

For a small or midsized firm, where attorneys often handle their own research without dedicated research staff, AI turns a 3-hour research sprint into a 30-minute guided session. The attorney still evaluates the results. The AI handles the legwork.

Document Review and Analysis

Document review accounts for over 80% of litigation spend, an estimated \$42 billion annually across the industry. Even for firms that don't handle high-volume litigation, the ability to quickly review, summarize, and extract key provisions from documents is a daily need.

AI can process contracts, pleadings, discovery documents, and correspondence to identify key clauses, flag inconsistencies, summarize positions, and extract structured data. 66% of personal injury firms are planning to deploy AI for document review and case summaries. The technology applies equally to corporate, real estate, employment, and estate planning practices.

Contract Review and Drafting

Attorneys spend an average of 3.2 hours per contract on review and analysis. For a firm managing 500 contracts annually, that's 200 working days of attorney time devoted to contract review alone.

AI can analyze agreements against your firm's standard positions, flag deviations from acceptable terms, generate redlines, and provide plain-language summaries of business impact. It can also draft standard contracts, engagement letters, and amendments from templates, producing a first draft that an attorney refines rather than builds from scratch. 78% of corporate legal departments and law firms are actively using, evaluating, or exploring AI for contract analysis.

Client Intake and Conflict Checks

Client intake is a high-volume, process-driven function that directly affects both revenue and risk. AI can automate intake workflows: collecting initial client information, running preliminary conflict checks against your records, routing matters to the appropriate practice group, and generating new matter memos.

For small and mid-sized firms where the managing partner or office administrator handles intake personally, this automation frees up hours of weekly administrative time and reduces the risk of missed conflicts or slow follow-up that costs the firm new business.

Brief Drafting and Legal Writing

AI won't write your briefs for you, but it will get you 60-80% of the way to a first draft. Given the facts, legal standard, and your firm's position, AI can produce structured legal arguments, identify potential counterarguments, suggest supporting authority, and format the document to court specifications. The attorney adds the judgment, the strategy, and the final polish.

For motion practice, demand letters, client memoranda, and routine correspondence, AI can cut drafting time in half while maintaining consistency across the firm's work product.

Billing, Timekeeping, and Practice Management

Law firms live and die by accurate timekeeping and billing. AI can analyze time entries for consistency and completeness, flag entries that may be challenged on review, generate narrative descriptions from brief notes, and identify billing patterns across matters or attorneys. It can also pull data from your practice management system to generate client status reports, matter summaries, and workload analyses.

Compliance and Regulatory Monitoring

For firms practicing in regulated industries (healthcare, financial services, employment, environmental), AI can run compliance checks against applicable regulations, identify required approvals, surface risk areas, and monitor for regulatory changes. This is particularly valuable for small firms where staying current on regulatory developments is a constant challenge.

Firm Operations: The Business Side

Your firm isn't just a legal practice. It's a business. AI applies to the operational functions that keep the firm running, and small to midsized firms often benefit the most because these functions are handled by people wearing multiple hats.

Marketing and business development. Draft blog posts, LinkedIn content, client alerts, and newsletter copy grounded in your firm's actual expertise. Build thought leadership without pulling attorneys away from billable work. Generate professional responses to online reviews.

Human resources. Create job descriptions, evaluate candidates, structure interview plans, build onboarding checklists, and draft performance reviews. For firms with 10 to 50 employees and no dedicated HR team, AI handles the process so the office administrator or managing partner doesn't have to start from scratch every time.

Finance. Analyze P&L statements, build forecasts, prepare journal entries, and run variance analysis. AI handles the repetitive analytical work so your bookkeeper or controller can focus on the judgment calls.

Administrative operations. Build and document standard operating procedures, create project plans for firm initiatives, and develop change management plans for technology transitions or office moves.

CHAPTER 05

AI Agents: Your Digital Workforce

Purpose-built assistants that go beyond the chatbot

Beyond the Chatbot

Most people's first experience with AI is a chatbot: you type a question, you get an answer. That's useful, but it barely scratches the surface. The real power of enterprise AI lives in agents and automated workflows.

An AI agent is a purpose-built assistant designed for a specific task or process. Unlike a general chatbot, an agent comes pre-loaded with instructions, structure, guardrails, and domain expertise. It knows what questions to ask, what format to follow, what mistakes to watch for, and when to stop and ask for human input.

Think of the difference between handing a first-year associate a blank legal pad and handing them a detailed research memo template with step-by-step instructions. Both can get the work done. Only one does it consistently, every time, without missing steps.

What Makes an Agent Different from a Chat?

Structure. An agent follows a defined process. A legal research agent, for example, doesn't just "look up some cases." It classifies the research by risk level, applies confidence scoring to its findings, verifies citations, provides multi-jurisdictional coverage, and explicitly flags when it is operating outside its reliable knowledge. It includes safeguards against the unauthorized practice of law and builds in conflict resolution protocols.

Guardrails. Agents include built-in quality controls. A contract review agent will analyze agreements against your firm's negotiation playbook, flag deviations, generate redlines, and provide business impact analysis. An NDA triage agent will classify incoming agreements as standard approval, counsel review, or full legal review, and catch embedded non-solicits, non-competes, or missing carveouts that a quick manual review might miss.

Consistency. When 10 different people in your firm use the same agent, they get consistently structured outputs. The quality doesn't depend on who wrote the prompt or how experienced they are with AI. A paralegal using the legal research agent gets the same structured, confidence-scored output as a senior associate.

Integration. Agents can connect to your business systems. They can read from your practice management platform, write to your document management system, pull data from your file storage, and trigger actions in other applications, all without manual copy-and-paste.

Workflows: Agents That Run Themselves

If an agent is a skilled assistant, a workflow is a skilled assistant that works on autopilot. Workflows connect multiple steps into automated processes that run on a schedule, respond to triggers, or execute on demand.

Examples relevant to law firms:

A workflow that monitors your intake inbox, extracts key matter details from prospective client inquiries, runs a preliminary conflict check, and routes the information to the appropriate attorney with a summary memo.

A workflow that pulls weekly billing data from your practice management system, identifies time entries that may need narrative improvement, flags unbilled time, and generates a partner review summary every Monday morning.

A workflow that processes incoming contracts, scores them against your firm's standard terms, flags high-risk provisions, and surfaces the results for attorney review with a prioritized exception list.

You build workflows using a visual, drag-and-drop interface. No coding required. You describe what you want, connect the data sources, define the steps, and let it run.

The Framework IT Standard Library: 100+ Ready-to-Use Agents and Workflows

When you deploy Managed Framework AI, you don't start from scratch. Framework IT has built a library of over 100 agents and workflows, purpose-built for the types of work our clients do every day. These are tools we've designed, tested, and refined based on years of working with small and mid-sized businesses.

For law firms, the most immediately relevant agents include:

Compliance Check. Runs compliance checks against applicable regulations, identifies required approvals, and surfaces risk areas before they become problems.

SOP Writer. Turns tribal knowledge into professional, audit-ready Standard Operating Procedures through structured interviews. Turns the procedures that live in your office administrator's head into documented, repeatable processes.

IT Policy Creator. Creates regulation-aligned IT security and privacy policies with complete audit-ready evidence plans. Covers multiple regulatory frameworks relevant to legal practices.

Beyond the legal-specific tools, the library covers every major business function: sales and business development, marketing, finance and accounting, human resources, operations, and productivity. Your firm gets all 100+ agents on day 1 of deployment, in addition to 500+ community-built apps already available on the platform.

CHAPTER 06

The Major AI Models and Providers

One platform, 67 models, zero vendor lock-in

One Platform, 67 Models

One of the most common mistakes organizations make when adopting AI is locking themselves into a single provider. They sign up for ChatGPT and assume they have "covered AI." In reality, different AI models have different strengths, and the landscape changes fast.

Managed Framework AI, powered by Hatz AI, gives your firm access to 67 Large Language Models (LLMs) from the leading AI providers, all through a single secure platform. No separate subscriptions. No vendor lock-in. When a new model launches, it is added to the platform automatically.

The Major Providers

OpenAI builds the GPT family of models, including GPT-5, GPT-5.1, GPT-5.2, and GPT-5.4. These are the most widely recognized AI models and excel at general-purpose tasks including writing, analysis, coding, and creative work. GPT-5 Nano offers a cost-efficient option for high-volume, simpler tasks.

Anthropic builds the Claude family, including Claude 4.5 Sonnet, Claude 4 Opus, Claude 4.5 Opus, Claude Opus 4.6, and Claude Sonnet 4.6. Claude models are known for strong reasoning, nuanced analysis, and careful handling of complex instructions. They are particularly well-suited for legal work: long-form content, detailed research, and tasks that require following multi-step processes with precision.

Google builds the Gemini family, including Gemini 2.5 Pro, Gemini 3 Pro, Gemini 3.1 Pro Preview, and Gemini Flash 3. Google's models bring strong multi-modal capabilities (handling text, images, and code together) and tight integration with Google's search and data infrastructure. Gemini 3.1 Flash is an excellent cost-efficient option.

Meta builds the Llama family of open-source models, including Llama 4 Maverick and Llama 4 Scout. These models offer strong performance at lower cost and represent Meta's commitment to open AI development.

xAI builds Grok 3 and Grok 4, high-capability models with strong reasoning and conversational abilities.

Amazon offers Nova Micro and Nova Lite, cost-efficient models well-suited for high-volume, routine tasks where speed matters more than peak capability.

Specialized models include advanced reasoning models designed for mathematical problems, coding challenges, and multi-step logical reasoning.

How to Choose the Right Model

You don't need to become an AI model expert. The practical guidance is straightforward:

High-stakes work (client deliverables, legal research, contract analysis, strategic memos): Use frontier models from OpenAI, Anthropic, or Google. They cost more per query but produce the highest quality output. For legal work specifically, Claude and GPT-5 tend to excel at the detailed, structured reasoning that legal analysis demands.

High-volume work (routine drafting, simple Q&A, data formatting, internal communications): Use value models from Amazon, Meta, or the faster tiers from Google and OpenAI. They are significantly cheaper and fast.

Image generation: The platform includes Nano Banana (powered by Gemini) for creating custom images from text descriptions, in both standard and premium quality tiers. Useful for marketing materials, presentations, and client-facing content.

A good rule of thumb: start with a frontier model to get the quality right, then test whether a cheaper model can produce comparable results. Often it can, especially for simpler tasks.

The power of model flexibility: switch between 67 models with one click. No new subscriptions. No rebuilds. Just better results.

Built-in Image Generation

Managed Framework AI includes Nano Banana, the platform's image generation capability. Describe what you want to see, and it creates a custom image in seconds. Two tiers are available:

Nano Banana 2 (Gemini 3.1 Flash Image): Fast, cost-efficient image generation with real-time web search knowledge, precision text rendering, and translation for marketing mockups.

Nano Banana Pro (Gemini 3 Pro Image): Premium quality output with high-resolution options (up to 4K) and legible stylized text generation for infographics, menus, diagrams, and marketing assets.

No design skills or stock photo subscriptions required. For firm websites, attorney bios, event promotions, and thought leadership content, image generation eliminates the bottleneck of waiting on a designer or paying for stock photography.

CHAPTER 07

Prompt Engineering: Getting Better Results from AI

The skill that multiplies everything else

The Skill That Multiplies Everything Else

AI is only as good as the instructions you give it. A vague prompt produces a vague answer. A specific, well-structured prompt produces output that is genuinely useful, sometimes startlingly so.

Prompt engineering is the practice of writing effective instructions for AI, and it's a communication skill more than a technical one. Attorneys already have this skill. You write precise instructions for a living. The same clarity you bring to a jury instruction or a contract definition translates directly to AI prompts.

The Fundamentals

Be specific about what you want. Instead of "Research employment law," try "Research the current standard for establishing a hostile work environment claim under Title VII in the Seventh Circuit. Focus on cases from 2020 forward. Include the elements the plaintiff must prove, any recent shifts in how courts evaluate severity and pervasiveness, and note any circuit splits."

The more context you provide, the better the output. Include details about the jurisdiction, the legal standard, the purpose of the research, and any constraints.

Assign a role. AI performs better when you tell it who to be. "You are a senior litigation associate at a midsized firm with 12 years of experience in employment law" produces dramatically different output than a bare request to "help me with this case."

Provide examples. If you want output in a specific format or style, show the AI what good looks like. Paste in a previous memo, a brief structure you want replicated, or a writing sample that matches your firm's voice. AI is excellent at pattern matching.

Break complex tasks into steps. Instead of asking AI to "draft a motion to dismiss," walk it through the process: "First, identify the applicable legal standard for a 12(b)(6) motion in this jurisdiction. Then outline the strongest arguments for dismissal based on these facts. Then draft the argument section, addressing each count separately." Step-by-step instructions produce step-by-step quality.

Iterate, don't start over. Your first prompt rarely produces a perfect result. That's normal. Refine the output by giving follow-up instructions: "Make the tone more direct." "Add a section addressing the statute of limitations defense." "Shorten each paragraph to 3 sentences max." Iteration is faster than starting from scratch.

Advanced Techniques

Chain of thought prompting. Ask AI to show its reasoning before giving a final answer. "Walk me through your analysis step by step before providing your recommendation." This produces more thoughtful, accurate outputs and makes it easier for the reviewing attorney to spot errors in the reasoning.

Few-shot prompting. Provide 2 or 3 examples of the input-output pattern you want, then ask AI to follow the pattern with new input. This is especially powerful for standardizing formats across your firm, such as client memo structure, demand letter format, or research summary templates.

Constraint-based prompting. Tell AI what not to do. "Do not cite any case without providing the full citation. Do not speculate beyond the facts provided. Do not exceed 500 words." Constraints sharpen the output and prevent common problems, including the hallucination problem that makes unguarded AI risky for legal work.

Template prompts. Build reusable prompt templates for tasks your firm performs regularly. A standardized prompt for drafting client status updates, summarizing depositions, or researching a specific type of claim ensures consistent quality across the firm. When someone builds a prompt that works, save it and share it.

CHAPTER 08

AI Security, Privacy, and Governance for Law Firms

Protecting your firm, your clients, and your license

Protecting Your Firm, Your Clients, and Your License

Security is the foundation everything else sits on. Every other benefit of AI, the productivity gains, the cost savings, the competitive advantages, means nothing if client data is exposed, privilege is waived, or your firm faces a bar complaint because someone pasted case details into an unsecured tool.

For law firms, governance isn't optional. It's an ethical obligation. This chapter covers the governance framework your firm needs, the professional responsibility rules that apply, and the security architecture that Managed Framework AI provides.

The Shadow AI Problem in Law Firms

Shadow AI is probably already happening in your firm: attorneys and staff using AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Copilot without your knowledge, approval, or oversight.

The risk for law firms is categorically different from the risk for other businesses. When an attorney pastes client information into a consumer AI tool, the firm faces 3 simultaneous exposures:

- 1. Privilege waiver.** The *United States v. Heppner* ruling (February 2026) established that consumer-grade AI platforms waive attorney-client privilege by eliminating the reasonable expectation of confidentiality. The court examined provider terms of service that permitted data collection, retention, and model training, and found confidentiality compromised. Once privilege is waived, it doesn't come back.
- 2. Ethical violation.** ABA Formal Opinion 512, along with guidance from over 30 state bars, makes clear that attorneys must understand the risks of AI tools before using them (Rule 1.1), protect client information from disclosure through AI platforms (Rule 1.6), and supervise their firm's AI use with adequate understanding and accountability (Rules 5.1 and 5.3). An attorney who uses a consumer AI tool on client matters without understanding the platform's data practices is not meeting these obligations.
- 3. Malpractice liability.** Generic AI models hallucinate legal information 69% of the time. If an attorney relies on fabricated citations, incorrect legal standards, or inaccurate factual claims from an unvetted tool, the liability falls on the attorney and the firm. Multiple courts have already sanctioned lawyers for AI-generated filings containing nonexistent case citations.

When your cyber insurance carrier, auditor, or bar disciplinary authority asks how your firm governs AI, you need a documented, auditable answer. Not a shrug. A policy, a platform, and a paper trail.

The 6 Pillars of AI Governance for Law Firms

1. Policy. A written AI use policy defining approved tools, prohibited data types, and acceptable use cases. For law firms, this policy must specifically address which categories of client data may and may not be used with AI tools, which platforms are approved for which types of work, and how the policy maps to the firm's ethical obligations under the applicable Rules of Professional Conduct. This doesn't need to be a 50-page document. It needs to exist, be communicated, and be enforceable.

2. Client consent. This is unique to legal practices. ABA guidance establishes that informed client consent is required before using AI tools on client matters. Standard boilerplate in engagement letters is insufficient. Your firm needs a defined protocol for when and how consent is obtained, what clients are told about the AI tools in use, and how that consent is documented. Many firms are updating their engagement letters to include AI use provisions.

3. Access control. Role-based permissions ensuring the right people have access to the right AI capabilities. A first-year associate shouldn't have the same platform access as a managing partner. Staff should have different capabilities than attorneys. A well-designed permission structure prevents confusion, limits risk, and ensures appropriate guardrails.

4. Data protection. Contractual zero-data-training guarantees and Data Processing Agreements (DPAs) with every AI provider. This is non-negotiable for law firms. If the platform's provider can use your prompts for model training, your client data is exposed and privilege is at risk. Your platform must guarantee in writing that your data is never used to train any public AI model.

5. Auditability. Full, searchable logs of who used AI, what prompts were entered, and what was returned. For law firms, this isn't just a governance best practice. It's the evidence you need to demonstrate ethical compliance if questioned by a bar authority, a court, or a client. If you can't produce an AI usage report when asked, you have a gap.

6. Training. Ongoing education so your policies are understood and followed, not quietly worked around. For attorneys, this includes the ethical dimensions of AI use, not just the technical ones. A policy memo doesn't count. Real training means structured onboarding, recurring support sessions, and a firm culture where people know the rules and the reasons behind them. Some states, including New York, are now requiring AI-specific CLE credits.

The Security Architecture Behind Managed Framework AI

Managed Framework AI is built on Hatz AI, a platform that has achieved SOC 2 Type I, SOC 2 Type II, and SOC 3 certifications. Independent auditors have verified enterprise-grade security controls across infrastructure, application security, access management, encryption, monitoring, and incident response.

Your data is never used for AI model training. Managed Framework AI has contractual agreements with all AI model providers (OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, Meta, xAI, Amazon, and others) that explicitly prohibit training on your data. When you submit a prompt, your data is processed and returned. It isn't stored by the provider. It can't improve their models or appear in responses to other users. This is a contractual guarantee, not a policy suggestion. For law firms, this is the baseline requirement that separates an enterprise platform from a consumer tool, and it's the foundation for maintaining privilege.

Encryption. AES-256 encryption at rest (the same standard used by financial institutions and government agencies). TLS 1.2+ encryption in transit. Keys managed separately and rotated regularly.

Data isolation. Each organization's data is logically isolated. Your firm's data is never commingled with other clients' data. Administrators have full visibility into usage, workflows, and audit trails.

Compliance. The platform supports compliance with GDPR, CCPA, HIPAA (with BAA), and SOX. DPAs and BAAs are available upon request. The certifications satisfy most enterprise security questionnaires and provide evidence of due diligence for auditors and bar authorities.

24/7 monitoring. Security monitoring with intrusion detection and anomaly detection, backed by an incident response plan and regular third-party penetration testing.

How This Maps to Your Ethical Obligations

Ethical Rule	Obligation	How Managed Framework AI Addresses It
Rule 1.1 (Competence)	Understand AI benefits and risks	AI Champion Certification, Office Hours, ongoing training
Rule 1.6 (Confidentiality)	Protect client data from disclosure	Zero-data-training guarantee, encryption, data isolation
Rules 5.1/5.3 (Supervision)	Supervise firm's AI use	Role-based access, audit logs, admin controls
ABA Opinion 512	Formal AI governance	Written policy, structured adoption, documented oversight
<i>Heppner</i> (Privilege)	Maintain reasonable expectation of confidentiality	Enterprise platform with contractual data protections

CHAPTER 09

Your AI Adoption Roadmap: The Crawl-Walk-Run Framework

From zero to measurable ROI

From Zero to Measurable ROI

The firms that succeed with AI follow a deliberate methodology, one that meets attorneys and staff where they are, builds confidence through early wins, and progressively expands capability.

Gartner research shows 80% of AI licenses go unused without structured adoption support. The Crawl-Walk-Run framework makes sure your investment produces results, not shelfware.

Why Crawl-Walk-Run?

Firms that rush AI deployments encounter the same problems: low adoption, confused attorneys, and an inability to prove value. The Crawl-Walk-Run model solves this by resolving governance and ethics questions first, building confidence through early wins, developing internal expertise at each phase, and scaling sustainably once the foundation is solid.

Crawl-Walk-Run is about going smart, not slow. The fastest path to transformational AI outcomes runs through a foundation of trust, capability, and organizational readiness.

Phase 1: Crawl — Building the Foundation

Timeline: Weeks 1-4

The Crawl phase is about laying the groundwork. Before anyone builds a workflow or automates a process, the firm needs to answer fundamental questions: Who is allowed to use AI, and under what rules? How will access be governed? How do we protect privilege and comply with our ethical obligations?

This phase may feel administrative, but it is indispensable. Firms that skip these steps invariably circle back to them later, usually under pressure, after a bar inquiry or a stalled rollout.

- 1. Establish an AI Acceptable Use Policy aligned to bar rules.** Every AI journey begins with governance. Before the platform is turned on for a single user, create or update a formal AI Acceptable Use Policy covering approved tools, prohibited data types, acceptable use cases, and the firm's position on using AI for client work. Map the policy to your state bar's AI guidance and the ABA Model Rules.
- 2. Update engagement letters and establish client consent protocols.** Define how and when the firm will obtain informed client consent for AI use on client matters. Update your standard engagement

letter to include AI use provisions. Establish clear guidelines for what clients need to know and how consent is documented.

3. Define roles, permissions, and your user structure. Define who will use the AI platform and what they will be able to do. A typical law firm role structure includes administrators, builder users, general users, and chat-only users. Organize users into logical groups by practice group, role, or pilot cohort.

4. Onboard users and deploy general-purpose AI applications. Bring users onto the platform through a controlled, deliberate process. Deploy a curated set of general-purpose applications to all users: writing assistants, summarization tools, brainstorming aids, and research helpers.

5. Create a central AI resource hub. Build an internal site dedicated to AI resources: getting-started guides, links to the platform, your AI use policy, a place to log and celebrate wins, and contact information for support.

6. Identify and develop AI champions. Select 2 to 3 enthusiastic, tech-comfortable attorneys or senior staff and invest in their skills early. Champions should complete the AI Champion Certification to build credibility and depth.

7. Encourage basic platform exploration. Before asking teams to automate anything, give them space to explore. This is where most people have their first "this is actually useful" moment.

8. Establish an AI-forward culture from firm leadership. Partners must visibly commit by using the tools themselves and actively encouraging others to experiment.

9. Launch recurring support sessions. Framework IT's Office Hours provide live, low-pressure sessions where users get hands-on coaching, troubleshoot prompts, and share discoveries.

By the end of Crawl: AI use policy in place and aligned to bar rules, engagement letters updated, users onboarded and exploring, champions developing expertise, and firm leadership visibly backing the effort.

Phase 2: Walk — Guided Exploration and First Wins

Timeline: Months 1-4

The Walk phase is where AI moves from curiosity to capability. The firm is ready to tackle real workflows with guidance. This phase is defined by intentional, supported experimentation: selecting the right problems, building solutions collaboratively, and measuring results.

1. Review and deploy pre-built applications. Review the library of available agents and workflows and deploy the ones relevant to your firm's practice areas. The Compliance Check, SOP Writer, and IT Policy Creator agents are natural starting points.

2. Customize applications for your practice groups. Introduce specialized applications tailored to specific practice areas. A litigation group will have different priorities than a transactional group.

3. Identify your first pilot workflow. The ideal pilot is high value, low complexity, visible, and measurable. Good candidates for law firms include client intake processing, standard contract review, research memo drafting, or billing narrative cleanup.

4. Develop the AI solution with guidance. Build the pilot as a collaborative effort with your champions and your Framework IT team.

5. Test with a controlled pilot group. Deploy to a single practice group or a handful of volunteers first.

6. Measure ROI and document your first win. Measure results against your baseline. This first documented win turns skeptics into supporters.

7. Maintain a living use case repository. Capture every AI use case in a structured document.

By the end of Walk: Legal-specific AI applications deployed to practice groups, first pilot automation completed and measured, ROI documented, and a repeatable process established for future use cases.

Phase 3: Run — Scaling, Independence, and Continuous Improvement

Timeline: Months 4-6+

The Run phase marks the transition from guided experimentation to firm-wide self-sufficiency. The guardrails are still in place, but the firm is driving.

- 1. Develop a power users program.** Identify attorneys and staff who have demonstrated strong AI skills and willingness to help others.
- 2. Explore custom integrations.** Connect AI to your practice management system, document management platform, billing system, and communication tools.
- 3. Formalize business case analysis.** Assess expected time savings, billable hour recovery, cost reduction, and implementation complexity for each proposed AI initiative.
- 4. Enable proactive workflow discovery.** The shift from "tell me what to automate" to "here is what we want to automate next" is one of the clearest signs of a mature AI culture.
- 5. Build custom AI applications.** Your team is now capable of building custom agents and workflows beyond the standard library.
- 6. Execute broader deployments.** Roll out successful solutions to additional practice groups, offices, or user groups.
- 7. Track ongoing value.** Continuously monitor adoption rates, time savings, billable hour recovery, and user satisfaction.
- 8. Establish a continuous improvement loop.** Create a recurring forum where leadership and power users review metrics, prioritize new use cases, address governance updates, and plan upcoming training.

By the end of Run (which never truly ends): Your firm is building and deploying AI solutions independently, tracking measurable value across practice groups, and continuously identifying new opportunities. AI is no longer a project. It is part of how your firm works.

CHAPTER 10

Managed Framework AI: The Complete AI Adoption Program

Not a software subscription. A managed AI adoption program.

Not a Software Subscription. A Managed AI Adoption Program.

Managed Framework AI is a full managed AI adoption program that combines the most powerful multi-model AI platform available with a proven adoption methodology, structured training, and the ongoing guided support that turns platform access into measurable business outcomes.

You get enterprise-grade tools, governance, and a named Framework IT team accountable for your results.

Three Pillars: Safe. Governed. Productive.

Safe. We help law firms adopt AI in a way that reduces risk around privilege waiver, data exposure, ethical violations, and policy misalignment, so that partners can approve AI with confidence and attorneys can use it without creating invisible liability.

Governed. We give firm leadership and administration greater visibility, control, standards, and guardrails so AI use is managed intentionally rather than emerging chaotically. When a bar authority, cyber insurance carrier, auditor, or client asks "How is AI governed at your firm?" you have a documented, defensible answer.

Productive. We turn AI into practical outcomes through enablement, use-case alignment, workflow improvement, and measurable gains in efficiency and execution, so that the investment in AI compounds over time instead of quietly gathering dust.

What Is Included

Access to 67 AI Models. ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Llama, DeepSeek, and more. Never locked into one vendor. Automatic access to new models as they are released.

Unlimited Users. No per-seat pricing surprises. Every attorney and staff member included.

100+ Framework IT Standard Agents and Workflows. Purpose-built tools covering compliance, SOP writing, IT policy creation, plus sales, marketing, finance, HR, operations, and productivity. Ready on day 1, in addition to 500+ community-built apps on the platform. Easily cloned and customized for your organization.

No-Code Workflow Builder. Build powerful automations with drag-and-drop. 50+ native integrations plus thousands more through Zapier. Zero developers needed.

AI Phone Agent (ADEL). Voice AI for call handling: consistent, governed, available around the clock. For firms that miss new business inquiries after hours, this is an immediate fix.

AI Champion Certification. A structured training curriculum (approximately 90 minutes) that takes your team from first-time users to confident power users.

SOC 2 Type I and II Certified. CPA-audited over 6+ months. Independently certified. Your data is never used to train any public AI model. Contractually guaranteed. This is the security architecture that protects privilege and satisfies your ethical obligations.

AI Navigator Training. Foundational platform orientation and onboarding support for all users.

Quick Tips Training. Bite-sized, practical AI tips delivered regularly to keep skills sharp and adoption growing.

Office Hours: 3 Sessions Per Week

Most AI platforms hand you a login and wish you luck. Managed Framework AI includes 3 live Office Hours sessions per week, and they are one of the most valuable parts of the entire program.

Office Hours are working sessions, facilitated by Framework IT's AI team, where your people get hands-on help with real work. The format rotates across 3 types:

Live Coaching and Q&A. Bring your questions. Get answers. Whether you are struggling with a prompt, trying to figure out which model to use, or wondering how to approach a specific workflow, our team works through it with you in real time. No question is too basic.

Use Case Workshops. Structured sessions where we build a specific workflow, agent, or automation together. Your team brings their own use cases and we help architect and build right there in the session. This is where people go from "I understand what AI can do" to "I just built something that saves me 3 hours a week."

Show and Tell. Users share wins, tips, and creative applications with each other. The collective intelligence of the group accelerates everyone's learning.

Office Hours are low-pressure, inclusive, and welcoming to beginners.

Monthly AI Strategic Business Review (SBR)

Every month, your Framework IT team conducts a Strategic Business Review (SBR) dedicated to your AI program. This is a structured strategic session designed to keep your AI adoption on track and continuously expanding.

During each SBR, we review adoption metrics, assess progress against your Crawl-Walk-Run roadmap, identify new use cases and automation opportunities, update your AI roadmap, and plan upcoming training and enablement activities.

The SBR keeps AI adoption moving forward as an ongoing strategic initiative with a named partner who stays accountable for results.

Accelerator Plans: Go Deeper, Build Faster

For firms that want to accelerate their AI maturity, Framework IT offers Accelerator Plans: packages of consulting hours where our AI team works directly with yours to develop custom agents, workflows, and automations.

The key word is "with." We build together so your people develop the expertise to keep building on their own. The goal isn't permanent dependency on consulting hours. It's getting your firm to the point where your own team identifies opportunities, architects solutions, and deploys them independently.

Typical engagements include:

Custom agent development. We design and build AI agents tailored to your firm's specific processes, practice areas, and terminology, working alongside your team so they understand how the agent works and can maintain and improve it.

Workflow automation. We help your team build multi-step automated workflows that connect AI to your business systems, from scoping and architecture through testing and deployment.

Practice-group-specific rollouts. We work with a specific practice group to identify their highest-value AI use cases, build the solutions, train the team, and measure results.

Advanced use case development. For firms in the Run phase, we help tackle complex, high-value automations that require deeper technical guidance.

How Managed Framework AI Compares

Feature	Microsoft Copilot	ChatGPT Team	Managed Framework AI
Users Included	25 seats	25 seats	Unlimited
AI Models	1 model	1 model	67 models
Adoption Support	None included	None included	Crawl-Walk-Run framework
Data Training	May use your data	May use your data	Zero training, guaranteed
Contract	Annual	Annual	Month-to-month available
Dedicated IT Partner	No	No	Named Framework IT team
Ongoing Enablement	No	No	Office Hours 3x/week, monthly SBR
Pre-Built Agents	Limited	Limited	100+ Framework IT + 500+ community
Privilege Protection	No contractual guarantee	No contractual guarantee	Contractual zero-data-training from all providers

The Transformation

Before Managed Framework AI: The firm is operating in the dark. Attorneys are using AI tools nobody approved. Partners have no visibility into what client data is being exposed. The pressure to "do something with AI" is growing without a clear plan. There's anxiety about privilege waiver, ethical compliance, and malpractice risk. And every day without a governed platform is another day of exposure.

After Managed Framework AI: The firm has a named partner, a documented roadmap, and a trained team actively using governed AI every day. Client data is protected by enterprise-grade security with contractual guarantees. Outputs are consistent and trusted. Workflows are automating what used to take hours. Partners can see adoption dashboards and prove ROI. The ethical obligations are documented and addressed. The anxiety is gone, replaced by confidence and momentum.

The platform is Hatz AI. The methodology is Crawl-Walk-Run. The difference is Framework IT.

CHAPTER 11

AI Governance Readiness Checklist

Is your firm ready?

Use this checklist to assess where you stand today. If you can't confidently check every box, you have gaps that need to be addressed before scaling AI adoption. Score yourself honestly. Most firms start with fewer than half of these checked, and that's normal.

Policy, Ethics, and Leadership

- We have a written AI use policy that defines approved tools and prohibited data types
- Our AI use policy addresses our ethical obligations under the applicable Rules of Professional Conduct
- Our partnership or management committee has formally endorsed our AI strategy
- We have designated an internal AI Champion to lead adoption
- Our AI policy has been communicated to all attorneys and staff
- Employees have acknowledged receipt and understanding of the AI policy
- Our AI policy is reviewed and updated at least annually
- Firm leadership actively uses AI tools and visibly supports the initiative

Client Consent and Privilege Protection

- We have updated our engagement letters to address AI use on client matters
- We have a defined protocol for obtaining informed client consent for AI use
- Attorneys understand when and how client consent must be documented

- We have evaluated our AI platform against the *Heppner* privilege standard
- We have contractual zero-data-training guarantees from our AI providers
- We can articulate our privilege protection measures to a court or bar authority if asked

Data Protection and Privacy

- We know which AI tools our attorneys and staff are currently using (including free tools)
- Client data categories (case details, privileged communications, work product) are defined as off-limits for unapproved AI tools
- We have Data Processing Agreements in place with every AI vendor
- We have a Business Associate Agreement in place if we handle PHI
- We have a defined process for classifying data sensitivity levels for AI use
- Attorneys and staff know which types of data they can and cannot enter into AI tools

Access Control and Permissions

- AI access is role-based: partners, associates, paralegals, and staff have appropriate permission levels
- We maintain searchable logs of AI usage (who, what, when)
- We can produce an AI governance report if asked by a bar authority, auditor, or client
- We have a process for reviewing and approving new AI tools before deployment
- User permissions are reviewed and updated when roles change
- Administrative access is restricted to authorized personnel only
- We have a defined offboarding process that includes revoking AI platform access

Training and Adoption

- Our team has received formal AI training, not just a policy memo
- Training includes the ethical dimensions of AI use for attorneys
- We have shared prompt templates and best practices documented
- We are tracking AI adoption metrics (usage, time saved, ROI)
- We have a structured plan to expand AI usage over the next 6 months
- New attorneys and staff receive AI onboarding as part of their standard orientation
- We have identified and developed AI Champions within the firm
- We maintain a use case repository documenting AI wins and lessons learned
- Our team has access to recurring support (Office Hours, coaching, help desk)

Compliance and Insurance

- We can answer "How does your firm govern AI?" with a documented response
- Our cyber insurance provider is aware of our AI usage and governance framework
- Our AI governance aligns with our state bar's AI guidance

- We have reviewed whether our practice areas have specific AI regulations or guidelines
- Our vendor management program includes AI-specific evaluation criteria
- We are current on any state-specific AI CLE requirements

Workflow and Automation Maturity

- We have identified our top 3 to 5 high-value AI use cases
- We have documented baseline metrics (time, cost, error rates) for at least 1 target workflow
- We have completed at least 1 AI pilot and measured results
- We have a pipeline of future automation opportunities
- We have mapped which pre-built agents and workflows align with our practice areas
- Our AI automations include human review checkpoints for all client-facing outputs

Governance and Continuous Improvement

- We have a recurring forum (management committee, firm meeting) for AI governance
- We review AI adoption metrics and ROI data at least monthly
- We have a process for prioritizing new AI use cases based on business impact
- We regularly share AI wins and best practices across the firm
- We have a feedback loop between users and the team managing the AI program
- Our AI roadmap is a living document that is updated based on progress and new opportunities

How to Read Your Results

0-15 boxes checked: You are in the early stages. Most firms start here, and there's nothing wrong with that. The important thing is to start building the foundation. The Crawl phase of the Crawl-Walk-Run framework is designed exactly for this.

16-30 boxes checked: You have meaningful progress but significant gaps remain. You are likely ready to move into the Walk phase, tackling targeted use cases while shoring up governance and training.

31-42 boxes checked: Your firm has a mature AI governance posture. You are in or approaching the Run phase, ready to scale, build custom solutions, and drive continuous improvement.

43+ boxes checked: You are operating at a high level of AI maturity. Focus on continuous improvement, expanding to new practice groups, and deepening the complexity of your automations.

If you have unchecked boxes, you aren't alone. Most firms do. Managed Framework AI was built to help you check every one of them. As a managed AI adoption program, our team handles the platform, the governance framework, the training, and the ongoing enablement so you can adopt AI with confidence, with a named partner who stays accountable for results.

CHAPTER 12

Next Steps

You have the playbook. The question now is what you do with it.

If your firm is ready to move from unmanaged AI usage to a structured, governed, productive AI program, here is how to start:

Request a consultation. We'll walk through where your firm stands today, identify the highest-value opportunities, and show you exactly how Managed Framework AI works. No pressure, no pitch deck. Just a conversation about what makes sense for your practice.

Take the readiness checklist to your partnership meeting. Use it to start an internal conversation about AI governance, ethical compliance, privilege protection, and opportunity. The checklist alone is often enough to surface gaps that nobody was talking about.

Stop the bleeding on Shadow AI. Every day your attorneys use unmanaged AI tools is another day your client data is at risk and your privilege protections are vulnerable. Getting onto a governed platform is the single highest-impact step you can take, and it doesn't require a long procurement cycle.

Framework IT has spent more than 16 years helping small and mid-sized businesses get technology right. Law firms have been among our core verticals since the beginning. AI is the next chapter, and we are here to help your firm write it, safely, ethically, and with measurable results.

Book a Consultation

Framework IT

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