LAWYERS JOURNAL

L A W   P R A C T I C E   M A N A G E M E N T

Mastering productivity: Tips, tools and strategies for legal professionals

By Hannah Bruno

Working long, solitary hours is often viewed as part and parcel of being in the legal profession. However, professionals are increasingly reporting high rates of exhaustion and burnout. Increasing productivity and efficiency in how you spend your time as a legal professional is important for several reasons, including cost savings, creating a competitive advantage, increased job satisfaction, and preventing burnout.

Legal Productivity Hacks

Refer to these tips to increase productivity, manage workload effectively, and provide high-quality service to clients.

1. Use technology to automate repetitive tasks: Save time by automating menial tasks such as document drafting, scheduling, and billing using software tools specifically designed for legal work, such as LawPay Pro.

2. Create a to-do list and prioritize tasks: Focus on the most important tasks and avoid getting overwhelmed by a long list of to-dos with proper prioritization.

3. Set realistic deadlines: Manage workloads and avoid feeling overwhelmed by tight deadlines with realistically achievable deadlines.

4. Avoid multitasking: Multitasking can actually decrease productivity, focus on completing one task at a time.

5. Delegate tasks to support staff: Allow support staff to take on busy work and free up time to focus on higher-level work.

6. Take breaks and practice self-care: Taking regular breaks and engaging in self-care activities such as exercise or meditation can help you recharge, stay focused, and prevent burnout.

7. Use templates and checklists: Utilizing templates and checklists can ensure that routine tasks are done quickly and efficiently, and that nothing falls through the cracks.

8. Learn to say "no" to low-value work: When you say "no" to work that does not align with your expertise or is not a good use of time, you are better able to focus on meaningful work that enables your firm to thrive.

How Do Law Firms Measure Productivity?

Measuring productivity in a law firm can be challenging because of the complexity of legal work. There are often many variables that affect the outcome of a particular matter. However, here are some simple metrics to track that any law firm can use to measure productivity:

- Billable hours
- Time management
- Case outcomes
- Client satisfaction
- Non-billable work

By measuring these metrics, law firms can identify areas where they can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and provide better service to their clients.

Three Tools That Help Lawyers Increase Productivity

Reputable law firms implement modern tools to streamline daily operations, making it essential to explore the best options available to save time and effort.

Time-tracking software – Time-tracking software enables better time management and makes it simple to accurately track the time spent on different tasks. In addition, it provides visibility into how time is being spent, enabling you to identify areas where efficiency can be improved.

With ideal time-tracking software, such as LawPay Pro, you can set reminders for upcoming deadlines and schedule blocks of time for specific tasks, enabling better time management.

Invoicing software – Legal work requires tracking billable hours and expenses and preparing detailed client invoices. This process can be time-consuming and prone to error, impacting productivity and profitability. Automating these tasks with invoicing software can enable legal professionals to generate invoices quickly and accurately, saving valuable time and increasing cash flow.

Online payment acceptance – By accepting online payments, legal professionals can reduce the time and resources spent on billing and collecting payments, freeing up time for other essential tasks. Additionally, online payment acceptance can help legal professionals manage their cash flow more efficiently by providing real-time payment processing and notifications, allowing them to stay on top of their finances.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Billing Like a Pro

Reference this checklist to bring your billing process up to the gold standard:

- Use time-tracking software or tools to accurately track your work hours.
- Record your time daily or at regular intervals to avoid forgetting important details.
- Use a standardized naming convention or numbering system for each client project

• Communicate clearly about your billing process, including rates, payment terms, and payment methods.

• Create detailed invoices outlining the work performed, hours billed, and any expenses incurred.

• Invoice clients promptly and regularly, preferably on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

• Include a due date on your invoices and send reminders to clients about upcoming payments.

• Keep detailed records of all client invoices and payments, and reconcile your records with your bank statements regularly.

• Review your billing and invoicing process regularly to identify areas for improvement.

• Be transparent and responsive to client questions or concerns about billing, and be willing to work with them to resolve any issues or disputes.

Meet LawPay Pro

From optimizing time-tracking to utilizing automation software, there are numerous ways to increase productivity in the legal profession. By putting these tips into practice, lawyers can take their productivity to the next level and achieve greater success in their legal careers.

A product of the ACBA Partners at LawPay, LawPay Pro is a cloud-based software developed specifically for lawyers, designed to handle the entire billing process from end to end. Using LawPay Pro, legal firms can take advantage of the technology needed to create and grow a successful business without dealing with a steep learning curve.

Some of the top benefits of LawPay Pro include:
• Streamlined and automated billing and payment services
• Accurate and easy time and expense tracking
• Sending invoices via text and email
• Increased organization and productivity

You can try a demo of LawPay Pro, with packages starting as low as $19 per month per user. We invite ACBA members to learn more today. ■

Hannah Bruno is a Senior Content Writer at LawPay. She is based in Austin, TX.