

Understanding Your Clients Throughout Their Lifecycle



Legl

The key to your firm's growth is staring you in the face

Pop quiz: what's your law firm's greatest asset?

Is it your best and brightest legal professionals? Your printer and photocopier? Your endless amounts of case data?

No. It's your clients. And understanding how you win and retain more of them is key to your firm's growth and profitability.

How do you do that? By introducing effective Client Lifecycle Management (CLM) technology to your firm. By that we mean flexible, modular workflows that digitise touch points with the client across the entire customer journey and matter lifecycle.

Operational inefficiency is costing law firms. Manual processes create pains for both clients and their legal service providers, opening firms up to a potential loss of business, a likely reduction in efficiency and a guaranteed exposure to risk. Better Client Lifecycle Management is the answer.

Not only does CLM tech enable law firms to understand their client base better, map trends and identify risk areas, it also helps them digitise the manual, administrative interactions that take place (to everyone's frustration) throughout a client's lifecycle.

That means better data, better visibility of risk, better processes and better business outcomes.

If you want to avoid stringing together multiple manual and tech solutions, give your clients a better experience and understand your client base better, then client lifecycle management is the logical next step.

Read on through the following pages to find out how you can take that step.



Introducing the lifecycle of a client

Every client who comes to your law firm experiences the same four touchpoints: acquisition, delivery, loyalty and retention. These four stages represent the client lifecycle, and mastering them is key to your business growth.

By putting your client at the very centre of your business decisions, you can build a clearer picture of their expectations and their risk profile—all the while leveraging technology to drive efficiency and profitability within your firm.

Whether it's your processes, your technology or your customer service, honestly assessing how your law firm is performing at each of the following stages is the first step to understanding where your client lifecycle might be falling behind.



Acquisition refers to your first interactions with a client, encompassing everything from client outreach to onboarding. In many ways, the success of your lifecycle relies on the strength of this first impression.

Delivery is more than just about successfully resolving a case. It's about how you communicate that success to your client, and provide them with a seamless experience throughout.

Loyalty is about going above and beyond for your clients, and being rewarded with positive reviews and referrals in return. It takes time, but a loyal client is your most valuable asset.

Retention is the most cost-effective way to grow your business. But the more clients return to you, the more your reputation spreads, and the more new clients you win - beginning the cycle all over again.

Always look closer...

Taking the time to really understand your clients can show you who's a good client for your firm, who pays their bills quickly, how many instructions they give you and what their lifetime value is.

By taking a client-centric approach at each of the four stages, you can gain the insights you need to optimise the processes and the experience across the entire client lifecycle.

From acquisition to delivery

Acquisition

When it comes to client acquisition, your main goal is to turn a prospective client into a paying client as quickly as possible. That means rapid communications, intuitive onboarding and convenient payment/signature methods.

This is the stage of the lifecycle where clients will build their first impressions of your law firm. Having efficient digital processes in place from the start will therefore go a long way in dampening any initial doubts they might be having - not to mention making your life a lot easier too.



Better understand risk with effective due diligence



Collect client information easily for future analysis



Commence billable work faster



Delivery

As the section of the lifecycle which usually involves the most touchpoints, the delivery stage is where clients will develop the majority of their opinions about you. Alongside successfully resolving their case, delivering a seamless customer experience here is non-negotiable if you really want to exceed their expectations.

Automating traditionally time-consuming tasks is one of the best ways you can do this, for two reasons. First, it frees up time to focus on more valuable work. Second, it's more convenient for the client. Make sure you're constantly evaluating your delivery processes to see how you can continue to improve them well into the future.



Identify bottlenecks in processes and drive efficiencies



Automate digital processes to focus on billable time



Enhance CRM or case management systems

From loyalty to retention

Loyalty

A satisfied client is a loyal client. But if they're not telling other people about their experience, how much value are they actually bringing to you? Making feedback a fundamental part of the workflow loop, and giving clients incentives to provide it, will help make their loyalty count.

Remember to use that feedback to your advantage. Both positive and negative reviews should be taken on board to understand where you are exceeding expectations and where you are falling short, so that you can optimise the lifecycle even further for future clients.



Improve client satisfaction across the board



Review feedback to streamline client journeys



Generate more positive reviews

Retention



More than any other stage, retention is the key to business growth. Winning more work from existing clients, as well as generating instructions from new ones, will help you expand further and faster than before.

With an effective overview of all your clients, you can reflect on which ones bring the most value to you and focus your efforts on them. The good news is, if you've put the right amount of work into the previous three stages of the cycle, then retention should happen naturally.



Identify new opportunities for scaling client work



Increase word of mouth referrals



Secure new instructions from existing and new clients

What is client lifecycle management?

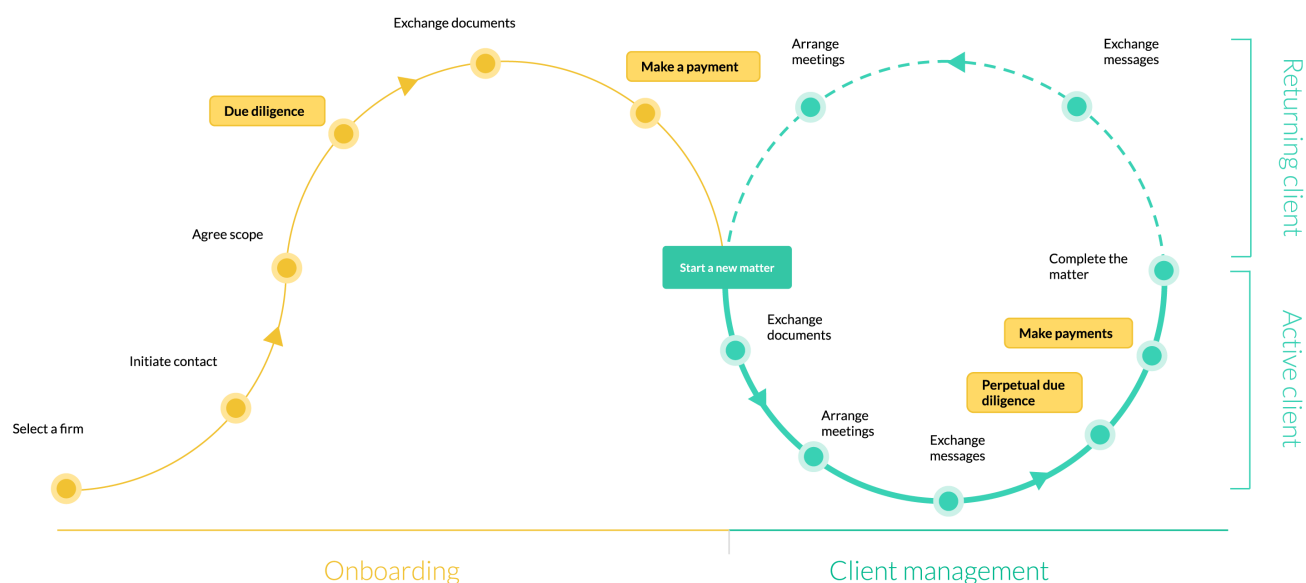
Every lawyer wants to make a difference for their client. But when you're stuck performing clunky admin tasks, making a difference takes a back seat.

That's where client lifecycle management (CLM) comes in. Simply put, CLM is about honing in on all of the touchpoints that exist during an interaction with a client, and identifying how you can iterate, improve and standardise them.

The best way to do this? Think about where the friction points lie. Are there any particularly repetitive, manual processes that give both you and your client a terrible experience? By automating those friction points, you can meet client expectations quicker and focus your time and energy on the kind of work which is more valuable to your client.

Digitising the client journey

Most of the stages below can be digitised with software or an outsourced service provider.



Remember!

You don't need to digitise everything. Although most processes could certainly be optimised or improved with the right technology, there are many which require a more white-glove approach.

The key is to get the balance right and identify where you can best leverage your digital and human touchpoints. Start with the changes that will bring the most value to you and your clients and work your way up from there.

Similarly, you don't need to reinvent all your existing processes. It's about understanding how you can deploy new technology to make your existing processes more efficient.

The five pillars of effective client lifecycle management

1 Every journey has a first step

Just because you're focusing on the entire customer journey, don't make the mistake of overlooking that crucial first step: onboarding.

Onboarding is where it all starts. It's where you get to know your client, collect all the information you need and do your client due diligence. By starting as you mean to go on, not only will you help yourself in the long run, you'll also commence billable work much quicker.

Use your onboarding process to lay the foundations for a great client relationship, and go beyond their expectations right from the start.

2 Remember, risks change

CLM is often referred to as "ongoing onboarding". That's because your client's information, situation and risk profile is always subject to change.

Having the most up to date picture of the client you're working with is paramount. And while this may have been difficult in the past, the right technology can go a long way.

For example, setting up AML monitoring to alert you when identity documents are about to expire can ensure you're always working with the most up to date information. From there, you can more confidently determine whether any additional actions are required for a client.

3 Better tech = lower costs

At its core, CLM is about leveraging technology to bring efficiencies and value to your client interactions.

Today's consumers have become accustomed to great experiences online, and they expect the same from you too. But meeting those expectations doesn't mean a huge IT

overhaul. The best tech solutions should be simple, quick and cost-effective to integrate.

They should also be worth their weight in gold. With streamlined client interactions, you can get the information you need quicker and focus on delivering billable services faster.

4 The complete picture is the only picture

Before you can genuinely improve your client experience, you need to have a complete picture of their touch points throughout the lifecycle first.

From onboarding to matter resolution and referrals, capture all of the different interactions between your firm and your clients, and scrutinise your performance honestly. Are any steps taking longer than they need to? Where are you letting things slip the most?

Once you've answered those questions, you can begin to prioritise the changes which will have the greatest impact. Plus, by resolving any bottlenecks and speeding up communication, you can greatly improve your customer experience along the way.

5 Better CX drives more revenue

It may not be immediately clear, but creating a seamless customer journey can bring huge improvements to your firm's cash flow, especially when it comes to onboarding and payments.

As an example, providing clients with digital payment methods frees up your fee earners to complete billable work instead of chasing payments. The speed and convenience of online payments means you can also take and reconcile payments from clients faster.

Ultimately, your clients are what brings revenue to your business. Maximise every interaction with them and they will thank you for it - as will your internal processes.

Financing the client lifecycle

You can't discuss the lifecycle of a client without talking about finance as well. Not only is finance crucial for investment, it's also an ever-present aspect of client interaction. Potential touchpoints include:

- ✓ Payment for initial meetings and consultations
- ✓ Money on account of costs and disbursements
- ✓ Part payments in a fixed fee model
- ✓ Invoice payments
- ✓ Partial / recurring payments
- ✓ Credit control

Providing clients with an easy way to make those payments is therefore one of the most effective things you can do to improve client satisfaction and keep them coming back for more.

But there's another benefit. And it's a very important one.

Unlocking your cash flow

Did you know the average invoice payment time across UK law firms is 60 days?

However, when law firms include a link to pay online, that figure drops to as little as 7 hours. It may seem trivial, but enabling payments to be collected faster and reconciled easier frees up cash flow, and in a big way.

Legal payments by the numbers

93%

of law firm customers believe it's important their lawyer uses technology to make dealing with them easier and less expensive

80%

of clients expect to be able to pay their invoice online, but only 34% of recent law firm customers said they had the option to pay using digital card payment methods

71%

of consumers believe having multiple ways to pay a bill increases their overall satisfaction with a service

55%

of law firms don't have enough cash to cover one month's operating expenses

Figures taken from
The Essential Guide to Online Payments for Law Firms

What do quicker payments mean for law firms?

**If a £25 million turnover firm got paid 2 weeks faster,
this would result in an additional £1 million on the balance sheet.**

Smith & Williamson, A Law Firm's Guide to Cash Flow in a COVID-19 World

Think about what your law firm could do with an extra £1 million. Aside from having healthier accounts, you would have more money to invest in the new hires, technologies or strategies that you've identified as crucial to enhancing your CLM capabilities.

Because there's no point identifying flaws within your client lifecycle if you don't have the cash to do anything about them.

Improving your CLM to strengthen your cash flow is a cycle within a cycle. Think about it. A better lifecycle involves digitising client payments. A slicker payment process means clients pay their bills quicker. Faster payments equal more cash, which can then be reinjected into even slicker payment processes, meaning even faster payments, an even stronger cash flow, and so on.

Regulating the client lifecycle

Before you can think about improving the client lifecycle, you need to ensure you are ticking all the regulatory boxes. More than most other industries, law firms have to meet a hefty amount of strict regulatory requirements. In order to do that, having a bird's-eye view of risk across your client base is essential.

Underpinning CLM is a commitment on the behalf of law firms to ensure they have the policies, controls and procedures in place to comply with regulations and professional codes of conduct.

But those processes also need to work in practice, so be sure to standardise them across your firm. Otherwise, time-strapped lawyers will adopt their own ways of working. More often than not, this is where corners are cut and compliance breaches happen.

The bottom line? Law firms that manage risk in an effective and efficient manner not only unlock value throughout the business, streamline processes and improve visibility of their entire client base, they also help instil a compliance culture across their firm.



7 ways CLM enables more compliant operations

1. Putting clients at the centre of your decision making gives you full visibility across your entire client base.
2. By providing you with a single source of truth, CLM makes it easier for auditors to find the information they need.
3. Leveraging technology which is risk monitored on an ongoing basis greatly reduces the chances of something being missed.
4. Comprehensive audit trails ensure that critical data and information is both accurate and stored securely.
5. Consistent, firm-wide processes optimise efficiency while also reducing the risk of team members employing unregulated ways of working.
6. Efficient processes also speed up risk escalation, resulting in faster resolutions.
7. Permissions ensure that only certain users can access various technology and information, enabling the safer storage and access of data.

A compliance expert's take on the impact of remote working

"Staying compliant throughout your client's lifecycle was already a challenge. But the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has opened law firms up to a new form of risk: remote working.

Working remotely and managing remote processes naturally comes with its own issues of decentralised information and poor oversight. These pitfalls can drastically slow down the speed of your client lifecycle, leading to inefficient matter resolutions and a poor experience overall for everyone involved.

Ensuring you can still operate effectively and deliver a great customer experience while working remotely is therefore vital. And compliance has a large role to play in this. The more you focus on working compliantly, the quicker and easier remote processes become, and the less issues you'll inevitably have to address.

Just remember, when investing in any remote working solutions, it's really important to confirm upfront whether your chosen tech solution meets the minimum regulatory standards. It's very easy to assume that the tech will cover everything, but liaising with the tech provider and asking about the fine print can be the difference between investing in a solution that works, and a solution that isn't fit for purpose."

Kate Burt

Head of Risk and Compliance at Legl

Experiencing the client lifecycle

Thanks to the emergence of new digital technologies, modern customers are only ever one click away from a great experience online. As a result, consumers expect more from their service providers, lawyers included, and want to interact with them in a way that is convenient and efficient.

The problem is, not every law firm is letting them.

Customer experience is a factor in which law firms are becoming increasingly competitive. The aim of the game? Providing clients with a best-in-class digital experience. If you are falling short of this benchmark, then you are running the risk of losing clients to other law firms who do it better.

Building a healthy and delightful CX isn't hard, though. It just requires a little ambition and an ample amount of commitment. By bringing your law firm into the same field of experience which customers get from every other industry, you can satisfy their expectations with ease.

The best part? Providing a great customer experience benefits your firm too. Happier clients equal less things going wrong, less avoidable admin and happier staff as a result.

What do clients really think of their legal providers?

31%

of clients said that scanning/printing/posting documents is the most frustrating aspect of interacting with a law firm

35%

of clients claim that their lawyer leveraged no form of technology during the matter's lifecycle

4.6

is the average rating, on a scale of 1 to 10, for how well a law firm used technology to make the client's life easier

57%

of clients believe their chosen law firm could have improved their service with better use of technology

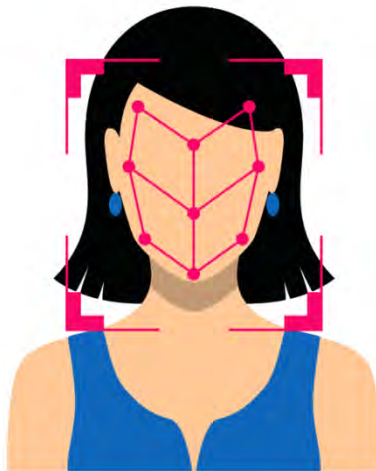
Figures taken from
**Legl's 2022 Consumer
Trends Report**

What types of technology can delight your clients?

Payments via digital wallet



Biometric IDV



e-Signatures



Tips for a superior client experience

✓ Meet evolving client expectations

Client expectations are growing every single day. Keep track of how customers are interacting with new technologies and experiences. Are there any opportunities for your law firm?

✓ Deliver a best-in-class digital client experience

“Best-in-class” doesn’t just mean within the legal industry. It means across all industries. Be ambitious. Benchmark your CX against those who are doing it the very best.

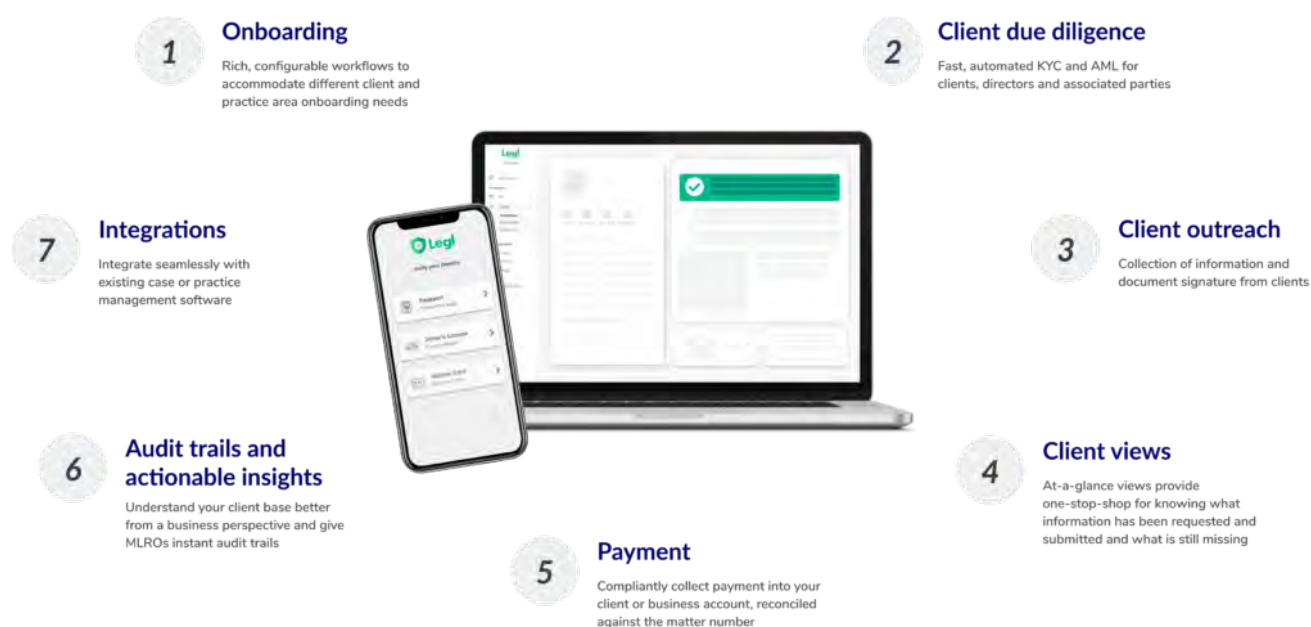
✓ Know when to use technology vs a human touch

Getting the balance between automated efficiency and manual interactions is crucial for a strong CX. Be strategic with your use of technology, and don’t let it do all the talking.

One single platform. One single source of truth.

Like any new piece of technology, the main worry that law firms have about Client Lifecycle Management technology is how long it will take to implement and deliver returns. But the best CLM systems can be integrated extremely quickly, allowing you to iterate and scale as you get more familiar with the tools at your disposal.

Well, at least that's what we believe here at Legl.



Our award-winning, data-first platform automates client-facing business processes and payments while creating rich data sets for law firms. From this one platform, you can digitise every aspect of the client lifecycle, using modular, flexible workflows to give both your firm and your clients a delightful experience.

That's what we mean when we call it a "single source of truth."

Don't just enhance your client lifecycle. Manage it properly!

To learn more about the benefits of client lifecycle management with Legl, [book a personalised demo](#) with us today.



Legl is a modular, data-first platform for modern law firm operations, supporting law firms to drive operational efficiencies and free up their time to focus on creating meaningful client experiences. Legl's award-winning client lifecycle management platform automates client-facing business processes and payments while creating rich data and a single source of truth for law firms. Visit [Legl.com](https://www.Legl.com) for more information.