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Chapter 12:
How legal operations teams should evaluate AI solutions

By MbaMemme Onwudiwe, EVP legal and business intelligence

In today's fast-paced world, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) has become widespread in all aspects of human life. Legal departments are no exception to this trend, and many are now leveraging AI tools to streamline their projects and reduce the burden of tedious manual work. In light of recent excitement generated by technologies like ChatGPT, it can be easy to get carried away by flashy demos and sales pitches, only to be left with AI that doesn't work as expected. As such, it is crucial to thoroughly evaluate AI tools before making a purchase decision and to understand the different types of AI that are available for legal operations. In this chapter, we will delve deeper into the value of leveraging AI tools for making your legal departments more efficient and explore best practices for evaluating AI solutions. We will then dive into why these capabilities are important for modern teams, especially when partnered with robust APIs that centralize contracts and business data.

AI is not a monolith and the technology can be applied to use-cases in legal operations in a variety of ways. Some applications of AI in legal operations are already ubiquitous, such as optical character recognition (OCR), which for years has helped legal teams take scanned PDF images of written documents and convert them into searchable digital files using computer vision. Litigation discovery is another facet of legal services that has widely adopted AI, through the widespread use of e-discovery tools to help sift through evidence. However, these days, more advanced use-cases are in focus for legal operations professionals, such as automatically extracting data from documents, as well as contract focused capabilities like reviewing agreements against pre-determined risk playbooks, and automatically organizing grouping contracts in the same master-amendment families. While these capabilities may sound advanced, in 2024 we use advanced AI every day – as it is embedded in tools like Google, Spotify, and LinkedIn. However, you wouldn't buy a Tesla with self-driving capabilities if it could only navigate roads you've already driven on. It's the same with legal tech – you need to

make sure these tools can provide you with value quickly before making a multi-year commitment for your organization.

Evaluating AI powered tools

Remember the initial weeks in which ChatGPT was released? Legal leaders across the globe took time to play around with the tool, and its speedy results allowed them to quickly decide whether or not the tool would be valuable to their use-cases. This ability to quickly evaluate a tool's results is a positive attribute of pre-trained AI powered tools. No matter what kind of AI you hope to use, the prime goal of an evaluator should be answering the question, *"Does this AI work quickly and accurately to solve my problems?"* Think about Spotify or Google. You would know if the AI stopped working within moments, by seeing weird search results or hearing a song you don't like. It's the same with legal tech. Legal operations leaders should be confident that they and their teams have the know-how to look at AI results and determine their quality. Legal tech tools are often sold in SaaS models, where customers sign up for expensive multi-year commitments to implement and rollout tools. In this context, it is of tantamount importance that evaluators confirm that advanced capabilities leveraging AI work accurately on day one, as they often have very little time to evaluate which is critical for internal momentum and buy-in during implementation and change management.

Steps to evaluate AI and make sure it's not "two eyes"

The first step is to talk to your potential vendor and ask them to describe their AI's capabilities. "Artificial intelligence" has very much become a buzzword in many industries, legal tech notwithstanding. As such, it is important to make sure you have a clear understanding of what exactly the "AI" is accomplishing for you in a system. Make sure to tightly define the functionality by narrowing in on what it does with questions such as:

- Does it automatically group master agreements with amendments?
- Does it flag risks in contracts?
- Is it tracking key dates and obligations?

Try to truly understand what is being automated by AI, and how much of it works on day one without your team's effort in training.

Once you have a full understanding of what the AI in your legal tech tool can do, the only thing left is to make sure that it can do it! The second step is to test the vendor's AI capabilities in real time, using documents that the

vendor has never seen before. You can either do this in a live joint demo, whereby you email the vendor 10-15 varying agreements they've never seen before and ask them to upload them to show the results, or request a no-strings-attached "sandbox" of the tool that will let you test out AI capabilities on your own without hand-holding. It is essential to ensure that the vendor can deliver on its promises and that the AI capabilities immediately work correctly before you subscribe long-term.

Just like using Google, ChatGPT, Twitter/X, or Spotify, these algorithms either work or they don't. It is basic due diligence to make sure the vendor can deliver on its promises. This is especially important, since if they are using "two eyes" instead of "AI" on your company's most important and confidential documents, it could expose your legal department to potential issues down the line.

Why is this important?

Today, enterprise legal teams have access to a multitude of workflow intake and organizational software that facilitate the generation, review, and approval of negotiated business documents. These documents are ultimately stored in a vast web of repositories and CRMs, each managed by different business units with their own goals and needs for data. In this environment, data and insights are segmented and siloed, limited by whatever data each particular technology platform owner believes is important enough for their teams to manually retranscribe into their software to be tracked moving forward. This makes holistic visibility of contractual obligations that cuts across these data silos almost impossible – because even if you were to gather and centralize the metadata being tracked in all these systems, they would differ and result in gaps in visibility.

Leveraging AI and APIs effectively solves these issues. By connecting repositories and CRMs storing agreements with two-way sync APIs, you can create a centralized repository of contracts that does not disrupt your existing document storage architecture. Teams can continue to store agreements in Salesforce or Google Drive, but as they do so, they are passively being stored in a centralized location that can be queried and audited when issues arise. Of course, the ability to perform said queries and audits can only be unlocked by utilizing AI to structure the unstructured data in these documents.

Having used APIs to centralize documents and data into one location, how do you take the next step of performing complex queries and getting action-

able insights? What you have now is all your agreements in one place and disparate metadata (tagged clauses and key dates) since people were keeping track of disparate information in their respective CRM systems. This is where AI comes in. Using artificial intelligence algorithms to analyze every single centralized contract and then output numerous yet uniform metadata about each document is key. By using the evaluative techniques that we discuss throughout this chapter, you can be sure that the tool you select is ready to perform these important processes from the outset of your adoption.

Conclusion

There is a joke in legal operations that CLM stands for "career limiting move" instead of "contract lifecycle management". This joke is a symptom of a culture in which vendors often oversell capabilities and clients spend months, if not years, frustratingly implementing tools without getting any value out of them. The quick time-to-value of AI capabilities can shatter this paradigm, but it will require more active engagement and skepticism by buyers who will need more of a "show me" than "tell me" mentality. Ultimately, however, the adoption of AI will help legal operations teams engage with contracts and litigation from more of a data perspective, which crucially brings legal into line with its peer business units.

This chapter 'How legal operations teams should evaluate AI solutions' by MbaMemme Onwudiwe is from the title Legal Operations in the Age of AI and Data*, published by Globe Law and Business.*

https://www.globelawandbusiness.com/books/legal-operations-in-the-age-of-ai-and-data