

New BigHand Research Reveals 'Impossible to Ignore' Gap Between Client Expectations, Pricing Transparency

Data shows firms miss out on significant realization gains due to lagging commercial literacy, limited budgeting capability, and uncertain AI strategies.

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- [BigHand](#), a leading provider of legal software solutions, has released a comprehensive [pricing trends analysis](#) based on anonymous responses from more than 800 legal finance professionals. The data shows a clear, widening gap between the pricing transparency and expertise clients expect to receive and what firms are providing.



Large law firms are reacting slowly to a significant spike in client demand for detailed reporting, alternative fee arrangements (AFAs), and accurate matter budgets. This hesitancy can lead to fractured relationships or failed bids for new work, especially in a tightening financial environment where clients are consolidating their panels and seeking cheaper alternatives.

A director of legal operations and strategic enablement quoted in the report calls the gap "impossible to ignore," noting that without clear budget visibility, clients struggle to manage spend and plan with confidence.

That struggle is confirmed by data, as nearly all respondents cited significant (more than 6%) billing realization increases when comparing matters with an assigned budget to those with none. Despite that clear evidence, 55% of firms continue to mandate budgets for under 20% of their matters.

Firms are instead attempting to create pricing expertise through new hiring efforts. Investment in finance specialists has jumped significantly in the last 12 months, but many of these professionals are entering an environment with tools that lack the sophistication clients now expect. Nearly half (49%) of firms still do not use a dedicated legal solution to determine the price of a matter.

“This is no longer a down-the-road problem,” said Eric Wangler, BigHand’s President, Global Legal Market. “The advent of AI has accelerated the pricing conversation and put firms in a vulnerable position, where they must be able to prove value to clients while also protecting their profitability. That’s only possible through a data-rich environment.”

Other key findings from the report include:

- Nearly 80% of firms believe there is an opportunity for more value-based pricing and billing to remain competitive, creating a need for dedicated tools and comprehensive data.
- Only 33% of firms provide training programs to educate associates on key financial performance indicators, risking margin and client confidence erosion due to poorly informed lawyers.
- A 50-lawyer practice group could increase annual profit by more than \$600K by implementing dedicated pricing tools.

This year’s report also includes a new section on AI adoption and how firms are communicating its impact to clients. Best practices continue to elude the industry, with responses split between reactive and proactive strategies.

“Firms know they must build more holistic, detailed approaches to matter pricing to stay relevant. But they’re still dragging their feet,” said Rod Wittenberg, BigHand’s Senior Vice President, Financial Productivity. “Don’t wait until a client forces your hand or, worse, goes somewhere else because you couldn’t show them an accurate budget.”

BigHand hired an independent firm to survey senior legal finance professionals across the UK and North America, giving an accurate representation of the legal industry. The report’s conclusions were developed by internal experts and are supported by third-party analysis and client case studies.

Download [the full report](#) to explore more 2025 legal pricing trends, recommendations, and industry benchmarks.

About BigHand

BigHand is a leading global provider of technology solutions for busy legal professionals. Its

product suite helps law firms improve lawyer and support staff management, document production, financial performance, and matter pricing.

The challenges facing law firm professionals are more pressing than ever. BigHand's team of experts works with 3,300 global law firms, including 81% of the AmLaw 200 and 82% of the UK Top 200, to give clients a better legal experience while strengthening firm profitability.

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