

# BigHand Report Finds Client Attrition Rising Across 95% of Law Firms, with Service Delivery Concerns the Top Driver

*New report finds law firms are adopting AI across support services without the role clarity and workflow visibility needed to protect client service.*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BigHand](#) today released its sixth annual [Legal Workflow Leadership Report](#), which finds that law firms are adopting AI across legal support services faster than they are building the operational structure needed to protect client service, preserve lawyer time, and prove measurable business impact.



Based on responses from more than 800 law firm leaders across the UK and North America, the research shows that AI has moved quickly from experimentation to common practice. The next challenge is operational: proving where AI is improving productivity, reducing friction, and strengthening client value.

Key findings include:

- Client service is a commercial risk: 95% of firms report increased client attrition, with 33% citing service delivery concerns as a primary driver
- Lawyer time is being redirected into support tasks: 35% of firms report increased reliance on lawyers for administrative tasks due to support staff retirement, while 46% say AI-generated outputs require additional supervision
- Workforce instability is adding pressure: 51% expect to lose between 21% and 50% of support staff to retirement, while 24% say support staff turnover directly affects billable hours and revenue

- AI adoption is now widespread: 96% of firms use AI in support services, but only 27% have redesigned support roles around it
- Operational review remains limited: 41% have formally reviewed support task types to identify where AI or automation can deliver the greatest impact
- Workflow visibility is still fragmented: 62% report having workflow technology, but only 21% use structured tools for task allocation and delegation

"Once AI adoption reaches this level, the question changes," said BigHand Global Legal President and Chief Revenue Officer, Eric Wangler. "Firms now more than ever need to protect lawyers' time by ensuring administrative tasks, AI supervision/quality control, and tasks that do not require legal judgment sit within the right support structures. Without the visibility to see where that work is going, firms risk mistaking activity for progress."

Many firms have invested in workflow technology, but lawyer-to-support staff delegation often remains split across email, informal requests, and individual working habits. That limits leaders' ability to track demand, capacity, utilization, and performance, making the impact of AI harder to prove.

The report includes commentary from legal operations, strategy, and enterprise services leaders on what these pressures reveal about the future of law firm support models.

"AI cannot resolve inefficiency where workflows are poorly defined," said Robert Millard, Director at Cambridge Strategy Group, commenting on the findings. "Firms need an accurate picture of how they capture, allocate, and deliver work across support functions, so the right resource handles the right work."

The pressure is already showing in lawyer workloads. Thirty-five percent of firms report increased reliance on lawyers for administrative tasks due to support staff retirement, while 45% cite increased time spent checking and verifying work. For firms under pressure to improve realization and protect margins, that work cannot simply fall back to the highest-cost resource.

"As experienced support staff leave, remaining teams absorb more work, service slows, and clients feel it directly," said Michelle Connolly, President of Enterprise Business Solutions at Opensity Solutions. "Without clear workflow visibility, critical processes like succession planning, service delivery, and AI governance will keep being managed as disconnected issues rather than symptoms of the same foundational gap."

The report also highlights the need for firms to treat support teams as a strategic resource, particularly as AI changes the skills, structures, and career paths required across legal support functions.

“Support staff shouldn’t be treated as a reactive, back-office function. They are a strategic asset,” said Denise Dellaratta, Chief Practice Services Officer at Fox Rothschild. “Firms need to invest in real-time operational data not only to drive efficiency, but to better support and develop their people.”

Together, the findings provide a detailed view of how legal support is becoming more closely connected to client retention, lawyer productivity, and the business impact of AI. The report examines where firms are seeing pressure today, where operational gaps remain, and how support models are beginning to evolve in response.

The full BigHand Legal Workflow Leadership Report 2026 is available to [download now](#).

## About BigHand

For over thirty years, BigHand has worked alongside law firms to provide the intelligence needed to improve profitability and client value at every stage of a matter’s decision lifecycle. Specialist by design, its solutions act as the performance engine of the modern law firm, built for the business of law and trusted by more than 810,000 professionals across 3,300 firms worldwide.

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