ABBYY

Go from Buying Apps to Building Them... with No Code!

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Why is buying the right legaltech software so hard?

For years, legaltech lurked on the fringes of the legal world. But now, suddenly, it has become not just cool but "core" to the practice of law:

> **" I used to think of technology as being sort of like a supplemental workstream, like [a] 'it better work' kind of a thing,"** said panelist Julie Jones, chairwoman at Ropes & Gray. **"Now I think of technology as being a fundamental and core aspect of the practice of law."**
>
> "The Pandemic Helped Push Tech to the 'Core' of Law Firm/Client Relationship," Law.com as reporting on 2021 RelativityFest

Reading the pandemic-era surveys and studies might make you think that, indeed, the tide has turned for the acceptance of the centrality of legaltech. The annual [Altman Weil Chief Legal Officers survey for 2020](#), the first one conducted during the pandemic, shows impressive numbers for the adoption of legaltech, starting with the numbers of GCs that plan to "improve in-house process efficiency," which is the top- rated tactic at 67.7%. And even though it is a much lower number, nearly a third of GCs now plan to "utilize in-house technology as a substitute for labor costs" at 29.0%.

But looking historically at the numbers through the [many years of such annual Altman Weil CLO surveys](#), which have been conducted since 2004, shows that the pandemic may not have much turned the tide, but instead simply raised it– perhaps not all that much. For example, the Altman Weil 2019 CLO Survey shows that 60.1% of GCs made "greater use of technology tools" (including 87.5% of departments with 51+ lawyers), which was the top-ranked option for actions taken to improve efficiency. Likewise, the more aggressive tactic of "replacing people with technology" was picked by 26.7%.

Turning again to Altman Weil's 2019 CLO survey, the last full one conducted before the pandemic, we can see that these tactics didn't work particularly well. When asked whether greater use of technology tools improved efficiency, only 45.1% of GCs said that this definitely added to efficiency. That's by far the biggest gap in the survey, between the percentage that use this tactic and those that found it useful.

The big gaps between adoption and results in legaltech may help to explain why the [2021 CLOC State of the Industry survey](#) found that the legal industry maturity level on technology and process support was mediocre at best. GCs rated their departments' maturity on a 1–5 scale, with 1 as "low" and 5 as "leading" or "high." While only 4% of GCs rated their department's maturity as 1/low, just 6% rated themselves at the "leading/"high." The remaining GCs rated themselves at 2–4, with 30% answering for each level. That's a pretty disappointing result for an average annual reported spend for technology of $1.2 million.

The long-time trend of spending big numbers to "win" big is not confined to legal departments; it may even be a bigger number within law firms. As shown by the [Altman Weil 2020 Law Firms in Transition report](#): 53.6% of firms are using technology tools to replace human resources. For example, as [reported earlier this year](#), many firms are working on reengineering the process that happens first in any firm: client intake. But only 37.2% of these same firms say that this tactic has improved efficiency. With consistent gaps like these between promises and results, should we doubt why we've [heard too many stories](#) about those selling legaltech software becoming at times questionably over-aggressive in selling it?

The future where you can transform yourself is now

From the AmLaw 100 behemoths to small firms/ solos to legal departments of all sizes— all are looking for more effective ways to increase realization rates and improve process efficiency.

Law firms and legal departments continue to struggle with the enormous volume of documents and content that enter their processes via clients, customers, courts, and regulators, despite advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies. That is because the implementation of those technologies requires highly skilled, and highly expensive, technical users. All of this creates tremendous complexity that causes many firms and departments to waste vast human resources in order to handle.

Fortunately, we are seeing the emergence of a much faster and simpler way to understand and extract insights from documents. This is being accomplished through the availability of purpose-built and pre-trained cognitive skills that can be applied without the requirement of being a machine learning expert. The availability of this technology is giving rise to the new "citizen developer," which Gartner defines as:

...an employee who creates application capabilities for consumption by themselves or others, using tools that are not actively forbidden by IT or business units. A citizen developer is a persona, not a title or targeted role. They report to a business unit or function other than IT.

This trend is revolutionizing the industry by making it easier for business users to quickly configure, train, and deploy document-intensive processes that handle the complexities of content without lengthy implementation phases or requiring organizations to have vast technical or machine learning experience. Technology services of the future will be assembled and composed by the people that actually use them. With the help of citizen developers, companies can automate content-centric processes faster, with automation throughout the entire organization.

> " ...in 3-5 years, as much as 65% of development will be done in-house using no code / low code which are complemented by AI software bots..."
>
> The Most Disruptive Trend Of 2021: No Code / Low Code", Betsy Atkins, Forbes

Business users can quickly design, train, and deploy pre-trained cognitive skills that handle the complexities of understanding content, without being a machine learning expert. This empowers citizen developers not only to spend less time on labor-intensive tasks at a significantly lower marginal cost compared to traditional development by highly skilled engineers, but it also allows them to constantly iterate, quickly adjust, and improve process automation until the desired results are achieved.

It's STILL all about the documents

The [ABA Legal Technology Resource Center survey in October 2020](#) showed that just 7% of respondents to the survey reported that their firms use AI tech tools, a decrease of one percentage point from a year ago.

Intelligent document processing (IDP) platforms must fit into the new paradigm of no-code / low-code and ease-of-use implementation in order to break through this resistance and fulfill the needs of citizen developers across the entire organization.

But now the advancements of AI and machine learning have combined with the ability of modern platforms to deliver this advanced technology through simple design tools and pre- trained machine learning models. Now, technology can process content as humans would, by identifying many variations of a document, locating and extracting data, and delivering it to all types of intelligent automation systems—further triggering processes and involving human interaction to only handle exceptional cases.

ABBYY Vantage: Your AI skills solution for the citizen developer documents

ABBYY Vantage delivers a smarter way to process documents using cognitive skills that read, understand, and extract insights from documents to improve business outcomes.

It helps organizations and the new citizen developer accelerate digital transformation by giving even the least technical employees what they need to build out cognitive skills that support their organizations.

A skill offers a no-code design to train machine learning models for all types of documents:

Core cognitive skills

ABBYY Vantage comes with a set of core cognitive skills that provide the foundation for processing documents of any kind—structured, semi- structured, or unstructured, and all types of data including machine printed, hand printed, barcodes, signatures, and check boxes.

Trained cognitive skills

Trained skills can be quickly designed to understand and extract information from all types of documents, or users can browse the ABBYY Marketplace for pre-trained cognitive skills to save development time and gain quicker ROI.

Rapid design and publishing of skills

Easy, no-code skill designer allows citizen developers to design, train, and publish cognitive skills for all types of structured and unstructured documents.

Monitor and analyze skills

Vantage Skill Monitor measures and analyzes the performance of all deployed skills, so you can continuously improve and move your cognitive automation to the next level.

Online learning service

Vantage skills are continuously getting smarter and more accurate over time, as new document variations and statistical data is collected during human-in-the-loop review. The impact of this makes your business processes more efficient over time and require less human intervention.

Vantage facilitates anywhere operation: Set your calendar to WFH-F ("Working From Home–Forever!")

Another one of Gartner's strategic technology trends since 2021 is what they term "anywhere operations":

> " **An anywhere operations model will be vital for businesses to emerge successfully from COVID-19. At its core, this operating model allows for business to be accessed, delivered, and enabled anywhere—where customers, employers, and business partners operate in physically remote environments. The model for anywhere operations is 'digital first, remote first...'**

One could expect lawyers to be skeptical about the anywhere operations model. After all, we have been working in offices, surrounded by staff, for a long, long time—and lawyers don't like change. However, the latest Altman Weil surveys show that remote/ flexible working arrangements are seen by 77.4% of lawyer leaders as likely to be a permanent post-pandemic change. That's not just the top scorer, but more than four times as high as the second highest one, which just happened to be new/greater use of technology tools (16.4%).

The Hildebrandt/Citi 2021 law firm advisory went even further in this regard:

> **The shift to remote working has been largely successful. In an industry that, by certain benchmarks, has lagged other industries in the adoption of remote working, the sudden move to full remote working was largely viewed as very successful. This was due in large part to the technology investments firms made in recent years."**

Why buy off-the-rack when you can build to suit with Vantage?

A 2019 Intapp survey of 258 lawyers at firms with 50+ employees revealed that lawyers recognize the importance of using software that is purpose-built for their needs and those of their clients as opposed to generic solutions, but that many are still grappling with the outmoded technology that isn't industry-specific. The research shows that 46% of lawyers surveyed are using technology that does not meet their needs. Even worse, 28% of lawyers find that the technology they use is too complex and creates more work than it saves.

In the Gartner Hype Cycle for Legal and Compliance Technologies, 2021, Zack Hutto, Director, advisory in the Gartner Legal & Compliance practice, states:

> As a result of acute workload pressures through the pandemic, technology solutions appear more attractive than ever for over-burdened legal and compliance teams …. many legal leaders get overwhelmed by technology opportunities. Legal and compliance teams don't always know what they want (or what they could pursue), but they know they need technology. (as Quoted in The Orange Rag – Legaltechnology.com) 'Focused investment in these areas can unlock the kind of transformational efficiency gains in legal and compliance like we have witnessed in other business functions, such as finance or HR."

So where should this investment be focused? Gartner has identified "digitally enabled workflows" as a key driver of future efficiencies:

> **Legal and compliance teams face more work to manage than ever before, and the traditional overhead costs are enormous," said Hutto. "Digitizing the highest volume workflows is both feasible, with mature technologies to do so, and has been shown to have profound results in terms of legal productivity for early adopters—if well managed" .... "Don't waste the precious time of your team—on top of the cap-ex on a tech solution—trying tackle the wrong opportunities."**

One of Gartner's strategic technology trends is "total experience," which represents the combination of "multi-experience, customer experience, employee experience, and user experience to transform the business outcome." A common point of frustration throughout all these touchpoints is disconnected processes and back-end systems that process data, whether structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. To achieve the goal of total experience, at the point where employees, customers,

users, and technology intersect, businesses will need to focus on content-centric and customer-facing processes, making sure these are automated efficiently, without latency and errors, and without repetitive steps. As a result, previous friction points for both customers and employees will be eliminated, customer experience will be significantly improved (leading to higher loyalty and business value), and employee satisfaction and sense of purpose will soar.

About ABBYY

ABBYY empowers legal professionals to focus more on practicing law and less on the administrative tasks. By automating the intake, processing, and analysis of legal documents, you spend more time practicing law and winning new clients, and less time on back-office headaches. ABBYY uses intelligent automation to ensure that technology accelerates the organization toward the achievement of its goals, now and in the future.

Vantage cognitive skills enable intelligent automation platforms, digital workers, and automation robots to intelligently process business documents in a human-like manner. To learn more visit **www.abbyy.com/vantage**.