

ALSPs: It's Not If You'll Use Them, It's How

By [Carla Landry](#) on June 21, 2021

Few people attend law school with the vision of spending most of their days on document review. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But for many lawyers a good day's work involves building great defense strategies, fighting for what's right, or using their expertise to help their clients solve their most pressing business problems. For law firms that outsource work to ALSPs and other law companies, the most routine tasks are becoming a thing of the past. Increasingly, they find that smartly selected legal technology solutions can help them streamline law firm processes and focus attention toward the most value-added work.

We've just concluded the first Global LPM Summit. It was a fantastic opportunity to spend time with the experts who shared their insights, knowledge, and lessons learned. I had the chance to host a session with Lisa Hart Shepherd, Founder of Acritas, and Joe Borstein, CEO of LexFusion. The central theme of the session was about how legal project management (LPM) can help you facilitate your ALSP relationships. Which made me think even more than I usually do about how ALSPs benefit law firms.

Percolating beneath the discussion with Lisa and Joe was the notion that ALSPs are critical to the changing law firm paradigm. It's no longer a matter of "if." It's not even a matter of "when." Nowadays, it's a question of "how."

Once upon a time, costs were a primary driver behind the push toward ALSPs. Certainly costs will always be a concern. If it's important to your client, it should be important to you. Law firms need to do things in the most cost-effective way possible. But it's no longer primarily an issue of cost. The bigger, more strategic, issue is how law firms put their talent to highest and best use. When firms use resources efficiently, they reap the benefits, including:

- Better experience for lawyers and law professionals
- Enhanced reputation for recruiting new talent
- More predictable outcomes for clients
- Greater savings through efficient processes

But perhaps the biggest benefit of all is that the strategic use of ALSPs removes a lot of the noise surrounding legal technology. Law firms and lawyers shouldn't have to be computer engineers and technology wizards. It makes sense to offload the development, deployment, and utilization of legal technology to the experts. In the beginning, ALSPs were adept at putting together technology solutions that work for law firms. Now they have even more sophisticated tools at their disposal, such as next generation cloud-based and AI technologies. While many lawyers are still struggling with how to place a Zoom call, the technology masters at ALSPs are figuring out how to streamline and digitize much of the low-value-added work lawyers do.

ALSPs have become an integral part of the legal ecosystem and a key player in the value chain. According to a recent [Thomson Reuters survey](#), some 80 percent of law firms use ALSPs. There was a time when ALSPs were unproven and firms were justifiably concerned about data security and work product quality. Those days are behind us. ALSPs excel at what they do. Now it's more about finding the best way to get the work done.

Few law firms would turn down the opportunity to be more strategic. When firms embrace ALSPs, they can leverage their expertise to do just that.

In order to use ALSPs effectively, they must be part of the law firm's value chain. This means that law firms must make a conscious and deliberate effort to leverage ALSP services. This is where LPM techniques support your work, allowing you to manage the full matter lifecycle while creating seamless connectivity between the law firm and the ALSP. The entire process is managed to ensure quality and meet client expectations.

When you use LPM to manage the matter through the entire lifecycle, you assume responsibility for overall service delivery. That's the role you want. There is no need to abdicate control; the ALSP should be a relationship that facilitates your law firm's strategy.

Increasingly, both general counsel and law firms are thinking differently about these alternative providers. ALSPs are no longer the threat they used to be. Rather, the most forward-thinking law firms are asking how they can use them more, not less. If you missed the Summit, there are gems in the recordings that may help you successfully develop and implement your ALSP strategy. Click [here](#) for more information.