



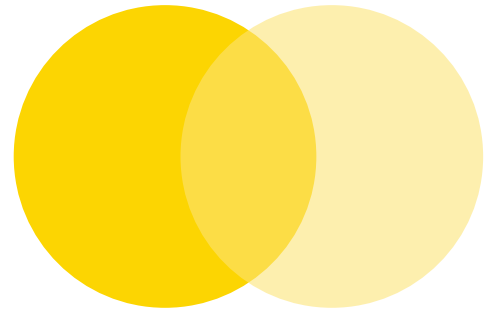
BML MUNJAL UNIVERSITY™
A HERO GROUP INITIATIVE

vahurā
BECAUSE OUR LAWS NEED CHAMPIONS

**DECODING
THE NEXT
- GEN LEGAL
PROFESSIONAL**



JULY
2020



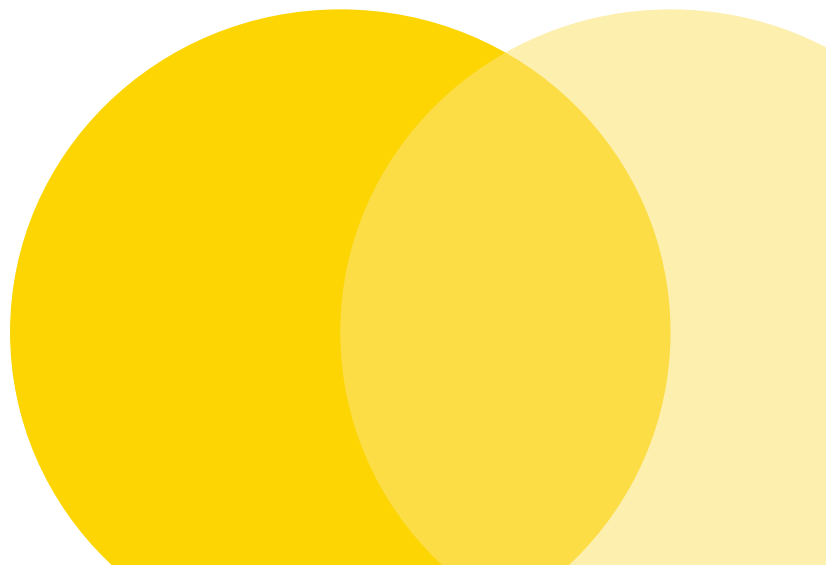
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ABOUT THE STUDY

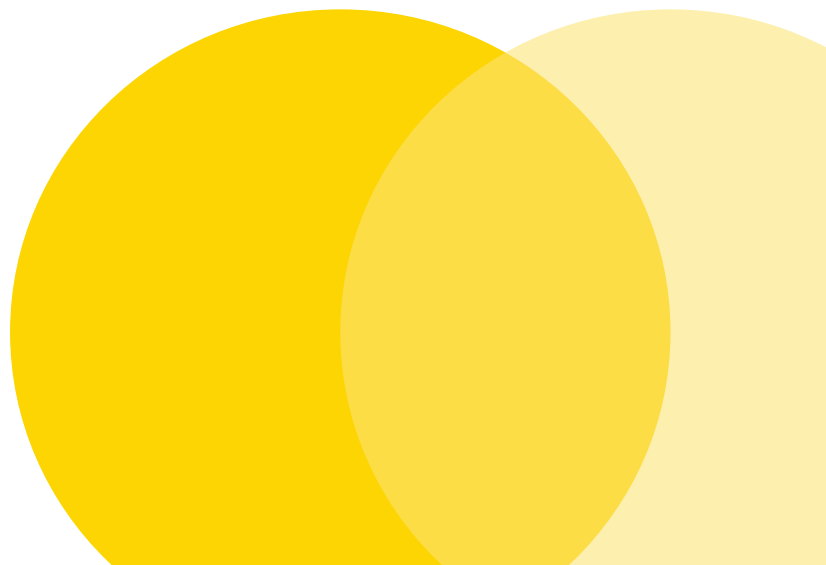
The study titled “**Decoding the Next - Gen Legal Professional**” (the “Study or Survey”) sets out to capture the practitioner's perspective of the practice of law and the skills required of lawyers in the rapidly transforming legal environment. BML Munjal University (BMU) and Vahura together curated this Survey in June 2020. In total, **208** legal professionals from leading law firms and in-house legal departments, as well as independent practitioners, shared their perspectives on the impact of technology on the legal profession, the skills and attributes required for the next generation lawyer to survive and thrive in our legal ecosystem. The results of this survey were analysed in-depth before generating this Study built on data insights.

Within the report, percentages in certain questions may exceed 100 percent because respondents may have been asked to “select all that apply”. In some cases, percentages have been rounded off.



Key Highlights

- Over **90%** of respondents foresee an increasing use of digitization and legal technology over the next 10 years
- **More than half** of the respondents are of the opinion that technology disruption is already underway or bound to happen
- **42%** respondents indicated that over 20% of their day to day legal work could be taken over by technology such as AI in the next 3 to 5 years
- **36%** of respondents who took the survey see the practice of law becoming more international with the increasing importance of international education/ qualification
- **76%** of the respondents expressed that the fundamentals of law subjects and programs with direct practical application are some of the key areas of focus for law schools
- **86%** of the law firm respondents reported that understanding and anticipating client needs would be one of the foremost skills required in young professionals in the next 3 to 5 years
- **83%** in house respondents highlighted commercial awareness as one of the essential skills in the next 3 to 5 years



About BML Munjal University (BMU)

Named after the late Founder & Chairman of the Hero Group, BML Munjal University (BMU) is a unique not-for-profit initiative founded by the promoters of the Hero Group. BMU is mentored by Imperial College London and is engaged in creating, preserving, and imparting internationally benchmarked knowledge and skills. The university seeks to transform higher education in India by creating a world-class innovative teaching, learning and research environment. It aims to become a nursery for the leaders of tomorrow and a repository of knowledge. The various undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral programmes offered in the University are: Ph.D, MBA, B.Tech, BBA, B.A. (Hons) Economics, B. Com (Hons), B.A., LL.B. (Hons.), B.B.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

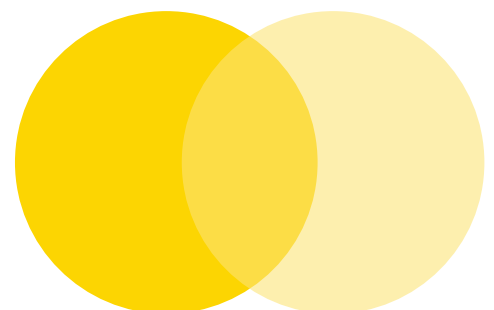
For more details on BML Munjal University, please visit www.bmu.edu.in

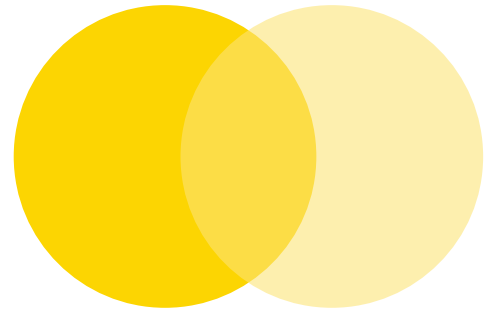
About the BMU School of Law

The School of Law offers a five years integrated LL.B. programmes designed to not only enhance knowledge but also instill in students a skill-based grounding in the subjects needed to excel in legal practice. These programmes seek to develop a sense of curiosity amongst students to understand the finer nuances of law, apply legal concepts to complex commercial issues and be able to clearly articulate the solutions to these problems both verbally and in writing. In a fast-changing world, legal issues require an interdisciplinary approach, therefore these programmes aim to develop lawyers with a holistic understanding of the economic, political, social, and business landscape in which the law operates.

A Vision to Transform Legal Education

The vision driving the School of Law is to use experiential learning to transform the way law is taught and how it is learnt; and to simulate the nuances of actual practice via case law discussions, moot courts, open-book exams and assignments testing problem-solving skills. These will be delivered through a highly qualified and dedicated faculty in conjunction with exposure to practice, involving periodic interactions with reputed practitioners, right from the first semester. All the students will be made to undergo an intensive schedule of internships over the period of five years.

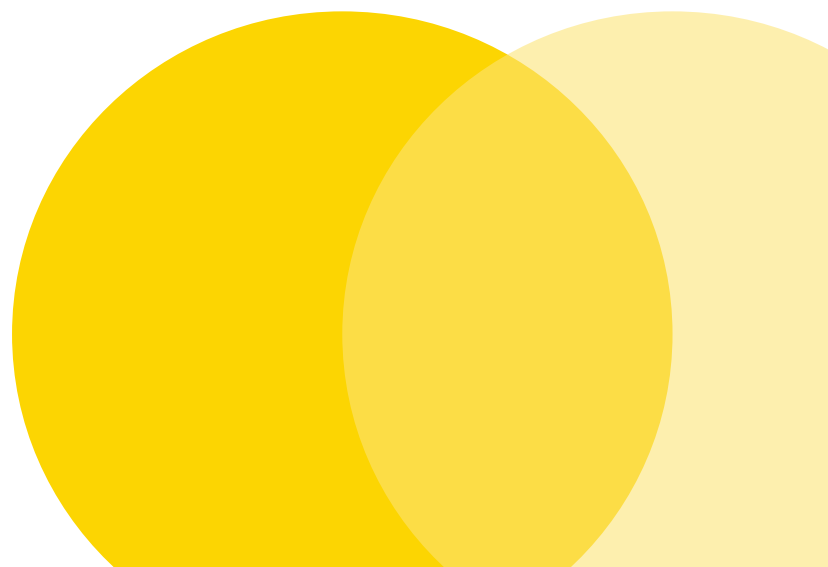




About Vahura

Vahura is India's leading legal search and change consulting firm. Vahura has pioneered legal recruitment in India and today, services clients across the APAC and MEA regions, for senior level requirements spanning legal, compliance, public policy, and tax domains. Vahura's other offerings include Onboard – enabling professional boards through director search and consulting; Counselect – India's first legal secondment and flexi-work venture; ReLawncnch – programs that help women return to the workplace after a break; and Navigator (<https://navigator.vahura.com>)- a career advisory platform that helps young professionals become recruitment ready. Vahura is also a founding partner of Agami – a platform to catalyse and scale transformative ideas in the areas of law and justice.

For more information visit www.vahura.com; www.counselect.com and www.agami.in





MESSAGE FROM PROF. (DR.) NIGAM NUGGEHALLI



Dear Reader,

It gives me great pleasure to present this pioneering survey report on the future of legal practice and the skills required of lawyers in today's rapidly transforming legal profession. We have prepared this report in collaboration with Vahura, the leading legal recruitment and consultancy firm in India. This survey is the first of its kind that asks lawyers about the future of their practice and the kind of skills that they look for in the entrants to the profession. We have found that lawyers expect technology to be a big disruptor and amidst these changes, the new lawyers joining the profession will be judged on their skills of communication, analysis and synthesis, as well as that of time management and teamwork, rather than traditional doctrinal knowledge.

The survey highlights the skills gap in legal education, a gap that the School of Law at BML Munjal University is committed to address by making experiential learning and personalised legal education the cornerstone of our pedagogy and curriculum. We are in the midst of extraordinary changes in our economic and technological landscapes. Law firms and lawyers are looking to burnish and strengthen their capabilities and skills in the eye of far reaching changes in business models and technology driven practices. In this scenario, law schools will play a critical role in nurturing and developing lawyers who will be equipped with the skills and attitudes required for the modern legal practice.

We hope that this survey report is a small step in remedying the mismatch between the expectations of the legal profession and the outcomes of legal education.

Thank you and hope you find this report helpful and thought provoking.

Sincerely

Professor Nigam Nuggehalli
Dean, School of Law
BML Munjal University
Gurugram





MESSAGE FROM MR. RITVIK LUKOSE



Dear Reader,

When Prof. Nigam taught me at NLSIU, Bangalore in the early 2000s, we lived in a world that was desktop driven, and where the smartphone was still science fiction. In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic striking, it was only through technology that we were able to reconnect with Prof. Nigam and work with the fantastic team at BML Munjal University (all over video calls), on this study relating to what the legal profession will look like in a decade. This is an area of great interest to us at Vahura, as our mission is to creatively catalyse the advancement of the legal profession.

The findings of this study have been garnered through a survey of over 200 professionals. This methodology has its inherent strengths and weaknesses. The strength is that it does well to capture the feedback and prediction of practitioners in the profession, who are in positions where they make hiring and other strategic decisions. The weakness of this approach, in my view is that it does not go far enough to alert us to the changing nature of the legal profession.

If you find some of the insights of the study too strange or “far out”, remember the wise words of Bill Gates - **“We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don’t let yourself be lulled into inaction.”**

I hope you find this study full of insights that spur you into action, and help advance the legal profession as a whole.

Warm regards,

Ritvik Lukose
Co-Founder & CEO, Vahura



KEY INSIGHTS

OVERVIEW

Globalisation and technology are constantly transforming the global economy. The legal profession is no exception to this rapid evolution. The way legal services are delivered has changed, leaving many unsure of what the future looks like for lawyers and how to prepare for it. There have been stark predictions for the future of law and for lawyers, the recurrent one being that next-generation lawyers require a deep understanding of the law with a host of tech and soft skills in order to remain competitive.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Delhi

57
27.40%



Mumbai

62
29.81%



Bengaluru

53
25.48%



Others

39
17.31%



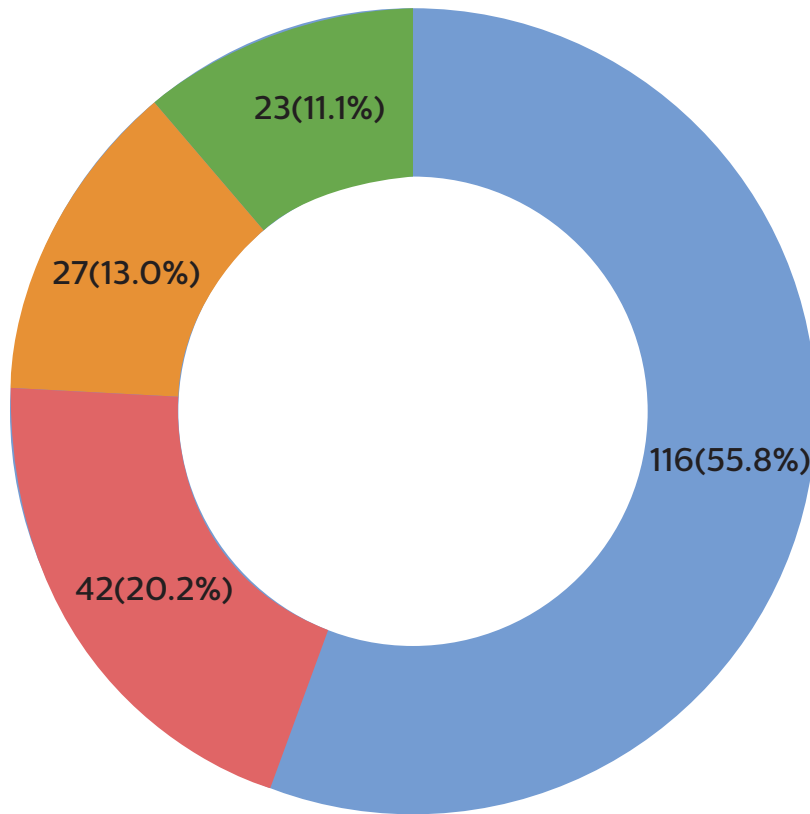
120
57.69%



84
40.38%



4
1.92%

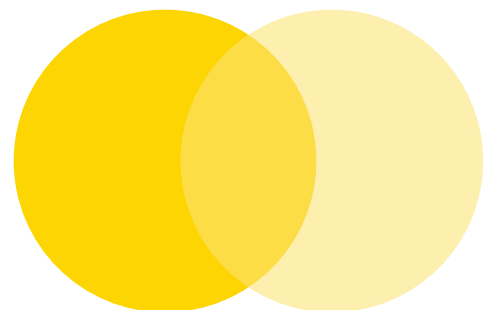


● Law Firm ● In-house ● Independent Practitioner ● Others



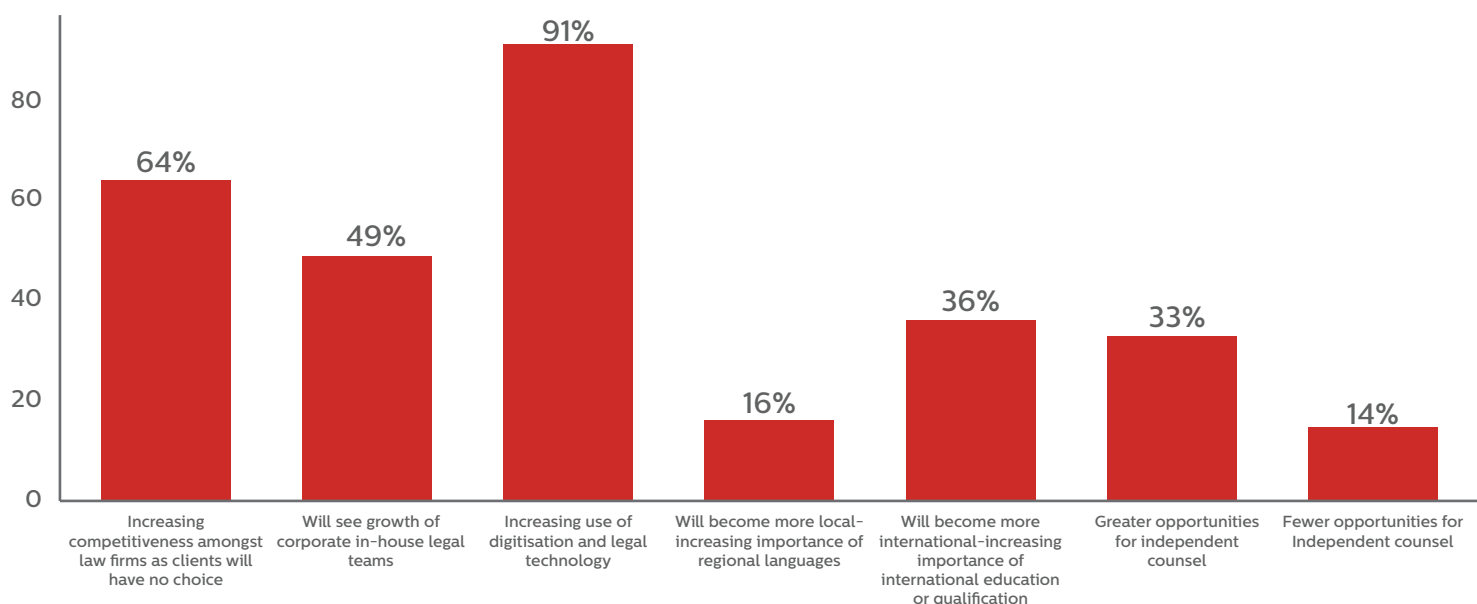
Focus on fundamental concepts of law, Keep learnability high and Sharpen non-legal skills

Basil Almeida, Managing Partner, Counsel & Co.



CHANGING DYNAMICS OF THE PRACTICE OF LAW:

The legal profession is in the midst of significant transformation. The changing client demands, rise of new generations with different career expectations, automation and technological innovations continue to accelerate a transformation in the legal profession. We will see a significant shift in the nature of talent required by law firms as well as corporate in-house departments in the coming years. Next-generation lawyers will increasingly find the need to embrace a broader role while law schools will be forced to revisit course content and skill-set development to keep up with the changing environment.

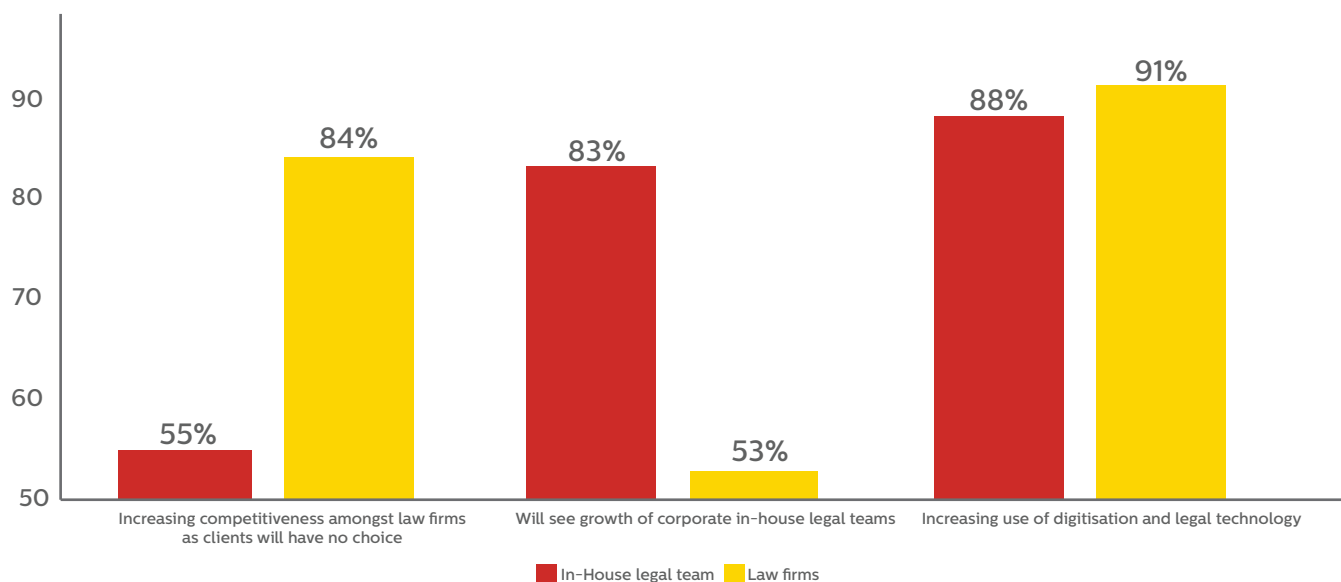


The survey delved into how lawyers see the practice of law changing in India over the next 10 years.

91%

of the respondents reported increasing use of digitisation and legal technology to be one of the key changes the legal sector will see. This was followed by increasing competitiveness amongst law firms and the growth of corporate in-house legal teams that were selected by 64% and 49% of the respondents respectively.

TOP 3 WAYS THE PRACTICE OF LAW WILL CHANGE IN INDIA OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS:



When we compared the responses received from law firm and in-house respondents, we observed that **91%** and **88%** respectively from each of the above categories consistently agreed that the increasing use of digitisation and legal technology is one of the key changes they anticipate.

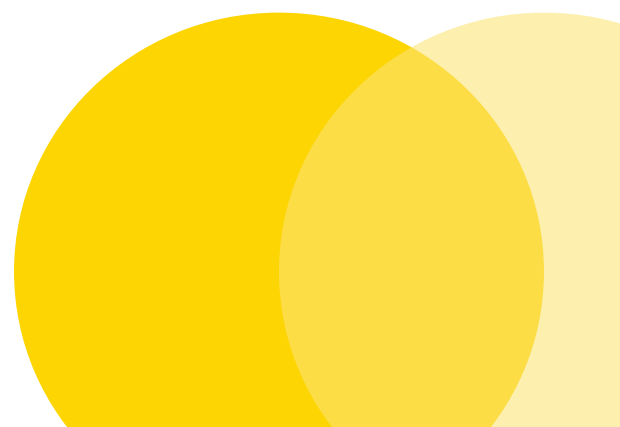
Our findings also suggest that **84%** of the law firm respondents anticipate increasing competitiveness amongst law firms as clients will have more choice.

Another key observation is that **83%** of the in-house respondents forecast a growth of corporate in-house legal teams.

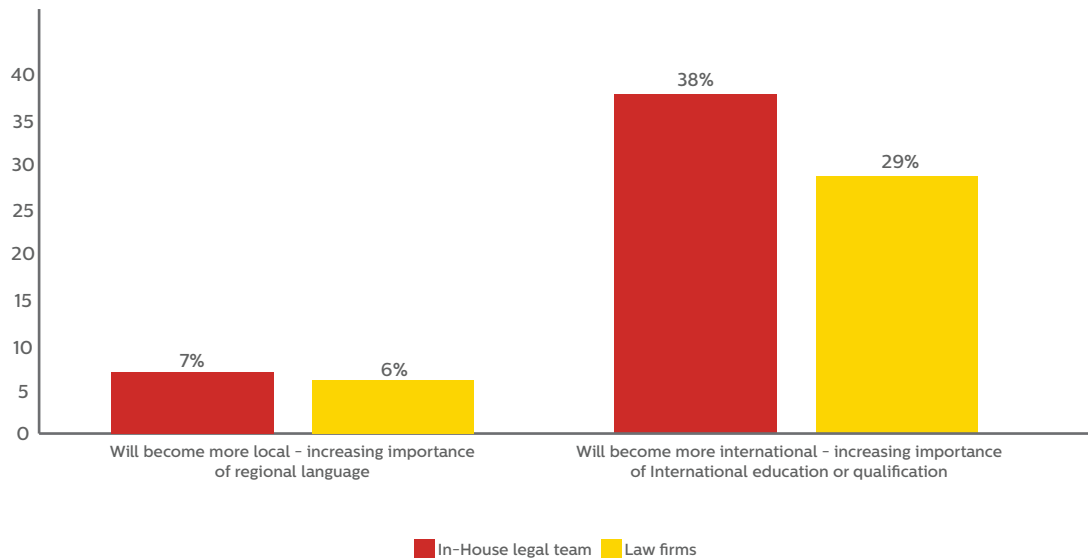


Get your basics right, do not have a template driven approach and have the ability to think in a vacuum without being guided by online articles or precedents.

Vidyut Bedekar, Co-Founder and Practice Head
Tree of Life Associates



The Practice of Law - more international or more local?

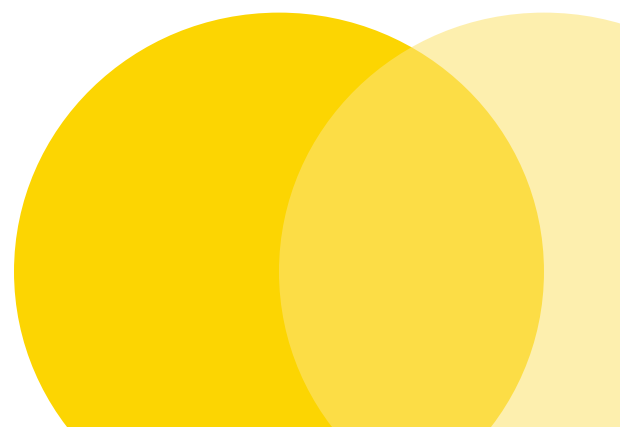


On an average, **38%** in-house respondents and **29%** law firm respondents who took the survey see the **practice of law becoming more international** with the **increasing importance of international education/ qualification**. One of the least-picked changes by respondents overall however, was the importance of regional languages attempting to make the practice of law more local. This may be on account of the fact that over **80%** of the respondents were from large metro cities, and predominantly engaged in corporate law practice areas.



Focus on the fundamentals and get it right - both knowledge of the law and skill sets to apply it are important

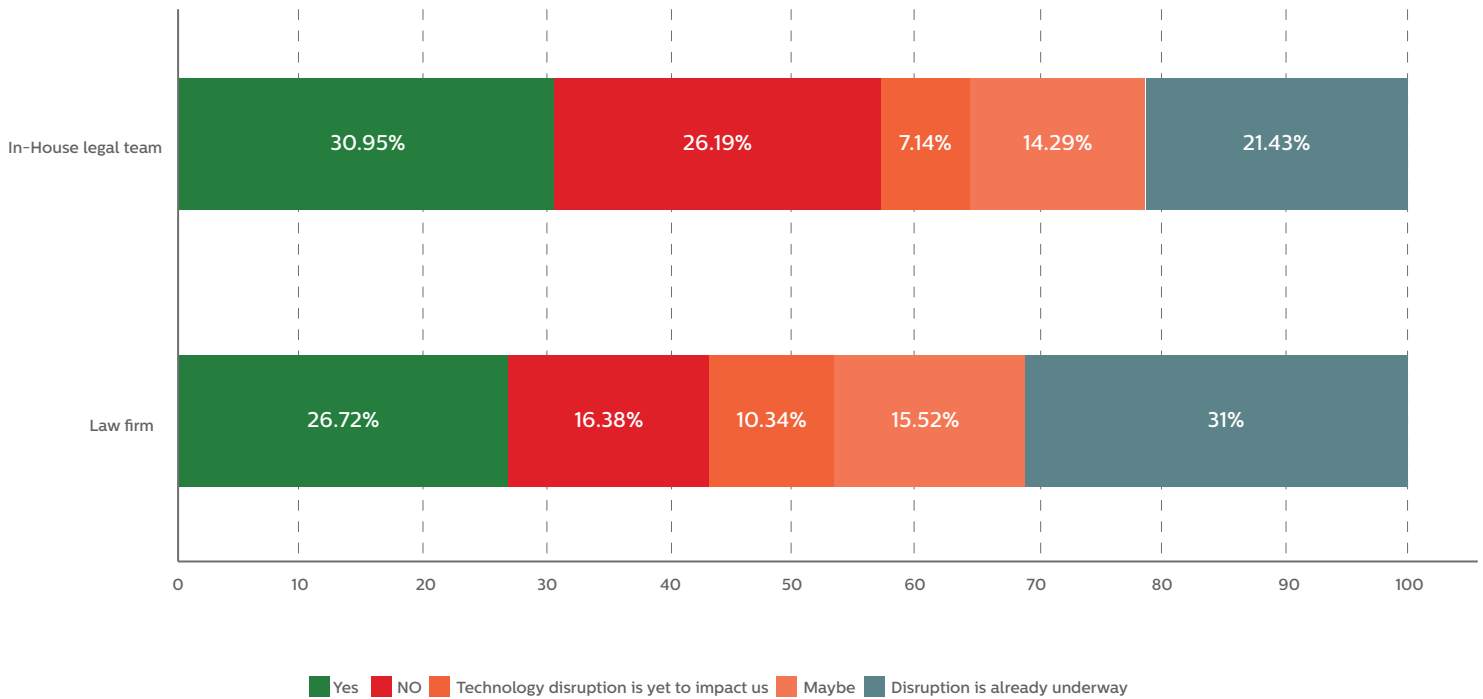
Prashant Mara, Partner, BTG Legal



THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN THE ERA OF DIGITISATION:

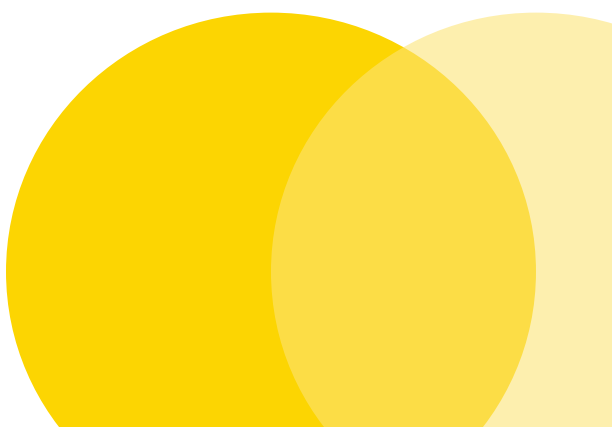
Technology is a key force for transforming the legal sector. Legal professionals are increasingly turning to accessible and impactful technology solutions that deliver higher efficiency and productivity through data-driven insights and analytics.

Will technology disrupt the law firm and in-house legal teams?

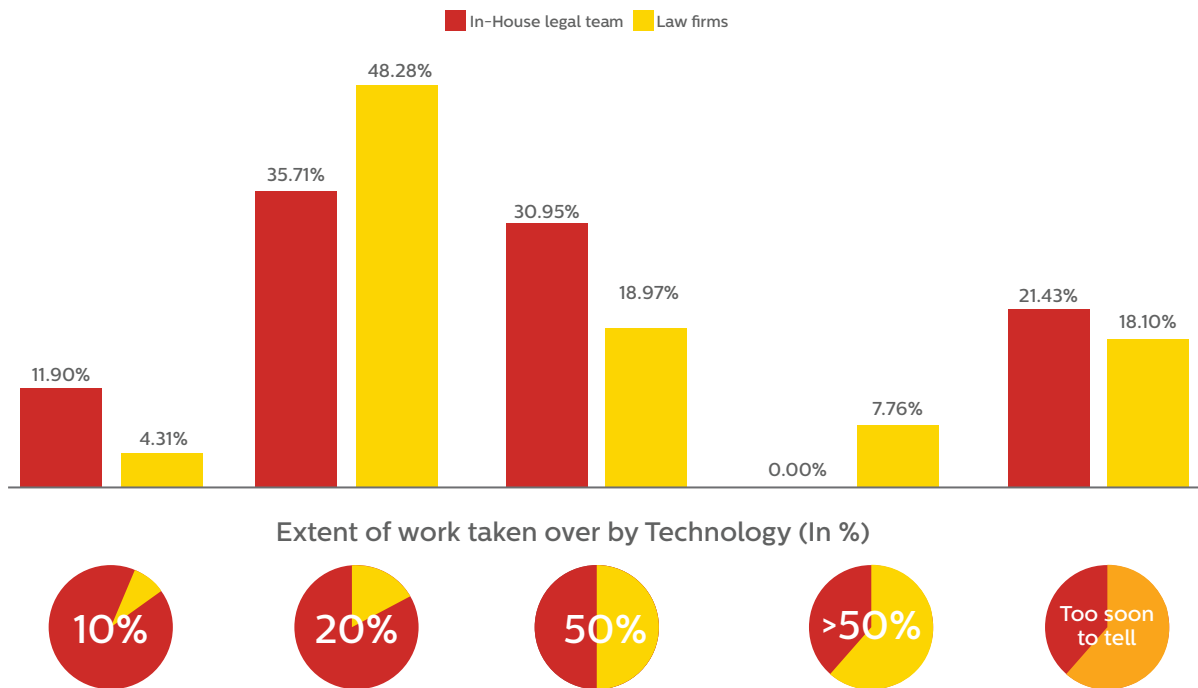


While in-house legal departments and law firms are already using technology solutions to improve their efficiency on a day to day basis, **7%** of our in-house legal team and **10%** of law firm professionals have reported that their practice is yet to be impacted by technology.

Almost **31%** of the in-house legal team respondents who have taken the survey opine that technology will disrupt the legal profession as compared to **27%** of the law firm respondents.



WHAT % OF THE LAW FIRM AND IN-HOUSE LEGAL TEAM'S DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES WILL BE DISRUPTED BY TECHNOLOGY?



Technology solutions in the legal space may replace some human roles at the entry-level by way of automating repetitive and standardized work but are expected to augment others.

Nearly **50%** of law firm professionals reported that **20%** of their day-to-day work could be automated, whereas over **67%** of in-house professionals forecast that **20% to 50%** of their day-to-day work will be taken over by technology in the coming years. This also suggests that law firms might be slower at adopting technology than in-house legal departments.

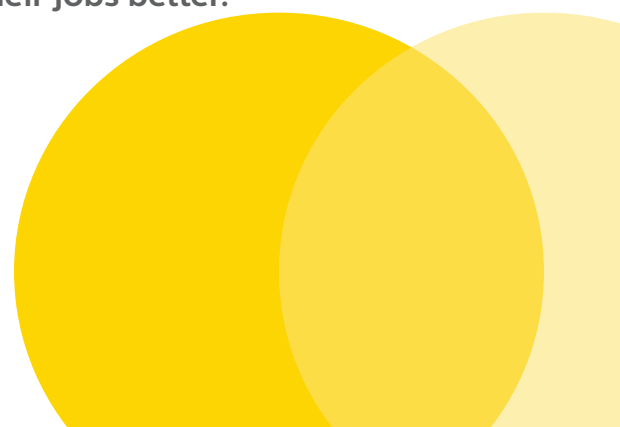
Freshly minted lawyers are usually trained on the kind of work that will be the first to be automated. This begs the question as to, how will young lawyers be trained and who will do the training? This is an area that law schools of the future, can step in to do more to prepare 'practice ready' lawyers.

Future teams, both law firms as well as in-house legal departments will be proficient in understanding and adapting technology. In view of this, the next generation lawyer must not only be familiar with the basics of law, but also be proficient in using technology to enhance their skills and help them do their jobs better.

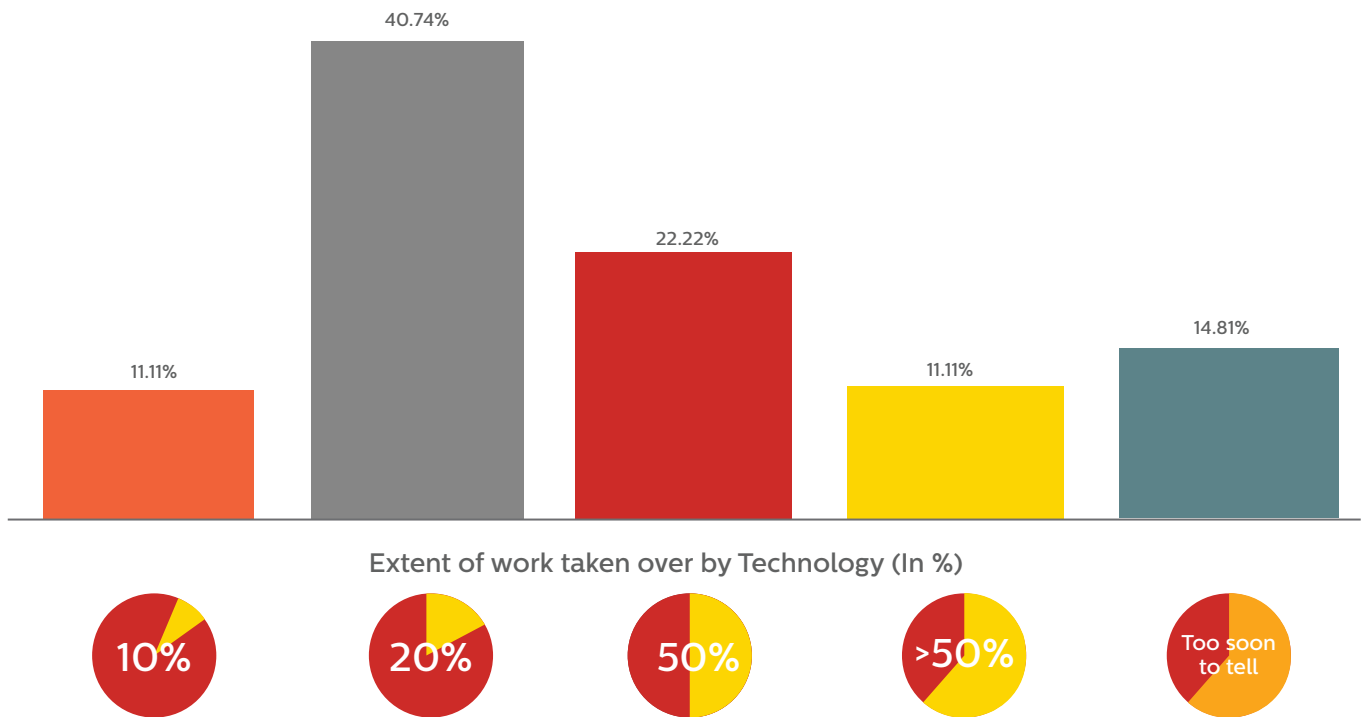


Practical hands on experience matters more than theoretical knowledge. Learn to be adaptable and change with times- you need to keep up! Read Read and Read to stay updated at all times!

Priyancka Dastur, Director - Learning & Development, Khaitan & Co

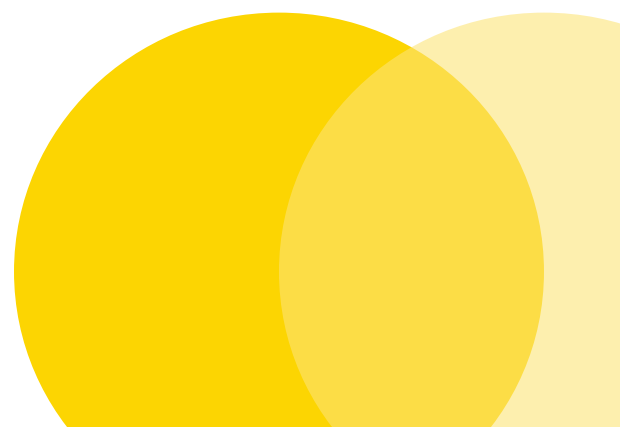


WHAT % OF THE INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONERS/ CHAMBERS DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES WILL BE DISRUPTED BY TECHNOLOGY?

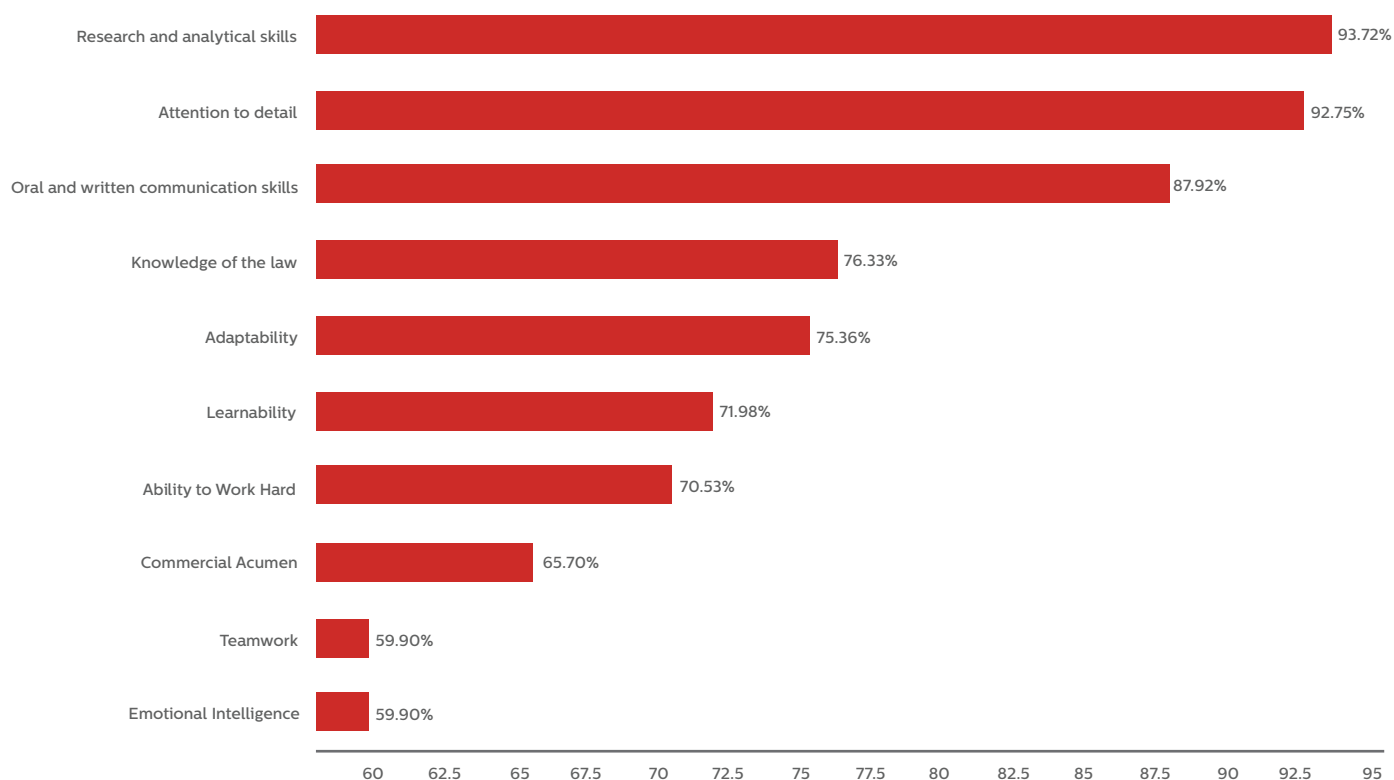


It is also interesting to note that technology transformation is not just limited to in-house legal teams and law firms, even independent practitioners/ chambers are preparing for this transition.

Over **40%** of the independent practitioners/ chambers state that they expect over **20%** of their day to day work to be automated.



TOP QUALITIES REQUIRED IN YOUNG LAWYERS?



In our survey, we asked professionals to rate the top qualities required in young professionals in order of priority. **94% of the respondents selected research and analytical skills** as one of the most important qualities required closely followed by **attention to detail** picked by **93% of the respondents**. Oral and written communication skills, knowledge of the law and adaptability were other qualities that were commonly chosen by the respondents.

While both law firm as well as in-house respondents selected the same top five qualities required in young lawyers, over **80% in-house respondents also emphasized the importance of the ability to work hard, learnability and commercial acumen**.

It is also interesting to note that all the General Counsels who took the survey unanimously reported that research and analytical skills, as well as oral and written communication skills, are the most critical qualities they look for in lawyers while hiring.

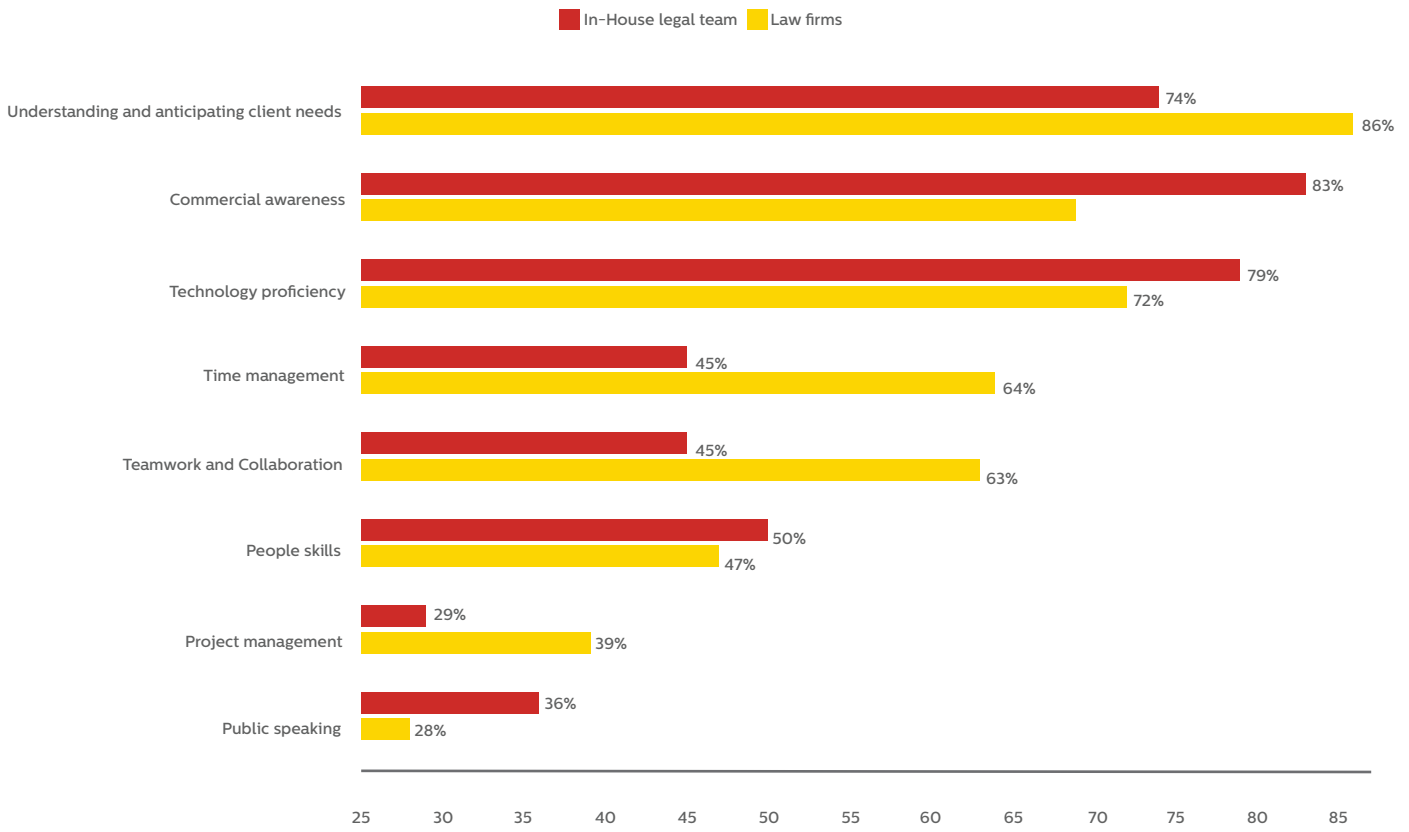
While professionals should maintain focus on expanding their skills and capabilities, specific skill demands vary based on the type of organization.



Young Lawyers need to be adaptable and have great commercial acumen to be successful

Dr. Sudhir Ravindran, Founder, Altacit Global 

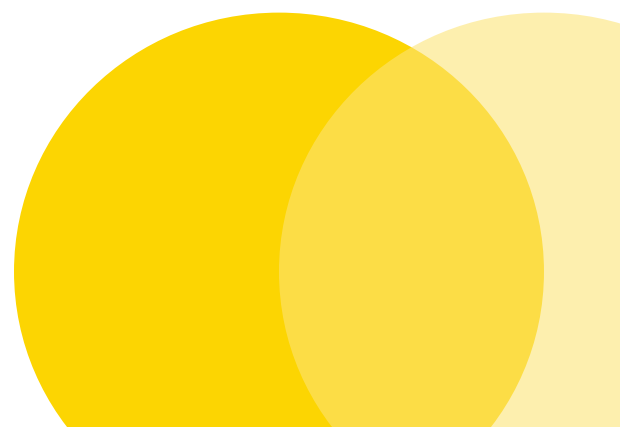
5 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS REQUIRED IN YOUNG LAWYERS BASED ON IN-HOUSE AND LAW FIRM PROFESSIONALS:



86% of the law firm respondents reported that understanding and anticipating client needs was the most critical skill required for professionals over the coming years.

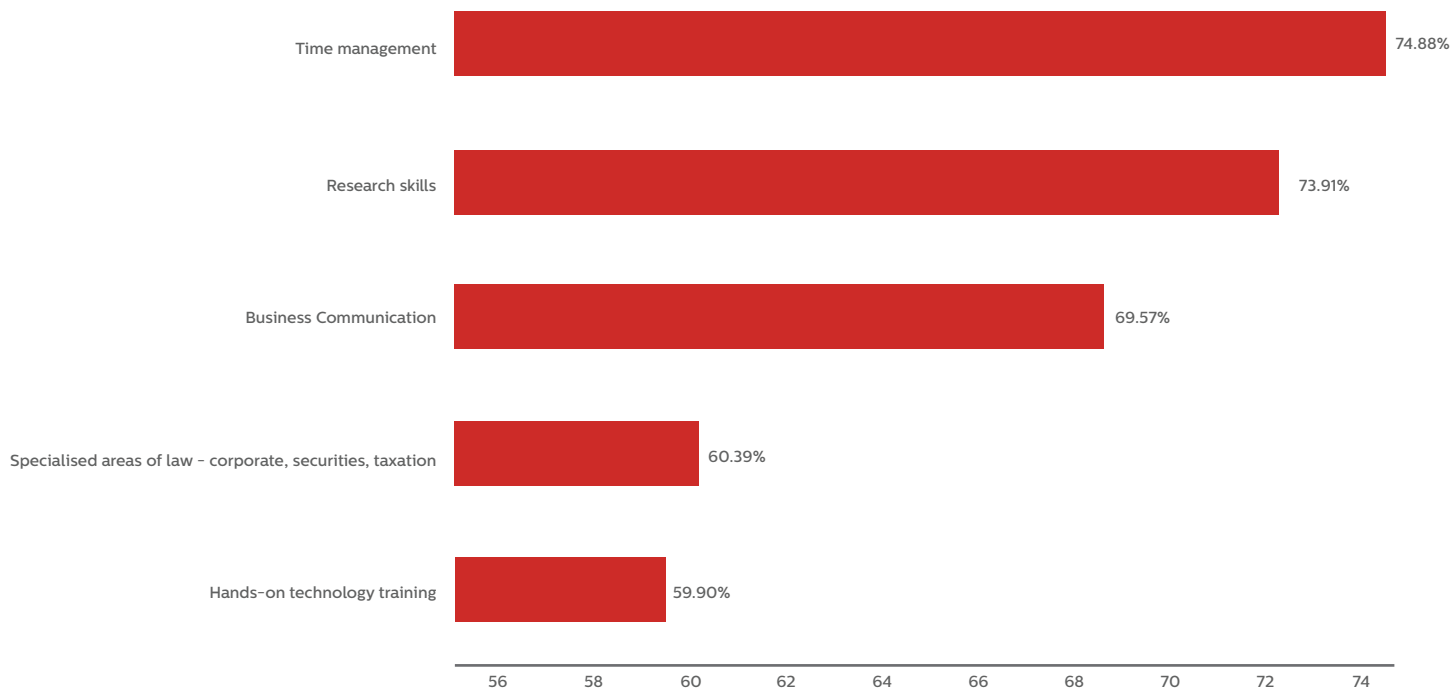
83% of the in-house respondents identified commercial awareness to be the most important skill required followed by technology proficiency, which was selected by 79% of the in-house respondents.

Both law firm and in-house respondents rated the importance of technology proficiency very highly. Teamwork & collaboration and time management are some of the other skills rated higher by law firm lawyers than In-house lawyers based on our findings.



TOP 5 AREAS OF TRAINING FOR YOUNG LAWYERS:

The survey also focussed on the various areas organisations need to spend time training their young lawyers and identified some of the prominent functions.



The top 5 areas that respondents believe organisations should train their young lawyers include **research skills, time management, training on specialised areas of law, business communication and technology training.**

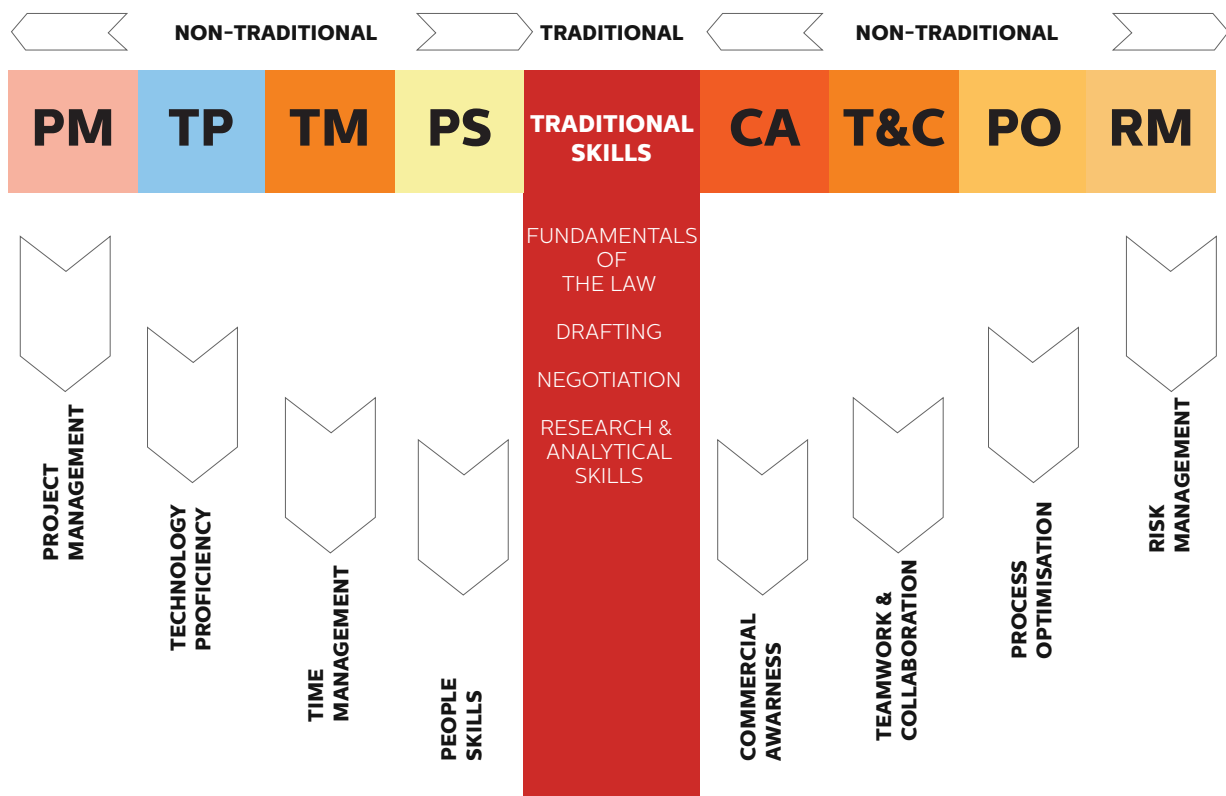
We also further looked into the different training areas in-house and law firm professionals prioritized. **81% of the in-house respondents** reported the importance for organisations to spend time training their young lawyers on **business communication, followed by research skills (76%) and hands-on training in technology (74%).**

Law firm professionals on the other hand prioritised training young lawyers on **Research skills (76%) and time management (75%)** followed by training on specialised areas of law such as corporate, securities, taxation **(66%).**



Ownership, Adaptability, Attention to Detail, Commercial and Legal Awareness concerning corresponding practice area are some of the key attributes for a young lawyer.

Jitender Tanikella, Partner, Algo Legal 

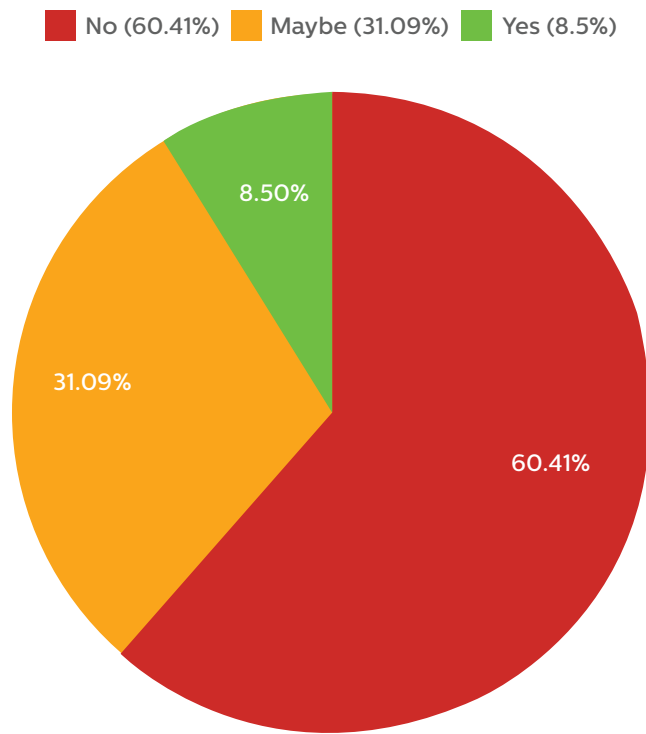


Previously, it was sufficient for a lawyer to be an I-shaped professional with expert knowledge. However, it is imperative for the new breed of talent emerging in this era of rapid technological and operational change to be a 'T' shaped lawyer*. This means that in addition to being a good lawyer with in-depth subject knowledge, the next generation lawyer must develop a set of non-traditional skill sets and knowledge areas. These professionals with multi-faceted skill-sets and having more agility will lead the digital era.

*<https://www.legalbusinessworld.com/single-post/2017/12/22/The-T-Shaped-Lawyer>

LEGAL EDUCATION IN INDIA - CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND WHAT LIES AHEAD:

Are law schools in India keeping up with the changing environment?



Over **60%** respondents believe that **law schools in India are not keeping up with the changing environment.**

Law Schools need to understand that next generation lawyers would be working in a changed landscape and accordingly take efforts to combat the growing disconnect between what the legal profession demands and what is being taught in law schools.

The level of economic activity drives the demand for lawyers. As for the job market, while technological advancements and structural changes to the legal job market may see a decrease in the growth of legal jobs in the future, our study shows that the demand for top-quality law schools and lawyers will continue to be high.

While **42%** respondents felt that there are enough law schools to cater to the market demand for lawyers, **30%** still believe that there is always a place for top-quality law schools.

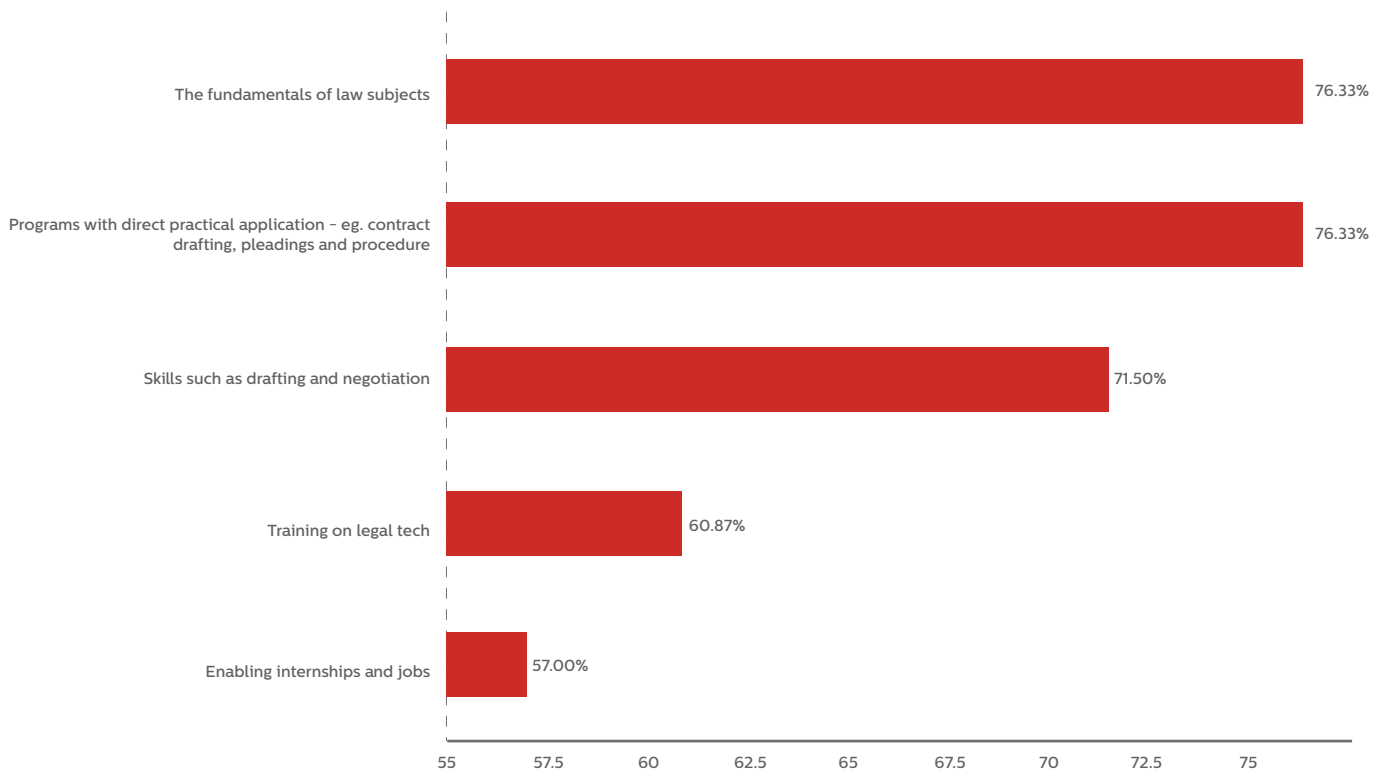


Work towards strong foundation of law and drafting. The understanding of business would come over a period of time and by then the strong foundation would significantly add to your expertise.

Y Srinivas Arun, Partner, Link Legal India Law Services



TOP 5 IMPORTANT AREAS OF FOCUS FOR LAW SCHOOLS:



We also studied the key focus areas that are most important for law schools. **76%** respondents recommended the fundamentals of law subjects and programs with direct practical application.

Other key focus areas included training on skills such as drafting and negotiation, and training on legal tech cited by **72%** and **61%** of the respondents respectively.

It is also interesting to note that while most of the in-house respondents (**83%**) found that implementing programs with direct practical application like contract drafting, pleadings and procedure is of the highest importance, majority of the law firm respondents (**84%**) adhered to the fundamentals of law subjects being the most important focus area for law schools.



Importance of learning soft skills like time management, collaboration etc are key for young lawyers.

Ashima Obhan, Partner, Obhan & Associates



Indian legal education needs to be reinvented with additional programs that complement the scope of the global legal landscape, embedding students with the resources, techniques and knowledge they need to excel in the digital age. Law Schools can introduce new courses or modify their existing curriculum and even collaborate with tech firms to bridge the innovation and technology gap. Transitioning towards a vocational teaching style will significantly benefit law students by giving them a better understanding of the practice of law. With the increasing automation of legal work, the burden to train the next generation of lawyers will shift from the law firms to the law schools. Law Schools that upgrade their pedagogy by incorporating legal tech tools, and developing real world skills like drafting, project management and collaborative working, will be most sought after by students and employers.

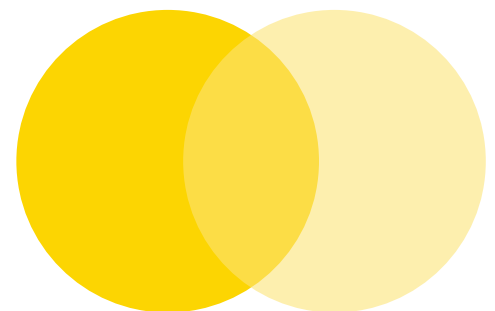
TAKEAWAYS FOR NEXT GEN LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Focus on your fundamentals - core concepts of law, drafting, communication and research skills. This is the core that will always be required.

Build non-traditional skills and areas of expertise such as business knowledge, tech proficiency and project management.

The old formula (Quality of Legal Work = Good Lawyer), is being replaced by a new formula (Quality of Legal Work = Good Lawyer + Technology + Process). Seek to develop expertise in all parts of this formula.

Employers will increasingly expect Next Gen lawyers to be pre-trained or specially qualified. Professionals who invest in getting practical experience, specialised knowledge or international qualifications, will stand apart from the rest.



TEAM CREDITS

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