AI in Action

How Houston Law Firms Are Adapting to the Future

By Nikki Morris and Adam Robertson



Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept for the legal profession—it is becoming part of the everyday practice of law. Starting this issue and continuing through this bar year, *The Houston Lawyer* will highlight how AI is impacting the legal profession—from lawyers in private practice, to government and corporate counsel, to courts themselves, and even non-lawyers, everyone has different needs that they are using (or at least testing using) AI to fill.

In this issue, we focus on mid-size and large firms. From research and document review to drafting, proofreading, and case assessment, these firms are finding new ways to use AI to work more efficiently while navigating questions of accuracy, confidentiality, ethics, and attorney development. In the following perspectives, attorneys from BakerHostetler and Andrews Myers share how their firms have approached AI adoption, where they have seen the greatest benefits, and what challenges they believe lawyers should consider as these tools become increasingly embedded in legal practice.

BAKERHOSTETLER

By Nikki Morris

At BakerHostetler, we use AI technologies to augment, rather than replace, the expertise of our lawyers. Through the use of firm-approved AI platforms such as Microsoft Copilot and Vincent AI (powered by Clio Work), the firm has incorporated AI into a range of day-to-day legal tasks, including legal research, document analysis, drafting, issue identification, and information management. Our AI tools are deployed within structured governance and security frameworks and are intended to enhance efficiency, scale, and insight while allowing attorneys to devote greater attention to strategic analysis and client counseling. AI-generated outputs are subject to attorney review and validation, and our lawyers remain fully responsible for all legal advice and work product delivered to clients.

That firmwide approach is reflected in how I have leveraged AI in my own practice as a commercial litigator. For example, I recently used it to aid in drafting a demand letter based on a contract. In discovery, I have used AI to help summarize discovery responses, identify areas of dispute in anticipation of a deficiency letter, and identify additional categories of documents or interrogatories to request. I have also found it helpful to distill key case issues for a document review protocol. I have also leveraged AI document review tools to prioritize the most likely responsive documents based on detailed prompts. When it

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comes to brief writing, I have worked with Copilot to identify areas of a brief that may need to be stronger or areas to cut when I am trying to stay within a word limit. While I do not always use the final output and there is definitely a signature tone in the way AI writes that needs to be edited, these tools work well when it comes to helping me organize my thoughts and get started.

Beyond substantive litigation tasks, I also use AI for practical administrative and practice-management work. For example, I use it to aid in proofreading and send out meeting invites. Copilot is also useful to help develop first drafts of non-billable materials or to get a quick summary of how a certain process works, such as when I'm dealing with a new industry or court.

In short, AI has had a big impact on my day-to-day life as a lawyer. AI can handle certain routine tasks creating some efficiencies in my day, and many of the initial drafts it creates are on par with the work product of a first-year lawyer but done in a fraction of the time, so I am able to turn around work product on an expedited time frame. As a profession, however, we are going to have to figure out how to continue to train new lawyers, so they can use these tools while also having the capability to analyze the output. And when it comes to our clients, who are also leveraging these tools, we are going to have to navigate balancing the benefits to the business of using AI with the risks of inaccurate AI-generated materials becoming discoverable.

For attorneys looking to incorporate AI into their practices, I have three suggestions. First, make sure you have all of the appropriate safeguards in place to confirm that the AI you are using is part of a closed system and that your client's data will not be shared outside of your network to ensure you are maintaining the privileged and confidentiality of the data. Second, clearly communicate how and when you are using it to your clients through engagement letters or otherwise to ensure the clients understand how and where their confidential information is being used. And finally, just start using it! I've learned a lot about prompts and the limits and capabilities of our AI tools by just trying them out. Trial and error has been one of the best ways to get more comfortable using AI and integrating it into my daily law practice.



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ANDREWS MYERS

By Adam Robertson

In early 2025, Andrews Myers decided to fully commit to bringing AI into our practice. The reason was simple. We strive to give our clients the best results, and that requires the best tools available. Within a few months, we were piloting Harvey, an AI platform built for legal work rather than adapted from a general-purpose chatbot. Just over a year later, every attorney and paralegal has access, and Harvey complements most aspects of our litigation and transactional work, from summarizing records and drafting to quality assurance review and case assessment. Along the way, adopting and growing our AI systems has given us some perspective worth sharing.

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Two advantages showed up quickly. The first was information distillation. Andrews Myers is a full-service business law firm handling matters of every size and complexity, and regardless of practice area, our attorneys review, digest, and summarize large amounts of information every day. AI does two things with that volume very well: it organizes and summarizes. It is not replacing human review, but it puts the material into an easy-to-digest format, so when we manually review the documents we already have a baseline understanding of what we are looking at. That lets us perform a more qualitative review the first time through.

The second advantage is our writing. Our experience is that, when correctly prompted and properly reviewed, AI can turn a good motion into a great motion. That tends to happen when we use it to revise rather than create from whole cloth. AI excels at sharpening prose, tightening arguments, and presenting complex issues in simple terms.

With the advantages come concerns. The question we ask ourselves most at Andrews Myers is how AI will affect the development of younger attorneys. Historically, lawyers honed their skills through years of struggle, spending hours researching and writing their way to an answer. AI takes much of that struggle away. We do not have a perfect solution, but we lean on our senior attorneys to mentor the younger ones and challenge their work product, making sure they not only *know* the answer but *understand* why it is the answer.

Another concern in most firms, ours included, is whether AI will reduce billable hours. We have found the opposite. We have not studied exactly why, but the consensus is that AI does not reduce the work so much as shift where the time goes. Instead of burning hours on mundane (but necessary) tasks, our attorneys finish them quickly and spend the time on substantive, higher-quality work.

Perspectives like these shape the advice we would give firms still deciding whether to implement AI. It comes down to four suggestions. First, the push for AI has to be from the top down. Adoption is a leadership problem before a technology problem, and without leaders championing it, roadblocks appear everywhere. Second, plan a structured rollout with real training on responsible and ethical use. These tools are not cheap, and the return depends on whether your team learns to get the most out of them. Third, start with high-value, low-risk work when testing AI. Do not debut AI on trial preparation. Use it for summaries, case timelines, or basic written discovery requests, and learn where it excels and fails while mistakes are cheap. Fourth, create a collaborative environment. Share good prompts, workflows, and success stories. Also share failures. The more your team works together, the faster everyone improves. That is how we did it, and it is why AI is now simply part of how we practice.



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