Faster Reviews, Lower Costs: The Case for Law Firm and ALSP AI Partnerships

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AI is not struggling in legal because the technology is immature; it struggles because it is too often deployed in isolation. Law firms are expected to control legal risk and strategy, Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) are expected to deliver scale and efficiency, and technology vendors are expected to innovate, yet these roles are rarely aligned. Our experience shows that the most effective and sustainable use of AI for large-scale document review, due diligence, and contract analysis emerges when these capabilities are deliberately brought together. In that model, corporate legal departments gain what matters most: trusted legal judgment, advanced technology, scalable delivery, and disciplined cost control.

The Law Firm Perspective: Innovation Without Compromise

Law firms are bombarded with vendors' promises of transformative AI. Certain tools quickly become the topic of conversation, often fueled by fear of missing out. Yet corporate clients expect more than experimentation; they expect diligence.

Our responsibility as trusted advisors is to thoroughly test and validate technology before it touches client data or workflows. Any adoption of AI must strengthen, not dilute, legal expertise, security, defensibility, and outcomes.

Why Embrace Technology

At Burnet Duckworth & Palmer LLP (BD&P), we pride ourselves on delivering tactical, high-quality legal solutions and regularly compete with the largest national and international firms. Over time, we developed workflows that perform exceptionally well, and we are unwilling to compromise them merely for technology's sake.

However, we reached an inflection point: the volume and complexity of data in modern matters has outpaced traditional review models. How could we continue delivering exceptional results without deploying armies of document reviewers and driving up costs? The answer was not replacing people with technology, but augmenting our lawyers with the right tools, across every practice area.

Creating a Balanced Approach to AI

BD&P has invested significantly in tools such as Microsoft Copilot, Thomson Reuters CoCounsel Core, Lexis+ AI, Relativity, Reveal and other specialized software platforms that support day-to-day legal work, research, drafting, analysis, and operational efficiency.

However, AI adoption is not about choosing between internal tools and external partners. Our approach differentiates between day-to-day AI enablement, powered by internal tools, and large, document-heavy matters and exploratory use cases where collaboration with an (ALSP) adds measurable value and delivers unique advantages in scale, testing, or workflow acceleration. Our AI roadmap is focused on three pillars: buy-in, measurable results, and trust-based governance.

Creating Buy-In Through Proof

To build confidence internally, we ran a proof of concept on a completed matter. Our team compared:
- A traditional manual review of records
- A workflow combining Continuous Active Learning (trained by BD&P experts) with Generative AI

The results were decisive:
- Generative AI reduced review timelines by approximately 70%
- Reduced the burden on lawyers training the learning model
- Surfaced key issues faster, accelerating case strategy

Trust and Governance

BD&P systems and AI-enabled workflows run in secure, access-controlled environments, and all client data we host or process remains in Canada. Our enterprise AI tools operate within siloed environments where client information is never used to train public models. We hold our (ASLPs) to the same standard. They maintain independently audited, industry-leading security certifications and strict data-isolation controls that ensure client information is encrypted and segregated.

Sustainable AI adoption requires more than tools; it requires trust across organizations. Through close collaboration, shared playbooks, and clearly defined roles, we built a governance framework that allows us to engage (ALSPs) strategically. Aligning stakeholders, selecting appropriate knowledge bases, defining accountability, and documenting workflows have built confidence for the firm and our clients.

Why We Chose Epiq

After evaluating several (ASLP), we chose Epiq because they approached the relationship as a partnership rather than a one-size-fits-all implementation. We do not deploy AI for novelty. We design workflows that contain costs without compromising outcomes, and our clients have benefited in tangible ways that are outside the box of typical (ALSP), and law firm collaboration, including:

- Review

For a fixed-fee transaction requiring due diligence and document review, we collaborated with Epiq to train contract reviewers, with quality control led by BD&P. The client received expert legal oversight, AI-assisted contract review, and scalable resourcing, without cost overruns.

- Information Governance

As we advise clients on data governance strategy, we work with Epiq's information governance team, Microsoft's largest global compliance partner, to deliver operational execution while BD&P deploys legal expertise pertaining to compliance and legal hold.

The Legal Technology Vendor Perspective: Choosing the Right Partner Matters

In today's legal landscape, corporations, law firms, and vendors alike face intense pressure to adopt AI, often faster than governance, trust, and alignment can be reasonably established. At the same time, the AI ecosystem continues to evolve rapidly, making isolated decision-making risky and inefficient.

We frequently see corporate legal departments and law firms independently evaluating AI tools and strategies. Vendors then compound the issue by pitching to each audience separately. The unintended result is fragmentation, slowed adoption, and missed opportunities for collaboration.

In conversations with corporate legal teams, two consistent themes emerged:
- "I trust that my law firm is handling it."
- "How would my law firm react to this?"

The path forward became clear: meaningful AI adoption requires collaboration with law firms, not around them. When legal judgment, advanced technology, and scalable delivery are aligned, corporate clients benefit from a seamless, defensible, and cost-effective model.

Why BD&P Was the Right Partner

Choosing Burnet Duckworth & Palmer LLP was deliberate. BD&P is a premier regional firm that consistently competes with, and is often pitted against, national and international law firms on some of the most complex and high-stakes matters in Canada.

Its role in the regional and national economy is significant. With deep roots in the energy sector, BD&P has long advised companies that are foundational to Canada's economic strength. At the same time, the firm has evolved alongside the market, expanding its expertise to support technology companies, growth-stage businesses, and other sectors critical to Canada's future economy.

Equally important, BD&P was willing to engage as a true partner. Rather than seeking off-the-shelf solutions, the firm invited collaboration to test, refine, and shape workflows together. This openness created space for innovation that respected legal judgment while leveraging technology responsibly.

BD&P's ability to innovate is rooted in something structurally unique about the firm: they are independent, unconstrained, and built to move quickly. Many national and international firms rely on vertically integrated delivery models, which often create conflicting incentives, inflexible internal structures, and limited experimentation. These models often force every project, regardless of differences, through the same pipeline.

Collaboration as a Catalyst

With BD&P, we co-developed AI-enabled workflows that did not force change for its own sake. Instead, technology was aligned with existing best practices, ensuring efficiency gains translated directly into better client outcomes.

For corporate legal departments, this collaboration means:
- Confidence that AI was being deployed under trusted legal oversight
- Access to advanced technology without sacrificing governance or defensibility
- Scalable delivery models that controlled cost while preserving quality

AI adoption in legal succeeds when the right partners come together. Regional firms like BD&P play a critical role in advancing innovation - not only for their clients, but for the legal industry and the Canadian economy.

Conclusion

When law firms, (ALSPs), and vendors operate together, each doing what they do best, corporate legal departments benefit from smarter decisions, faster outcomes, and predictable costs. This is how AI delivers on its promise in legal - not as a disruptor, but as a force multiplier for trusted expertise. This model keeps client outcomes, not internal structures, at the centre of every decision.

If you're assessing AI for document-heavy work, request the BD&P/Epiq AI Review Playbook (Canada-hosted) or book a 30-minute workflow assessment with our teams. We'll map your use case, recommend a partner mix, and estimate time/cost impacts.