

**Start, Stop, Keep:**

# **Your Guide to In-House Legal Best Practices for an Efficient 2024**



The [sharpest in-house legal professionals know](#) that efficiency is key to getting ahead and keeping the lead in 2024.

As companies continue to be frugal with spending, teams like yours are being asked to make miracles on a shoestring budget. Given how many departments you work with, the variety of issues you handle, and the frequency of requests that come in — combined with an increasing pressure to deliver on outcomes and prove value — organized workflows and standardized processes are critical to success in and beyond the new year.

This means assessing your processes against in-house best practices to evaluate what to change, optimize, or get rid of.

We've come up with a list of in-house best practices your team can start and optimize (and a few things you should consider giving up) in the new year — what it is, why you should start, stop, or keep, and how to do it.

**Here's your start, stop, keep list for 2024.**

## START

Your plate is often so overloaded that you spend more time focusing on getting the work done than on following in-house best practices. This “start” list is a list of practices that allows your legal team to set up the systems you need to ensure all your hard work isn’t in vain. If you aren’t already tracking legal matter, auditing your contracts, and planning your crisis response, now is a great time to start.

### Start: Tracking legal matter

#### What

Tracking what your team spends time on is an in-house best practice essential to improving your processes and delivering a high-quality work product. By managing tasks ad hoc, you struggle to understand your wider legal portfolio, seasonal trends, and spend. This means tracking the types of tasks that come across legal’s collective desk, how you divide the tasks among your in-house team and outside counsel, how long each task takes, and your success rate.

#### Why

By tracking legal matter, you understand more clearly what’s the best use of your time. This allows you to be more strategic in how you manage requests, balance your team’s workload, and execute better. You’ll start to understand how your work is driving value for the business and discover where there are opportunities for improvement.

#### How

With legal project management tools like [LinkSquares Prioritize](#), you can streamline matter management by tracking legal requests, managing intake, and ensuring follow through on legal tasks – all in one single platform. You can also pull reports and analytics about your legal requests, task assignments, and completion rates to monitor your team’s productivity.



## Start: Auditing your contracts

### What

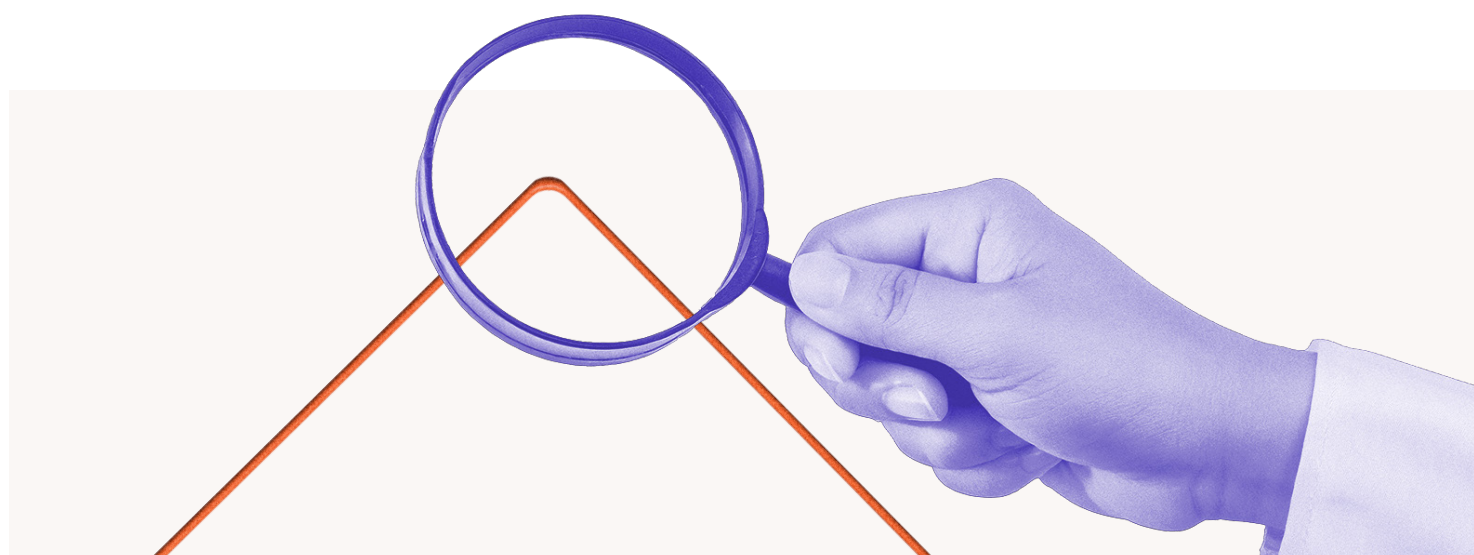
As the regulatory landscape shifts and business priorities change, staying on top of what's inside your contracts is an in-house best practice that helps you to maintain compliance. An audit uncovers business-critical information that protects you from risk and contributes to your bottom line. For example, in light of the [SEC's new cybersecurity law](#), you can run an audit to discover missing data privacy clauses in older contracts, then update accordingly.

### Why

Conducting regular contract audits helps you manage risk — keep tabs on risk markers, liabilities, and reporting obligations — and business priorities like auto-renewal terms, vendor agreements, and revenue flow. By knowing what's inside your contracts, your team can be more proactive in addressing legal issues instead of playing catch-up.

### How

Use [contract lifecycle management \(CLM\)](#) technology to conduct regular contract audits. CLM enables you to build out internal processes and controls that comply with regulation, and provides an audit trail that tracks a contract's lifecycle. [LinkSquares Analyze](#), for example, allows your team to run regular audits and generate reports on your findings.



## Start: Planning your crisis response

### What

The nature of a crisis is that it can hit at any point — but that doesn't mean it has to catch you off guard. Unfortunately, most businesses leave their crisis response to chance, so they're not as agile as they could be when disaster strikes. A [crisis management](#) plan allows you and your cross-functional collaborators to understand your existing risk level and make a plan for potential threats that might arise.

### Why

In the middle of a crisis — a scandal, a bankruptcy, a fire — it's hard to think straight with your emotions all over the place. Unprepared, you'll be running on adrenaline trying to make sure you have everything in order, which increases the margin for human error. But with a crisis management plan in place, your team can approach disaster with a level head and proactively protect the business and ensure operational continuity.

### How

Collaborate with cross-functional team members to build a crisis management team. This team will run point on building out a response plan for common or likely crises (e.g. a data breach) and a plan for operationalizing it. The crisis response team can use CLM software to gather the contracts and documents they need and quickly find answers to their most pressing questions.

## STOP

If efficiency is the name of the game in 2024, then there's no room for outdated, manual ways of doing things. If you want to boost your team's productivity and impact, look at the ways your team still uses your inbox to manage tasks, relies on manual processes, and makes guesses when data is needed to do the job well.

## Stop: Using manual processes

### What

A manual process is usually a process that you have to do by hand or one at a time. For example, filling in each spreadsheet cell with contract data every single time you execute one, drafting each new NDA from scratch, or copying Salesforce data and pasting it into your CLM. These are all manual processes, and they take up a lot of your valuable time.

### Why

Manual tasks are the enemy of in-house legal productivity. They slow you down and increase the likelihood of mistakes. Plus, it's extremely difficult to gather useful data through manual processes. Doing things manually isn't a strategic use of your time, as it keeps you from driving other initiatives that impact the business and provide quantifiable value.

### How

Replace your manual processes with [legal technology](#). Modern businesses are far more productive when they use technology to automate the tedium. With technology, you accomplish more in less time and with greater accuracy, and have access to the reporting insights that legal technology provides. For instance, CLM allows you to automate pre-signature tasks and generate post-execution insights into how well you follow in-house best practices.

## Stop: Inbox task management

### What

As in-house counsel, you're no stranger to fielding requests from all over the business. Usually, this means many, many emails to sift through, make sense of, follow up on, and track to completion. It can also mean toggling between different tools to gather everything you need to manage and fulfill a request. For legal teams in high-growth businesses, managing your inbox for legal requests takes way more time than fulfilling the requests themselves.

### Why

Tracking everything through your inbox opens up cracks for important requests to fall through, causing delays on important initiatives for the business. It's easy for things to get lost in your inbox, especially one-off documents or approvals from years back. This causes bottlenecks and impedes your ability to provide timely and consistent value to the business.

### How

Use legal project management tools to centralize legal intake and task management. [LinkSquares Prioritize](#), for example, allows you to manage legal intake and follow through on tasks in a single platform. This way, you can track tasks more effectively and deliver on promised value to your cross-functional collaborators, becoming a more consistent business partner.

## Stop: Guessing

### What

Without data, legal teams are left to guess: guess what resources you need, what you've accomplished over the last year, or how long it takes to turn around an agreement. Guessing is the Achilles' heel of the in-house legal department, making you unreliable in the eyes of your collaborators and unable to advocate for the resources you really need.

### Why

A gut feeling is helpful for every lawyer to have. It can give you a sense of the right direction to go in and a general understanding of what you need to do. But guessing or going off gut can have you leading your team astray. Instead of guessing, use data to back up your requests for additional headcount, acquiring technology, and increasing budget.

### How

An end-to-end CLM solution like LinkSquares has powerful analytics that provides insights into your performance and the effectiveness of your processes. With AI contract analytics, a contract repository, and a reporting dashboard, this tool enables legal teams to pull reports to justify needing more resources. Define, track, and measure KPIs that are meaningful to your team and use those in conversations with the rest of the business.





## KEEP (OPTIMIZING)

Thanks to the larger role that legal operations is playing, many in-house teams have standard workflows, processes, and KPIs. Here are some efficiency-maximizing tasks to keep and continue optimizing in 2024.

### Keep: Contract workflows

#### What

Workflows are the collection of start-to-finish steps that make up a legal process. For example, teams can have workflows for reviewing marketing material, updating website terms of service, and enabling self-service NDAs.

#### Why

Workflows streamline your process and ensure consistency across execution. Optimizing your workflows allows you to consistently scale your processes to adapt to the changes in business conditions.

#### How

Use a CLM tool to implement and streamline common contract workflows for your organization. With this kind of comprehensive technology, you can set up automations to require less lawyer intervention in lower-value contracts or tasks that don't drive revenue. You can also create an internal playbook that enables the rest of your team to execute their part. Be sure to update your workflows as your team scales.

## **Keep: Legal intake**

### **What**

A well-organized intake process is crucial to strong execution and quite difficult without the right tools. During intake, your team collects as much information about the request as possible and, if needed, goes back to the requestor for additional information. An effective intake process is centralized, gives requesters the ability to attach pertinent information, and asks the right questions so you can quickly execute the task.

### **Why**

A well-structured legal intake process helps you build your brand as a team that your business can depend on. It allows you to organize, prioritize, and assign your legal requests, increasing the chances of successful execution. A sound legal intake process improves your reputation as an enabler of business.

### **How**

Take your intake to the next level with an intake and task management solution like Prioritize. Using technology to supplement your process gives you the superpower of being able to make your intake process a strategic advantage. The best part is knowing that it was built with legal — and therefore, compliance — in mind.

## Keep: Tracking metrics and KPIs

### What

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are measurements of success that legal teams use to track progress and demonstrate value. Some legal teams track volume, timing, or people metrics to understand how they are performing against goals. [KPIs](#) should be meaningful, demonstrate legal's value, identify opportunities and bottlenecks, and be data-driven.

### Why

KPIs and metrics allow legal teams to show up to business discussions at the same level as other business units. These measurements can also provide visibility into how your team divides their time, advocate for more resources, and help you step confidently into the future.

### How

Use legal technology to collect key metrics and data. With CLM software, you can track individual team members' output, performance, and success rates. You can also use dashboards to visualize the data and present it to company leadership in a meaningful way.



## Conclusion

This year will require legal teams to be more efficient than they've ever been. This means that manual processes, inbox management, and guessing have to go in 2024. To make this year your most productive yet, collaborate with your team to optimize key workflows, processes, and analytics using [LinkSquares](#). And if you haven't already, start tracking legal matter, auditing your contracts, and planning your crisis response.

Legal technology makes carrying out in-house best practices even easier, and helps operationalize your start, stop, keep list. Legal project management tools help you track intake and task execution, and CLM helps you to automate every aspect of the contract lifecycle. Start the year off right by improving your productivity and efficiency so you can expertly navigate the uncertain waters.

[See a demo of LinkSquares today.](#)



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