



Building a Future-Ready Legal Workforce in the AI Era: THE SKILLS TECHNOLOGY CAN'T REPLACE

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For legal departments, claims teams, and corporate risk leaders, keeping pace with today's technology shifts often feels like jumping into a vehicle already in motion: the landscape changes quickly, the ground rarely stays still, and just as the team finds its rhythm, the terrain shifts again.

Most leaders are familiar with this dynamic: rising uncertainty, the pressure to adapt quickly without losing balance, and the quiet question running beneath every transformation initiative—*What will change next, and how will we prepare for it?*

For legal and claims professionals, the stakes are even higher. AI-generated citations that don't exist, automated claims scoring with potential bias exposure, and AI-drafted documents that miss jurisdiction-specific requirements all introduce real legal, regulatory, and reputational risk. Each new platform offers efficiency—but also new obligations.

Yet amid all this change, one constant remains: the anchor of organizational performance—human skills such as judgment, creativity, adaptability, and trust that stabilize teams and keep them effective.

Organizations that nurture these evergreen skills do more than withstand the turns ahead; they navigate them with confidence. Their workforce is equipped for today's technologies and prepared to adapt as new ones emerge.

WHY EVERGREEN SKILLS MATTER MORE THAN EVER

For years, being “future-ready” in legal and claims environments meant adopting new matter management systems, eDiscovery tools, or litigation platforms—and retraining staff to keep up. But the pace of change now outstrips the pace of training;

by the time professionals become fluent in one platform, the technology has already advanced.

Upskilling the workforce every time a vendor updates its platform is neither realistic nor cost-effective.

Instead, an organization's most enduring competitive strength is its human-driven skill base—its ability to absorb change, interpret complexity, and use technology with discernment.

FIVE EVERGREEN SKILLS EVERY WORKFORCE NEEDS

AI is gaining ground across legal, claims, and risk functions, yet each new tool creates obligations that technology cannot fulfill. Human capability remains essential for accuracy, defensibility, and compliance. Today's demands center on core human capabilities, not simply tech-savviness.

- **Defensibility of AI-assisted legal work:** Filings, summaries, and claims decisions must remain defensible—even when AI contributes.
- **Regulatory and ethical obligations:** Professionals remain accountable for accuracy, bias prevention, and data protection.
- **Claims and litigation risk mitigation:** Human oversight reduces errors that can lead to disputes, sanctions, or reputational harm.

With this framework in mind, here are some evergreen skills that will prepare today's workforce for tomorrow's challenges.

1. Digital Adaptability

As new tools emerge every year, employees must be comfortable learning continuously, adjusting quickly, and understanding how technology fits into their work.

Employees who are strong in digital adaptability:

- Use new platforms without hesitation.
- Understand the limits and capabilities of AI.
- Navigate evolving tools confidently.
- Strengthen their skills through continuous learning.
- Maintain stable performance despite platform updates.
- Possess high levels of curiosity and a desire to stay on top of new advancements.

Examples include adjusting to AI-assisted drafting tools, revised matter-management workflows, or new research interfaces.

Claims handlers may also need to adapt to new triage algorithms, while litigators respond to changing eDiscovery review platforms or AI-driven document summaries.

Digital adaptability strengthens when leaders reward curiosity and normalize learning as everyday behavior—not a one-off exercise or a box to check.

2. Critical Thinking & Human Judgment

AI can summarize documents, analyze data, and propose solutions, but it cannot reliably identify nuanced risks, interpret cultural or organizational context, or determine alignment with an organization's values, strategy, or risk appetite. This is why human judgment remains indispensable—from validating legal summaries to ensuring accuracy before filing, advising clients, or making claims decisions.

Before relying on any AI output, critical thinkers pause and ask themselves:

- Does this output make sense?
- What assumptions might be wrong?
- Does this align with our goals, ethics, and risk posture?
- What context is missing?

3. Creativity & Original Thinking

AI draws on established patterns, while humans conceive what comes next—and that forward-looking creativity is the ability to envision new possibilities, challenge assumptions, and identify solutions no algorithm can.

This creative capacity appears in the way people:

- Reframe problems in ways AI cannot.
- See opportunities that sit beyond what the data demonstrates.
- Design new products or experiences.

As AI takes on routine drafting and research, legal professionals can allocate time to creative, higher-value work—such as re-designing intake workflows, restructuring knowledge-management systems, or developing new litigation playbooks.

4. Problem Solving

Modern organizational challenges are rarely confined to a single department. They arise at the intersection of people, processes, and technology—an area AI can assist, but cannot independently navigate, and where human problem solving is essential in addressing issues such as:

- A claims file stops progressing because an AI tool flags conflicting policy data — and teams need to investigate underlying documentation and coordinate with underwriting.
- A contract review system produces inconsistent results due to poor inputs — and teams address the problem by improving data quality.
- Clients or employees face delays from outdated HR or legal steps — and teams resolve these issues through coordinated, cross-department efforts.

Problem solving is a skill that strengthens workplaces operating under constant change, especially when employees must interpret issues that span systems, processes, and risks.

5. Responsible AI Use

As AI is woven deeper into day-to-day work across the organization, responsible AI use emerges as a critical human skill: applying technology with discretion, awareness, and sound judgment.

Fortune recently reported about two Deloitte engagements—one with Australia and another with Canada—where government reports included fabricated research and misattributed citations. Reviewers traced the errors to unverified AI outputs—a clear reminder that AI-generated content can appear polished, but without human judgment and oversight, it can be fundamentally flawed.

In the legal sector, this aligns with duties of competence and supervision, and with growing regulatory scrutiny over how AI shapes claims decisions and legal advice. Responsible AI users know how to:

- Protect confidential, sensitive, and privileged information, and ensure AI use complies with regulatory and professional obligations.
- Recognize when AI may introduce bias into hiring, claims, legal analysis, or performance decisions.
- Understand the limitations of models and avoid over-reliance.
- Verify outputs before action is taken.
- Raise issues promptly when outputs appear incomplete or inconsistent.
- Use AI in ways that align with organizational policy and values.

In this context, responsibility transforms from philosophy to practice—it becomes a skill. Organizations that practice this discipline reduce errors, mitigate bias, and strengthen risk management—an increasingly critical need as AI adoption accelerates.

HOW ORGANIZATIONS CAN BUILD AN ALWAYS-READY WORKFORCE

Cultivating these capabilities doesn't hinge on large budgets or sophisticated programs but on a few focused actions executed regularly.

1. Institutionalize continuous learning and practical AI literacy

Organizations develop skills more effectively through regular, practical learning than through periodic, intensive training. Practical learning methods—micro-learning, peer exchange, and AI literacy centered on responsible use—prove easier to sustain and more effective than technical deep dives or one-off workshops.

2. Implement sandbox environments for safe testing

Safe testing environments empower the workforce to experiment freely, deepen their practical knowledge, and ultimately strengthen their competence—leading to more successful implementation and adoption of technology.

3. Model adaptability at the leadership level

An adaptable workforce starts with adaptable leaders. When leaders demonstrate openness and a willingness to learn, they set the tone for a culture where learning and flexibility becomes the norm.

4. Build teams around resourceful talent

Teams composed of curious, communicative problem solvers thrive long term. Their mindset supports quick adaptation to new tools and keeps the team effective as priorities shift without losing momentum.

5. Foster cross-functional collaboration

When legal, HR, finance, IT, and business units work together, they gain insight into system and process interdependencies—enabling more cohesive and aligned operations.

THE ROI OF STAYING HUMAN IN AN AI-DRIVEN ERA

A McKinsey analysis found that organizations that invest in human skill development see measurable operational and strategic improvements.

Engagement strengthens as employees feel more confident navigating new workflows, and operational risk decreases when people know how to question, validate, and responsibly apply AI outputs. Together, these gains translate into tangible returns—fewer implementation setbacks, more effective use of new tools, and reduced risk exposure—demonstrating that strengthening human capability is a direct contributor to organizational performance.

A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE IS A HUMAN-LED WORKFORCE

Technology will continue to evolve and reshape how we work, but human skills will remain the steady foundation that carries us forward.

In legal and claims settings—where accuracy, compliance, and sound judgment are non-negotiable—human oversight remains the essential safeguard as AI becomes more embedded in daily work.

Each new advancement prompts the same question: What can humans make of this? The organizations that will lead the next decade are those that amplify human strengths—not as a counterweight to AI, but as the element that gives it purpose.



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