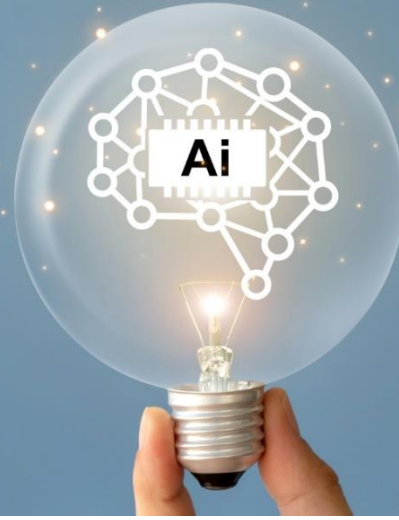


AI Roundtable



AI Roundtable 2: Use Cases & Partner Adoption

Session Notes

Date: 22 April 2026

Format: Hybrid (In person / Teams)

Duration: 2 hours

Led by: PSFI – Ori Wiener, Alastair Mitchell

Status: Confidential – for circulation within the roundtable group only (Chatham House Rules)

1. Introduction

This second roundtable built on the foundations of Roundtable 1 by shifting from high-level framing to practical application. The discussion focused on where AI is currently delivering value in law firms, how that value is understood by partners and clients, and the challenges firms face in embedding AI into everyday legal work.

A central theme throughout the session was the idea that AI is raising the baseline of legal delivery, but that differentiation continues to come from human judgment, context and trust.

2. Reflections on Roundtable 1

Participants broadly agreed with the conclusions from the first session, in particular that:

- ◆ AI should be viewed as an enabling capability, not a replacement for legal expertise.
- ◆ Responsibility and liability remain firmly with the lawyer, regardless of how advanced the technology becomes.
- ◆ Clients continue to expect human accountability, explanation and judgment.

Several participants observed that law firms are often ahead of their clients in terms of AI experimentation and awareness. This creates an opportunity for firms to:

- ◆ Support client conversations on AI governance and risk.
- ◆ Move into advisory roles that go beyond pure legal execution.
- ◆ Help clients navigate uncertainty, rather than only responding to defined instructions.

3. Client demand and external signals

There was clear consensus that client interest in AI has intensified:

- ◆ Firms are increasingly being asked to attend client meetings specifically to discuss AI.
- ◆ Clients are seeking insight into:
 - What genuinely matters versus what is noise.
 - How peer organisations are responding.
 - Where regulatory and operational risks lie.

Importantly, participants noted that some clients often do not yet have fixed expectations around pricing or efficiency gains, which provides space for firms to shape these conversations proactively.

4. Use cases currently being prioritised

The discussion identified several broad categories of AI use cases across firms:

- ◆ Client-facing applications and advisory support
- ◆ Efficiency and delivery optimisation
- ◆ Internal operational use
- ◆ Partner enablement and individual productivity

In practice, most current effort is concentrated on client-facing and delivery efficiency use cases. Internal and operational use cases were acknowledged to be important, but were often described as:

- ◆ Harder to prioritise internally,
- ◆ Less visible to partners,
- ◆ Slower to show immediate return.

Participants cautioned that an excessive focus on efficiency risks reinforcing the perception that AI equates to “faster and cheaper”, rather than starting conversations about new forms of value and service delivery.

5. Value drivers: reactions and insights

A significant part of the session was devoted to testing a proposed value driver framework for AI-enabled legal work.

Overall response

Participants found the framework useful as:

- ◆ A shared language for internal discussions.
- ◆ A way to move conversations beyond narrow cost-saving narratives.
- ◆ A support tool for partners who are less confident articulating the value of AI-enabled work.

It was seen as particularly helpful for client-facing conversations, marketing narratives and internal education.

Areas of challenge and refinement

However, several important caveats and additions were discussed:

- ◆ **Quantification remains difficult**
Some value drivers are measurable, but many are not. Most firms lack reliable baseline data to demonstrate improvement, and several participants felt that a strong narrative may often be more persuasive than precise metrics.
- ◆ **AI typically supports parts of a matter, not its entirety**
This makes it difficult to attribute a clear monetary value to AI usage in isolation.
- ◆ **New revenue opportunities deserve greater emphasis**
Examples included:
 - Monetising anonymised insights from accumulated transaction data.
 - Providing intelligence services based on firm-wide experience.

This prompted discussion of whether AI-driven efficiency could, in some areas, increase overall demand rather than reduce it.

- ◆ **Brand and positioning were highlighted as missing drivers**
Participants stressed that AI adoption influences how firms are perceived:
 - As premium advisors versus commoditised providers.
 - As trusted experts who use technology intelligently, rather than firms defined by tools alone.

6. Task-level versus process-level adoption

A useful distinction was drawn between two types of AI adoption:

- ◆ **Task-level (horizontal) use**

Examples include summarisation, research support and meeting preparation. These are generally easier to adopt, deliver quick wins and are often driven by individual lawyers.

- ◆ **Process-level (vertical) use**

Examples include end-to-end workflow redesign (e.g. due diligence processes). These have greater potential impact but require substantially more governance, coordination and change management.

Most firms are pursuing both tracks, but at different speeds and scales.

7. Speed to value and experimentations

Several participants shared experiences of rapid experimentation, including hackathons and short, intensive prototyping exercises. These approaches were seen to:

- ◆ Generate energy and engagement.
- ◆ Demonstrate potential quickly.
- ◆ Lower psychological barriers to experimentation.

However, there was consensus that moving from prototype to production remains challenging, particularly where client data, risk management and governance are involved.

8. Adoption challenges: people before technology

While technical limitations were acknowledged, participants repeatedly returned to human and cultural barriers as the primary constraint on adoption, including:

- ◆ Lack of trust in outputs.
- ◆ Confidentiality concerns and uncertainty around approved tools.
- ◆ Time pressure and competing priorities.
- ◆ Reluctance to admit AI usage, driven by fear or embarrassment.
- ◆ A tendency to treat “AI” as a single concept rather than a collection of tools solving different problems.

The shared conclusion was that adoption challenges are predominantly behavioural and organisational, not technological.

9. Governance, risk and accountability

Examples of emerging good practice included:

- ◆ Treating prompts as part of the legal work product.
- ◆ Saving prompts and outputs to matter files.
- ◆ Clearly distinguishing between technology-assisted processes and legal advice, with accountability retained by partners.

These approaches were often driven by regulatory expectations and anticipation of future scrutiny.

10. Competitive landscape and differentiation

The group discussed the evolving legal market, including:

- ◆ Legal technology platforms becoming increasingly sophisticated.
- ◆ Competition from alternative legal service providers and adjacent professions.

Despite this, there was strong agreement that technology alone is unlikely to be a sustainable differentiator. Instead, firms will continue to compete on:

- ◆ Judgment and experience.
- ◆ Contextual understanding of client needs.
- ◆ Trust, accountability and professional assurance.

11. Next Roundtable

Roundtable 3 will focus on pricing, value, and commercial models, with particular attention on:

- ◆ Pricing AI-enabled legal services
- ◆ Aligning value, effort, and outcomes
- ◆ Implications for billable hours and alternative fee arrangements
- ◆ Investment, capability development, and return on investment

Participants were encouraged to share questions or topics for inclusion ahead of the next session.

Attendees

Firm	Name
Arthur Cox	Mairéad Duncan-Jones, Ben Murdoch-Smith, Jennifer Ward
Burges Salmon	Alasdair Hibberd, Austin Milne
CMS Germany	Benjamin Luckmann
Dentons Europe	Pavel Stika
DLA Piper	Terry Fedigan
Freshfields	Marina Ralf
Graf von Westphalen	Ava Moussavi
Osborne Clarke	Sally Kim, Rachel Hawkins, Tara Walsh
Russell McVeagh	Karen O'Leary
Slaughter & May	Richard Smith
Travers Smith	Oliver Bethell
PSFI	Ori Wiener, Alastair Mitchell, Pia Kleiber, Gareth John

All supporting materials associated with this session, including slides and referenced resources, will be available via the website access link circulated to participants.



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