



NEWS RELEASE

New Report From Williams Lea, an RRD Company, Finds AI is Prevalent in Legal Marketing, but Transformation Remains Elusive

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New survey of 200 senior marketing and business development leaders at large U.S. law firms reveals a growing disconnect between technology investment and operational change

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Williams Lea, an RRD company and global provider of tech-enabled business-critical support services to law firms and professional services organizations, released **The State of Legal Marketing 2026: Rising Investment and AI Impact** report. It found a significant disconnect between legal marketing operations and the technologies meant to advance them. Despite growing investment and adoption of AI, meaningful transformation remains elusive for many firms.

The report found that AI has largely been put to work generating and editing content, rather than rethinking the work and surrounding processes. Budgets are up, tools purported to improve productivity and efficiency are in use daily, while marketing teams report being more stretched than ever.

Drawn from 200 senior marketing and business development leaders, The State of Legal Marketing 2026: Rising Investment and AI Impact findings put hard numbers to a frustration the market has so far only voiced anecdotally. Across five dimensions — budget, AI adoption, the forces leaders see coming, differentiation, and marketing's standing inside the firm — the same pattern emerges: the resources have arrived but the redesign has not.

The gap is now the defining line between the firms that will pull ahead this decade and the ones that simply keep pace. The report uncovered five findings that define the landscape:

- AI adoption continues to grow. A majority of firms use AI somewhere in marketing — most often for content creation (52%) — but only one-third consider themselves ahead of the curve. Trust, not technology, is the leading barrier to broader use.
- Budgets are up, but teams are falling behind. A large majority of (80%) leaders saw budgets increase over the past year, yet 74% describe their teams as stretched or under-resourced. More money is being absorbed by demand that grows faster than capacity.
- Leaders already know where this is going. Asked what will most reshape legal marketing over the next three years, leaders ranked generative AI and automation first (45%), ahead of client expectations, pricing pressure and talent shortages. They see the shift clearly; what they have not done is act on it.
- Differentiation is getting harder. Thought leadership remains the leading differentiation strategy (44%), but producing enough high-quality content to sustain it is also the single biggest challenge marketers report (37%). Firms are competing on the same terrain and tactics.
- Marketing is still fighting for its standing. More than half of the leaders surveyed agree marketing is still seen as a support function rather than a driver of revenue (56%), and that the investment required to compete is consistently underestimated (61%).

“Firms have the budget, tools and awareness — and while they’re doing the same work faster, they should be leveraging AI for transformation,” said Mike Raposa, Chief Revenue Officer, Williams Lea. The firms that get ahead will question why work is done this way and whether it needs to change. Success will boil down to being bold, thinking bigger and asking better questions.

Williams Lea’s report suggests that the next decade will not be won by the firms that automate the most steps or publish the most content. It will be won by the firms willing to rethink and redesign the work itself. To learn more about Williams Lea and read The State of Legal Marketing 2026 report, visit [here](#).

About Williams Lea

Williams Lea is the global provider of tech-enabled business-critical support services to financial, legal, and professional services firms, connecting people, processes, and technology to streamline key business and administrative functions. Williams Lea serves clients in 20 countries across four continents and has 7,000 employees worldwide. For more information, visit www.williamslea.com.

About RRD

RRD provides a complete portfolio of marketing, packaging, print and business services to the world’s most respected brands, including 92% of the Fortune 100. The company’s proprietary technology, advanced data analytics and established expertise fuel organizational decision-making, from strategy through execution. With

operations in 30 countries, global organizations and regulated industries trust RRD to reduce complexity and drive audience connections across the entire customer journey.

Media Contact

Williams Lea Communications

press@williamslea.com

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