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A DIAGNOSTIC FOR FIRM LEADERS

The Managing Partner's AI Readiness Assessment

Where does your firm stand on AI? A 15-minute diagnostic across five critical dimensions.

Most firms treat AI as a technology problem.
The ones pulling ahead know it's a monetization problem.

22
diagnostic questions

5
critical dimensions

AmLaw 500
firms engaged

Scan to discuss

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Where Does Your Firm Stand?

You are worried you are falling behind on AI. Your peers are experimenting. You are not sure if it is working for them, either. You have heard the vendor pitches, seen the demos, and read the headlines — but you still do not have a clear picture of where your firm stands or what to do next.

This assessment was developed from direct engagement with AmLaw 500 firms. It measures readiness across five dimensions that most AI evaluations miss — because most evaluations treat AI as a technology problem. It is not. For the AmLaw 500, AI is as much a monetization challenge as a technology challenge. And until your leadership understands that, every tool purchase and every training program will underperform.

The Five Dimensions

Dimension	What It Measures	Why It Matters
1. Leadership AI Fluency	Whether senior leaders use AI themselves — not just approve it	Adoption fails when leadership delegates without understanding
2. Monetization & Pricing Readiness	Your firm's ability to price AI-augmented work profitably	AI without pricing strategy creates revenue compression
3. Institutional Knowledge	How your firm captures and shares expertise across teams	Senior knowledge walks out the door every retirement
4. Security & Governance	Whether you can deploy AI without creating liability	Confidentiality violations end careers and client relationships
5. Strategic Alignment	The coordination level of your firm's AI initiatives	Scattered experiments waste budget and create confusion

80% of AmLaw firms are actively deploying generative AI tools (ILTA 2025). The gap between firms that act now and firms that wait widens each quarter.

How to Use This Assessment

Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 based on where your firm stands today — not where you hope to be. A score of 1 means the statement does not describe your firm at all; a score of 5 means it fully describes your current reality. Be candid. This assessment is most valuable when it reveals gaps, not when it confirms what you already know.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Minimally	Somewhat	Mostly	Fully describes our firm

Estimated time: 15 minutes. This assessment is designed to be completed by a managing partner, chair, or member of the executive committee. For the most accurate results, complete it independently before discussing with colleagues.

1 Leadership AI Fluency

AI is one of the first technologies that is more immediately useful to senior people than junior people. A 20-year partner knows instantly whether AI output is good — a second-year associate does not. When executive committees learn to use AI for strategic scenario modeling, they save hundreds of hours per year and make faster, better-informed decisions. That is why the most effective firms train leadership first.

1. Members of our executive committee have personally used AI tools (not just seen demos) in the past 30 days.	Score: _____
2. Our managing partner can articulate specific ways AI could change the firm's competitive position — beyond efficiency.	Score: _____
3. Senior partners in our highest-revenue practice groups have experimented with AI for their own work product.	Score: _____
4. Our firm's AI training efforts have prioritized leadership and practice group heads before associates and staff.	Score: _____
5. When evaluating AI tools, our leadership team understands the difference between the underlying models, the data, and the software interface.	Score: _____

DIMENSION 1 SUBTOTAL **/25**

Industry context (February 2026): Only 31% of legal professionals personally use generative AI for work (2025 Legal Industry Report). At large firms, it rises to 39% — still a minority. Most senior leaders at even the largest firms have never used AI tools themselves. When leadership goes first, firm-wide adoption follows significantly faster.

2 Monetization & Pricing Readiness

6. Our firm has analyzed which specific legal tasks are most susceptible to AI-driven time compression.	Score: _____
7. We can articulate our true cost-to-serve by practice area — not just revenue per matter, but the actual cost of delivery.	Score: _____
8. Our firm has explored or piloted alternative fee arrangements (flat fees, subscriptions, value-based pricing) in at least one practice area.	Score: _____
9. Our partnership has discussed how AI adoption will affect billing partner compensation and realization rates.	Score: _____
10. We have a plan for how to maintain or grow revenue as AI reduces the time required for recurring legal work.	Score: _____

DIMENSION 2 SUBTOTAL **/25**

Industry context (February 2026): 90% of legal dollars still flow through hourly rate arrangements (Thomson Reuters 2026), creating fundamental tension with AI efficiency gains. 100% of law firms surveyed in BigHand's 2025 analysis reported that AI has already impacted their pricing strategies — yet adoption of alternative models hovers around one-third. 26% of corporate clients expect to decrease law firm spending in 2026. The firms that solve the pricing equation first will set the competitive standard for the next decade.

3 Institutional Knowledge & Memory

Every senior partner who retires takes decades of institutional knowledge with them. Every associate who reinvents a document a colleague perfected last year represents duplicated effort. AI creates the first real opportunity to capture and share this knowledge at scale — imagine a senior partner's writing standards, client preferences, and strategic approaches flowing down to every team member, so everyone's work matches the standard that matters.

11.	When a senior partner retires or leaves, our firm has a systematic way to capture and transfer their expertise to colleagues.	Score: _____
12.	Associates and junior partners can easily find and learn from the best work product across the firm — not just within their own team.	Score: _____
13.	Our firm captures lessons learned and strategic insights from completed matters in a way that is searchable and reusable.	Score: _____
14.	Senior partners' preferences, writing standards, and client-specific approaches can be shared with their teams — so junior staff can produce work that matches the senior partner's expectations without repeated revision cycles.	Score: _____

DIMENSION 3 SUBTOTAL **/20**

Industry context (February 2026): Firms invest in document management, but the expertise that matters most never gets captured: how a senior partner approaches a negotiation, which arguments work with a specific judge, how to structure a deal for a particular industry. Associates reinvent work colleagues already perfected. Every partner retirement is an irreversible knowledge loss.

4 Security & Governance

The first question every firm should ask about any AI tool: does it keep your data? Most firms have not verified whether their AI providers retain prompts, documents, and conversations — or use them to train the next version of the model. Zero data retention is the baseline. And your attorneys' chat logs contain work product and client intelligence.

15. We know whether our AI tools have zero data retention — meaning prompts, documents, and conversations are never stored or used to train models. Score: _____

16. We have evaluated where our attorneys' AI chat logs are stored — and assessed what would happen if they were accessed by opposing counsel or a vendor. Score: _____

17. Our firm can deploy AI in a way that maintains ethical walls between conflicting client matters — with the same rigor as our document management system. Score: _____

18. We are tracking the evolving state-level AI regulations and bar association guidance that apply to our practice. Score: _____

DIMENSION 4 SUBTOTAL **/20**

Industry context (February 2026): Data privacy is the #1 barrier to AI adoption in legal — 56% of firms cite it (ACEDS/Secretariat 2025). 20 U.S. states now enforce data privacy laws. Texas has imposed penalties exceeding $1 billion. ABA Formal Opinion 512 requires lawyers to understand whether AI tools retain confidential data and obtain informed client consent. The regulatory direction is clear and accelerating.

5 Strategic Alignment & Change Readiness

Many firms have pockets of experimentation — an associate using ChatGPT, an IT team piloting a research tool, a practice group testing contract review software. Without coordination, these experiments never compound. They remain isolated, duplicative, and ultimately unconvincing to the partnership. The firms extracting real value have moved AI from an IT initiative to a leadership priority.

	19. Our firm has a defined AI strategy that is endorsed by the executive committee — not just an IT initiative.	Score: _____
	20. There is a single point of accountability for AI adoption and its business outcomes at the firm.	Score: _____
	21. Our AI evaluation process considers business model impact (revenue, pricing, competitive positioning) — not just operational efficiency.	Score: _____
	22. Our firm has allocated budget for AI experimentation that goes beyond purchasing software licenses — including training, change management, and strategic advisory.	Score: _____

DIMENSION 5 SUBTOTAL **/20**

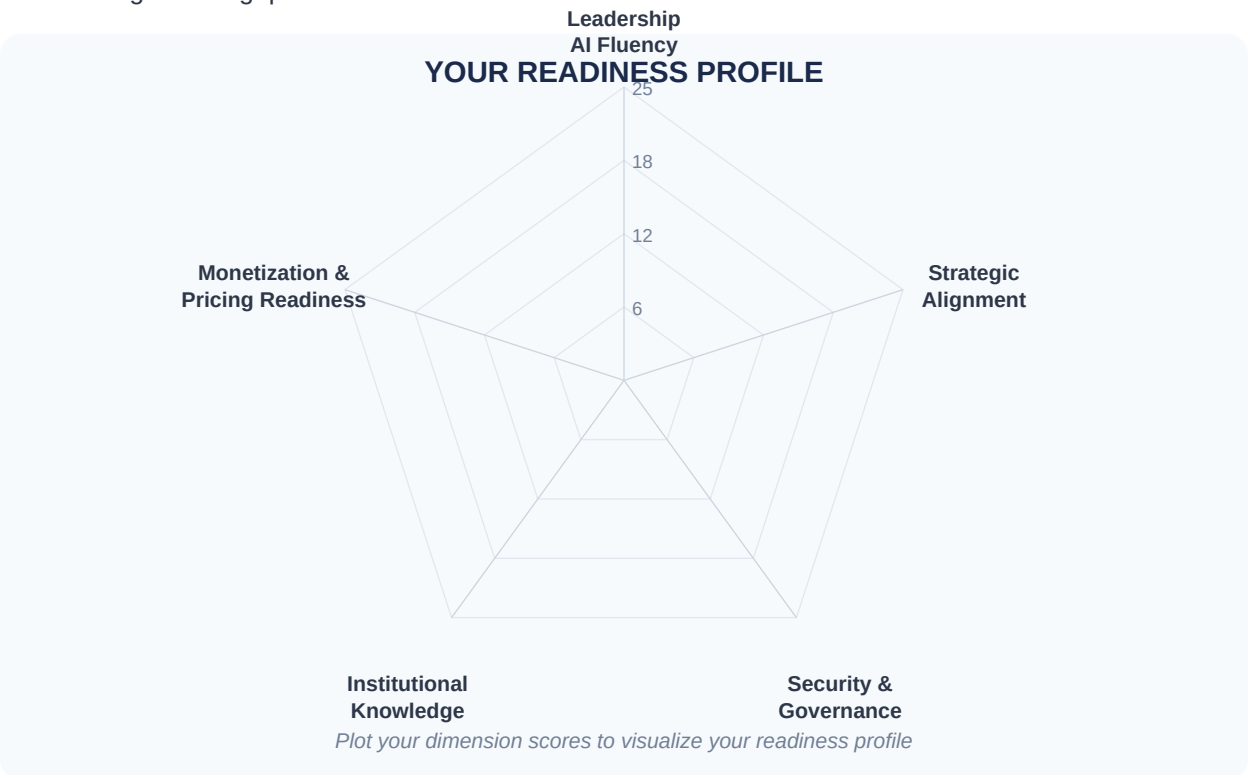
Industry context (February 2026): More than 70% of firms are exploring or piloting AI tools (2025 Best Law Firms Survey), yet fewer than half have established written policies governing AI use (ILTA 2025). Training on specific AI tools has only recently doubled to 36%. The gap between experimentation and strategic execution remains the primary obstacle to extracting real value from AI investments.

Your Readiness Score

Dimension	Your Score	Maximum
1. Leadership AI Fluency		25
2. Monetization & Pricing Readiness		25
3. Institutional Knowledge & Memory		20
4. Security & Governance		20
5. Strategic Alignment & Change Readiness		20
TOTAL SCORE		**110**

Visualize Your Profile

Plot your dimension scores on the radar chart below. The shape of your profile reveals where your firm's strengths and gaps are — and where to focus first.



Plot your dimension scores to visualize your readiness profile

See what your profile means — and what to do about it.
hello@stewardshipped.ai | 30 minutes. No commitment.

What Your Score Means

AI-Forward (88 – 110)

Your firm understands that AI is a monetization challenge, not just a technology challenge. Focus on optimization, pricing strategy, and capturing competitive advantage while peers are still experimenting. Your leadership fluency is your moat — protect it.

Emerging (66 – 87)

A solid foundation exists, but critical gaps remain in one or two dimensions. Firms at this level typically have strong security awareness but underinvest in leadership fluency and monetization readiness. Targeted intervention in your weakest dimension will yield the highest return.

Early Stage (44 – 65)

Your firm is experimenting with AI but has not built the strategic infrastructure to extract value from it. This is where the majority of AmLaw firms sit today. Without a coordinated program starting with senior leadership, experiments will remain isolated and unconvincing to the partnership.

At Risk (Below 44)

Your firm faces an urgent strategic gap. Here is what the next 12 months look like without action: vendor pitches without a framework to evaluate them, an IT team struggling with technology it was not built to assess, and leadership unable to make confident strategic decisions about AI. The distance between your firm and AI-forward competitors widens each quarter. The good news: a leadership-first, monetization-aware approach compresses the timeline significantly.

Dimension-Specific Guidance

If you scored lowest in...	Your priority action is...
Leadership AI Fluency	Start at the top. Executive-level AI enablement with hands-on use cases — not lectures — is the single highest-return investment.
Monetization & Pricing	Commission a service economics assessment. Until you understand true cost-to-serve by practice area, you cannot price AI-augmented work profitably.
Institutional Knowledge	Evaluate how your firm captures and shares expertise. The question is not whether you have a document system — it is whether senior judgment is accessible to the full team.
Security & Governance	Confirm zero data retention on every AI tool in use. Evaluate where chat logs are stored. Then establish a written AI governance policy.
Strategic Alignment	Designate a single point of accountability for AI strategy at the executive level. Move from scattered experiments to a coordinated program with measurable outcomes.

How Peer Firms Are Approaching This

Based on publicly available industry research and surveys of thousands of legal professionals, several patterns are emerging among firms that are making measurable progress with AI:

They train leadership first — not associates.

The most effective firms invert the typical technology rollout. Rather than training junior staff and hoping adoption rises, they start with the executive committee and practice group leaders. Senior professionals know what good work looks like — which means they are better positioned to evaluate AI output, identify where it adds value, and make strategic decisions about deployment. The cascading effect is powerful: when partners use AI daily, adoption across the firm follows.

They treat AI as a monetization question, not a technology question.

Forward-looking firms recognize that AI efficiency gains create a pricing problem as much as they solve a productivity one. If AI reduces the time to complete a document review from ten hours to one, and the firm bills by the hour, revenue drops by 90% on that task. The firms pulling ahead are the ones asking 'how do we price this profitably?' before they ask 'which tool should we buy?'

They invest in knowledge capture, not just knowledge retrieval.

Document management systems help you find what already exists. But the most valuable knowledge at a firm — the strategic judgment, client relationship intelligence, and accumulated expertise of senior practitioners — was never written down in the first place. Leading firms are exploring how AI can capture this tacit knowledge and make it accessible across the organization, turning individual expertise into institutional memory.

What Happens When Firms Wait

The real competitor is not another consulting firm or AI vendor — it is inaction. Based on industry data and publicly reported patterns, here is what the next 12 months look like for a firm that decides to wait:

Months 1-3: Vendor pitches continue without a framework to evaluate them. Your team attends demos, reads reports, and feels no closer to a decision. Meanwhile, 80% of peer firms are actively deploying generative AI tools.

Months 4-6: Your IT team — built to evaluate off-the-shelf software, not AI models — struggles to assess what is real and what is marketing. Associates begin using consumer AI tools without guidance or governance.

Months 7-12: Clients start asking about your AI capabilities. Corporate legal departments, 64% of which expect to depend less on outside counsel due to AI (ACC/Everlaw 2025), begin including AI questions in

RFPs. Your managing partner is still unable to make confident strategic decisions about the most significant transformation the profession has faced.

What the First 90 Days Look Like

Firms that move from assessment to action typically see three things happen quickly:

Weeks 1-2: A secure AI environment (Memoria) is configured for your firm — isolated from external data, compartmentalized by practice group, with your own data and documents. Your team begins working in it immediately.

Weeks 3-6: Executive committee and practice group leaders complete hands-on sessions built around their actual work — scenario modeling, budgeting, competitive analysis. Most report learning concepts they had never encountered from any vendor demo.

Months 2-3: Leadership can articulate the firm's AI strategy, identify which work can be monetized differently, and evaluate tools based on direct experience rather than vendor pitches.

Recommended Next Steps

That kind of progress starts with one decision. Regardless of where your firm scored, the following steps will accelerate your progress. They are listed in order of impact.

1. Share this assessment with your executive committee. This is the single most valuable step you can take today. Have each member complete it independently, then compare results. The gaps between individual perceptions are often the most revealing insight — and the best starting point for a strategic conversation about AI. The firms making the most progress started exactly here.

2. Identify your weakest dimension. The dimension where your firm scored lowest represents your highest-leverage opportunity. A targeted intervention in one weak area often unlocks progress across all five dimensions.

3. Start with leadership, not technology. The most common mistake firms make is evaluating AI tools before their leadership understands the technology. When senior leaders can distinguish between what AI can and cannot do — through hands-on experience, not vendor demos — every subsequent technology decision improves.

4. Address the pricing question before it addresses you. Client expectations around AI-driven pricing are accelerating faster than most firms realize. Proactively developing your pricing strategy positions you ahead of clients who will increasingly demand it.

5. Schedule a conversation with someone who has done this before. If this assessment revealed gaps, the fastest path forward is a 30-minute consultation — not a commitment, not a sales pitch. We walk through your results, discuss your firm's specific priorities, and determine whether working together makes sense. Reach out at hello@stewardshipped.ai.

About the Team

Stewardshipped is an AI strategy practice built by a team that has practiced law as equity partners at AmLaw firms, served as General Counsel at cabinet-level federal agencies, negotiated international data frameworks with the European Union, held intelligence community clearances, and founded, built, and exited enterprise technology companies serving Global 2000 clients.

The engineering team includes AI architects who have built production AI systems for the Department of Defense and Fortune 500, led machine learning at multiple VC-backed startups, designed privacy-monitoring platforms, and taught software engineering at Georgia Tech and Johns Hopkins. Stewardshipped has worked with Fortune 500 companies and AmLaw 500 law firms to build AI fluency at the leadership level, deploy secure environments, and develop monetization strategies that protect firm economics.

Schedule a Consultation

Walk through your results in a 30-minute conversation. You will leave with your firm's three highest-priority actions — whether or not we work together.

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