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From Admin to Asset:

How IP Teams and Law Firms Can Transform Operations Through Data, AI, Spend Management, and Strategic Alignment

Nadine Stuttle
IP Technology, AI, operations and transformation Advisor
PSS Solutions

Nadine Stuttle, Founder and CEO, IP Technology, AI, operations and transformation Advisor at PSS Solutions, Switzerland, explains how in-house IP teams and law firms can move from administrative support to strategic business partners by harnessing data, AI, spend management, and governance to align IP with long-term enterprise value.

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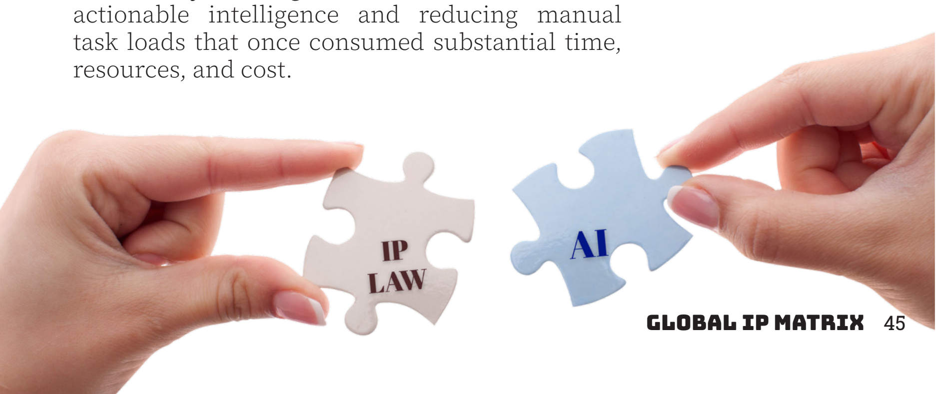
IP has become a core driver of competitive advantage, yet in many organisations the IP function has historically focused on administrative workloads: filing and prosecuting applications, managing deadlines, paying annuities, and coordinating with outside counsel. Today's business environment demands far more. Rapid innovation cycles, rising costs, and global competition require IP teams to shift from reactive administrators to strategic partners who guide decision-making, influence investment, and support the strategic vision. This shift also profoundly affects IP law firms, which are increasingly expected not only to provide legal expertise but also to deliver analytics, technology-enabled efficiencies, cost transparency, and proactive strategic advice. Emerging technologies, particularly AI and agentic AI, are accelerating this transformation, reshaping what IP teams and law firms can deliver and how they collaborate.

Historically, both in-house teams and law firms struggled with fragmented data, manual processes, and reactive workflows. Decisions about where to file patents, how to allocate budget, or which assets to abandon were often made in isolation, without access to comprehensive portfolio analytics or real-time competitive intelligence. As a result, portfolios grew inefficiently, prosecution costs mounted, and both sides found it difficult to articulate ROI or influence business strategy. AI and automation are now dismantling these barriers by turning unstructured IP data into actionable intelligence and reducing manual task loads that once consumed substantial time, resources, and cost.

> "For example, an agentic AI system could continuously monitor competitor filings, synthesise new technical documents, identify emerging threats, and notify portfolio managers with recommended actions"



Data analytics remains central to the modern IP operation, but AI dramatically amplifies what analytics can be achieved. With AI-enabled search, automated landscape analysis, and predictive prosecution modelling, organisations can assess technology trends, map competitor activity, predict office action outcomes, and evaluate the value or vulnerability of assets far more quickly. Law firms are embracing these tools to provide deeper insights to clients, benchmarking prosecution outcomes across industries, forecasting costs with greater accuracy, and identifying filing strategies that minimise risk and optimise efficiency. In-house teams use AI to connect IP data with product, R&D, and financial systems, providing a more holistic view of how IP investments support business strategy.

Agentic AI—systems that can autonomously execute sequences of tasks—represents an even more transformative shift. Rather than simply assisting with discrete tasks, agentic AI can orchestrate end-to-end workflows such as prior art searches, patent landscape scans, or annuity forecasting. In prosecution, agentic AI could draft preliminary office action responses or generate claim variations based on examiner behaviour and historical success rates. For law firms, agentic AI has the potential to streamline complex workflows such as multi-jurisdictional filings, routine correspondence, docket reconciliation, and even first-draft claim construction—allowing attorneys to focus more on strategy and advocacy. A threat to the law firm revenue stream, or a unique opportunity to embrace change, become technology-enabled and stand out from the competition? A key question all law firms must urgently address.

Improving data quality remains a foundational prerequisite for advanced analytics and AI adoption. In-house teams often begin by conducting data audits, cleaning metadata, standardising technology

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classifications, and integrating systems so data can flow seamlessly from R&D to legal to finance. Law firms play a critical role in this effort: because they manage large volumes of prosecution data, they can help ensure accuracy by adopting structured reporting formats, automating updates from IP offices, and delivering clean, machine-readable data back to clients. AI tools trained on clean datasets can then produce more reliable insights and reduce the risk of error in automated tasks.

Once data quality is improved, organisations can build KPIs that reflect both operational efficiency and strategic impact. Traditional metrics—filing timeliness, cycle time reductions, or office action response speed—remain important, but strategic KPIs gain new relevance with AI. Law firms can track the impact of AI tools on drafting quality, cost predictability, and reduced prosecution cycles. Shared KPIs across in-house teams and law firms help ensure alignment, while AI-powered dashboards provide real-time visibility into trends, costs, and risk indicators. As AI becomes embedded in IP operations, KPIs increasingly measure value created through automation, insights generated from analytics, and improvements in strategic decision-making.

Spend management and procurement are also being transformed by technology and analytics. Rising prosecution and maintenance costs have pushed organisations to adopt more rigorous procurement practices, including firm rationalisation, standardised pricing models, and alternative fee arrangements. AI and agentic systems enhance this discipline by enabling real-time cost tracking, predicting budget deviations, and identifying patterns that drive cost overruns. In-house teams can use AI to model different filing or renewal strategies, evaluating the cost implications of jurisdictional choices or varying response strategies. Law firms can use AI to improve their own cost structures, optimise internal workflows, and pass efficiency gains on to clients through more competitive pricing.

Cost optimisation extends to portfolio pruning as well. Many portfolios contain legacy or low-value assets that consume significant maintenance budgets. AI tools can evaluate each asset's relevance to current products, revenue impact, technology roadmaps, and competitive positioning. Agentic AI can run continuous portfolio scans, flagging assets that are underutilised or misaligned with strategy, and generating evidence-based recommendations for pruning or monetisation. Law firms can provide additional analytical models to support pruning decisions, helping clients evaluate legal risks, enforcement history, and market trends associated with each asset. Together, these capabilities enable a more precise approach to spend management, ensuring investments are focused on assets that meaningfully support business objectives.

The integration of AI and analytics also makes ROI measurement more sophisticated and defensible. ROI can be framed in traditional financial terms—licensing revenue, litigation successes, cost avoidance, or monetisation of unused assets—but it increasingly includes strategic dimensions such as competitive blocking value, market access enablement, and risk mitigation. AI can model the expected impact of defensive publications, freedom-to-operate strategies, enforcement options, and brand expansion initiatives. Law firms can support ROI analysis by providing industry benchmarks, predictive litigation analytics, and monetisation opportunities. As AI tools become more capable, ROI measurement shifts from retrospective evaluation to real-time forecasting and scenario modelling.

These technological shifts are fundamentally reshaping the IP profession and how services are delivered across the IP wrirecosystem. The skills required of in-house teams are expanding from legal expertise to include data literacy, AI fluency, financial acumen, and cross-functional collaboration. Law firms are undergoing a parallel evolution: many are investing in legal technologists, AI specialists, data scientists, and project managers to support their attorneys and enhance client service. Attorneys increasingly need to understand how AI tools generate insights, how to validate AI outputs, and how to integrate AI-driven recommendations into strategic counselling.

Upskilling is therefore essential for both sides. In-house teams benefit from training in data analysis, AI model interpretation, financial modelling, portfolio strategy, and innovation processes. Law firms are developing internal training programmes to help attorneys understand AI's capabilities and limitations, adopt new drafting and search tools, and engage in data-driven discussions with clients. Some firms provide training directly to client teams, supporting joint capability development and strengthening relationships.

Governance frameworks tie all of these elements together by defining how decisions are made, who participates, and how AI is used responsibly. Effective governance establishes clear criteria for filing, renewal, and litigation decisions; integrates finance, R&D, and legal stakeholders; and ensures consistency and transparency. Governance for AI adds additional layers, including oversight of AI-generated recommendations, auditability of decision sources, safeguards against bias, and processes for validating model outputs. Law firms can support clients by helping develop these governance frameworks, advising on regulatory considerations, and providing their own AI-use policies to reassure clients about confidentiality and model integrity.

Ultimately, the future of IP management is collaborative, data-driven, AI-enabled, and strategically aligned. In-house IP teams and law firms that embrace these shifts will be uniquely positioned to deliver greater value—protecting innovation more efficiently, strengthening competitive advantage, optimising spend, and enhancing business outcomes. AI and agentic AI won't replace IP professionals, but they will fundamentally change the nature of their work, elevating their roles from administrators of complex processes to strategic advisors guiding innovation, investment, and enterprise growth. Together, empowered by data and technology, IP teams and their law firm partners can create a high-performance ecosystem that transforms IP from a compliance obligation into a driver of long-term business success.