

LexisNexis® 2010 International Workplace Productivity Survey

Executive Summary of Results for Legal Professionals

A new international survey of legal professionals reveals that “information overload” is a widespread and growing problem in the legal community around the world. Not only does the incessant flow of information decrease productivity and performance in the workplace, it also takes a toll on employee morale. The survey found practitioners in every market struggling to cope, and looking to their employers for greater support.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Too Much Information: A Global Challenge

- A majority of legal professionals in three of the five markets surveyed say that the amount of information they have to manage for their jobs has increased significantly since the economic downturn (South Africa: 68%, China: 52%, U.K.: 52%, U.S.: 48%, Australia: 34%).
- On average, more than two in five legal professionals surveyed (44%) say that if the amount of information they receive continues to increase, they will reach a “breaking point” at which they will be unable to handle any more.
- On average, legal professionals report spending just over half (51%) of their work day receiving and managing information, rather than actually using information to do their jobs.
- Legal professionals report that between one-third and one-half of all the information they receive at work each day is not important to getting their job done.
- A large majority of all legal professionals surveyed (87%) report needing to search for old emails or documents at least once a week, while an average of half of all respondents report needing to recreate documents because they are unable to find previously created versions at least once a week.

Drag on Performance, Productivity and Morale

- On average, six in ten (58%) legal professionals admit that the quality of their work suffers at times because they can’t sort through the information they need fast enough.
- Almost half (48%) of all legal professionals surveyed report having trouble recreating how they spent their time for billing purposes (U.S.: 57%, U.K.: 39%, China: 44%, South Africa: 61%, Australia: 31%)
- On average, almost half (48%) of all legal professionals surveyed report feeling demoralized when they can’t manage all the information that comes their way at work.
- On average, slightly over half (51%) of all legal professionals surveyed feel that people starting out in the legal industry are not well prepared for the amount of information management and processes they will have to manage in their jobs.

The just-released survey, commissioned by LexisNexis—a leading global provider in workflow solutions—builds on a similar survey conducted in 2008 and shows that information overload among American legal professionals appears to have gone from bad to worse. The expanded 2010 study surveyed 600 legal professionals from the United States, United Kingdom, China, South Africa and Australia, and reveals that information overload is pervasive across the globe.



“24/7” Communications: Improving or Impairing Productivity?

- When asked how they prefer to be reached with important information, more legal workers in the U.S. (48%), U.K. (68%) and South Africa (67%) choose email over any other means, including mobile or landline phone, text messages or in-person meetings.
- More than nine in ten (94%) legal professionals in Australia and more than two-thirds (69%) of South Africa’s legal professionals say the constant flow of email and other information is distracting, making it difficult to focus on the task at hand. Most legal professionals in the U.K (62%), U.S. (58%) and China (51%) echo this sentiment.
- Nine out of ten U.S. (90%) and Chinese (87%) legal professionals say they have deleted or discarded work information without fully reading it, as have eight in ten legal professionals in Australia (81%), seven in ten in the U.K. (70%) and approximately two-thirds in South Africa (65%).

Impact Varies from Market to Market

- Nine in ten (91%) U.S. legal professionals report needing to search for old emails or documents, and almost six in ten (57%) report having trouble recreating how time was spent for billing purposes at least once a week.
- Three in five (61%) legal professionals in China report needing to recreate documents because previous versions can’t be found, while half (50%) report disagreements among colleagues about the right way to organize information at least once a week.
- Two in five (42%) Chinese legal professionals report missing a meeting or appointment because of scheduling miscommunications (versus 15% of U.S. legal professionals), and 35% of Chinese legal professionals say they miss deadlines because they have trouble finding the necessary information (compared to 18% of U.S. legal professionals) at least once a week.

Legal Professionals Want Solutions: Legal Employers in Some Countries Seen as More Supportive Than in Others

- Across all countries, 87% of legal professionals say their employer has taken at least one action to help them manage information efficiently, such as investing in faster computers and more up-to-date technology; providing tools that work together to improve productivity; and providing information management technology designed specifically for legal professionals.
- More than half (52%) of legal professionals in China say their company has provided information management technology designed specifically for their profession, versus only 24% of legal professionals in the U.S.
- More than nine in ten (93%) legal professionals in China and more than three-quarters (77%) of U.S. legal professionals report that they could be more efficient if the software tools they use were designed to work the way they work, while 84% of Chinese and 70% of U.S. legal professionals say they would be more productive if they didn’t have to switch back and forth between applications to do their work.
- On average, 66% of legal professionals across every market wish their company provided more training in information management.

Survey Methodology

LexisNexis commissioned the 2010 International Workplace Productivity Survey. The national study included 1,700 white collar professionals across five countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, China, South Africa and Australia. The study included 300 non-legal professionals and 200 legal professionals in the U.S. and 200 non-legal professionals and 100 legal professionals in each of the other markets. It was fielded by WorldOne, an international market research agency, specializing in the collection and analysis of data for leading market research organizations, consulting firms and corporations.

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