

Report: Alternative Legal Service Providers: Understanding the Growth and Benefits of These New Legal Providers (Thomson Reuters Legal Executive Institute, Georgetown University Law Center, and the University of Oxford Saïd Business School 2017)



In the 2010's, the legal marketplace saw an influx of new start-ups and new entrants looking to challenge the long-standing service model offered by law firms to their clients. Traditionally, clients looked to their law firms to provide a full range of legal and legal-related services. In 2017, by contrast, consumers of legal services found themselves the beneficiaries of a new and growing number of nontraditional service providers that are changing the way legal work is getting done. These alternative providers comprised a new sector of the legal market, one that is emerged and evolved rapidly.

Alternative Legal Service Providers (ALSPs) present an alternative to the traditional idea of hiring an attorney at a law firm to assist in every aspect of a legal matter. For an emerging market, the use of ALSPs was quite widespread. The full results of this survey show that at least 51% of law firms and 60% of corporate legal departments used ALSPs for at least one type of service at the publication of this report.

Key Findings:

- The use of ALSPs by corporations and law firms is strong and expected to grow in volume and types of service used.
- Corporations are flexing their buying power and law firms are responding.
- Motivations for using ALSPs go beyond cost savings to access to specialized expertise.
- Both law firms and corporations are concerned about the quality of service.
- The growth of ALSPs presents new opportunities for corporations and law firms.

The ALSP market has grown quickly. Their use in 2017 is primarily centered around standardized tasks but increasing sophistication on the part of the ALSPs, as well as better technology and growing familiarity and comfort on the part of law firms and corporations could lead to ALSPs playing a greater role in increasingly complex services and tasks.

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