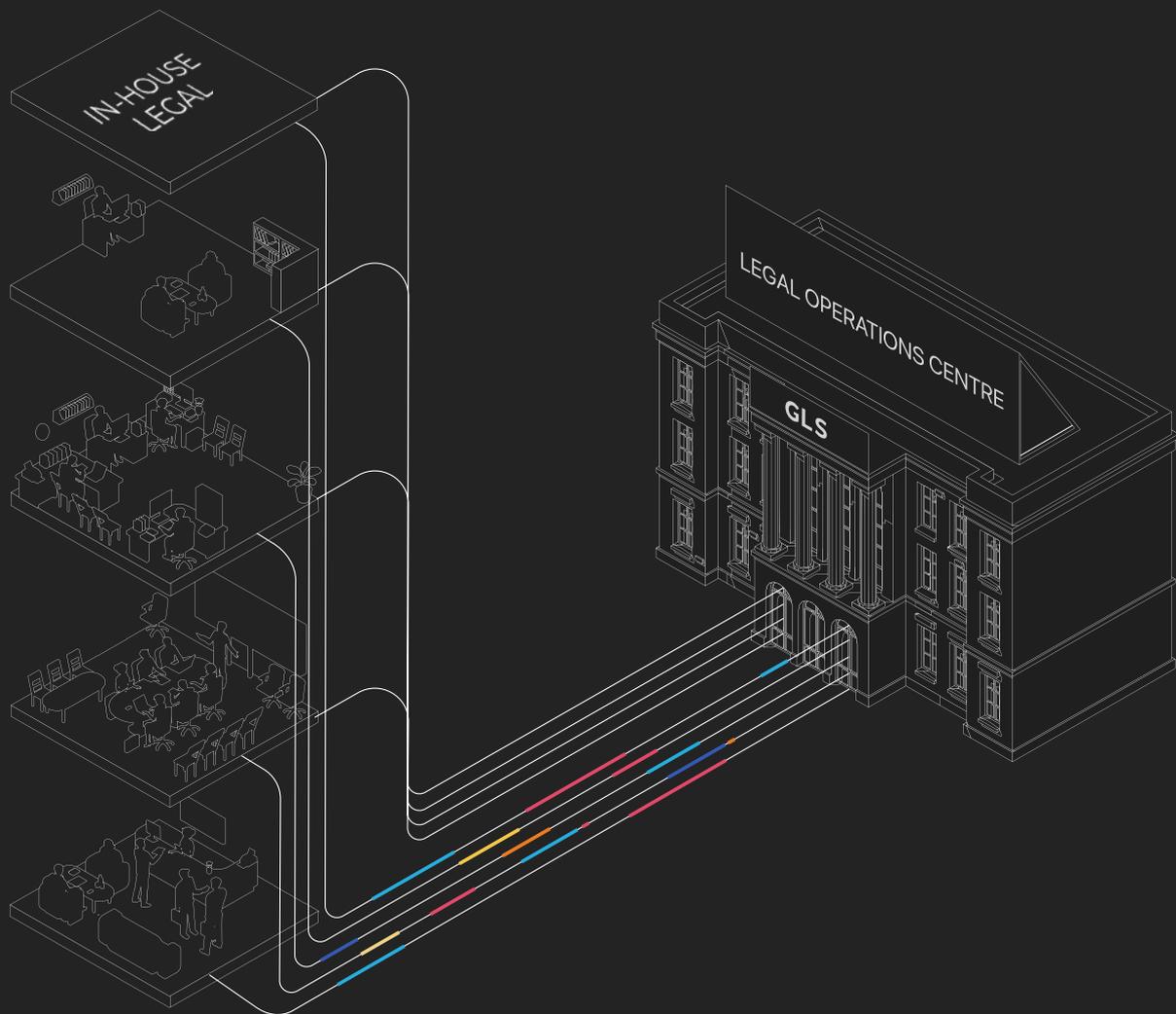


# GLS'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LEGAL OPERATIONS

Improving In-House Team Performance



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**Global Legal Solutions®**

By Matthew Glynn  
[www.gls-legaloperations.com](http://www.gls-legaloperations.com)

**This book is dedicated to all those who have suffered the inefficiencies of the legal industry and are motivated to improve things.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

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### **Matthew Glynn**

Matt is Managing Director of the GLS Group, a leading legal industry disruptor that delivers 24/7/365 access to world-class legal solutions. Solutions that enable in-house teams and law firms to achieve far greater productivity outcomes.

Be it by AI based contract reviews, contract automation solutions or by architecting high-performance legal teams, GLS Group provides access to world class solutions at a disruptive price point.

A former Big Law technology lawyer, Matt has been responsible for the development of hundreds of technology enabled tools that extend what in-house legal resources can achieve. Matt is sought after for industry comment by the Financial Times and the BBC amongst others.

Matt is an industry leader when it comes to helping in-house teams achieve far greater performance outcomes with fewer resources. Matt regularly implements productivity solutions to legal teams of all sizes across the globe and routinely helps them achieve external legal budget compression ratios in excess of 1:10 and time task compression that exceed 1:20.

### **WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:**



### **Simon Bryan**

**Managing Director**  
GLS EMEA



### **Nicholas Brocklebank**

**Director of In-House  
Transformation & Digitisation**  
GLS Group

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### **For information:**

Contact GLS at  
[info@gls.global](mailto:info@gls.global)

Visit GLS at  
[www.gls-legaloperations.com](http://www.gls-legaloperations.com)

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# PART K

## 10 THINGS THAT CAN SINK YOUR LEGAL OPERATIONS AGENDA

*"The way to do this efficiently is to learn lessons from the experience of others."*

# LEARNING FROM OTHER'S EXPERIENCE

Experience is the ultimate form of wisdom. Experience is also the most valuable teacher when it comes to implementing new things, with limited resources, into an ecosystem that generally does not like change.

Most IHLs will not be able to afford dedicated legal operations personnel so “tooling up” on domain expertise is critical. And, the way to do this efficiently is to learn from the “lessons” of other people's experience.

Noting that, sadly, despite the consistency with which these issues arise, many organisations (especially the larger MNCs) will find themselves making many of the below mistakes as premature IHL Transformation plans are rushed through.

**Having supported so many IHL Transformations we have gained great visibility as to where the “potholes” can typically be expected to lie – we wish to share this knowledge with you.**



# 10 THINGS TO AVOID

Nothing will sink your plans to leverage the power of legal operations to enhance what your IHL can deliver more than the following 10 things:

## NUMBER ONE

### Shiny Boxes:

There are no shiny box solutions for IHL Transformation. There is no single solution or technology available that will tend to all the transformation needs of your specific IHL. A comprehensive solution/technology cannot simply be “plugged in” one morning.

Beware of any salesperson offering you an “all in one” software led transformation solution. They simply do not exist. Remember, lawyers enable; technology facilitates – there are no exceptions to this infallible rule.

Many solutions that are currently in the market reflect a software company’s views of the needs of an IHL – and they will have no knowledge of your specific ecosystem and attendant processes.

Transformation is about optimising IHL Lines and IHL Stations, something that can be approached in a particular order to leverage project and resource efficiencies. Thereafter, it is possible to bind “optimised” solutions into a legal-tech platform that can amplify/automate the quality of the underlying resource.

Some IHL Stations will definitely perform very well when combined with a legal technology solution (e.g. templates + automation), but technology “facilitates”, it will not transform your IHL for you.

GLS Group spends an astonishing amount of time helping clients “fix” failed IHL Transformation initiatives that have been led with a major legal tech system acquisition – most typically in the contract life cycle management and workflow management spaces.

## NUMBER TWO

### Institutional Inertia:

Institutional inertia can be a roadblock that inhibits many IHLs from achieving their transformation goals. You must

defeat this obstacle from the outset and you do so by counting on its continued presence.

Critically, you MUST bring your internal clients and stakeholders with you on your transformation journey – if you do not, you will fail. To do this, you must give them a seat at the table when it comes to overall solution design – this is imperative.

If you do not consciously manage “corporate change resistance”, your legal operations agenda will fail. As such, IHL Transformation is as much a “change management exercise” as it is an “IHL process optimisation” exercise.

**Change management = giving credible reasons to internal stakeholders to support what you want to do.**

If you do not extend to your internal stakeholders a sense of “ownership” of the solutions you intend to implement, you will fail.

Deploying appropriate change management strategies, such as developing a sense of urgency, a sense of common ownership over the problem(s), communicating strategy and demonstrating quick wins are all vital.

Indeed for every transformation project GSL assists on, we insist that our clients focus on the transformation steps that can be guaranteed to succeed when the right things are done in the right order.

We do this as it is imperative to deliver the kind of “visible success” early on that internal stakeholders will want to follow. Corporate actors like to be on “team success” and will abandon “team failure” faster than you can blink.

Put simply, change management deficiencies is a common theme across all failed IHL Transformation

projects that GLS has had to come into to salvage – it is a Top 3 cause of IHL Transformation failure.

### NUMBER 3

#### Big Bangs:

**“Most people overestimate what they can do in 12 months and underestimate what they can do in 12 years.” – Bill Gates**

Legal operations implementation is about taking small steps, consistently over time and building upon those steps once success is accepted. “Big Bangs” don’t work and can cause new and even greater problems.

For an IHL to improve its performance with limited resources, it must look to optimise its legal operations over a gradual but sustained transformation plan.

GLS advocates a tried and tested “85:15” rule – that is 15% of your team’s capacity each week should be focused on transformation initiatives. This will deliver a comprehensive transformation over 2 years.

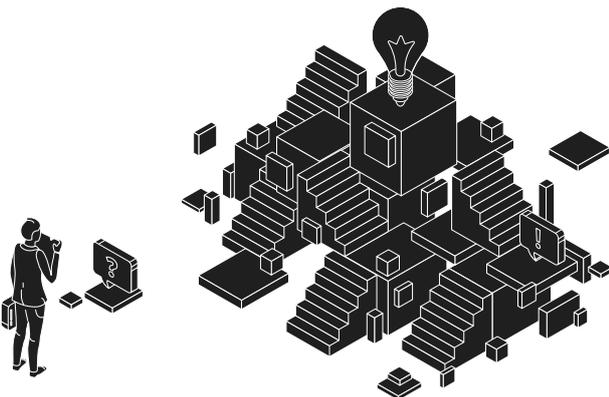
By applying **R.P.L.V.** to your “business as usual” support activities, you can achieve our mandated 15% IHL Transformation focus target without too much effort – and in 24 months your IHL should be in great shape.

### NUMBER 4

#### A Myopic Technology Focus:

Technology has a role to play in legal operations – but it is only one of the 3 essential pillars, i.e. technology, people and processes. Technology is not a “fix all” solution – far from it.

Yes, technology is essential for “full IHL optimisation” but it is far too frequently viewed as a panacea for systemic IHL inefficiency.



Legal technology has arguably come to be viewed as the “new face” of legal transformation – something which is totally erroneous but understandable given the flood of legal technology headlines in the legal press in recent years.

**Frankly, the real “legal technology trend” is not the technology itself but its role as a catalyst for fundamental IHL change – legal technology is enabling change but is not the change itself.**

It is this mis-association that has pulled many GCs off course when they look to plan an effective transformation journey. Again, See Warning No.1 – legal transformation is not about shiny boxes.

To be really clear, GCs should not be talking to software companies until they have had a good long look at the [GLS Legal Transformation Tube Map](#) and applied **R.P.L.V.** to the resources they already have within their IHL.

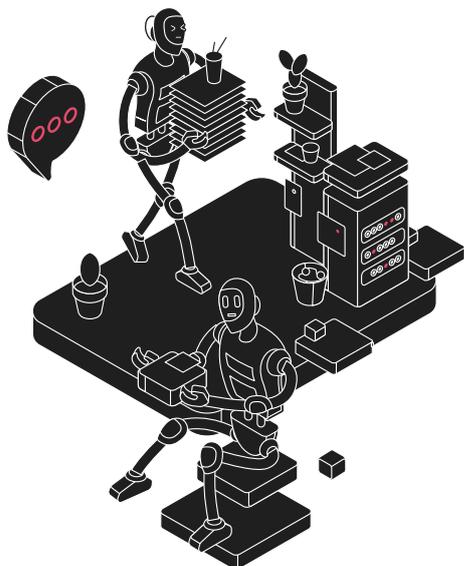
A myopic focus on legal technology, as is portrayed in the legal industry press, is a knee-jerk reaction by the top 1% of companies trying to respond to the pressure IHLs face to transform. But, you cannot “buy” your way to a transformed state – you have to plan and implement it yourself.

The larger the organisation, the more tempting it is to “buy” a technology solution without first doing all the fundamental, low-tech implementation steps (i.e. readying people and processes) – and this explains the high rates of legal technology implementation failures at MNCs.

All too often, initial trepidation within an MNC over legal technology risk is rapidly replaced by impatience for benefits – benefits that do not appear as the fundamentals were not done properly. Lawyers enable, technology facilitates.

Technology is great but people are better. If you focus on technology 100% of the time, it will be a disaster.

Finally, if you doubt how serious we view this risk for companies of size – note this – the GLS Legal Operations



Centre is bristling with high-tech solutions – but we **STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO NOT** buy any of them until you have done your low tech work first.

For a poignant reminder of the dangers of succumbing to the allure of high technology at the expense of essential low-tech implementations – see our white paper “How to Avoid A High Tech Train Wreck”.

**Related Resource:** [visit the Legal Tech Channel on the GLS Legal Operations Centre](#)

**Related Resource:** [see GLS White Paper “How to Avoid A High Tech Train Wreck”](#)

## **NUMBER 5** GC Only Legal Operations:

It is all too often a true “rule of thumb” that long-standing GCs tend not be as receptive to technology and workflow optimisation initiatives as their younger team members.

It is a major mistake for GCs not to encourage active participation of younger team members in legal operations and transformation initiatives, particularly in the technology sphere.

This “pothole” sits alongside Number 2 above in that corporate inertia is not just something that resides outside of your IHL team – it can exist within it as well.

As such, including and motivating your own team to participate in the formulation of your transformation solution and then empowering them to lead key parts of its implementation is essential.

## **NUMBER 6** Aggressive Time Lines:

If you try and force the pace of change beyond that which your organisation can actually handle, you are almost certainly going to fail.

**FACT: Transformation takes time and false starts and mistakes take even more time to fix. The normal duration for an end to end transformation is 24 months – plan on this – anything less than this is probably going to be “rushed”.**

We advocate consistently dedicating 15% of your capacity to transformation activities – you will then be able to substantially transform your IHL comfortably over a two year period just by apply R.P.L.V. based decision making.

The bottom line is that whilst the business will want a lot achieved in short order – what they really need is change that actually delivers results. This means qualitative, potent and self-authored change.

Effective IHL Transformation, is all about successive implementation at a pace that guarantees success.

## **NUMBER 7** Pass & Proceed:

Your organisation has limited appetite for new things and always will. It is therefore vital to deliver success consistently and build on that – start small and with the “quick wins”, and then move on.

You have no business moving forward with your transformation efforts until you have “proven” through empirical data that the current implementation is working effectively – you must “pass” in order to “proceed”.

As such, choosing the right transformation project and maintaining focus is critical. You must resist the distraction of the 100+ other things that would be nice for you to achieve, and simply focus on the 3-5 things that, at any one point in time, you absolutely must (and can) deliver.

**Any consultant that tells you that you must aggressively transform multiple parts of your legal function simultaneously should be treated with extreme caution – that approach simply does not work.**

### NUMBER 8

#### Budget:

All too often IHL leaders believe that they are *“too small to attract the budget needed to effectively transform”*. Frankly, nothing could be further from the truth.

Most of the most potent transformation steps involve little or no additional budget – they just involve concerted effort. As we have already demonstrated throughout this Guide, IHLs have far more resources to hand than they realise.

We believe that most IHLs can achieve a 30%+ productivity gain by just fully identifying all the resources that are actually available to them and making better use of them through R.P.L.V. – that is 30%+ productivity gain without the need to expend any additional resources.

Transformation should start with something you can deliver yourself and in time the “record of success” that you will build up will build the credibility you need when requesting major resource allocations.

### NUMBER 9

#### Ignoring Formative Stations:

If you fail to focus “up-front” effort on the relevant Formative Station then your work on that IHL Line will never realise its full potential. It will also be inefficient. Simple.

We have spoken at length about the importance of Formative Stations and their role in successful transformation. Ignoring them is a little like dismissing the importance of diet, sleep and mental state on your overall health.

### NUMBER 10

#### Ignoring Data:

If you do not develop an active data analytics competency from Day 1, you will be impairing your ability to implement effective transformation and inhibit what your legal operations agenda can achieve.

If you do not collect historic performance data, you will not be able to demonstrate the improvements and ROI that your transformation efforts achieve. If you cannot prove it, then it did not happen.

IHLs must talk the language of business – which is numbers. The New Law IHL accepts that if they cannot prove it to their business, then they didn’t do it.

Again, without wishing to be unduly cynical, the above 10 risks are frequently present on most IHL Transformation journeys. But knowing of their existence in the advance, as you now do, can help you to avoid them and achieve success.

## ESSENTIAL OBSERVATIONS / TIPS

- Two years is a sensible timeline for an end to end transformation of your IHL
- The hallmarks of all effective legal operations transformation are similar and can be replicated
- Purveyors of “shiny box” legal operations solutions must be avoided
- Legal operations should prioritise initiatives that can be validated empirically
- Avoiding common mistakes and sticking to what is known to work is fundamental to legal operations
- 15% of your team’s capacity should be consistently focused on transformation activities
- The bigger your company is, the more susceptible it will be to these 10 common risks
- Consciously address the above “warnings” and your IHL agenda will run a far smoother course

## WHAT NEXT?

IHLs now operate in era of constant improvements where a productivity initiative might represent a powerful competitive advantage one day but can very quickly become “table stakes” the next day.

Constant monitoring of overall legal operations and IHL specific developments forms a permanent and vital part of the standing IHL mandate.

As such, we would like to encourage you to participate in the legal operations community. This will enable you to benefit from “real time” awareness of key developments that can help your IHL to stay on top of its game.