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Dictation

Tip sheet

The currency of technology

# How winning law firms are battling rising inflation



# Feeling inflation pressures?

## Here's how legal professionals can hit the release valve

Throughout the world, [inflation rates](#) have risen at an alarming rate over the past year. This has been putting cost pressures on organizations of all sizes, in every industry, and in both the public and private sectors.

The legal field is no exception – a recent article in [The American Lawyer](#) indicated that typical rate increases law firms conduct on an annual basis are no longer keeping pace with the sudden significant rise in inflation. The article also noted that firms are tasked with striking a difficult balance between protecting margins and setting pricing the market will bear.

In spite of economic headwinds, the article's author did offer a promising conclusion: [Technology can help](#) law firms get more creative with their resources. In 2022, there has been a significant increase in technology use as compared to the past decade. Further, cybersecurity and cloud computing were necessary investments driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, but law firms are now seeing the potential of technology to improve profitability as well.

What does this look like from a pragmatic standpoint? The following examples offer ideas about how law firms can leverage technology to combat the impacts of inflation and drive profitability in times of economic uncertainty.

## Save costs by enhancing operations

“Time is money” is a maxim probably truer in law than in any other field, as a firm’s success is its ability to drive profits (85% of respondents in a recent [Thompson Reuters survey](#) defined success in this way). Therefore, “succeeding” is heavily reliant on operational efficiency so the firm can maximize the production of billable work. The sea change of migrating on-premise or installed software solutions to the cloud has contributed significantly to this objective. Advanced voice technologies in particular, which are a critical part of a legal professional’s toolkit, can boost efficiency to get more work product from the day and get the most out of the firm’s budget.

Routing voice files quickly from attorneys’ spoken notes through the process of transcription and/or speech recognition, editing, review, and final document creation is one illustration of how voice technology and software improve operational workflow. With cloud enablement, these solutions support hybrid, remote, and other types of digital collaboration to accommodate different work styles and preferences, as well as to serve clients anytime, anywhere. Streamlining and centralizing the collection, storage, and accessibility of voice files and related documents, images, and videos, no matter the device or platform, is another major time- and cost-saving benefit of cloud-based voice solutions. IT staff spend less time on server and software maintenance for data storage, responding to help desk tickets for lost files, and other lower-value activities, and can instead devote time and resources to more strategic initiatives.



## Increase time for higher-value work

Efficiency goes hand-in-hand with elevating the type of work product the firm is able to produce. It's important to note that not all billable hours are created equally.

Winning law firms focus on dedicating more time to work of the highest value from a revenue standpoint, and creatively utilize all tools at their disposal to do so.

Minimizing time spent on non-billable work is one example. In the same [Thompson Reuters survey](#) mentioned previously, 74% of 400 participating law firm respondents said spending too much time on administrative tasks was at least a "moderate" challenge. Accelerating and automating file routing and processing via speech-to-text capabilities reliably reduces time spent on administrative tasks. Being able to leverage these tools keeps day-to-day "transactional" tasks at a minimum.



As a result, attorneys have more time for strategic, consultative work that drives higher billings. Assistants can spend more time helping deliver high-touch, personalized client service. Partners and other senior leaders can more quickly and conveniently review and comment on work products. Connecting and supporting every staff member in the firm enables the organization as a whole to elevate its performance.

## Keep revenues flowing by easing the billing and tracking process

Consider this sobering [statistic](#) from *Legal Management* magazine: Waiting until the end of the day to record time can cost 10%-15% of potential billable hours due to inaccuracies. Waiting 24 hours can cost about 25%. And staggeringly, doing so weekly can result in a 50% loss of potential billable hours!

Accurately tracking billable time is best captured immediately, rather than trying to remember after several hours (or even several days) later – making a voice note of time along with the associated work makes it a convenient one-step task. Time and billing can then be routed to support staff to shepherd through financial and administrative workflows and expediently invoiced.

Additionally, tracking is not just limited to billable hours. With advanced cloud voice solutions, photos of receipts can be attached to voice memo details for easier capture, management, and processing of business expenses. Consolidating this supporting documentation contributes to speeding up invoicing, and ultimately, payment.

While macroeconomic factors may not be predictable, harnessing the right tech tools can help smooth out peaks and valleys. Technologies such as cloud voice technology solutions, combined with new and fresh approaches to processes and procedures, can make significant positive impacts on a firm's bottom line.

To find out more about how your firm can leverage these capabilities and enhance profitability, visit [www.speechlive.com](http://www.speechlive.com).

