

The Economics Changed

What Used to Cost \$200K Now Costs \$30-50K

Two years ago, custom AI for a law firm meant a \$200,000+ project that took six months or longer. Enterprise vendors. Long sales cycles. Teams of developers. For most mid-sized firms, it wasn't realistic.

That's not the world we're in anymore.

The same capabilities now cost \$30-50K and take weeks. Not because quality dropped. Because the tools changed. Senior consultants working with AI can deliver what used to require teams. The math that made custom software impractical for mid-sized firms? It works now.

Why Prices Dropped 80%

Software development used to be about writing code from scratch. Every function, every feature, every integration built line by line. A document search system might take four developers six months. At fully-loaded costs, that's \$300K before you've deployed anything.

AI changed how software gets built. Modern development assembles proven components. Pre-trained models handle the hard parts. A senior developer with AI tools produces what used to require a team.

The result: what cost \$200K now costs \$40K. What took six months takes six weeks. The quality is the same or better. The delivery model changed.

What This Means for Your Firm

Projects that weren't worth considering are now worth considering.

Making your document repository searchable in plain English? That used to be a \$150K project. Now it's \$35-50K. Your associates ask "what's our standard approach to California non-competes?" and get a useful answer in seconds.

Building a system that captures knowledge from retiring partners? Enterprise vendors quote six figures. We've built them for \$40K.

Contract review automation tailored to how your firm works? Not the one-size-fits-all SaaS tool. Custom logic for your practice areas. \$30-50K, done in weeks.

Real Project Costs

Here's what we've built for law firms at these prices:

Document intelligence: \$45,000. 50-attorney firm. Twenty years of documents made searchable. Associates get answers with citations in seconds. Deployed in six weeks.

Knowledge preservation: \$38,000. Mid-sized firm with partners retiring. System to capture institutional knowledge. Everything indexed and searchable.

Contract review: \$52,000. Corporate practice reviewing 200+ contracts monthly. Custom models for their clause patterns. Review time dropped 60%.

Research acceleration: \$28,000. Litigation boutique. Custom integration with their DMS. Research in minutes instead of hours.

Build Timelines: Weeks, Not Months

Week 1-2: Understand your workflow. What documents exist? What questions do people ask?

Week 3-4: Build the core. Modern AI development moves fast when assembling proven components.

Week 5-6: Refine and deploy. Test with real users. Go live when it works.

Six weeks from kickoff to attorneys using the system.

Why You Own the Result

SaaS tools rent you capability. Per seat, per month, forever. The vendor holds your data.

Custom builds work differently. You own the code. It runs on your servers. Add users without adding costs.

Five-year comparison: SaaS at \$80/user/month for 50 users costs \$240,000. Custom build at \$50,000 plus updates costs \$75,000.

That's \$165,000 in savings.

Ethics Is Easier Than You Think

Cloud AI creates ethics headaches. Client data in someone else's servers.

Custom AI on your servers sidesteps this. Does client data leave your building? No. Can you audit everything? Yes.

Ethics committees that spend months on cloud vendors often approve on-premise in weeks.

Who's Already Doing This

A 45-attorney firm built document intelligence for real estate. Associates find precedents in seconds.

A 60-attorney firm captured knowledge before two partners retired. Decades of expertise stayed.

A litigation boutique halved research time. Same quality, faster delivery.

These firms aren't bigger. They're just ahead.

The First-Mover Advantage

In twelve months, most firms will be exploring this. The question is whether you'll have a year's head start.

The firms moving now will have refined systems, faster associates, larger knowledge bases. Their competitors will be at the starting line.

Where to Start

Pick one high-value problem. One workflow where associates waste time or knowledge gets lost.

Get a cost estimate. If it pays for itself in 18 months, it's probably worth doing.

The economics changed. The question is whether your firm will act on that.

Ready to see what's possible at today's prices? Schedule a conversation or explore our legal-specific solutions.