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# Top AI Insights for GC in 2026

## Top AI insights for GC in 2026

GenAI adoption is accelerating — 86% of organizations are now piloting or deploying GenAI at scale, up from just a handful three years ago. Yet, most general counsel (GCs) remain cautious, with many struggling to move beyond early experimentation and confidently embed GenAI into legal workflows.

To meet rising business expectations, GCs must not only manage AI's complex risks but also harness its potential to deliver faster, more cost-effective legal services.

GCs can use the following report to answer four critical questions that peers are asking Gartner:

1. What should legal's role be in establishing effective AI governance?
2. How can we be more proactive in managing AI risks and regulatory compliance?
3. What GenAI use cases should my legal department adopt?
4. How do I best position my legal department to take advantage of AI technology efficiency, productivity and quality gains?

## What should legal's role be in establishing effective AI governance?

Responsibility for AI governance and risk management is shared across multiple functions, but GCs are ultimately accountable for legal risk events. GC must strike a careful balance: If their approach is too lax, they expose the organization to unacceptable risk; if too heavy-handed, they risk business partners bypassing controls altogether. To strike this balance, GC should focus on the highest-risk AI use cases by embedding triggers into existing risk assessments to identify and track these projects, applying additional review and controls where needed. At the same time, they should provide the business with clear criteria to determine when legal review is required and when projects can proceed independently.

Finally, while GC may not be directly responsible for governance ownership, it is essential that they maintain oversight to create accountability and ensure critical governance activities are executed with rigor.

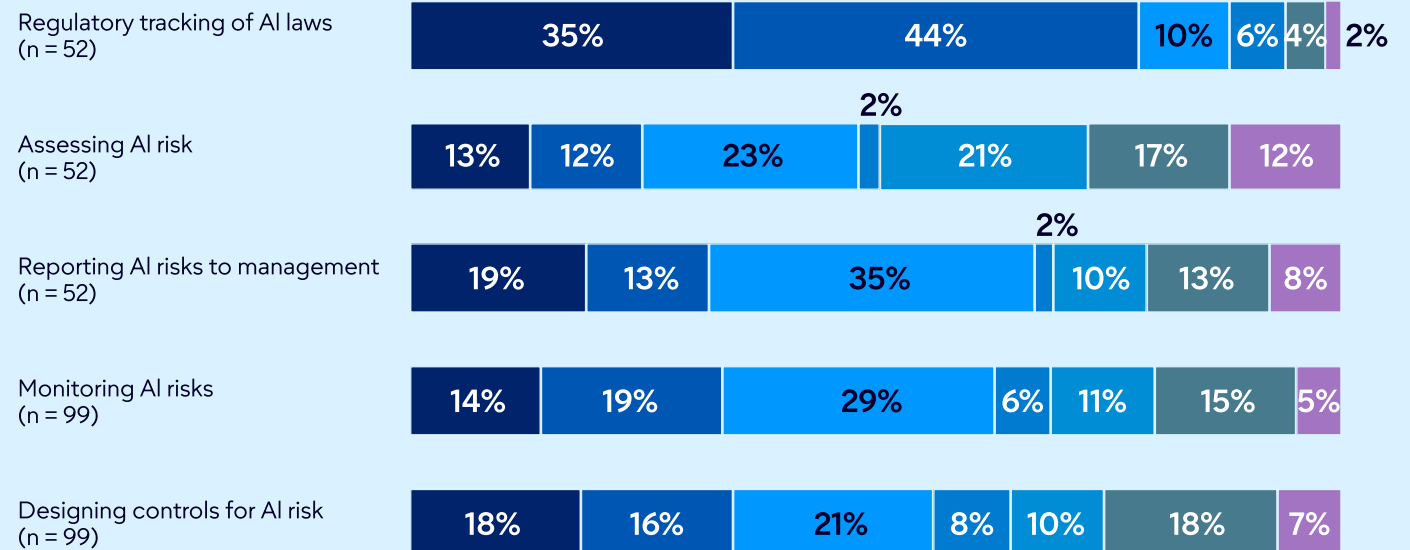
Related resource:

[AI's Next Frontier Demands a New Approach to Ethics, Governance and Compliance](#)

### AI governance activity ownership by function

Percentage of organizations

■ Legal ■ Compliance ■ Enterprise risk management ■ Audit ■ Information security ■ IT ■ Other



Source: Gartner

## How can we be more proactive in managing AI risks and regulatory compliance?

GCs often get stuck in a reactive loop, constantly updating policies to keep up with new AI laws — confusing business partners and leading to inconsistent compliance. Fortunately, many new AI regulations mirror or build upon existing ones. Because of this, building your policies and controls framework around three core principles common to most AI laws — risk management, transparency and fairness — ensures you are already well-positioned for compliance with most new laws.

This proactive approach means future updates will require only minor tweaks — not major overhauls — even as new laws and new technologies, such as agentic AI, emerge.

### Common AI principles and related action items



Required by the regulation



Partial requirements or ones that vary based on certain factors, such as AI use case



Not required by the regulation

		Colorado AI Act*	California SB942 and AB2013	New York AICPA (proposed)	U.S. Executive Orders***	EU AI Act
Transparency	Disclose AI use to consumers and regulators.	◐	◐	◐	○	●
	Provide opt-out options for automated decision making to consumers.	◐	○	◐	○	○
	Disclose provenance of AI-created content.	◐	●	○	○	●
Risk management	Require risk assessments for AI impact and use.	◐	○	◐	○	●
	Require impact assessment on fundamental individual rights.	◐	○	○	○	●
	Prohibit certain very high-risk uses of AI.	○	○	●	○	●
Fairness	Adopt process to minimize biases in AI outputs.	◐	○	◐	◐	●

Source: Gartner

## What GenAI use cases should my legal department adopt?

GC should focus on implementing proven AI applications that deliver immediate value and can be implemented easily — such as contract visibility, legal document summarization, meeting transcription and legal research. Only a handful of AI applications are truly ready for prime time, and the four previously mentioned practical solutions offer the best balance of business impact, reliable operation and ease of implementation.

Augmenting your legal team’s ability to do these highly repetitive, low-value tasks allows legal teams to boost efficiency and redirect resources to more strategic work.

### GenAI use-case scorecard for legal technology

Top scoring Use case

None

Medium

Low

High

	Revenue impact	Productivity	Risk reduction	Marketplace dynamics	Organizational dynamics	Regulatory dynamics
Automated contract review	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Case filing preparation	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Contract risk analysis	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>Contract visibility/data extraction</b>	High	High	High	High	High	High
e-discovery	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Knowledge management (KM)	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
Legal intake and triage	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>Legal research</b>	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
Legal self-service chatbot	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Legal spend analysis	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Legal writing and communications	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
M&A due diligence analysis	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	High
Patent and trademark research	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Patent drafting and prosecution	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
<b>Summarization of legal documents</b>	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
<b>Transcribe and summarize meetings</b>	Medium	High	High	High	High	High

Source: Gartner

## How do I best position my legal department to take advantage of AI technology efficiency, productivity and quality gains?

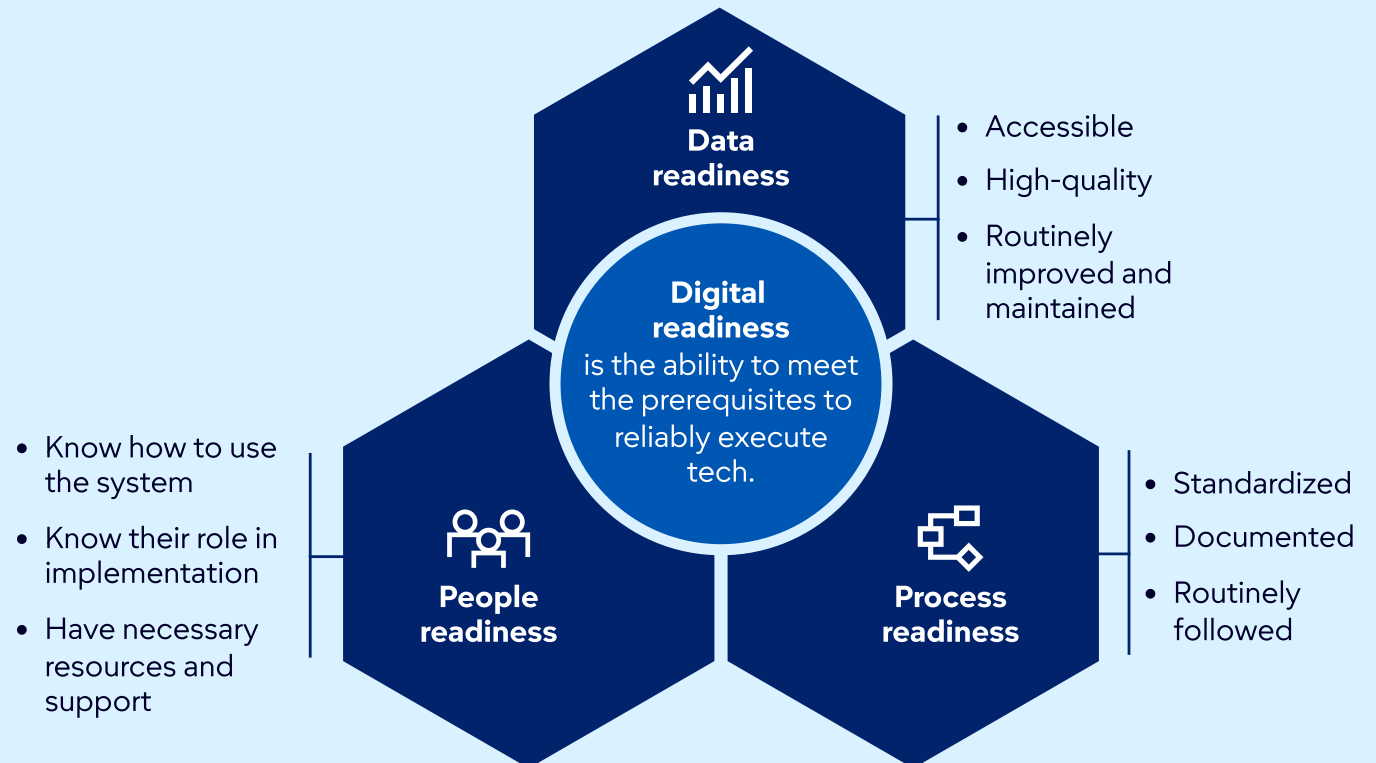
Legal departments that invest in the people, process and data that empower technology – rather than invest in technology itself – are nearly twice as likely to achieve successful implementation. AI is no exception. Many GCs mistakenly assume that if they simply purchase the right technology, results will follow. Purchasing technology without preparing your department to effectively use it translates to low adoption, legal team pushback or incorrect use, making processes even less efficient than they were before.

Achieving value and impact from AI investments requires GCs to promote digital readiness by standardizing processes, instituting robust data management and upskilling their teams.

Related resource: [Build the Digitally Ready Legal Department](#)

### Digital readiness prerequisites





9 prerequisites legal must meet to fill people, process and data readiness gaps



Source: Gartner

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