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Law Firm Records Management Benchmarks

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THE QUESTIONNAIRE

CHAPTER 1 – RECORDS RETENTION

1. As per your firm's policy, for how many years do you retain legal records?
2. Over the past three years, has your firm changed its legal records retention policies regarding the length of time it is desirable to retain legal records?
3. If your firm has significantly altered its record retention policies over the past three years, what have you done and why?

CHAPTER 2 – DOCUMENT STORAGE

4. Does your firm store any records offsite?
5. If so, about what percentage of your overall records are housed offsite?
6. What is the difference in cost, per square foot per month, of storing records in your warehouse or other offsite location and storing these records at your executive legal offices?*
7. Approximately how many square feet of office space[†] did the records department use in _____?
 - A. 2010
 - B. 2014
8. Does your firm partner with a warehouse supplier?
9. Does your firm partner with a legal records management firm?

CHAPTER 3 – INDEXING AND METADATA

10. Describe the essentials of your firm's metadata and records indexing efforts. Is it largely handled in-house or outsourced? What does the firm include in all labels and file descriptions? How are matters easily tracked? Are all documents trackable to particular attorneys?

* If your office costs are \$60/square foot per month, and warehouse or other offsite costs are \$15/square foot per month, then the difference would be \$45/square foot.

† Not warehouse space.

11. How have you gone about training records management staff to provide proper indexing or metadata for records while minimizing the time that attorneys themselves must spend in metadata and document indexing tasks?

CHAPTER 4 – STAFF

12. In terms of full-time equivalent employees, how large was your firm's records management staff in _____?

- A. 2010
- B. 2014

13. How many employees do you consider to be _____?

- A. Management personnel
- B. Records assistants or other support personnel

14. What percentage of records management staff time is spent _____?

- A. Creating legal records
- B. Retrieving or refiling legal records

15. Are any personnel devoted exclusively to the issue of examining or classifying documents to determine where these documents are classified under the firm's retention scheme?

CHAPTER 5 – BUDGETS

16. Apart from salaries, what are the three or four major costs for your records department?

17. How much did your firm spend for the travel, lodging, and seminar attendance costs of records department employees in the past year?*

18. How much did your firm spend for off-site storage in the past year?

CHAPTER 6 – DOCUMENT IMAGING AND BAR CODING

19. What percentage of your firm's document imaging is _____?

- A. Completed in-house
- B. Outsourced

* Includes costs of inter-office and warehouse-related travel.

20. Does your firm use any _____ scanners in its document imaging efforts?
- A. Slide
 - B. Microfilm
 - C. Flatbed
 - D. Drum
 - E. Sheet-fed
21. How many scanners does your records management department own or lease?
22. In the past two years, how much did the records department spend on _____?
- A. Scanners, digital cameras, and other similar imaging technologies
 - B. Bar coding equipment
 - C. Bar coding service providers
23. If your firm uses an integrated document management system or software package, which system or package do you use and why did you choose it?

CHAPTER 7 – RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE AND RECORDS DESTRUCTION

24. How did your firm develop its record retention classification system or system of organization and accounts?
25. What percentage of the firm's total legal records were destroyed in the past year?

CHAPTER 8 – RECORDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND CYBERSPACE

26. Does your firm have any kind of policy in place for regulations on how to treat blog posts, Facebook posts, instant messages, YouTube video posts, listserv posts, Twitter feeds, and other such commentary in cyberspace as legal records?
27. If your firm has such a policy, what is it?
28. How does your firm back up emails?
29. What percentage of the legal records retained by your firm would you say are electronic documents in their original state?
30. What percentage of the firm's records that are in paper formats in their original state are scanned or otherwise imaged?

CHAPTER 9 – ANNUAL SPENDING

31. What was the firm's total estimated annual spending for records management in _____?
- A. 2012
 - B. 2013
 - C. 2014

CHAPTER 10 – ADVICE

32. What have been your firm's best moves or policies on records management issues?

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP
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Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP
McConnell Valdés LLC
Miller Johnson
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Overall sample size: 10

By Number of Law Firm Partners

Less than 50	5
50 or more	5

By Number of Full-Time Equivalent Employees

Less than 325	5
325 or more	5

By Client Base

Medium-sized businesses*	5
Big businesses†	3
Other (individuals, government, and/or non-profit organizations)	2

* \$5 million to \$250 million in sales

† More than \$250 million in sales