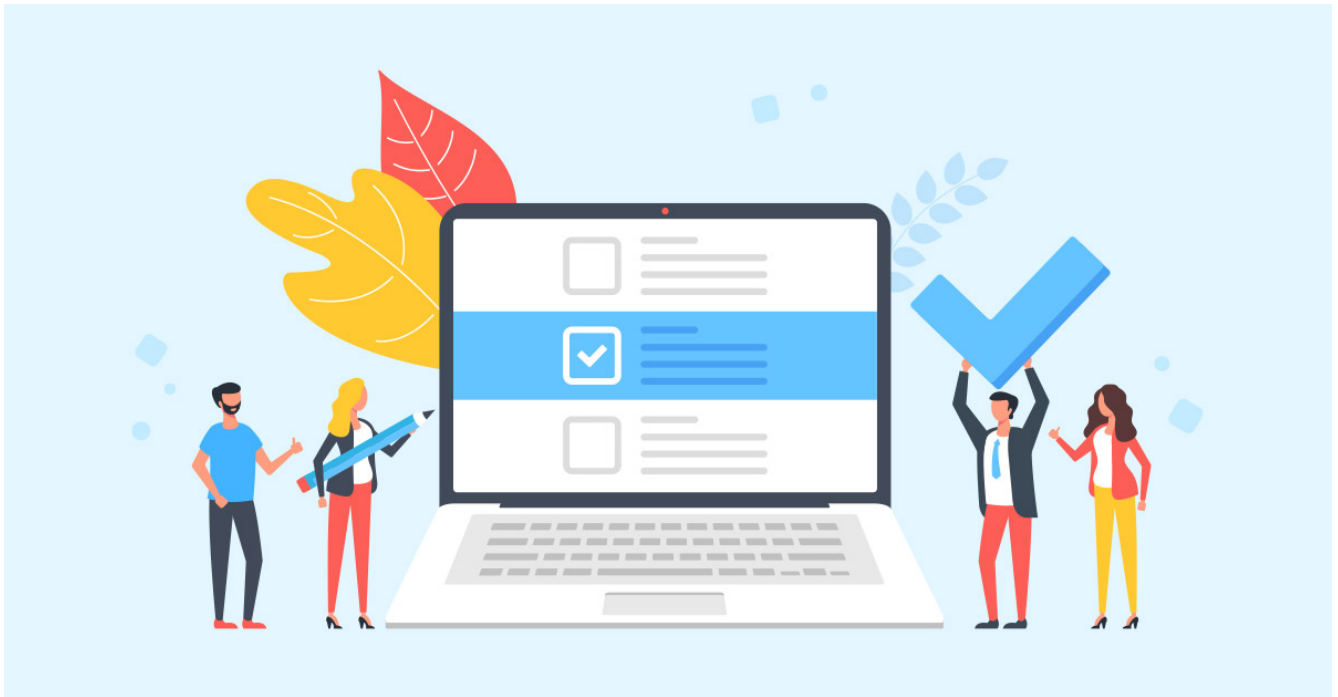


Task Management for Lawyers: How to gain control



A multi-national firm was under investigation. Work conditions [at this firm](#) were harsh, so much so that associates were sleeping at their desks in an effort to meet deadlines. Associates were crushed under the weight of huge workloads and punishing deadlines.

This may be a typical scenario at law firms. From lawyers to administrative everyone is overwhelmed with work. Managing your tasks may seem intangible when you're in the thick of it. Here are a few ways to ease the blow.

Tactic #1: Communicate your workload

It happens – you have your task list for the day and a co-worker has something pressing that needs to get done. In these scenarios, we look at how to address these situations.

- **Partner A:** “I need you to complete these docs and file paperwork with the courthouse by the end of business today.”

- **Partner B:** “I need you to finish the rewrites on this agreement by 3:30 pm today.”

Initially, you’ll want to agree to both. Especially, if you’re a new lawyer in the office or associate. However, taking on tasks you don’t have the time to complete could cause more harm than good. Here is how you could address the situation:

- **Partner A:** “I need you to complete these docs and file paperwork with the courthouse by the end of business today.”
- **You:** “Sure, I can do that. What should I tell Partner B? He wants me to finish contract rewrites by 3:30 pm?”

This works in person, but it’s especially effective if you send *Partner A* an email and you CC *Partner B*. Again, you’re going to have to weigh the internal politics of the situation. Either way, your co-workers will appreciate you being honest about the work you can or can’t commit to.

Tactic #2: Put the ball in their court

If you’re being asked to complete a task that will set you behind on other tasks, ask your partners outline a solution. It’s important that your delivery isn’t forced. You’re simply asking for guidance to better your tasks without delaying or sacrificing others.

Here are some examples you can use:

- I’m supposed to finish rewrites; they’re due in 1 hour. Did you want me to **let the client know we need to push this back** so I can work on your items?
- **I’ll need this list of docs** so I can meet your noon deadline; where should I go to get these?
- **The client mentioned they wanted to go in a different direction.** Should I start on this to-do anyway? If so, what should I tell the client?
- I’m willing to help you prepare for your case. Would you be willing to **take over these agreements for me** instead?
- Richard told me to focus on these tasks for today. **What should I say to him about this?**

When you position these questions this way, your co-worker can weigh their options and figure out other ways to delegate tasks. The key here is communication. Task management for lawyers starts with being open about your

workload and asking questions for guidance.

These tactics work because you're showing that you want to be a team player. You want to take on more tasks but not so much you're dropping the ball on other important work.

Task management for lawyers is possible

Most of the time, lawyers attempt to manage the ever-growing-list of projects, tasks, and events. They quietly carry the burden, as more and more work is stacked on their shoulders. Eventually, it become too much and your work can suffer.

This doesn't have to be your routine. Having open communication and adopting a practice management software with [task management](#) abilities, will help everyone at your law firm get a high-level view of everyone's workload.

You'll find it's easier than ever to regain control over your time, work, and resources, no punishing deadlines required.