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# Workday Legal Team's 'Secret Sauce' Boosts An AI Rollout

By **Steven Lerner**

Law360 (May 6, 2025, 11:39 AM EDT) -- Initially trailing other departments, Workday's legal team claims it emerged as a leader in adopting a new artificial intelligence platform by the end of 2024, crediting extensive staff training for the turnaround.

Last year, the enterprise software company rolled out Google's AI chatbot Gemini across the organization. Leaders in the legal department, which has over 200 people on staff, saw AI as a way to boost efficiency by handling mundane tasks and freeing up time for more strategic work.

A Slack channel was set up by late 2023 in the legal department to discuss AI use cases. By the end of 2024, the legal department had become the company's leader in AI adoption, driven by a shift in training toward broader AI applications, according to Greg Bennett, Workday's director of legal services.

"It was really validating because I think that I had other organizations [in the company] that thought I had some kind of secret sauce," Bennett told Law360 Pulse. "We did — we invested in skill training."

Initially, the legal team lagged behind the other Workday departments in adopting Gemini after its rollout last year. Although the team did not provide specific data on the extent of the slow adoption, Bennett attributed it to the technology's novelty, and uncertainty among staff about best practices and use cases.

For example, members of the legal team lacked skills in prompt engineering, the practice of writing instructions for AI tools. Members of the legal team also didn't understand how the AI worked.

Bennett said the legal department realized that it needed to train its staff on AI because the technology is so different.

"We realized that we needed to partner with someone to help us deliver that type of skills-based training," Bennett said.

After evaluating various training programs, Workday's legal team ultimately chose the lawyer training program AltaClaro, which was recommended by its outside counsel, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP. Bennett said AltaClaro stood out for its specialized AI training tailored specifically to legal professionals.

Abdi Shayesteh, CEO of AltaClaro Inc., told Law360 Pulse that it typically serves smaller legal teams and that Workday's legal department was one of the first larger ones to use its AI training program.

The training started with about an hour of interactive videos and assessments on foundational knowledge, such as how AI can be used by legal professionals and ethical considerations for AI. Shayesteh said the course is platform-neutral, meaning it is not tied to any specific generative AI tool.

In the next hour of training, users were given hands-on assignments with real-world legal tasks, which included prompt engineering. Shayesteh said the training focused on how to interact with AI to limit potential hallucinations, a phenomenon that occurs when AI tools produce inaccurate results.

Bennett said this training exposed some members of the staff to prompt engineering for the first time.

The training finished with a one-hour live virtual group review session with a legal practitioner.

Workday rolled out the online training from May to December 2024, and it claims that 94% of its global legal department completed the training.

After the training, the legal department saw a 15% jump in the number of legal employees who could identify and apply advanced prompting skills. An internal survey also showed an increase in the comfort level of using generative AI tools.

As a result of the training, Bennett claims the legal department transformed from lagging to leading in AI adoption across the company.

One way the legal department drove wider adoption is by identifying members of its team who actively took the AI course. Those individuals, called "AI champions," promoted the training and the use of Gemini across the department. Monthly legal generative AI workshops were also held to encourage the use of the tool.

In the months since the training, Workday's personnel underwent some changes. In February, the company announced a plan to lay off 8.5% of its current workforce as it sought to push AI use across the organization.

While Bennett declined to comment on the impact of the layoffs in the legal department, he did say it's hard to measure if AI can fill in the gaps, because humans are still required to complete complex legal tasks.

With its expanded use of AI, the legal department has transformed its reputation into that of a reliable source of innovation within the company, according to Bennett. The team now uses Gemini to review contracts and engagement letters for law firms.

Notably, before Workday **acquired** the contract software platform Evisort in 2024, the legal team had already been using it for about two years — the first group in the company to do so.

Bennett said other departments used to see the legal team as "a speed bump" and "the group of no," but now the perception of the legal department around the company has changed.

"We started seeing us as leading the pack in innovation," Bennett said.

AltaClaro provides training to several legal departments. Shayesteh said that some legal departments are just dabbling and "kicking the tires" with the training and others, such as Workday, are taking the training very seriously.

"Currently, Workday is probably an anomaly in the legal department space in seeing this opportunity, but they're demonstrating that if you take this level of seriousness with the training, you can cross the chasm and go beyond early adopters," Shayesteh said. "This is a good role model for other legal departments to follow."

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.