New Year's Resolutions for Lawyers: 13 Realistic Goals for 2026

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As the year comes to a close, most people start thinking about their New Year's resolutions. But did you know that about 91% of people fail to keep their New Year's resolutions? New Year's resolutions for lawyers can be even more challenging—balancing legal career-related goals and personal ones is no easy feat.

Still, having a few realistic goals can make a big personal and professional difference for lawyers. And New Year's resolutions for lawyers are more likely to succeed if legal professionals take care to set realistic and achievable goals.

Below are 12 realistic New Year's resolutions for lawyers (that's one a month!) to help you stay on top of your game.

1. Get organized

Start your new year off with a clean slate by tying up loose ends and getting organized. Review your open matters (you can do this easily in Clio with a Matter report) and ask yourself these questions:

- Should any open matters be closed? If yes, close them.
- Are any cases stalled? Make a plan to address the issue, or consider referring the case to another lawyer.
- Do any matters have outstanding balances? If so, start sending out invoices. Also, review our guide to year-end law firm financials to double check that all of your firm's finances are in order for the new year.

2. Take your AI use to the next level

With 79% of legal professionals using AI in their law firms, according to the most recent *Legal Trends Report*, you're likely already using AI in some form in your firm. But are you truly getting the most out of it? Using cloud-based, legal AI practice management software that helps you run your firm—like Clio Manage with Manage AI—turns your management system from a system of record to a system of action. It helps extract deadlines from court documents, generate professional draft invoices automatically, and more.

Meanwhile, Clio Work connects your matters with the world's largest global law library to deliver cited research, analysis, and case strategy you can trust.

Put it all together, and you're leveling up your AI use across the entire life cycle of a matter. Book a demo to see how Manage AI and Clio Work for yourself today!

3. Take a client-centered approach to practicing law

In the digital age, law firms that focus on their clients first are better positioned to succeed. Clear communication, thoughtful processes, and consideration for the entire client journey makes for happier clients, more referrals, and more pleasant client interactions overall.

Investing in legal practice management (LPM) technology, especially tools with integrated AI, can also help you manage your matters more efficiently and improve client relations.

Learn more about running a client-centered law firm.

4. Start accepting online payments

If your law firm doesn't accept online payments yet, make this one of your top New Year's resolutions for lawyers. If you're still not sure about accepting online payments at your law firm, consider this: According to the most recent *Legal Trends Report*, 70% of growing law firms use electronic payments, allowing them to collect money quickly from clients, improving cash flow. Clients can pay online from a bill, email, text message or by visiting the firm's website, or they can also pay in person with tap to pay.

To get you started, here's some information on choosing a credit card processor for your law firm.

5. Explore alternative payment options

When it comes to electronic payments for law firms, there are plenty of options to help ensure your firm gets paid on time and your finances keep running smoothly. For example, you can implement payment plans to make services more affordable and attract a larger client base. Even better, Clio's Pay Later feature, lets you get paid in full, upfront—so you can offer flexible payment options with none of the hassle.

6. Network more

Even in the digital age, referrals are an excellent source of potential clients for today's law firms. In other words, in addition to providing an excellent client-centered experience, you need to go to more networking events, both to meet other lawyers and to meet new clients.

These events don't have to be boring—legal technology conferences, legal meetups and events (virtual and in-person), social gatherings, and local industry meet-ups can be valuable (and fun) to attend.

To connect with potential clients, consider networking events outside of your industry. Give talks at non-legal-specific events, get involved in your local community, and remember to mention to new connections that you're a lawyer available for hire.

Also, don't limit your networking to in-person events. Network online by joining professional groups on LinkedIn. The Law Community, by Clio, is also a great way to connect with other lawyers and legal professionals online.

Get more top attorney networking tips.

7. Bring more of your legal practice on the go

You already check your email on your phone, so why not try managing more of your practice while mobile? Turn bus rides and dentist office waiting times into pockets of productivity: There are plenty of apps for lawyers to help you run a mobile practice with ease.

8. Revamp your online reputation

In the age of AI, your online reputation is key. No matter how your clients hear about you, they'll likely look you up before they sign on the dotted line. And what they learn about you from AI tools like Gemini or ChatGPT will likely depend on online reviews as well as what's on your website. .

How do you create a strong online reputation? It starts with a structured online marketing plan. Invest some time in creating and implementing a solid marketing strategy, and start the year off by reviewing your website, Google Business Profile listing, blog, LinkedIn profile, and other social media properties to ensure you're keeping up with the latest best practices.

Don't have your own website? Clio Grow users can make their own law firm website in minutes.

9. Become more data-driven

How well is your law firm really doing? To properly measure your success, you need to take a data-driven approach: Define key metrics and track them.

We're not just talking about keeping tabs on the number of new clients you bring on each month either—look at where your clients are coming from, and track the return on investment of your marketing efforts.

More importantly, keep an eye on how efficiently your firm is operating. For example, look at how many billable hours you're logging as a percentage of your total workday. You'll be able to do this easily with advanced reporting in Clio.

To track this information in Clio, create a matter for non-billable/administrative work, and use a timer to keep track of time spent on these tasks, just as you would any other billable matter. Then, compare time spent on this matter with time spent on all other matters combined, and—voilà—there's your utilization rate.

Compare your utilization rate to the average (which is just 38%, according to our latest *Legal Trends Report*) and look for ways to cut down on non-billable work, or consider alternatives to the billable hour, such as flat fees or contingency agreements.

10. Prepare for client intake before you meet your next client

If you have yet to set up an automated client intake system, 2026 is the year to do it.

A streamlined client intake system will save you time and eliminate the added potential for human error that comes with manual data entry. And, with Clio Grow's upcoming AI functionality you'll be able to speed up and automate conflict checks, client screening and scoring (based on your specific parameters), send emails, and enjoy automated follow-up emails nudging clients to complete necessary forms. It's client intake that moves itself forward in the background, so you have more time to focus on tasks that only you can do.

To get you started, here's a guide to client intake for law firms. In addition, Clio Grow will give your firm the platform it needs to build a seamless client intake process.

11. Take better care of yourself

Lawyering is inherently stressful, but if there's one thing that's more important than your career, it's your health. Self-care should be on every lawyer's New Year's resolutions list.

If you've been working long hours and neglecting self-care, use the new year as a turning point. Eat well, get enough sleep, and take care of yourself. You may not be able to avoid stress as a lawyer, but you can definitely find ways to manage stress more effectively. For example, try meditating, even for just a few minutes each day. This ritual will help clear your mind and set yourself up for success at work.

12. Attend events to invest in your firm's future

Attending legal industry events will help generate ideas to improve your practice and make your business more profitable. For example, ClioCon features talks on the latest industry trends, best practices, and more to keep your firm on the cutting edge.

Case in point: Clio customer Chris Trebatoski has used his learnings from the conference to double his firm's revenue over the years.

Get your passes for ClioCon 2026.

And if you're not sure which event to go to next year, consult this list of the best legal conferences for lawyers to attend.

13. Try a new tool to help your practice succeed

We'd be remiss not to include new tech tools among our list of New Year's resolutions for lawyers. If you're already using practice management software and other tech tools to make day-to-day tasks at your law firm run more smoothly, you know how much of a difference tech can make. Practice management software also helps firms bill, create documents, and track time much more efficiently!

And of course, in 2026, AI usage will be critical to your firm's success. Tools like Manage AI and Clio Work will help you leverage AI to automate business operations and get the most out of your firm's work day.

Beyond that, client intake software, document automation software, and payment solutions can all help supercharge your firm for 2026 as well.

Finally, why not experiment with a new tool to address specific needs and workflows in your practice in 2026? With over 250 apps and services in the Clio App Directory, there's plenty to explore and choose from.

That's it for now! We challenge you to try at least one of these New Year's resolutions to better your firm.

About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.