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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

A&O Shearman Harvey and ContractMatrix rollout

IMPLEMENTED 2022–2026 · PROFESSIONAL SERVICES · UK · BAND D · CLAIMED ONLY

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A global law firm trialled Harvey from November 2022, built the ContractMatrix contract tool with Microsoft and Harvey, and now sells AI tools to clients. The firm describes a step change in how legal work is delivered. The results reported are the firm's own.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI: the Harvey legal assistant, the ContractMatrix contract tool built with Microsoft and Harvey, and agentic tools built with Harvey.

Implemented: 2022–2026. Grade: band D, Task support, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: By the firm's account, 96% of partners and 93% of lawyers used its AI tools in September 2026, with over 558,000 activities on ContractMatrix and Harvey; no independent evaluation of results found

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

A&O Shearman. Global law firm formed in 2024 by the merger of Allen & Overy and Shearman & Sterling; the Harvey trial began at Allen & Overy before the merger. Revenue of USD3.7 billion in its latest financial year, per Non-Billable. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 3. Customers and proposition, 5. People and skills.

Business challenge

The challenge. By Microsoft UK's account, the firm wanted to use generative AI to streamline contract management, a large part of its business, while managing the risks.

How it was addressed. Allen & Overy trialled Harvey from November 2022 and announced it as part of its global practice in February 2023. In 2023 the firm built ContractMatrix with Microsoft and Harvey, a contract tool for in-house counsel that is also sold to clients. In April 2025 it announced agentic tools with Harvey for antitrust filing analysis, cybersecurity, fund formation and loan review, to be sold to clients and other law firms with a revenue share. In November 2026 it committed USD1.1 billion over five years, mostly through each practice spending at least 3% of its time building specialist AI tools. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Who implemented it

Harvey (Software vendor): Supplied the Harvey legal AI platform and co-built ContractMatrix and agentic tools with the firm..
Microsoft (Model or cloud provider): Co-built ContractMatrix, which is hosted on its Azure cloud platform and sold through Azure Marketplace and AppSource..
In-house (In-house): Markets Innovation Group (A&O Shearman): The firm's team of lawyers, developers and innovation specialists that ran the trial and builds the tools..
Harvey is described in the firm's 2023 release as built on a version of OpenAI's models.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T1 Chat assistants, T7 AI agents. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Harvey, Microsoft, OpenAI, Harvey, ContractMatrix, ContractMatrix Vantage.

Where it was built in: Harvey is used by lawyers for drafting and research; ContractMatrix is a contract drafting, review and negotiation tool hosted on Microsoft Azure; from 2025 the firm and Harvey build agentic tools for antitrust filing analysis, cybersecurity, fund formation and loan review.

What changed

By the firm's account, 96% of partners and 93% of lawyers used its AI tools in September 2026, and it now delivers ContractMatrix to clients across several jurisdictions, often under new pricing structures. Effects on cost, margin, headcount or revenue: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

USD1.1 billion over five years announced in November 2026, mostly lawyer time; the firm did not tell Non-Billable how much will be cash. Cost of the Harvey and ContractMatrix rollout so far: Not reported.

What it saved

About seven hours per average contract review, an efficiency gain of about 30%, in Microsoft UK's 2024 story. The firm said in 2025 that its agents do in minutes what previously took several hours. Firm-wide savings in money or hours: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

By the firm's account, a qualified lawyer always takes responsibility for the advice, AI governance committees oversee deployment, and there is always an expert in the loop. These are the firm's statements; no independent check was found.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
By the firm's account, a qualified lawyer always takes responsibility for the advice; Non-Billable names the partner who leads the Markets Innovation Group as the firm's global head of AI. [1] [4]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Microsoft UK reports operational restrictions built into ContractMatrix for highly sensitive fields, and governance on intellectual property and data privacy, by the firm's account. [3]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
The firm's 2023 release says output needs careful review by a lawyer; Microsoft UK quotes the firm saying there is always an expert in the loop. [2] [3]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
The firm says its AI governance committees oversee deployment across practices, sectors and offices, and ContractMatrix output is cross-verified against reference libraries. [1] [3]

A4 · Vendor AI · Claimed
The firm chose to host ContractMatrix on Microsoft Azure, citing secure hosting of data; Harvey is a third-party platform. Contract terms and vendor checks: Not reported. [3]

A5 · Agent controls · Claimed
The firm says its agentic tools combine intermediate outputs into work products with transparency and oversight; specific agent limits are not reported. [5]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Claimed
The firm says it works with regulators and has taken part in UK, US and EU efforts, including the UK's AI Growth Lab for legal services. [1]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– By the firm's account, 96% of partners and 93% of lawyers used its AI tools in September 2026, with over 558,000 activities on ContractMatrix and Harvey.

– The firm says client uptake of ContractMatrix products rose ninefold in 12 months and that in one client's blind evaluation it scored 8.5% higher than the next closest rival; the client is not named.

– Microsoft UK reports about seven hours saved per average contract review.

DID NOT

– No setback or withdrawal is reported in the sources opened.

UNPROVEN

– Effects on cost, margin, pricing, staffing and revenue: Not reported; the firm says success will be measured by what it delivers for clients but publishes usage and one client evaluation.

– How much of the USD1.1 billion is cash rather than lawyer time: the firm did not respond to Non-Billable on this.

– Whether the agentic tools change core billable work: Artificial Lawyer wrote in April 2025 that the move was probably not a game changer yet and was not intended to disrupt the firm's core work.

– Accuracy and error rates of the tools: Not reported.

Nov 2022 Markets Innovation Group begins a beta trial of Harvey [2]

Feb 2023 Firm announces Harvey integrated into its global practice, for more than 3,500 lawyers across 43 offices [2]

2023 Firm builds ContractMatrix, a contract tool for in-house counsel, with Microsoft and Harvey [1]

May 2024 Microsoft UK reports 1,900 lawyers using ContractMatrix and about seven hours saved per average contract review [3]

Apr 2025 Firm announces agentic tools with Harvey, to be sold to clients and other law firms with a revenue share [5]

Sept 2026 Firm reports 96% of partners and 93% of lawyers using its AI tools [1]

Nov 2026 Firm announces USD1.1 billion over five years, with each practice investing at least 3% of its time in AI tools [1]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: A. Grade: D, Task support. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Task support.

Task support (Level 1, band D) on the evidence, claimed as transformation (band A). Wide use and a client product line are reported, and the time saving comes from the firm and Microsoft. No source reports a change in cost base or pricing results, and none checks the figures independently.

Graded D, claimed A. The firm describes a step change in how legal work is designed and delivered. The sources show wide use, a client product line and one time-saving figure from 2024 that comes from the firm. No source reports changes in cost, revenue, pricing or staffing, and none checks the results independently. The transformation is claimed and unproven.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The firm treats AI as a build-and-sell capability as well as a productivity tool: lawyers' time goes into specialist tools, and the tools are sold to clients. That is a bigger claim than task support, and the sources do not yet show it in the numbers. For a large professional services firm the transferable points are the named owner team, the lawyer-accountable control model and measuring usage against outcomes. The outcomes are the part still to be shown.

1. Report outcomes such as cost, cycle time and client results alongside usage figures.
2. Keep a named lawyer accountable for every output, whatever the tool produced.
3. Treat vendor and firm figures as unconfirmed until a client or independent party checks them.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Mostly self-reported: the firm's releases and a Microsoft customer story, repeated by legal trade press. One client evaluation is reported through the firm.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: firm announcements and vendor story, relayed by trade press; no independent evaluation.

Sources disagree. The firm's November 2026 release dates its enterprise-wide generative AI deployment to 2022. Its February 2023 release describes a beta trial from November 2022 and announces the integration of Harvey into its global practice in February 2023. The 3,500 lawyers figure (Harvey, 2023) and the 1,900 lawyers figure (ContractMatrix, 2024) refer to different tools.

Status. Ongoing: November 2026 announcement of a five-year programme.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/ao-shearman-harvey-contractmatrix

[1] A&O Shearman: A&O Shearman accelerates AI strategy with a USD1.1 billion lawyer-led commitment (5 November 2026)
https://www.aoshearman.com/en/news/ao-shearman-accelerates-ai-strategy-with-a-usd11bn-lawyer-led-commitment

[2] A&O Shearman: A&O announces exclusive launch partnership with Harvey (15 February 2023)
https://www.aoshearman.com/en/news/ao-announces-exclusive-launch-partnership-with-harvey

[3] Microsoft UK Stories: How A&O Shearman is reshaping law with trailblazing AI tool (28 May 2024)
https://ukstories.microsoft.com/?p=79464

[4] Non-Billable: A&O Shearman ramps up AI push with five-year plan it says is worth $1.1bn (5 November 2026)
https://www.nonbillable.co.uk/news/ao-shearman-ramps-up-ai-push-five-year-plan

[5] Artificial Lawyer: A&O Shearman To Profit Share With Harvey on Agentic Tools (7 April 2025)
https://www.artificiallawyer.com/2025/04/07/ao-shearman-to-profit-share-with-harvey-on-agentic-tools/

A&O Shearman website: https://www.aoshearman.com

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