



LEGAL PROFESSION SYMPOSIUM 2025

Focus Group Discussions Report on Culture, Business of Law, and Technology

30 May 2025

Contents

-	Contents	2
1	Introduction	3
2	Objectives	4
3	Profile of Participants	4
4	Scope of Discussions	5
5	Summary of FGD concerning Culture	7
6	Summary of FGD addressing the Business of Law	8
7	Summary of FGD discussing Technology	11
8	Takeaways of FGD concerning Culture	15
9	Takeaways of FGD addressing the Business of Law	18
10	Takeaways of FGD discussing Technology	20
11	Conclusion	21
Annex A	Detailed Summary of FGD concerning Culture including Mindful Business Charter and Mindful Business Singapore	22
Annex B	Detailed Summary of FGD addressing the Business of Law including Notes	37
Annex C	Tabular Summary of FGD discussing Technology	50

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In April and May 2025, the Singapore Academy of Law (“SAL”) convened three Focus Group Discussions (“FGD”) to collect insights that could contribute to the deliberations at the Legal Profession Symposium 2025 with the intent to focus on:
- a. Sustainability and quality of the future of the legal profession taking into consideration both existing and new challenges, e.g., AI¹, *et al.*,
 - b. Addressing the “push” factors by young lawyers, i.e. training/mentorship, workplace culture, etc., and
 - c. Supporting future leaders’ needs in their leadership roles.
- 1.2. The FGDs were organized into three broad categories: culture, the business of law, and technology with young lawyers (both practicing lawyers and in-house counsels) as the target audience. These discussions took place at SAL on the following dates: 23 April 2025, for culture; 7 May 2025, for the business of law; and 8 May 2025, for technology.
- 1.3. The FGDs were facilitated by members of SAL’s Professional Affairs Committee (“PAC”). The FGD concerning culture was led by Messrs Hui Choon Kuen², Teo Weng Kie³, and Madam Diana Ngiam⁴. The FGD on the business of law was facilitated by Messrs Gregory Tan⁵ and Kenneth Lim⁶. And the FGD discussing technology was moderated by Messrs Raeza Ibrahim⁷ and Hui Choon Kuen. Further, Beelee Seah⁸, Rodney Yap⁹, and Ng Jern-Fei KC¹⁰ supported as

¹ “AI” is the acronym for Artificial Intelligence.

² Hui Choon Kuen is 3 Chief Prosecutor of the Crime Division in the Attorney-General’s Chambers.

³ Teo Weng Kie is the Managing Director of Securus Legal LLC.

⁴ Diana Ngiam is 2 Director (Legal) of the Legal Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

⁵ Gregory Tan is the Joint Head, Legal & Regulatory at Temasek.

⁶ Kenneth Lim is a Partner at Allen & Gledhill LLP.

⁷ Raeza Ibrahim is a Director, Litigation & Dispute Resolution at TSMP Law Corporation.

⁸ Beelee Seah is a Partner at Norton Rose Fulbright (Asia) LLP.

⁹ Rodney Yap is a Manager, NewLaw at PricewaterhouseCoopers Singapore Pte Ltd.

resource persons in FGDs for culture, the business or law, and technology respectively.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The FGDs were to set the tone and distil prompts that could be used to kick-start the breakout discussions at the Legal Profession Symposium 2025 (“LPS25”).
- 2.2. In addition to gathering insights into the motivations, values, and aspirations from young lawyers, the FGDs also provided insights from diverse perspectives to:
 - a. Recognize the complexity of operating and collaborating in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (“VUCA”) world,
 - b. Find ways to bridge generational divides by harmonizing innovation with tradition, and
 - c. Acknowledge the challenges that may continue to persist.

3. Profile of Participants

- 3.1. The 16 participants at the FGD concerning culture were from the legal and corporate sectors, ranging from a medium-sized law firm to a legal department of a government ministry. All participants were under 40 years of age.
- 3.2. The 20 participants at the FGD addressing the business of law were divided into two groups: disputes, and non-disputes. There was approximately half of the 20 participants in each group. Most of the participants at this FGD held the titles of “managing partner/director”, “director/associate director”, “partner”, and

¹⁰ Ng Jern-Fei KC is an Advocate and Arbitrator at Duxton Hill Chambers.

“counsel/general counsel”.

- 3.3. The 14 participants at the FGD discussing technology were from the legal and corporate sectors, ranging from small- and medium-sized law firms to an MNC¹¹.

4. Scope Of Discussion

- 4.1. In general, each FGD commenced with a primer, followed by a list of questions to seek input from the participants through discussion, and any exploration of possible solutions, where applicable.
- 4.2. The context of the FGDs was a VUCA world beset with many challenges, not the least of which is the transformation of work processes with the rising integration of AI and a workforce with a different set of priorities, needs, and wants from the younger generation. In this context, each FGD operated on any impact and challenges to, among other things:
- a. Harmonize innovation with tradition for the alignment of divergent workplace values and multi-generational collaboration,
 - b. Future-proof legal careers through for e.g., re-skilling, and
 - c. Build corporate resilience by redesigning operations, adopting different business models, and/or expanding horizons.

¹¹ “MNC” is the acronym for multi-national corporation.

- 4.3. The scope of the FGD concerning culture included the topics of:
- a. Mindfulness in the workplace,
 - b. Bullying and harassment,
 - c. Diversity and inclusion,
 - d. Sustainability, and
 - e. Collaborative work culture.
- 4.4. The scope of the FGD addressing the business of law focused on the overarching question of the extent to which Singapore (“SG”) law firms have the capability and capacity to engage in more regional/cross-border work and are thus ahead or behind the competitiveness curve vis-à-vis international law firms. The overarching question was approached using a SWOT¹² analysis and analyzed in the context of large law firms as opposed to small- and medium-sized law firms.
- 4.5. The scope of the FGD discussing technology was:
- a. Day-to-day inefficiencies and efficiencies,
 - b. Evolution of workflows, and
 - c. Impediments to the adoption of technology.

¹² “SWOT” is the acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

5. Summary of FGD concerning Culture

- 5.1. On mindfulness in the workplace, there was a call for organizational mindfulness to foster a culture of awareness, respect, and sustainability, and encouraging open conversations about workload and expectations. This call aimed to enhance work-life balance and promote a reasonable degree of autonomy among co-workers in the workplace.
- 5.2. On bullying and harassment, the discussion highlighted the need to define bullying clearly and address cultural normalization of harsh behaviors. Creating open cultures and neutral channels for complaints were seen as essential for fostering a supportive work environment.
- 5.3. On diversity and inclusion, efforts to broaden the definition of diversity and promote meritocracy are underway, addressing socio-economic stratification and gender inequality in the legal profession. Among the recommendations were providing more scholarships and revising hiring criteria that values resilience and real-world experience.
- 5.4. On sustainability, the motivations for pursuing a legal career vary for everyone, with some driven by financial incentives and others by a desire to advocate for justice. The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted traditional training regimes, leading to, among other things, increased isolation among young lawyers.
- 5.5. On collaborative work culture, bridging generational gaps and adapting to technological advancements are ongoing challenges. A collaborative culture emphasizing mentorship could facilitate learning and growth for young lawyers, enhancing their professional development.

6. Summary of FGD addressing the Business of Law

- 6.1. The key themes that emerged were:
- a. Transformation of SG lawyers from SG-centric legal domain experts into legal solution providers for the region (i.e., SEA¹³)
 - b. Training and development for young lawyers
 - c. Strategies to retain talented junior and mid-career SG lawyers, and to attract talented mid-career offshore lawyers back to SG
 - d. Promotion of a central narrative as to why SG is a preferred destination to conduct business in the region and championing SG law as the top choice of governing law in the region
 - e. Significance of LegalTech¹⁴, and AI
- 6.2. First, the transformation of SG lawyers into legal solution providers for the SEA region, and the training and development for young lawyers are strengths to be developed.
- a. SG law is highly regarded and valued by stakeholders and clients in the region, and SG lawyers have also established themselves as domain masters of SG law with strong technical expertise.
 - b. To broaden the pie, SG lawyers must undertake a mindset transformation, be less risk adverse, and role-shift to become legal solution providers, especially for the region (e.g., being the legal counsel who manages risks and works with non-SG counsels to provide legal structuring and solutions to clients,

¹³ "SEA" is the acronym for South-East Asia.

¹⁴ "LegalTech" is the acronym for legal technology.

including venturing into emerging areas such as ESG¹⁵ and AI.

- c. Offer training opportunities (in Part B¹⁶ or even sooner) for young lawyers to develop requested soft skills (e.g., learning how to pitch capabilities or sell the role of a legal solutions provider along with business acumen marketing/business development skills and presentation skills).
- d. Senior lawyers must be encouraged to equip, enable, and empower junior lawyers by giving them opportunities, opening doors and settling them into client relationships/networks.

6.3. Secondly, the retention of junior and mid-career SG lawyers and the attraction of talented mid-career offshore lawyers back to SG are weaknesses that need to be addressed:

- a. It is imperative to examine and understand the concerns of junior and mid-career SG lawyers with a view to attracting and retaining legal talent.
- b. To attract experienced foreign-qualified lawyers back to Singapore, one approach is to simplify legal regulations that currently hinder their return. Such regulations could consider the career stage of these lawyers, such as those in their 3rd, 5th, or 8th year of practice. Additionally, it is important to recognize that these lawyers may have motivations beyond just career advancement for wanting to return to Singapore.

¹⁵ “ESG” is the acronym for Environmental, Social, and Governance, and is a framework used to assess a company’s impact on society and the environment.

¹⁶ Part B is a mandatory preparatory course leading to Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations.

- c. There was consensus that if there are good career opportunities, that would naturally attract high calibre lawyers to work in SG.
 - d. It is important to review and improve processes for obtaining ground-up feedback from lawyers at an early stage when formulating policies which affect the profession.
- 6.4. Thirdly, the promotion of a central narrative as to why SG is a preferred destination to conduct business in the region and championing SG law as the top choice of governing law in the region as well as the development of LegalTech and AI presents significant opportunities.
- a. Foreign lawyers in the region who have been offered opportunities to be seconded to SG law firms are more likely to “evangelise” and champion SG law when they return to their respective countries.
 - b. It may be rational to consolidate different voices into a central platform or agency to promote the choice of SG law when contracting, and of SG as an international legal hub/destination for international business and dispute resolution. With reference to the United Kingdom’s (“UK”) Ministry of Justice’s GREAT Legal Services campaign which raises the profile of UK legal professionals and promotes their growth in high potential markets besides promoting the UK as a centre of legal services to the global market, SG’s EDB¹⁷ or like government body could take the lead to drive a similar campaign.

¹⁷ “EDB” is the acronym for Singapore’s Economic Development Board.

- c. AI and its potential as a transformative tool for legal practice can allow small- and medium-sized law firms to punch above their weight competitively and improve operational efficiency. While there are limitations created by the need for confidentiality and practical cost concerns, these could be overcome by collective purchasing arrangements to reduce costs, and/or develop more affordable local AI solutions.
- d. There is scope for the drafting of a model AI governance framework for SG law firms to adopt as a baseline requirement, leaving law firms to adapt it according to their respective practices and ethical obligations.

7. Summary of FGD discussing Technology

- 7.1. On the issue of day-to-day inefficiencies and efficiencies, participants identified problems with existing profession-wide technologies. In particular, the Court registry's online platform was observed to be unreliable and inconsistent, leading to much loss of time and frustration. For example, though many e-forms exist on platforms, their output does not always conform with the Court's own requirements based on Practice Directions or other regulations. Additionally, systems are isolated, resulting in administrative delay in the transfer of cases, particularly between superior and subordinate courts.
- 7.2. Suggested solutions to the above problem included ensuring that e-forms and filing processes completely matched Court requirements, and that even if there are different front-facing interfaces, the back-end of all Courts/Tribunals could be the same.

- 7.3. Separately, simple innovations were suggested such as better integration between Court systems and personal calendaring/task management.
- 7.4. With the moderators' prompting, participants also considered the access to justice ("A2J") perspective, particularly for litigants-in-person ("LIP"), observing that Court technologies (such as e-Litigation) were either completely unavailable to LIPs, or the interfaces were (still) too complicated such that LIPs continue to turn to lawyers for assistance. Solutions suggested included that all court systems be opened to LIPs, different interfaces notwithstanding, and that an AI chat bot could be implemented in every system to assist both LIPs and lawyers.
- 7.5. An important segue in this discussion was that problems currently faced in efficiencies may warrant solutioning by re-looking at Court processes, procedures, and rules.
- 7.6. On the evolution of workflow, the discussions went beyond the topic of workflow *per se* to cover collateral matters such as A2J and, trust and use of AI in the legal practice.
- 7.7. Participants were equally split on whether they had a high-, mid- or low-level of trust in the quality of output of current iterations of GenAI¹⁸ legal technologies.
 - a. Participants with high comfort levels were utilizing a variety of tools in isolated ways (including generic GenAI tools, that were not legal profession specific). A big proponent were those in the *pro bono* sector or working on smaller value cases, where time efficiencies were a priority.

¹⁸ "GenAI" is the acronym for Generative Artificial Intelligence.

- b. Participants with mid-comfort levels were content to use more advanced legal profession specific tools but were wary of the slant or blind spots of legal output based on the training of the underlying LLM¹⁹s. The preference was to use GenAI in more “plain vanilla” engagements.
 - c. Participants with low comfort levels had a variety of concerns ranging from accuracy (e.g., the risk of hallucination²⁰), client privacy (i.e., data secrecy and professional obligation), and whether efficiency was genuine given the need for repeated prompting before “usable” output is generated.
- 7.8. When asked what was needed for lawyers to be more trusting of GenAI technologies, varied solutions and perspectives emerged:
- a. Hallucination risks could be managed in multiple ways. First, by improving prompt engineering. Second, by using LLMs with defined content universes which are reliable. Third, by applying further technologies to “check” output. Importantly, there is a need to segregate between “false positive” hallucinations (*i.e.*, made up scenarios) and “false negative” hallucinations (*i.e.*, missing out current portions) within the different tasks of legal analysis (based on law) and evidence analysis (based on party documents). Each required different solutions.

¹⁹ “LLM” is the acronym for large language model.

²⁰ In AI, hallucinations occur when models generate incorrect or misleading information presented as fact.

- b. Most participants acknowledged that contrary to marketing positioning, the state of technology remained in its infancy in terms of quality of output. Accepting this, the best current use cases appear to be in specific instances, by replacing an existing task within current workflows for time efficiency or adopting GenAI to do tasks that lawyers cannot do entirely (such as generating more content for marketing).

- c. The technology can improve over time with investment by lawyers (e.g., in the training of LLMs) but this raises competing economic issues. GenAI which addresses all the shortcomings identified should have the effect of transforming business models such that low-value work within law practices is reduced. This, in effect, could lead to a reduction of jobs for junior lawyers. For present purposes, while the technology remains unsuitable, law firms would have to make tough decisions on whether to pay high costs for in-development technology when the economics on such spending is not yet clear.

- d. On a macro perspective, there was sharing that American, Australian and particularly, PRC²¹ law practices have already embraced existing technology. The lack of adoption, with attendant efficiency, risk law firms with global outlooks being less competitive.

²¹ PRC is the acronym for the People's Republic of China.

- 7.9. On the practical problems to wider-scale LegalTech adoption, participants largely agreed that it was a mix of cultural resistance (in terms of being risk-adverse) and economics. The question was, “Why train something that will replace me?”.
- 7.10. It was acknowledged that some of the risk concerns could be mitigated by recognition from key stakeholders (such as the Courts and Professional Insurers) of what would encompass acceptable standards of GenAI use. Present risks such as data privacy concerns have been met only with reminders that lawyers (still) remain ultimately responsible. One possibility is that stakeholders could agree that a law practice would be deemed to have satisfactorily taken all reasonable steps to maintain data privacy and would not *prima facie* be held liable if they use LegalTech solutions that meet certain objective standards.

8. Takeaways of FGD concerning Culture

- 8.1. The legal profession may suffer from a lack of diversity, with many lawyers coming from higher SES²² backgrounds. To effectively serve clients, it is essential for lawyers to possess a range of experiences, which can only be achieved through diverse backgrounds.
- 8.2. While there seemed to be no inter-generational conflicts based on the experiences of the participants, who felt they could learn from seasoned older lawyers, this may be attributed to the fact that many of the participants were supervisors in their mid- to late- 30s, allowing them to value the wisdom and experience of the seasoned older lawyers. If there had been more participants

²² “SES” is the acronym for socio-economic status.

in their mid- to late- 20s, there might have been increased frustration in collaborating with older lawyers. As such, the FGD responses regarding inter-generational conflicts may be of limited use. Instead, it could perhaps be more useful to “take the temperature” of the older lawyers.

- 8.3. Bullying in the legal profession encompasses a range of behaviors, from overt aggression to subtle exclusion, affecting various groups such as junior lawyers and women with caregiving responsibilities. It is essential to recognize the impact of generational differences, distinguish between the intent behind actions and their actual effects, and provide clearer industry guidelines on what constitutes bullying or harassment.
- 8.4. Reporting harassment and bullying in the workplace often occurs through internal HR²³ channels, which may prioritize the organization's interests over those of the complainants. This practice, in addition to the lack of clarity of what constitutes bullying or harassment in the legal industry, can leave individuals feeling vulnerable, and disillusioned, and may lead those individuals to choose not to trigger the process of a complaint out of caution. Additionally, the competitive and close-knit nature of the legal profession can further inhibit open discussions about these issues, making it essential to establish safe and neutral reporting mechanisms.
- 8.5. AI-supported reporting may offer a neutral alternative to human judgment, providing an anonymous platform for individuals to ascertain if an incident qualifies as bullying or harassment before seeking further guidance or the next course of action.

²³ “HR” is the acronym for human resources.

- 8.6. The Mindful Business Charter²⁴ (“MBC”) principles, emphasizing empathetic communication, respect for rest periods, and mindful delegation, are increasingly recognized as essential for the sustainability of legal institutions, particularly those facing high attrition rates. Discussions highlighted the importance of intentionality, for e.g., providing context when assigning tasks and the value of granting young lawyers the autonomy to manage their own deadlines.
- 8.7. On the matter of work-life balance, many advocated for a hybrid²⁵ work model which allows for more personal time by reducing commute hours, that can be redirected towards family and personal activities. This raises questions about whether the older generation values work-life balance as much as the younger generation and the potential consequences of their beliefs on this issue.
- 8.8. The attrition rate among young lawyers in the legal profession is not universally perceived as problematic. Those who did not view it as a concern emphasized individual autonomy in career choices. Conversely, those who viewed the attrition rate as a concern cited factors such as job dissatisfaction, a lack of like-minded peers, more lucrative opportunities outside the field, and increased options for recent graduates as reasons. The question is whether there is a need for those who remain in the industry to reach out to those who left so that there is a better understanding of what causes lawyers to leave.

²⁴ Mindful Business Charter <<https://www.mindfulbusinesscharter.com/the-charter>> (accessed 26 May 2025) and detailed in Annex A.

²⁵ A hybrid work model is one that allows working from home or remote working on a few days in a work week.

9. Takeaways of FGD addressing the Business of Law

- 9.1. SG law is held in high regard by regional stakeholders and SG lawyers are recognized for their expertise. To expand their influence, SG lawyers must shift their mindset, embracing the role of regional legal solution providers rather than remaining solely as SG law specialists. This transformation involves collaborating with non-SG counsels and venturing into emerging fields like ESG and AI, thereby enhancing their service offerings and addressing SEA's legal needs.

- 9.2. In relation to the training and development for young lawyers to be regional legal solution providers, it is essential to implement training programs that enhance young lawyers' soft skills which include pitching capabilities and business acumen. Additionally, senior lawyers could actively support junior colleagues by providing opportunities sooner, facilitating connections, and integrating them into client networks. This collaborative approach will foster a more dynamic legal landscape in SG.

- 9.3. The rise of AI presents both challenges and opportunities for young lawyers, who now face a different training landscape compared to their older counterparts. They will not have the same "training runway" as their senior counterparts since AI is expected to quickly take away the more basic and more menial legal tasks. To effectively prepare junior lawyers for making critical judgment calls as effectively as their older counterparts, it is essential to enhance legal education (including how to effectively harness AI in legal work) from the law schools through to the preparatory courses for the Bar examination with more practical, hands-on relevant experiences that can be directly applied to practice (and students who do not wish to join practice

can for e.g., opt out). This may involve revising law school curricula and training programs to better equip future lawyers for the evolving legal environment and is a unique opportunity for SG to differentiate itself from other jurisdictions on how it teaches, trains, and prepares its lawyers for practice to maintain its legal hub status in the region.

- 9.4. To retain talented junior and mid-career SG lawyers and attract mid-career offshore lawyers to or back to SG, the following strategies could be considered:
- a. Actively address the concerns of junior and mid-career lawyers to enhance talent retention, in particular having more transparency on lawyers' compensation and career expectations in progression from junior lawyers to partners, and communicating the foregoing as early as before entry into law school to avoid a mismatch of expectations,
 - b. Enhance feedback mechanisms to gather insights from lawyers early in policy development, fostering a more responsive legal environment,
 - c. Simplify regulatory barriers for experienced foreign-qualified lawyers to facilitate their option/return to practice in SG, targeting specific career stages,
 - d. Ensure attractive career opportunities to draw high-caliber lawyers to SG,
 - e. Provide secondment opportunities for foreign lawyers at SG law firms to enhance their advocacy for SG law upon those foreign lawyers' return to their home countries, and in so doing position SG as a preferred legal destination, and

f. Establish a unified platform – potentially led by the EDB, akin to the UK's GREAT Legal Services campaign – to promote SG law in contracts and its status as an international legal hub to effectively elevate SG's profile for business and dispute resolution.

9.5. AI is a transformative force in legal practice, enabling small- and medium-sized law firms to enhance competitiveness and operational efficiency. However, challenges such as confidentiality and costs persist. Collective purchasing arrangements and local AI solutions may alleviate these financial burdens. Additionally, establishing a model AI governance framework for SG law firms can ensure ethical compliance while allowing for tailored adaptations to individual practices.

10. Takeaways of FGD discussing Technology

10.1. While all participants had engaged with some forms of LegalTech, there were unequal levels of familiarity with how the underlying technologies were actually carrying out the tasks which (in the moderators' view) posed problems for forward planning of solutions and identifying use cases that will have minimal error.

10.2. Participants were invested in addressing inadequacies of existing technologies as well as newer GenAI technologies. However, there is uncertainty on whether existing technologies (which appeared to be the "lower hanging fruit") will or can be improved.

- 10.3. The nature of the legal practice influences what types of technologies and use cases are appropriate. Equally, the outlook of the legal practice (and its short, mid- and long-term goals) will naturally influence what LegalTech is suitable.
- 10.4. There was consensus regarding the following:
- a. Access to justice remains challenging for laypersons, necessitating user-friendlier systems and improved guidance.
 - b. While trust in AI is essential, human oversight is necessary to mitigate inaccuracies.
 - c. Cost to TECH²⁶ adoption remains a barrier for many less-resourced law firms.
- 10.5. TECH adoption faces challenges due to system limitations, cultural resistance, and ethical concerns, emphasizing the need for interconnected systems and a cultural shift in the legal profession.

11. Conclusion

The FGDs provided critical insights which should be considered for the discussions at the upcoming LPS25. By addressing the issues of the work culture in the legal industry, reformulating the business of law, and embracing technology while solving systemic barriers in the system, Singapore can enhance its status as a regional legal hub.

²⁶ "TECH" is the acronym for technology.

ANNEX A

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

EVENT	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (CULTURE)		
DATE	23 APRIL 2025 (WED)	TIME	4:00PM ~ 6:00PM

#	TOPIC	DISCUSSION	IMPACT / CHALLENGE
A	Mindfulness in the Workplace	<p>1. Mindfulness</p> <p>a. 'Mindfulness is defined as "... the awareness arising through paying attention on purpose in the present moment, non-judgmentally, in the service of self-understanding, wisdom, and compassion"²⁷.</p> <p>b. Organizational mindfulness is framed as fostering a workplace where employees are mindful of their actions, interactions, and the impact on the environment and the business's long-term success.</p> <p>c. The Mindful Business Charter (MBC) and Mindful Business Singapore (MBS) were referenced as it encourages, among other things, open conversations about timelines and workload, shifting expectations both internally and externally.</p> <p>2. Management of Associates</p> <p>a. Reflecting on how juniors prefer to be treated and ensuring tasks are completed is crucial.</p> <p>b. Autonomy and bi-directional communication are key.</p> <p>3. Inclusion in Client Conversations</p> <p>a. It is important to include staff in conversations with clients and break down both soft and hard deadlines to</p>	<p>1. Positive Impact: Improved Work-Life Balance through Hybrid Work and AI Efficiency</p> <p>a. Organisational mindfulness aids proactive structuring of work to avoid overburdening its staff, especially juniors, and to foster a healthier ecosystem of expectations, collaboration, and feedback.</p> <p>b. The integration of hybrid work models and AI technology has significantly contributed to achieving a better work-life balance for legal professionals.</p> <p>c. Hybrid work allows lawyers, especially those with young families, to manage their time more effectively by reducing commute times and offering flexibility in work hours.</p> <p>d. This flexibility is crucial for young parents who need to juggle professional responsibilities with family commitments.</p> <p>e. Additionally, AI tools have streamlined many routine tasks, allowing lawyers to focus on more complex and rewarding aspects of their work.</p> <p>f. By automating repetitive tasks, AI not only increases productivity but also frees up time for lawyers to engage in activities that enhance their personal and professional lives. While AI tools boost efficiency and productivity, concerns about their proper</p>

²⁷ <[Frontiers | The impact of an organizational-level mindfulness-based intervention on workplace social capital and psychological safety: A qualitative content analysis](#)> (accessed 27 April 2025)

		<p>manage expectations and avoid burning out.</p> <p>4. Hybrid Work Benefits</p> <p>a. Hybrid work arrangements are particularly beneficial for juniors with children, with the majority agreeing on its positive impact.</p> <p>5. Work-Life Balance</p> <p>a. The first three years are challenging in managing workloads and knowing when to say “yes” or “no” to superiors. Work-life balance becomes more achievable after two years in practice as juniors gain experience.</p> <p>b. The challenges faced by juniors managing workloads and setting boundaries should be acknowledged.</p> <p>c. The importance of predictability and flexibility in achieving a work-life balance was highlighted.</p> <p>d. Seniors need to shift mindset and learn to adjust their teachings with the younger generation.</p> <p>6. AI Usage</p> <p>a. AI is a daily tool for juniors, enhancing efficiency and productivity.</p> <p>b. Juniors should focus on adding value through transaction structuring and client relationships to avoid being replaced by AI.</p>	<p>research and relevance have been raised.</p> <p>g. Strategic Opportunity: Participants encouraged a shift in mindset—from using AI as a productivity shortcut to seeing it as a way to create new services or co-create legal tech solutions with clients. This approach allows lawyers to become innovators and partners rather than functionaries.</p> <p>2. Challenge: Initial Years are Challenging Due to Workload Management and Lack of Experience</p> <p>a. Challenges to implementing mindful business practices include inconsistent delegation practices, assumed urgency leading to unnecessary overtime, cognitive overload in juniors, and unconscious pressure from seniors expecting constant availability and normalizing last-minute requests. Without a firm-wide or industry-wide framework, delegation and team management vary widely depending on the individual supervisor.</p> <p>b. The initial phase of a legal career is marked by a steep learning curve, where managing workloads and meeting deadlines can be overwhelming.</p> <p>c. Juniors may struggle with knowing when to accept or decline additional work, leading to stress and potential burnout. Junior lawyers often operate in “survival mode,” where they are focused on not falling behind rather than reflecting on how they work best.</p>
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

			<p>d. The lack of experience in handling complex legal matters further exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult for them to achieve a sustainable work-life balance during the formative years of their careers. So, despite the benefits of hybrid work and AI, juniors may continue to face significant challenges in their early years of practice.</p>
B	Bullying and Harassment	<p>1. Defining Bullying</p> <p>a. There is a need to clearly define bullying, such as whether throwing objects is considered bullying, to prevent juniors from feeling intimidated and leaving the firm/industry.</p> <p>b. Bullying in the legal profession ranges from overt aggression to subtle exclusion and overburdening.</p> <p>c. Examples included social pressure on new lawyers, unequal treatment of women with caregiving duties, unsupported delegation of high-stakes tasks to juniors, and over-reliance on high-performing associates. One cited example was a tradition where newly called lawyers were expected to host and pay for a celebratory drinking session for senior colleagues. While originally intended as a bonding exercise, it often resulted in undue pressure, especially for those who do not drink or had family commitments.</p> <p>d. Defining bullying is challenging due to ambiguity in feedback tone, cultural and generational differences, and the distinction between intent and impact.</p> <p>e. Constructive criticism can be</p>	<p>1. Positive Impact: Increased Awareness and Potential for Creating Neutral Channels for Complaints</p> <p>a. The discussion around bullying and harassment in the legal profession has led to increased awareness and the potential establishment of neutral channels for complaints [referring to the Law Society’s 2020 anti-bullying pledge and the accompanying resource guide on workplace harassment in the legal profession].</p> <p>b. By acknowledging the existence of these issues, the legal community is taking steps towards creating a safer and more inclusive work environment.</p> <p>c. The introduction of pledges and discussions about neutral complaint channels signifies a commitment to addressing these problems.</p> <p>d. Such channels would provide a confidential and impartial platform for individuals to voice their concerns without fear of retaliation, ultimately fostering a more supportive workplace culture.</p> <p>2. Challenge: Persistent Issues with Defining and Addressing</p>

		<p>perceived as bullying, and unintentional actions may still have significant effects on individuals.</p> <p>2. Cultural Normalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Harsh behaviors persist among older lawyers, who replicate acts that can be defined as bullying as rites of passage. b. Such a mindset pressures juniors to "toughen up," overlooking the psychological harm and alienation such acts cause. c. Delegation without support such as assigning junior lawyers high-stakes tasks on hearings or client meetings without proper briefing or debriefing was noted as a recurring issue. While some juniors enjoy being challenged early, others view this as being set up to fail, especially when guidance is absent. d. Overburdening high performers: associates are often disproportionately assigned complex or urgent files under the assumption that they can "handle it". This form of overreliance, though not always malicious, was described as a form of structural bullying. <p>3. Reputation versus Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Due to a constant supply of young lawyers, firms may prioritize reputation over retention. <p>4. Open Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creating a culture where outside office topics can be discussed openly is important. b. The drinking culture in the 	<p>Bullying and Harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Despite the progress in raising awareness, defining and effectively addressing bullying and harassment remains a significant challenge. b. The legal profession often grapples with ambiguous situations where the line between assertive management and bullying is blurred. c. This ambiguity can lead to under-reporting of incidents, as individuals may fear being perceived as overly sensitive or jeopardizing their careers. d. Barriers to reporting bullying include a lack of neutral channels, fear of retaliation, and absence of confidentiality. It was noted from a participant that even where formal structures exist, the reality is that seniors may have a separate word with HR to "manage" the issue internally, hence leaving the complainant exposed and disillusioned. e. Internal HR structures often prioritize firm interests, and senior partners may manage issues quietly, leaving complainants exposed and disillusioned. f. Additionally, the competitive nature of the legal field can discourage open discussions about these issues, further complicating efforts to create a truly inclusive and respectful work environment.
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

		<p>legal industry can cause distress among young lawyers.</p> <p>5. External Channels for Expression</p> <p>a. Providing an external channel for freedom of expression can help counteract issues like sexual harassment and exploitation.</p> <p>6. Awareness and Pledges</p> <p>a. Having a pledge against bullying and harassment raises awareness among lawyers.</p> <p>7. AI-Supported Reporting</p> <p>a. AI-supported reporting involves using an AI tool as a first-line triage mechanism for anonymously submitted incidents.</p> <p>b. It identifies recurring language patterns or behaviors resembling bullying, serving as a screening and trend-spotting tool without replacing human judgment.</p> <p>8. Other Solutions Proposed</p> <p>a. Proposed solutions include establishing neutral third-party reporting channels, collecting anonymous aggregated feedback for industry-wide insights such as collecting industry-wide data to help identify patterns, define norms, and set thresholds for action, adopting clear whistleblowing protocols from the corporate or public sector, where whistleblower protections and investigation protocols are more clearly defined, and promoting education and dialogue to raise awareness</p>	
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

		of bullying, especially in its subtle forms.	
C	Diversity and Inclusion	<p>1. Defining Diversity</p> <p>a. 'Diversity involves having people with individual differences and acknowledging the unique blend of knowledge, skills and perspectives people bring to the workplace.'²⁸</p> <p>b. In law, diversity generally refers to the inclusion of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics within the legal profession or legal system. This includes, but isn't limited to, differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and other personal attributes. It also encompasses the variety of perspectives, knowledge, and skills that diverse individuals bring to the practice of law.²⁹</p> <p>c. Broaden the definition of diversity to include various backgrounds and life stages.</p> <p>2. Entry into Legal Education</p> <p>a. Family background and upbringing can influence legal education take-up.</p> <p>b. The establishment of SMU and SUSS law schools have introduced a more varied group of graduates into the legal profession. These students typically possess a wider range of life experiences and enhanced interpersonal skills.</p> <p>c. Promote mentorship and outreach programs to support non-traditional</p>	<p>1. Positive Impact: Efforts to Bridge Educational Gaps and Promote Meritocracy</p> <p>a. Efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion within the legal profession have focused on bridging educational gaps and promoting meritocracy.</p> <p>b. Initiatives such as scholarships and alternative pathways to legal education aim to provide opportunities for individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.</p> <p>c. By broadening access to legal education, the profession can benefit from a wider range of perspectives and experiences, ultimately enriching the legal community.</p> <p>d. These efforts reflect a commitment to creating a more equitable profession where success is determined by merit rather than background.</p> <p>2. Challenge: Socio-economic Factors Still Influence Diversity in the Profession</p> <p>a. Despite these efforts, socio-economic factors continue to influence diversity within the legal profession.</p> <p>b. Individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have greater access to resources and opportunities, which can perpetuate existing disparities.</p> <p>c. This on-going challenge highlights the need for continued focus on creating</p>

²⁸ <<https://lawgazette.com.sg/practice/practice-matters/diversity-and-inclusion/>> (accessed 28 April 2025)

²⁹ <<https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/creating-culture-of-diversity-in-legal-department>> (accessed 27 April 2025)

		<p>entrants into the legal profession.</p> <p>d. Concerns were expressed about the increased admission of overseas-trained or second-lower graduates through relaxed criteria, as it might lower standards or be more accessible to those with greater financial means.</p> <p>3. Meritocracy versus Mobility</p> <p>a. A debate arose regarding the current validity of Singapore's meritocratic ethos.</p> <p>b. Some participants supported the system, referencing a time when hard work ensured upward mobility.</p> <p>c. However, others pointed out that structural inequality now makes it challenging for merit alone to be sufficient. Structural inequality 'describes disparities in wealth, resources, and other outcomes that result from discriminatory practices of institutions such as legal, educational, business, government, and health care systems'³⁰</p> <p>4. Scholarships and Pathways</p> <p>a. More scholarships should be provided for those from less privileged backgrounds, and more pathways to formal legal education should be created.</p> <p>5. Diversity in Practice</p> <p>a. Firms have to embrace diversity as lawyers who can bring different perspectives are valued by clients to handle international transaction work which often</p>	<p>pathways that support under-represented groups.</p> <p>d. Addressing these systemic issues requires a multi-faceted approach, including mentorship programs, targeted recruitment efforts such as law firms looking beyond grades and pedigree to assess candidates based on resilience, interpersonal skills, and real-world experience, and ongoing support for individuals from diverse backgrounds throughout their legal careers.</p>
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

³⁰ <<https://www.impact.upenn.edu/what-is-structural-inequality/>> (accessed 27 April 2025)

		<p>involves dealing with different cultures and ways of working.</p> <p>6. Socio-Economic Stratification</p> <p>a. Socio-economic stratification (“SES”) in the legal profession is increasing, with high-SES lawyers gaining advantages through networking, in internships, and financially.</p> <p>b. Concerns about "soft elitism" highlight a preference for polished accents and global education over legal ability. Non-traditional entrants face barriers due to lack of exposure and support, despite their capabilities.</p> <p>7. Gender and Parenthood</p> <p>a. Gender inequality affects female lawyers, especially mothers, who face career progression gaps due to caregiving duties, limiting their participation in key networking events.</p> <p>b. Meanwhile, male colleagues with children experience fewer sacrifices, resulting in an enduring imbalance in promotional outcomes. One participant identified the importance of balancing family and work that led him to change from practicing to IHC role.</p> <p>8. Recommendations for Inclusion</p> <p>a. The recommendations emphasize revising hiring criteria to value resilience and real-world experience, implementing structured mentorship for underrepresented groups, providing scholarships to support aspiring lawyers,</p>	
--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

		from lower-income backgrounds and shifting the cultural mindset to value adaptability, collaboration, and diversity over mere academic brilliance.	
D	Sustainability	<p>1. Motivation for Being a Lawyer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The motivations driving individuals to pursue a career in law are diverse and can significantly influence their career trajectory and satisfaction. b. For some lawyers, their decision is driven by financial incentives, as the profession is often associated with high earning potential. c. However, this motivation can lead to disillusionment if the financial rewards do not meet expectations or if the work itself lacks personal fulfillment. d. Others are motivated by a desire to make a positive impact, seeking a career that allows them to advocate for justice and support those in need. e. Understanding these varied motivations is crucial for law firms and legal institutions as they seek to attract and retain talent. f. By aligning career opportunities with the personal and professional goals of young lawyers, the legal profession can foster a more engaged and committed workforce. <p>2. Isolation and Training Regimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted on the traditional training regimes within the legal profession, leading to increased isolation among 	<p>1. Positive Impact: Recognition of the Need for Skill Development and Adaptation to Global Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The legal profession should recognize the importance of skill development and adaptation to global standards as key components of sustainability. b. As the legal landscape evolves, lawyers should be encouraged to acquire new skills and embrace innovative practices to remain competitive. c. This includes understanding international legal frameworks and developing expertise in emerging areas of law. d. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, the profession can ensure that its members are well-equipped to meet the demands of a dynamic global market. <p>2. Challenge: Isolation and Lack of Mentorship Due to Hybrid Work and Training Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The shift towards hybrid work and changes in training regimes have led to challenges related to isolation and a lack of mentorship of juniors. b. The traditional model of in-person mentorship and guidance has been disrupted, making it difficult for new lawyers to build strong professional

		<p>young lawyers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. With the shift to remote work and hybrid models, the opportunities for in-person mentorship and networking have diminished. c. This isolation can hinder the development of strong professional relationships and reduce the informal learning that occurs through daily interactions with more experienced colleagues. d. While remote work offers flexibility, it also challenges the traditional apprenticeship model that has long been a cornerstone of legal training. e. As a result, juniors may find it more difficult to navigate the complexities of the profession and develop the soft skills necessary for effective client interaction and collaboration. <p>3. Skillset Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In the current global legal landscape, young lawyers are increasingly required to develop a diverse set of skills to remain competitive. b. This necessity is driven by the presence of overseas counterparts, such as UK solicitors and engineers who have transitioned into legal roles, bringing with them a unique blend of technical and legal expertise. c. The legal profession is no longer confined to traditional legal knowledge; it now demands a broader understanding of various disciplines and the ability to integrate these into legal practice such as soft skillsets on negotiation and technical skillsets on Gen AI, etc. d. This shift necessitates that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relationships and receive the support they need. c. This isolation can hinder professional development and contribute to feelings of disconnection within the legal community. d. Addressing these challenges may require innovative approaches to mentorship and collaboration that leverage technology while maintaining the personal connections essential for professional growth.
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

		<p>lawyers continuously update their skills, embracing new technologies and methodologies to enhance their practice.</p> <p>e. By doing so, they can offer more comprehensive services to clients (bearing in mind to be more productive with better returns on the charge fee) and remain relevant in a rapidly evolving market.</p>	
E	Collaborative Work Culture	<p>1. Cultural and Generational Differences:</p> <p>a. Young lawyers may lack the rigor of older generations, especially with the advent of Gen AI, as they navigate a more complex world.</p> <p>b. Encourage open communication and mutual respect to bridge generational gaps and adapt to technological advancements.</p> <p>c. Recognize the potential for learning and growth through mentorship and collaboration.</p> <p>2. Mentorship</p> <p>a. Good mentors with overseas experience provide valuable learning opportunities for young lawyers.</p>	<p>1. Positive Impact: Potential for Learning and Growth through Mentorship and Collaboration</p> <p>b. A collaborative work culture that emphasizes mentorship and collaboration offers significant potential for learning and growth.</p> <p>c. Experienced lawyers can provide invaluable guidance and support to their younger counterparts, helping them navigate the complexities of the legal profession.</p> <p>d. This inter-generational exchange of knowledge not only enhances the skills of young lawyers but also fosters a sense of community and shared purpose.</p> <p>e. By promoting a culture of collaboration, the legal profession can cultivate a more supportive and dynamic environment that encourages innovation and excellence.</p> <p>2. Challenge: Bridging Generational Gaps and Adapting to Technological Advancements</p> <p>a. Bridging generational gaps and adapting to technological advancements present ongoing challenges for the legal profession.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Differences in work styles, communication preferences, and technological proficiency can create friction between generations. c. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change requires lawyers to continuously update their skills and adapt to new tools and processes. d. Successfully navigating these challenges involves fostering open communication, encouraging mutual respect, and providing opportunities for all members of the profession to learn and grow together.
--	--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

MINDFUL PRACTICES

MINDFUL BUSINESS CHARTER (“MBC”)

The intention of the Mindful Business Charter is to remove unnecessary sources of stress and promote better mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. There will be times when long hours and stress cannot be avoided, but this isn't always the case, and we want it to become an exception rather than the rule. As a business community we have a responsibility to do things differently.

1. MY ORGANISATION'S COMMITMENT

- a. Drive forward the actions and change necessary to support the Mindful Business Charter.
- b. Promote a culture where people can speak up early about any concerns that they might have with their wellbeing (or the wellbeing of colleagues).
- c. Make performance against the Mindful Business Charter / responsible business a priority standing agenda item for all client and supplier relationship review meetings.
- d. Ensure responsible business is included as an area of assessment during significant procurement processes.
- e. Once established, introduce the Mindful Business Charter to one new member every 12 months and report annually on your broader activity to the Mindful Business Charter community.

2. MY COMMITMENT

OPENNESS AND RESPECT

a. BUILDING TRUST AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

- i. Treating internal colleagues and external contacts with the appropriate level of respect and courtesy.
- ii. Discussing upfront with my colleagues, clients and contacts their preferred method of communication and clarifying any relevant implications of an individual's working patterns.
- iii. Asking for and providing feedback to others on a regular basis.

SMART MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

b. ADHERING TO SMART MEETING AND COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE:

- i. Being respectful of others' time by planning meetings properly (considering who needs to attend / giving appropriate notice / setting clear agendas and objectives) and avoiding last minute cancellations.
- ii. Unless otherwise necessary, allowing people to join meetings by the method they deem suitable, providing video and call-in details as default on meeting invites to allow everyone to participate regardless of their physical location.
- iii. Running meetings effectively, including (a) allowing contribution from participants regardless of location and (b) giving consideration to how different people process information and make decisions.

- iv. Avoiding over-use of email and instant chat and avoiding copying people into messages that they don't need to receive.
- v. Where multiple communication media are used, agreeing how each is expected to be used and allowing people to log out for periods to enable focussed attention.
- vi. Making use of subject lines in messages and ensuring these are reflective of the message's content.

RESPECTING REST PERIODS

c. CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THE NEED TO 'SWITCH OFF':

- i. Where support is required outside of someone's core working hours, giving them options for when that could be (early morning or evening / weekend).
- ii. When sending communications outside of business hours, being clear whether it needs to be read / actioned promptly or considering sending pre-timed messages (so they are not received late at night and at weekends).
- iii. Including working hours / availability as part of email signatures, so people are aware of each other's' working patterns.
- iv. Respecting people's right to take annual leave without the expectation of them checking messages / being on call, and role modelling the same behaviour where possible.

MINDFUL DELEGATION

d. IMPLEMENTING A BEST PRACTICE APPROACH TO COLLABORATION, INSTRUCTION AND DELEGATION:

- i. Respecting the need to provide sufficient context and information for a piece of work, ideally including the purpose and ultimate recipient.
- ii. When instructing on a task, negotiating rather than imposing a deadline, being transparent where possible on the wider timetable, and promptly communicating timing changes which impact others.
- iii. When being instructed on a task, being confident to flag when a deadline is unrealistic and / or unachievable

MINDFUL BUSINESS SINGAPORE (“MBS”)

MISSION

To promote business and social responsibility amongst the Singapore legal community to prioritize the removal of unnecessary sources of stress and promotion of mental health and well-being in the workplace.

INITIATIVES

1. To establish a business case for the adoption of the Mindful Business Charter or similar initiatives by the entire legal community in Singapore.
2. To advocate for change in the way we work at the organizational, professional, and legislative levels.
3. To facilitate access to mindful business training and support programs to enable business leaders and other stakeholders to bring best practice to their firms/organizations.
4. To coordinate awareness and educational efforts with other organizations in the legal community including the Law Society of Singapore, the Singapore Academy of Law, the Singapore Corporate Counsel Association, the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Singapore Institute of Legal Education and the 3 Singapore law schools.
5. To work with mental health professionals to facilitate access to mental health specialists for members of the legal profession in Singapore.

ANNEX B

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

EVENT	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (BUSINESS OF LAW)		
DATE	7 MAY 2025 (WED)	TIME	4:00PM ~ 6:00PM

KEY THEMES	NON-DISPUTES	DISPUTES
STRENGTHS		
<p>Transformation of SG lawyers from Singapore-centric legal domain experts into legal solution providers for the region (i.e., SEA)</p>	<p>1. Expertise and Competitive Advantage SG law firms have established a strong foundation in both contentious and non-contentious work. They are recognized for their expertise, particularly in arbitration and dispute resolution, which has allowed them to export their services beyond SG. The growing acceptance of SG law as a third-party law in international transactions further enhances their competitive edge.</p> <p>2. Rule of Law and Domain Expertise The success of SG law firms is deeply rooted in SG's strong rule of law and domain expertise. This foundation ensures that SG lawyers are valued globally, and as long as SG maintains its legal integrity, its lawyers will continue to be in demand.</p>	<p>1. Legal talent Singapore lawyers are generally perceived by foreign clients as qualified, knowledgeable and well-trained.</p> <p>2. Rule of Law Participants identified Singapore's rule of law, established legal system and perceived neutrality and legitimacy of its legal processes as a key differentiator which attracts foreign parties to choose Singapore law and/or jurisdiction.</p> <p>3. Geopolitical developments Various geopolitical developments have also encouraged foreign parties, including China, India and other Asia-Pacific jurisdictions, to increasingly choose Singapore law and/or jurisdiction, making it an attractive alternative to traditional hubs for litigation and arbitration like London or New York. Participants also commented that Singapore lawyers are perceived as having linguistic and cultural affinity with these jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Training and development for young lawyers</p>	<p>3. Training and Development SG law firms focus on training younger lawyers, emphasizing both technical skills and soft skills such as business acumen and presentation skills. This comprehensive training approach helps in expanding the horizons of young lawyers and preparing them for international work.</p>	

WEAKNESSES		
<p>Strategies to retain talented junior and mid-career SG lawyers, and to attract talented mid-career offshore lawyers back to SG</p>	<p>1. Regulatory Challenges</p> <p>The regulatory environment poses challenges for lawyers who wish to return to SG after gaining experience abroad. The process of requalification can be cumbersome, and there is a perception that returning lawyers are not valued as highly as those who have remained in SG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's OK to live with and acknowledge the natural flow; people will want to return if there are opportunities/work ▪ More can be done to reduce/simplify regulatory barriers for SG lawyers who are experienced and foreign qualified (not eligible for admission to SG Bar) to return to SG to practise; But seen another way, if the opportunities are there, the lawyers seeking to return will do the necessary to have themselves qualified anyway 	<p>1. Difficulty retaining talent</p> <p>Participants observed that cost of living increases have outpaced both law firm partner profits and associate salaries. Participants commented that law firm salaries have not kept pace with cost-of-living increases (e.g., property prices), and that even if they remained in the profession for the next 15-20 years, they would never be able to achieve the same standard of living as compared with senior lawyers (citing lawyers who started practicing in the 1980s and 1990s as examples). Some participants expressed the view that because such aspirations are now out of reach for lawyers working in Singapore law firms, they would be inclined to pursue a higher-paying career path with an international law firm or outside of legal practice, or alternatively, to pursue a non-partnership career path with better work-life balance (whether in legal practice or elsewhere).</p> <p>Some participants commented that they had observed disputes lawyers being stressed and practicing defensively due to a fear of the court making remarks or writing judgments critical of lawyers, and that some lawyers eventually decided to stop doing disputes work partly due to such stress. Participants also shared that some younger lawyers had been demoralized after perceiving certain Assistant Registrar(s) as being rude to them during hearings and/or setting unreasonable timelines, and that this was one of the reasons for those lawyers deciding to stop doing disputes work. Some participants observed fewer opportunities for advocacy and cross-examination because a</p>

		<p>higher proportion of disputes are settled before trial due to the widespread use of mediation.</p> <p>2. Challenges to financial sustainability of litigation practices</p> <p>Participants involved in law firm management commented that factors such as increased competition, a larger population of lawyers, pressure from clients to keep fees low, and government policies and/or court guidelines in relation to lowering legal costs (or past attempts to introduce scaled costs for disputes), made it difficult to sustain or increase headcount or adjust law firm salaries upwards. Some participants commented that some local clients were prepared to pay relatively higher fees for similar services provided by foreign law firms advising on foreign law but were accustomed to insisting on lower or discounted rates when engaging Singapore law firms.</p> <p>Some participants commented that they felt a loss of purpose and pride in their profession or “craft”, because some of their clients did not appreciate their time and effort spent providing quality legal services. They said that some clients were unable to or had no interest in recognizing quality work and were in any event not prepared to pay for the time required to produce quality work. The fees for certain practice areas have also become commoditized. Some participants commented that it was difficult to sustain a smaller legal practice that needs to compete against more senior legal practitioners who are successful at attracting business due to their age or reputation but who do not (in their view) provide quality legal services.</p>
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Themes of Transformation Training & Development</p>	<p>2. Lack of Market Awareness and Engagement There is a noted lack of awareness and engagement with emerging areas such as ESG practices. SG firms are often not present in major forums and discussions, which can limit their ability to capitalize on new opportunities and trends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESG is not a market maker domain, more of market support. ▪ Not really the forte of law firms as ESG entails a lot of technical interfacing ▪ ESG issues feature more strongly in US/Europe transactions. ESG in Asia is very small and we must find the market and opportunities to deploy it ▪ There must be minimum size and volume to avoid ESG work from being a loss leader. In international firms, the ESG team is drawn from different offices, but you serve the global network to achieve the scale. You cannot have a disproportionate number of lawyers in every office doing ESG work. <p>3. Training and Development Gaps While technical training is strong, there is a lack of focus on soft skills such as business acumen, presentation, and marketing skills. This gap can hinder the ability of lawyers to effectively engage with clients and expand their practice internationally. SG lawyers must shift the mindset and have that desire to hustle, along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building up soft skills in young lawyers (centered around business acumen/ change of mindset, how to pitch/sell) ▪ Partners must equip, enable and empower junior lawyers, 	<p>3. Parties continuing to choose foreign law and foreign jurisdictions Despite Singapore's comparative advantages and favorable reputation as a dispute resolution hub, foreign law continues to be chosen by parties in various areas when contracting, including for historical reasons. One example is the choice of English law for P&I Club insurance.</p> <p>Participants also gave examples of clients who had chosen to litigate higher-value disputes in other jurisdictions such as London because the clients (who believed that they had a strong case) expected to be able to recover significantly higher costs before a UK court against the other party in the event of successful outcome there. In the clients' assessment, for a high value dispute, the client would recover only cents to the dollar in costs if successful in Singapore, and that was a disincentive for clients to litigate in Singapore.</p> <p>4. Relative weakness in branding and soft skills Participants expressed the view that Singapore law firms and lawyers tended to be weaker in branding and promoting their capabilities as compared with their international counterparts.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	opening the doors and settling them in.	
OPPORTUNITIES		
<p>Promotion of a central narrative as to why SG is a preferred destination to conduct business in the region and championing SG law as the top choice of governing law in the region</p>	<p>1. Spotighting SG law as the most relevant applicable law in regional transactions SG law firms have the potential to play a bigger role in cross-border and regional work. By leveraging their expertise in SG law and building connections in overseas jurisdictions, they can expand their reach and capture more international business. Two broad thrusts can be undertaken:</p> <p>a. <u>Creating champions to market and promote SG law to the region to broaden the pie</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value proposition is to translate the SG lawyer's sophistication and excellence into the market (SEA Region) and sell the legal solutioning ▪ Find your addressable market and participate at a high level – Smaller firms: form partnerships; Bigger firms: regionalization; set up regional offices ▪ Consolidate different voices into a central platform or agency to promote SG law and SG as an international legal hub/ destination for international business (cf UK Ministry of Justice's GREAT Legal Services campaign promoting UK as centre of legal services to the global market). Can EDB take the lead just as they have taken the lead to bring other businesses into SG? <p>b. <u>Building ecosystem of regional networks; Deeper Integration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not just restricted to gaining 	<p>1. Promoting the use of Singapore law Participants queried what can be done by policymakers to promote the use of Singapore law and to encourage parties to choose Singapore law and Singapore as a jurisdiction for the resolution of disputes when contracting.</p> <p>2. Singapore firms pursuing regional expansion and building regional networks Participants described various efforts by the larger Singapore law firms to establish regional offices and networks. For smaller firms, participants discussed the need to connect with existing networks or like-minded foreign firms, and the need to identify relevant or niche markets to attract and meet the needs of international clients. Participants also discussed the need for Singapore law firms to adapt to deliver quality work that matches the multi-jurisdictional scale and scope of their international counterparts.</p>

	<p>access to new markets but new talent as well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer opportunities for foreign lawyers in the region to be seconded to SG law firms, these lawyers will serve as the “evangelists” to promote the use of SG law ▪ Beyond the initial referrals, it allows for an injection of expertise to branches overseas, deeper integration of regionalization ▪ Buy over/merge with the best experts in the local markets 	
<p>LegalTech and AI</p>	<p>2. Adoption of Legal Tech and AI</p> <p>There is an opportunity for SG law firms to leverage legal tech and AI to enhance their competitiveness. By investing in technology, firms can improve efficiency, offer better client services, and potentially attract and retain talent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local law firms are tracking AI developments more closely, and seeing how the quality of life of lawyers can be improved through this. ▪ In time to come, clients will also look to see clients being more tech-enabled. The value-add to be expected from lawyers will also be higher. ▪ A tremendous amount of time and resources are wasted organizing back-end arrangements. Hence, to be an early adopter, you must clear the pathway for it. As an industry, we must have more conversations on whether there can be a way to collectively get it done. ▪ The concern is where the documents end up once uploaded onto the AI. As such, the AI trains on the documents uploaded. There is also greater sub-par and inaccurate results because it is still in its early 	<p>3. Legal Tech and AI</p> <p>There was a strong consensus from participants on the importance of AI and its potential as a transformative tool for legal practice, including in terms of maintaining a competitive edge and improving operational efficiency. In addition to AI, investment in other legal tech such as document management systems and other practice tools was viewed as important.</p> <p>4. Suggested model AI governance framework</p> <p>Participants emphasized that AI tools must be utilized responsibly and in compliance with existing ethical obligations, including the need to protect client confidentiality. Some participants suggested the possibility of drafting a model AI governance framework for Singapore law firms, while also noting that this could also be left to each law practice to formulate, bearing in mind existing regulatory and ethical obligations.</p>

	<p>stages. However, there are still efficient tools that can be useful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian lawyers are finding more progress in this area, where Singapore lawyers tend to be more skeptical. They talk about passing on savings to clients, and more discussions in this regard. ▪ Firms in the US are employing almost 10x more AI than SG firms. ▪ Firms are not positioning AI as a replacement, there is a lot to be said about thinking carefully about implementation. ▪ AI governance framework for Singapore law firms in general? Such projects are underway, because AI is developing so quickly the modalities are changing – there are so many different types. When we talk about AI, it is too much of an umbrella term and it will be hard to come up with one framework that can take everything into account. If we talk too early about regulation, it may stifle further innovation. For now, having lawyers signed up, may suggest a less prescriptive method to regulate the area. When the day comes that AI can replace the lawyer, then greater regulation will be needed. ▪ Consider the feasibility of law firms collaborating to pay for a collective AI model/license which could be costly on an individual firm basis. 	
<p>Themes of Transformation Training & Development</p>	<p>3. ESG and Emerging Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESG practices are gaining traction globally, and SG law firms can capitalize on this trend by developing expertise in this area. Additionally, 	<p>5. Ground-up feedback from lawyers when formulating policies affecting the profession: Participants commented that when formulating policies affecting the legal profession, they would</p>

	<p>emerging fields like AI and cryptocurrency present new avenues for growth. ESG should not be ignored; greenfield area, after all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law firms are still keen to drive ESG work, supported by EnterpriseSG’s Sustainability Legal Catalyst Programme (5 law firms on panel) <p>4. Talent Attraction for offshore Mid-career Lawyers</p> <p>Worth thinking about when to deploy resources to attract local talent working overseas to return beyond recruitment of fresh graduates. For example, practicing lawyers have certain stages in careers which may make them more amenable to return (e.g. 3/5/8-year mark?)</p>	<p>appreciate a more bottom-up approach which ensures that practitioners are consulted. Some expressed the view that some recent developments such as the amendments to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) regime appeared to be a relatively top-down imposition, which ought to have taken into account lawyers’ concerns about the increased CPD hours required. Participants commented that the use of processes to gather ground-up feedback such as conducting focus groups at an earlier stage of policy formulation, instead of after the policy has already been drafted, would help.</p>
THREATS		
	<p>1. Globalization and Competition</p> <p>International firms with well-established networks and resources can easily capture market share, making it challenging for local firms to compete.</p> <p>2. Technological Advancements</p> <p>While technology presents opportunities, it also poses threats. The rapid development of AI and other technologies could disrupt traditional legal work, and firms that fail to adapt may find themselves at a disadvantage.</p> <p>3. Talent Retention Challenges</p> <p>SG law firms face difficulties in attracting and retaining talent, particularly in the face of competition from international firms and in-house legal departments of multinational corporations. Factors such as better exposure, higher pay, and career growth opportunities abroad contribute to</p>	<p>1. Affordability of Legal Tech and AI</p> <p>Participants expressed concerns about the affordability of existing AI and legal tech platforms, especially for smaller law firms. Some participants commented that they had observed US and Australian firms currently utilizing AI much more extensively as compared with Singapore law firms. Participants queried the possibility of collective purchasing arrangements to reduce prices, or the development of more affordable local AI solutions.</p> <p>2. Competition</p> <p>Participants commented that the quality of legal services provided by lawyers from Singapore’s Asia-Pacific counterparts is increasingly sophisticated, and Singapore lawyers will need to work hard to maintain their edge. One participant cited an example of Indian firms becoming increasingly</p>

	<p>this challenge.</p> <p>4. Economic and Business Sentiment Pessimistic business sentiment and economic uncertainties can impact the demand for legal services. Changes in global economic conditions, such as tariffs and shifts in supply chains, can affect the volume and nature of the legal work available to SG law firms.</p> <p>5. Market Fragmentation and Regional Competition The ASEAN market is fragmented compared to more unified markets like the EU and US. This fragmentation can limit the ability of SG law firms to expand regionally and capture a larger market share. Additionally, regional competition from other legal hubs can pose a threat to SG's position as a leading legal centre.</p>	<p>sophisticated in terms of having large teams to manage Singapore arbitrations on their own, without the involvement of any Singapore law firm. This meant that a Singapore law would need to be able to offer a higher value contribution in some way, in order for a foreign client and firm to decide to involve a Singapore law firm in the Singapore-seated arbitration.</p> <p>3. Talent Retention Participants expressed similar views as the non-disputes group. Also see above under Weaknesses.</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

NOTES

1. Enhancing the capabilities of Singapore law firms and lawyers to compete globally and regionally: The demand for legal services in relation to cross-border transactional and disputes work has given rise to opportunities and challenges for Singapore-based law firms. The globalization of various areas of legal practice and the presence of international and regional law firms presents competitive challenges to Singapore law firms.

1.1. Opportunities and competition: How can Singapore law firms compete more effectively with their regional and international counterparts, who have existing well-established networks and the resources to easily capture market share?

1.1.1. How can Singapore law firms build and enhance their international and regional networks and cross-border capabilities? Participants expressed the view that it was important for Singapore lawyers to have a change in mindset to transform from lawyers who advise only on Singapore law to a legal solution provider, with the ability to understand regional cultural nuances and arbitrage.

1.1.2. How can larger Singapore law firms adapt to deliver quality work that matches the multi-jurisdictional scale and scope of their international counterparts?

1.1.3. How can smaller Singapore law firms identify relevant or niche markets to attract and meet the needs of international clients?

1.2. Promotion of Singapore law and equipping and branding Singapore law firms and lawyers: What are Singapore's strengths as compared with other jurisdictions and how can Singapore law firms capitalize on these strengths?

1.2.1. Participants identified Singapore's rule of law, established legal system and perceived neutrality and legitimacy of its legal processes as a key differentiator which attracts foreign parties to choose Singapore law and/or jurisdiction. Various geopolitical developments have also encouraged foreign parties to choose Singapore law and/or jurisdiction, making it an attractive alternative to traditional hubs like London or New York. The above includes Singapore as a preferred seat for disputes.

1.2.2. How can policymakers, the courts and the profession further promote the use of Singapore law when drafting agreements and the choice of Singapore as a jurisdiction for dispute resolution? Some participants queried whether any centralized or government agency could take the lead in promoting the use of Singapore law and the choice of Singapore as a jurisdiction.

1.2.3. Participants gave examples of clients who had chosen to litigate higher-value disputes in other jurisdictions such as London because the clients expected to be able to recover higher party-and-party costs in the event of successful outcome there. In the clients' assessment, for a high value dispute, the client would recover only cents to the dollar in terms of party and party costs if successful in Singapore, and that was a disincentive for the client to litigate in Singapore.

1.2.4. Participants queried how Singapore law firms and Singapore lawyers can be better equipped to offer specialized legal services in emerging areas of legal practice such as AI, cryptocurrency, and environmental, social and governance (ESG)? Some participants observed that the viability of cryptocurrency-related businesses in Singapore was largely dependent on government policy and regulation. Other participants observed that the market for ESG-related legal work in Asia and Singapore is relatively small as compared with the US and the EU.

2. Talent management and retaining younger and mid-career lawyers: the ability to attract, retain, and develop legal talent is essential for law firms seeking to sustain growth and competitiveness. An evolving legal landscape, market pressures and generational shifts have given rise to challenges in attracting and retaining legal talent.

2.1. Why lawyers are leaving Singapore law firms: Based on feedback received, a significant number of younger and mid-career lawyers no longer aspire to partnership in Singapore law firms. This appears to be a considered decision on the part of these lawyers based on various factors including:

2.1.1. Focus group participants observed that cost of living increases has outpaced both law firm partner profits and associate salaries. Participants commented that law firm salaries have not kept pace with cost-of-living increases (e.g. property prices), and that even if they remained in the profession for the next 15-20 years, they would never be able to achieve the same standard of living as compared with senior lawyers (citing lawyers who started practicing in the 1980s and 1990s as examples). Some participants expressed the view that because such aspirations are now out of reach for lawyers working in Singapore law firms, they would be inclined to pursue a higher-paying career path with an international law firm or outside of legal practice, or alternatively, to pursue a non-partnership career path with better work-life balance (whether in legal practice or elsewhere).

2.1.2. Careers in technology, banking / finance, or in-house positions with multinational corporations were perceived by some participants as more attractive as compared with legal practice, with some of these options offering better working hours, equal (or better) pay and/or more perceived prestige as compared with legal practice. Factors such as better exposure, higher pay, and career growth opportunities overseas contribute to the above.

2.1.3. Focus group participants involved in law firm management commented that factors such as increased competition, a larger population of lawyers, pressure from clients to keep fees low, and government policies and/or court guidelines in relation to lowering legal costs (or past attempts to introduce a scale of costs for disputes), made it difficult to sustain or increase headcount or to adjust law firm salaries upwards. Some participants commented that some local clients were prepared to pay relatively higher fees for similar services provided by foreign law firms advising on foreign law but were accustomed to insisting on lower or discounted rates when engaging Singapore law firms.

- 2.1.4. Some participants commented that they felt a loss of purpose and pride in their profession or “craft”, because some of their clients did not appreciate their time and effort spent providing quality legal services. They said that some clients were unable to or had no interest in recognizing quality work and were in any event not prepared to pay for quality work. The fees for certain practice areas have also become commoditized. Some participants commented that it was difficult to sustain a smaller legal practice that needs to compete against more senior legal practitioners who are successful at attracting business due to their age or reputation but who did not (in their view) provide quality legal services.
- 2.1.5. For disputes work, some participants commented that they had observed lawyers being stressed and practicing defensively due to a fear of the court making remarks or writing judgments critical of lawyers, and that some lawyers eventually decided not to do disputes work partly due to such stress. Participants also shared that some younger lawyers had been demoralized after perceiving certain Assistant Registrar(s) as being rude to them during hearings and/or setting unreasonable timelines, and that this was one of the reasons for those lawyers deciding to stop doing disputes work. Some participants observed fewer opportunities for advocacy and cross-examination because a higher proportion of disputes are settled before trial due to the widespread use of mediation.
- 2.2. Foreign-qualified mid-career Singapore lawyers:** Some participants discussed the possibility of regulatory or other measures to make it easier for Singaporean foreign-qualified mid-career lawyers who are presently working overseas to return to Singapore to contribute to the local talent pool. On the other hand, some other participants expressed the view that if the relevant job opportunity in Singapore is attractive enough, that person will be likely to take the necessary steps to qualify to practice in Singapore in any event, so regulatory changes are not necessary.
- 3. Innovation and adaptation:** Singapore law firms must continue to embrace technological advancements, including AI and legal technology, and must adapt their business models and operations accordingly. There was also a call from some focus group participants a more ground-up approach when formulating policies which affect the legal profession.
- 3.1. Adoption and affordability of AI and legal tech:** There was a strong consensus from participants on the importance of AI and its potential as a transformative tool for legal practice, including in terms of maintaining a competitive edge and improving operational efficiency. In addition to AI, investment in other legal tech such as document management systems and other practice tools was viewed as important. However, focus group participants expressed concerns about the affordability of existing AI and legal tech platforms, especially for smaller law firms. Some participants commented that they had observed US and Australian firms currently utilizing AI much more extensively as compared with Singapore law firms. Participants queried the possibility of collective purchasing arrangements to reduce prices, or the development of more affordable local AI solutions.

- 3.2. Suggested model AI governance framework:** Participants emphasized that AI tools must be utilized responsibly and in compliance with existing ethical obligations, including the need to protect client confidentiality. Some focus group participants suggested the possibility of drafting a model AI governance framework for Singapore law firms, while also noting that this could also be left to each law practice to formulate, bearing in mind existing regulatory and ethical obligations.
- 3.3. The importance of ground-up feedback formulating policies affecting the profession:** Participants commented that when formulating policies affecting the legal profession, they would appreciate a more bottom-up approach which ensures that practitioners are consulted. Some expressed the view that some recent developments such as the amendments to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) regime appeared to be a relatively top-down imposition, which ought to have taken into account lawyers' concerns about the increased CPD hours required. Participants commented that the use of processes to gather ground-up feedback such as conducting focus groups at an earlier stage of policy formulation, instead of after the policy has already been drafted, would help.
- 3.4. Alternative billing models:** Participants were queried whether their firms had considered or utilized any alternative billing models apart from the billable hour or fixed fee arrangements, but the consensus was that these were still the most appropriate methods of billing and/or that there were presently no viable alternatives.
- 3.5. Alternative firm structures:** Participants were queried whether their firms were considering or had considered any alternative structures to the existing and traditional law firm structures presently used in Singapore (sole proprietor, partnership, LLP, LLC, and LLCs grouped together as Chambers). All participants answered no, and that they were satisfied with their existing law firm structures.

ANNEX C

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

EVENT	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (TECHNOLOGY)		
DATE	8 MAY 2025 (THU)	TIME	4:00PM ~ 6:00PM

GENERAL	
What is LegalTech?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement Across Stakeholders: The discussion is a landmark event in legal practice, bringing together practitioners from various sectors to collaboratively address technology-related challenges. This inclusive approach ensures that the issues of the judiciary, legal services, and in-house counsel are not overlooked. ▪ Focus Areas: The conversation spans multiple facets of technology in the legal field, including HR policy implementation, workplace bullying, and AI tools for legal search. A significant emphasis is placed on the ethical implications and concerns of stakeholders, particularly clients.
DAY-TO-DAY EFFICIENCY / INEFFICIENCY	
<p>What are repetitive tasks in your practice that ought to be tech-enabled?</p> <p>What are high value tasks which <i>presently</i> need not be tech-enabled?</p> <p>What are tasks which in future should be tech-enabled?</p>	<p><u>DAY-TO-DAY EFFICIENCY AND INEFFICIENCY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Repetitive Tasks: Participants highlighted calendaring and document filing as areas ripe for technological enhancement. The integration of court systems like eLIT and ICMS with personal calendars was suggested to automate updates and deadlines, reducing manual input. ▪ System Reliability: There is skepticism about the reliability of current systems like eLIT, which are seen as slow and prone to errors. Participants expressed a desire for a more integrated system that reduces discrepancies and improves efficiency.
EVOLUTION OF WORKFLOW	
<p>How would you do it now such that:</p> <p>(a) Practice is sustainable for counsel</p> <p>(b) Client/Internal Department received efficient responses/turnaround</p> <p>(c) There is next gen training</p> <p>(d) There is Access to Justice</p>	<p><u>EVOLUTION OF WORKFLOW</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Practices: The integration of AI in legal workflows is seen as a way to reduce workload and improve efficiency. AI can assist with tasks like proofreading and formatting, allowing lawyers to focus on more substantive work. ▪ Future Prospects: There is potential for AI to play a larger role in legal practice, but it is not expected to replace human judgment and strategy. The focus is on using AI to complement human efforts and improve access to justice. <p><u>ACCESS TO JUSTICE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenges for Laypersons: The current legal systems are complex and not user-friendly for laypersons, who often struggle with filing documents and meeting compliance requirements. There is a call for systems that are more accessible and provide guidance

<p>(e) There is profitability</p> <p>(f) There is quality of development of law (Common Law)</p>	<p>to non-lawyers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Solutions: Suggestions include providing templates, pre-populated forms, and chatbots to assist users in navigating legal processes. However, there is concern that these solutions may not fully address the underlying issues of system complexity. <p><u>TRUST AND USE OF AI IN LEGAL PRACTICE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust versus Hallucination: There is a need for assurance in the accuracy of AI-generated content. Participants discussed the importance of human intervention in drafting and the potential for AI to assist with minor tasks. ▪ Comfort Levels: Comfort with using AI varies among participants, with some expressing high comfort due to the time-saving potential, while others are concerned about AI dictating their thought processes or missing crucial details. ▪ Pricing and Adoption: The cost of AI tools is a consideration, with some participants unwilling to pay for current solutions. There is interest in contributing to the development of more reliable and cost-effective tools.
<p>PRACTICAL PROBLEMS TO TECH ADOPTION</p>	
<p>Why isn't more tech adopted?</p>	<p><u>PRACTICAL PROBLEMS TO TECH ADOPTION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ System Limitations: The current legal tech systems are seen as inadequate in addressing the needs of both lawyers and laypersons. There is a call for more connected systems that can share data and reduce duplication of work. ▪ Cultural and Ethical Considerations: Lawyers are generally risk-averse, and there is a need for cultural change to embrace technology. Ethical considerations, such as data privacy and the potential for AI to generate false negatives, are also concerns.