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# “LPM: ASK THE DIRECTORS”

## HOW DID YOU END UP IN LPM?

Having a background in law is not a requirement to be in LPM. Not everyone in the LPM space has a background in law, and neither is it a prerequisite. Some firms prefer to have a team of LPMs from various industries with different experiences and skills to bring to the table.

On our panel, we have directors who pursued legal education and practiced as a lawyer but, along the way, have come upon the opportunity to be in LPM. The decision to enter the LPM profession has given some even greater satisfaction and happiness. Some directors have journeyed into LPM from entirely different backgrounds. Regardless, all have invaluable hard and soft skills to put forth in this growing field.

## LPM AT YOUR FIRM

The way that LPM works vary from firm to firm. More often, it has to do with the size and maturity of the LPM department. In smaller firms, LPMs may be doing the work that specialized teams in larger firms do, such as client relations, pricing, and tech. In a smaller firm, LPMs may have to juggle a bit more, even sometimes doing it all. Generally speaking, LPM has a longer-standing history in the United Kingdom, so you could say it is more mature and well established there. LPM in the United States is fast up and coming, followed by Asia.

*“I report directly to the firm's chief pricing and value officer, and underneath him we have essentially three teams. We've got the legal project management team, we have the pricing team and we have a rates management team. And we all work really closely together. But we have a very bright-line definition between all of those teams.”*

*“I think the UK has probably had legal project management as a concept, as a career path, maybe a little bit longer than the US. So there's starting to be a bit more of a division of skill set. So although, for example, my background is primarily project management with some process improvement, so I need to know how that operates. I need to deploy some of that in the work that I'm doing. But it's a lot more of a specialized skill set.”*

At the end of the day, everyone can agree that LPMs are known as the communicators, who always get things done.

*“There is something that we call our commercial management, which is essentially scope management, budget management, just making sure that the matters are progressing as envisioned. And then we have our full-service flavor of LPM. And that's really the more traditional getting involved from the very outset of the matter to help scope budget define the assumptions put together the work plans, the communication plans, the risk matrices, the contingency planning, managing the timekeepers, keeping an eye on the scope, keeping an eye on the assumptions, keeping an eye, making sure that the time keepers are putting their time in the correct buckets, coding them to the correct phases, the correct tasks, and then at the end, kind of doing that post mortem to figure out, all right, what went well that we can use for the future, what can we improve for the future? So that's really the way that's the ideal structure.”*

## ESSENTIAL QUALITIES IN AN LPM CANDIDATE

LPM candidates not only need hard skills, such as skills in Excel, excellent data analysis, and presentations, but they also need soft skills in communication, patience, and control. The skill at the top of the list is communication, and without communication, the role of LPM is lost.

*“When it comes to project managers managing a project in a legal setting, a lot of times we rely on the power of persuasion. We have to suggest things. We have to put the information in front of the partner so they can act on it, but hoping they act the way we're asking them to act on it. So it's a lot of that the soft skills are extremely important.”*

### LPM: HARD & SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED

- ✓ COMMUNICATION & CLARITY
- ✓ EXCEL & DATA ANALYSIS
- ✓ CONTROL
- ✓ ATTENTION TO DETAIL
- ✓ PATIENCE
- ✓ PRESENTATION SKILLS

## THE FUTURE OF LPM

Since LPM is still relatively new, there is much room to grow. And, as the role grows and matures, it is proving itself essential and an integral part of many law firms. The market for LPM is on the rise, without signs of slowing down anytime soon. At the moment, there are a lot more LPM positions out there than there are people to fill them.

The future of LPM is looking good, and no one should let their backgrounds deter them from pursuing a career in the field. There are LPMs today who have come from having been lawyers, law school graduates, PA roles, process roles, regulatory roles, tech, and more. Having a diverse team of individuals can be advantageous, especially when pooling their thoughts to find new ways to solve challenges they encounter.

*“...There are just so many positions out there open and not enough people to fill them, so it's a good time to be a candidate in this market. Not such a good time to be me in this market trying to find someone.”*

*“LPM is not going anywhere... And that's going to keep growing and growing. What else do we need under this operations world? We need process. You can't have PM without process, tech support, all of these kinds of industries all over that.”*

*“Bring in people with that background in LPM or background in PM. But obviously don't be closed off to other backgrounds as well, because if you've got the right mindset and the right base skill set there, it can work. And we've seen it work pretty much with everybody in our team so far as well. So maybe a slightly controversial approach, but so far so good.”*

*“...Don't let your degree dictate your quality of life. If you are an associate at a big law firm and it's not for you, don't stick with it just because you're a J.D. and you feel like you need to. There are a million different things you can do. And I would highly encourage you to look into LPM just because the market is just going crazy right now.”*