

# AM I STEALING BILLABLE HOURS FROM LAWYERS?

## The Billable LPM Question

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### STEALING BILLABLES FROM LAWYERS?

Whether characterised as “stealing” or “borrowing,” LPMs manage tasks and administrative work that would not have been billable by a lawyer otherwise.

*“I think LPM's are "stealing" the billable hours that lawyers don't bill anyways due to client restrictions/write offs, or limitations on admin time they can bill. **So yes, we are stealing hours, but it's not hours they were going to bill anyways.**”*

*“**No I wouldn't say stealing.** If you haven't budgeted hours for PMO, which helps to enable a more streamlined/efficient project, then I guess it could be seen as stealing however!”*

*“Utilising LPMs allows lawyers to focus on the legal deliverables and LPMs to support the delivery of exceptional customer service. **Not stealing, but a valuable addition.**”*

*“It isn't stealing but perhaps **borrowing time** as LPM time could or should lead to additional attorney time once a strategic plan is put in place for the Lawyers.”*

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*Speaking as someone from the big 4, my team's approach is to include a certain % of the overall budget for LPM when pricing. Why can't law firms do the same? Is it because they see LPM more as admin time?*

### USURPING THE BIG FOUR

If Big 4 LPMs are billable, why not law firm LPMs?

*“I would say most law firm LPMs are not billed due to pressures from clients not to bill for work that is a value add. That is likely the differentiator.”*

*“**I agree US clients are typically very resistant to bill for value added services**”*

*“My LPM team recorded all their hours. Convo between partners and clients allowed them to bill through our hours. Of those passed through **our collection rate was 98%. It's about setting expectations 1st w/ partner then with clients.**”*

*“**I like the idea of an LPM flat rate/monthly charge - that's a smart approach!**”*

*“It is interesting that the work that is being done at a cost effect rate is hard to push through as billable when not too long ago we were billing for telephone calls and copies. Big 4 probably still charge for long distance and faxing :D “*

### FINAL THOUGHTS

*“I think it will take a real shift in traditional lawyer attitudes/mentality but I don't see why they can't share a piece of the pie! That's what I'm aiming for one day ”*

### ADVOCATING FOR PIECE OF THE PIE?

Does a billable LPM lead them to advocate for a piece of the pie?

*“**This can go both ways.** Because we didn't have a piece of the pie, clients saw our motivation as purely one of wanting to provide value to them. But if LPMs' were getting %age, that might change what work they do and stop being admins.”*

*“Absolutely - LPMs are a fundamental part of a practice and the delivery of legal services and clients see the value in dedicated LPMs - let Lawyers be a Lawyer while LPMs do their thing!”*

*“**If there's a share in the profit it would encourage us to become more involved,** and the more involved you are in your work generally the harder you work which could lead to interesting changes/ideas with how you work. I like talking about this!”*

*“That is the issue between the US vs the world that LPMs and the like can not get a seat at the table they will always be considered staff. **When you have a piece of the pie you can advocate for yourself and your people like partners do for their practice groups.**”*

### BILLABLE LPMs LESS INCENTED?

*“I would hope the opposite would happen if LPMs billed for their time. **I think billing your time can cause you to be more efficient** particularly if you know there is a budget value associated with your work.”*

*“**This is a fun question.** If we were subject to billable hours would we “pad” our time to hit that? Does marriage to billable hours = “being efficiently inefficient” so you can hit that hours goal? Maybe LPM is better as a flat rate/monthly charge?”*

***Very interesting. I've noticed a bit of both-** less efficiency on some hand but then Partners that supercharge their practice (budgeting, etc.) with LPM.*

### LAST NUGGETS OF WISDOM

*The community answered with so many song titles!*

*“Don't give up!”*

*“Don't stop believing!!!”*

*“Keep fighting the good fight.”*

*“The only way is up .”*