ACTIONABLE AI

presents

AI Playbook

Google Gemini and NotebookLM for Small Law Firms

A Practical Guide to Using Google's AI Tools Responsibly, Ethically, and Profitably

actionableai.net · Prepared by Greg Yates - Revised September 29, 2026

Important Notice

This playbook is educational and informational. It is not legal advice, ethics counsel, or a substitute for consultation with your state bar or qualified counsel on any specific matter or on your firm's own professional-responsibility obligations.

Nothing here creates an attorney-client relationship. Actionable AI is a consulting firm, not a law firm.

Google's AI products change frequently. Features, pricing tiers, data-handling terms, and privacy policies described in this playbook reflect conditions as of September 2026 and must be verified against current Google documentation before you rely on them. A feature available in one plan tier today may move to a higher tier or be discontinued tomorrow.

Ethics rules governing AI use in legal practice vary by state. The analysis here is built on ABA Model Rules and ABA Formal Opinion 512 (July 29, 2024), which provide a national framework. Your state bar may have issued opinions, proposed amendments, or adopted rules that are more specific or more restrictive. Check your own state bar's current guidance before implementing any AI workflow in client matters.

All sample policies, disclosures, letters, and prompts are starting points. Have a licensed attorney review them before adoption or use in your firm.

Google's products, and the other tools named in these pages, are named because small firms already own or evaluate them, not as endorsements. Actionable AI takes no fees from any vendor and recommends no product.

A note on numbers. Every figure here falls into one of three buckets, and you can tell which from the sentence around it. Statutory amounts, deadlines, and case outcomes carry their own citation and can be

checked at the source. Third-party statistics name the body that produced them. Anything else is an Actionable AI working assumption, offered to be stress-tested against your firm's own rates, volumes, and matter values rather than repeated as fact.

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The Problem With Generic AI Advice

Here is what the AI influencers will not tell you: they are comparing all AI tools as if they are the same product sold by different companies. They are not. Treating Gemini as a faster version of ChatGPT, or NotebookLM as a smarter Google search, will get you into trouble, not because the tools are bad, but because the advice you are following was not written by someone who understood the difference.

Generic AI advice does not know that Google sells two completely different Gemini products with privacy terms so different that one may expose your client data to human reviewers while the other contractually bars it. It does not know that NotebookLM is architecturally unlike every other AI assistant on the market: its source-grounded chat draws on notebook sources, although it can still misread or misstate them. It does not know that a small law firm may already be paying for enterprise-grade Gemini through a Google Workspace subscription and not realize it.

Generic advice produces generic results. In a law firm, generic results mean a confidentiality violation because a paralegal used the firm's Google account for one task and a personal Gmail account for another. They mean a hallucinated case citation because a lawyer used Gemini for research without understanding that Gemini is not a legal research database and cannot verify that the case it cited actually exists. They mean a tool that could transform your practice sitting unused because nobody explained it correctly.

What This Playbook Does Differently

This playbook was built for solo practitioners and small Florida firms with fewer than 25 lawyers who want to use Google's AI tools in actual client work without creating ethics problems, confidentiality violations, or embarrassing court filings. Every recommendation is grounded in ABA Formal Opinion 512 (July 29, 2024), current ABA Model Rules, and the growing body of court decisions and state bar guidance that now governs AI in legal practice.

It answers three questions that matter:

1. What are the real ethics and confidentiality risks of using Gemini and NotebookLM, and how do you build guardrails that hold?
2. What specific tasks should you use each tool for, and which uses will generate sanctions, grievances, or malpractice exposure?
3. How do you implement these tools without blowing a deadline, leaking client data, or filing something a judge will sanction?

That is it. No evangelism. No predictions about the future of law. Just the specific, practical analysis a small firm needs to decide which Google AI tools are worth adopting and how to use them without creating new problems.

The Actionable AI Philosophy

Tools serve lawyers. Not the other way around.

The small firm that benefits most from AI is not the one that adopts the most tools. It is the one that adopts the right ones carefully: picks them, governs them, trains on them, and uses each only where it earns its keep. AI fits a small law firm well when it compresses time on tasks that are high-volume and pattern-based. It does not replace judgment on any matter that requires one.

THE ACTIONABLE AI TEST

Before you put any AI tool near a client matter, answer four questions:

1. Does the tool have a contractual no-training-on-your-data clause?
2. Where does the client data go, and who can access it?
3. Can a lawyer verify the output before it reaches a client, an agency, or a court?
4. Would you be comfortable explaining this use to your state bar, and to the judge on the case?

If you cannot answer all four confidently, the tool is not ready for client matters.

Why Google Gemini and NotebookLM Are Different

Most lawyers who try Google's AI tools do not realize they are using two fundamentally different products with different architectures, different risk profiles, and different privacy terms. Understanding the distinction is not optional. It is the single most important thing in this playbook.

Two Products, Not One

Gemini is Google's general-purpose AI assistant. It draws on a large language model trained on broad data and uses that training to generate text, answer questions, draft documents, and conduct research. Like ChatGPT and Claude, Gemini does not limit its answers to documents you have uploaded. It generates responses from its training data. That is both its power and its primary risk: it can and does generate plausible-sounding content that is factually wrong.

A naming note before we go further: on July 16, 2026, Google renamed NotebookLM to Gemini Notebook. Existing notebooks and shared links carry over, while Google continues to add features. This playbook uses the NotebookLM name throughout because that is still what most lawyers search for, but the interface you open will say Gemini Notebook. NotebookLM is different from Gemini in a fundamental way. In its source-grounded chat, it answers from sources in the notebook and commonly provides links back to them; some links identify a whole document rather than a passage. It is designed to stay within those sources, but it can misread a case, misattribute a quotation, or make an unsupported claim. Source grounding makes checking faster. It does not make checking optional, and the quality of the answer depends on the sources you selected and the lawyer's review.

> **THE ONE-LINE DISTINCTION**
>
> Gemini generates answers from everything it was trained on.
>
> NotebookLM generates answers grounded in the documents you upload.
>
> They are not interchangeable. Each tool has tasks it does well and tasks it should never be used for.

The Account Split: The Confidentiality Decision You Are Making Right Now

This is the most consequential privacy issue in using Google's AI tools, and the one most lawyers get wrong.

Google maintains two completely different data-handling regimes, one for personal Google accounts (gmail.com addresses) and one for Google Workspace accounts (your firm's domain). The difference is not a matter of degree. It is structural.

Under Google's consumer terms, interactions with Gemini on a personal account may be reviewed by human reviewers to improve safety and model quality, and are subject to retention periods. For personal Gemini users, Google's standard privacy policy applies, including potential use of activity data across Google services.

Under Google Workspace terms, when the specific Gemini service is enabled as a core service under a qualifying Workspace edition, Google commits contractually that prompts, outputs, and uploaded data are not reviewed by human reviewers, are not used to train AI models, under the applicable Workspace terms. A work address by itself does not establish those terms. NotebookLM became a Google Workspace core

service in February 2025, but the administrator must confirm that it is a core service under the firm's particular license and is enabled for the users involved.

> **THE ACCOUNT TRAP**
>
> Every lawyer in your firm should answer this question right now: when you open Gemini or NotebookLM, which Google account is signed in?
>
> If the answer is a personal gmail.com account, even if you are on a firm computer, you are not operating under enterprise data protections.
>
> Use the approved firm Workspace account after the administrator verifies the license, core-service status, and protections for each AI service. But many firms have not made this explicit, and staff members default to whatever account their browser remembers.

The Context Window: What It Actually Means for Your Work

Eligible Gemini Apps access levels offer a one-million-token context window, which Google illustrates as up to approximately 1,500 pages of text. Standard access can be limited to 32,000 tokens, and some modes have separate limits. Confirm the limit for the firm's edition and selected mode before planning a large-file workflow.

For a law firm, the practical application is significant. When the files fit the account's context and upload limits, a production can be submitted for initial analysis. A case file, complaints, answers, discovery, depositions, and expert reports may need to be divided into batches. A research question can be answered with reference to an entire body of uploaded primary sources rather than fragmented pieces.

The limitation is equally important to understand. A large context window does not mean perfect comprehension. Gemini can miss details buried in the middle of a long document, overweight the beginning and end of a submission, and fail to flag contradictions in dense factual records. The context window is a capacity advantage, not an accuracy guarantee. Large inputs still require lawyer review of the output.

Source Grounding: Why NotebookLM Fails Differently

The value proposition of NotebookLM in legal work is precisely its constraint. General AI tools hallucinate because they generate plausible-sounding text from training data, training data that may include outdated law, misremembered cases, and invented citations. NotebookLM's source-grounded chat draws on the notebook sources you select. That constraint helps, but it does not make the generated answer error-free.

This reduces one route to invented citations and introduces another risk. Source-grounded chat should not present a case absent from the notebook as source support, but it can still misread a case that is there. It may also miss a critical fact that you failed to upload, give you a confident answer based on a document you included that turns out to be outdated, or fail to flag a contradiction that spans documents you forgot to add. Many answers link to source passages, while some refer to a document as a whole; in either event, verification against the underlying text is still required. The tool is only as complete as the notebook.

NotebookLM's free tier supports up to fifty sources per notebook. NotebookLM Plus (bundled with the Google AI Plus subscription, and with certain Workspace plans) supports up to 100 sources per notebook; NotebookLM Pro (bundled with Google AI Pro) raises the limit to 300; NotebookLM Ultra (bundled with Google AI Ultra, sold in two storage tiers) supports up to 500 or 600 sources depending on the storage plan,

along with shared notebooks for team access and usage analytics. Google restructured these tiers at I/O in May 2026 (adding the new Plus tier), so confirm current names and limits before relying on them. For most single-matter research, fifty sources is sufficient. For complex multi-party litigation or comprehensive knowledge-base projects, the Plus tier is necessary.

What Google Workspace Integration Actually Means

Many small firms already pay for Google Workspace, the suite that includes Gmail, Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Calendar, and Google Meet. The Gemini AI features are now bundled into Workspace Business Standard, Business Plus, and Enterprise plans, which means firms at those tiers may already have access to Gemini for Workspace without an additional purchase.

The integration has practical value. Gemini in Gmail can summarize email threads and draft replies. Gemini in Google Docs can assist with drafting and editing. Gemini in Google Drive can summarize documents. These are not the deep AI-assisted legal workflows described in this playbook, but they reduce friction for lawyers who already live in Workspace. The same enterprise-grade data protections that apply to your Gmail apply to Gemini when you use it inside Workspace apps on your firm's account.

Check with your Google Workspace administrator or your plan's billing page to confirm which tier your firm is on and what Gemini features are included. Feature availability varies by plan.

A Note on Other Google AI Features

Google has built AI into many of its products beyond Gemini and NotebookLM. Google Search now includes AI Overviews, generated summaries at the top of search results, which are a general consumer feature and should not be used to research legal questions or case citations. They carry the same hallucination risk as any generative AI output and lack source verification. Google Lens processes images, which has limited direct application in most legal workflows. Google Translate offers machine translation that can assist with foreign-language documents but requires attorney review for any legal accuracy. Smart Compose and Smart Reply in Gmail are suggestion features, not generative drafting tools; they operate on a much smaller model and do not raise the same data-handling considerations as Gemini. These products are mentioned for orientation. This playbook covers Gemini and NotebookLM exclusively.

What Google's AI Stack Does Not Do

The honest account of any AI tool includes its limits. For Gemini and NotebookLM in a law firm context:

— **Legal research database replacement:** Gemini is not Westlaw or Lexis. It cannot retrieve current cases, verify that a citation is valid, confirm that a statute is still in effect, or give you Shepard's or KeyCite treatment history. Use it for synthesis and drafting; verify every legal authority against a primary source.

— **Jurisdictional expertise:** Gemini's training reflects general legal knowledge weighted toward commonly available sources. It is weaker on state-specific procedural rules, local court customs, and recent unpublished opinions. Assume its jurisdiction-specific outputs need verification.

— **Conflict checking:** Neither tool integrates with your case management system. AI cannot replace a formal conflicts check.

— **Real-time information:** Gemini's training has a knowledge cutoff. Recent case law, new statutes, and updated regulations may not be reflected in its answers. Always verify that cited authority is current.

— **Attorney judgment:** Intake decisions, litigation strategy, settlement analysis, and any output that requires legal advice belong to a lawyer. These tools do not replace that judgment; they inform it.

The US Ethics Reality

The ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct were not written with AI in mind. They apply anyway. The American Bar Association issued Formal Opinion 512 on July 29, 2024, its first formal ethics opinion addressing generative AI in legal practice. That opinion is the national baseline. It does not create new rules. It maps existing rules onto the new technology and explains where they bite.

One caution before reading further: the ABA Model Rules are not binding law. Each state adopts its own rules of professional conduct. As of mid-2026, many states have issued their own ethics opinions on AI (including California, North Carolina, Texas, Oregon, New York, and others) — Florida is one of them. Florida Bar Ethics Opinion 24-1 (Jan. 19, 2024) permits generative AI use subject to confidentiality, oversight/competence, billing, and advertising safeguards, and the Florida Supreme Court has amended the Comments to Rules Regulating The Florida Bar 4-1.1, 4-1.6, 4-5.1, and 4-5.3 to flag the 'necessity to take care in using generative artificial intelligence.' In re Amendments to Rules Regulating The Florida Bar – Chapter 4, 393 So. 3d 137 (Fla. 2024) (SC2024-0032, eff. Oct. 28, 2024). Some states are proposing formal rule amendments that would carry disciplinary authority, and the landscape is evolving rapidly. Check the Florida Bar's current guidance directly. The analysis here reflects the ABA framework. Check your own state bar's current guidance, your state may be more specific or more restrictive.

The Five Rules That Matter Most

RULE 1.1: COMPETENCE

The comment to Model Rule 1.1 requires maintaining the legal knowledge and skill, including the benefits and risks of relevant technology, to provide competent representation. Competence in the context of AI does not require technical mastery of how language models work. It requires enough understanding to decide when a tool is appropriate, to supervise its output, to verify the results, and to recognize when something has gone wrong.

For Google's tools specifically, competence means knowing the difference between Gemini and NotebookLM, understanding the account split and its privacy implications, and knowing that neither tool is a substitute for a legal research database. ABA Formal Opinion 512 states that lawyers must 'periodically reassess' their understanding as the technology evolves. With Google updating its AI products multiple times per year, that reassessment is not a one-time event.

> **ACTION ITEM**
>
> Within 90 days, every lawyer in the firm completes at least one CLE covering AI in legal practice.
>
> Document it. This is the cheapest single step that addresses the competence obligation for the whole firm.
>
> Check your state bar's CLE requirements and approved provider list, many state bars now offer AI-specific CLE credit.

RULE 1.6: CONFIDENTIALITY

Model Rule 1.6 protects information relating to the representation, subject to informed consent, implied authorization, and its stated exceptions. ABA Formal Opinion 512 calls for informed consent before putting

representation-related information into a self-learning generative AI tool whose design presents a risk of disclosure; when consent is required, generic boilerplate is insufficient. The opinion calls for a fact-specific review of the client, matter, task, and tool. Florida Bar Ethics Opinion 24-1 separately recommends informed consent before third-party generative AI use that would disclose confidential information.

For Google's tools, this analysis starts with the account question. Using client information in Gemini or NotebookLM through a personal Google account operates under consumer terms that allow human review. Using the same tools through a Google Workspace account with enterprise data protections operates under a different contractual regime. The firm's written governance policy must specify which account is required for any client-related AI work, and staff must be trained on it.

> **HARD RULE**
>
> No client information, names, matter facts, documents, identifiers, enters Gemini or NotebookLM unless the firm is using a Google Workspace account with the service enabled as a core service and its enterprise data protections confirmed in writing.
>
> Personal gmail.com accounts are approved only for tasks with no client data: public-law research, generic drafting templates, continuing education.

RULE 5.3: SUPERVISION OF NONLAWYER ASSISTANCE

ABA Formal Opinion 512 treats generative AI output the way it treats work product from a nonlawyer: the lawyer is responsible for reviewing and supervising it. In a small firm where a paralegal or legal assistant uses Gemini to draft correspondence or NotebookLM to summarize depositions, the supervising attorney owns the output. A written policy, training on verification protocols, and documented review are the minimum requirements.

The supervision obligation is higher in a small firm, not lower, because the staff-to-attorney ratio often means less review bandwidth. An AI-generated document that bypasses attorney review does not stop being the firm's responsibility because a machine produced it.

RULE 3.3: CANDOR TOWARD THE TRIBUNAL

Generative AI tools fabricate case citations, misstate holdings, and invent quotations. This is not a bug that will be patched. It is a fundamental characteristic of how large language models generate text. They predict plausible text, not true text. A confident paragraph citing a 2024 Eleventh Circuit decision may be entirely invented.

The sanctions record is now substantial. More than 1,600 court proceedings worldwide have now involved AI-generated hallucinations or fabricated content, according to the public AI Hallucination Cases database, and the count is still climbing. In the first published federal appellate opinion on AI-fabricated citations, the Ninth Circuit sanctioned two California attorneys $2,500 each for submitting briefs containing citations to opinions that did not exist and fabricated quotes from existing cases. The court also suspended both from practice before the circuit for six months, required them to send the order to their clients, opposing counsel, and the presiding judge in every other case they have, and ordered that for two years every attorney at their firm file a sworn statement with each filing disclosing whether generative AI was used, naming the tool, and certifying personal review of all citations and quotations. A Colorado attorney, Zachariah Crabill, received a one-year-and-one-day suspension with ninety days to serve and the remainder

stayed on a two-year probation, after filing a motion built on ChatGPT-invented citations, failing to withdraw it, and initially attributing the errors to a legal intern. People v. Crabill, 23PDJ067 (Colo. O.P.D.J. Nov. 22, 2023). Judges across the country have issued standing orders requiring attorneys to certify that AI-generated content has been verified by a human.

> **THE RULE**
>
> No AI-generated citation, case, statute, regulation, or quotation, appears in any document, filing, memo, or letter until a real lawyer has verified it against Westlaw, Lexis, or an official court or government database.
>
> Gemini is useful for drafting and synthesis. It is not a cite-check tool. NotebookLM only cites from what you uploaded, which means its 'citations' point back to your documents, not to verified primary sources.
>
> Print this. Put it on the wall. Make it absolute.

RULE 1.5: FEES

ABA Formal Opinion 512 addresses the fee question directly: a lawyer may not charge a client for time spent learning to use a technology for client matters generally, and the efficiency that AI creates cannot be used to inflate billed time. If Gemini compresses a three-hour research task into forty-five minutes, the time entry is forty-five minutes.

For hourly practices, this means contemporaneous time records must reflect reality. Flat and contingent fees remain subject to the applicable reasonableness factors; a sharp reduction in work from AI may require reevaluating a flat fee. The opinion also notes that in most circumstances, lawyers cannot charge clients separately for AI tool costs as a disbursement, these are generally overhead costs, though fee agreements and applicable state bar guidance may vary.

Other Rules That Touch This Work

— **Rule 1.4 (Communication):** ABA Formal Opinion 512 notes that clients should generally be informed if AI plays a material role in their representation. Engagement letter disclosure (Appendix B) addresses this.

— **Rule 1.18 (Prospective Clients):** AI-assisted intake tools that screen potential clients create confidentiality and conflict obligations from the first interaction, before any engagement.

— **Rule 5.5 (Unauthorized Practice of Law):** An AI tool cannot give legal advice or form a representation. Any client-facing AI interaction must make clear that the user is communicating with a technology tool, not a lawyer.

— **Rule 7.1 (Communications About Services):** Advertising claims about AI capabilities must be substantiated and not misleading.

The Courts Are Writing Their Own Rules: Right Now

No single federal AI disclosure rule exists as of mid-2026, but individual judges and circuits have moved aggressively. Judge Brantley Starr of the Northern District of Texas was among the first to act, requiring all attorneys to certify that any AI-generated text was checked for accuracy by a human before filing. The requirement has since spread across dozens of federal district courts in varied forms.

For Florida practitioners, state court is where this matters most for day-to-day practice. The Florida Supreme Court amended Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.515(d)(2), effective June 15, 2026, to require every signer of any filing in any Florida state court (attorney or self-represented litigant) to certify that the legal authorities cited exist and are accurately cited, and the rule expressly authorizes sanctions for a filing inconsistent with that certification. In re Amendments to the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration, No. SC2026-0673 (Fla. May 28, 2026). This uniform statewide rule replaced the prior patchwork of circuit-by-circuit administrative orders and applies to every Florida state-court filing, not just filings before judges who have issued individual AI standing orders. Check Rule 2.515(d)(2) before every state-court filing, in addition to any federal district or judge-specific order.

The Ninth Circuit, responding to its own sanctions cases involving fabricated citations, issued orders explicitly warning of AI hallucination risks and the professional-responsibility consequences of unverified AI-generated filings. Many district court judges have individual standing orders requiring disclosure of AI use in submitted documents. Before filing in any court, check the assigned judge's current standing order. The number of such orders has grown from a handful in 2023 to hundreds by mid-2026.

BEFORE EVERY FILING

Check the assigned judge's current standing order for AI disclosure requirements.

Verify every legal citation against Westlaw, Lexis, or the official court database, regardless of whether AI was used to draft the filing.

When in doubt, disclose. Judges respond far better to voluntary transparency than to discovering undisclosed AI use after the fact.

Appendix C gives you certification language you can adapt to the order that applies.

The Emerging Workflow Most Small Firms Are Missing

Most of this playbook is about using AI to run your practice. This chapter is about something more specific: a workflow that is changing how productive small firms manage their caseloads, and that most lawyers have not figured out yet.

The problem every small firm knows is document chaos. A single contested matter might generate hundreds of files: pleadings, discovery requests and responses, deposition transcripts, expert reports, correspondence, medical records, financial documents. Lawyers spend enormous time trying to find what they already have, reconstruct timelines they have reviewed before, and catch contradictions buried across hundreds of pages. The answer most firms reach for is more hours. The answer NotebookLM enables is a different kind of search.

The Per-Matter NotebookLM Hub

Forward-thinking small firms are creating a dedicated NotebookLM notebook for each active matter. Every document in the case file, properly uploaded through a Google Workspace account, goes into that notebook: pleadings, transcripts, expert reports, correspondence, contracts, photographs with captions, everything. The notebook becomes a searchable, grounded intelligence layer on the entire case.

In its source-grounded chat, NotebookLM draws on the notebook sources you select, a useful verification advantage. It can still misstate a quotation or the significance of a case. Many answers link to a source passage, but some reference an entire document. Open the source and check the cited text before using it. A lawyer can ask: 'What did Dr. Smith say about the timeline of symptoms?' and get an answer with a citation back to the deposition page. 'List all dates mentioned in the correspondence' produces a linked chronology. 'Where do the defendant's interrogatory responses contradict the deposition testimony?' surfaces contradictions across two document types in seconds.

What Changed in February 2025

NotebookLM became a Google Workspace core service in February 2025. Before that, it operated under consumer terms even for Workspace users. For qualifying Workspace editions where NotebookLM is enabled as a core service, Google states that uploads, queries, and responses are not human-reviewed or used to train AI models. The administrator should verify the firm's license, service status, and terms before client information is uploaded.

This matters for law firms because the ethical objection to per-matter document uploads, that client information was reaching Google's servers under consumer terms that allowed human review, was substantially resolved for users of qualifying Workspace editions after the service and terms are confirmed. The tool went from ethically questionable for this use case to ethically defensible (with proper governance) in a single product update.

> **KEY REQUIREMENT**
>
> The per-matter NotebookLM hub is only ethically defensible for client work when the firm has confirmed that its Workspace edition provides the applicable enterprise data protections for the service and user.

Personal google.com accounts do not provide these protections. The account, license, and service status are governance questions that must be answered before any matter documents are uploaded.

The Audio Overview: Passive Case Review

NotebookLM's Audio Overview feature converts uploaded documents into a conversational podcast-style summary generated from your sources. A lawyer can upload the key documents in a case and generate a ten-minute audio summary to listen to during a commute or between meetings. The audio is based on notebook sources but may misstate the record; check any detail before relying on it.

As of 2025, Audio Overviews are interactive: you can ask the AI hosts follow-up questions by voice during playback and get responses grounded in your uploaded sources. For a lawyer with a hearing the next morning who wants to review a deposition on the drive in, this is a genuinely different kind of tool. Verify any specific fact the audio surfaces against the original document before relying on it in court, but as a synthesis and orientation tool, the Audio Overview has no direct equivalent in other AI products.

How to Set Up a Matter Notebook Correctly

— **Account first:** Confirm every team member is signed into an approved firm Workspace account and that the administrator has verified NotebookLM's core-service status and protections for that license.

— **One notebook per matter:** Do not mix client matters in a single notebook. Natural separation reduces the risk of cross-matter disclosure and makes it easier to delete or archive the notebook when the matter closes.

— **Upload what you have:** Pleadings, discovery, transcripts, expert reports, key correspondence, and any other documents you would consult if asked a question about the case. More is better, up to the source limit.

— **Name notebooks consistently:** Use a matter number and short description: 'Matter-2026-047-Smith-v-Jones.' This protects against misidentification if a notebook is shared.

— **Shared notebooks:** Basic private notebook sharing allows team members to query the same sources; paid plans may offer advanced sharing controls. Assign notebook ownership to the responsible attorney. Verify the edition and administrator restrictions, then set access controls before sharing.

— **Archive at matter close:** When a matter closes, export the notebook's sources per your document retention policy and delete the notebook. Do not allow matter notebooks to accumulate indefinitely.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT NOTE

The question to ask at your next staff meeting: do we have a standard procedure for creating a matter notebook when a new file opens?

Firms that build this into their intake workflow, notebook created at file-open, documents uploaded as they arrive, report meaningful reductions in the time attorneys spend searching the file. The efficiency compounds as the matter grows.

Ethics Risks & Governance Framework

A governance policy without teeth is a document in a drawer. This section gives you the failure modes that will actually trip a small firm using Google's AI tools, the data classification framework that decides which tool sees which information, and the training that turns a written policy into practice.

High-Risk Failure Modes

THE WRONG ACCOUNT

The most common failure mode. A staff member opens NotebookLM or Gemini while signed into a personal gmail.com account and uploads client documents. The data-handling protections that make these tools appropriate for client work do not apply. The violation occurs the moment the document leaves the firm's trust boundary, regardless of whether a human reviewer ever reads it. The fix is account governance, not tool governance.

HALLUCINATED CITATIONS IN GEMINI OUTPUT

The most professionally dangerous failure mode. A lawyer uses Gemini to draft a brief or memo. Gemini generates plausible-sounding citations to cases that do not exist. The lawyer files the document without verifying the citations. The court sanctions the lawyer. This sequence has now played out in more than 1,600 proceedings worldwide documented in the AI Hallucination Cases database. NotebookLM's source-grounded chat reduces the risk of training-data-generated citations, but its answers can still misstate the uploaded record or misattribute a passage. Gemini can generate unsupported citations as well.

INCOMPLETE NOTEBOOK, CONFIDENT ANSWER

NotebookLM's version of the hallucination problem. Because the tool only answers from uploaded sources, a lawyer who forgets to upload a key document will get answers that are internally consistent with the notebook but wrong as a matter of record. 'Does the contract include an indemnification clause?' will return a confident 'no' if the version of the contract that included it was never uploaded. The completeness of the notebook is the quality-control problem unique to NotebookLM.

OVER-RELIANCE AND QUALITY DRIFT

The slowest-developing failure mode. The lawyer stops reviewing AI output carefully because it has been accurate for months. Then it is wrong on a deadline, a damages rule, or a jurisdictional requirement, and nobody catches it because verification has become perfunctory. The cure is a non-negotiable verification step that does not depend on the lawyer's current confidence in the tool.

UNSUPERVISED STAFF USE

A paralegal or legal assistant uses Gemini independently for client work without attorney review of the output. The output goes out as a client letter, a demand letter, or a filing. The firm is responsible for it. The supervision obligation under Rule 5.3 does not diminish because the tool is convenient.

Data Classification Framework

Not all data carries the same risk. A classification framework makes the tool selection decision faster and less dependent on judgment in the moment.

Class	Tool Tier Required
Tier 1: Public information (statutes, published opinions, agency guidance, generic legal concepts, public records unrelated to any client matter)	Any approved tool, only if the material contains no client-related information or matter-specific selection or annotation. Review public records tied to a client under the applicable higher tier.
Tier 2: Anonymized facts (hypotheticals, fact patterns with all identifiers removed)	Gemini or NotebookLM on a firm Google Workspace account.
Tier 3: Client identifiers and matter facts (names, dates, claims, contract terms, business facts)	Only approved Google Workspace services with core-service status and enterprise data protections confirmed for the firm's license. NotebookLM preferred for document-heavy Tier 3 work.
Tier 4: Highly sensitive (medical and mental-health records, financial account data, SSNs, third-party PII in productions, privileged communications)	Approved, protected Workspace services, after internal review; consider client-specific consent; consider whether AI is appropriate at all for this specific data.

DECISION RULE

Before any staff member uploads a document to NotebookLM or pastes text into Gemini, one question applies: what tier is this data, considering its connection to a client matter even if a source is public?

If the answer is Tier 3 or Tier 4, the only permitted tools are approved Workspace services with verified core-service status and enterprise protections for the firm's license.

If the firm has not confirmed enterprise data protections are active, Tier 3 and Tier 4 data should not enter any AI tool.

Approved Tool List

Maintain a current approved tool list specifying, for each AI tool: the approved use cases, the data tiers it may handle, DPA status (or Google Workspace enterprise protections confirmation), the responsible owner, and the plan/account tier. Review it at least quarterly. When staff want to add a new tool, the default answer is 'pending the approval process,' which requires confirmed data protections, defined retention, and a brief written assessment.

Staff Training Requirements

Everyone who touches AI on firm work needs to know:

— Which Google account to use for AI work on client matters, and why.

— How to classify data before choosing a tool.

— Why every Gemini citation requires independent verification, and why NotebookLM answers require confirming the notebook is complete.

— Why no AI output, draft, memo, letter, or filing, leaves the firm without attorney review.

— How to report a suspected data incident if documents were uploaded to the wrong account.

Best Use Cases by Workflow Stage

The following seven stages cover the general workflow of a small law firm regardless of practice area. Within each stage, the tool recommendations specify whether Gemini (open-ended generation, research synthesis, long-document review) or NotebookLM (source-grounded Q&A on specific uploaded materials) is the better fit, or both.

Stage 1: Client Intake and Screening

Intake is where the firm makes its first and most consequential judgment calls: which matters to take, which to decline, and which deadlines are already running. It is high-volume, pattern-heavy work, exactly where AI earns its keep, and exactly where an error in deadline identification can bar a claim before the file opens.

— **AI helps:**

— **Converting intake call notes into a structured screening memo:** Paste anonymized call notes into Gemini; get a structured memo covering potential claims, threshold facts, statute of limitations considerations, and intake questions to follow up on.

— **Drafting initial intake questionnaire variations:** Generate practice-area-specific intake forms for new matter types. Gemini drafts; attorney reviews for jurisdiction-specific requirements.

— **Building a conflict-check list from matter facts:** Gemini can organize potential parties, related entities, and adverse parties from a case description for input into your conflict-checking system.

— **AI does not:**

— **Make the intake decision:** Whether to take a case is a legal and business judgment. AI identifies relevant facts; the lawyer decides.

— **Run a conflict check:** AI tools do not integrate with your case management system or firm database. The conflict check is still a manual process in your practice management software.

— **Identify all applicable deadlines:** Always verify AI-generated deadline analysis against the current statute for your jurisdiction. Use AI-generated deadlines as a prompt to verify, never as a calendar entry.

> **IMPORTANT**
>
> Any deadline information from a generative AI tool is a hypothesis, not a verified deadline.
>
> Docket every deadline yourself against the current primary source. AI-generated deadline estimates have been wrong in court proceedings across the country.

Stage 2: Matter Research

Legal research is where Gemini's capabilities and its limitations are both most visible. The tool can synthesize a complex legal landscape faster than any associate. It can also fabricate cases, misstate holdings, and confidently describe law that was overruled two years ago.

— **AI helps:**

— **Synthesizing a legal issue across multiple sources:** Ask Gemini to summarize the current state of law on a specific issue as a starting framework for your Westlaw research. Use it to orient, not to conclude.

— **Generating research outlines:** Describe the legal question; ask Gemini for the key sub-issues, split authorities, and elements to research. This saves time structuring the research plan.

— **Uploading cases to NotebookLM for cross-case analysis:** Upload a collection of relevant cases as PDFs to NotebookLM. Ask the notebook to compare how different courts have applied the same standard, or identify the strongest factual parallels to your case. Source-linked output only.

— **Deep Research reports:** Gemini's Deep Research feature generates multi-page analytical reports on complex legal topics. Treat them as first-draft synthesis, not verified authority.

— **AI does not:**

— **Substitute for Westlaw or Lexis:** AI tools cannot verify case citations, check subsequent history, or confirm a statute is currently in force. Every case Gemini cites must be verified.

— **Know your jurisdiction's current local rules:** Gemini's knowledge of state-specific procedural details, local court rules, and recent local practice updates is unreliable. Verify against official sources.

Stage 3: Document Review and Analysis

This is the stage where NotebookLM's source-grounded architecture produces the greatest value in a law firm. A complex file can be organized, queried, and analyzed through a properly assembled matter notebook at a fraction of the time traditional review requires.

— **AI helps:**

— **Building a case chronology from uploaded documents:** NotebookLM can generate a date-ordered chronology from everything in the notebook, with citations to source documents. Verify completeness of the notebook before relying on it.

— **Summarizing deposition transcripts:** Upload a deposition transcript; ask for a summary by topic, a list of admissions, or a comparison against a prior statement.

— **Finding contradictions across document types:** Ask the notebook: 'Where do the interrogatory responses contradict the deposition testimony on the timeline?' This is NotebookLM's strongest single capability in litigation support.

— **Generating a document inventory from a production:** Upload production documents; ask the notebook to generate a categorized inventory by document type and date range.

— **AI does not:**

— **Review documents for privilege:** Privilege determinations require legal judgment. AI can flag potentially sensitive communications for attorney review, but the privilege call is the lawyer's.

— **Authenticate documents or assess evidentiary issues:** These require legal analysis and often factual investigation. AI flags patterns; lawyers make evidentiary judgments.

— **Replace missing documents:** If a key document was not uploaded, NotebookLM will not know it exists. Completeness of the notebook is the quality-control responsibility.

Stage 4: Drafting

Drafting is where Gemini earns its keep in volume practices. First drafts of letters, contracts, demand letters, discovery requests, and client updates can be generated in minutes, then reviewed and refined. The key discipline is treating Gemini output as a first draft that requires lawyer editing, not a finished product.

— **AI helps:**

— **Drafting client correspondence:** Describe the message to convey; Gemini drafts. Attorney edits for accuracy, judgment, and tone. Much faster than drafting from scratch.

— **Drafting discovery requests:** Describe the dispute and the information you need; Gemini generates a first set of interrogatories or document requests. Attorney reviews for jurisdictional compliance and strategic completeness.

— **Drafting demand letters and cease-and-desist letters:** Describe the facts and the demand; Gemini drafts. Attorney verifies factual accuracy and legal precision.

— **Summarizing NotebookLM output into client-facing language:** Get the technical answer from the notebook; ask Gemini to restate it in plain English for a client letter.

— **Generating contract clause variations:** Ask Gemini for three alternative formulations of a clause with different risk allocations. Attorney selects the appropriate version.

— **AI does not:**

— **Know jurisdiction-specific requirements for filings:** Gemini may draft a motion that misses local-rule page limits, required certifications, or form requirements. Always verify against current rules.

— **Verify the accuracy of its own legal assertions:** Any legal rule, standard, or authority in a Gemini-generated draft must be verified before the document goes out.

Stage 5: Client Communication

Client communication is high-volume and routine enough that AI assistance reduces time significantly. Letters updating clients on case status, explaining developments, or summarizing a deposition can be drafted faster with Gemini. The firm's judgment on what to communicate and how remains the lawyer's responsibility.

— **AI helps:**

— **Drafting status update letters:** Provide the status facts; Gemini drafts a clear, readable update in the firm's voice. Attorney reviews for accuracy and relationship calibration.

— **Generating FAQ documents for clients at specific case stages:** At each major case milestone (after filing, before deposition, before trial), Gemini can generate a list of questions clients typically have and plain-language answers.

— **Drafting follow-up emails after client meetings:** Provide meeting notes; Gemini drafts the confirmation and next-steps email. Attorney reviews before sending.

— **AI does not:**

— **Provide legal advice to clients:** A Gemini-drafted client letter provides information, not advice. Attorney review ensures the letter does not inadvertently create obligations or misstate the legal position.

— **Calibrate relationship dynamics:** The attorney knows the client's level of sophistication, emotional state, and communication preferences. AI drafts; the attorney edits for the relationship.

Stage 6: Court and Filing Preparation

Court preparation is where verification requirements are most critical, because errors here carry the highest professional consequences. AI is most valuable for structure, checklists, and synthesis, not for generating content that goes directly into a court filing without careful attorney review.

— **AI helps:**

— **Generating pre-filing checklists:** Describe the filing type; ask Gemini for a checklist of required elements, certifications, and attachments. Verify the list against current court rules.

— **Summarizing the record for argument preparation:** Upload key documents to NotebookLM; use the notebook to generate a case-specific summary of facts, record citations, and timeline for argument prep.

— **Drafting initial brief structure and argument outlines:** Describe the issue; ask Gemini for the argument structure. Attorney builds the actual argument.

— **Generating anticipated opposing arguments:** Ask Gemini: 'What are the strongest counterarguments to this position?' Use the output to stress-test your argument before the hearing.

— **AI does not:**

— **Verify that cited cases exist and say what you claim:** Every citation in every filing requires verification. This is non-negotiable. AI cannot do this for you.

— **Know the assigned judge's preferences:** Local practice, judicial temperament, and standing orders are not reliably reflected in AI outputs. Know your judge.

> **CAREER-ENDING TRAP**
>
> Submitting an AI-generated brief or motion to a court without verifying every legal citation against a primary source.
>
> The Ninth Circuit sanction involved fabricated citations and fabricated quotes from existing cases. Both came from AI-generated content that was not verified.
>
> The rule is simple: any legal authority that appears in a court filing was either verified by the submitting attorney against a primary source, or it does not appear.

Stage 7: Knowledge Management and Practice Continuity

The most underdeveloped AI use case in small firms is institutional knowledge management. When a matter closes, the firm has accumulated research, strategic decisions, and practical knowledge that vanishes into archived files. NotebookLM can help preserve and retrieve it.

— **AI helps:**

— **Creating matter-closing summaries:** At matter close, ask the matter notebook to generate a summary of the case: key facts, legal issues addressed, strategic decisions made, and outcomes. Save it as a reference for future similar matters.

— **Building a firm knowledge base:** Create a dedicated knowledge-base notebook with research memos, winning arguments, and templates for recurring matter types. Staff can query it for precedents instead of starting from scratch.

— **Drafting onboarding materials for new staff:** Describe the firm's practice areas and procedures; Gemini drafts an orientation document. The attorney reviews and refines it.

— **Generating meeting agendas and post-meeting summaries:** Provide meeting context; Gemini drafts an agenda. Provide meeting notes; Gemini drafts a summary with action items.

— **AI does not:**

— **Automatically update when the law changes:** A knowledge-base notebook reflects the law as of the documents in it. Review and update regularly.

— **Replace formal document retention procedures:** Notebooks are a research tool, not a document management system. The firm's retention and destruction obligations are not satisfied by archiving a notebook.

Prompts Library

BEFORE USING ANY PROMPT

Strip all client identifiers before pasting anything into Gemini on an unapproved account.

Verify every legal authority against a primary source before it appears in any client document or filing.

NotebookLM prompts are only as reliable as the documents you uploaded. Confirm the notebook is complete before relying on it.

All prompts are starting points. Edit for your specific matter, jurisdiction, and client before using.

PROMPT 01: INTAKE SCREENING MEMO · Stage 1: Client Intake

```
You are a paralegal at a small law firm preparing a screening memo for the
supervising attorney.

Based on the anonymized intake notes below, produce a structured memo covering:
1. Potential legal claims identified (list each with a brief description)
2. Key threshold facts supporting each claim
3. Possible statute of limitations or deadline concerns (identify the issues; do
not calculate final deadlines)
4. Missing information needed to evaluate the case
5. Recommended follow-up questions for the next client interview
6. Overall intake flags the attorney should be aware of

Format as a memo with numbered sections.
Do not make a recommendation about whether to take the case.
Do not include any specific legal advice.

[PASTE ANONYMIZED INTAKE NOTES BELOW]
```

PROMPT 02: CONFLICT CHECK PARTY LIST · Stage 1: Client Intake

```
You are a legal assistant preparing a conflict check summary.

From the matter description below, extract and organize:
1. Client name and any related entities or individuals
2. Adverse parties (all known names and entities)
3. Third parties who may appear in the matter (witnesses, co-defendants, etc.)
4. Any organizations, employers, insurers, or lenders mentioned
```

```
Present each group as a bullet list, clearly labeled.
This output will be used as input for a manual conflict check in the firm's case management system.

[PASTE ANONYMIZED MATTER DESCRIPTION BELOW]
```

PROMPT 03: LEGAL ISSUE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK · Stage 2: Matter Research

```
You are a legal research assistant helping structure a research project.

For the legal issue described below, provide:
1. The core legal question in precise terms
2. The primary legal framework that governs this issue (statute, common law doctrine, or regulation)
3. The key sub-issues a thorough research memo should address
4. Any known circuit splits, state-law variations, or areas of unsettled law
5. The specific primary sources to verify first (name the relevant statute sections and leading cases by name only. I will verify their existence and current validity)

This is a research framework only. Do not state what the law is or predict how courts will rule.
All cited authorities will be independently verified before use.

[DESCRIBE THE LEGAL ISSUE BELOW]
```

PROMPT 04: NOTEBOOKLM CASE LAW COMPARISON · Stage 2: Matter Research

```
[USE IN NOTEBOOKLM WITH UPLOADED CASE PDFS]

You have access to the cases I have uploaded to this notebook.

For the legal standard described below, compare how the uploaded cases have applied it:
1. State the standard as each court articulated it
2. Identify the key factual factors each court emphasized
3. Note where the courts reached different outcomes on similar facts
4. Identify the factual parallel most favorable to my position, citing the source document and page number

Do not rely on any case or legal authority that is not in my uploaded sources.
For each statement of law, identify the specific source document and passage.
```

```
[DESCRIBE THE LEGAL STANDARD AND YOUR FACTUAL SITUATION]
```

PROMPT 05: NOTEBOOKLM DOCUMENT CONTRADICTION FINDER · Stage 3: Document Review

```
[USE IN NOTEBOOKLM WITH MATTER DOCUMENTS UPLOADED]

Review the documents in this notebook and identify:
1. Any statements in one document that directly contradict statements in another
2. Dates, amounts, or facts that appear inconsistently across documents
3. Any gap between what a party said in one document type (e.g., interrogatory response) and what appears in another (e.g., deposition transcript)

For each identified contradiction or inconsistency:
– Quote both conflicting passages
– Identify the source document, date, and page number for each
– State why the inconsistency appears significant

Do not draw legal conclusions. Surface the factual conflicts for attorney review.
```

PROMPT 06: NOTEBOOKLM CASE CHRONOLOGY · Stage 3: Document Review

```
[USE IN NOTEBOOKLM WITH MATTER DOCUMENTS UPLOADED]

From the documents in this notebook, construct a chronological timeline of key events.

For each entry:
– Date (or approximate date if exact date is unavailable)
– Description of the event
– Source document and page number

Organize entries in chronological order.
If a date is inferred rather than explicit, mark it as 'approximate' and explain the basis.
Do not include any information not found in the uploaded documents.
```

PROMPT 07: DISCOVERY REQUEST FIRST DRAFT · Stage 4: Drafting

```
You are a legal drafting assistant helping prepare a first-draft set of discovery requests.
```

```
Based on the case description below, draft:
1. Ten interrogatories targeted at the key factual disputes in the case
2. Ten document requests designed to obtain the evidence most likely to support the claims or defenses described

Format interrogatories as numbered paragraphs with definitions section at the top.
Format document requests as numbered paragraphs with a standard definitions and instructions section.

Note: This draft requires attorney review for jurisdictional compliance, local rule requirements, and strategic completeness before use. Do not include client names or identifying information in this draft.

[DESCRIBE THE CASE AND KEY FACTUAL DISPUTES BELOW]
```

PROMPT 08: CLIENT UPDATE LETTER DRAFT · Stage 4: Drafting

```
You are a legal communications assistant drafting a client update letter.

Based on the case update information below, draft a clear, plain-English letter to the client covering:
1. What happened in the case since the last update
2. What it means for the client's matter (stick to factual description, not legal advice)
3. What happens next and the client's role, if any
4. Any questions the client should be prepared to answer or decisions the client will need to make

Tone: professional but accessible. No legal jargon without explanation. No predictions about outcome.
The draft will be reviewed by the supervising attorney before sending.

[PASTE CASE UPDATE FACTS BELOW: REMOVE ALL CLIENT IDENTIFIERS]
```

PROMPT 09: DEMAND LETTER FIRST DRAFT · Stage 4: Drafting

```
You are a legal drafting assistant preparing a first-draft demand letter.

Based on the facts and legal basis described below, draft a demand letter that:
1. States the factual basis for the claim in clear, specific terms
2. Identifies the legal basis without making specific case citations (those will be added after verification)
```

```
3. States the demand clearly and with a deadline
4. Explains the consequences of non-response

Tone: firm and professional. Not inflammatory.
Do not include specific case citations. Leave a [CITATION PLACEHOLDER] where citations belong.
This draft requires full attorney review, legal citation verification, and editing before use.

[DESCRIBE THE FACTS AND LEGAL BASIS FOR THE DEMAND BELOW]
```

PROMPT 10: CLIENT FAQ FOR PRE-DEPOSITION PREPARATION · Stage 5: Client Communication

```
You are a legal communications assistant preparing a client FAQ document.

Create a plain-English FAQ document a client can read before their deposition covering:
1. What a deposition is and what to expect
2. Common deposition questions they should be prepared for based on the facts described
3. How to handle questions they don't understand or don't know the answer to
4. What they should never do during a deposition
5. How to prepare with their attorney

Do not provide legal strategy. Keep language accessible for a non-lawyer.
The attorney will review and customize this document before sending to the client.

[DESCRIBE THE RELEVANT CASE FACTS AND DEPOSITION TOPIC BELOW]
```

PROMPT 11: POST-MEETING ACTION ITEMS SUMMARY · Stage 5: Client Communication

```
You are an assistant drafting a post-meeting summary and follow-up email.

Based on the meeting notes below, draft an email to the client (or opposing counsel, as indicated) summarizing:
1. Key points discussed
2. Decisions made
3. Action items with responsible party and any deadline noted
4. Next steps and scheduled follow-up

Tone: clear and professional. The email will be reviewed by the attorney before sending.
```

```
Do not include confidential legal strategy.

[PASTE MEETING NOTES BELOW: REMOVE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION]
```

PROMPT 12: PRE-FILING CHECKLIST GENERATOR · Stage 6: Court and Filing Preparation

```
You are a litigation support assistant preparing a pre-filing checklist.

For the filing type and court described below, generate a checklist of items to
confirm before submitting, including:
1. Required elements of the document itself
2. Required attachments, exhibits, or certifications
3. Court-specific formatting or page limit requirements (note that these must be
verified against current local rules)
4. Electronic filing requirements
5. Service requirements
6. Judge-specific standing order items to check (list what to look for; I will
verify the current order)

Present as a numbered checklist. Flag any item that requires verification against
current rules.

[DESCRIBE THE FILING TYPE AND COURT/JURISDICTION BELOW]
```

PROMPT 13: NOTEBOOKLM RECORD SUMMARY FOR ARGUMENT PREPARATION · Stage 6: Court and Filing Preparation

```
[USE IN NOTEBOOKLM WITH CASE DOCUMENTS UPLOADED]

I am preparing for [describe the hearing/argument].

From the documents in this notebook, provide:
1. A summary of the key facts I need to know going into the argument, with source
citations
2. The strongest factual points supporting my position, with source citations
3. The factual weaknesses in my position that opposing counsel may raise
4. Any factual admissions by the opposing party in the record, with source
citations

Do not include any information not in the uploaded documents.
All factual assertions must be attributed to a specific source document and page.
```

PROMPT 14: MATTER CLOSING SUMMARY FOR KNOWLEDGE BASE · Stage 7: Knowledge Management

```
[USE IN NOTEBOOKLM WITH MATTER DOCUMENTS UPLOADED, OR IN GEMINI WITH ANONYMIZED
FACTS]

This matter has closed. Prepare a knowledge-management summary covering:
1. Brief factual description of the matter (anonymized)
2. Legal issues raised and how they were resolved
3. Effective arguments or strategies used
4. Approaches that did not work and why
5. Key lessons for future similar matters
6. Useful templates, forms, or language generated in this matter worth preserving

This summary will be added to the firm's knowledge base for reference in future
similar matters.
Do not include client-identifying information.
```

PROMPT 15: STAFF ONBOARDING DOCUMENT FOR AI GOVERNANCE · Stage 7: Knowledge Management

```
You are a training document writer preparing an onboarding guide for new firm
staff.

Based on the firm policies described below, draft a plain-language AI usage guide
covering:
1. Which AI tools are approved and for what tasks
2. Which Google account must be used for AI work on client matters, and why
3. How to classify information before choosing a tool (Tier 1 through Tier 4)
4. Why Gemini outputs require verification and how to do it
5. Why NotebookLM answers require a complete notebook
6. How to report a suspected data incident

Format as a short guide a non-technical staff member can read and follow.
The attorney will review and customize before distribution.

[DESCRIBE THE FIRM'S AI POLICIES AND APPROVED TOOLS BELOW]
```

PROMPT 16: OPPOSING ARGUMENT STRESS TEST · Stage 6: Court and Filing Preparation

```
You are a legal research assistant helping stress-test a legal argument.

For the argument described below, generate:
1. The five strongest counterarguments opposing counsel is likely to raise
2. For each counterargument: the factual or legal basis it rests on, and the most
```

```
direct response
3. Any factual weaknesses in the position that opposing counsel will likely exploit
4. Any authority, described by topic only, no specific citations, that may cut against the position

This output is for attorney review and preparation only.
Do not include specific case citations; the attorney will research and verify authority.

[DESCRIBE YOUR LEGAL ARGUMENT AND KEY FACTS BELOW]
```

Appendix A: Sample AI Governance Policy

The following sample policy covers the governance issues specific to Google Gemini and NotebookLM in a small law firm. Adapt section headings, scope, and specific tool references to your firm's actual tool stack. Have a licensed attorney review before adoption.

Purpose

This policy governs the use of artificial intelligence tools, specifically Google Gemini and NotebookLM, by attorneys and staff of [Firm Name]. It establishes account requirements, data classification standards, verification obligations, and supervision requirements to ensure compliance with the firm's ethical duties under applicable rules of professional conduct.

General Principles

— AI tools supplement attorney judgment; they do not replace it.

— Every AI output used in client matters requires attorney review before use.

— Client information enters AI tools only under conditions that satisfy Rule 1.6 confidentiality requirements.

— The firm uses Google Workspace accounts for all AI work involving client information.

Account Requirement

All use of Google Gemini or NotebookLM on client matters must occur through approved firm Workspace accounts under qualifying licenses, not personal google.com accounts. Staff members must confirm which account is signed in before beginning any AI-assisted client work. The IT administrator or designated Workspace administrator will verify for each product that it is enabled as a core service under the applicable Workspace license and that enterprise data protections govern the specific user accounts.

Data Classification and Approved Uses

Data is classified into four tiers. Tier 1 (public material unrelated to a client matter) may be used with any approved tool. A public record tied to a client or prospective client must be classified by its matter content, not by public availability alone. Tier 2 (anonymized facts) may be used with Workspace-account tools. Tier 3 (client identifiers and matter facts) may be used only with Google Workspace tools with confirmed enterprise protections. Tier 4 (highly sensitive data including medical records, SSNs, and financial account data) requires attorney review before any AI tool is used and may require client-specific consent.

Verification Obligations

— Every legal citation in an AI-generated document must be verified against a primary source (Westlaw, Lexis, or official court or government database) before use in any filing, client communication, or legal memorandum.

— NotebookLM answers are only as reliable as the documents uploaded. Attorneys must confirm notebook completeness before relying on notebook output in client matters.

— All AI-generated deadlines are hypotheses, not verified deadlines. Every deadline must be docketed against the current statute or rule.

Supervision

Supervising attorneys are responsible for all AI-assisted work product produced under their supervision, including work produced by paralegals and legal assistants using approved AI tools. AI output must be reviewed by the supervising attorney before use in client matters.

Court and Tribunal Filings

Before filing in any court, the responsible attorney must check the court's and assigned judge's current AI disclosure requirements and standing orders. Filings must comply with any applicable AI disclosure or certification requirements. When in doubt, disclose.

Incident Response

If client information is entered into an AI tool using a personal Google account or any tool not on the approved list, the responsible staff member will report the incident immediately to the supervising attorney. The firm will assess whether notification is required under applicable ethics rules and take appropriate corrective action.

Staff Acknowledgment

All attorneys and staff who use AI tools in client matters must sign an acknowledgment that they have read and understand this policy. Acknowledgments are maintained in personnel files.

Appendix B: Client AI Disclosure Statement

The following language is designed for inclusion in your firm's engagement letter. Adapt to your practice and your state bar's requirements. Attorney review required.

> **AI USE IN YOUR REPRESENTATION: ENGAGEMENT LETTER DISCLOSURE**
>
> Our firm uses artificial intelligence tools, including Google Gemini and Google NotebookLM, to assist in performing legal services efficiently. These tools may be used for research, document review, drafting, and analysis.
>
> We use approved Google Workspace accounts after confirming that the applicable contractual data protections cover the specific services and users. Under those terms, prompts and uploaded documents are not human-reviewed or used to train generative AI models.
>
> All AI-assisted work product is reviewed by a licensed attorney before use in your matter. These tools supplement attorney judgment; they do not replace it.
>
> If you have questions or concerns about our use of AI in your matter, please contact us.

Implementation notes: Review your state bar's guidance on AI disclosure. Some states require more specific disclosure; some have proposed mandatory disclosure rules. ABA Formal Opinion 512 requires informed consent for the self-learning tools and disclosure risks it describes; boilerplate alone is insufficient when consent is required. Florida Bar Ethics Opinion 24-1 recommends consent before third-party AI use that would disclose confidential information. Assess the actual tool and proposed use before relying on this sample disclosure. Consult your state bar's ethics guidance.

Appendix C: Court AI Disclosure and Certification

The following is sample certification language. Check the current standing order of the assigned judge and any applicable local rules before using or adapting this language. Requirements vary significantly across courts and continue to change.

SAMPLE AI CERTIFICATION LANGUAGE

Pursuant to [applicable standing order or local rule], the undersigned counsel certifies as follows:

1. This filing [did / did not] involve the use of generative artificial intelligence tools in preparation.

2. Where AI tools were used, all legal authorities cited in this document have been independently verified by undersigned counsel against primary sources and exist and are accurately cited.

3. All factual statements in this document are made on the basis of counsel's knowledge, information, and belief, formed after reasonable inquiry.

Date: _____ Signature: _____ [Bar Number and State]

Implementation notes: Many judges require disclosure of the specific AI tools used. Some require the certification in every filing; some only when AI-generated text appears. Check the standing order of the specific judge assigned to your case. When no order exists, voluntary disclosure is the conservative position.

Appendix D: AI Vendor Questionnaire

Use this questionnaire before approving any AI tool for client-matter use, including when evaluating whether your current Google Workspace plan provides the protections described in this playbook. Direct these questions to your Google Workspace administrator or Google support.

1. Does your product use customer prompts, inputs, or outputs to train or fine-tune AI models? If yes, what is the opt-out mechanism?
2. What are the data retention periods for prompts, outputs, and uploaded documents? Is deletion on demand available?
3. Are human reviewers able to access our prompts, outputs, or uploaded documents? Under what circumstances?
4. Is our data stored within a defined geographic boundary? Where?
5. Does the product offer a signed Data Processing Agreement (DPA) or equivalent contractual commitment?
6. What breach notification obligations does your service include, and what is the notification timeline?
7. What security certifications does the product hold (SOC 2, ISO 27001, etc.)?
8. What controls exist to prevent our data from being accessible to other customers of the service?
9. How do we confirm that the enterprise data protections described in your terms are actually active on our specific account?

For Google Workspace specifically: confirm with your Workspace administrator that Gemini Apps and NotebookLM are each enabled as core services under your specific license, that the applicable Workspace terms and data-processing commitments cover each service, and that the intended users have the protected access level. The Google Workspace Admin console provides confirmation of your plan tier and active services.

Appendix E: 90-Day Implementation Roadmap

This roadmap moves a small firm from zero to a governed, productive AI workflow using Google Gemini and NotebookLM in 90 days.

Days 1–30: Foundation

— **Confirm account governance:** Every attorney and staff member confirms which Google account is their default for AI work. The Workspace administrator checks the license, core-service status, applicable terms, and protected access for Gemini Apps and NotebookLM. Document the confirmation.

— **Designate an AI Policy Supervisor:** Assign one attorney as the AI Policy Supervisor responsible for maintaining the approved tool list, reviewing incidents, and updating training. This does not require technical expertise. It requires authority.

— **Complete ABA Model Rule orientation:** Every attorney in the firm reads ABA Formal Opinion 512 and checks your state bar's current AI guidance. One CLE on AI in legal practice within 60 days.

— **Adopt the sample governance policy:** Customize Appendix A, have a licensed attorney review it, and obtain staff acknowledgments.

— **Add AI disclosure to engagement letter:** Customize Appendix B, review against your state bar's requirements, and begin using it in new engagements.

Days 31–60: Proficiency

— **Open first matter notebooks:** Create a NotebookLM notebook for two to three active matters (approved qualifying Workspace account only). Upload documents as they come in. Ask the notebook a question about each matter.

— **Run first Gemini drafting tasks:** Use Gemini on a Tier 1 or Tier 2 task first (public-law research, anonymized drafting). Build the verification habit before using it on client-identified work.

— **Establish verification protocols:** Formalize how the firm verifies AI-generated legal citations (specific database, specific format). Make it a checklist step, not a judgment call.

— **Train all staff on the account requirement:** Run a 30-minute staff meeting on which account to use, how to check which account is active, and what to do if they used the wrong one.

Days 61–90: Optimize

— **Measure the impact:** For two matters, track time spent on document review and research before and after using NotebookLM. Use the actual numbers to calibrate where AI is earning its keep.

— **Build a knowledge-base notebook:** Create a firm knowledge-base notebook with research memos, useful templates, and winning arguments from closed matters. Begin routing queries through it.

— **Review the governance policy:** After 90 days of use, the AI Policy Supervisor leads a 30-minute review: what worked, what did not, what needs to be added to the approved tool list or the policy.

— **Set the annual review cadence:** Google updates its AI products multiple times per year. Schedule a quarterly 30-minute AI policy review on the firm calendar.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE AT DAY 90

Every attorney and staff member knows which Google account to use and can verify it in 30 seconds.

Two or more active matters have a NotebookLM notebook with complete documents uploaded.

The verification step for AI-generated citations is a checklist item, not an afterthought.

The AI Policy Supervisor has reviewed and updated the governance policy once.

At least one attorney has run the per-matter hub workflow and can describe its time savings accurately.

Sources and Ethics Anchors

— ABA Formal Opinion 512, Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools (July 29, 2024): https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/professional_responsibility/aba-formal-opinion-512.pdf

— ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct: 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.18, 3.3, 5.3, 5.5, and 7.1. The Model Rules are not binding; check your own state's adopted rules and current bar guidance

— People v. Crabill, 23PDJ067 (Colo. O.P.D.J. Nov. 22, 2023): one year and one day, ninety days to serve, remainder stayed on two-year probation, for filing ChatGPT-invented citations

— Lnu v. Blanche, No. 24-4790 (9th Cir. June 3, 2026): the first published federal appellate opinion sanctioning attorneys for AI-fabricated citations. The panel imposed $2,500 in monetary sanctions against each of two attorneys, a six-month suspension from practice before the circuit, and a two-year firm-wide AI-disclosure and citation-verification certification requirement: https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2026/06/03/24-4790.pdf

— Standing order of Judge Brantley Starr, N.D. Tex., requiring certification that AI-generated text was checked by a human

— Google Workspace Updates, NotebookLM and NotebookLM Plus now available as a Google Workspace core service with enterprise-grade data protection (February 2025): https://workspaceupdates.googleblog.com/2025/02/notebooklm-and-notebooklm-plus-now-workspace-core-service.html

— Google, NotebookLM is now Gemini Notebook (July 16, 2026): https://blog.google/innovation-and-ai/products/gemini-notebook/notebooklm-gemini-notebook/

— Current Gemini Notebook plan limits (sources per notebook, notebooks, daily queries): Google support documentation. Verify before relying on any limit stated in this playbook

— Google Workspace terms and data protections for Gemini: https://workspace.google.com/terms/

— Florida Bar Ethics Opinion 24-1, confidentiality and consent: https://www.floridabar.org/etopinions/opinion-24-1/

— Google, Gemini Apps with a work or school account, edition and context limits: https://support.google.com/gemini/answer/14620100?co=DASHER._Family%3DBusiness-Enterprise&hl=en

— Google, Gemini Notebook with a work or school account, service and data protections: https://support.google.com/gemininotebook/answer/16337734?hl=en

— Google, Gemini Notebook chat, citations and product limitations: https://support.google.com/gemininotebook/answer/16179559?hl=en

— Google, Gemini Notebook FAQ and sharing: https://support.google.com/gemininotebook/answer/16269187?hl=en

— Google, Create a notebook, private sharing: https://support.google.com/gemininotebook/answer/16206563?hl=en

About Actionable AI

Actionable AI is a consulting practice that helps small law firms evaluate, adopt, and implement AI tools practically and ethically. Founded by Greg Yates, a former Big Law corporate equity partner at Steptoe (NYC Managing Partner) and Seyfarth Shaw, the practice is built on one principle: the simplest solution that gets the job done is almost always the right answer.

Most small firms do not need an enterprise AI platform. They need clear guidance on which tools fit their work, which ones create ethics problems, and how to implement in a way that does not require IT support or a learning curve measured in weeks.

What We Do

— AI readiness assessments with specific, written findings and recommendations

— Hands-on implementation and training on approved AI tools

— Governance policy development and ethics review

— Ongoing support as tools and ethics guidance evolve

Who This Playbook Is For

Solo practitioners and small Florida law firms with fewer than 25 lawyers who want to use Google's AI tools in actual client work without creating problems. If you have read this playbook and want a second opinion on your specific situation, your tool stack, your practice area, your team, that conversation is what we do.

> **NEXT STEP**
>
> Book a free 15-minute assessment call to discuss (https://actionableai.s.gy/9Ei2uw):
>
> The call covers:
>
> — Which Gemini and NotebookLM features fit your current caseload
>
> — Whether your Google Workspace plan already gives you enterprise data protections
>
> — How to build a governance policy your staff will actually follow
>
> — The verification workflow that fits your practice's pace
>
> — Your state bar's current AI guidance and what it means for your firm
>
> No pitch. No deck. No obligation.
>
> actionableai.net · Greg Yates · gyates@actionableai.net

Actionable AI

Download the free Florida AI Starter Playbook.

Eight practical resources for managing partners and firm administrators: a readiness checklist, five pilot workflows, a tool-approval scorecard, a lawyer verification checklist, and a 90-day plan. It is free, and the button below downloads it directly.

Scan to download the Starter Playbook

Download the Starter Playbook (PDF)

Direct download: Florida AI Starter Playbook (PDF)

Want a second set of eyes on which workflow to pick?

I take 15-minute calls with managing partners and administrators. I will tell you whether there is a fit. No deck.

Book a 15-minute introductory call

Book a 15-minute introductory call