

A circular graphic on the left side of the page contains a grid of 14 small portrait photos of diverse individuals, including men and women of various ethnicities, dressed in professional attire. The grid is arranged in four rows: the first row has two photos, the second and third rows have four photos each, and the fourth row has four photos, with the bottom-right cell being empty.

## Maximizing Your Interim Legal Project Experience

### *Practical Tips for Attorneys & Legal Professionals*

Interim legal work can be a great way to expand your experience, build relationships, develop new skills, and gain exposure to different industries and legal environments.

Whether you are an **experienced legal consultant** or **taking on your first project-based role**, success in interim work requires more than strong legal skills alone. The attorneys and legal professionals who thrive are those who combine **excellent work product with responsiveness, adaptability, professionalism, and a proactive mindset**.

This guide provides **practical tips to help you maximize your project experience, build strong client relationships, and position yourself for long-term success** as a trusted, flexible problem-solver.

## Understanding the Nature of Interim Work

Clients typically engage interim legal support to address bandwidth constraints, employee leaves, specialized expertise needs, product launches, or shifting business priorities.

Unlike traditional roles, **interim positions often require fast ramp-up, immediate contribution, flexibility, and minimal hand-holding**. Clients are looking for professionals who can quickly integrate into the team and begin adding value.

Being adaptable, responsive, and solution-oriented is critical.

## What Success Looks Like

Strong legal skills and high-quality work product are essential, but successful interim legal professionals also distinguish themselves through responsiveness, reliability, adaptability, and professionalism.

Clients value attorneys and legal professionals who are **easy to work with, solutions-oriented, and proactive** in helping make the client's life easier. Strong communication, sound judgment, and dependability are key to building trust quickly.

### Exceptional attorneys and legal professionals do the following:

- Communicate proactively
- Respond thoughtfully and consistently
- Adapt well as priorities shift
- Operate as trusted partners, not just task executors

Ultimately, success comes from combining excellent legal work with professionalism, responsiveness, and strong working relationships.

## Getting Started: Setting Yourself Up for Success Early

The beginning of a project is critical for building credibility and momentum.

**Early on, prioritize setting up system access, learning the client's tools and processes, identifying key stakeholders, and reviewing templates, playbooks, and prior work product.** Doing so can help you understand client preferences, reduce revisions, and ramp up more quickly.

Depending on the client's preference, brief introductions with key stakeholders can also help build relationships early.

## Establishing Strong Communication from Day One

One of the best ways to set yourself up for success is aligning on expectations early.

### Early in the engagement, try to clarify:

- Expected work schedule and availability
- Preferred communication methods (email, Teams, Slack, etc.)
- Turnaround expectations
- Client preferences regarding level of detail, drafting style, and risk tolerance
- Priority workstreams and deadlines
- Budget or time expectations for assignments

Even a simple check-in can create significant alignment and prevent misunderstandings later.

For example:



*"Just wanted to confirm expectations regarding turnaround times and communication preferences. I'm generally available from 8–5 PT, but can be flexible if urgent issues arise. For contract reviews, is there a target turnaround time you'd like me to aim for? Also, do you prefer quick Slack updates as matters progress, or more consolidated email updates?"*

Conversations like this help establish transparency, responsiveness, and trust from the outset.

## Confirming Scope & Hours Expectations

It is important to **align early on expected workload, weekly hours, priorities, and whether hours may fluctuate over time.**

As projects evolve, **revisit expectations periodically to ensure continued alignment.** If you have additional capacity or concerns regarding bandwidth, communicate proactively so the client can plan and allocate work appropriately.

## Taking a Proactive, Problem-Solving Approach

Clients appreciate interim legal professionals who think proactively and help solve problems.

### Whenever possible:

- Work through issues independently first
- Research applicable background or precedent
- Consider practical business implications
- Propose potential solutions

### When escalating issues, try to provide:

- Relevant context
- Potential risks
- Recommended next steps or options

Rather than simply identifying problems, aim to help move matters toward resolution.

## Maintaining Transparency & Visibility

Because interim professionals often work remotely or independently, visibility matters.

### Clients appreciate proactive updates regarding:

- Current priorities
- Progress on assignments
- Upcoming deadlines
- Potential roadblocks or delays
- Bandwidth or availability changes

Providing visibility helps clients allocate work effectively, identify issues early, and build confidence in your support.

A concise weekly update can be extremely effective. For example:

*"Quick status update for this week:*



- *Vendor agreement review completed and returned to business team*
- *Currently reviewing two license agreements (expected turnaround by Wednesday)*
- *Waiting on product/security feedback before finalizing data processing agreement*
- *Capacity remains available for additional work later this week"*

Simple updates like this can significantly improve alignment, reduce uncertainty, and help clients manage workload distribution more effectively.

## Managing Availability & Reliability

Reliability is one of the most important qualities clients look for in interim legal professionals.

**Communicate proactively regarding delays, scheduling conflicts, time off, bandwidth concerns, or unexpected issues that may impact deliverables.** Whenever possible, raise concerns early rather than after deadlines have passed.

It is also helpful to **document important decisions, timelines, or expectations through email or other written channels** to help ensure clarity and alignment.

## Building Strong Working Relationships

Strong working relationships can lead to extended engagements, repeat opportunities, and positive references.

Simple behaviors matter: **be responsive, dependable, collaborative, respectful of people's time, and adaptable as priorities evolve.**

Observing and adjusting to the client's preferred communication and working style can also help build trust quickly.

Some teams prefer detailed written updates and frequent check-ins, while others value concise communication and independent ownership. **Paying attention to team norms can help you integrate more effectively.**

## Being Open to Feedback & Acting on It

Feedback is a normal and valuable part of interim work.

Early in the engagement, consider setting the tone by communicating that you welcome feedback and want to align with the client's preferences.

### When feedback is provided:

- Receive it professionally
- Avoid defensiveness
- Clarify expectations if needed
- Implement adjustments quickly

Demonstrating responsiveness to feedback builds trust and confidence.

## Staying Aligned Through Regular Check-Ins

If appropriate, recurring check-ins with your manager or key stakeholders can help confirm priorities, clarify expectations, discuss workload, and address issues early.

Even brief recurring touchpoints can significantly improve alignment and efficiency throughout the engagement.

## Flexibility & Agility

Interim legal environments can change quickly due to shifting business priorities, staffing changes, product launches, budget considerations, or organizational developments.

The most successful interim legal professionals remain flexible, calm, adaptable, and solution-oriented as priorities evolve.

## Communication with Your Attorney Development Partner (Paragon Legal)

Your Paragon Legal attorney development partner is an ongoing resource throughout your engagement.

### Please proactively share:

- Project updates and developments
- Positive feedback or milestones
- Concerns or challenges
- Changes in workload or scope
- Potential extension opportunities
- Organizational or staffing developments

We want to support you throughout your project experience and help position you for long-term success. The more visibility we have into your experience, the better we can advocate for and support you.

## Practical Tips for Success

In summary, a few simple habits can go a long way toward helping an engagement run smoothly and creating a positive client experience.

- Align on expectations early
- Over-communicate rather than under-communicate
- Provide concise status updates
- Flag risks or delays early
- Try to problem-solve before escalating
- Review templates and prior work product early
- Document key decisions and communications
- Build relationships with stakeholders
- Be responsive, reliable, and easy to work with
- Stay flexible as priorities evolve
- Ask for and act on feedback

Successful interim legal work requires more than excellent legal skills alone.

The attorneys and legal professionals who consistently thrive are those who combine strong legal judgment with proactive communication, responsiveness, transparency, flexibility, and professionalism.

Ultimately, **success comes from building strong partnerships while delivering excellent work** - and approaching each engagement as a trusted, adaptable resource who helps make the client's life easier.

***Good luck!***