

Strong governance meets bold AI adoption

Innovation-forward law firm trusts the iManage foundation to build the framework to safely accelerate its AI ambitions



Seyfarth

Industry:

- Legal

Headquarters:

- Chicago, IL

iManage footprint:

- iManage Work 10 in the Cloud
- iManage Share
- iManage Threat Manager
- iManage Records Manager
- iManage Closing Folders
- Ask iManage
- iManage MCP Server

With more than 1,000 lawyers across 19 offices, [Seyfarth Shaw](#) ranks among the Am Law 100. An innovation-forward firm, a culture of technology adoption runs from firm leadership through every practice group. The firm has grown and prospered through generations of iManage, from an on-premises desktop solution for document management and email to a cloud-native knowledge platform where an attorney with an internet connection can collaborate from anywhere. No surprise that Seyfarth Shaw brings the strategic discipline it has always used to explore the legal tech frontier of AI: governance before access, training before adoption, and a foundation that makes it all possible.



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Chris Myatt, Sr. Director, User Services
End User Support, Seyfarth Shaw



Business outcomes:

- Platform is the default workspace
- Cut storage and compliance costs
- Better client service tools
- Flags unusual download activity
- Hit 10-year retention milestone



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The business challenge

Building governance infrastructure that keeps up with the legal tech landscape

Driven by equal parts ambition and rigor, Seyfarth Shaw's practice grew more distributed, more collaborative, and more document-intensive each year. When matter volumes were modest, and everyone was in the same office, on-premises document management worked well enough. But as the firm scaled across offices and time zones, the limitations of a legacy system became increasingly evident.

"In a law practice, everything important lives in the DMS," says Chris Myatt, Senior Director, User Services, End User Support, Seyfarth Shaw. "If you're the attorney, and you can't get to your documents, it's as if the whole network is down."

Then, with the proliferation of AI across the legal landscape, the firm faces one challenge layered on top of another. Vendors push new capabilities at conferences and clients bring them up in conversation, and attorneys want the tools they keep hearing are revolutionizing the industry.

"You're trying to filter through a lot of noise," Myatt says. But the tension is twofold: either attorneys are tempted to use new tools before the firm has vetted them, or the firm is being pressured to adopt tools that are forbidden in matters governed by explicit guidelines. For a firm that prides itself on innovation, the bar is set deliberately high. Architecture that isn't fit for purpose works against attorney productivity and the firm's ability to move with confidence. Governance is critical and has to keep pace.

Seyfarth's clients conduct regular security audits of the firms they work with, and those audits demand answers: where does client intellectual property live, and how is it protected? "We have a whole team dedicated to responding to those audits," Myatt says. "We have to check the box to say that we are secure, with a cloud platform where we have security controls around the client matter number, the document number, and ethical walls." Without a governed, cloud-native foundation, that box cannot be checked.

The solution

Invested in finding better ways to serve clients

Strong governance is an absolute necessity for Seyfarth Shaw, and the shift to browser-based [iManage Work 10 in the Cloud](#) was a huge benefit for attorney access. "No matter where you are, on any device, you can get your documents," says Myatt.

The iManage collaboration toolset has also evolved significantly in a continuous arc toward the same goal — attorneys and clients working effortlessly together on documents. [iManage Share](#) created secure, governed workspaces where clients and counterparties could access documents without those documents leaving iManage.



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[Next-generation co-authoring](#) brought real-time simultaneous editing directly inside [Microsoft 365](#), removing the check-out process. And the latest innovation, collaboration links, enables lawyers to share a link with an external party with no iManage account to open and edit a document in place, without the file leaving the governed environment.

"If you've ever shared a link with someone in their personal lives, you can understand how this works." Familiarity lowers the barrier. Lower barriers drive adoption.

Seyfarth Shaw has followed this arc the whole way, practicing a culture of innovation that shows up in how new tools arrive at the firm. Myatt says change management is not a project, it is an organizational discipline. "In User Services, we think of ourselves as a third party selling a product and a service."

New-hire training introduces the proper use of tools to prevent bad habits from forming. Practice group presentations deliver the most relevant use cases to the attorneys who will benefit most. Ninety-second e-learning videos keep capability awareness alive without consuming time that attorneys do not have to spare. A product digest, born from voice-of-client survey findings, keeps the inventory of available tools visible to attorneys who would not know to ask.

The business outcomes

A governed foundation, ready for what comes next

Since the move to [iManage Cloud](#), Seyfarth Shaw now has more email stored in the platform than documents. Myatt calls it the firm's most meaningful adoption indicator, saying it reflects the stability enabled by the shift. It tells him that attorneys are actively using the platform as the place where their work lives, not a tool they work around.

That confidence in the foundation shows up in how new capabilities arrive at the firm. [iManage Closing Folders](#), which organizes transaction documents, signature pages, and closing checklists into a single governed workspace, came to Myatt's attention when an attorney on a call with a peer firm saw them using it. After the call ended, he called Myatt and asked, "Why are we not using this tool?" Good question! They got the tool. Myatt says that's what it looks like when attorneys are genuinely invested in finding better ways to serve their clients.

Seyfarth uses [iManage Threat Manager](#) to protect client data and keep attorney activity in the governed platform. Mass downloads are the primary signal the firm monitors: if an attorney is pulling large volumes of documents from the DMS, Threat Manager surfaces it, and Myatt's team investigates. The solution also provides adoption intelligence. If someone's usage falls below what it should be, Myatt can determine whether they need better training or whether their files are ending up somewhere outside the governed environment. "If they can't find it, they're not going to use it," he says.



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Seyfarth used [iManage Records Manager](#) to free itself from the long-term burden of obsolete records, recently hitting a 10-year retention milestone and deleting a substantial body of matter data that had completed its full retention lifecycle. Storage costs fell, and compliance complexity with it. “Talk about liberating,” says Myatt.

Looking ahead

Seyfarth Shaw is investing significant energy in establishing the necessary guardrails for third-party AI. Security is the dominant consideration, so before opening AI access to anyone in the firm, they built a two-layer architecture to maintain the highest level of protection. The first layer comprises required training focused explicitly on guardrails.

“Trust but verify,” says Myatt. “AI doesn’t replace human judgment — it augments your workflow.”

The second layer is designed to address the explicit guidelines for AI use dictated by each of the firm’s outside clients, creating an auditable, enforceable standard before a single prompt is written. Myatt anticipates that [iManage MCP Server](#) will be a big help with his efforts to make the use of third-party AI solutions safer, going forward.

The conversation rests on confidence in the foundation they’ve built with iManage. “We’ve been in the cloud with iManage for the last eight years. I trust their security.” That trust is not a soft benefit. It is the precondition for everything that’s coming next — with agentic AI, the [next-generation iManage platform](#), and all of the new capabilities and protections that will afford.

For now, Myatt is most focused on the possibilities of [Ask iManage](#). Seyfarth’s evaluation of the natural language AI assistant is underway, but it is the integration of Ask iManage into the M365 ribbon that most excites him. That will place natural language search directly inside the environments where his attorneys already spend their time.

“Most attorneys never leave Word,” he explains. “Their workflow is file open, file save, file close, all within M365. Having Ask iManage appear in the right-hand pane of that environment is the difference between a tool that gets used and one that does not.”

About iManage

iManage is dedicated to Making Knowledge Work™. Our cloud-native platform is at the center of the knowledge economy, enabling every organization to work more productively, collaboratively, and securely. Built on more than 30 years of industry experience, iManage helps leading organizations manage documents and emails more efficiently, protect vital information assets, and leverage knowledge to drive better business outcomes. As your strategic business partner, we employ our award-winning AI-enabled technology, an extensive partner ecosystem, and a customer-centric approach to provide support and guidance you can trust to make knowledge work for you. iManage is relied on by more than one million professionals at 4,000 organizations around the world. Visit www.imanage.com to learn more.