

# The Law Firm Bottleneck Map

Find where work actually slows down inside your firm — before it shows up as missed deadlines, stressed staff, or partner overload.

This is **not** about fixing anything yet. It's about **seeing clearly**. Most firms don't have a workload problem. They have a **flow problem** — and they're guessing where it is. This map removes the guesswork.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read top to bottom.
2. Mark where work **waits, loops, or gets escalated**.
3. If something feels familiar, circle it.
4. You're not broken. You're just congested.

### STAGE 1: LEADS → INTAKE

#### Common Bottlenecks

1. Leads respond, but calls take days to schedule
2. Intake asks the same questions twice
3. Conflict checks delay momentum
4. Staff isn't sure when to push vs pause

#### If this stage is clogged, you'll notice:

1. High lead volume, low conversion
2. Partners stepping in "just to help"
3. Inconsistent intake quality

### STAGE 2: INTAKE → ENGAGEMENT

#### Common Bottlenecks

1. Engagement letters sit unsigned
2. Retainers aren't clearly tied to next steps
3. Clients "think about it" indefinitely
4. No owner for moving matters forward

#### If this stage is clogged, you'll notice:

1. Long gaps between first call and real work
2. Deals dying quietly
3. Unclear accountability

### STAGE 3: ACTIVE MATTERS

#### Common Bottlenecks

1. Work pauses waiting on documents
2. Staff unsure what's urgent vs optional
3. Too many updates, not enough progress
4. Partners reviewing things twice

#### If this stage is clogged, you'll notice:

1. Constant internal check-ins
2. Missed soft deadlines
3. Team stress without clear cause

### STAGE 4: REVIEW → DECISION

#### Common Bottlenecks

1. Everything routes through one partner
2. Decisions live in email threads
3. "Let me review this" becomes a delay
4. No clear approval standard

#### If this stage is clogged, you'll notice:

1. Partners feel like the bottleneck
2. Staff waits instead of acting
3. Work slows even when capacity exists

### STAGE 5: BILLING → CLOSE

#### Common Bottlenecks

1. Invoices sent late
2. Clients surprised by charges
3. Billing corrections after the fact
4. Close-outs drag on

#### If this stage is clogged, you'll notice:

1. Cash flow anxiety
2. Awkward client conversations
3. Matters that never feel "done"

## The 5 Bottleneck Types (Circle One)

#### 1. Decision Bottleneck

Everything waits on one person.

#### 2. Clarity Bottleneck

People aren't sure what "done" looks like.

#### 3. Ownership Bottleneck

Too many hands, no owner.

#### 4. Process Bottleneck

Work moves, then loops back.

#### 5. Visibility Bottleneck

No one sees the full picture.

Most firms have **1–2 primary bottlenecks**. They change as the firm grows.

## Why This Matters

If your firm feels busy but not smooth:

1. The work isn't broken
2. The people aren't the problem
3. The system is just overloaded in the wrong spot

Fixing the wrong bottleneck makes things worse. Fixing the right one creates relief fast.

## Soft Qualifier

At the bottom: **Quick self-check:** Where does work most often slow down in your firm?

1. Intake & handoff
2. Active matters
3. Partner review
4. Billing & close
5. Not sure — it just feels heavy

(This is gold for internal routing later.)

## If you want a second set of eyes to sanity-check what you circled:

Book a 15-minute workflow clarity check

No prep. No pitch. Just alignment.

<https://bluebird-partners.com>