PITON Global

EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER · WP-36

PARALEGAL SUPPORT · PHILIPPINES

The billable-leverage standard: the executive economics of paralegal support outsourcing to the Philippines.

An analysis of why tasks completed is a volume vanity metric, how work-product reliability and attorney leverage — never task throughput — decide the true cost of a paralegal operation once errors in filings, missed deadlines, and attorney rework are counted, and the vendor-selection discipline that returns the attorney's hours to billable work.

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ABOUT THIS SERIES — VOLUME 36

Every paralegal-support proposal is priced per task or per hour, because activity is easy to count. This volume is about the only support outcome a legal team actually depends on: the task done right, delivered on the deadline, so the attorney's hours go back to billable, judgment-grade work instead of fixing and re-checking. The gap between completing a task and completing one an attorney can rely on is where filing errors and lost leverage live. The full series lives at piton-global.com.

THE PITON-GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

About the authors

John Maczynski

Chief Executive Officer

John has bought paralegal capacity for three decades, and learned that the fast team that completes every task and gets the filing wrong is the most expensive one a legal team can hire — because a defective cite-check or a blown deadline is an attorney's problem to fix at attorney rates, and every task an associate re-does is billable leverage lost. His standing question ignores the task count: of the work you completed, how much did the attorney rely on without touching it? Applied at PITON-Global, that question is what clients get on every paralegal-support sourcing decision — personally, with no account layer in between.

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Chief Strategy Officer

Ralf has spent twenty-five years running Philippine legal-process floors, and he judges a paralegal team by its work-product reliability and on-time rate, not its tasks logged: whether the filing was right and the deadline met, or the task bounced back to an attorney. The paralegal contract in Section 3 codifies what he learned rebuilding teams that completed tasks fast and got them wrong. He now reads paralegal-support providers the way he once ran them — from the error log and the attorney-rework rate backward.

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ABOUT PITON-GLOBAL

PITON-Global is a buyer-side advisory practice, Manila-based since 2001, that has never operated a delivery floor or taken a placement commission. Its stock-in-trade is knowing the Philippine provider market at the operating level — 1,000+ mapped operations, re-verified continuously, including each paralegal team's real work-product reliability and on-time rate rather than its tasks-per-day headline —

and converting that knowledge into a shortlist of six to ten genuinely qualified partners per engagement. Buyers from Tripadvisor, Garmin, TSYS, HealthPartners, Yetipay, Workrise, and Norman Disney & Young have run their searches through the practice.

SECTION 01

Executive summary

-60%	99%+	99.7%	6.3×
Fully-loaded cost per reliable task vs. US onshore	Work-product reliability rate on vetted teams, up from 88–94%	On-time rate on court and filing deadlines, vetted teams	First-year ROI, reconstructed case (Section 6)

A paralegal-support engagement is bought on the price per task or hour and paid for on the work it gets wrong. The vendor reports thousands of tasks completed at a fraction of the onshore cost; the legal team finds the cite-checks that missed a bad citation, the document sets assembled with the wrong exhibits, the deadline calculated a day late, and the attorneys re-doing offshore work at attorney rates instead of relying on it. The operation logged its tasks and the firm inherited defective work product, a rework backlog, and billable hours burned on supervision. The gap between completing a task and completing one an attorney can rely on is where the real cost of cheap paralegal support hides, because a defective task is not leverage delivered — it is attorney time consumed or a deadline put at risk.

The Philippines — English-language, common-law-oriented, with a deep legal-support talent pool — is where paralegal support is delivered with the most reliability discipline, because that pool can run the accuracy checks, deadline management, and attorney-ready assembly that reliability demands. Five findings:

1 **Tasks completed is the industry's most flattering number.** Any team can log a task and hand it back. Vetted teams are measured on outcome: work-product reliability, on-time rate, and attorney-ready rate. Weak providers quote a low per-task price the firm repays in filing errors, rework, and burned leverage. Section 2 shows the gap.

2 **The reliable, attorney-ready task, not the fast completion, is the product.** Work an attorney can rely on comes from getting it right, meeting the deadline, and delivering it to standard — not from clearing a task queue. Teams that work reliably return billable hours to the attorney; teams that complete loosely return rework and deadline risk that cost more than the task.

3 **A defective task cuts both ways — error and delay.** The wrong exhibit or missed cite can defeat a filing; the deadline missed can forfeit a right. Vetted teams hold reliability above 99% and on-time above 99.5% precisely because both tails cost — the error that gets filed and the deadline that slips.

4 **The rework and the lost leverage, not the task, are what cost.** A task done wrong costs the attorney's re-do at attorney rates, the deadline exposure, and the billable hour that never came back — many times the per-task saving. Teams that work reliably return attorney capacity to billable work, and that reclaimed leverage — not the offshore rate alone — is where the case study's return is built.

5 **Contract on the reliable task, not the completed one.** The contracting failure of paralegal support is paying per task and hoping the work is reliable and on time. Vetted deals price against reliability floors, on-time targets, and attorney-ready-rate minimums, making trustworthy work product the team's problem, which is where it belongs.

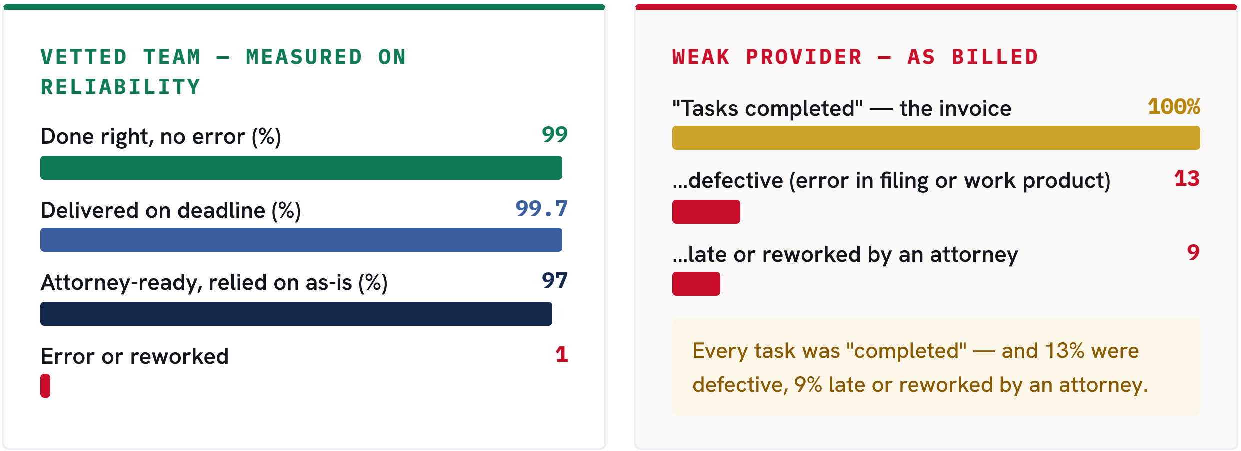
The intended reader is a general counsel, law-firm managing partner, or director of legal operations buying paralegal support per task and paying for it in filing errors, missed deadlines, and burned attorney leverage. Sections 2–4 separate the teams that work reliably from the teams that complete tasks; Sections 5–7, the method and the proof.

SECTION 02

The volume mirage: tasks completed versus reliable work product

Figure 1 shows one month of a legal team's paralegal tasks two ways: as the completion report a weak vendor bills, and as the reliability reality the attorneys and the docket experience. The tasks-completed number is identical in spirit to a chatbot's containment rate — a figure engineered to look like output while filing errors, rework, and deadline risk accumulate underneath.

FIG. 1 — ONE MONTH OF TASKS: RELIABILITY QUALITY VS. REPORTED COMPLETION



Every task was "completed" — and 13% were defective, 9% late or reworked by an attorney.

Left: PITON-Global engagement instrumentation, 2025–26, reliability audited. Right: composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence.

The economics follow the reliability, not the task count. On the left, ninety-nine percent of tasks are done right and delivered on deadline, so attorney leverage is real and the docket is safe; on the right, a cheap per-task price is defective on thirteen percent and late or reworked on nine, paying in filing errors, attorney re-do time, and deadline risk at once. A low per-task price that produces defective work is not a saving; it is rework and exposure, delayed and sometimes irreversible. The reliability audit — work-product accuracy, on-time rate, attorney-ready rate — is the cheapest due-diligence instrument in this paper.

SECTION 03

The paralegal contract: get it right, meet the deadline, free the attorney

Figure 2 lays out the three clauses of a working paralegal-support contract — the machinery a floor read verifies before any per-task price is believed.

FIG. 2 — THE PARALEGAL CONTRACT, AS OPERATED ON VETTED TEAMS

GET IT RIGHT

Cite-checks, document assembly, discovery indexing, and filing prep are done to the firm's standard and checked before delivery — with a second-pair-of-eyes QC on anything that touches a court filing, and an unclear instruction escalated rather than guessed. The work is made correct at the source, so it does not become an attorney's problem downstream.

MEET THE DEADLINE

Court dates, filing windows, and internal deadlines are calendared, calculated to rule, and worked backward with buffer so nothing slips — with time-zone coverage that returns work overnight. A deadline met is a right preserved and an attorney who never had to scramble, which is where a docket's risk is actually contained.

FREE THE ATTORNEY

Work is delivered attorney-ready so the supervising lawyer reviews and relies rather than re-does, returning billable hours to judgment-grade work — with a reliability report the legal team can read. Freeing the attorney is the whole point of leverage, which is the only outcome the firm's economics actually feel.

↓ yields ↓

THE RELIABLE TASK 99%+ RELIABILITY ON DEADLINE ATTORNEY-READY

Tasks are done right, delivered on deadline, and attorney-ready — so filing errors disappear, deadlines hold, and attorney hours return to billable work instead of rework and supervision. The operation gets cheaper per reliable task and restores billable leverage at the same time, which is the entire promise of outsourcing paralegal support to people who measure reliability, not tasks completed.

Operating parameters from PITON-Global legal-process engagements, 2025–26. Offshore paralegals work under supervising-attorney review; nothing here substitutes for licensed legal judgment.

In diligence, the contract is tested from the attorney's side: assign a blind task set and re-check the work product for errors against the standard; audit the deadline log for slips; interview on how they handle an ambiguous instruction or a compressed filing window. Perhaps one team in ten survives it cleanly. Steps 3 and 5 of the framework exist to find that one before the contract does — because everything in Table 3 of Section 6 depends on work-product reliability, not tasks completed.

SECTION 04

Cost and performance: cost-per-reliable-

task economics and benchmarks

TABLE 1 — FULLY-LOADED COST PER RELIABLE TASK: THREE OPERATING MODELS (2026)

OPERATING MODEL	COST / TASK	VS. US BASELINE
US onshore in-house paralegal	$96	baseline
Low-cost offshore LPO mill (per-task)	$64	−33%
Vetted Manila team — reliable, on-time	**$38**	**−60%**

Basis: PITON-Global engagement pricing 2025–26; cost per reliable task = fully-loaded operating cost divided by tasks delivered reliable, on-time, and attorney-ready (defective, late, and reworked excluded); the LPO mill looks cheap per task but rework at attorney rates, deadline exposure, and supervision lift its true cost per reliable task; US comparator fully-loaded in-house paralegal cost per comparable task.

TABLE 2 — PARALEGAL-SUPPORT BENCHMARKS, VETTED VS. BASELINE (2025–26)

METRIC	VETTED TOP TIER	BASELINE	EXECUTIVE READING
Work-product reliability rate	99%+	88–94%	The only task number leverage follows
On-time rate (deadlines & filings)	99.7%+	94–98%	Right preserved, or forfeited
Attorney rework vs. baseline	−62%	baseline	"Get it right" — held or not
Task turnaround vs. baseline	−44%	baseline	Overnight, or in the queue
Attorney billable leverage reclaimed	+30%	baseline	Time on billable work, or on rework

Source: PITON-Global legal-process engagement data 2025–26; baseline = typical pre-engagement operations billed on tasks or hours.

The strategic read: the LPO mill's −33% per task is a false economy — rework at attorney rates, deadline exposure, and supervision lift its true cost per reliable task far above the per-task gap, and a right forfeited on a missed deadline is a cost no rate recovers. The vetted Manila team's −60% is real because it is measured where the value is: the task done right, on deadline, that an attorney can rely on. Buy on tasks completed and you buy the right column of Figure 1; buy on cost-per-reliable-task and you buy work-product reliability — the same discipline every volume in this series keeps arriving at from a different door.

SECTION 05

Sourcing discipline: the 7-Step Vendor Vetting Framework, applied to paralegal support

Paralegal-support diligence adds one hard requirement to every step: a per-task price is real only when the work-product reliability behind it survives a blind re-check against the standard. The funnel below is representative of a 25–60-seat paralegal-support search.

FIG. 3 — THE 7-STEP FRAMEWORK AS A PARALEGAL-SUPPORT FUNNEL

	STEP	WHAT IT ELIMINATES IN A PARALEGAL-SUPPORT SEARCH	FIELD REMAINING
1	**Requirements definition**	Task-first scoping: fixes the work-product-reliability floor, the on-time target, the attorney-ready-rate standard, and the turnaround the operation must meet by task type	1,000+
2	**Market mapping**	LPO mills: operations that bill tasks and treat errors and slipped deadlines as the client's problem, and generalist floors with no paralegal-trained staff or practice depth	~42
3	**Capability screening**	Teams without the machinery: paralegal-trained staff, audited reliability history, a QC and deadline-management workflow, and coverage across your task types and practice areas	~12
4	**Compliance & security audit**	Weak governance: client-confidentiality and privilege protection, conflicts screening, access controls on DMS and filing systems, SOC 2 scope covering the paralegal-support stack	~7
5	**Operational diligence**	The blind test: assign a task set and re-check the work product for errors and deadline discipline; read the error and slip logs; interview on how they handle a compressed filing window	4–6
6	**Competitive RFP & negotiation**	Per-task pricing: finalists bid against reliability floors, on-time targets, and attorney-ready-rate minimums — all carrying credits for tasks that come back defective or late	2–3
7	**Transition & launch governance**	Cold start: the team calibrates against your task types, filing standards, and DMS on a sample before it takes live work, with the reliability floor certified before steady state, PITON-Global embedded buyer-side	1

Field-remaining counts represent a 25–60-seat paralegal-support search, PITON-Global engagements 2024–26.

The standing guarantees hold: **vendor neutrality** — PITON-Global operates no paralegal floors, completes no tasks, and takes no placement economics, so the shortlist reflects audited reliability performance, not inventory; **right-sizing** — teams for whom your operation is a flagship account. Six to ten genuinely qualified providers, delivered within 48–72 hours, free to the buyer, competing through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP.

Re-basing the operation on work-product reliability: a 48-seat paralegal-support rebuild, reconstructed

Engagement PL-051 is a US law firm and corporate legal department — running roughly 210,000 paralegal tasks a year across litigation support, document assembly, and filing prep — that had offshored paralegal work to a per-task LPO. The task price was excellent; the reliability was not: work-product reliability sat near 91%, filing errors were surfacing, deadlines had slipped more than once, and attorneys were re-doing offshore work at attorney rates. The director of legal operations wanted the leverage without the errors and the deadline risk. Identifying details are anonymized under NDA.

SELECTION (WEEKS 0–8, BLIND TESTS)

Requirements fixed a 99% reliability floor, a 99.7% on-time target, and an attorney-ready-rate minimum, with a mandatory QC and deadline-management workflow. Mapping produced 42 claimants; the machinery screen — paralegal-trained staff, audited reliability, QC process, task-type coverage — left 12; the confidentiality-and-conflicts audit left 7. Blind task tests re-checked against the standard shortlisted 5. A Manila team won priced against reliability and on-time rate, with a blind re-check written into the reporting spec.

TRANSITION (MONTHS 2–6, CALIBRATED FIRST)

The team calibrated against the firm's task types, filing standards, and DMS on sample work before taking live tasks; the reliability floor was certified in month 3. The QC-and-deadline loop fed calibration from day one. By month 6 work-product reliability reached 99.2%, on-time hit 99.7%, attorney rework fell 62%, and task turnaround dropped 44%. PITON-Global chaired the reliability review board to steady state.

TABLE 3 — PL-051 FIRST-YEAR VALUE BUILD-UP (US$)

VALUE COMPONENT	YEAR 1	BASIS
Labor arbitrage on the 48-seat paralegal operation	$1.66M	90.0k productive hrs × ($28.40 – $9.90)
Attorney leverage reclaimed (rework removed)	$0.74M	Billable attorney hours returned from re-work
Deadline & malpractice exposure avoided	$0.26M	Missed-deadline and filing-error exposure removed
Turnaround & capacity value	$0.16M	Overnight delivery and higher matter throughput
Gross value created	**$2.82M**	
Less: engagement & transition costs	($0.45M)	Calibration, QC-loop build, DMS/filing-system integration; advisory fee $0 (provider-paid model)
Net value ÷ cost = first-year ROI	6.3×	$2.82M ÷ $0.45M

Figures rounded; reliability, on-time, and rework effects audit-verified. Method in Methodology & notes.

Fifty-nine percent arbitrage, forty-one percent from reclaimed attorney leverage, avoided exposure, and faster turnaround — a typical split for the series, earned because the operation was re-based on work-product reliability rather than task volume. Every line traces to a diligence step: the reliability floor to Step 1, the reliability-based pricing to Step 6, the QC workflow to Step 3's contract. The director of legal operations' line at the year-one review: "The task price barely moved. What moved is that my attorneys stopped re-doing the work — and nothing's slipped a deadline since."

SECTION 07

The executive playbook: governance for the first 180 days

A paralegal-support transition succeeds when the team is measured and paid on work-product reliability and on-time delivery — client in command throughout.

DAYS 0–30

Define reliability, contract on it

Set the work-product-reliability floor, the on-time target, and the attorney-ready-rate and turnaround thresholds with legal leadership before launch, and document the QC and deadline-management workflow by task type. Contract against reliability and on-time rate — never per task alone — with floors and targets carrying credits. Stand up the blind re-check as the program's arbiter of truth.

DAYS 30–90

Calibrate the team, prove the floor

Calibrate the team against your task types, filing standards, and DMS on sample work before it takes live tasks; certify the reliability floor and QC loop. Switch on the QC-and-deadline loop from day one. Publish the paralegal dashboard: reliability rate, on-time rate, attorney rework, turnaround, leverage reclaimed.

DAYS 90–180

Take live tasks, certify steady state

Route live tasks to the team only after it holds the reliability floor and on-time target, always under supervising-attorney review. Review the reliability board monthly with the error and slip logs on the table. Certify steady state on two months at floor including a peak-filing period; hand over on documented criteria; keep the quarterly blind re-check standing.

> THE FIVE FAILURE MODES WE ARE HIRED TO PREVENT
>
> Paying per task while filings carry errors · completing tasks instead of getting them right · guessing an unclear instruction rather than escalating · letting deadlines slip on a busy docket · taking live tasks before reliability is proven. All five are settled at selection and contract.

The paralegal-support argument, in one sentence: a completed task is activity and a reliable one is an attorney's hour returned to billable work, and a vetted Philippine team delivers –60% cost per reliable task with 99%+ reliability, a 99.7% on-time rate, and attorney rework cut by nearly two-thirds — for buyers who re-check the reliability instead of counting tasks completed, and compete the finalists through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP. Anyone can complete a task. We make sure you buy the team whose work an attorney can rely on.

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

How the numbers were built

Reliability and rework figures (Fig. 1, Table 2) derive from engagement instrumentation in PITON-Global legal-process engagements, 2025–26. Work-product reliability and on-time rate are measured by re-checking a sample of tasks against the standard and auditing the deadline log; attorney rework, turnaround, and leverage reclaimed are measured against the client's pre-engagement baseline. The weak-provider column is a composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence, shown for contrast.

Cost-per-reliable-task figures (Table 1) are fully loaded — wages, benefits and statutory charges, facilities, technology and DMS/filing tooling, management and QC overhead including reviewers and deadline managers, attrition-driven recruiting — divided by tasks delivered reliable, on-time, and attorney-ready, with defective, late, or reworked tasks excluded from the denominator; US comparators reflect fully-loaded in-house paralegal cost for a comparable task. A reliable task is done right, delivered on deadline, and can be relied on by the attorney.

The case study (PL-051) is anonymized under NDA; volumes and dates are generalized, figures rounded. Reliability, on-time, and rework effects are audit-verified; the leverage-reclaimed line reflects billable attorney hours returned, and the exposure-avoided line is a conservative estimate. ROI = net first-year value ÷ all engagement-related client costs. PITON-Global's advisory fee is provider-paid and appears at $0 in the client cost base; neutrality safeguards are documented at piton-global.com.

Market context draws on IBPAP reporting and PITON-Global's proprietary provider mapping (1,000+ operations; work-product reliability and on-time performance re-verified May 2026). Offshore paralegals support, and never replace, licensed attorney judgment; all work product is delivered under supervising-attorney review. Estimates and projections are PITON-Global analysis and should be cited as such. The full series is available at piton-global.com.

Would your provider's task price survive a reliability re-check?

Thirty minutes with John will tell you. Free to buyers, strictly vendor-neutral — a reliability-verified shortlist within two to three business days.

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