LAW.COM

Landfall IP Breaks Down What It Means to Be an AI Native Hybrid Law Firm

Managing partners Michael Drapkin and Nathan Mutter said the AI-native label is less about layering tools onto existing workflows and more about building workflows around AI from the beginning.

July 15, 2026 at 04:50 PM By **Ella Sherman**

Landfall IP managing partners Michael Drapkin, left, and Nathan Mutter, right. Courtesy photos

Over the last two years, a growing number of law firms describing themselves as “artificial intelligence-native" have emerged, but the definition of what it means to be “AI-native” has been blurry since the term was first introduced.

Colorado-based Landfall IP is a hybrid law firm, operating as a firm that is tied to managed service organization (MSO) Agentic IP, which provides the firm’s technology. Founded in 2025 by former

Holland & Hart partners Michael Drapkin and Nathan Mutter, is one of the firms trying to put a more concrete definition around the label.

Drapkin and Mutter sat down with Law.com to discuss why they decided to create Landfall, the proprietary tools for patent work they use day to day and what makes a law firm AI native.

The following has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

How did Landfall IP come about?

Drapkin: We had been very, very successful at our previous firm. ... We were the top outside counsel at Qualcomm, Micron, Salesforce, many other very, very large technology companies where we really focused on creating automation in the old automation, the pre-AI, pre-ChatGPT automation. ... What we are doing is bringing that same concept to the future for the AI age. ... We identify innovations, we draft, we file patents. We do that very quickly, days, a week, not weeks and months like traditional law firms. ... We focus on patent drafting, prosecution, portfolio development [and] strategy. We are very traditional patent law firm services, but packaged and put together in a totally different way.

Mutter: How we are really capitalizing on the generative AI moment was our systems-level thinking. Previously, what we were doing that nobody else was doing was breaking down our process of preparing patent applications into a discrete system and not thinking about it as a human doing some work the whole way through, but saying, “What is the input? What are the outputs? What translations need to occur?” And really breaking down this act of preparing a legal document for a client into a system.

We systematized it, but then once AI came on board in the way that we understand it now, the system that we had in place needed to be completely redesigned around the new capabilities AI has. As successful as that system was and as cutting-edge as it was for the time, we found ourselves needing to redesign it from the ground up and saying, "Because we have this new technology, how should the system really work?" And going back to the drawing board and saying, “How do we interact with clients? How do we prepare documents? How do we incorporate feedback? How do we build and keep track of all the things that a law firm has to do?”

What specific systems in patent work were you hoping to rebuild?

Mutter: What I can do is really frame it in terms of not necessarily what wasn't working that well, but what AI unlocked that was in many ways impossible for, which really gets at the way we view an AI-native organization or AI-native team and how that compares to a group that is trying to take an existing process and bolt AI on top.

So let me unpack that with an example: In patents, the first thing you do if you're an inventor and you want to get a patent is you typically speak with the attorney and you have to explain to them your invention so they can go off and draft the application. That process historically involved the inventor who would write up a document and send it in, and there's typically an interview where you talk with the attorney, and then they would go off and do some drafting. With AI coming online, we realized there are many capabilities that we could do to not only improve this process, but really fundamentally add new capabilities to it. An example of that is what we have called the Discovery Agent, which is a voice-powered agent that we designed and built in-house. It interviews the inventor in a structured way, just like we would as a human practitioner. But what the AI capability unlocked there is that the questions it asks and its ability to understand and keep up with the inventor and ingest tremendous amounts of data in real time, it really asks the right questions and it has an uncanny ability of extracting information from the inventor in a way that is tremendous and really hard to replicate.

On top of that, it will do a prior art search in real time. So, in the traditional way, if you as an inventor wanted to understand if your invention was truly new, you would have to talk with a search firm or an attorney and explain it and it might take several weeks and you'd have to spend this few thousand dollars and wait and you would get this report. Our system, because of AI and the way that we've designed it, can actually do this prior art search in real time, and it can give the inventor this insight in the conversation.

Drapkin: What we've done is take a look at the entire pipeline and decide how could we improve it? How could we take all of this friction out? What we generally find is sometimes AI is a little bit helpful: In doing proofreading, we definitely need to read the entire patent application, revise it, refine it, orchestrate it. We're involved in that whole process, very hands-on. But the AI is also helping us with the review to find things to double-check, to triple-check, to quadruple-check that there are no errors drafted in a certain style. It's really about a partnership and an orchestration. Instead of having discrete buckets, we bring for each bucket what humans do really well, which is judgment, strategy and do what the AI does really well, which is analysis and word generation and we combine those two.

Is your technology proprietary or do you work with vendors?

Drapkin: We leverage all the different AI models, and we are pretty model agnostic. We also leverage off-the-shelf patent tools as well. ... There's some things that off-the-shelf patent tools do well, but there are holes and things that they simply don't do. There is nothing like the Discovery Agent out there. ... It's proprietary to us, but there are some generative tools out there in the patent space that do a great job, and it's more effective for us to buy those off the shelf. We're constantly

optimizing. We're experts at tool use. We have a big development team that we work closely with where we're either buying or building to create best in class.

Can you define what AI-native means in your own words?

Mutter: It's really an organization or a team or a process where AI and the capabilities that are specific to AI are really fundamental and core infrastructure. It necessarily needs to be designed from the start with AI at its core. This concept of native, just the definition of the word means to be born from or to have associated at its origin, and so to contrast that with a non-AI native process, it's a process that existed before AI was around of course, and where you're trying to retrofit or squeeze AI on top of it. It's really a structural foundational difference and one of the ways that this plays out is an AI-native framework or organization is really built to grow with the capabilities of AI. The capabilities of the models today are much different than they were even six months ago, and so if you have a process or a framework that's AI-native, as the capabilities increase, that process will organically latch on and grow with it. Whereas if you have a process where AI is stitched on, as those capabilities of the AI increases, you might have to continually re-stitch because you're really trying to fit AI onto a process that wasn't designed for it.

There could be two parts going into what defines an AI-native law firm: How an organization integrates the AI and how the organization is structured. There are also "AI-powered" or "AI-native" hybrid law firms" that take outside funding, which disrupts the traditional law firm structure. Does Landfall take outside funding, and if it does, how is it structured to legally operate as a law firm?

Drapkin: We are actually providing legal advice and legal services directly. Landfall is a law firm and that's how that is structured. We also have an underlying technology company in the background that is called Agentic IP. It is a managed service organization. They own the technology, and so that's the structure. ... We do have a law firm that has everything you would want to have in a law firm, and then we also have the technology company in the background that is providing the technology, the structure, the hiring, all of the administrative and technology things that are set up that way.

We could take outside funding. I would say that right now, the MSO structure is set up for that, but right now we are doing really, really well, and we feel like we can move fastest and provide the best services and we're profitable right away. There's no real reason for us to take outside funding right now, although that's something that we would consider in the future if we needed to, for example, invest significantly more in the technology or do significantly more hiring. Right now, our size is optimized for innovating the fastest and serving our clients, and we have a great team in the background that helps us do that.

For people to be a law firm, they definitely need to have lawyers who are licensed, and they need to be thinking through those issues, and they need to have malpractice insurance, and they need to have all the requirements that the bars have. One of the advantages that we've had, every single I is dotted and T is crossed. We are absolutely dialed [into] this, and what I worry is we're beginning to blur the lines with some of these organizations where they're calling themselves law firms, but there's not a partner, and it doesn't really work that way. There's certain ownership limitations on who can be an owner, and it does concern me that there's this opacity and that they're not being transparent.

Mutter: Even a company that has a similar structure, MSO or something similar, probably isn't really sufficient to make you AI-native because you can have the technology under the hood that is in the hands of the practitioners, but if those practitioners don't adopt that process or don't think in an AI-native way, it really comes down to adoption at the level of people doing the legal work. We have that funnel, the technology infrastructure, but also that our practitioners are AI-native in our thinking as well. That's another point of differentiation.