

City of Palo Alto Streamlines the Contract Process with DocuSign

Palo Alto Uses DocuSign's Trusted DTM Platform to Reduce Contract Turnaround Time By More Than Half

Company's Top Objectives

The city of Palo Alto further established digital leadership and accelerated the pace of business with DocuSign's Digital Transaction Management (DTM) platform, speeding contract approvals and internal processes to deliver maximum value to constituents.

Challenge

It's no surprise the city of Palo Alto, located in the heart of Silicon Valley, has been a leader in bringing government into the digital age. The city was one of the few with a website in the early 90's and began putting constituent documents online for review in the early 2000's. However, up until April 2013, Palo Alto was still using wet-ink signatures for contracts and internal approvals, which was time-consuming and cumbersome. David Ramberg, Assistant Director of the Administrative Services Department, explained the contract process. "We send out contracts ten times a week, if not more. There's lots of friction when you send something in the mail or overnight. All kinds of things can happen, including paperwork getting lost, leaving a city department to wait to get started on a key priority or initiative because the contract is stuck somewhere."



Top Benefits Achieved

- ✓ Reduced contract turnaround from up to 14 days to less than 5 days
- ✓ Accelerated approvals of City documents
- ✓ Increased accountability and auditability of utility warehouse supply and equipment requests
- ✓ Rolling out to departments city-wide after successful trial deployment

DocuSign offered more robust features and greater customization over key steps in the process

The Resolution

The first step when moving to Digital Transaction Management (DTM) and electronic signatures was a legal review. Because Palo Alto is a charter city, the city attorney wrote a resolution supporting the legality of secure electronic signature solutions to the city council, which, once approved, authorized their use. Next, Ramberg led a review of several solutions, narrowing the list to two finalists. Flexibility, functionality, ease of use, and its position as The Global Standard for Digital Transaction Management® made DocuSign the right choice. "DocuSign offered more robust features and greater customization over key steps in the process," said Ramberg. "Plus its ease of use with the ability to easily drag and drop different signature fields was attractive to us."

The Key Benefits

The city of Palo Alto started using DocuSign in its contracting process and immediately saw a more than 50% reduction in turnaround time, from up to 14 days to less than 5 days. "DocuSign delivered an immediate productivity gain," said Ramberg. "If we could get a contract completed sooner, a department could start the project sooner and there's a whole ripple effect of us increasing our work rate and efficiency."

DocuSign's security and audit trail made it the perfect choice for Palo Alto to manage supply requests from its utilities warehouse. "We didn't even bother with paper forms; we went straight to DocuSign," said Ramberg. "We built the forms and now use DocuSign to route warehouse supply and equipment requests between the utilities and finance departments. It has added accountability and tracking to those transactions."



DocuSign is part of our continuous effort to streamline business processes to deliver maximum value to the community. The response to DocuSign has been overwhelmingly positive."

David Ramberg,
Assistant Director of Administrative Services
Department



Palo Alto is using DocuSign to streamline internal processes, as well. "An area we're really excited about is using DocuSign in the legislative process" said Ramberg. "The city staff sends City Council resolutions and ordinances throughout the City for approval, and each one must be signed by multiple city executives including the Mayor. With DocuSign, the City Clerk's office is no longer walking around with physical folders." While it's too soon for Ramberg to give an estimate of time saved, he expects the results to be dramatic. "With DocuSign, we keep people working in their electronic inboxes, not their physical inboxes, which is a big win."

Looking ahead, the HR department plans to use DocuSign in the next year for employee onboarding and benefits enrollment, and Ramberg expects DocuSign to be used in other areas, as well. To speed the pace of change, the city has contracted with DocuSign to have a Customer Success Architect come onsite to help Palo Alto quickly move legacy processes onto DocuSign's DTM platform.

Ramberg even sees potential for DocuSign to improve constituent services. "Our utilities department is planning to use DocuSign to streamline interactions with customers, including authorizations to sign up for conservation and rebate programs, and to make service changes." Enabling

customers to interact digitally from PCs or mobile devices will not only speed processes but also improve constituent satisfaction.

"In my career, I have seen certain tools come and go," said Ramberg. "Some things don't stick and others are grudgingly accepted. But the response to DocuSign has been overwhelmingly positive. Once people DocuSign, there's no going back. DocuSign is a significant game changer in how we do our city work."



DocuSign, Inc. (DocuSign®), The Global Standard for Digital Transaction Management® helps organizations achieve their digital transformations for dramatic ROI, increased security and compliance, and better experiences for customers, partners, suppliers and employees. DocuSign automates manual, paper-based processes with the only open, independent, standards-based DTM platform for managing all aspects of documented business transactions. DocuSign empowers anyone to transact anything, anytime, anywhere, on any device securely.

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