

DocuSign for Office 365 Helps Minimize the Hassles of Paperwork for Special Olympics Athletes

Special Olympics athletes now have the option to use DocuSign to complete athlete clearance forms

Summary

In 1962, in the backyard of her Maryland home, Eunice Kennedy Shriver launched a summer camp. This was no ordinary day camp, however. Guided by her drive to bring social justice and equality to all, Camp Shriver provided a place for people with intellectual disabilities to explore and celebrate their athleticism in various games and sports competitions. The Camp was a success, quickly gathering momentum, and by 1968, what had started as a backyard summer day camp, blossomed into the world's first Special Olympics Games.

Today, there are 4.5 million Special Olympics athletes in 170 countries. Special Olympics offers 32 Olympic-type summer and winter sports in trainings and competitions 365 days a year, including the Special Olympics Summer and Winter World Games, which alternate every two years. Special Olympics is also dedicated to providing health services and education for its athletes; it provides more than 1.4 million free health examinations in over 120 countries making it the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.



Anticipated Results

- ✓ Average total savings of \$1.1 million over the next 3 years with DocuSign's DTM platform
- ✓ Shorten athlete clearance form average turnaround time from up to 22 days to 3 days, an 84% improvement
- ✓ Reduce athlete clearance form average completion time
- ✓ Deliver easier registration process to 4.5 million athletes

Challenge

As Special Olympics grows, one of the challenges it faces is finding a way to efficiently manage the organization's heavy paper traffic. From important athletic forms, HR paperwork like offer letters and contracts, and financial paperwork like procurement and check requests, Special Olympics processes nearly 800,000 sheets of paper each year. At this volume, countless administrative hours must be dedicated to creating, printing, distributing, tracking, and archiving paper, all of which contributes to significant annual hard-dollar spending.

Among the most important documents Special Olympics processes are athlete clearance forms. These forms, which must be updated every three years, require the signatures of athletes or guardians, and doctors to ensure that athletes are in proper physical condition to compete. These athlete clearance forms must be presented at every practice and competition in order for athletes to participate. Because the number of athletes who compete in Special Olympics Games has increased exponentially over the years, maintaining an efficient management system for these forms has become challenging.

"When you consider that we have 4.5 million athletes worldwide, and that each athlete must have both a parent/guardian release form as well as a medical release form, and that both of those forms must be updated every three years, and that those forms require at least three, and sometimes four or five signatures, it's easy to imagine how problems can arise," says Dave Lenox, President and CEO, Special Olympics Washington. "On average, the turnaround time for a single athlete's athlete clearance form is 22 days and requires the paperwork to change hands at least three times. That's a lot of time, energy, and money dedicated to a single piece of paper. And each time it changes hands we run the risk of losing it and having to start the process over from the beginning."

Special Olympics Chief Technology Officer, Noah Broadwater, adds that the highest cost of paper comes when coaches, volunteers, or staff lose or forget to bring required documents with them to competitions or practice. "We would see athletes in the United States or Africa or Europe drive hours to compete or practice, and if they had forgotten their paper clearance forms along the way, they wouldn't be able to participate." Special Olympics began seeking a solution that would allow athletes to sign and maintain documents in the cloud so forgotten paperwork wouldn't bar them from practice and competition.

Solution

Special Olympics began investigating digital alternatives to its paper processes. "We realized that if we could use cloud technology to store and transact documents digitally, our athletes would always have access to their files no matter where they were," says Broadwater.

One of the solutions Special Olympics researched was DocuSign's Digital Transaction Management (DTM) platform. Equipped with language support, digital and electronic signature capabilities, and secure mobile cloud-retention of documents, DocuSign and its integration with Office 365 emerged as a good fit for Special Olympics. The organizations entered into a sponsorship agreement.



Special Olympics was founded on the belief that through the power of sports, people with intellectual disabilities find joy, fulfillment and confidence. With DocuSign and Office 365, our athletes won't have to miss a practice or a competition due to missing forms. The joy that comes from the opportunity to compete is simply unquantifiable."

Noah Broadwater,

Results

Going digital has enabled Special Olympics to eliminate costs associated with paper-based processes, allowing for savings of more than \$35 per document. "These dollars are now going back into funding our mission at Special Olympics," says Noah Broadwater. "Between hard-dollar savings and productivity gains from automating processes, we are hoping to save nearly \$1.1 million over the next 3 years."

Special Olympics is also reclaiming valuable time. "On average, athlete medical clearance forms that used to require 15 minutes to input data now require approximately one minute," says Broadwater. "That's 94% less time that we have to spend managing paperwork, which lets us spend that time interfacing with athletes, planning events, and doing the things that we are really passionate about."

Turnaround time on such forms has also decreased greatly. Once averaging 22 days to turnaround, such forms are now drawn up, signed, and archived in as little as three days. "Going from 22 days down to three days is incredible – that's an 84% improvement over our paper process," says Dave Lenox. "For us, this means we know sooner that our athletes are fit to compete, and for our athletes, it means they can get on the field faster."

One of the biggest impacts Special Olympics has seen by minimizing its reliance on paper is the assurance that no athlete will be barred from participation due to missing paperwork. "Special Olympics was founded on the belief that through the power of sport, people with intellectual disabilities find joy, fulfillment and confidence," says Broadwater. "With DocuSign for Office 365, our athletes won't have to miss a practice or a competition again due to missing forms. The joy that comes from the opportunity to compete is simply unquantifiable."



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