

7x Increase in Contract Signoff Speed Helps MNPS Purchasing Provide Better Service

Using manual processes was taking 85 days on average for the Purchasing Department at Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) to obtain all signatures required on vendor contracts. That was 85 days that the department's efficiency suffered and school system personnel had to wait for materials and services they needed. By cutting that to an average of 12 days with the DocuSign Agreement Cloud, MNPS Purchasing is delivering goods faster, executing more contracts and saving money – all while helping the environment.

153 schools and 85,000 students? A digital agreement process was needed

With 153 pre-K through 12th grade public schools that educate 85,000 students annually, MNPS is one of the largest school systems not just in Tennessee, but in the entire U.S. When Gary Appenfelder joined MNPS as Director of Purchasing four years ago he made it his mission to reduce the time to sign off on vendor contracts. He immediately saw the paper problem: There are 13 to 17 reviewers/signers required, two to six carbon copies made, and signatories using conventional postal delivery services to transact business. Status tracking was done with cumbersome excel spreadsheets. "Actually we were lucky if signoff took just 85 days," Appenfelder reported. "Too often documents were lost some place in the process, which meant starting the 85 day cycle all over again."

Bringing productivity to MNPS with ease

While investigating and testing electronic signature products, Appenfelder and his team learned about the DocuSign Agreement Cloud. "Superficially, DocuSign seemed to cover the same ground as others, but when we peeled back the onion a little we saw that DocuSign had much richer functionality for about the same price," said Appenfelder. "DocuSign has many subtle but important features in areas like security, templates, tracking, and reporting that add up to a big difference in the productivity of the people using it and why they emerged as the global standard."

MNPS introduced DocuSign to a select group of internal users, and when that went smoothly, widened usage both internally and externally. "Almost immediately after the implementation of DocuSign, we stopped providing any instruction to new DocuSign users, even vendors," Appenfelder said. "That's how intuitive it is."

Results



Slashed average contract processing time from 85 days to 12



Increased contracts processing rate by +90% in the last nine months



Eliminated contracts lost in processing



Covered DocuSign licensing costs through paper savings alone

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Gary Appenfelder
Director of Purchasing
MNPS

Still in its first year with DocuSign, MNPS is using the solution for virtually all of its contracts – with no printing at all. The only exceptions are for a very few vendors that insist on using pen and paper to transact business, but even then, MNPS uses a hybrid paper-electronic process it developed using the workflow functionality of DocuSign.

“Purchasing is now executing more than 500 contracts per year.”

Gary Appenfelder
Director of Purchasing
MNPS

Serving more clients and executing contracts quicker with DocuSign

The benefits of DocuSign at MNPS begin with initial contract creation because the use of DocuSign encourages authors to include everything in the contract at the outset. “In the past authors would sometimes make changes after some of the reviewers had signed off,” Appenfelder explained. “That’s altogether too easy to do with paper, and it led to all kinds of problems, but with DocuSign we have much more control over the process.”

With DocuSign, signoff now takes just 12 days. This is partly because the process is so simple, and also because reviewers can sign off wherever they are, using any device, rather than waiting until they are at their desks. “But there’s yet another reason,” said Appenfelder. “We’ve found that people can’t stand having something in their electronic inbox that’s demanding their attention, so even though there might be piles of paper with equally urgent material on their desks that have sat there for days or weeks, they do their signing with DocuSign first.”

MNPS scrapped status tracking with spreadsheets in favor of built-in reporting by DocuSign. “When somebody asks us where a contract stands in the process, we can now provide a precise answer with a single mouse click, far faster and more accurately than in the past,” Appenfelder said. “We can also predict with confidence when contracts will be finalized, which was never before possible.”

Because the sign-off process is now faster and more efficient, Purchasing is able to execute over 500 contracts per year, which is more than double what they’ve been able to achieve in previous years. This would not have been possible without the help of DocuSign. And this year MNPS lost no contracts during processing, compared to as many as five in previous years. Additionally, Purchasing is using DocuSign for another purpose, issuing purchase orders.

Appenfelder and his group have become apostles for DocuSign around Nashville, with impressive results. The school system’s Construction Department and Learning Technology Group are now advocates, and the Human Resources Department is next in line. In addition, Davidson County, of which Nashville is the county seat, purchased DocuSign after seeing the benefits to MNPS.

“Our stakeholders are ecstatic about DocuSign,” Appenfelder concluded. “We’re able to serve more clients better with the efficiency improvements we get. DocuSign has been a big win for us in every respect.”

“We expected that DocuSign would speed contract processing and increase the number we execute per year, but the amount of improvement blew our socks off. DocuSign delivered far more dramatic results than we ever imagined.”

Gary Appenfelder
Director of Purchasing
MNPS

About DocuSign

DocuSign helps organizations connect and automate how they prepare, sign, act on, and manage agreements. As part of the DocuSign Agreement Cloud, DocuSign offers eSignature: the world’s #1 way to sign electronically on practically any device, from almost anywhere, at any time. Today, more than 500,000 customers and hundreds of millions of users in over 180 countries use DocuSign to accelerate the process of doing business and to simplify people’s lives.

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