DocuSign®

Digitizing the Armed Services

Paperwork has never been part of the mission. Today, there's a better way to do business.

Dear Agency Leader,

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, your agency's mission is more important to the American people than ever. And yet, every year, Department of Defense (DoD) agencies spend at least $540 million on paper-intensive, manual processes that have nothing to do with their mission.[1] Time and money that could be spent on high-value work is instead wasted on paperwork that frustrates both servicemembers and DoD staff and creates unnecessary risk.

COVID-19 taught us that the old way of doing business in person (or by phone, fax or mail) is over. Almost overnight, hundreds of thousands of servicemembers and staff found themselves working remotely like everyone else, with their departments scrambling to adjust.

It's an always-on, digital world now. People want — and increasingly expect to have — the ability to conduct business securely through self-serve, mobile-friendly, digital tools that are available 24/7 (think Amazon, Google, Netflix). Doing business at DoD should be no exception.

DoD staff isn't happy about processing mountains of paperwork either. Now, you have both a need and an opportunity to innovate in the way you do business.

Start by accelerating the adoption of electronic signatures to achieve quick wins for efficiency and compliance. Then, move to modernize your most burdensome business processes — those involving written agreements and forms that must be prepared, signed, acted on and managed by both service members and staff. You'll deliver better experiences faster, with less risk and lower costs for everyone (including the planet) in the long run. That's what we call agreeable government: easy to do business with, easy to do business for and easy on the environment.

At DocuSign, we have helped more than 500,000 organizations — including over a thousand government agencies at the federal, state and local level — work better remotely by modernizing their forms, signatures and agreement processes. We are FedRAMP authorized and pending DoD IL4 certification.

We invite you to read further and contact us with questions or follow-up requests.

Sincerely,
Team DocuSign

We've entered the paperless era

1940s–1970s
Invention of photocopiers and fax machines

1970s–1990s
Birth of personal computers, the Internet, and the World Wide Web

1990s–2000s
Rise of e-business, CRM and the PDF

2000s–2010s
Broad adoption of mobile technology and cloud computing

Today
Focus on process automation and digital experiences

Paperwork is not your mission

You are driven by the mission. You have dedicated your life to protecting national security, being on the front lines of pandemic response, terrorism and everything in between. Whatever call beckoned you and your peers to service, one thing is certain: filling out mountains of paperwork was not part of it. And yet, paperwork has become a major part of doing business at DoD. According to data published by the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) and internal DoD estimates, paperwork costs DoD at least $540 million a year.[2] That is the equivalent of military basic pay costs for 20 battalions[3]—greater than our current force posture in Afghanistan—spent on managing paperwork.

There are problems associated with excessive paperwork processes beyond just the financial costs. The Army's civilian time-to-hire average is 133 days.[4] By contrast, many civilian agencies target an 80-day time-to-hire metric. In the world of contracting, the Army's Procurement Administrative Lead Time, which is the amount of time from solicitation to award of a contract or task order is 174 days.[5] The Army isn't the only branch with long contracting processes; the other service branches have comparable paperwork stats.

It's clear that excessive paperwork processes cost more than money; military readiness may be impacted as well. Modernizing your agency's system of agreement—the people, processes and technologies your agency uses to prepare, sign, act on and manage forms and agreements—is key to delivering the efficiencies and experiences people expect in a digital world. This guide quantifies the opportunities for digitizing the services and helps you prioritize your transformation efforts for both quick wins and continuous improvement.

DoD paperwork by the numbers

$540 million
Annual cost to DoD of internal and public-facing paperwork

66 million
Volume of paper forms processed annually

$1.5 billion
Annual cost to the public to fill out DoD paperwork

133 days
Time-to-hire for the Army

174 days
Average procurement administrative lead time for the Army

194
Number of unique forms across DoD

Where should DoD start?

The military is a microcosm of American life. It has parallel equivalent systems for healthcare, retail, housing, education, legal and more, to make life within the services as normal as possible for servicemembers and their families. These institutions need speed, security and convenience in their paperwork and agreement processes, just like their counterparts on the civilian side and in the private sector.

There are many areas DoD can modernize agreements but the following stand out as key areas that are ripe for digital transformation.

Healthcare

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) oversees the Military Health System (MHS), which manages the healthcare for more than 9.5 million active duty personnel, military retirees and their families.[6] In 2019, DHA consolidated management of all clinics and hospitals in the MHS with the goal to deliver a more uniform patient experience.

Agreements are everywhere in healthcare, defining relationships for patients, providers, suppliers and more. Most processes and systems to obtain agreements were improvised rather than designed. As a result, they are needlessly slow, costly and cumbersome for everyone involved. In fact, research shows that care team response times during patient admissions, transfers and discharges exhausts an average of 30 minutes per patient, which can raise patient care costs by an average of 75%.

DocuSign enhances the patient experience, reduces regulatory risk and increases facetime with patients because it cuts the time needed to process paperwork while helping providers manage compliance with HIPAA.[7]

DocuSign worked with a leading DHA hospital to identify over $2.6 million in savings from reduction in turnaround time and errors in patient forms as well as eliminating print costs. Other common healthcare use cases include telehealth agreements, patient onboarding, physician credentialing, provider agreements, physician referrals and contracting.

Retail

Retailers have served the military for more than 100 years. Large retailers that serve the armed services like the Exchange, Nexcom, and MCCS have the same needs as private sector retailers. Fierce competition from new entrants, rapid technological change and business model disruption are changing the way the retail industry engages with customers, vendors, partners and employees. Military retailers, which need to be almost entirely self-supporting, are not immune to these competitive pressures. In order to survive and thrive in this new world, they need to keep their operations lean and mean.

Nowhere is this more true than with contracts, historically a paper-heavy process that impacts every department and is at the core of how business is done. Removing paper from the equation will eliminate efforts spent chasing down contracts and correcting errors made in tedious, manual tasks, which will result in serious savings. For instance, DocuSign helped Office Depot cut millions of dollars from their contract lifecycle process.[8] Other retailers have used DocuSign to reduce contract errors to 0, down from 70%. And critically, in these times of social distancing, retailers have seen 50% reductions in employee onboarding time by utilizing DocuSign eSignature for remote onboarding.

Results

$2.6 million
Savings identified from eliminating paperwork at a prominent military hospital

Zero errors
in retail contracts, down from 70%

Recruiting and accessions

Recruiting is the lifeblood of our military. The service branches need to acquire, develop and retain top talent in a competitive marketplace on both the enlisted and civilian sides. While the military can rarely compete on salary with the private sector, it competes on mission, offering recruits the rare opportunity to do some of the most interesting, impactful work there is.

What spoils the mission-driven pitch, however, is following it up with a stifling personnel bureaucracy that drives talent away. A study from the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) found that, despite military personnel costs being 50% higher since Sept. 11, 2001, the military is still short on critical personnel, including cyber specialists, medics, pilots, Arabic speakers and more.[9] In 2018, the Army missed its recruitment quota for the first time since 2005[10] (although it met that quota again in 2019).[11] The BPC study made a number of recommendations to change structural issues with the way military HR works, including adopting technologies to streamline the process.

DocuSign helps large HR organizations streamline their non-value-added manual paperwork processes. We have seen HR organizations modernize their systems of agreement and reduce turnaround times by up to 80%, average savings of $50 for every job offer extended and deliver a superior employee experience that allows signing virtually anywhere, at any time on practically any device. Salesforce, for example, was able to reduce the turnaround time on offer letters from 5 days to 1 and reduce the cost of offer letters by 80% using DocuSign's pre-built integration into Workday, their HCM system.[12]

Morale, welfare and recreation

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs enhance the quality of life for servicemembers and their families deployed globally. They provide services like movie theaters, entertainment opportunities, fitness centers and childcare facilities.

There's a ton of paperwork to make MWR services available. Consider the length of a typical daycare contract, the paperwork necessary to rent a facility for an event or the approval layers in an advertising/sponsorship contract. MWRs can streamline these work processes completely with digital forms, templates and electronic signatures. For processes that require a payment, a secure electronic payment can be integrated into the workflow after the agreement is signed.

Legal

The Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG Corps) of the services implements the military's system of justice. The military justice system consists of specially-trained attorneys, judges, paralegals and clerks who are experts in military law. The JAG Corps handles all manner of law, including criminal, civil, administrative, labor and international law.

Because the JAG Corps is dispersed around the country and in military theaters around the world, much business needs to be handled remotely, but the process for doing so can be slow and manual. This is not ideal when a central tenet of the military justice system is a speedy trial. There are pre-trial, post-trial and appellate processing time standards set by statute and legal precedent. Most of the time, cases stay within the guidelines, but not always. For instance, average processing time for 362 new courts-martial filings in the Army in FY19, from sentencing to convening authority action, was 134 days. The standard is 120 days.[13]

Results

80% reduction
in candidate turnaround times at Salesforce

9,000+
global law firms use DocuSign

Courts-martial caseloads have been increasing due to a growing number of sexual misconduct related prosecutions. In FY19, military judges of the U.S. Army Trial Judiciary presided over 783 original courts-martial, a 16% increase from FY18.[14] Appeals efficiencies seem to be decreasing in some of the service branches as well. The Navy and Marine Court of Criminal Appeals and the US Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals experienced a 15% and 18% decrease in the number of cases reviewed over the last reporting period, respectively.[15]

Technology continues to be a significant hurdle preventing more efficient military justice administration. The Navy and Marine Corps are working to implement a modern case management system to comply with statutory requirements, capture required data, manage cases and provide public access to courts-martial dockets, filings and records.[16]

The good news is that a significant amount of legal casework can be moved into the cloud. In the wake of COVID-19, DocuSign is working with civilian and administrative courts in several jurisdictions to enable clerks to route documents through complex workflows to judges for electronic signatures and storage in a secure repository.

Education

DoD, through its Department of Defense Education Activity office (DoDEA) operates 163 schools globally, educating 70,000 military-connected children.[17] The cost of paperwork to school districts in general is high. According to the Learning Policy Institute, teacher turnover can cost school districts $20,000 per teacher.[18] The amount of unpaid overtime hours teachers spend filling out non-classroom-related paperwork can contribute to burnout.[19]

DocuSign works with over 800 K-12 schools, helping them streamline processing of special education forms, teacher contracts, procurement contracts, technology acceptable use policies and more using electronic signatures and secure workflows. For instance, Adlai E. Stevenson High School, a high school with a student body of over 4,000 students, used DocuSign to reduce the time needed to distribute student guidebooks from a week to a day.[20]

The cost of paperwork to the military's institutions of higher education is also high. DocuSign works with one of the five service academies on cadet admissions and medical evaluations. On the civilian side, DocuSign helped UT Austin save $2.4 million in just one year by eliminating paper.[21]

Results

$2.4 million

Paperwork savings at UT Austin

Three steps to digitize the services

Step 1:
Start working with an e-signature provider now

The right e-signature provider can set you up for greater success at every milestone down the road — and for greater efficiencies across your entire agreement process, not just at the moment of signing.

Look for an e-signature solution that warfighters and employees already know and trust to lower your agency's cost of supporting adoption. Along the same lines, think about the business applications your agency uses today, and choose a solution that easily integrates with them. Better yet, build a solid foundation for future innovation by partnering with a provider that offers a comprehensive solution for streamlining the entire agreement process. Make sure your e-signature solution has been DoD IL4 and FedRAMP authorized to meet rigorous DISA and federal standards for security.

Step 2:
Digitally upgrade all of your forms

Your e-signature provider should help you prioritize your modernization efforts for optimal efficiency and warfighter experiences. At a minimum, digitize paper-only forms. But don't stop there, your goal should be to make every form digitally fillable, signable and searchable — from nearly any mobile device.

Even PDF forms could benefit from an upgrade, especially those we call "DINOs" (digital in name only). DINOs are publicly available PDFs that need to be downloaded, printed, filled in, signed, scanned and uploaded or emailed. While better than an all-paper process, the DINO process is still needlessly slow, error-prone and manual for everyone involved.

OIRA's excellent database can help you identify which specific forms are most challenging, whether physical or digital. And DoD's Executive Services Directorate (ESD) tracks internal paperwork processes as well.[22]

Start with the most expensive forms in terms of cost to your agency, and then tackle those most costly to the public. Next, move on to the most time-intensive forms (forms with the highest burden hours to the public). Finally, upgrade the most used forms (forms with the highest volumes). There will be overlap in those categories, so you'll see the paper piles shrinking at an exponential rate.

Step 3:
Modernize your entire system of agreement

Signing is not the only step in your agreement process. Think about all the manual steps before and after the signature (or form submission) that waste time, money and goodwill. How do you prepare forms and other agreements? How many people need to review and approve them? Can digital forms be pre-filled with the right personal information? Does data need to go into other systems after forms are signed and submitted? Are signed documents securely stored and easily retrieved when needed?

Your system of agreement is at the heart of these questions. It includes all the people, processes and technologies involved in your entire agreement process – from preparing and signing documents to acting on terms and managing completed agreements.

The more digital, automated and connected you make it, the faster and easier it will be to get agreements done, and the better the experience for both warfighters and employees. Also, don't forget that the OIRA and ESD databases only track a fraction of paper-heavy processes. There are hundreds of thousands of intergovernmental agreement processes, contracts and more that can be modernized for even greater efficiency and productivity.

Again, if you select the right e-signature provider from the start, you'll later be able to modernize your entire system of agreement to accelerate any process.
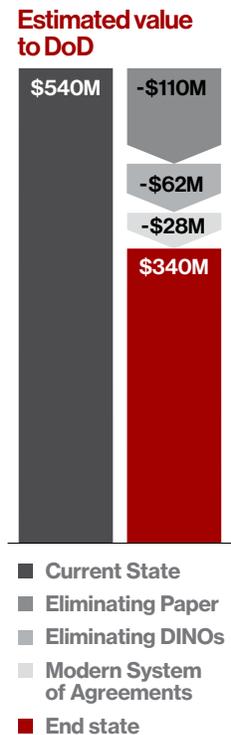
Seize your $200 million opportunity

We estimate that there is $200 million in potential value for DoD by digitally transforming forms and agreement processes.

Here's a breakdown:

Save $110 million by eliminating paper
Estimated potential value to be realized immediately by replacing all paper forms with digital self-service solutions.

Save $62 million by streamlining digital-in-name-only forms
Estimated potential value to be realized by streamlining DINOs (i.e. static PDF-based forms and processes).

Save $28 million by modernizing systems of agreement
Estimated potential value to be realized longer-term by automating the entire agreement process and connecting siloed systems.

Estimated value to DoD

$540M -$110M
-$62M
-$28M
$340M

- ■ **Current State**
- ■ **Eliminating Paper**
- ■ **Eliminating DINOs**
- ■ **Modern System of Agreements**
- ■ **End state**

Ready to get started?

At DocuSign, we have helped more than 500,000 organizations – including over a thousand government agencies at the federal, state and local level – work better remotely by modernizing their forms, signatures and agreement processes. We are FedRAMP authorized and pending DoD IL4 certification.

We have included our topline analysis of DoD's paperwork burden but we've done a more thorough analysis at the process level. We can help you identify your most burdensome forms and agreement processes and put you on a faster path to digitization.

Contact us today to get started.

How DocuSign is helping government agencies respond to COVID-19

The following are examples of processes DocuSign has been able to get up and running quickly in the wake of COVID-19

Emergency government services

Helped one of the world's largest cities establish process to redirect PPE supplies to hospitals and health centers

Emergency lending

Enabled regional banks to process thousands of Small Business Administration (SBA) loans under the Paycheck Protection Program

Hiring and onboarding

Helped one of the world's largest retailers hire and onboard more than 100,000 store and online-fulfillment workers

Work from home

Helped hundreds of government agencies adjust to the new reality by quickly implementing timesheets, telework agreements, and other critical paperwork

Notes

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7 DocuSign HIPAA Compliance Guide https://www.docusign.com/sites/default/files/DocuSign_HIPAA_Compliance_Overview.pdf.

8 Digital Thought Leadership: Office Depot's Steve Schmidt on Keeping Business Efficient with DocuSign https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYdpVGzrQGQ&feature=youtu.be.

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