

Unblocking Modern Selling Processes

Using digital agreements to
remove clogs and bottlenecks
from your sales pipeline

Featuring research from a
commissioned study conducted by:

FORRESTER®

Selling the benefits of digitization

For many companies, the sales team sits at the heart of its profitability. Its ability to operate efficiently doesn't just impact the bottom line. There are legal and regulatory considerations too.

Agreements, generated by sales, are the primary source of any business' growth. They underpin the commercial performance of the entire organization. But, while digital automation, cloud and mobile are commonly used to optimize other parts of the business, many processes associated with sales agreements are still manual. This outdated approach drains resources, creates compliance risk, and can even put deals in jeopardy.

A new study* by Forrester Consulting, commissioned by DocuSign, **The State of Systems of Agreement 2020**, reveals the true scale of the problem. Moreover, it demonstrates how optimizing sales agreements improves overall business performance.

The current state of the sales department

Sales professionals have sophisticated digital tools at their disposal for going about their daily roles. Customer relationship management (CRM) solutions are particularly effective, transforming the way businesses interact with prospects and customers.

Despite this, the majority of major agreements managed by sales depend on some form of manual process. 90% of agreements are generated manually in some way.

Broken down by agreement type, as much as 54% of sales contracts involve this kind of process. Similarly, 55% of partner agreements also depend on an analogue approach.

The impact of inefficient agreements

While the benefits of digitization are well established, clearly there are barriers preventing sales departments from modernizing their operations.

The central role sales plays in the overall performance of the business can lead to resistance to change. If sales are up, there may be opposition for fear of disturbing a winning formula. If the department is struggling, it is unlikely there will be much enthusiasm for the perceived disruption associated with a transformation project.

It is essential business leaders look past these concerns at the bigger picture, as every day digitization is delayed has a cost. Consider this – 73% of departments in large companies process at least 500 agreements per month. Even if each one were to take only five minutes, that is an entire working week for one team member.

Manual processing of agreements is slow and resource intensive, putting businesses at a disadvantage against more agile competition. Delays to finalizing agreements can even result in lost revenue.

An example of this could include failing to complete a new business deal ahead of a strict procurement deadline. Or, losing an existing account due to poor customer experience. 46% of firms believe inefficient, manual agreement processes have led to poor customer experiences.

At best, any delay to processing agreements results in operational inefficiency which, given the central role sales plays in an organization, ripples out to the wider business.

Optimizing your sales agreement process

Ahead of any efforts to optimize, it is important to recognize the distinctions between different sales agreement processes. The process associated with Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) agreements can vary significantly, with the latter usually more straightforward with fewer steps to complete.

Despite the differences, automation has the potential to enhance both B2B and B2C sales operations, ensuring compliance and consistency. In recent years, electronic signature technology has become well-established, reducing turnaround time on agreements from days to hours, or even minutes. In doing so, it has already delivered tremendous efficiency savings. However, signing represents just one part of a four-stage agreement process. All agreements need to be prepared, signed, acted on and managed.

And there are many stages, either side of the electronic signature, that still remain inefficient.

A lack of integration between systems at every stage of the agreement cycle, like marketing databases, CRMs and the billing system, is a major problem. Just over half (57%) of businesses report having a good level of integration between their business systems.

The rest of the businesses are still spending significant time manually inputting information from one system to another. The situation is slightly better in sales departments, where 58% feel that electronic signature and systems of record, like CRM, are sufficiently integrated and automated. But there is room for improvement.

Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) covers a wide range of sales agreements, including estimates, quotes, service contracts, recurring payments and renewals. And by improving interdepartmental agreement collaboration, it shortens the sales cycle and reduces associated costs.

The business impact of CLM is significant, particularly in a B2B environment. Negotiations often delay contracts, due in part to stakeholders outside the sales department. Legal, for instance, requires access to the contract, as well as the ability to edit and share it. All of this is done manually and often results in contracts being lost or ineffective version control and bottlenecks.

CLM solves these issues, providing one centralized contract hosted in the cloud. This ensures all stakeholders have easy access to up to date documentation. It also gives sales constant visibility of the status of negotiations, helping staff identify and prompt individuals slowing down progress.

Streamlining this process allows salespeople to add more value to the business. Freeing up their time, they can focus on generating new leads, following up inbound inquiries, and ensuring existing clients receive first-class customer service.

B2B vs. B2C agreements and process:
All these agreements need to be prepared, signed, acted on, and managed.

B2C Sales Process	Agreements
Quote	Service approvals Estimates Quotes
↓	↓
Contract	Service contracts Terms & conditions Waivers
↓	↓
Payment	Recurring payments Financing applications
↓	↓
Processing	Warranties Renewals & cancellations Returns / exchanges

B2B Sales Process	Agreements
Opportunity	NDAs
↓	↓
Configure, Price, Quote	Price lists Discount lists Quotes Proposals
↓	↓
Propose and Contract	Sales contracts SOWs Work orders MSAs
↓	↓
Order and Renewal Management	Addendums Purchase orders Change orders
↓	↓
Bill and Collect	Financing agreement Payments Authorizations

Prioritizing the agreement process after the signature

Many companies are finding modernizing their system of agreement for the speed of today's business a challenge. The majority are starting with electronic signature. But the steps that come after this, creating the agreements digitally, acting on them and managing them, are not happening in one unified platform. Forrester's research confirms many businesses need to improve these stages of the agreement process. 47% currently have trouble finding and managing their agreements, and verifying they are secure.

End-to-end agreement lifecycle management helps businesses manage their agreements more efficiently. It also provides an auditable data trail and advanced reporting capabilities. For the sales department, this automation drives greater reliability when it comes to contract renewals. This is an important factor if an agreement is going to drive ongoing revenue.

The ability to set automatic reminders in advance of renewal dates, and integrate with CRM solutions like Salesforce, gives sales teams an advantage when it comes to creating long-term customer relationships.



Helping businesses **manage their agreements more efficiently**



Provides an auditable data trail and **advanced reporting capabilities**



Greater reliability when it comes to contract renewals



Ability to **set automatic reminders in advance** of renewal dates



Integration with CRM solutions



Puts sales teams on the front foot when it comes to **creating long-term customer relationships**

Building the case for change

In the last year alone, inefficiencies in the agreement lifecycle were directly responsible for:

46% customer experience

43% delaying the start of projects

42% of organizations experiencing delays in recognizing revenue

39% of organizations wasting resources on unnecessary printing, mailing, and faxing

This is why business leaders are putting pressure on departments to improve. Automating agreements and moving them into the cloud helps secure revenue faster and reduce negotiation periods.

Both B2B and B2C businesses are seeing huge benefits from modernising their system of agreement, reducing turnaround times, errors and manual labor:

B2B

Salesforce: 30k+ employees, \$17B+ revenue

1 hour – average contract turnaround vs. 2 days before DocuSign

10k+ hours of manual agreement prep time saved annually

85% of agreements now “no-touch”

B2C

Extra Space Storage: 3k+ employees, \$1B+ revenue

67% decrease in average time to complete customer contracts

90% reduction in paper costs

100% reduction in contract error rates

By automating processes with solutions like DocuSign eSignature and DocuSign CLM, the sales department has a direct impact on operational efficiency and performance across the organization.

Of course, it's not just a case of buying the latest technology. There needs to be a cultural change too. Digital transformation is only effective if staff buy in to the behavioral and process evolution required to support it. Business leaders can achieve this by proactively demonstrating the positive influence automation has on both the sales teams' day-to-day operations and overall health of the business. It is essential all employees understand how a strong system of agreement in business can make a difference.

B2B and B2C benefits from modernising their systems of agreement

1hr

average contract
turnaround vs. 2 days
before DocuSign

85%

of agreements now
“no-touch”

100%

reduction in contract
error rates

The DocuSign Agreement Cloud

The DocuSign Agreement Cloud™ digitally transforms how you do business by modernizing your entire agreement process – from preparing to signing, acting on and managing agreements.

For B2B Sales:

eSignature

Send and sign with the world's #1 electronic signature solution

DocuSign CLM

Automate the contract lifecycle with CLM enabled document generation, collaboration, workflow, and a central agreement repository

Intelligent Insights by Seal

Discover and analyse clauses using AI across all your agreements

Integrations

Salesforce, Oracle Customer Cloud, SugarCRM, Zoho

For B2C Sales:

eSignature

Send and sign with the world's #1 electronic signature solution

Guided Forms by Intelledox

Simplify complex forms with interactive step-by-step guidance

Click

Capture consent to standard agreement terms with a single click

Payments

During the signing process, collect payment via credit card, Apple Pay, Google Pay, or electronic payments

Find out more about what the **DocuSign Agreement Cloud** could do for your organisation and sign up to a **30-day free trial** today.

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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