DocuSign®

10 Reasons to Adopt E-Signature

Answers to common questions about implementing electronic signature

Executive Summary

The way we work has changed. Modern organizations are putting together new technology systems that allow employees to be productive outside a traditional office building. Electronic signature is an important part of that work-from-anywhere toolkit.

Though e-signature has been legally recognized for decades, some businesses have been reluctant to replace traditional ink-and-paper processes. In the last two years, all of that changed. As pandemic disruptions closed down office buildings, organizations of all sizes in all industries began using e-signature to keep business moving. By the time teams returned to a more traditional working environment, e-signature was a permanent part of everyday operations.

In parallel, customer expectations were undergoing their own shift. As transactions moved to the cloud, customers got comfortable with the speed, ease and flexibility of the anywhere economy.

To research the way e-signature usage has impacted business efficiency and customer experiences through the evolving landscape, DocuSign conducted a survey of almost 2000 decision makers at organizations around the world. The questions were about the way signatures were collected, potential challenges in that process and the impact of e-signature.

What we found might surprise you:

– Two-thirds of today's e-signature users started using the technology in the last two years

– 95% of organizations are either using e-signature, evaluating e-signature providers or planning to purchase a solution in the future

– Current e-signature users rate security as the top business benefit

– 3 in 4 respondents using e-signature describe their signing experience as easy

In this report, we'll cover the findings of our research and present data that can answer common questions about adopting e-signature technology.

1/ How easy is it to sign documents at your organization?

Before we dive into the data about modern e-signature usage, it's important to think about how your organization signs documents. Think about all the steps involved, the difficulty of each one and the total time involved.

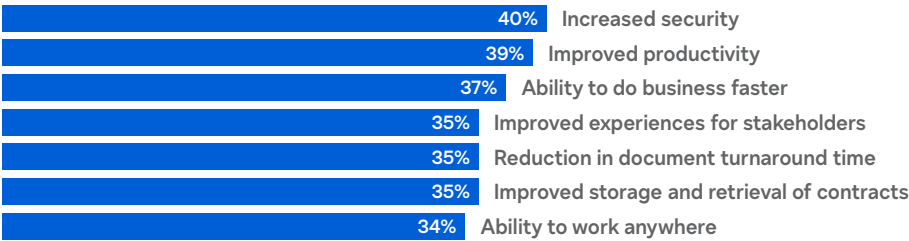Here are a few questions to help you get started:

– What technologies are in place to prepare documents and collect signatures?

– How much work is done by hand?

– Do you always have visibility into the progress of a document as it is signed?

– Are there people or steps in the signature process that create unnecessary delays?

– Is it easy to sign everyday business agreements?

– What obstacles are preventing you from using an e-signature tool?

2/ Why should we start using electronic signatures?

The organizations in our survey that have adopted e-signature tell a promising story. While a majority of these respondents have been using e-signature for less than two years, they are already seeing results that benefit the entire company.

The most common results of implementing e-signature are increased security, productivity and speed. However, most respondents report experiencing more than one significant benefit, including improvements in user experience, revenue gain, availability of legal proof and environmental impact. The story that emerges from these professionals is that e-signature can impact multiple high-level goals depending on the way it is deployed.

Benefits of using e-signature

40%	Increased security
39%	Improved productivity
37%	Ability to do business faster
35%	Improved experiences for stakeholders
35%	Reduction in document turnaround time
35%	Improved storage and retrieval of contracts
34%	Ability to work anywhere

How easy is it to sign documents with e-signature?

29%	Very easy
44%	Somewhat easy

3/ What if my customers don't want to sign electronically?

You're not alone. In fact, that's the most common concern preventing respondents from adopting e-signature. Of all the respondents who had not yet started using e-signature, 37% were worried about customers being uncomfortable with the technology. They also expressed uncertainties about security and legality.

Barriers to e-signature adoption

37%	Customer willingness to sign electronically
36%	Security/compliance concerns
33%	Legality concerns
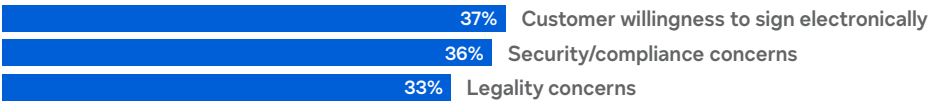
There's good news for anyone who worries about customer experience: modern customers have evolved to expect simple, device-agnostic interactions that e-signature tools offer. Leaders in retail, banking, real estate and other industries have paved the way for trusted digital transactions. Whether in their personal or professional life, it's likely that customers have already had positive experiences with e-signature.

With mobile-friendly signing tools, customers can provide signatures on almost any device, anywhere, anytime. In fact, customers are so enthusiastic about completing documents with e-signature that 44% of signatures with DocuSign eSignature are completed in less than 15 minutes.

4/ Are electronic signatures more secure than paper signatures?

To be brief, yes. Current e-signature users report increased security as the most common benefit of the technology. Even respondents who don't use e-signature overwhelmingly agree that it is more secure than manual signature.

	E-signature users	E-signature nonusers
Digital signature is more secure	83%	71%
Manual signature is more secure	17%	29%

Modern e-signature platforms can meet the most rigorous security standards, including ISO 27001:2013, SOC 1 Type 2 and SOC 2 Type 2. This technology is so robust that it has been accepted as standard in industries with the most rigorous security standards such as healthcare, finance and government.

Electronic signatures are also significantly harder to forge than ink-and-paper signatures because they automatically create an electronic record of activity that can be accessed if an audit is needed. All of the metadata around an e-signature acts as a verification method in case a signature is investigated later.

By enhancing the signature process with features like identity verification, standard templates and real-time field validation, any organization can be confident that their signature process is safe.

"This technology enables us to be innovative, agile, proactive and dynamic—all while keeping our focus on patient needs."

VP of Innovation and IT Corporate Business Systems at Houston Methodist

5/ What if my industry has strict security and privacy regulations?

Good news, e-signature platforms offer the tools you need to customize workflows and remain compliant. Respondents in our survey report that compliance teams are often early adopters of e-signature technology. At 32% of organizations, compliance teams are often the very first to use the technology, which is second only to IT teams.

For organizations that use compliance management software to stay within regulatory guidelines, e-signature tools are easy to integrate. Looking only at the survey respondents that currently use e-signature, more than half had already integrated it with compliance technology. More than 9 in 10 of those professionals plan on integrating the two tools.

Compliance management software integration plans

- **57%** Currently integrated
- **36%** Planning to integrate
- **6%**   Not planning to integrate
- **1%**   Don't Know
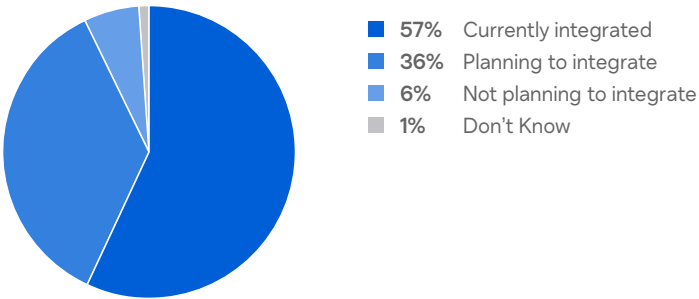
Even heavily regulated industries like healthcare regularly do business using e-signature. If modern organizations can use e-signature and stay compliant with 21 CFR Part 11 and HIPAA regulations, private data in any industry can also be handled securely.

"If it weren't for the ability to get an electronic signature, we wouldn't have written half the new business we did last year."

President
Downeast Insurance

6/ Are electronic signatures legal for the agreements I send and sign?

Concerns about the legality of e-signatures are a common hurdle for organizations considering the technology. Around a third of nonusers consider legality questions as a significant barrier to adoption. If people inside your company have voiced that opinion, that's a normal reaction.

The good news is that those fears can be relieved; e-signature has been legally recognized in most countries for a long time. In the United States, the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce (ESIGN) Act and the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA) have made electronic signature a routine, legal part of business agreements for **more than 20 years.**

Similar legislation has made e-signature legal in the United Kingdom (Electronic Communications Act in 2000) and the EU (ongoing regulations, but the most recent is 2016's eIDAS).

Because of the way businesses adopted cloud-based, remote-friendly work in the last two years, regulations around the world are increasingly recognizing much more than just signatures. Depending on the region, organizations may also be allowed to legally perform notarization or witnessing on a digital platform. DocuSign specifically has been used to provide e-signatures in 44 languages and more than 180 countries.

DocuSign maintains a database of global legality guidelines regarding e-signature laws. To learn more about the specific e-signature laws that are relevant for your organization, just select your country.

7/ We're on a tight budget. Can we afford electronic signature?

In the work from anywhere economy, you can't afford not to have electronic signature. Your customers, suppliers and staff want doing business with you to be fast, secure and easy. Check out pricing options from DocuSign.

Electronic signature technology is an investment that quickly reduces costs and accelerates time to revenue. Even though a majority of e-signature users have been using the technology for less than two years, they're already reporting positive impacts on the bottom line.

Benefits of e-signature

28%	Faster time to revenue
26%	ROI/cost savings
19%	Revenue gains
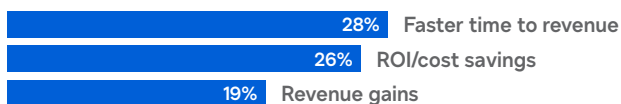
DocuSign research has found that eSignature saves an average of **$36 per agreement** by reducing hard costs and improving employee productivity. For any team considering an e-signature tool, it's important to consider how much there is to gain by removing paper and waste from the process.

Depending on how well e-signature is integrated throughout the organization, there's potential to save even more by improving contract quality, reducing compliance risks and making business easier.

8/ Can I set it up myself or will it be too complex?

Like any other modern software platform, e-signature requires a certain level of skill to use properly. Around 3 in 10 professionals think technical complexity is a barrier to e-signature adoption at their organization. Nearly the same percentage of current e-signature users view technical skills as an obstacle to expanding usage internally. It's important to choose a provider who offers robust on-demand and live training resources to support adoption and drive a successful implementation.

Fortunately, today's e-signature users feel like they're well equipped to use the technology. The providers they've selected give them a product that is easy to understand and use. More than four in five say their e-signature provider offered training that gave them all the skills required to use the product effectively.

Did you receive enough training from your e-signature provider?

- **85%** Yes
- **11%** No
- **4%** Unsure
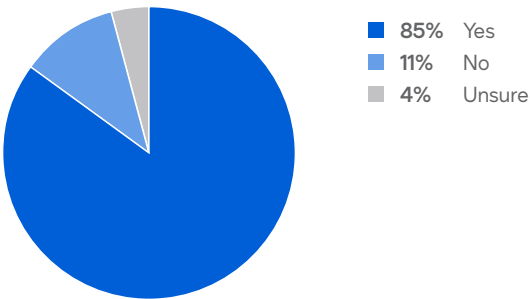
Remember that around two-thirds of e-signature users in the survey have been using the product for less than two years. With all of that recent growth, it's hard to imagine that the tool is too difficult for new users to understand and use.

> **"The quantifiable benefits of [e-signature] are tremendous, but to me one of its biggest advantages is intangible—the peace of mind."**
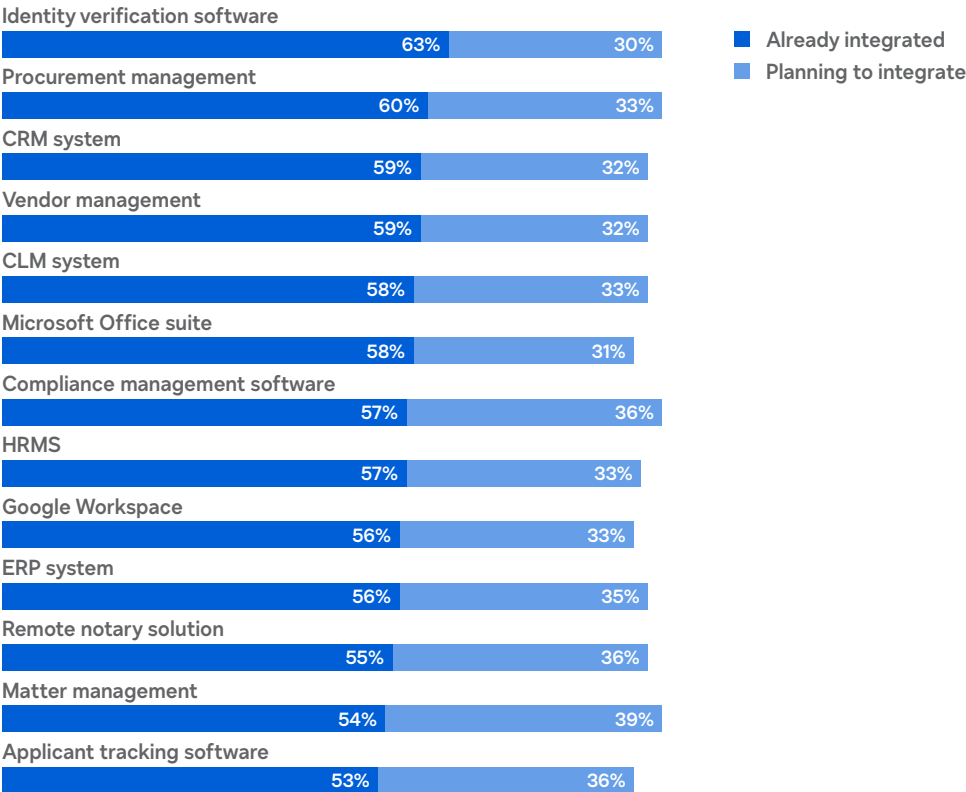
Client Service Manager
Merriman

9/ Can electronic signature tools integrate with other important tools?

One of the most important strategies to successfully deploy an e-signature solution is to integrate it with the tools that are already being used. When e-signature tools share data with the most popular business systems, employees can see the value in their everyday routine.
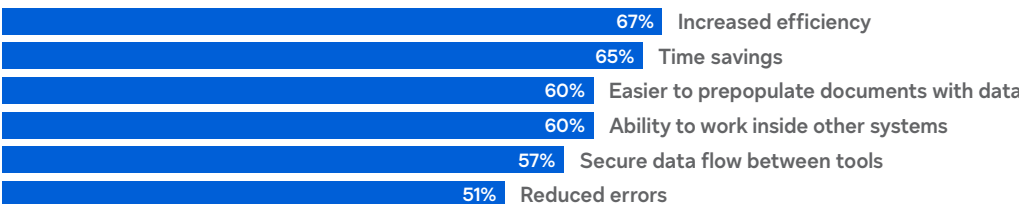
The short answer to the big question is yes, e-signature integrates with other business tools. A more complete answer is that integrating with other tools is not only possible, it's the best way to get the most value out of the technology. Current e-signature users are connecting the tool as wide and as deep as possible. For every single software listed in our survey, around 90% of respondents either already integrated it with e-signature or plan to in the future.

Integrating e-signature with other business software

■ Already integrated
■ Planning to integrate

Identity verification software
63% | 30%

Procurement management
60% | 33%

CRM system
59% | 32%

Vendor management
59% | 32%

CLM system
58% | 33%

Microsoft Office suite
58% | 31%

Compliance management software
57% | 36%

HRMS
57% | 33%

Google Workspace
56% | 33%

ERP system
56% | 35%

Remote notary solution
55% | 36%

Matter management
54% | 39%

Applicant tracking software
53% | 36%

The business impact of these integrations is powerful. More than half of current e-signature users see a series of benefits related to speed, security and quality of work.

Benefits of e-signature integrations

67% Increased efficiency
65% Time savings
60% Easier to prepopulate documents with data
60% Ability to work inside other systems
57% Secure data flow between tools
51% Reduced errors

Which e-signature integration saves you the most time?

34%
Microsoft Office suite

30%
Customer relationship management

30%
HR resource management system

29%
Identity verification software

10/ How can I get my department leaders to support e-signature adoption?

To start, share the information you've already learned about the security and legality of e-signature. Since those are common concerns, it's important to address them right away. Next, focus on the ways that e-signature can replace wasteful steps in your existing signature workflow. For example, if you have routine delays or find it hard to get visibility into the status of a contract, e-signature can help.

In our survey, respondents not currently using e-signature acknowledge that it's likely faster than manual signature. An overwhelming majority of professionals currently using manual signature know that e-signature can be completed at least at the same speed and probably faster.

Nonuser views on e-signature speed

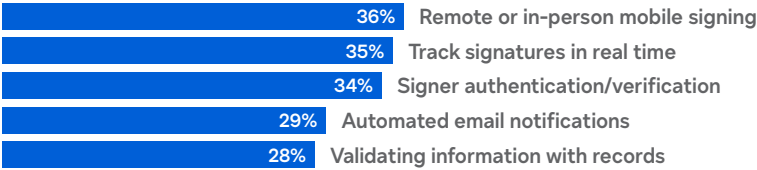|	
61%	E-signature is faster than manual signature
23%	E-signature is the same as manual signature
11%	E-signature is slower than manual signature

Another useful strategy is to share information about the experience that e-signature users are having. They estimate that electronic signatures are **45% faster** than ink-and-paper signatures. It turns out that the manual signers are right—e-signature makes everything move faster.
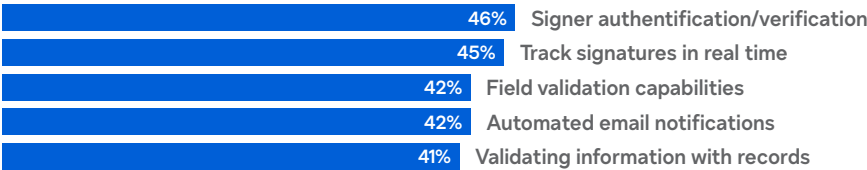
That's not the only thing nonusers are right about. There's a close match between a list of e-signature features they want and a list of features current users love. In short, e-signature meets or exceeds expectations.

E-signature features

Most appealing to nonusers

36%	Remote or in-person mobile signing
35%	Track signatures in real time
34%	Signer authentication/verification
29%	Automated email notifications
28%	Validating information with records

Most beneficial for users

46%	Signer authentification/verification
45%	Track signatures in real time
42%	Field validation capabilities
42%	Automated email notifications
41%	Validating information with records

It's past time to adopt an e-signature solution

For any team still looking for a solution to the problems of manual signatures, DocuSign eSignature is the world's #1 way to send and sign from practically anywhere, at any time. eSignature has been used in more than one billion transactions completed by a million customers in 44 languages across 180+ countries.

DocuSign meets some of the most stringent global security standards and supports more than 350 integrations with the most popular business tools, including Microsoft, Salesforce, Google and more. It's the easiest and fastest way to improve your team's electronic signature capabilities and compete in the modern business landscape.

"DocuSign has become part of facilitating a full breadth of remote experiences."

David Boots
VP Strategic Development
Dilawri Group of Companies

"We use DocuSign day in and day out. All of our vendors integrate with DocuSign, which is definitely a vital partner for us in terms of integrations and functionality."

Jill Thomas-Aviles
Vice President, Payments and Deposit Operations
JAXFCU

Contact us to learn more about how your team can use eSignature to make agreements faster and easier.

DocuSign eSignature by the numbers

Up to 80%
of all successful DocuSign transactions are completed in less than 24 hours

44%
of successful DocuSign transactions are completed within 15 minutes

$36
saved per document on average by DocuSign eSignature compared to traditional paper processes

More than 33%
of all DocuSign transactions are completed via mobile device

Methodology

To collect data for the 10 Reasons to Adopt E-Signature report, DocuSign conducted a survey of 1802 technology decision makers in the summer of 2021. The survey contained about 35 questions related to respondents' current e-signature us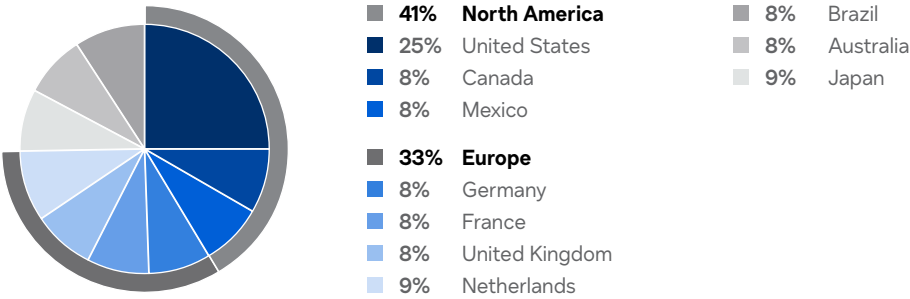age, the signature processes at their organization and their predictions for future usage. Survey participants included both users and nonusers of e-signature technology.

The largest share of respondents came from the United States (25%), with at least 145 respondents (8%) from 10 different countries on 5 continents. Respondents held a healthy blend of titles across five primary lines of business and represented organizations of all sizes in various industries.
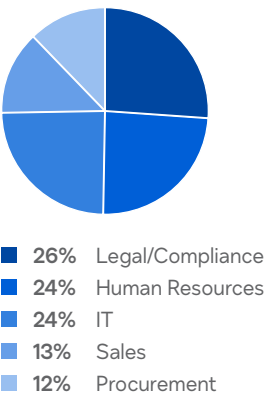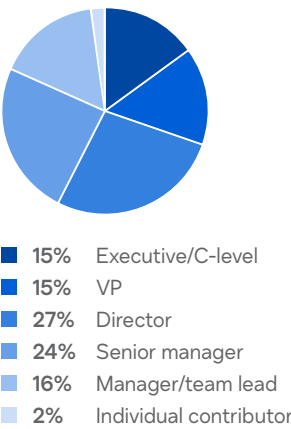
E-signature usage

- **64%** E-signature user
- **36%** E-signature nonuser

Participant geography

- **41%** **North America**
- **25%** United States
- **8%** Canada
- **8%** Mexico

- **33%** **Europe**
- **8%** Germany
- **8%** France
- **8%** United Kingdom
- **9%** Netherlands

- **8%** Brazil
- **8%** Australia
- **9%** Japan

Industry

- 14% **Business services**
- 10% **Tech/software**
- 9% **Legal services**
- 9% **Healthcare**
- 9% **Financial services**
- 9% **Retail**
- 8% **Construction**
- 6% **Life sciences**
- 6% **Insurance**
- 5% **Government**
- 5% **Higher education**
- 4% **Energy/utilities**
- 4% **Telecommunications**
- 2% **Staffing**
- .5% **Real estate**

Department

- **26%** Legal/Compliance
- **24%** Human Resources
- **24%** IT
- **13%** Sales
- **12%** Procurement

Role

- **15%** Executive/C-level
- **15%** VP
- **27%** Director
- **24%** Senior manager
- **16%** Manager/team lead
- **2%** Individual contributor

Company Size

- **30%** SMB (5–125)
- **27%** Midmarket (126–500)
- **23%** Major (501–5000)
- **20%** Enterprise (>5,000)