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WHITEPAPER

Transform your business with integrated eSignature

Why signatures matter

As the speed of business accelerates and commerce becomes increasingly complex, signatures are more important than ever.

Relationships, agreements, and contracts need to be formally or legally acknowledged by the parties involved, resulting in a broad spectrum of business documents that have to be executed in order to be enforceable. To name just a few: account plans, employment agreements, letters of intent, procurement contracts, and sales contracts, among many others.





Getting documents signed in today's business environment

Getting agreements signed is mission critical to any organization. But, gone are the days of creating and printing out a paper document, then sitting down across the table from each other and taking turns signing it. The way business is done has evolved significantly. Commerce is globalized, interconnected, digitized, and requires greater responsiveness than ever.

It is common for the parties signing an agreement to be in different geographic locations. Even if you are in the same place as the other party, most often you aren't signing a paper document, but instead signing a virtual document on a touch screen. However, there has been a steady move away from in-person signing, whether on paper or on screen.

This is even more true in an era when Covid-19 has forced many organizations to do more business remotely and digitally, rather than in person.

There is also a growing emphasis on creating convenient, quick, and painless processes to meet high customer expectations and keep employees working on tasks that add value to the organization and the bottom line. In this environment, creating efficient processes and optimized workflows is more important than ever. If the signature process is still paper-based, it creates some very real problems and slows down the pace of business. It also prevents organizations from taking full advantage of many of the positive business outcomes that come from transforming commercial operations.

The downside of ink signatures

There are a lot of negative outcomes in today's business environment when documents are executed the old-fashioned way, with ink on paper. Deals are made quickly, business is done at anytime and anywhere. If business cycles are hanging on an ink signature on a piece of paper, there are some serious downsides:

It's a manual, inefficient processes—and it's expensive

The document has to be printed, scanned, sent via email or mail, and then signed by the other party, scanned, and returned (or mailed back). Like any manual process, it is error-prone, slow, and there is a heavy price. This includes the cost of the time that employees spend on it, not to mention the cost of all that paper, printing, even postage.

It creates risk

Many documents that require signature contain sensitive information. Sensitive documents are at greater risk of being left on a printer, or a scanner, even lost in the mail if they are being printed for physical signature. One study found that 75.9% of businesses surveyed had suffered serious business risk and compliance issues as a direct result of cumbersome, paper-based processes.^[1]

Lack of visibility and control

Once a paper document is in the signature process, there is no visibility into the status, whether it has been received and signed, whether the third party has signed off and mailed it back to you, or refused signature. It's also difficult to guarantee that the process—of sending that document out, getting it back, and recording the result—takes place in the same way every time with an equally reliable outcome.

It slows down business

If every step of a cycle has to go through those manual processes, it creates significant drag on your cycle times and limits the success of your projects. Sales cycles will be longer; contract negotiations will be extended; HR offer letters may not reach your chosen candidate before they accept another position, to name just a few.

It won't make your customers happy—and they're likely to think less of your company

Customers have come to expect a high level of convenience and nearly instant service. Significant delays, particularly if they require that your customers become involved in the same manual processes (sign, scan, upload, email, etc.) is not going to meet this expectation. It will affect how they perceive your company—whether its processes are up-to-date, whether it employs the latest technology—and likely impact the level of trust they have in you and your brand.

The case of contracts

Contracts represent a particular case where the importance of executing signatures quickly and securely is as critical as in any area of business, if not more so. Increasingly prevalent in today's environment, contracts define the terms and conditions of most formal exchanges and ensuing obligations across B2B and B2C relationships. Contracts are critical to all areas of an organization, from legal and procurement to sales, operations, and beyond. Goods and services cannot be exchanged nor revenue recognized without a legally binding agreement. Because the contract lifecycle is so essential and central to simply making business happen, the contracting process is a critical area to focus on in order to streamline and optimize workflows across the organization.

Signatures are an essential step in the process, as contracts have to be executed in order to enter into effect and become legally binding. In other words, without a signature, contracts are just words on paper, rather than commitments. Manual steps in the contracting process—much like those in the signature cycle—are detrimental on a number of counts: slow negotiations, lack of searchability, frequent errors, and increased risk.

Removing manual steps and creating integrated, automated processes throughout the contract cycle is critical for greater efficiency, speed, and security. Integrating an electronic signature capability into the contracting process is essential to maintaining the contract in digital form, thereby creating visibility into contract status and content (contract clauses). A signature solution provides an audit trail to show precisely who had a contract, who approved it, who signed it, and when it was signed. It is very difficult to achieve the level of rigorous record-keeping required by numerous legal and regulatory requirements with paper-based processes. Companies face a growing need to move away from a manual contract process—including agreements signed on paper—in today's highly regulated, fast-paced business environment.



75%

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The benefits of an eSignature solution

Organizations that digitize and integrate their approaches across the board help their employees get work done more easily. The purpose is to eliminate labor-intensive and risky manual steps, cut unnecessary costs, improve efficiency, and create both a better customer and user experience. Electronic signatures are a prime example of this strategy, and a key business process that unlocks many others. In other words, implementing electronic signatures is an essential building block for updating and streamlining workflows and document processes across the organization.

Electronic signature integration creates benefits organization-wide and concrete gains for those companies that have adopted these technologies, making it an essential component of transforming commercial operations.

Speed and efficiency

Documents that are ready for signature can be securely sent, signed, and returned within minutes, drastically cutting down the time required to execute contracts and other important documents. A solution like Conga Sign integrates with Salesforce, so the user doesn't even have to leave that platform to send the document out for signature. This can lead to faster business processes, more deals closed (for sales or procurement), and more time back to employees for value-added activities.

Reduced costs/fast ROI

Using electronic signature saves the expense of printing, copying, scanning, mailing, storage, and the cost of slow

business cycles and lost deals. A modern solution like Conga Sign that integrates flawlessly with your CRM and document generation solution is quick to implement, and once in place, will give back a significant chunk of valuable employee labor time to create fast ROI. In an AIIIM study, 60% of businesses surveyed had positive ROI on paper-free projects within 12 months, and 77% of businesses within 18 months.^[2]

Secure

Sending sensitive information for electronic signature requires robust security protections. Sign meets industry-recognized physical and technological security standards that guarantee secure transactions, while being easy to use and quick to implement.

- Firewalls and boundary devices strictly protect the infrastructure used to process customer data and ensure constantly updated system accessibility measures
- All data transferred is encrypted, including all communications, data stored, any document in transit to be signed or returning, and all backups
- Authentication tracks the IP address of the signer, guaranteeing his or her identity with a greater level of accuracy than most wet signatures
- A complete audit trail is created as the document moves through the signature process, with the final copy automatically saved into Salesforce and available to signers off platform
- Security permissions established for your Salesforce users are extended to Sign, making it easy to carefully layer access

Reliable

You need to be sure that the documents you send out for signature will make their way to the person you're sending them to, and that the information you store as a result of these agreements will be there when you need it.

To address these needs, all Sign files are backed up in multiple locations and updated throughout the day, every day.

Our services are hosted with Amazon Web Services (AWS), available in the United States, EMEA and APAC across multiple, geographically separate data centers to ensure continuity and prevent any service interruption.

Legal

An electronic signature that meets certain standards has the same weight and legal importance as an ink signature on paper (and sometimes is considered even more authoritative and more tamper-resistant).

- In the United States, the federal Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN), passed in 2000, guarantees that electronic signatures have the same validity as ink signatures for virtually all uses. Many other countries also broadly accept electronic signatures as legally binding, including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, among others.
- In the EU, the governing regulation is the Electronic Identification and Trust Services or eIDAS, which took effect in 2016. It permits broad use of electronic signature, but there is a multi-tiered structure of laws governing their use. A signer's digital identification is based on different types of authentication certificates that have greater or lesser weight as legal evidence.

Lower risk

With Sign, documents are securely sent, signed, and returned. An audit trail is created for each document that records everything that happens to it, with date/time stamps and IP address stamps. Documents sent for eSignature are tamper proof; if someone makes a change, the signatures are invalidated. In fact, electronic signature can guarantee safer transfers and a lower risk of fraud than signatures on paper, since the process provides greater transparency.

Better visibility

Sign provides real-time status of the document sent for signature from draft to completion, so it's clear who has the contract, when they received it, and whose signature is needed to move forward. The system creates an audit trail, or a record of all signer actions. This includes a record of a refusal to sign and the reason for it. This audit trail is automatically updated in Salesforce, ensuring real-time access to view contract status. Executed contracts also are automatically saved to Salesforce. The solution's pre-built reports and analytics capabilities use this data to provide insight into contracting roadblocks, like transaction expirations and declines.

Usability

In addition to being quick to implement, an electronic signature solution that is easy to use creates better user adoption, both internally and externally. The connected, informed customer expects digital interaction, security and mobile signing capabilities, all of which Sign provides. Specifically built for

Salesforce, the user experience is seamless, with features and functions that users already know how to employ. One study found that 72% of businesses believe that improving their business processes would increase customer satisfaction and brand value.^[3] Implementing an easy to use, reliable electronic signature process is a prime example of this

As part of integrated business processes

Electronic signature is an essential component of streamlined, integrated business process optimization. In the contracting process, it is the final link in a series of automated steps in the contracting cycle or other business workflow.

However, it is no longer enough simply to have an electronic signature solution. If a company has a solution in place, but the bloated features exceed the company needs and elevate the cost, the solution has a lower ROI and can be more difficult to integrate with other solutions. In particular, if the company uses Salesforce but the integration isn't perfectly seamless, work flows are negatively affected. A solution that is built for Salesforce, and has lightweight, straightforward features focused on quick, secure document execution from within the CRM, is ideal for many business scenarios. A solution closely integrated with Salesforce can also automate data transfer into Salesforce, cutting manual data entry processes and improving overall data quality.

The integrated business suite

Conga offers the most complete solution in the market for commercial operations transformation. As part of the Conga Suite, Sign Integrates flawlessly with other Conga offerings. It's part of unified systems from a single, world-class provider, so companies can tailor solutions to their specific needs for the quotes, contracts, documents, and processes essential to business and a better customer experience.

Similar methodologies and parallel architectures create strong integrations across the board, with fewer speed bumps and no seams where different solutions knit together. When implemented well, the results are flawless processes, powerful multi-step automation, and far-reaching business benefits—in short, the building blocks of total business transformation.

Sign is built for Salesforce, creating a modern signature application on the platform, rather than requiring integration from outside. Lightweight and economical, Sign provides seamless document execution from both Salesforce Classic and Lightning. Conga offers flawless integrations with Sign across its solutions, both built on the Salesforce Platform and off.

Technical and professional scaffolding is guaranteed when your solutions are all drawn from a single, trusted vendor with a clear record of excellent service and support. There won't be any finger-pointing at another vendor because systems don't mesh well, nor any need for it. If your vendor has a history of consistency, reliability, quality, and 5-Star customer service, then benefits are a known quantity.

For more information on Conga's eSignature,

[Request a demo](#)

[1] Hubspot, "Is Paper Silently Killing Your Business in the Digital Age?", http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/388534/Paperless_Enterprise_Infographic_DocuWare.pdf?t=1464791697974.

[2] AIIM, "Paper-Free Progress: Measuring Outcomes," quoted in Hubspot, "Is Paper Silently Killing Your Business in the Digital Age?", http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/388534/Paperless_Enterprise_Infographic_DocuWare.pdf?t=1464791697974

[3] IDC, "The Document Disconnect," quoted in Hubspot, "Is Paper Silently Killing Your Business in the Digital Age?", http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/388534/Paperless_Enterprise_Infographic_DocuWare.

About Conga

Conga, the leader in digital transformation of revenue operations, empowers businesses to drive better insights and outcomes and achieve peak performance. Increase revenue generation, manage key relationships, and overcome complexity with a comprehensive solution set for revenue operations—the processes and documents surrounding customer engagement, Configure Price Quote (CPQ), and Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM). Conga helps businesses meet customer needs today while increasing agility to prepare for every possible tomorrow.

Conga is headquartered in San Mateo, California with global operations across North America, Europe, and Asia.

Learn more at conga.com or follow Conga on Twitter: [@CongaHQ](https://twitter.com/CongaHQ)



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