

Accelerating Business-to- Business Sales Agreements with Contract Lifecycle Management

Replace inefficient tools and
manual processes with an
end-to-end agreement platform

Businesses move at the speed of sales agreements

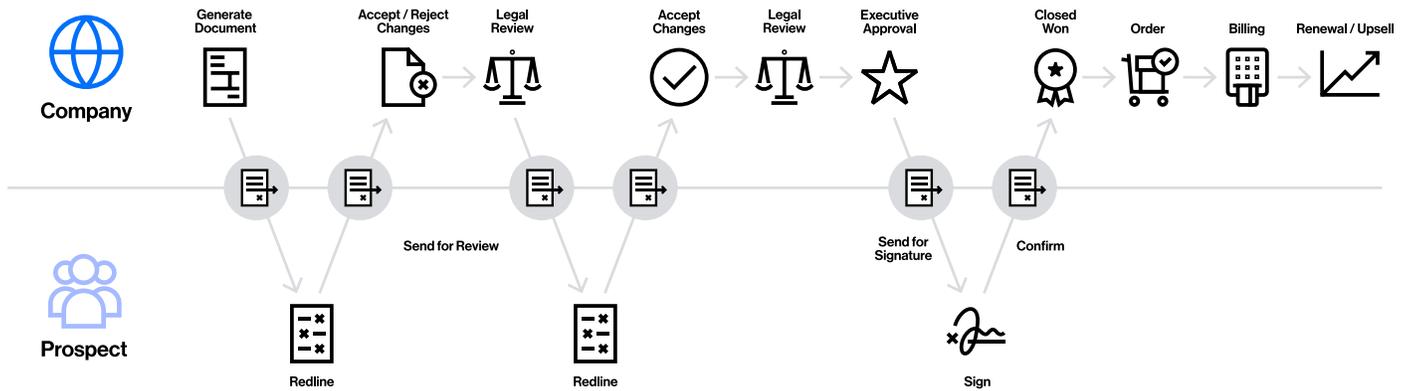
Sales teams in every industry are digitally transforming agreement processes to be more agile, efficient and customer-focused. The faster agreements are finalized, the faster companies can collect revenue, satisfy customers and complete new projects. Depending on company size, industry and several other factors, these transformations can be quite complex, often involving multiple internal and external stakeholders with unique circumstances.

The more complicated the sales contacting process is, the harder it is to complete the transformation. There's a clear need for a more holistic approach to managing contracts, especially as agreements get more complex, involving more reviewers in sales, legal and other functions. Because contracts affect multiple parts of an organization, these problems can quickly compound.

In this paper, we'll explore some of the primary points of failure in traditional sales agreement workflows and the negative business impacts of those breakdowns. As part of that discussion, we'll also offer a fresh perspective and introduce the next generation of digital technologies to streamline contract lifecycle management. The results so far speak for themselves: an accelerated pace of business, increased compliance and improved experiences for everyone involved.

The many (often manual) steps of a B2B sales transaction

Here's a simplified diagram of the steps necessary to complete a business-to-business sales transaction today. The agreement is handed off from team to team and company to company several times, with various reviews and edits along the way. Each of the arrows in this diagram represents an exchange that, if handled manually, can be an opportunity for unnecessary costs, mistakes or delays.



Challenges of manual B2B sales agreements

The modern B2B sales process is often an inefficient patchwork of disconnected systems. To be productive, businesses need to prepare documents, send them for signature, act on the final terms and manage the agreements. Rather than focus on elevating the entire process, too many organizations stick to siloed point solutions tailored to just one step in the workflow. The result is a series of technology gaps that have to be filled manually by sales reps.

Generating quotes/contracts

Without an agreement system to connect CPQ and CLM tools, there's a process gap between quotes and contracts. To fill that gap, sales reps have to create manual workarounds. A common way for today's B2B sellers to prepare a contract is to copy an existing document and replace the original content with details about a new deal. This process is a quick way to populate a contract, but it also opens the door for a range of errors – incorrect data entry, reuse of outdated language or terms, repetition of previous mistakes, etc. At scale, if any time is saved creating documents this way, it will only be forfeited later as reps have to revise documents to correct bad information.

Negotiating agreements

The back and forth of contract negotiation can be complicated. Without a common source for information about contract details, pricing and account information, multiple independent reviewers can all be working on their own version of an agreement at the same time. Too often, a word document or PDF is emailed as an attachment and reviewers redline their own local documents before sending all the edits to a single source for consolidation. Parties from different companies or even from different teams at the same company are working on entirely separate documents. Version control issues are only complicated further when legal or executive approval is needed.

More businesses are using spreadsheets to manage contracts than a tool specifically designed for CLM

Ineffective contract management costs businesses up to 9.2% of revenue

65% of people say challenges in the contract process result in delays in closed deals

Obtaining signatures

Without a modern option to collect electronic signatures as part of a CLM solution, there's a disconnect between agreement preparation and management. Sales contracts have to be sent via mail, completed with ink-and-paper signatures, scanned, faxed, photographed and/or mailed back. The actual signature takes a few seconds and the inefficient steps before and after waste an incredible amount of time and resources. Even with an electronic signature platform, businesses are forfeiting value if they don't connect that tool to technology that generates agreements and acts on the final terms.

Leveraging data from completed agreements across systems

Once all parties have signed an agreement, the final terms need to be reflected in other relevant business tools, including a CRM platform, CPQ solution, a provisioning tool and a billing system. Without an integration to automate that process, sales reps have to spend time manually updating those systems. This manual workflow slows down the whole system, resulting in delayed revenue collection and decreased customer satisfaction.

Impacts of manual sales processes

The inefficiencies detailed in the previous section have a series of negative results. Broken workflows can't simply be mended with manual effort. Analog processes introduce friction and make the entire system slower. As business transactions get faster and simpler (think consumer interactions with Amazon or Uber), service expectations increase and companies that fail to keep up will see substantial drag across all parts of business. In the modern age, it's simply unacceptable for customers to receive different information from different company representatives. That frustration will turn quickly into lost revenue.

Delays in revenue

There's a direct correlation between how long it takes a business to complete a sales agreement and how long that business has to wait to receive revenue. It's straightforward – the customer can't pay you until the paperwork is completed, so dragging out agreement processes also drags out the payment receipt. With a nebulous view into the progress of contracts and how long it will take to complete them, executives also find it hard to make accurate revenue forecasts. That translates to inaccurate goals for individual sellers and unclear projections for sales leadership.

Wasted sales productivity

Sales reps have a limited amount of time to commit to work projects. That time is best spent talking to prospects, understanding their unique needs and pitching products. Those are activities that directly increase revenue. Unfortunately, when reps spend time on manual administrative tasks, they're losing time they could be investing in more productive things. Every step in the agreement process that has to be done by hand is wasting sales rep time by decreasing their potential productivity and slowing down the pace of business.

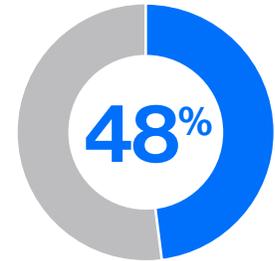
Incorrect or noncompliant agreements

Copy/paste agreement preparation and disjointed approval processes can lead to contracts that have bad information. In the best case, those agreements can be recreated and will only cost the time and effort needed to process a new agreement. In worse cases, those errors can be extremely costly – penalties for noncompliance, revenue losses related to incorrect service levels and even lost business.

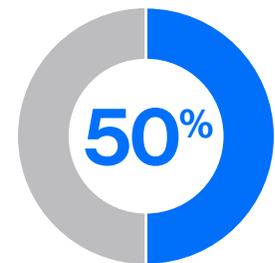
Missed opportunities for upsell and renewal

When contracts aren't connected to other important business systems, teams lose visibility into important events that are part of that contract. Without that end-to-end connection, customer teams can't report on usage to recommend new product upsells and sellers might even lose track of renewal deadlines. Existing customers can be a fantastic source of new revenue, but if companies make it hard for those customers to continue spending, they'll likely take their business elsewhere.

DocuSign's State of Contract Management



said their executive team would benefit from seeing contract status in relation to anticipated revenue



said a transparent contract process would assist in reporting and predicting revenue

Connecting sales agreement processes with Contract Lifecycle Management

Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) solutions fix the problems of disconnected systems of agreement. These tools use technology to create a single end-to-end platform to automate tasks, efficiently orchestrate complex workflows and eliminate unnecessary risks. The result is a shorter sales cycle with lower costs, fewer errors and increased visibility. Beyond improving existing workflows, CLM can also be configured to trigger actions at important dates, which can be extremely useful in renewal negotiations.

Integrate with CRM & CPQ to generate contracts

Most of the data you need to prepare a document comes from other systems. Instead of requiring sales reps to copy information from a CRM into a sales agreement, a CLM tool integrates with your CRM to automatically populate sales contracts with customer details. By combining preapproved templates with these integrations, sales teams can streamline agreement generation and approval to complete agreements in significantly less time with far fewer errors. With all agreement systems integrated on a single platform, sales reps can kick off contracts and maintain visibility throughout the process without ever leaving their CRM.

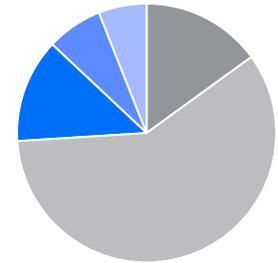
Accelerate legal review with a preapproved clause library

Whether the legal team gets involved in contracts at the generation, negotiation or approval stage, those resources are generally in high demand and should not be wasted. With a CLM solution, the legal team can build a library of preapproved clauses that can be inserted into any agreement. This language will allow sales reps a self-service means of creating documents that meet any business's legal standards without requiring additional effort from legal counsel.

Design custom workflows

Every business has rules about specific approvals and signatures that are required for different types of agreements. With a manual system of agreement, the sales rep has to personally shepherd a deal through all of these stages. A CLM solution lets any business customize the routing for each type of agreement, ensuring that the right individuals view and sign documents in the correct order. With a tool like DocuSign eSignature, electronic signatures can be collected in minutes, ensuring the fastest possible turnaround on complex contracts. As each signature is collected, the CLM automatically advances the document to the next signer, improving overall agreement speed and visibility.

Sales teams and contract management software adoption in 2020¹



- 15% Not using it anywhere in the organization
- 59% Not using it, but actively considering
- 13% Used in other departments, but not sales
- 7% Used in sales department
- 6% Used across entire organization

¹ <https://www.docuSign.com/white-papers/the-state-of-systems-of-agreement-2020-1>

Negotiate and collaborate in one place

It's far easier and much faster for multiple parties to work together on an agreement if everyone has access to the same version of the document. No more disparate local files stored in emails or on desktops. When every individual party can access a single live file, accessible via a secure central repository, the process moves far more efficiently. This is especially true for complex or high value agreements. A detailed history of changes helps every party understand the progress of the document in case of an audit or another incident further down the road. For the seller in particular, there are significant workflow advantages to be gained by utilizing a single system that combines real-time data from multiple tools – CRM, CPQ, ERP, service clouds, etc. – with information about past agreements and current account status.

Search a centralized agreement repository

When an employee needs to find an agreement, they shouldn't have to look in more than one place. To find agreements efficiently, the entire library of contracts needs to live on a single platform. That's what a CLM tool offers. There are countless events that can require a business to search through existing agreements to find liabilities or opportunities. Beyond simple text search, businesses can also attach tags and metadata to contracts to make search more powerful. With a powerful central repository, customer teams can even create alerts for upsell or renewal opportunities.

DocuSign CLM is part of the DocuSign Agreement Cloud, a comprehensive set of applications and integrations that digitally transforms the entire agreement process. By connecting all these tools on a single central platform, B2B sales teams can increase agreement efficiency and allow individual sales reps to spend more time on revenue-creating activities.

DocuSign CLM — faster, more powerful B2B sales agreements

As the leader in electronic signature technology, DocuSign is transforming the Contract Lifecycle Management category with DocuSign CLM. CLM is a secure cloud platform that streamlines the workflows for agreements, cutting the sales cycle by as much as 75%. DocuSign CLM is redefining business standards with customer-centric innovation that automates manual tasks and simplifies complex processes. It's an easy way to optimize sales operations and improve collaboration between internal teams, prospects and customers.

DocuSign CLM Customer Results



\$50K saved annually in document storage fees



75% decrease in contract cycle time



Increased customer efficiency

“DocuSign CLM’s cloud-based central repository with robust search and workflow is a game changer for OmniTRAX. The ability to create contract templates and clause libraries enabled the commercial team to shorten the time it takes to get contract packages to customers.”

Jeannette Wayne

Senior Director and PMO
OmniTRAX

“If we remove 30 percent of the time required to negotiate and execute a loan — through automation, parallel processing and eSignature — that time gets channeled back into customer relationships.”

Jonathan Holman

Head of Digital Transformation
Santander Corporate & Commercial

DocuSign is a pioneer in Contract Lifecycle Management technology. In fact, Gartner named DocuSign a Leader in the 2020 Magic Quadrant for CLM. Learn more about the [DocuSign Agreement Cloud for Sales](#).

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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