

Top 3 Government Workflows to Digitize Today

MARKET TRENDS REPORT



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Introduction

Interacting with government agencies and systems can be frustrating for constituents, but agencies are out to change that. President Biden signed an [executive order](#) in December 2021 directing the federal government to improve the user experience, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management efforts to hire [seasoned customer experience experts](#) to lend a hand. State and local agencies are doing much the same, [focusing on digital government services](#) to improve user experience.

While enhancing the constituent experience is important, agencies are beginning to realize that improving the employee experience through automation is just as critical. The millennials who make up the lion's share of government workers today expect it and aren't likely to remain in agencies where manual processes continue to proliferate. It's hard to imagine that any employee in their 20s or 30s today would be happy filing paper forms in boxes or performing laborious manual tasks that could easily be automated.

Automating manual processes internally can take shape in many ways, including pre-filling data in forms, integrated signing and payments, implementing e-signatures, generating contracts, onboarding employees and automating entire workflows. The result is faster, more accurate processes and higher user satisfaction.

To learn more about improving the user experience, GovLoop spoke with DocuSign, a major supplier of digitization solutions to government. This report explains how digitizing and automating processes can improve productivity, user satisfaction and security.



By The Numbers

38%

of public sector respondents globally say data is manually entered. 43% say data is manually exported from one system and then imported to another.

70%

of local government officials and staff say they expect to use more software and technology to streamline public service delivery in the future.

“Improving Government services should also make our Government more efficient and effective overall.”

– President Joe Biden, in the Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government

39%

of state employees say budget restraints is the top challenge to implementing their digital roadmap this year.

\$220

The average amount it costs a health care organization to recreate a lost document.

64%

of HR leaders are prioritizing employee experience more than they did before the pandemic.

73%

of surveyed federal employees say their agency lacks a clear vision for digital transformation.

10,000

The number of sheets of copy paper the average office worker uses each year.

77%

of U.S. employees say automation solutions have provided them with more time to deepen relationships with customers and stakeholders.

Replacing Manual With End-to-End Digitized Processes

The Challenge: Slow, Error-Prone Processes

Legacy processes can be clunky, slow and frustrating for users. Issues include:

Slow processing: Paper-based processes requiring multiple reviews and approvals tend to get bogged down. A manual onboarding process, for example, can take much longer without automatic notifications about document receipts and signatures. In addition to higher costs and extra time, manual processes can result in frustration. Younger government employees and constituents especially expect processes to be efficient and automated. And with worker shortages [especially acute](#) across government, agencies can't afford inefficiencies.

More frequent errors: When processes are manual, errors are more likely, and those errors can be costly and time-consuming to fix. If, for example, an employee writes the wrong dollar amount on a form, that form may pass through several steps before the error is caught—if it is even caught. Once identified, the form may need to be resubmitted, taking even more time.

Poor security: Even if legacy processes are partially automated, that technology may lack modern security measures, raising questions about trust and validation. That could mean a greater chance of malware hitting a system, which can bring processing to a halt, depriving agencies of revenue and constituents of smooth transactions. Ensuring that information remains fully secure during every step of a process requires end-to-end encryption and authentication with modern technology that meets or exceeds strict security standards.

Complicated and time-consuming audit preparation:

Audits and other requests for information like Freedom of Information Act requests require efficient, comprehensive data collection. It takes much longer to collect the right information for an audit—and know that you have collected all of the required data—with paper-based processes. Some of the required information may be in a file cabinet (or misfiled), while some may be in a disconnected data repository.

The Solution: End-to-End Digital Processes

Most government agencies today have embraced automation to some extent, and it has made a real difference in productivity and cost reduction. But in many cases, the automation isn't end-to-end.

For example, an automated benefits management process that still requires employees to submit requests for vacation days manually isn't fully automated. Reaping the benefits of automation—a better user experience, a greater ability to collaborate, better security and overall technology modernization—requires that all parts of the process be automated and integrated.

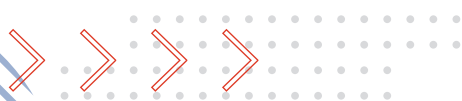
Before applying any technology to a process, make sure the process you're focusing on is a good candidate for automation. Shonte Eldridge, senior director of state and local government strategy and solutions at DocuSign, recommends first identifying:

- The key stakeholders (who will be affected)
- The processes that need to be digitized first
- The current status of the process and the improvements needed
- The desired future state of the process

“Let's say you decide that digitizing your hiring process is most critical. The first step is mapping the hiring process from beginning to end—the time it takes from posting the position to hiring a person,” Eldridge said. “The map will show you where signatures and approval points occur and be able to pinpoint where slowdowns are happening.”

With that information, agencies can address the longest processes first. If, for example, it takes three weeks to send an offer to a prospect and receive a reply, enabling e-signatures on mobile can speed up the process.

There are many ways to digitize processes, but it's important to make sure the options you choose are tightly connected to the needs and mission of the agency. Digitized processes often include automating data collection and preparation, collecting and applying appropriate signatures electronically, and distributing and managing the document throughout its lifecycle.



Top Use Cases for Digitization

Correspondence Management



Agency correspondence typically follows a standard path: create the document, secure supervisor approval of the content, send the correspondence to the recipient, wait for it to be returned with a signature and then file the document. This is true of everything from memos to purchase orders to signing off on promotions. Instead of printing out the document, signing it, scanning it, emailing it and then filing it—a combination of manual and automated components—a fully automated process ensures that everyone involved is working with same version of the document, everybody can see the progress of the transaction and the process moves along at a faster pace.

Human Capital Management



Recruiting and hiring, onboarding, employee development, benefits administration, retention of key talent—all of these functions belong to the HR department. While agencies have automated some of these processes, others remain paper-based and manual, and few have automated the entire process and integrated relevant pieces with other critical internal systems. The onboarding process alone typically consists of more than 50 activities, many of them still paper-based. Digitizing, automating and connecting processes related to onboarding creates a faster, smoother, less expensive and less error-prone process. Digitization also can improve employee retention by as much as 82%—an increasingly important metric in today's struggle for government employees.

Procurement



Whether an agency needs a new office lease, a state-of-the-art enterprise resource planning system or new vehicles for its fleet, the procurement process is fairly similar: Solicitations are posted, vendors submit bids, agencies evaluate the offers and choose a winner, terms are negotiated and the contract is signed by all parties. Along the way, procurement officials must ensure that contracts comply with all applicable laws and specifications. Using a modern contract lifecycle management system addresses all of these challenges. It assures compliance, drastically reduces time to approval and signature, reduces errors and ensures that everybody is working with the same version of a document.



Case Study: Automation Delivers for Health and Human Services Agencies

With more than [70 million Americans](#) currently enrolled in Medicaid and nearly [10 million](#) receiving disability benefits, government health and human services programs are overwhelmed. Spurred by numbers like these, DocuSign commissioned a study to better understand what leading states are doing right in administering these benefits and what lagging states can learn from them.

The research found that most health and human service agencies now have a public portal that enables applicants to upload information, but some portals are much more effective than others. Portals that simply replaced paper processes with partially digital processes—for example, requiring applicants to download, print, fill out and then upload a form—were less successful. The most successful were those that fully streamlined the application process with digital forms and electronic signatures.

For example, DocuSign worked with a large state child protection services agency that formerly relied exclusively on paper. When it was ordered to increase the number of foster parents in the system, CPS leaders realized that manual processes would make complying with the order difficult.

The agency digitized its 40-page initial adoption application, using DocuSign to enable electronic signatures. As a result, CPS not only was able to comply with the court order, but it experienced a significant increase in the number of foster parent applications. It also helped the agency itself; with digitized processes, for example, a case worker can submit signed, certified documents electronically, significantly reducing time and overall costs.

HOW DOCUSIGN HELPS

DocuSign helps public sector agencies focus on their missions instead of paperwork, deliver user experiences, reduce costs and streamline processes. Products include:

- DocuSign eSignature (electronic signatures)
- DocuSign Notary (electronic notarization)
- DocuSign CLM (contract lifecycle management)
- DocuSign Payments (automated payment technology)

- DocuSign Identity (verifying signer identity)
- DocuSign Monitor (activity tracking)
- DocuSign Insight (AI-powered contract analytics)

DocuSign also has more than 350 pre-built integrations with other products for managing all data and processes, along with thousands of APIs. DocuSign eSignature and DocuSign CLM are [authorized at the FedRAMP Moderate Impact Level](#), and DISA has granted DocuSign a [provisional authorization for Impact Level 4 \(IL-4\)](#).

Conclusion

Governments at all levels are working hard to transform manual processes into digital ones and eliminate siloed islands of information. While many are making good progress, there is still plenty of work to be done. That means focusing on end-to-end automation for processes, creating a more productive, frictionless experience. It takes a combination of choosing the right processes, applying the right tools and keeping the user experience front and center.

While change isn't always easy, making the right changes are well worth the effort. The key, Eldridge said, is making sure that user experience is always the top priority. While processes and technology are critical enablers, they simply aren't as important as putting users first.

"There are a lot of ways to improve processes, and if the end result is still something that takes too long or is too complicated, the user experience will suffer," she said.



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.

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