



DOCUMENT AUTOMATION IS KEY TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

Digital Transformation Brings Documents and Data Together

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

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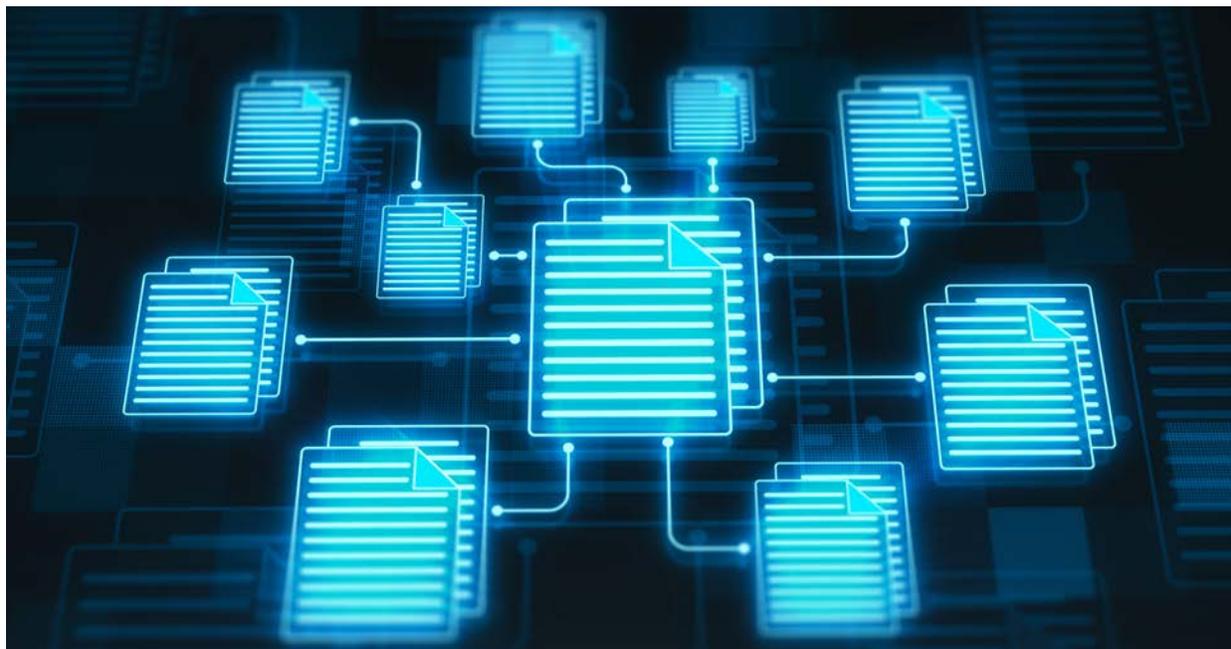
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INTRODUCTION

Document automation is transforming the way work gets done, from the front office, where sales and marketing work, to the back office, where the most notable contributors are finance and legal. One of the easiest and most effective ways to embrace digital transformation is to rethink document creation and management. After all, whether we're talking about marketing collateral, proposals, quotes, invoices, project updates or anything else, your customers depend on you for information. And that information is contained and communicated in documents. Document automation makes it easy to create and deliver professional, branded content that is ready to share and collaborate on. In the process, companies can shrink cycle times, eliminate wasteful re-work, improve outcomes and positively impact the customer experience.

Today's smart businesses are looking for ways to automate routine processes around document creation and management to improve everything from sales, marketing and customer relationships to enterprise-resource planning and supply-chain management.

A complete, intelligent document automation solution will include a variety of features that contribute to a successful digital transformation effort. Document creation should be quick, easy and accurate, enabled by standard and customized templates and branding.



Process and workflow automation should incorporate triggers to speed delivery, increase productivity and reduce manual steps. Advanced data editing and retrieval capabilities ensure you are capturing all relevant information from any source within the organization and that the data is accurate and clean. Internal and external users can work together collaborating on documents wherever and whenever they need to, and built-in eSignature capabilities let users execute sales and other processes with ease.

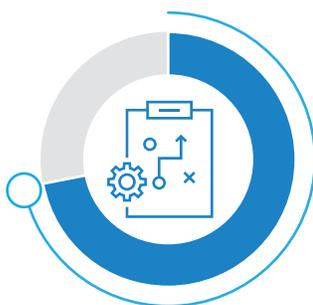
This paper will discuss why companies need to embrace digital document transformation across their organizations, examine how document automation is improving basic business processes, highlight the key elements to look for in an automation solution, and offer best practices for implementation success.

DOCUMENT AUTOMATION IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Smart companies are looking for ways to leverage automation to increase efficiency, shrink cycle times and deliver consistent processes across the business. The goal, at least initially, is to reduce costs and improve productivity by streamlining basic procedures. But as automation segues into digital transformation, it does much more than scale common, repetitive operations. Automated document processes improve customer service, drive competitiveness, increase productivity, help companies meet compliance requirements and, ultimately, lower costs. They can also affect those tasks that directly impact revenue: customer and partner contracts, employee recruiting and retention, sales and marketing, outsourcing arrangements and more.

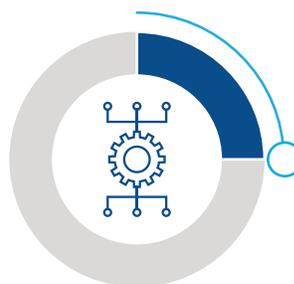
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of companies have already invested in technology to drive and improve enterprise content and business process management.



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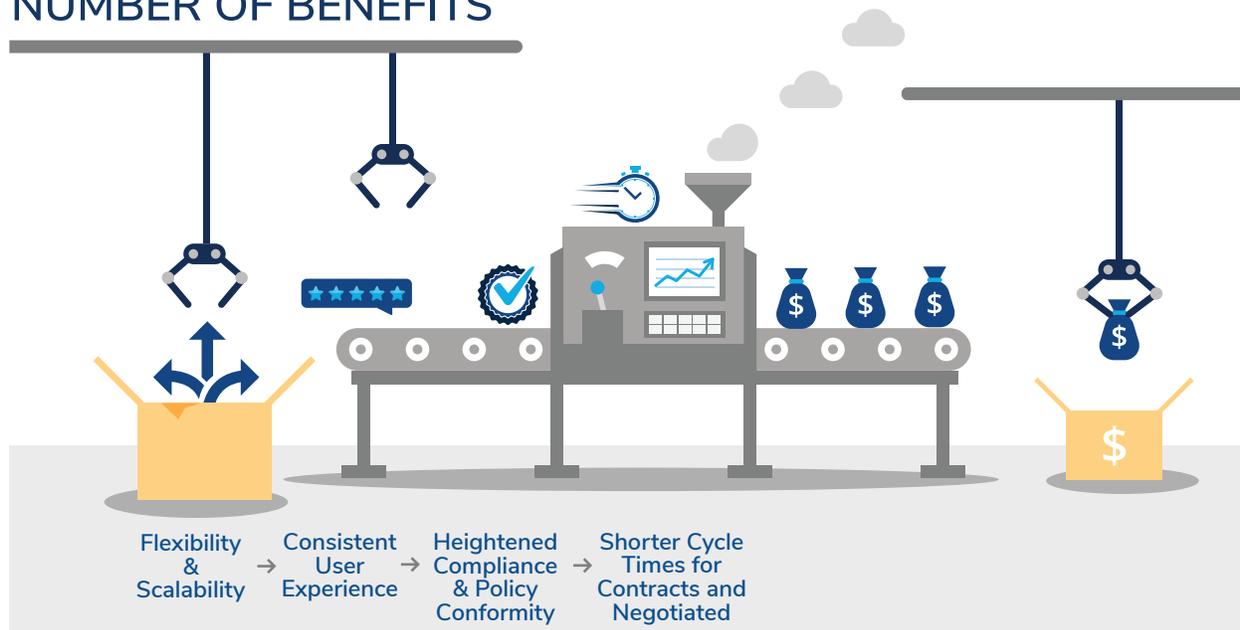
Source: Frost & Sullivan

Companies clearly recognize the business and operational value in automation. In a recent Frost & Sullivan survey of almost 2,000 global IT decision makers, 72% say they have already invested in technology to drive and improve enterprise content and business process management. Furthermore, almost a quarter of IT decision makers say that Digital Business Automation (DBA) is one of the top technologies they use to reduce costs and positively impact the bottom line. Document automation is a key part of that effort.

As they consider technology investments, companies are trying to reduce operational costs, improve the customer experience and embrace digital transformation. Automated document management can help with all that and more.

By automating business processes, companies can see a number of other benefits as well: flexibility and scalability, a consistent user experience, heightened compliance and policy conformity, and significantly shorter cycle times for contracts and other documents. And yet, about 20% of survey respondents acknowledge that effectively automating business processes is a top challenge for their organization.

AUTOMATING BUSINESS PROCESSES HAS A NUMBER OF BENEFITS



Source: Frost & Sullivan

One way to start the process is to focus on document creation and management throughout the organization. After all, documents—and the information they contain—lie at the heart of almost any business. Whether we’re talking about contracts and sales agreements, employee comp plans and NDAs, invoices and receipts, or sales and marketing collateral, no company can run without codifying its operations in documents. But while most organizations have begun the process of digitizing such “paperwork,” they still spend countless hours manually creating, editing, vetting and tracking all the documents within their virtual walls. By automating that process, companies can increase the amount and quality of the work they produce—in other words, increase productivity.

Specifically, when they make it easy for employees to create common documents with a few mouse clicks, companies ensure that all corporate collateral reflects the brand and goals of the organization, as well as the mission at hand. In the process, they can dramatically shrink the time it takes to create, edit and process everything from contracts to comp plans, thereby increasing agility and allowing them to quickly respond to market changes, employee-retention needs and new customer demands. That, in turn, will positively impact the bottom line.

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN END-TO-END DOCUMENT AUTOMATION PLATFORM

The key to any successful automation effort is to focus on how people actually work and then identify the parts of each process that are repetitive and mundane. Those are the areas that are ripe for automation, freeing up employees to focus on the more thoughtful initiatives that deliver measurable

value and drive strategic action across the business. The result has a double impact on the bottom line: machines speed document creation and management, allowing the company to increase cycle and production times, process more sales and quickly onboard new employees. Meanwhile, the employees themselves have more time to spend on the intelligent, strategic tasks that make them so valuable to the organization.



A complete document automation solution makes it easy to digitize the document generation process and enable the flow of information through all parts of the business. This will include:



CREATION

Creating documents should be a painless process that leverages automated templates to ensure the result is customized, branded and professional—and includes rich text and images as needed. Users won't need graphic design experience to produce creative collateral ready to share with colleagues, partners and customers. Better still, companies that automate document creation can eliminate the common errors that slow down approval processes and negatively impact the bottom line.



BRANDING

Even internal documents benefit from branding, and it is required for customer- or partner-facing contracts and collateral. Don't leave your professional presentation up to ad-hoc employee efforts. Custom branding capabilities will guarantee every document has the specific, vetted and professionally designed look your executive team demands.



DATA

Documents are only as good as the information they contain. Any document automation solution must pay special attention to the data that's driving the content. In the best case, a solution lets users see, filter and update all relevant data from a single screen. It should pull accurate data from a variety of sources and ensure that the information is reliable, clean and secure. The software should also exclude certain data and meet privacy and compliance policies and regulations. With a built-in Salesforce integration, you can utilize that platform as the system of record throughout the document management process.



COLLABORATION

Most businesses run on teamwork, and documents are part of almost every project and group process. Your document automation software should make it easy to share, edit and track documents online. The processes should be secure and managed, allowing creators and contributors alike to see who's done what and what actions need to be taken. A cloud-based storage system ensures security and privacy while surfacing the content to all users who need it or should have access to it—on any network or device.



WORKFLOWS

Once documents are created, they need to be used. With workflow capabilities embedded within the solution, companies can rest assured that all content will be routed, accessed and stored according to pre-set rules and policies, thereby shrinking cycle times and increasing compliance. Employees should be able to visualize, create and automate complex workflows without coding or custom development. Best-in-class software lets users build, visualize and track complex business processes in real time to monitor progress and identify where and when slowdowns are occurring. Integrating document routing with other BPA solutions will add value and maximize ROI.



SIGNATURES

Sales agreements, contracts, employee compensation and benefits plans, supplier invoices, and hundreds of other documents require a legally recognized signature to be considered valid. No automation program is complete without an eSignature feature that makes it simple, fast and cost-effective to get and track the necessary sign-offs at each step of the process.

SUCCESS STEPS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PROVIDER

A number of vendors offer document automation software, but it's important to partner with a provider that understands the key processes involved in the creation, management, storage and use of the documents that are so critical to your business.

Look for a provider with a full suite of capabilities and a long history in the market. Cloud-based solutions are cost effective, flexible, scalable and easy to deploy across the organization. Ease of use should be top of mind; employees won't use an automation solution if doing so isn't intuitive or requires extensive training and cumbersome rules.

On the feature front, make sure your chosen solution is fully customizable and that it offers robust sharing, editing and collaboration capabilities. Look for built-in risk management that considers your organization's unique legal and compliance requirements and will ensure all documents meet corporate and government standards. Secure network and storage options will satisfy IT managers, while out-of-the-box Salesforce integration lets end users leverage the information in their CRM platform with ease.

CONCLUSION

As companies embrace digital transformation across the organization, they should pay close attention to document automation. By digitizing the creation, management and tracking of all corporate collateral, companies can speed times to close, increase accuracy, lower costs, improve the customer experience and drive employee productivity. Look for an end-to-end solution that makes it easy for any employee to create branded, vetted and professionally designed content; share it with others for editing and revisions; track its progress through a variety of workflows; integrate data from your CRM system; comply with all legal requirements; and get any necessary signatures to finalize the document.

NEXT STEPS 

Schedule a meeting with our global team to experience our thought leadership and to integrate your ideas, opportunities and challenges into the discussion.



Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this white paper? Call us at 877.GoFrost and reference the paper you're interested in. We'll have an analyst get in touch with you.



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