



The Case for E-Signatures in Human Resources

Real Stories across the Employee Lifecycle

Introduction

The digital revolution has come to human resources. New advances in IT and new tech tools—cloud, mobile, analytics and social media—have the potential to liberate HR from time-intensive manual labor, allowing HR teams to become a more strategic contributor in the organization.

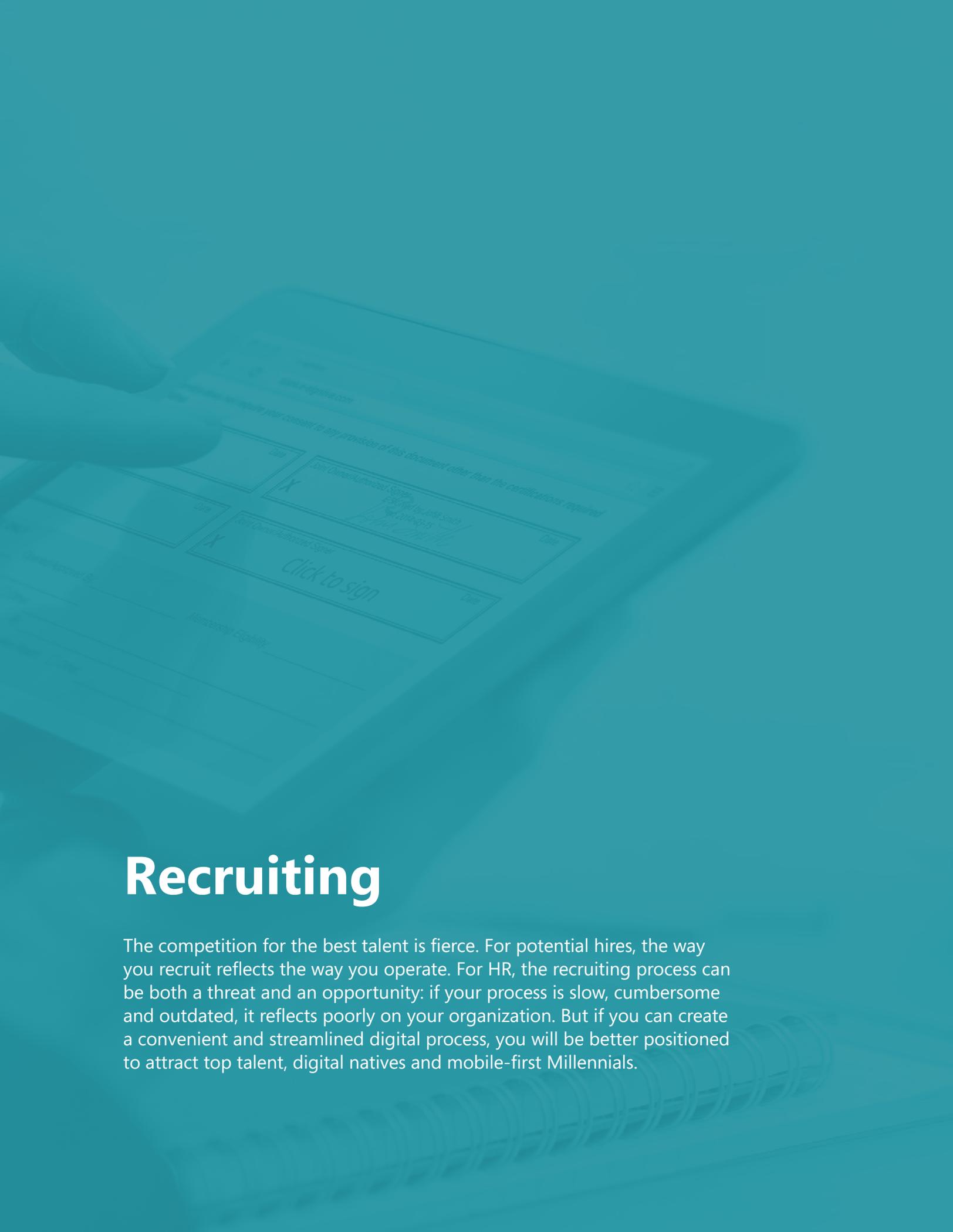
At a pragmatic level, digital disruption brings apps and tech tools that enable employees to self-serve and improve productivity. Burdensome tasks, such as chasing internal approvals for new hires, completing onboarding paperwork and shipping performance evaluations between remote offices, can now be accomplished with greater speed and centralized control.

From a higher-level perspective, the availability of cloud platforms and applications gives HR greater autonomy. But effective end-to-end digitalization can stumble over one element: the need for a signature. The last link in a true digital chain—the key element that can turn the paperless ideal into a workable reality—is the e-signature.

As a result, HR departments are applying e-signatures across the entire employee lifecycle to achieve rapid gains in productivity, convenience and cost-efficiency. This paper presents real use cases that cover recruiting, onboarding, maintenance and exit processes across business and government. Discover what other HR teams have done to see how e-signatures can become a practical and realistic way for your HR team to embrace all the advantages of today's digital world.

THE VALUE

- **Elevating the employee experience:** According to HR thought leader and [Forbes](#) contributor Jeanne Meister, "...as we enter 2017, the next journey for HR leaders will be to apply a consumer and a digital lens to the HR function, creating an employee experience that mirrors their best customer experience." Leading HR organizations are doing this is by equipping employees with the latest tech tools, mobile apps, digital workflows and e-signatures – many of which employees are already using as consumers.
- **Enhancing the employer brand:** HR is using new apps and cloud services to provide a modern employee experience starting from the first point of contact, recruiting and onboarding. This positions the organization to better compete for talent, especially among digital natives and in markets where there are labor shortages.
- **Enabling remote workforces:** An electronic process breaks through borders, creating streamlined workflows regardless of device or location. Many organizations are turning to mobile technologies to create a culture of empowerment, where employees can make decisions and move projects forward from anywhere.
- **Improving productivity:** E-signatures reduce processing times, freeing employees from unnecessary administrative tasks so they can apply their expertise where it matters. This boosts morale and productivity.
- **Ensuring compliance:** Automated processes can enforce workflow rules so common errors like missing documents, pages or signatures disappear. Also, digital processes provide visibility into the status of the signing process, with a full audit trail of each signer's actions to demonstrate compliance.



Recruiting

The competition for the best talent is fierce. For potential hires, the way you recruit reflects the way you operate. For HR, the recruiting process can be both a threat and an opportunity: if your process is slow, cumbersome and outdated, it reflects poorly on your organization. But if you can create a convenient and streamlined digital process, you will be better positioned to attract top talent, digital natives and mobile-first Millennials.



U.S. Military Recruiting: Streamline recruiting in a challenging environment

“The Air Force prides itself as the most technologically advanced military branch of the US armed forces... But the recruiting force is not always able to reflect that sophistication during meetings with prospects.

“It doesn’t help ... when our recruiter pulls out a computer that the kid used when he was 12,” said MG Harencak. “He has to fill out a form and we have to take the data from the form that he filled out manually and manually put it into the [old] computer,” he said.

“To remedy that ... We could bring the entire recruiting force to tablets, to thumbprints, to electronic signatures. It could all be done without paper...”

Aim Higher: It's Time to Boost The Air Force's Recruiting Enterprise, by Michael C. Sirak, Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies Visiting Fellow, Mitchell Policy Papers, Sept. 2016



CHALLENGE: Lengthy paperwork a huge turn-off for 18-year old candidates

For the Army, Air Force and National Guard, recruiting is a challenge in even the most conducive times. But with the economy improving over the last five years, attracting 18-year olds becomes even more difficult. Any amount of friction can impact results. Young people expect convenience. They’re able to manage many aspects of their lives through their smartphones and cannot understand why they have to spend so much time signing paperwork. In rural environments, applicants make multiple trips to a recruiting office as far as three hours away – just to sign documents.

On the back end, overworked recruiting officers spend an average of 70 - 80% of their 12-14 hour workdays processing paperwork. Each Military Entrance Processing Service (MEPS) package includes upwards of 21 documents (Form SS-86 alone is 134 pages), many of which require multiple signatures from applicants, parents, doctors and in some cases, judicial authorities. Due to the complexity of the paperwork, the process takes between six weeks and six months, and as many as 30% of the MEPS packages are returned to recruiting officers to correct mistakes and get them re-signed. All told, the average paper-based onboarding expense for the US Air Force is \$27,200 per recruit.

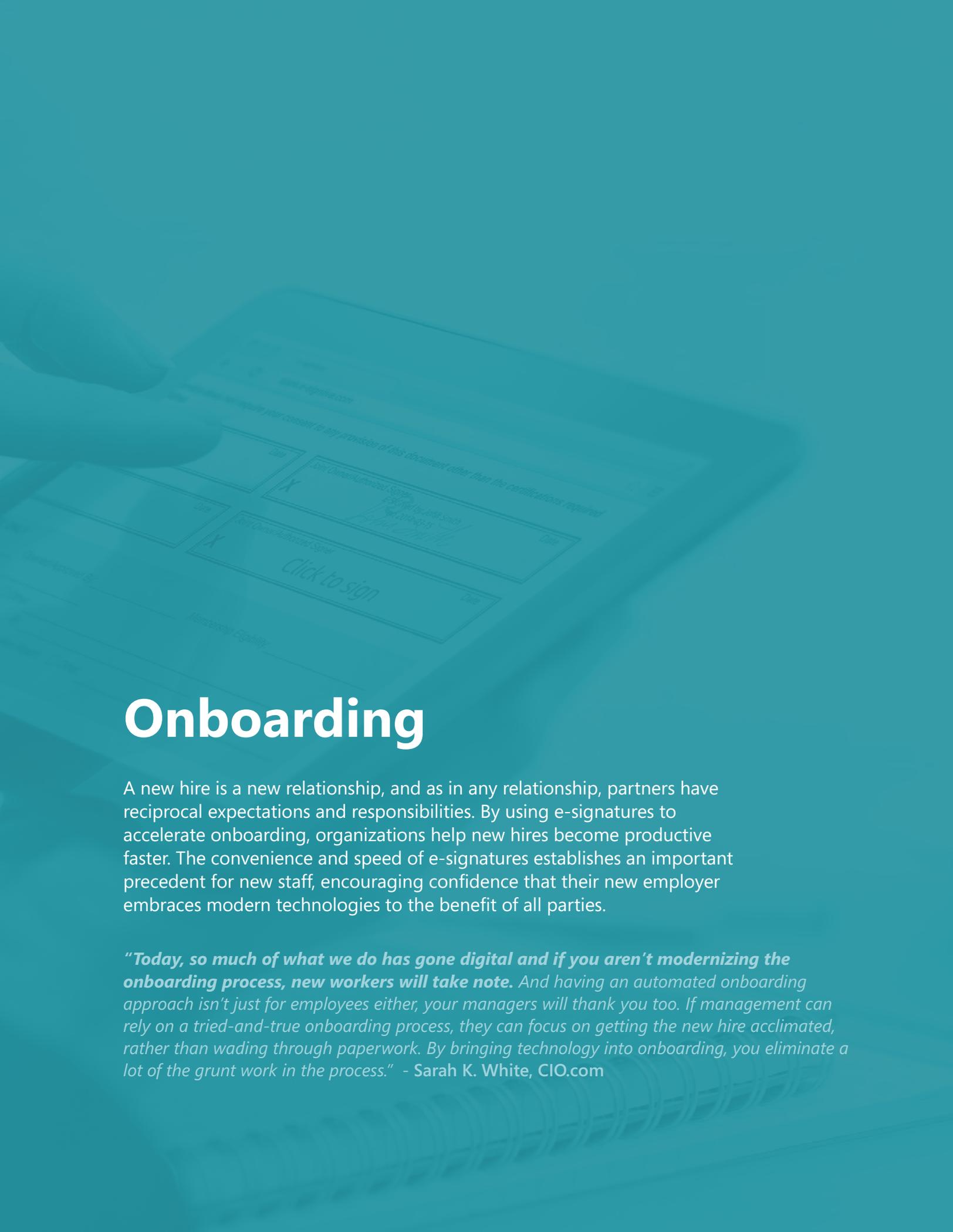
Further, the DOD allocates funding to each state for their National Guard Units. Funds depend on their manpower numbers, putting millions of dollars at stake if recruiting efforts fall short. The need for Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps recruits is equally crucial, with natural attrition alone fueling the need to replace the thousands of uniformed servicemen and women who retire each year – putting recruiting efforts under tremendous pressure.

SOLUTION: Fully digitize the recruiting workflow, using Salesforce, Drawloop and integrated e-signatures

eSignLive is working with government IT solutions provider [Phase One](#) to create an end-to-end digital process that integrates electronic signatures with Salesforce, Drawloop and Mercury SMS. eSignLive’s mobile-friendly interface and flexible authentication options like email authentication or challenge questions, combined with a one-time SMS PIN, are especially attractive to digital natives and federal cybersecurity experts. Recruits can authenticate and e-sign documents with a few taps on a mobile device, or in any web browser with a few clicks. What used to take hours and multiple visits can now be done in minutes. Plus, the platform balances ease of use with built-in audit trails and other security features to satisfy the DOD’s stringent demands for security and accountability.

RESULTS: Meet urgent manpower requirements more easily

By reducing delays and errors incurred by paper, recruiters expect to reduce drop-off and accelerate the process. Phase One anticipates a 20% improvement that will increase the number of recruits each recruiter can onboard every month, while also eliminating the need to hire more recruiters just to increase the number of recruits.

A hand is shown holding a tablet that displays a digital document with e-signature fields. The document includes a URL 'www.payscale.com', a consent statement, and several signature boxes. Two boxes are marked with a large 'X', and one box contains the text 'Click to sign'. The background is a solid teal color.

Onboarding

A new hire is a new relationship, and as in any relationship, partners have reciprocal expectations and responsibilities. By using e-signatures to accelerate onboarding, organizations help new hires become productive faster. The convenience and speed of e-signatures establishes an important precedent for new staff, encouraging confidence that their new employer embraces modern technologies to the benefit of all parties.

***“Today, so much of what we do has gone digital and if you aren’t modernizing the onboarding process, new workers will take note. And having an automated onboarding approach isn’t just for employees either, your managers will thank you too. If management can rely on a tried-and-true onboarding process, they can focus on getting the new hire acclimated, rather than wading through paperwork. By bringing technology into onboarding, you eliminate a lot of the grunt work in the process.”** - Sarah K. White, CIO.com*



akyla.

European HR platform for the staffing industry

UK Data Center

enables European organizations to meet data residency requirements

2 Weeks

to integrate e-signatures with the Akyla platform



CHALLENGE: Staffing agencies can sign thousands of employment contracts; using paper was too time-consuming

A Dutch HR software provider, Akyla serves the staffing industry in the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway (and soon, Benelux, the Nordics and Germany). Akyla provides a white-labeled HR portal and mobile app that staffing agencies can use to communicate with their customer, the hiring company, as well as new hires. Inside each staffing company’s HR portal, these three parties exchange a variety of sensitive HR documents—including employment contracts, employee handbooks, tax forms, insurance forms, documents related to working conditions, etc., that must be securely signed. Paper and postal mail are not a viable option: the platform manages tens of thousands of documents for tens of thousands of employees every year.

SOLUTION: Integrated e-signature service with 2-step authentication and European data storage

In 2013, Akyla researched its e-signature options and quickly committed to eSignLive. After suffering the loss of its previous e-signature vendor to bankruptcy, Akyla needed a reputable vendor with a deep track record. Further, eSignLive offered white-labeling options—in logos and other graphical elements—so staffing agencies can promote and reinforce their brand throughout the onboarding process. Privacy standards in the EU are stringent, and eSignLive runs its e-signature service in global data centers, including a UK data center that meets European requirements. The implementation timeframe was less than a month, but eSignLive’s API made integration easy, a one-person project that took just two weeks from installation to full deployment.

It was important for Akyla that eSignLive provide flexible choices for authentication since most of the document signing is remote. Akyla is currently using the Advanced Electronic Signature (AES), with the goal to support Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES) and third-party authentication in the future, where required by customers in select use cases and geographic regions. Akyla currently uses a 2-step process in which staffing consultants and employees first receive an email with a secure link to the documents, along with a password. The platform then automatically generates and sends a 4-digit PIN code to the signer’s cell phone via SMS text. Signers must apply the PIN in the portal prior to signing documents using the click-to-sign method.

Advanced notification options, including emails and push texts, remind signers that signatures are due, which saves the staffing agency the time and expense of chasing signers. And for their larger agencies, who are onboarding 200-300 new employees each week, having immediate visibility into which new employees have received and signed which documents, is a direct benefit of digitalization – something that wasn’t possible with paper.

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akyla.

European HR platform for the staffing industry

RESULTS: Akyla helps clients master a growing documentation workload, gains competitive edge

For the period ending December 2015, Akyla's platform managed ~25,000 documents; in 2017, that number is expected to grow 5-fold.

According to CEO and founder Martin Schievink, "We are expanding our customer base and experiencing rapid growth, both in the form of new customers and expanded usage among existing customers. Integrating eSignLive gave us an edge on competitors. It completes the Akyla solution, and delivers a lot of efficiency for our customers – making their work easier."

Signing workflow using SMS PIN authentication

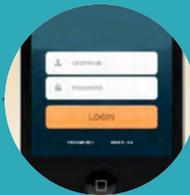
HR departments have many options for authenticating candidates, recruits and new employees during remote signing events. To balance ease of use against security, hiring organizations frequently choose a combination of email authentication, login credentials, challenge questions and/or one-time PIN sent by SMS text to the signer's personal device. Here is a sample workflow:



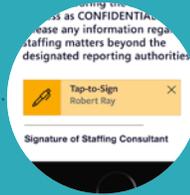
Staffing Consultant



An email notifies the staffing consultant that their signature is required. To access the documents, the consultant clicks the link. In this case, a first level of authentication happens when the consultant logs in to their email account.



The link takes the consultant to an HR portal, where they enter their login credentials to gain access to the documents. Using login credentials such as user ID and password, provides a second layer of authentication.



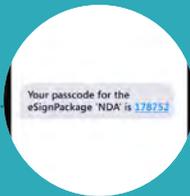
The consultant e-signs the documents with a click or tap. The signed documents are then routed to the next person in the process. When all signatures are completed, the final record is saved in the portal.



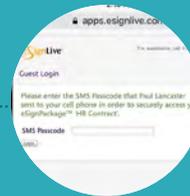
New Hire



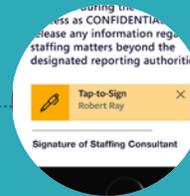
An email notifies the new hire that their signature is required. To access the documents, they click the link. In this case, a first factor of authentication happens when the new hire logs into their personal email account (email credentials are something only the user knows).



The system automatically sends a text message with a 4-digit PIN to the new hire's phone (something only the user has).



eSignLive prompts the new hire to enter the SMS PIN in order to get access to the documents. This is a second factor of authentication.



The documents are displayed and the new hire clicks or taps to sign. When the signer has applied their e-signature, they confirm their intent to sign. They can then save the signed documents for their records.



Streamlined hiring and onboarding for a highly distributed work force

3 Days

Onboarding drops from 2 weeks to < 3 days

Doubled

Hiring rate with e-signatures

“Electronic signatures and records not only give us the security and compliance we want, but also instant access to the data we need to serve our clients on their terms.”



John Fraser
Lifesprk CTO

CHALLENGE: ~30% annual growth demands faster onboarding

Lifesprk, a US homecare services provider, is enjoying rapid, 30% growth that has strained its hiring capacity. Committed to service excellence, Lifesprk enforces rigorous standards that accept only three of every 20 applicants. In 2015, three full-time HR staffers managed the process, hiring approximately 12 people per month. But the process took an average of two weeks, and involved hundreds of pages of documentation, many of which required in-person signatures in the company’s corporate office. Applicants had to make the trip multiple times, even when the office was over a hundred miles away. Lifesprk needed a faster, more efficient process while maintaining its demanding standards.

SOLUTION: SaaS e-signatures optimized for a mobile, remote workforce

Under enormous time pressure, Lifesprk turned to eSignLive for out-of-the-box e-signature capabilities that did not require integration or training. In just one hour, Lifesprk was ready to use the service.

Flexible authentication options, including Q&A, SMS and email, ensured that Lifesprk knew whom they were transacting with, even when the new hire was remote. Applying a signing order to the workflow ensures that documents are routed to the necessary parties, from the applicant to the hiring coordinator, in the right sequence. Lifesprk especially liked the 2D barcoding option—even when the company prints documents out for signers to read and review, the barcode gives new hires the ability to use their smartphone to e-sign the documents, so the process remains digital. Signers simply scan the barcode with their phone to access the digital version of the documents and tap-to-sign right on their mobile screen.

Electronic signatures and records make archiving and demonstrating compliance easier, because eSignLive includes a comprehensive audit trail in each signed document. Because the audit trail is embedded in the document, the evidence travels everywhere with the final record. More than 85 pages of documentation have been compressed into one PDF per hire, making documents easy to store, search and retrieve.

RESULTS: Monthly hire rate doubles from 12 to 24—with just one staff person

Lifesprk initially started using e-signatures with one or two key documents, gradually expanding to over 20 in its first year of use. Enabled by e-signatures, Lifesprk’s onboarding process has shrunk from two weeks to just under three days. Thanks to increased speed and efficiency, the company has doubled its hiring rate from 12 to 24 employees per month, even as it has reduced the hiring staff from three people to just one. Yet greater efficiency has not compromised quality. Sara Aschenbrener, Lifesprk General Manager, notes that, “Through the introduction of e-signatures for all new hire paperwork, we have drastically improved the employee experience, ensuring all are given the consistency, reliability and dedication we expect of each one of them.”



GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER

Driving digital
transformation
throughout HR

E-signatures enable new hires to securely sign the employment contract before their first day on the job, eliminating first-day delays and accelerating the onboarding experience.

CHALLENGE: Impress young talent who demand a modern, mobile experience

This company's HR Group has launched a Transformation Initiative to lift HR to the forefront of the "paperless revolution." Although the company had already deployed ADP and Workday to digitize workflows and organize documentation on the back-end, the team also needed to modernize the front-end by removing paper from their onboarding process. The need originated from various EMEA countries, where HR managers recommended e-signature technology as part of the overall HR Transformation. The reason was simple. The new generation of talent manages their lives through their phones. The company's HR leadership needed to offer them a more modern experience that could be completed on any device, anywhere, any time.

SOLUTION: Apply e-signatures to student internship contracts

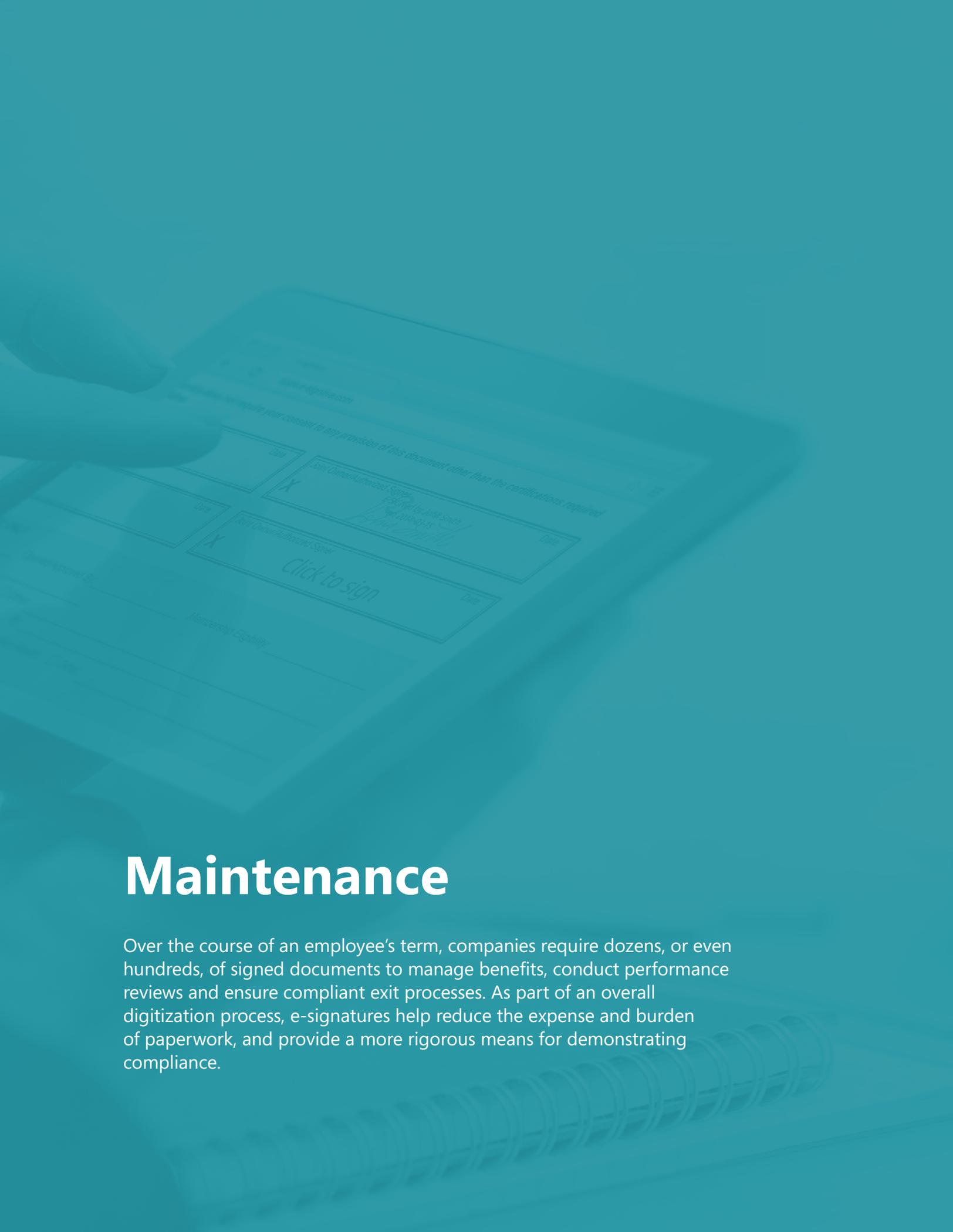
In the first half of 2017, the company will roll out two e-signature pilot programs in France and Denmark, the former with new student interns, and the latter for a variety of new hires. In this phase 1 pilot, they will offer e-signatures for two document packages: the initial offer letter and a confirmation of agreement that the new hire must sign, as well as other forms for collecting personal data (ID card, Social Security card, etc.). Multiple follow-up packages contain business conduct guidelines, a welcome package and confidentiality documentation, insurance forms and legal agreements, many of which require signatures.

For the pilot, the company is using the Advanced Electronic Signature (AES) with SMS PIN authentication. The system triggers an email to each new hire, with a secure link to the online portal. New hires will login to the portal and also receive a one-time PIN by SMS on their mobile phones. Once in the portal, they will be prompted to enter the PIN and click-to-sign the required documents. In phase 2, they plan to expand the use of e-signatures to many other HR processes and countries across the EMEA region – and move to Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES) with third-party authentication by a Trust Service Provider.

RESULTS: Save money, save time and enhance reputation

With e-signature onboarding, the company expects its first employee touch point to project a modernity appropriate for a leading technology firm. Digitization will also shrink the paperwork burden, eliminating first-day delays and reducing paper-related overhead and expenses, such as those for printing and shipping. With one centralized tool for HR, they can offset administrative overhead in high-cost countries. And to ensure compliance with data privacy regulations, the e-signature solution will run on a data center hosted in the UK.





Maintenance

Over the course of an employee's term, companies require dozens, or even hundreds, of signed documents to manage benefits, conduct performance reviews and ensure compliant exit processes. As part of an overall digitization process, e-signatures help reduce the expense and burden of paperwork, and provide a more rigorous means for demonstrating compliance.



Saving \$1.2 million a year on performance reviews

\$5

Saved per signature



FedRAMP

Hosted on a FedRAMP compliant cloud



CHALLENGE: Master performance review documentation for 8,000 field employees

By virtue of its mission, the US Census Bureau covers a lot of ground—the entire United States—and requires a huge, 8,000-person field team, plus 7,000 employees at its headquarters and regional offices, to fulfill its mission. At three points during the year, every employee must complete a review process that requires two to three signatures.

To control costs, accelerate reviews and meet regulatory requirements, the Census Bureau has initiated a Cloud-First Digital Performance Management solution that can serve as a model for federal government agencies or any organization that is challenged by a large distributed workforce.

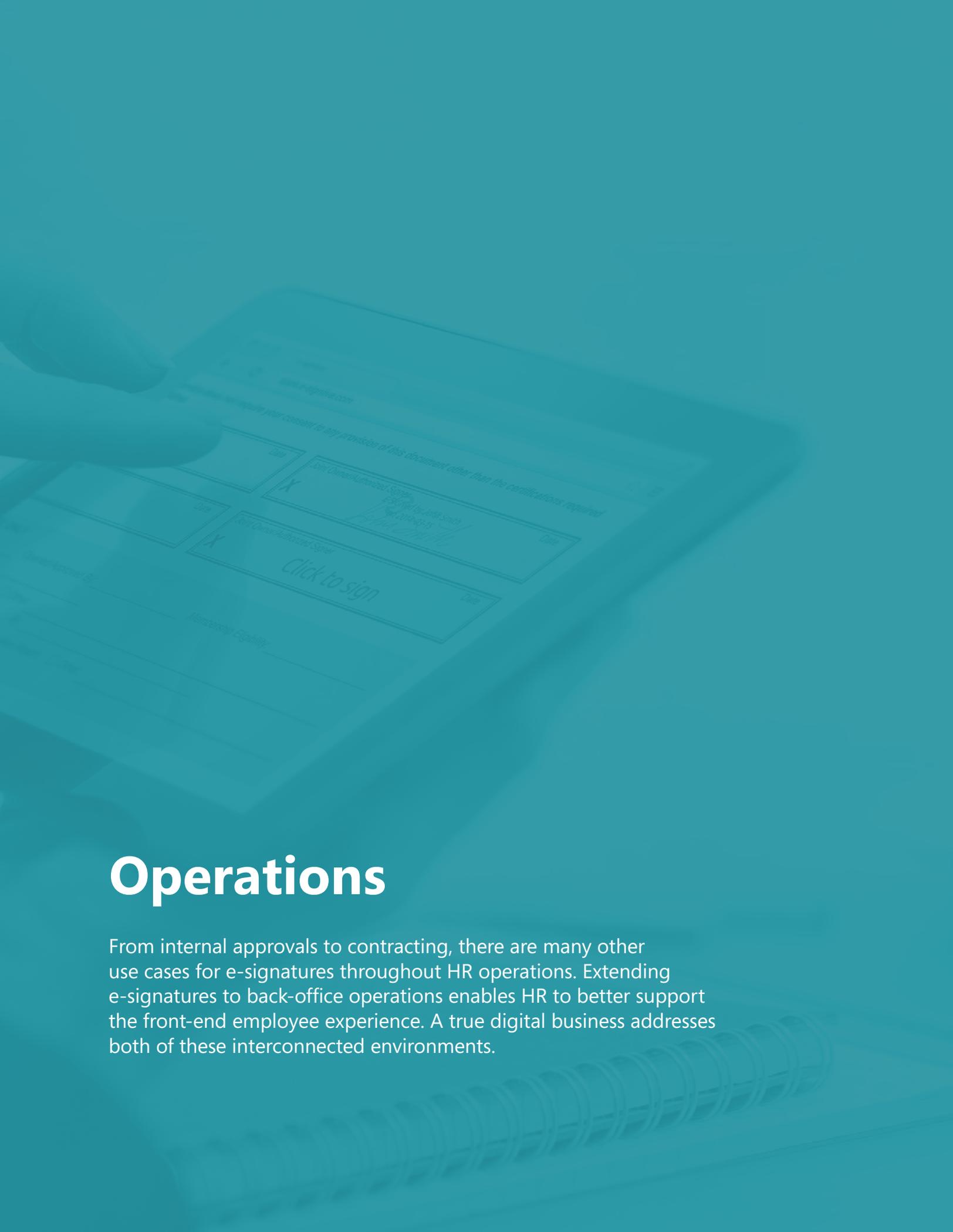
SOLUTION: Deploy the only HPSD-12 compliant cloud e-signature solution

The Bureau chose the only available e-signature solution that was FedRAMP compliant: eSignLive. eSignLive works with the federal government’s Personal Identity Verification (PIV) standards, allowing signers to apply their government issued smart cards to verify their identities. The comprehensive audit trail tracks who signed what, when and where, providing a visibility lacking in paper documentation. Built-in status reporting and alert/notification tools automate the signing process, simplifying management.

RESULTS: Save \$5/signature, reduce processing time from 3 months to 27 days

In just four months, the Census Bureau was able to design and build an effective digital Performance Management system with integrated e-signature capabilities. Phase 1 roll-out among 8,000 field employees will begin in April 2017; phase 2 will include the Bureau’s 7,000 headquarters and regional office employees, beginning in October.

Turn-around times for review cycles are expected to drop by 70%, reducing processing times from three months to an average of 27 days. Similarly, the Bureau anticipates saving \$5 per signature, or \$1.2 million annually in printing, postage, storage and handling costs.



Operations

From internal approvals to contracting, there are many other use cases for e-signatures throughout HR operations. Extending e-signatures to back-office operations enables HR to better support the front-end employee experience. A true digital business addresses both of these interconnected environments.



KUEHNE+NAGEL

Creating more structured approval processes

In-country Data Centers

E-signature service is hosted in Canada

Easier for Swiss Auditors

The electronic audit trail, embedded directly in the e-signed PDF, eliminates the need to manually retrieve paper files from file cabinets

CHALLENGE: Replace ad hoc emails with formal, auditable documentation

Kuehne + Nagel is a global transportation and logistics company, headquartered in Switzerland, with more than 60,000 employees worldwide. Its Canadian HR department, frustrated by burdensome paperwork, sought a better way to manage and document internal approval processes for everything from new hires to exit processes. In the case of internal approvals for new hires, for example, company rules require internal stakeholders to complete the approval process that requires sign-off from five to six company officials. But fulfilling these requirements was an ad hoc affair of exchanged email conversations without formal workflows or notifications. In addition, the company's annual internal audits, conducted by the Swiss head office, meant printing, archiving and manually retrieving hundreds of pages of email communications. The company's Canadian HR leadership wanted a more efficient alternative it could deploy fast.

SOLUTION: Implement a stand-alone e-signature service with Canadian hosting

Kuehne + Nagel turned to a stand-alone solution, eSignLive, to save the time and expense of a full-scale e-signature integration. Through eSignLive, internal processes such as job requisition and pre-termination approvals have been compressed into a document that is automatically routed to the appropriate parties in the correct order. To meet privacy requirements, the cloud-based service is hosted on an IBM data center in Canada. As of January 1, 2017, most HR processes are paperless, eliminating expenses associated with printing, filing and retrieving paper documents.

RESULTS: Paperless process makes annual audits much simpler

By creating templates in eSignLive, Kuehne + Nagel has transformed informal email exchanges into a form with mandatory fields for gathering the right signatures at the right times. Keeping the process digital has given HR leadership much-needed visibility into the status of approvals. Further, the e-signed documents, with their embedded audit trails, make it much easier for the head office to conduct its audits, and for the HR department to demonstrate the successful fulfillment of corporate policy.



TOP BANK

A top bank's HR department turns to the eSignLive cloud service to e-sign contracts

30 minutes

Average time to e-sign contracts reduced from 2 hours to 30 minutes



CHALLENGE: E-signatures are already in use for high volume, customer-facing transactions; how can a single employee benefit?

Like so many organizations today, a top bank recently implemented e-signatures as an enterprise shared service with the priority of automating customer-facing transactions. But as word about e-signatures spread across the bank, requests for e-signatures quickly flooded in from other departments.

One such department was HR, where a single employee is responsible for sourcing and negotiating all third-party suppliers for the bank's global training needs. Whenever a new product or process is introduced, the bank requires a training program for employees.

On paper, the contracting process involved several pain points:

- The majority of the employee's time was spent preparing documents, collating copies for signature and sending them over to bank executives for signature. In addition to the administrative work managing paper, it was a challenge to get timely signatures from busy executives.
- On the back-end, the employee had to image, scan and file all contracts, as well as ship a copy of the final signed contract to the vendor.

SOLUTION: Subscribe to the eSignLive service

Maximizing that employee's productivity was key. By purchasing a single user subscription, the employee was able to start using e-signatures immediately.

RESULTS: Paperless process frees HR employee's time for higher value tasks

- In the past, it would take an average of 2 hours to get each contract signed and returned. By keeping the process digital, this is down to 30 minutes, which translates into an average of 10 weeks saved annually. The employee can now use their time for higher value tasks.
- The ability to sign on a mobile device has made it very easy for busy executives to sign off faster.
- Training projects are no longer delayed while HR waits for manual signatures.
- E-signatures have had an impact on the bank's brand. Suppliers now view the bank as innovative and easier to do business with.

Can your organization benefit from e-signature enabled HR?

As the previous use cases demonstrate, HR departments can apply e-signatures across the entire employee lifecycle to achieve rapid gains in productivity, convenience and cost-efficiency.

Could your department enjoy similar benefits throughout the HR lifecycle? The path forward is much easier than you think. Today's technology offers HR a flexibility that makes it easy to get started. As you saw throughout this paper, you have options. You set the scale. Integrate e-signatures into organization-wide platforms. Or, start simply with an inexpensive cloud service that your team can start using right away.

From his firsthand experience digitizing HR processes with e-signatures, John Fraser, CTO at Lifesprk, recommends that organizations "look for quick wins, with low risk and high rewards, like internal HR documents." The company started simply with no integration, using the out-of-the-box eSignLive service, to get up and running quickly – with nearly no training. The impact was immediate.

To pursue similar outcomes in your organization, try the eSignLive [Quick Demo](#) or [free trial](#), or contact us at sales@esignlive.com.

Learn more about e-signatures for HR through these in-depth webcasts:



Webcast: How to Automate HR Processes with Electronic Signatures

► [WATCH NOW](#)



Webcast: Streamlining Healthcare (HR) Processes with E-Signatures

► [WATCH NOW](#)



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eSignLive™ is the electronic signature solution behind some of the world's most trusted brands. Regulated industries and top analyst firms recognize eSignLive products and services for their ability to balance the highest levels of security and compliance with ease-of-use while automating any process – from the simplest, internal signing workflow to the most complex, customer-facing transactions. Available in the cloud and on-premises, the eSignLive solution offers a scalable platform to support an organization's digital transformation strategy across the enterprise – today and tomorrow.

eSignLive is the trade name of Silanis Technology Inc., a VASCO group company. VASCO Data Security International Inc., a global leader in authentication, electronic signatures, and identity management, enables more than 10,000 customers in 100 countries to secure access, manage identities, verify transactions and protect assets across financial, enterprise, e-commerce, government and healthcare markets. Learn more at www.esignlive.com