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## PRODUCT & SERVICE GUIDE

# e-Signature: Is it Speeding Up or Derailing Digitization? How the Right Choice Makes All the Difference

The shift to e-signature is just one piece of the larger digitization and automation puzzle. According to a recent Forrester study, 48 percent of Asia-Pacific enterprises were automating fulfillment and verification, such as digital signature.

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*By Zakir Ahmed.*

Organizations gravitate toward software purpose-built for enterprise use, rather than what's designed for consumers, for a reason. Businesses have a wider range of requirements and the software they use should scale and adapt to changing needs. So why is it, when it comes to e-signature technology, some companies think a basic solution will cut it?

e-Signature technology is becoming increasingly popular as organizations accelerate digital transformation efforts in response to COVID-19, and companies have many options when it comes to choosing a provider.

Capturing a digital signature is relatively simple, so it's tempting to go for e-signature software your customers may already be using. But the same thoughtful consideration that goes into choosing providers for other technologies should be applied to the e-signature selection process too.

While it's true most software providers will have no trouble delivering fast and efficient remote signature capabilities today, many of them may actually impede your organization's future automation initiatives. A smarter, more intelligent choice is to opt for a solution that meets your customers' immediate desires for e-signature capabilities, but also has the features and functionality to support your business needs well into the future.

### **All e-signature solutions are not created equal**

The shift to e-signature is just one piece of the larger digitization and automation puzzle. According to a recent Forrester study, 48 percent of Asia-Pacific enterprises were automating fulfillment and verification, such as digital signature. However, these same organizations were in the midst of other automation initiatives, including:

- Digitization of information (55%)
- Front-desk interaction (51%)
- Rules-based tasks (46%)
- Business Spend Management (45%)
- Decisioning (42%)
- Back-office tasks (40%)
- Workflow orchestration (29%)
- AP Automation (25%)

While your customers only care about being able to ditch the wet ink and paper, organizations must think about the bigger picture. What do these e-signature solutions provide in terms of scalability and security? What does the technology infrastructure look like? Is it compatible with your enterprise's broader IT requirements and automation initiatives? What type of licensing models are offered?

Working with a single vendor is often the best approach. An automation platform with e-signature capabilities ensures you get the basic digital signature functionality your customers want now *as well as* the functionality and innovation needed to incorporate digital signatures into business workflows for end-to-end automation.

In fact, more than half (58 percent) of Asia-Pacific organizations prefer a single-vendor approach for their automation technology platform, and a resounding 99 percent of enterprises believe it's valuable to work with a single vendor who can offer a breadth of complementary technologies. Companies prefer the single-vendor approach for many reasons, including greater efficiency of daily tasks, improved employee productivity, a seamless technology solution, better internal collaboration, improved operational efficiency, improved customer experience, and better security and compliance.

### **Four features of a forward-looking e-signature solution**

If you want a solution to support larger digital transformation efforts, it's worth taking the time to carefully evaluate e-signature technologies and vendors. There are four features enterprises should consider must-haves:

- 1. *Streamlined integration:*** A powerful e-signature solution should integrate into existing core systems, such as CRMs and ERPs, and collaborate with corresponding workflows. When document and form signing is embedded deeply into your applications and workflows, companies benefit from in-depth reporting and can offer customers and employees more innovative experiences.
- 2. *Powerful Enterprise Management:*** Many organizations prefer an on-premise e-signature solution for security and compliance reasons. But they may want to migrate to the cloud in the future. Does the solution support both types of deployment models or a hybrid approach? Companies in just about every industry also need to make sure they are adhering to compliance regulations and taking the proper steps for risk mitigation. As such, an e-signature solution must provide audit trail capabilities and meet technical guidelines governing the use of e-signature around the world. The technology should also deliver substantial evidence of approval and adoption of a document's contents and its binding, conclusive, non-repudiable character.
- 3. *Desirable User Experience:*** The user experience is important for employees and customers. As more workers continue to remain remote, they need to be able to create, send, track and sign documents and forms digitally. And it has to be easy. For instance, a no-code, intuitive experience is essential to scale adoption and productivity across business units. From the customer vantage point, ease-of-use is just as important, but they also want to engage from any location, on any device. Thus, to meet this expectation and foster positive customer journeys, any solution you choose should support an omnichannel experience.

**4. *Embedded into One Intelligent Automation Platform:*** With so many organizations investing in intelligent automation platforms, integration is critical. Point solutions create disjointed automation silos and hinder digital workflow transformation. An intelligent automation platform with e-signature capabilities and access to complementary automation technologies, such as robotic process automation and document intelligence, enables organizations to orchestrate entire business processes digitally.

An intelligent automation platform with forward-thinking e-signature capabilities guarantees electronic signatures are trustworthy, secure and convenient. With faster contract completion, approval times and signing ceremonies, it'll drive performance and speed up deals. But that's just the start.

With automation, companies can also reduce the costs associated with manual, paper-based processes and redirect resources to higher-value tasks. e-Signature integration with existing systems makes end-to-end digitization possible across many use cases – including customer and employee onboarding, procurement, subscriptions, customer loan applications, and customer service.

A digital signature solution embedded into an Intelligent Automation platform will provide your organization with high-quality signature capture today and support your larger digital transformation strategy. Don't let a basic solution derail you. Invest in enterprise-grade e-signature so your employees can “Work Like Tomorrow — Today.”

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