



The Legal Architect

Designing Agreement Infrastructure
for the Agentic Enterprise

A New Mandate for Legal



44%

of legal tasks could be automated by AI, far surpassing the 25% average predicted for other corporate functions

Goldman Sachs

No enterprise function touches more parts of the organization than legal, and no category of work offers more potential for AI-driven transformation than agreements. Achieving that transformation at scale, however, requires a fundamental shift in how legal departments operate, and a broader vision of legal's role in the organization.

Rather than conducting manual, case-by-case reviews for all agreements, legal teams will establish guardrails and policies that direct AI agents—becoming, in the process, the architects of the organization's agentic agreement infrastructure and the systems that operate on it.

Most in-house legal teams are already adopting or at least experimenting with AI tools to expedite human-led document review and support self-service contracting, ensuring routine tasks are confidently handled within risk parameters set by the legal department. The potential rewards are enormous. [Research by Goldman Sachs](#) estimates that **44% of legal tasks could be automated by AI**, far surpassing the 25% average predicted for other corporate functions, but unlocking this level of automation demands a commitment to foundational change in both process and mindset.

Contract data is scattered across

~24 systems

per organization, wasting up to 15% of annual value through inefficiency

World Commerce & Contracting

Isolated point solutions for agreements, often a thin wrapper around a foundational LLM, deliver only incremental improvement. Today, contract-related data is scattered across an average of 24 different systems per organization, a level of fragmentation that bottlenecks execution and causes businesses to lose up to 15% of their annual value due to inefficiency, according to **World Commerce & Contracting**. Efficiency gains from any single point solutions are routinely offset by the cost of wrangling scattered data and orchestrating a tangle of disconnected applications that often fail to interoperate smoothly. Adding more department-level tools—like a standalone AI redlining app for Legal that doesn't integrate with Sales' CRM—only compounds the problem by introducing yet another disconnected silo.

What's needed is not patchwork. It's a platform.

A flexible platform, combined with a robust change management plan, can help legal teams navigate the transformation to incorporate AI into their agreement workflows while maintaining appropriate human oversight.

The DocuSign Intelligent Agreement Management (IAM) platform is a unified intelligent system where your company's legal standards are encoded and enforced —across every department, every workflow, and every agreement. The IAM platform helps legal teams begin to shift from reviewing agreements to architecting and governing them as the team is ready: setting rules, guardrails, and boundaries, and building them directly into the organizational infrastructure.

The result is a system that helps accelerate contract execution while maintaining controls that hold up under scrutiny, with standardized escalation paths and a defensible audit trail that shows exactly what action was taken when, and under what approved language.

This paper is an invitation to reimagine the role of in-house legal teams as architects of AI-driven transformation, with a seat at the table wherever the business makes commitments. AI creates the opportunity to elevate the legal function from departmental specialists to enterprise-wide strategists. Every agreement in the organization—from sales, procurement, HR, and beyond—ultimately should pass through legal. That's not a burden. It's a mandate to lead.

Platform v. Patchwork Point Solutions

Over the past decade, many legal departments have assembled a collection of point solutions: one tool for e-signature, another for redlining, another for document storage, perhaps another for intake, and increasingly, an AI assistant or two for initial contract review. Each tool is designed to solve a real problem. But collectively, they can create a new one.



81%

of legal teams report rising workloads, while roughly 55% operate with flat or reduced budgets

Thomson Reuters Institute

This is the patchwork approach, and its costs are deceptive.

Systemic friction

On paper, every tool delivers value. In practice, the friction between them—manual handoffs, duplicated data entry, fragmented audit trails, and the inability to get a single view of the portfolio—can erode much of the efficiency each tool is designed to deliver.

Operational fragmentation

Disconnected systems force legal professionals to focus time on administrative reconciliation rather than strategic governance and system design. Legal teams can end up spending significant time moving documents between systems, reconciling versions, chasing down the latest redline, and trying to reconstruct a decision history that lives in a half dozen different places.

Scalability bottlenecks

The problems compound with scale, because every new disconnected tool adds another seam. The model is unsustainable, especially given that 81% of legal teams report rising workloads while roughly 55% operate with flat or reduced budgets, according to the [Thomson Reuters Institute](#).

Newsweek

Newsweek ranked Docusign one of the **most trustworthy** software companies in America in 2024, 2025, and 2026

Meanwhile, a different model is emerging. Forward-thinking legal leaders are consolidating onto a single platform that serves as the unified workflow hub, agreement repository, and common interface between legal and the rest of the enterprise. Instead of stitching together a patchwork, they're building a platform to support the infrastructure.

The difference is stark. A recent **Deloitte study** found that organizations using agentic workflows within an end-to-end platform like IAM report nearly 30% higher ROI than those using point products.

A platform helps eliminate the gaps between individual tasks. An agreement moves from intake to triage, drafting, negotiation, execution, and post-signature management within a single system, with increased visibility and a unified audit trail governed by a single set of rules.



53%

of in-house legal teams cite contract workload as a top driver of demand growth

Only 47%

expect internal legal spend to increase, indicating rising contract volume without proportional budget expansion

CLOC

Standardize once, enforce everywhere

When legal operates on a unified platform, it can codify its playbooks, risk positions, and fallback logic once, then enforce those rules across departments, regardless of where an agreement originates. Legal's judgment doesn't stay locked in a document or a lawyer's head. It becomes a scalable, consistent, and provable infrastructure.

Without that foundation, the architect's role remains aspirational at best. You can't govern what you can't see, and you can't enforce rules across systems that don't communicate. The patchwork keeps legal confined to the role of a manual reviewer—not due to a lack of ambition, but because the tooling limits any other mode of operation.

The cost of inaction is tangible. When workloads rise and budgets plateau, the breaking point is imminent. Experienced legal professionals can burn out and leave, deal cycles can become stretched out, and spending on outside counsel can balloon. The **2026 State of the Industry Report from CLOC** found 53% identifying contract workload as one of the top areas of demand growth for in-house counsel work. At the same time, only 47% of legal teams expect inside legal spend to increase, signaling that departments are being asked to absorb more work without proportional budget growth.

The decision facing legal leaders is not whether to modernize with AI, but how: with another collection of disconnected tools, or with a platform designed to let legal teams architect and lead the organization's agreement and agreement-technology strategy.

The Docusign Advantage

The right platform doesn't replace existing tools; it connects them. Legal leaders evaluating the platform approach should ask these three questions:

- 1 Can we trust the platform?
- 2 Does it integrate with other tools we already use?
- 3 Is it built for where AI is going—not just where it is today?



FORTUNE

More than 95% of the Fortune 500 are Docusign customers

Gartner

Docusign is a Leader in the Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for CLM for 6 years

IDC

#1 e-signature solution for over a decade

Can we trust the platform?

For legal teams, trust is a foundational requirement. Docusign has spent two decades building the infrastructure that agreements run on. The company pioneered e-signature—remaining IDC's #1 solution for over a decade—and built one of the most widely adopted contract lifecycle management (CLM) systems in the enterprise, recognized as a Leader in the Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for CLM six years running. More than 95% of the Fortune 500 are Docusign customers, and Newsweek ranked Docusign one of the most trustworthy software companies in America in 2024, 2025 and 2026.

Three years ago, Docusign recognized that AI would transform how agreements are managed and began building the AI-native platform that became IAM. This was a rethinking of the entire role of agreements, elevating its award-winning CLM and e-signature products into a single, unified platform. This evolution was informed by Docusign's unique advantages: a deep understanding of customer agreement workflows, an unmatched body of agreement data, and a vast ecosystem of more than 1,100 integrations.

The IAM platform is built on robust security and compliance infrastructure, supporting:

- SOC 2 Type II & ISO 27001
- FedRAMP Moderate Impact Level & GovRAMP authorized

Data protection isn't a feature—it's the foundation everything else is built on.

37%

overall time savings after implementing automation and AI tools—effectively returning **18 hours per week** to every legal team member for high-value advisory work

Deloitte

Does it integrate with other tools we already use?

Agreements don't live exclusively in the legal department. Sales opportunities trigger them in CRMs like Salesforce, procurement requests in ERPs like SAP, and HR actions in HCMs like Workday. Teams discuss them in messaging apps like Slack, review them in Microsoft Word, and track them in dashboards.

The IAM platform integrates with these core systems and more than 1,100 others. That means contracting happens inside the tools business teams already use, helping to prevent legal teams from being siloed into a separate system. At the same time, legal gains real-time visibility across the entire agreement lifecycle, regardless of which department initiated the work.

DocuSign IAM seamlessly connects with an expanding ecosystem of specialized legal tools, including Harvey, Legora, and CoCounsel by Thomson Reuters, as well as a growing roster of general-purpose LLMs from providers such as Anthropic, OpenAI, Google, Perplexity, and others. Legal teams can extract deep negotiation insights from specialized tools while bringing all results back into IAM as the canonical system of action, preserving data control and an unbroken audit trail.

The IAM platform operates on a dual-track model

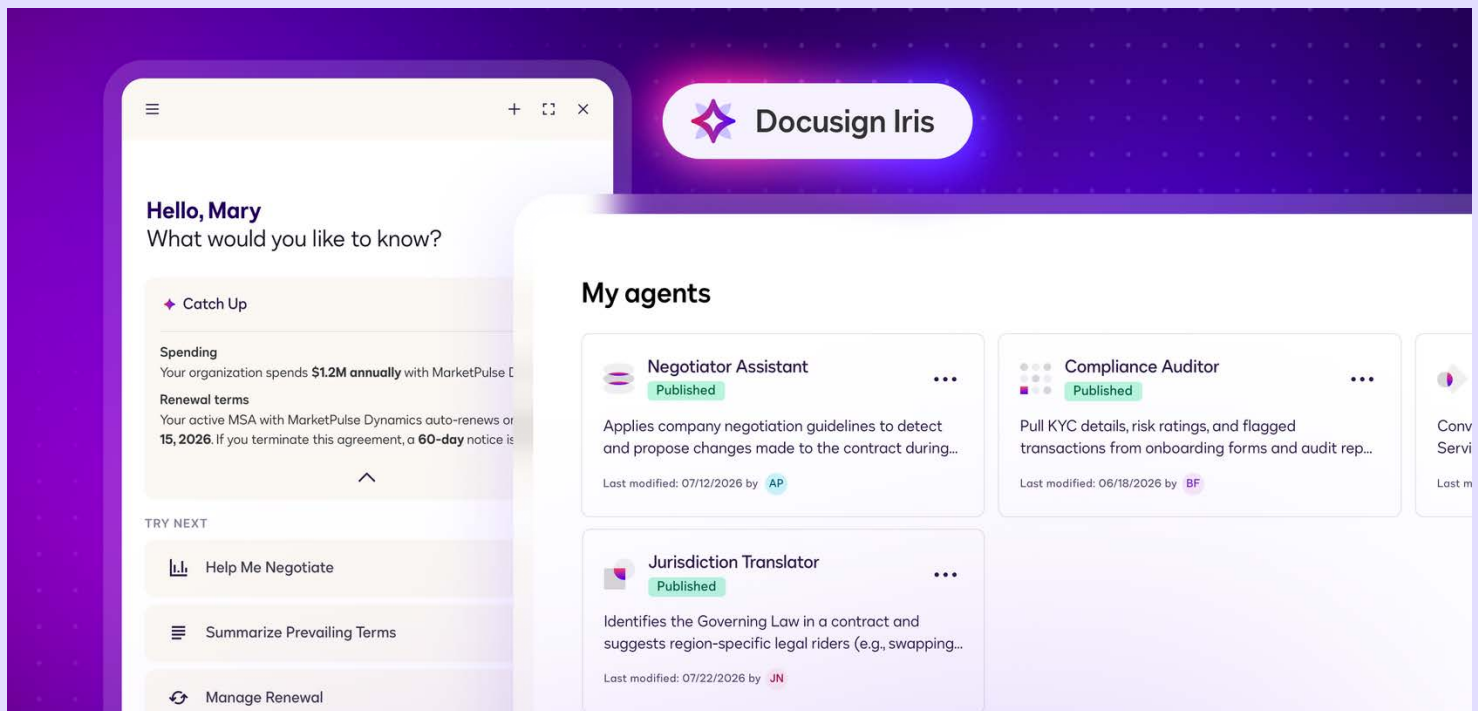
As the “front door”

IAM serves as the secure, governed primary interface for legal work—the place where agreements are created, reviewed, negotiated, executed, and managed. From within IAM, legal teams route work to specialized tools and bring results back into a single governed environment.

As the connective layer

For teams that live in other tools—like Harvey for contracts or Anthropic for research—IAM operates in the background as the agreement repository, workflow engine, and system of record. Users stay in their preferred app, while IAM keeps actions secure, governed and within defined risk boundaries.

In both modes, DocuSign IAM remains the canonical system of action. Every decision, redline, and approval flows back into a single audit trail. Legal teams benefit from specialized tools without fragmenting their data, losing governance, or sacrificing accountability.



cimplifi™

Deployed Docusign AI-Assisted Review as an enterprise-grade safety net for corporate risk management

Is it built for where AI is going—not just where it is today?

The Docusign IAM platform is designed to meet teams where they are today and evolve when they are ready, thanks to its flexible open ecosystem and AI-native architecture, which adapts as technology evolves. As LLMs improve, so does IAM. Legal teams don't have to rip and replace their infrastructure every time a new model emerges or a new regulation takes effect. Their playbooks, governance rules, and audit trails can still remain a stable, unwavering source of truth.

This means legal leaders can adopt IAM with confidence today, knowing that the platform will grow with them. The rules encoded today will still be enforced next year and in years after, even as the system becomes more capable, more intelligent, and more deeply integrated into the enterprise.

By moving from manual agreement reviewers to strategic governors of enterprise risk, legal leaders can secure an enduring structural advantage. This is not an invitation to adopt yet another tool, but a mandate to claim a definitive seat at the center of business strategy. When legal teams encode their judgment directly into the foundational fabric of the organization, they transcend traditional boundaries to become true architects of agreements and agreement technology in the agentic enterprise—safely driving AI adoption, leading organizational transformation, and defining how the business operates at scale.

IAM in Action

The IAM platform covers the full agreement lifecycle, from initial intake through execution, post-signature management, and renewal. The use cases illustrate how legal teams use the IAM platform to shift from manual, case-by-case processing to scalable, governed workflows while keeping humans in the loop when it matters most.



Requests				
Search requests	Active Filter	Request Type	Owner	
Title T1	Status T1	Last activity at T1	Due Date T1	
New contract request REQ-0001	New	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
CRM Renewal REQ-0004	Approval Phase	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
GPUs for data center expansion REQ-0004	Contract Review	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
Standing desk for Level 16 REQ-0018	Awaiting Others	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
Review vendor privacy policy REQ-0089	Legal Approval	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
NDA for ERP demo REQ-0023	Finance	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
Marketing proposal REQ-0021	Submitted	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	
DPA Review REQ-0014	Phone	06/13/2025	06/13/2025	

1 Intake

Intelligent triage and auto-routing

Without centralized architecture, legal requests often arrive through highly fragmented channels—email, Slack messages, ad hoc forms, and informal hallway conversations. These requests frequently lack the context legal needs to act, turning the first step into administrative triage. The IAM platform centralizes inbound requests into a single trackable queue. Agents categorize, triage, and automatically route requests to the correct business owners, who can self-serve within the risk parameters legal has defined. Complex or non-standard requests escalate instantly to the appropriate legal professional with full context attached, so the team focuses on work that requires human judgment.

77%

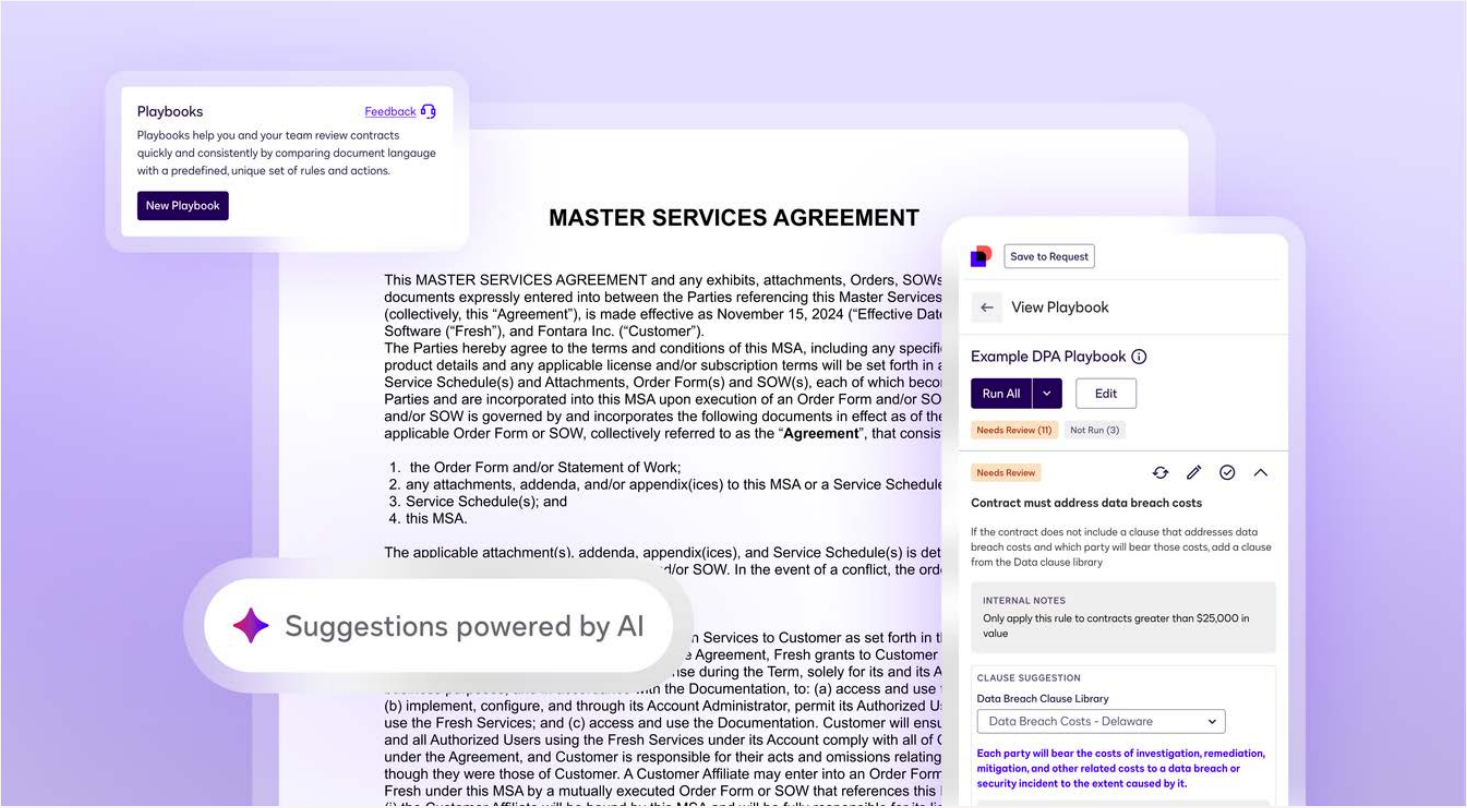
reduction in time spent
processing agreements

Catchfire

2 Agreement Generation and Negotiation

Standardized first-party drafting

Routine agreements like NDAs and MSAs shouldn't require a lawyer to draft from scratch every time. The IAM platform dynamically generates first-party agreements from legal-approved templates, handling conditional logic and complex variables based directly on intake data. The output is consistent, compliant, and ready for review, often bypassing manual review because legal's rules are pre-encoded.



78%

of routine agreements automated to proceed without direct legal intervention

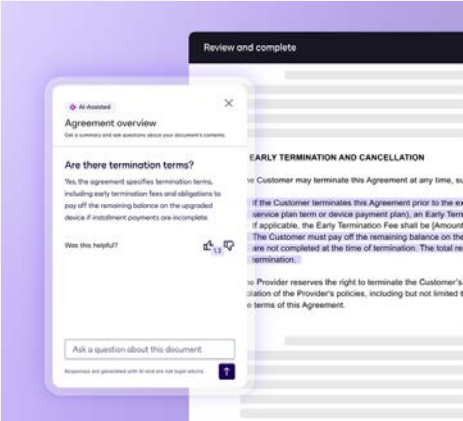
iCIMS

Automated playbooks for third-party review

Architecting an automated third-party review process empowers the business to maintain deal velocity while strictly enforcing commercial and compliance guardrails. The IAM platform’s advanced AI agents ingest historical contract data to dynamically build, update, and refine legal playbooks. These agents then cross-reference third-party drafts against the playbooks at machine speed, flagging non-standard terms and surfacing suggested redlines directly inside Microsoft Word.

Data-driven negotiation

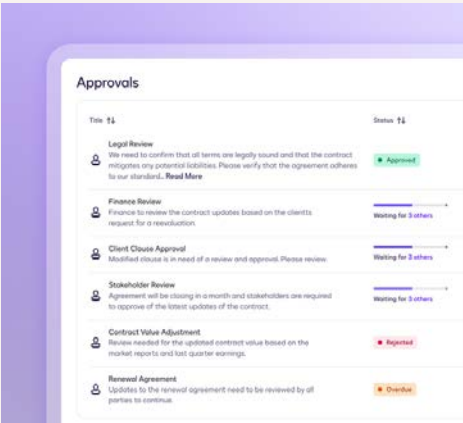
Without centralized infrastructure, negotiations sprawl across disparate email threads, complicating version control and strategic alignment. The IAM platform centralizes all comments, redlines, and decision history within a unified negotiation hub. AI summarizes the negotiation history, highlights open financial risks, and suggests playbook-driven fallback positions to help teams close faster without conceding critical legal protections.



95%

reduction in manual review time

Cimplifi



3 Repository Management

AI-powered data search and extraction

In many organizations, signed contracts become static, unsearchable files buried on shared drives. Extracting metadata or analyzing portfolio risk requires manual review, which rarely happens at scale. The IAM platform ingests executed contracts into an intelligent central repository where AI automatically extracts key terms and normalizes them into structured, searchable metadata. Legal teams use natural language search to locate specific clauses across thousands of legacy agreements in seconds.

Obligation and renewal management

Missed renewal windows, untracked post-signature milestones, and unmonitored SLAs lead to hidden revenue leakage. Agents continuously track post-signature obligations, identify out-of-policy pricing, and trigger automated alerts to notify account owners well before critical dates arrive. Gone are the days of legal having to remember every deadline.

Portfolio analysis and regulatory response

When regulations change, or supply chain risks emerge, legal leaders need portfolio-level visibility—fast. The intelligent repository and workflow-powered analysis tool aggregates contract data into live dashboards, enabling teams to run what-if analyses, mine historical redlines for negotiation intelligence, and execute bulk regulatory responses across hundreds or thousands of affected agreements. What used to take weeks of manual review becomes a same-day exercise.

4 Governance

Transparent AI oversight and the human-in-the-loop safety net

AI-powered automation is only as trustworthy as the governance around it. Legal leaders must know exactly what an AI agent did, how to prove it, and how to ensure a human takes over when a situation demands it. The IAM platform is built around transparent AI governance. Legal teams determine exactly what agents are permitted to do and establish firm escalation thresholds. When the system encounters a novel scenario outside the playbook, it escalates automatically. Every action —by human or agent—is captured in a unified audit trail, providing a defensible record of authority.

The ROI

The strategic case for the IAM platform is compelling, but legal leaders also need to justify the investment in concrete terms. When legal designs an agreement architecture on IAM, the data below, drawn from Docusign customers and independent research, quantifies what the IAM platform delivers across efficiency, cost reduction, and enterprise scale.



Saw an **80% reduction in tools** across the legal stack, replacing six vendors with one Docusign IAM platform

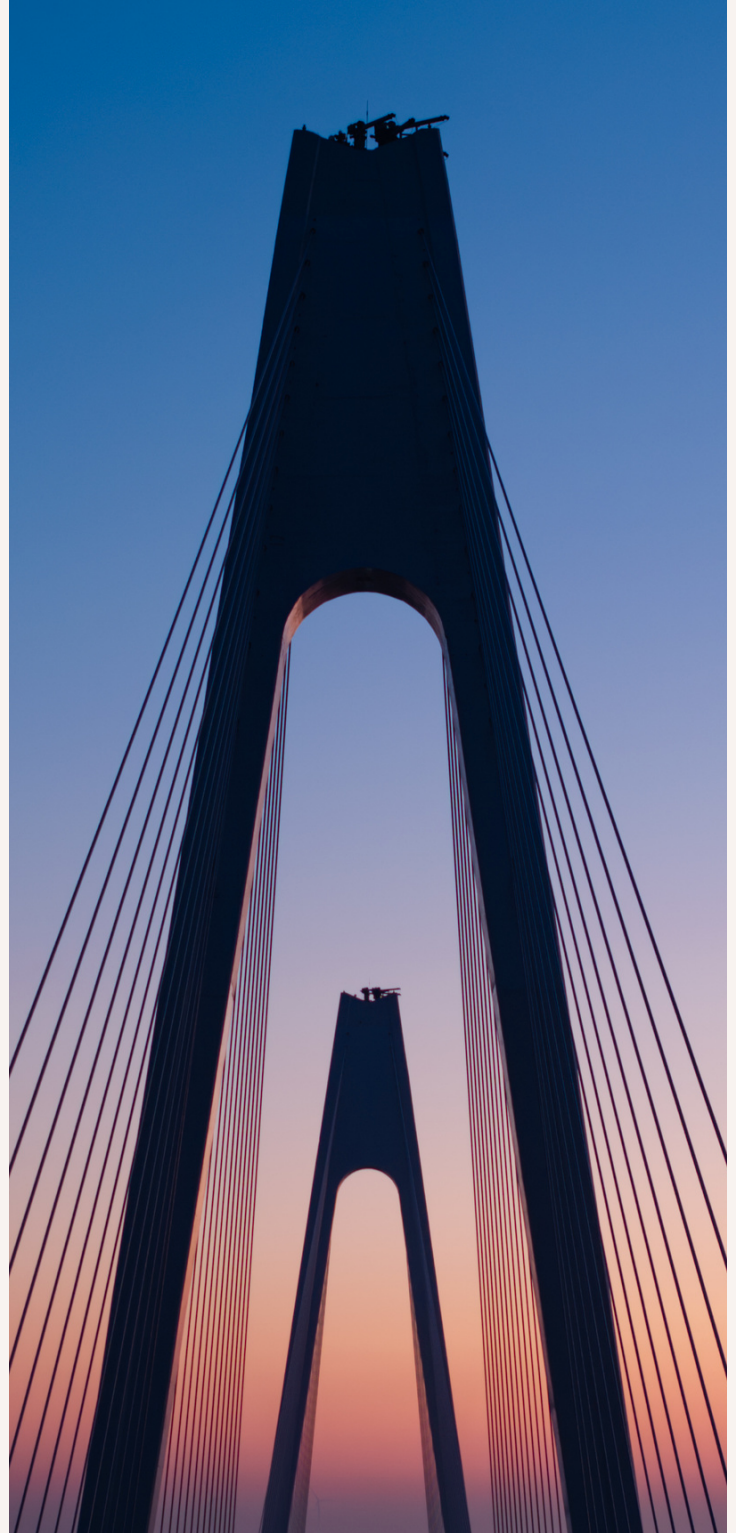


Unilever

Scaled Docusign globally across 70 countries, standardizing corporate legal guardrails and **reducing average contract completion times by 50%**

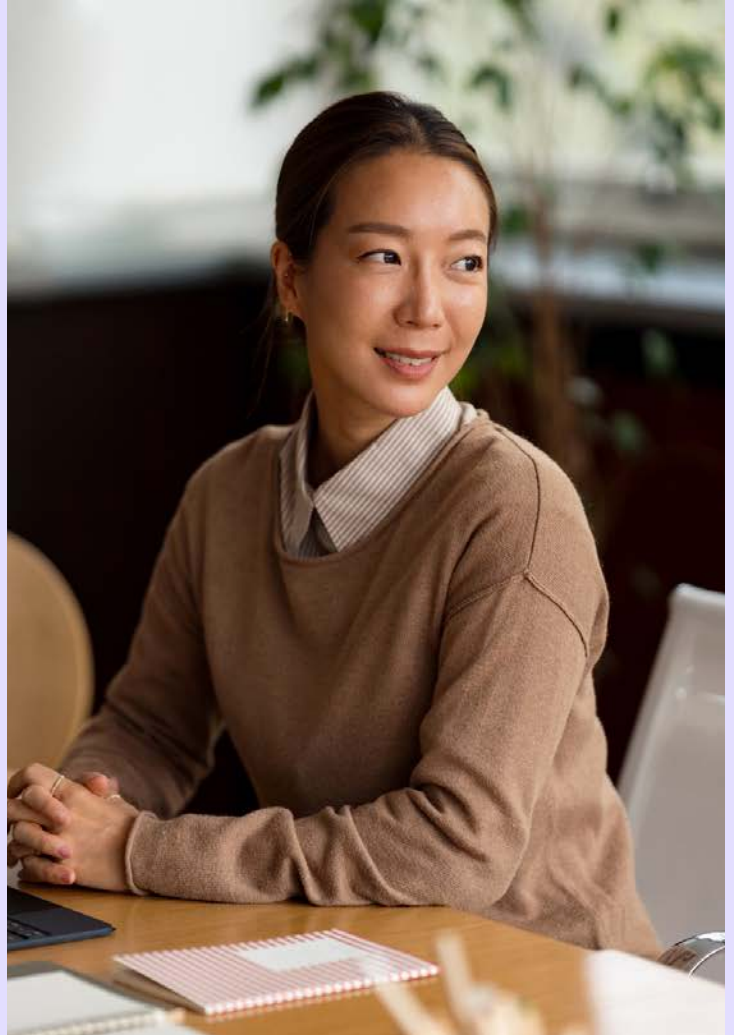


Compressed agreement creation time from 75 minutes to 5 minutes, **converting deals into revenue 93% faster**



The Future of Legal

For decades, legal teams have operated as reviewers, with every agreement, every clause, and every redline passing through human hands before business moves forward. That model worked when transaction volume was manageable, and the tools available were limited. It doesn't work necessarily in an enterprise that needs to move at machine speed, across dozens of departments and multiple jurisdictions, with AI agents increasingly handling routine workflows.



“We’re seeing leading legal departments move past isolated AI pilots and instead reimagine contracting as an end-to-end, data-driven capability. When AI is embedded thoughtfully—supported by the right operating model, governance, and talent—legal teams can reduce friction, surface risk earlier, and actively enable faster, more confident business decisions. The real transformation isn’t just deploying new tools; it’s redesigning how legal creates value in an AI-enabled enterprise.”

EY **Heidi Steinberg**
EY Global and Americas, Legal Transformation Leader



Deflected routine interventions, **automated 78% of standard agreements**, and unlocked critical portfolio metrics to justify business resource allocation.

The IAM platform lets legal teams architect and define what AI agents are permitted to do, set the boundaries for self-service contracting, and determine which tasks require human judgment and which can move forward within pre-authorized parameters. Crucially, legal can prove exactly what happened, when, and under whose authority, with a complete, auditable trail.

The IAM platform draws on two decades of agreement expertise and is purpose-built for this moment, delivering seamless cross-enterprise reach that cannot be achieved with a patchwork of disconnected point products.

Connect with Docusign

To explore what the Docusign IAM platform can do for your legal team:

- Visit the [Docusign Release Readiness Hub](#) to see our latest product updates
- Register for an upcoming [Roadmap Webinar](#) to see what's coming next



Docusign for Legal



Connect with our sales team

About Docusign

Docusign brings agreements to life. Nearly 1.9 million customers and more than a billion people in over 180 countries use Docusign solutions to accelerate the process of doing business and simplify people's lives. With intelligent agreement management, Docusign unleashes business-critical data that is trapped inside of documents. Until now, these were disconnected from business systems of record, costing businesses time, money, and opportunity. Using the Docusign AI-native IAM platform, companies can create, commit, and manage agreements with solutions created by the #1 company in e-signature and contract lifecycle management (CLM). For more information, visit [Docusign.com](#)