# Forbes
## INSIGHTS

# The Push For Efficiency In Financial Services And Insurance: Digital Workflow Solutions Make Their Mark

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**Adobe** ✕ ■■ Microsoft

# Table Of Contents

# Introduction

## There is no longer room for paper-based processes.

Financial services and insurance (FSI) organizations have gone all-in on the cloud, with customer data being managed in private clouds that are remote and internal. At the same time, the proliferation of blockchain, apps and artificial intelligence (AI) requires a laser-like focus on data and document management—making a strong case for a digitize-everything strategy that's taken hold in the industries.

A survey of 602 senior digital and technology executives—conducted by Forbes Insights in association with Adobe and Microsoft—confirms this: All 50 of the FSI executives polled said they plan to increase their budgets for digital workflow solutions in the coming year.

That extra funding may help business leaders correct previous workflow makeovers as suggested by 52% of FSI executives, who said time and operational constraints led to restructurings that were incomplete or not entirely satisfactory. Meanwhile, 64% of FSI executives—this report will refer to them as chief information officers, or CIOs—said they were reevaluating workflows and internal processes to achieve higher operating excellence.

This report will highlight these trends and examine how they are influencing the finance sector's overhaul of document workflows and internal processes.

# Disconnected Process Environments Are Limiting Financial Services Organizations

## On average, 51% of FSI CIOs said legacy workflows are sapping overall productivity.

IT and operations departments are struggling the most, while procurement is struggling the least, with only 30% of FSI CIOs noting an impact on productivity.

There are several problems with inefficient processes. One is that they can lead to partial digitization. Without end-to-end digitization, organizations end up with a significant portion of analog data and documents within processes. This makes it difficult to get a clear picture of what's going on internally and with customers and partners, since the data is essentially trapped on paper or in a stand-alone document.

The inefficiencies slow employees, who are forced to work with documents that are not optimized for modern use. The details of a paper contract, for instance, must be transcribed directly into customer, sales and operational systems or scanned and digitized. Both processes take time and can potentially introduce human error. They also force employees to spend their time on menial tasks rather than strategic work. This may be why two-thirds of FSI CIOs cited increased day-to-day efficiency as a likely outcome of fully digitizing their workflows and internal processes. Sixty percent also cited improved employee morale as a likely outcome.

On average,

## 54%

of FSI CIOs said legacy workflows are impacting employee satisfaction.

SOURCE: FORBES INSIGHTS

# Making The Connection Between Employee And Customer Experiences

## CIOs have another element to think about when considering changes to legacy workflows and disconnected processes: the customer.

For instance, 66% of FSI CIOs said the increasingly digital nature of customers' lives is setting a higher digital standard for their work processes, and 64% said improvements made in the digital employee experience will lead directly to improvements in the customer experience. This may be why 70% said their organizations are increasingly focusing on the link between employee and customer experiences and its effect on revenue growth.

Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) is a good example. In 2019, the company, which currently operates more than a dozen exchanges and marketplaces including the New York Stock Exchange, was looking for ways to make its processes and operations more efficient. ICE found its solution in e-signatures and digital document workflows, says Luke Xiehuan, director of information technology at ICE.

"In a global environment, e-signatures are the fastest way of reaching customers everywhere. With traditional signatures on paper, you risk people not signing because they don't want to deal with the time and hassle," he explains.

ICE processed more than 60,000 documents over the course of two years, including all of its contracts, which are now completely digital. Today, the company's thousands of employees have access to digital documents no matter where they originate across the network. In addition, since the documents can move freely through sales, operations, human resources, legal and marketing, employees always have a detailed view of each customer.

When employees can manage contracts entirely in the application they use without having to switch platforms, they can provide better customer service. And since customers can access and complete documents digitally, they get a seamless experience.

> **"**
>
> E-signatures are the way of the future for all documents. Customers expect the ease of e-signatures."
>
> **LUKE XIEHUAN**
> DIRECTOR,
> INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
> INTERCONTINENTAL EXCHANGE

# Reaping The Security Benefits Of Automated And Intelligent Processes

Thirty-eight percent of FSI CIOs ranked perceived security risk as a top-three challenge to deploying digital document management in their organizations. But should it be?
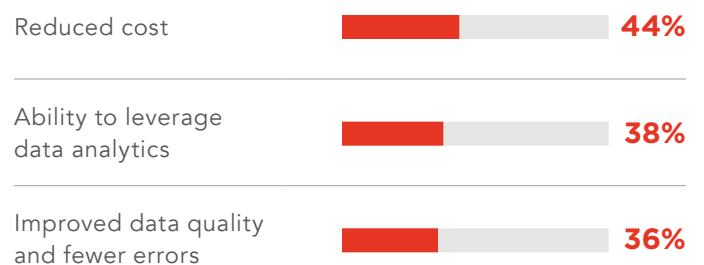
Security risk was tied to the challenges associated with employee adoption and training. It was also tied to perceived regulatory and compliance risks, according to the survey. When asked to choose the top three challenges to deploying digital document management in their organizations, 36% of FSI CIOs cited concerns with regulatory and compliance risks. And yet, when done correctly, digital document management actually improves all of the above. In fact, digital documents created from standard templates meet legal, compliance and security requirements across the board.

ICE saw that its own digital document strategy minimized risks significantly. Working with fully digital workflows means there's less of a chance that documents will be changed improperly, lost or fall into the wrong person's hands, says Xiehuan. It's simple to see who has accessed a document and whether they made any changes to it. You can even tag data, creating alerts if anything is changed or deleted.

The ability to protect data effectively means compliance is easier, too. Digital documents provide a secure and traceable audit trail—and the transparency required by regulated financial services organizations—so organizations can prove that their documents have been stored correctly. FSI organizations can also create rules to automate document storage. For example, organizations worried about content security can use safeguards inherent in Adobe Acrobat that protect the integrity of PDF content. This keeps PDFs safe from alteration, ensures sensitive information remains private and prevents unauthorized printing.

And when it comes time to prepare compliance filings, employees can quickly find the documentation they need since searching for and accessing files is nearly instantaneous—a task that can be impossible when documents are in paper form or created outside of an automated document process. With digital document workflows, identity validation is reflected in audit trails and there's a record of document exchange and actions—not just when the document was created and when it was last saved.

## Top Benefits Of Improving Workflows & Digital Processes For FSI CIOs

Reduced cost — **44%**

Ability to leverage data analytics — **38%**

Improved data quality and fewer errors — **36%**

*Each respondent selected their top three benefits*
Source: Forbes Insights

**KJ BANNAN**
Report Author

# Methodology

Forbes Insights surveyed 602 business leaders from North America (80%) and Europe (20%).

Of the 50 respondents in the financial services and insurance sectors, 64% were chief information officers. The remaining were chief technology officers (12%), chief digital officers (10%), chief innovation officers (8%) and chief transformation officers (6%). All respondents came from organizations with at least $250 million in annual revenue.