

Addressing Environmental Initiatives with a Digital System of Agreement

The world changed a lot from 2020 to 2021, and so did the way we do business. With global organisations collectively turning their attention to employee health, remote work accelerated at an unprecedented pace. The traditional office environment was replaced with a virtual cloud workspace that blurred the lines between consumer and professional technology to the point of nonexistence.

The new anywhere economy operates with reductions in commuting, business travel and in-office paper waste, causing global emissions to dip significantly. As employees return to brick-and-mortar locations in 2021, a new challenge appears: retaining the productivity benefits of the virtual economy while cementing the sustainability gains.

In many ways, the remote-friendly workflow changes were long overdue. In fact, plenty of companies have announced that staff can either work from home permanently or part-time via a flexible hybrid setup. The environmental gains are similar—long overdue and worth retaining as new baselines are established.

Increasing pressure to commit to environmental goals

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report in October of 2018¹ presented a bleak future without a significant global effort to reduce carbon emissions. Consequently, the demand to make emissions progress permanent is coming from an increasing number of critical business stakeholders—government regulators, third-party ratings agencies, investors, customers and employees.

Executives know that sustainability efforts are gaining importance. According to Deloitte, nearly 60% of businesses feel increased pressure from stakeholders to develop and disclose plans that address climate risk². Natural Capital Partners reports that in 2020, 30% of Fortune Global 500 companies had made a public commitment to carbon neutrality or similar science-based targets³.

For many companies, including those in the software space, supply chain emissions are among the most important emissions sources to address. To date, most companies have been focusing on reducing emissions under their direct operational control and from their purchase of electricity, heat and steam. However, in the new landscape, it's also becoming critical to reduce emissions throughout the company's broader value chain.

31%

of employees desire additional rigor from employers in both taking and communicating meaningful climate action⁴

Nearly 90%

of businesses have recently reviewed or changed their climate risk disclosure procedures and developed plans to address climate-related risks²

Identifying opportunities for environmental improvements

There is a wide range of direct and indirect tactics that modern organisations can adopt to reduce their environmental impact. Here are a few common strategies:

Electricity consumption

The electricity used in operations is a significant driver of overall emissions for most companies. Reducing electricity and switching to renewable energy sources are easy opportunities to reduce emissions.

Commuting and business travel

While new technologies may eventually make air travel less emissions-intensive, the simplest path to reducing present-day emissions is to reduce overall air travel. The rapid shift to virtual meetings in 2020 helped demonstrate that this tactic can be successful. Those tools also offer a productive option for employees working from home.

Supply chain

It's becoming increasingly common for organisations to engage suppliers and collectively set similar emissions goals. Large companies are now including climate-related requirements in vendor contracts and imposing penalties for noncompliance.

How DocuSign helps with sustainability efforts

A modern [system of agreement](#)—the collection of technologies and processes used to prepare, sign, act on and manage agreements—moves business processes to the cloud and replaces wasteful practices with more efficient digital alternatives. The benefits of a virtual workspace are twofold: more efficient individual agreements and a more efficient agreement process at large.

As the world of work shifts to a distributed model, organisations are using their agreement platforms to connect critical systems of record (CRMs, HCMs, ERPs, etc.) and digitise processes that have traditionally been plagued by bottlenecks. These distributed models reduce the need for business travel, employee commuting, office space and on-premises data centers. More robust virtual environments are also likely to improve customer and employee experiences.

At the system level, a cloud-based agreement platform gives organisations the tools they need to enshrine their sustainability efforts in contracts. With the expanded visibility into these documents, a business can monitor compliance standards, keeping buyers, suppliers and even suppliers' suppliers accountable. Using powerful templates, preapproved clause libraries, automated reports and AI, teams can improve visibility into environmental commitments and take action to make the world a healthier place.

Savings from contract digitisation:

£30

saved on average per agreement with electronic signature⁵

70%–80%

of efficiency gains seen by companies that replace manual process with digital technologies⁶

22K work hours

saved annually by companies with e-signature usage⁶

Since 2003, DocuSign technology has saved:⁷

20B+

sheets of paper

3M+

trees

11B+

litres of water

75M+

kgs of waste

1.2B+

kgs of additional CO₂

1 Global Warming of 1.5 °C
2 Deloitte Resources Study 2020
3 Response Required
4 Sustainability Is Vital for Employee Attraction and Retention
5 DocuSign eSignature
6 The State Of E-Signature Implementation
7 DocuSign and the Environment

About DocuSign

DocuSign helps organisations connect and automate how they prepare, sign, act on and manage agreements. As part of the DocuSign Agreement Cloud, DocuSign offers eSignature, the world's #1 way to sign electronically on practically any device, from almost anywhere, at any time. Today, over a million customers and more than a billion users in over 180 countries use the DocuSign Agreement Cloud to accelerate the process of doing business and simplify people's lives.

DocuSign, Inc.
Broadgate Quarter
9 Appold Street, 2nd Floor
London EC2A 2AP UK 94105

docusign.co.uk

For more information
emea@docusign.com
+44 203-714-4800