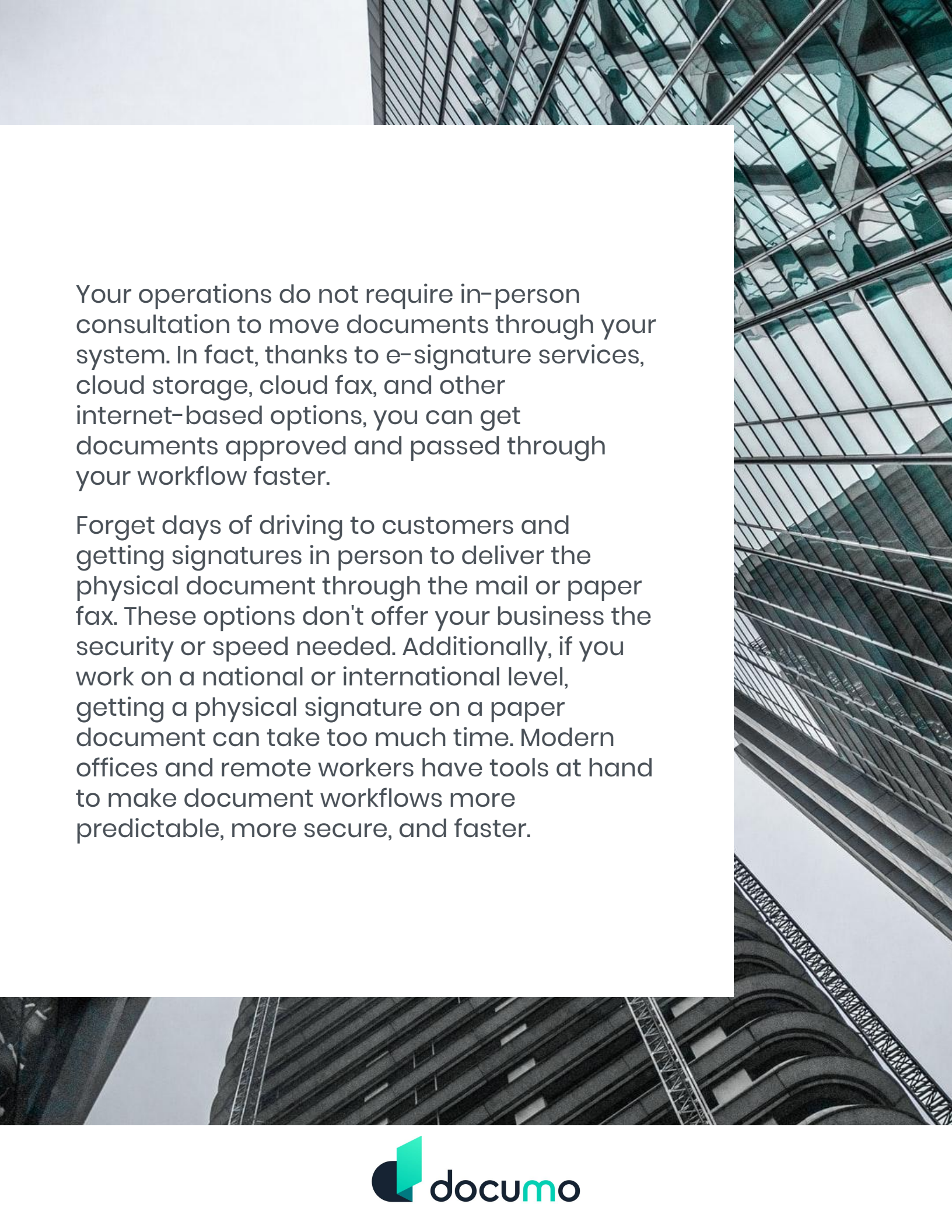GUIDE

5 Simple Ways to Improve Document Workflows

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Your operations do not require in-person consultation to move documents through your system. In fact, thanks to e-signature services, cloud storage, cloud fax, and other internet-based options, you can get documents approved and passed through your workflow faster.

Forget days of driving to customers and getting signatures in person to deliver the physical document through the mail or paper fax. These options don't offer your business the security or speed needed. Additionally, if you work on a national or international level, getting a physical signature on a paper document can take too much time. Modern offices and remote workers have tools at hand to make document workflows more predictable, more secure, and faster.

1 - Look at Holes in Your Current Process

The first step of any improvement program is a close evaluation of what your business currently does. How does your existing document management system fail? Do you lose paper documents? Does your fax machine eat paper? Do you need to drive all over town to get signatures on contracts? Do misfiled papers waste time?

These questions are not rhetorical. They come from situations faced by businesses daily. Each day, an average of up to **5% of documents** at every business disappear through misplacement or misfiling. While the average cost to properly file a document is $20, the cost in worker time to locate a misfiled paper increases to $120. If your company needs to replace a missing document, you could spend up to 25 hours doing so.

Even if your workers file everything away perfectly, the process of handling paper documents takes time, up to **60% of worker time** goes toward document handling. This number makes sense when you consider that 90% of company information comes from documents. When that information is paper-based, workers must spend much of their day copying, faxing, filing, and locating the physical papers. Cutting these processes out by choosing cloud-based solutions could help your workers to have more time for other, more productive processes.

2- Consider Cloud Fax Services

Unattended fax sheets on machines, empty toner cartridges, and paper jams can thwart your efforts to send secure faxes to another company. Instead of relying on paper methods that can take time to send and a phone call to verify in some cases, send your information online through cloud fax services

With a cloud fax option, like mFax, the information undergoes encryption as soon as it transmits, and even in cloud storage, it stays in an encrypted state until an authorized person logs into the system to read it.

Our mFax cloud fax service provides you with more peace of mind compared to fax over IP (FOIP) options, which have a notorious record of unreliability. Paper faxes, too, can cause havoc when the machines do not submit the data as intended. The added cost of maintaining a landline for a standard fax machine also increases your business costs while mFax does not require such a provision.

Whether your business wants to go to paperless operation, needs more reliability in sending documents, or wants a simple way to track where and when you send faxes, our cloud fax service provides you the option you need.

While cloud fax makes tracking documents sent and received via fax easier for your document workflow, you also need a secure method of storing the information, which is why you need cloud storage as part of your document management system.

3 – Store Documents in the Cloud

How you store your documents also contributes to a smoother workflow. You want your employees to access information easily, but you also need to keep it secure. While paper documents stored in an office filing cabinet offer open access, they also lack security for this same storage system.

Paper documents do not have the security of online services. For instance, cloud storage systems, like mDrive, protect your company's data in a secure, central location. When it comes to data breaches, the majority occur from insiders. Among those who cause security problems with information in companies, **25% are malicious insiders** while 36% are unwitting employees who make mistakes. When you store sensitive information in a filing cabinet protected by a single lock or key that anyone in the office can access, you open your company to data breaches.

When you use mDrive for cloud storage, only authorized personnel can get to the documents stored in the cloud. Our mDrive has a security system **built to the Google Security Model** for large-corporate security solutions available to any business that chooses mDrive. By encrypting all data and only decrypting it for authorized users, data breaches through unauthorized access to the cloud storage system decrease. Even if you accidentally forget to log out of the system, it will time out after a given time. This automatic log-out prevents coffee breaks from turning into data breaches by someone else using your computer.

Despite the high level of security protecting documents in cloud storage, you can still **share information easily with mDrive**. You can also make public links for anyone to access the documents if you have information that you want to share with customers or those outside your company. Lastly, all faxes that you send through mFax go directly to the mDrive for storage.

4 - Use E-signature to Hasten Approvals

If your company still insists on in-person signatures on paper, introduce decision-makers to the E-Sign Act **passed by the United States Congress in 2000**. It allows for e-signatures to be as binding as paper signatures in all forms of commerce.

Switching to using e-signatures for your documents offers longer-term storage and more safety. Signatures on paper have a risk of physical loss, which may include natural disasters striking your file storage location. However, if you choose to use e-signatures on documents stored in the cloud, such incidents will not cause loss of proof of the agreement between you and a customer.

Choose mSign as your e-signature service, coupled with mDrive and mFax for a complete package to help you to improve document workflow.

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5 - Continue to Refine and Improve Your Document Management

Honing your document workflow requires constantly looking for ways to improve. As you introduce new technology to replace older methods, you may experience some brief hiccups in operations as your workers change to the new system. Don't take these minor delays for signs that the new measures do not work. However, if your employees continue to lag behind or waste time after a few weeks of using new methods of document management, consider making changes or retraining your employees.

Are there too many emails concerning the cloud-based documents? According to Forbes, the average office worker spends over two hours a day **wading through 200 emails** The majority of those messages, up to 144 of the 200, involve CC or BCC, which means the worker didn't need to see the message at all. If you get too many alerts from internet document management, consider changing the types of messages you get to cut down on emails and reduce wasted time.

Changing email message preferences is only one way that you can continue to refine your document management process to improve workflow. You may find other ways to cut down on wasted time after you implement cloud storage, cloud fax, and e-signature services. Discuss the matter with those who also work with these systems in the company to get feedback on the best ways to make these services work for the way your business operates.

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Improve Your Office Organization or Remote Operations Through Better Document Management

When it comes to document management, you need to have a clear organization. Paper documents require bulky cabinets for storage. Additionally, paper products can get lost or damaged through normal operations. Coffee spills, dropped papers, and paper jams can all cause lost documents. If those were signed copies, you will need to find a way to get the paper resigned.

However, when you opt for cloud-based products to move your documents through a process, there are no physical pages to damage. Additionally, with multiple layers of security, you don't have to worry about hackers breaking into your sensitive files.

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