

A Non-Technical Guide to the Dropbox Sign API

Your guide to accelerating
business performance using
the Dropbox Sign API



APIs are kind of a big deal

We get it, dipping your toes into the world of APIs can be a complex, jargon-filled experience that's more than a little overwhelming.

But truly, it's not all that complex (we promise). You don't need to be a tech expert to understand how APIs integrate into your systems. And the advantages eSignature APIs offer are more than worth it.

Whether you're hiring, selling, or something else, eSignature APIs significantly improve your document workflow efficiency by:

- Empowering employees to focus on 'higher value' tasks by removing manual document management.
- Delivering a streamlined customer experience that reduces drop-offs.
- Saving a huge number of hours by eliminating manual tasks through automation.
- Realizing even greater efficiency gains as your business scales.

So here it is, your non-technical guide to the Dropbox Sign API, and how it can transform your business.





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A brief introduction to APIs

Before we jump into all the business-boosting benefits of APIs, here's the lowdown on what APIs are and how they work.

Put simply, APIs help applications talk to each other. Think of an API like a waiter at a restaurant. A customer (application #1) orders

food from the menu. The waiter (the API) takes your order and relays it to the chef (application #2). The chef (application #2) makes the customer's order. The waiter (the API) then delivers the order to the customer (application #1).

But instead of people in a restaurant, it's two applications that automatically communicate to complete the request. Simple, right?

Now let's take APIs out of the kitchen and apply them to eSignatures. Every time someone fills in a signup form on your website, that action can automatically trigger an API to send out a digital contract via email.

There's one more thing you should know about: third-party APIs, which are similar but not exactly the same. Let's return to our restaurant analogy.

The waiter (the API) still takes the customer's order (application #1). But instead of taking it to the chef (application #2), he takes it down the road to another restaurant's chef (application #3) who fulfills the order and returns it to the customer (application #1).

The beauty of integrating third-party APIs is that they add new experiences and capabilities to your business without you having to build them. So rather than developing your own eSignature tool, you can use a specifically built, secured, and maintained third-party tool.

This is just scratching the surface. APIs replace all manner of repetitive business tasks—for both your customers and your employees. And that's where the Dropbox Sign API is pretty special.



“If you start building everything in-house, it takes a lot of time to get all the functions in place — engineering, strategy, support. It can also create monolithic systems and APIs making it harder to innovate at a fast pace. Using a hybrid approach of building APIs internally and using third-party APIs allows companies to leverage best-of-breed functionality from different vendors. It reduces upfront investment and allows them to switch to the latest and greatest APIs if the vendors aren’t innovating and meeting them where they need their help the most.”

— Akshay Sheth, Senior Engineering Manager, FactSet Research Systems

The Dropbox Sign eSignature API

The Dropbox API enables products to integrate customer-facing eSignature applications that streamline the document-signing processes. And the benefits are significant:

- A faster path to revenue by automating lengthy and manual document processes.
- Reduced churn by creating a seamless signing experience for customers.
- Focus on scaling without worry, knowing the API can handle any volume of requests.

Plus, because the Dropbox Sign app handles signature transactions, you avoid the complexity of complying with domestic and international eSignature laws.

Two ways to integrate the Dropbox Sign API

The Dropbox Sign API isn't one-size-fits-all, it lets you build an online signing workflow that best fits you and your customers' unique workflows. There are two main ways to integrate eSignatures, each with its own advantages:

Non-embedded

Users sign documents away from your product on DropboxSign.com. The signer is notified via email and the signed documents are collected on Dropbox Sign.

Embedded

Users sign documents directly on your platform. Documents are embedded seamlessly into your app or website with just a few lines of code.



Use cases primed for eSignature APIs

If this all sounds a bit theoretical, here are some concrete, industry-specific examples where eSignature API integration improves the signing experience.



HR and onboarding

When employees, contractors, or agents join companies, dozens of documents—authorizations, offer letters, direct deposit sheets, and NDAs—must be completed and signed before any work begins.



Taxes, insurance, and loans

The complexity of the financial services industry means loan applications, sets of corporate taxes, or insurance applications take a long time to complete—especially when they require multiple signatures from multiple parties in multiple locations.



Signups and applications

Forms like liability releases and waivers need multiple signatures when a user signs up for a service or applies for membership.



Procurement and sales

When employees, contractors, or agents join companies, dozens of documents—authorizations, offer letters, direct deposit sheets, and NDAs—must be completed and signed before any work begins.



Real estate

Whether you're leasing, buying, or managing a property, everything from lease agreements to HOA resolutions require signatures from home buyers, homeowners, and real estate agents.



Legal agreements

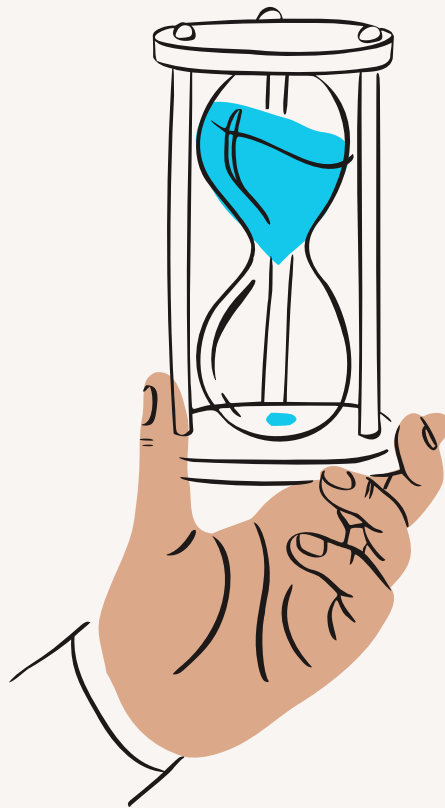
Court proceedings, civil cases, estate planning, and other situations all demand legally binding electronic signatures from several parties—often in different geographical areas.

Speed up document completion through automation

In today's on-demand world, people expect immediate digital responses, actions, and results.

So, whether you're closing another deal or hiring a new employee, any way you can shave seconds or minutes off a workflow is an edge over the competition.

And that's exactly what implementing an eSignature API does. By automating repetitive requests like signatures, identity documentation, and contact details, you reduce the gap between request and response. The Dropbox Sign API makes initiating and responding to requests faster through automation. Here's how:



Automated notifications

Let's say you send an employment contract to a candidate. Once they've signed the documents, the Dropbox Sign API automatically notifies you it's complete and you can move on with your hiring process.

Embedded templates

Dropbox Sign templates allow you to format a document once and then reuse it again and again. This functionality is perfect for high-volume documents like sales contracts, tax forms, investment agreements, HR paperwork, and more.

Group Sign

The Dropbox Sign Group Sign feature also allows teams to send a document to a group of recipients when only one signature is required. Casting a wider net returns a completed signature faster, rather than waiting for one person to respond.



When you combine Dropbox Sign automated notifications, embedded templates, and group sign features, the time your teams spend on repetitive manual tasks plummets across your business units:

- Sales teams close deals faster by getting contracts to prospects immediately.
- Hiring managers lock down top-tier talent before the competition by delivering employment contracts and offer letters to candidates sooner.
- IT and HR cut down the back and forth over documents related to remediation issues.

CUSTOMER STORY

DEALMAKER

DealMaker eliminates manual processes from the capital-raising process

Raising capital used to be full of costly and error-prone manual workflows that led to headaches and slow progress.

DealMaker saw an opportunity to eliminate the friction of manual processes in the capital-raising process through digital documents and eSignatures. But to make it happen, they needed an eSignature solution that could be seamlessly embedded into their platform for a faster, more transparent signing experience. That's when they turned to the Dropbox Sign embedded API.

"HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] embedded beautifully into our platform and unlike other vendors it didn't require users to leave our platform, open new accounts, or separately log in. The HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] API helped us deliver on our mission of speed, efficiency, and ease of use." — Mat Goldstein, CRO and CoFounder, DealMaker

And it's completely transformed DealMaker's capital-raising process by reducing a 72-hour process down to 30 minutes.



Reduce bounce rates with a frictionless user experience

When you need an important document signed, the last thing you want to do is create confusion. Yet it happens so often. Users are ping-ponged from your website to their email or a third-party site and back to your original page. It's especially true of mobile where switching between tabs and windows is cumbersome.

These disjointed signing experiences massively damage the chances someone will complete your request or even work with your business.

Integrating eSignatures via API into digital customer interactions can remove significant friction to deliver a streamlined experience. Here's how embedded eSignatures help.



Fully embedded eSignatures

By embedding eSignature APIs into your product or website, users never leave your experience—no third-parties, switching tabs, or email-checking. For customers and candidates, the entire signing experience becomes one cohesive signing interaction.



Custom-brand your experience

Just like multiple experiences, multiple brands confuse people. A custom-branded eSignature tool lets you make the signing experience look and feel exactly like your brand, which removes confusion as to which company they are dealing with—further smoothing your user experience.

Combine custom branding and embedded features for the ultimate user experience

The Dropbox Sign eSignature API combines both embedded signing and a whitelabeled experience to lock users into a distraction-free and custom-branded experience throughout the signing experience. And from what we've seen, this significantly reduces bounce rate and improves document completion by as much as 26%.

CUSTOMER STORY



Greenhouse Onboarding unifies its onboarding experience

Greenhouse Onboarding's entire operation is geared towards one thing: a seamless experience for new hires to become productive and active members of their new company.

But other eSignature providers stood in the way of creating that seamless experience—requiring Greenhouse Onboarding's customers to create their own account to sign documents. This made the whole process complicated and fragmented for new hires.

Then they discovered the Dropbox Sign embedded API which let customers sign everything with out ever leaving Greenhouse Onboarding's platform. And it's made a big difference to their experience. As Aaron Gibralter, Director of Product Engineering, puts it, "the ability to white-label different solutions used throughout the onboarding process provides users with a cohesive experience. Removing this barrier allows new hires to focus on the company culture and team they've chosen to be a part of".



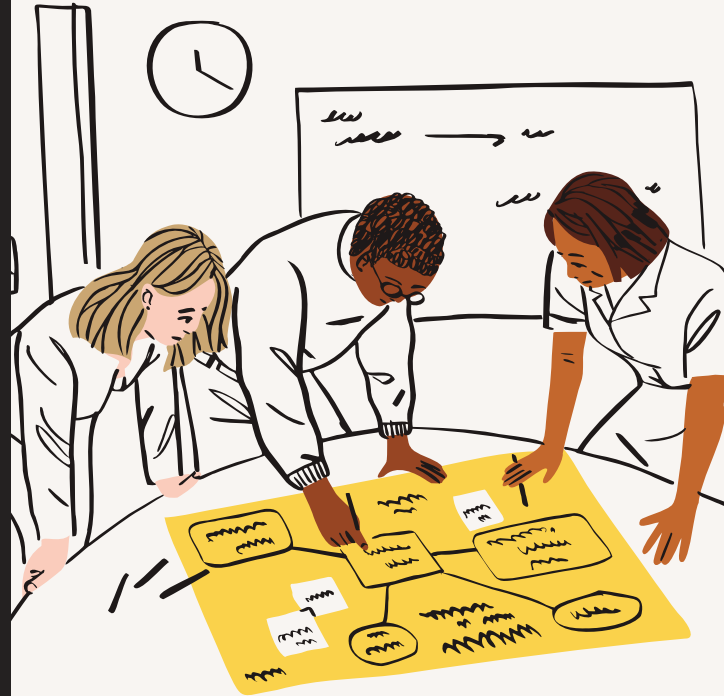
APIs are built for scale and growth

What's important to understand about integrating eSignature APIs into workflows is that they're an efficiency multiplier, not a one-off quick fix.

To put it in context, the more documents you manage, the more time-saving APIs become.

For instance, if your team manages high volumes of signature requests at once, an API integration reduces document admin and removes workflow bottlenecks. Rather than individually emailing out documents or links to each recipient, an integrated eSignature API automatically sends the appropriate forms to every recipient with one click of a button. It might not seem like a huge time-saver for a single form, but when you send 10s, 100s, or 1000s of documents, it'll save you hours.

This is precisely what Dropbox Sign Bulk Send with Template is designed to do. It sends separate signature requests to an email list of up to 250 people using one template and a single API request. This greatly reduces admin time and frees your team up to focus on more productive activities —whether that's sourcing more talent or nurturing customer prospects.



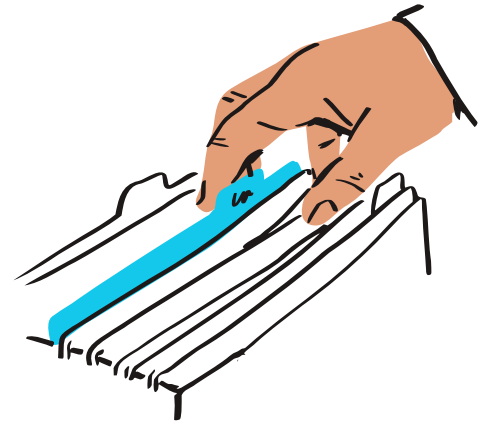
CUSTOMER STORY



How Fountain processes and hires over 96,000 applicants a month

The hourly workforce is highly mobile and eager to start working as soon as possible. That means the businesses that recruit this workforce must move quickly to hire.

For Fountain—an hourly workforce platform—it's critical applicants move to the final contract-signing stage fast. But with so much documentation in the hiring process, speed isn't easy.



"At Fountain, we strive to provide a seamless branded experience across corporate sites and customized job directories," said Sean Behr, CEO of Fountain. "Automated document signing supports this, allowing candidates to apply for jobs on the go and move swiftly to be hired."

And it's this functionality enabled by APIs that's helped Fountain's customers hire an average of 96,000 candidates each month by significantly shortening the hiring timeline.

Go live fast

The faster you integrate an eSignature API, the faster you'll experience the benefits.

But an API integration can also become a time-suck for your development team, who need to understand what it does, how it works, and how to use it. And if this time and effort outweighs the benefits of the integration, you have a problem.



That's why Software Development Kits (SDKs) are critical. An SDK speeds up implementation time considerably by giving developers the tools, libraries, documentation, code samples, and processes to implement your API.

One way to think about APIs and SDKs is like Lego. Think of your API as a pile of Lego blocks. You can put them together but it's not entirely clear how the model should actually look. The SDK is like an entire Lego kit—pieces, instructions, box and all—so you know exactly what you're doing and how to get there, step by step.

When you have clear, simple instructions, integrating an eSignature API becomes fast and simple for your developers.

That's why Dropbox Sign offers six SDKs, so developers can integrate APIs easily in their preferred language.

And if you get stuck, trained Dropbox Sign API Support Engineers are always on hand to field any technical questions.

CUSTOMER STORY



Pigeon Loans

With Dropbox Sign you'll be eSigning in days instead of months

- On average, a Dropbox Sign API integration takes just 2.5 days—the fastest in the industry*.
- 40% of Dropbox Sign API integrations are completed in 10 hours.
- 88% of developers finished their integrations in 40 hours.

"I've implemented other APIs and it usually takes about a week.

Dropbox Sign is using such forward-looking technology, along with clear and easy to understand documentation that I was able to do it in less than 3 hours. This was a record for me."

— Brian Bristol, CTO and Co-Founder, Pigeon Loans

*Source: G2 - Most Implementable 2020



Conclusion

Workflow efficiency is just an API away

There you have it: the non-technical guide to the Dropbox Sign API. That wasn't too complex and jargon-packed, right?

In fact, eSignature APIs are the complete opposite. The Dropbox Sign APIs removes confusion and complexity across your business for employees and customers alike. Whether it's delivering a better experience for customers, saving your employees hours in manual tasks, integrating APIs into your workflows is a game-changer.

And when those game-changing efficiencies magnify as you grow, your business is set up to thrive.

If this all sounds good, [book a demo](#) with a Dropbox Sign API experts, who will happily walk you through how the product works and how you can simplify your signing process



About Dropbox Sign

Dropbox Sign simplifies work for millions of individuals. Customers all over the world trust the Dropbox Sign platform – which includes eSignature, digital workflow and electronic fax solutions. Companies all over the world rely on us to power their applications, making it easier to close deals faster, onboard new hires, complete documents without error and much more. For more information visit the [Dropbox Sign](#) website.