

Everything you need to know about eSignature integration for SaaS

From UX to legality to
build vs. buy



Introduction

eSignatures and SaaS are a match made in heaven

As digital transformation continues to reshape the workplace, the use of SaaS has exploded. In fact, companies now use [137](#) unique SaaS apps on average to run their businesses.

Why? Because it's convenient. SaaS technology is a hassle-free option that offers best-of-breed capability, flexible costs, and hands-off maintenance.

But convenience is also what every other SaaS platform competes on. See, features are only a differentiator until someone copies them—which is sadly all too easy, and common in the SaaS world.

Instead, separating yourself from rival SaaS vendors has become about how you deliver your product—the way your customer feels when buying and using it—because that's much harder to replicate. And with [80%](#) of consumers willing to pay extra for a better user experience, it's a worthwhile investment.

As Armando Torrealba Echiburú, Product Design Director at Xero says, "Your user experience is the bridge between customers and technology. Since SaaS operates in a different distribution model — not like enterprise where you have a sales team—the software has to sell itself."

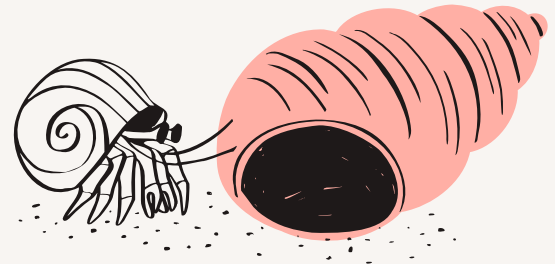
However, that demands every inch of your product be as frictionless and user-friendly as possible for both customers who use your product and your customer's customers who feel the benefits.

And one quick-win to improve your user experience is by integrating eSignatures directly into your platform via an API, which removes tedious paperwork from your product's workflow, greatly improving the experience you offer.

But eSignatures are so much more than just UX enablers. This guide covers everything you need to know about adding Signatures to your SaaS platforms and getting the most out of them:

- How eSignatures boost your UX
- How eSignatures cut costs
- Different types of eSignature integration
- The pros and cons of building vs. buying
- The legality of eSignatures vs. traditional 'wet' signatures

Here's how integrating eSignatures directly into your application via an API is the extra advantage you've been looking for.



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The UX-boosting power of eSignatures

In the highly competitive SaaS market, differentiating your product has become less about price and features and more about user experience (UX).

The thing is, UX is often seen as a long, iterative journey of designing, testing, and refining products based on customer data, not a fast-moving tactical tool. But that's not always the case, one quick way to boost your platform's user experience for customers and users near-instantly is with integrated eSignatures.

70% of business leaders view UX and CX as a competitive differentiator



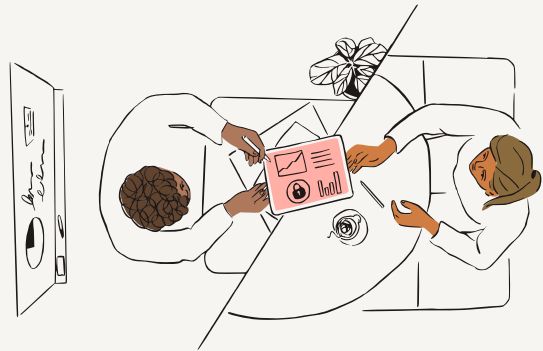
How eSignatures deliver a unified, consistent experience

The leading cause of lost business—whether it's sign-ups, sales, or customer churn—is a bad user experience. In fact, a whopping 70% of customers abandon a purchase because of bad user experience and 67% of customers claim an unpleasant experience as their reason for churn.

So when customer a signs up for your product and are hurled across the internet to a third-party website (or worse, have to download a document from your platform, sign it, then attach it to an email and send it back), you're damaging your product's experience.

Put simply, the easier you make the signing experience, the greater the chances customers stay on your platform rather than trying to find an alternate solution.

Adding eSignature capability to your product's experience lets customers send and sign important documents securely without ever leaving your platform. What's more, when you use refined eSignature APIs, it's possible to make the signing experience available across any device.



From what we've seen, when you eliminate distractions and frustrations from the signing experience, customers complete documents as much as 26% faster. And this helps with both customer acquisition and retention.

- **For acquisition:** Because prospects aren't distracted by third-party experiences or clunky user journeys, the chances they convert into customers goes up and that's a faster path to revenue.
- **For retention:** If your software helps your users send out and sign contracts—like sales and HR tools—then how effectively your customers get those contracts signed and returned plays a huge role in their perception of your product. The easier you make things, the more engaged customers become, the more you reduce churn, and the faster your customer base grows.

Where eSignatures thrive

A simple and streamlined experience is especially valuable in highly regulated industries where documents often demand multiple legally signed documents, these are a few examples:

For **HR teams**, candidates and employers need to sign contracts like NDAs, 1099s, employment contracts, and offer letters.

“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.”



In the **financial services industry**, paperwork is a mammoth task—loan application, corporate taxes, insurance applications, the list goes on and on—and it often requires multiple signatures from multiple parties in multiple locations.

“HelloSign’s [now Dropbox Sign] embedded experience allows us now to deliver a seamless user experience that links invoices with corresponding contracts. The full white-labeling functionality enables us to own the eSignature experience, abstract it from our users, and ensure they never have to leave AdvicePay to transact business.

Now, users don’t touch the contract because it’s 100% controlled via the HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] API from data in our system. They never have to leave AdvicePay and they can manage, track, and download all their contracts from our application. The invoice-contract data match helps them align accounts payable with accounts receivable, which can dramatically improve their bottom line.

When a user creates an invoice in AdvicePay, our application automatically creates a contract in HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] and pulls the invoice amount and other key data fields into the contract so the documents are 100% synced.”

— Joe Timmer, Lead Developer, AdvicePay

In **Real estate**, documents like buyer's agreements, purchase agreements and homeowners insurance almost always require a lot of signatures.

"We've found that a lot of sellers don't want to do the print-sign-scan-fax workflow, so our HelloSign [now Dropbox Sign] integration is definitely a differentiator that helps us delight our customers and get our NPS as high as possible."

It could take a listing agent a couple of days to get a listing on the MLS for their seller. Now, with our seamless process built on Dropbox Sign, the auto-fill capabilities, and editable templates, we've had sellers sign up with our product, list on the MLS, and receive and accept an offer with all forms completed in less than one day.

Our process is 100% online and integrated. Not only do sellers complete the entire process in one browser window, but we are able to facilitate them getting their listing on the MLS in about 10 minutes."

— Travis Carona, Technical Co-founder, ListingSpark



CUSTOMER STORY



How Fountain 10Xed its largest client's growth with mobile eSignature integration

Fountain's hiring automation platform helps businesses hire hourly workforces. Approximately 50% of its workforce applicants come through mobile, so a mobile-first signing experience was a high priority.

And delivering in a single integrated workflow has significantly shortened the hiring timeline for Fountain's customers and applicants. It's helped their customers **hire 96,000 applicants each month** on average and led to **10x growth** in markets served by its largest client in less than a year.



Convert prospects into customers faster

Talk to any salesperson and they'll tell you that when it's to sign a contract, people disappear. That the final contract-signing step scares away customers for one of two reasons:

- it's admin-prone – print, sign, scan, send.
- it's time-intensive so customers are more likely to get distracted or second-guess their decision.

So any measure that makes the contract-signing process easier and faster is a leap towards more customer conversions and fewer drop-offs.

That's exactly what integrating eSignature APIs into your contract-signing process does. When a customer signs up for your product, it triggers an eSignature API to automatically present users with a digitally signable contract right there in your application. And because customers don't have to wait for a salesperson to manually put together a contract and send it to them, it speeds up the signing process.

Even better, [Dropbox Sign integrates with Salesforce through this API](#). So if your sales team use Salesforce as their CRM, they can send contracts out for eSignature directly from Salesforce using the Dropbox Sign API.

The Dropbox Sign API lets you build custom eSignature workflows that streamline the signing process across your business and eliminate friction for end-users.

By customizing your document process with your company's branding from start to finish with the Dropbox Sign custom-branding features, signees stay locked in a single experience the whole time and only see your brand—eliminating any confusion or distractions.

With eSignatures, contracts are signed on average 80% faster and closing rates increase by as much as 28%.

eSignatures for greater operational efficiency

Almost every part of the modern SaaS operations is measured, optimized, and integrated for improved digital interactions.

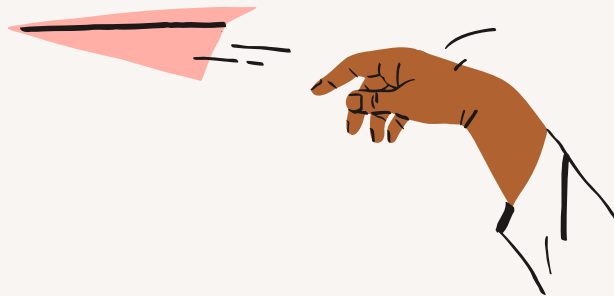
But for the longest time, the final blockage in this near-seamless digital workplace has been eSignatures, which have lagged with paper-based processes and awkward third-party tools. It's made handling documents more error-prone and tedious than it needs to be. But with an eSignature API, the final barrier preventing a fully integrated SaaS platform is finally eroding.

Boost productivity

Sending a high volume of signature requests at the same time is a productivity drain for your team — creating, sending, and managing individual documents is inefficient and can cause workflow bottlenecks.

By automating manual tasks, like sending signature requests or reminders with an eSignature API integration, you can streamline your platform's paperwork processes.

Sophisticated eSignature APIs can send hundreds of individual signature requests with one click simply by using a formatted document and a single API request. This can all save up to 700 annual work hours meaning teams have more time to focus on their actual job, rather than tiresome admin.



Template away admin headaches

eSignature APIs also save your team hours. Using high-volume document templates simply by setting up and saving a template once (on your website or application), your team can reuse that template over and over again whenever they need it. These templates are especially great for high-usage documents like sales contracts, HR onboarding paperwork and rental agreements.

Reduce direct costs

Moving document signing to the cloud eliminates costs associated with the traditional, physical process—such as postage and packaging—as well as the longer-term costs associated with storing paper documents and contracts.

As you can see, integrating eSignature technology into your software platform doesn't just pay huge dividends for your customer's experience, it also saves you and your team significant time and money.



CUSTOMER STORY

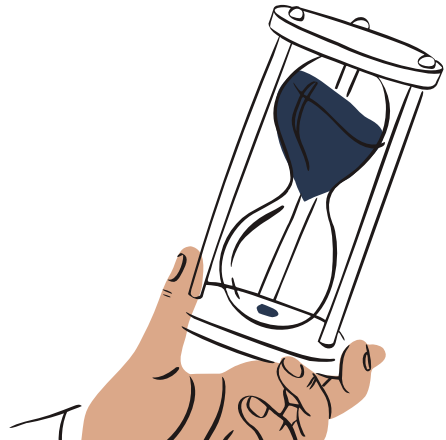


How eSignatures streamlined WorkRamp's operations

WorkRamp, a SaaS HR platform, found success integrating eSignature APIs for multiple use cases: to accelerate customer contracts, complete financing documents, provide an effortless HR onboarding flow, and reduce billable hours for legal paperwork. And it significantly cut down the time they spent shuffling paper documents.

"What took 30 minutes before (when manually printing and scanning contracts) now takes 1-2 minutes. Dropbox Sign has definitely exceeded our expectations."

– Ted Blosser, Head of Sales and Customer Success, WorkRamp



Different ways to integrate eSignatures into your product

When integrating an eSignature solution into your application, you have two options—direct end-users to a third-party service or keep them within your product. Here's the difference and the benefits of both:



Direct to third-party eSignatures

When partnering with a trusted third-party eSignature site, signers are notified via email that a document is ready for their signature. They're then directed to the third-party's platform where their eSignature is securely collected.

If trust is an important part of your and your customers' relationships, then directing them to a well-known, legitimate eSignature solution provider assures customers that their transaction is credible and their data is safe.

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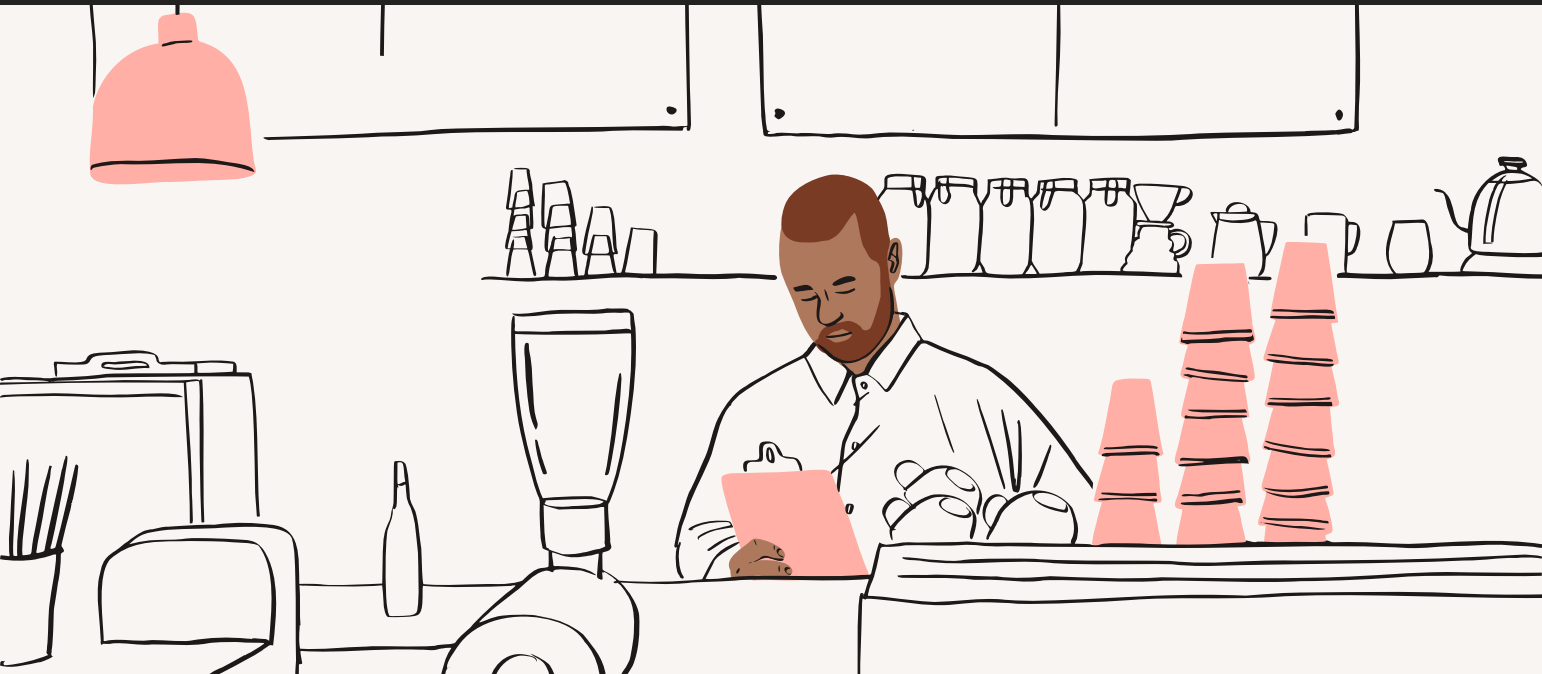
Additionally, you don't have to add any new code to your website so you can get up and running instantly—it's truly plug and play SaaS.

However, the process can be clunky. Expecting customers to open a new tab or window on their computer or mobile phone and then navigate back to your page after signing risks losing their attention forever.

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No matter your product, Dropbox Sign has you covered

The Dropbox Sign API lets companies build online signing workflows for their customers directly into their products, simplifying document transactions within their own product through both embedded and non-embedded signing.

Non-Embedded

Users are directed to sign documents on Dropbox Sign.com from your product. We notify the signer via email and collect their eSignature on Dropbox Sign.

Embedded

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

Whichever API integration you need, Dropbox Sign has you covered with both embedded and non-embedded APIs that'll get your customers signing ASAP.



Build vs. buy

So, you're convinced of the benefits of adding eSignatures to your SaaS stack. But do you build the eSignature solution in-house? Or do you buy one?

Both building and buying an eSignature solution comes with their own upsides and risks. Choose wrong and it might take too long to develop, surface security flaws, or hamstring you with limited functionality—all costing you and your team time and money.

To make the best decisions for your product, here's what you need to know about each:





Implementation speed

The faster you deploy an eSignature solution, the faster your team and your customers start seeing the benefits.

- **Build:** While building an eSignature tool in-house gives you total control over functionality and can be customized to exactly what you want, you could be waiting weeks, months, or even years for a team of experts to develop such a tool. And even then it's not guaranteed to be what you want.
- **Buy:** Integrating an eSignature tool via API is a short, easy process that doesn't take more than a couple of days. The average Dropbox Sign API integration takes just 2.5 days meaning your development team gets valuable time back to tackle problems unique to your business.

Security

Security threats are constantly changing and that demands continued vigilance to keep up with constantly evolving threats.

- **Build:** With an in-house product, you have total control over how much time and resource you dedicate to keeping everything secure. It's up to you! But that's risky.
- **Buy:** By integrating a third-party eSignature API, a team of experts dedicated specifically to eSignatures and security threats monitors your product and keeps everything safe and up to date.

Legal standards and compliance

Just like security, eSignatures demand strict compliance to standards that are constantly changing.

- **Build:** With a home-built tool, you retain the power to decide which areas of the law apply to your operation and which you need to comply with. But remember, you're also tasked with building the infrastructure that timestamps and authenticates documents to a court-admissible standard internationally. Plus it'll need updating whenever there's a regulatory change.
- **Buy:** Your eSignature provider maintains the legal infrastructure around eSignatures and keeps everything up to date with the latest changes to manage compliance risks and ensure your eSignatures are legally binding.

Maintenance and support

You need to know your eSignature tool won't break down for you or your customers.

- **Build:** If you're building an eSignature tool, you're likely confident you have developers, engineers, and security experts on staff to maintain it and quickly respond to customer issues at the drop of a hat.
- **Buy:** A dedicated support team takes care of the maintenance. And if there's an issue, they're on hand to fix your problem fast.

Dropbox Sign integrates 2X faster than the industry average

We're proud of our clean documentation and developer-focused resources that make it simple for developers to integrate the Dropbox Sign eSignature API into any platform, website, or workflows. Here's just how easy it is:

- 40% of Dropbox Sign API integrations are completed in 10 hours
- 88% of developers finish their integrations in 40 hours

But don't just take our word for it, here's what Dropbox Sign customers say...

"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. HelloSign's [now Dropbox Sign] API helped us deliver on our mission of speed, efficiency and ease of use."

— Mat Goldstein, CRO and Co-Founder



eSignatures and the law

Buying a SaaS product feels different—there's no in-person meeting, physical product in your hands, or literal dotted line to sign on—and that makes the transaction feel less serious; less legitimate.

But that doesn't make the contracts and agreements you and your customers sign any less valid or protected. Contracts, and the eSignatures on them, are just as legally binding and enforceable as paper documents.

There are a number of specific eSignature laws designed to keep you and your customers safe. Electronic signature regulations in the U.S. and the European Union, for example, ensure agreements signed electronically maintain the same level of validity as an agreement signed by hand.



Are eSignatures legal internationally?

In short, yes. eSignatures are legal as long as they adhere to all relevant laws. And understanding eSignature laws and how they apply to contracts between different countries allows you to conduct legal business on an international scale.

However, every country has its own specific regulations for exactly how and when electronic signatures are used. If you have any country-specific queries or other questions about the legality of eSignatures, you find the answer to them in the [Dropbox Sign legality guide](#).

Audit trails

With a single instance of fraud costing companies [USD\\$1.5 million on average](#), there are huge consequences when private and commercially sensitive documents fall into the wrong hands or are tampered with.

That's why you want to ensure every party is secure, traceable and accountable—it's the only way to protect everyone involved in the transactions and ensure compliance. Any worthwhile eSignature tool will create a non-editable audit trail that ensures every action on your documents is thoroughly tracked and time-stamped, so you have defensible proof of access, review, and signature.

Compliance is a top Dropbox Sign priority

Failure to adhere to information security standards is a risk no company should take. The associated penalties from civil fines to prosecution in criminal court just aren't worth it. That's why Dropbox Sign has diligently built processes to keep our service internationally compliant.

To get specific, Dropbox Sign is compliant with the following: SOC 2 Type II, ISO 27001, HIPAA, the U.S. E-SIGN act of 2000, the

Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (EUTA) of 1999, and the eIDAS regulation for the EU of 2016 (EU Regulation 910/2014).

In addition, Dropbox Sign adds an audit trail page to all completed documents which contains a globally unique identifier that shows which email address signed a document and when and a hash of the PDF document which is used to determine whether it has been modified or tampered with.

Conclusion

eSignatures are SaaS' secret weapon

In the fast-paced world of SaaS, there's always another optimization tweak or hot piece of tech that promises to take your business to the next level.

The distinction you need to make is which optimizations and products will resolve your business' and customers' most immediate and grating pains because that's where you'll unlock the most gains. And removing the slow and confusing signing processes for both your employees and customers is a great place to start.

If Dropbox the Sign API is something that'll help your business, [book a demo](#) with one of Dropbox Sign's 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—to automate and manage their most important business transactions. 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.