nitro

Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital Workplace

How IT can finally provide digital tools for everyone

Executive Summary

The promise of the digital workplace is unfettered productivity for every team member. Without the traditional constraints of time, location, and paper-based workflows, teams can accelerate digital transformation, innovate faster, and help the enterprise become exponentially more competitive.

Seems like a reasonable promise.

Unfortunately, too many organizations will fall short on that promise because they have unnecessary commitment issues. Let us explain. Fulfilling the promise of a digital workplace cannot happen without first providing the digital tools every individual needs to be as productive as possible.

Not just HQ. Not just the sales team. Everyone.

To manage cost, most organizations limit digital tools, including eSigning and PDF management to the "lucky few." With only a fraction of the organization equipped with these valuable tools, an overwhelming "silent majority" are left MacGyver-ing their way through collaborating, communicating, and executing work with others.

> "Fulfilling the promise of the digital workplace means committing to digital tools for everyone."
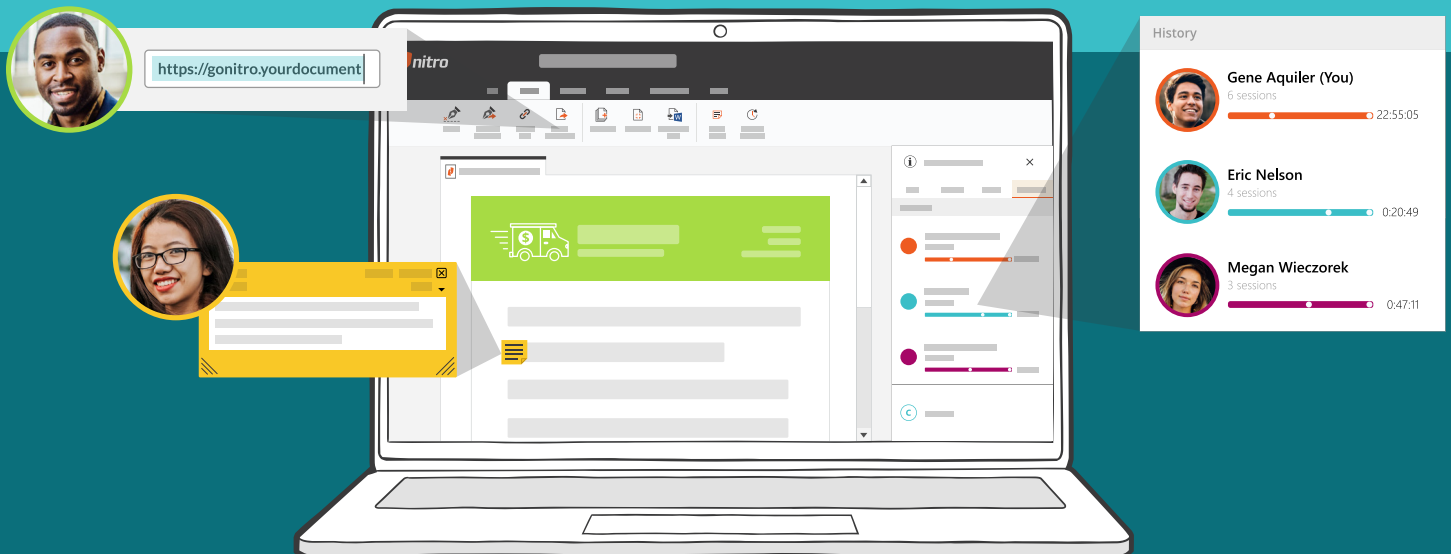
The Digital Workplace Is Already Here

Regardless of industry, executive teams are expected to perform amid unprecedented change. Disruptive technology, consumer expectations, and even the competitive landscape itself are all moving targets. As rapid change fuels urgency across the enterprise, many organizations have already become fully digital. Here are five undeniable trends driving organizations to empower a fully digital workforce:

Speeding Innovation Through Virtual Teams

According to research from HP, **62% of employees now work on virtual teams**, making them possibly the single most important way that companies prioritize and coordinate work today. As fluid teams proliferate, traditional barriers to innovation will continue to erode as access to specialized and technical expertise is available at will. By their very nature, virtual teams require the speed and collaboration that digital workflows provide on any device, anytime, anywhere.

Meeting & Exceeding Employee & Consumer Expectations

"What have you done for me lately" is quickly becoming, "what will you do for me right now?" Businesses are hiring employees and serving customers in the new expectation economy, defined by David Mattin of Trendwatching.com as "an economy of ever-accelerating expectations, applied ruthlessly to every purchase decision, experience and moment of attention." According to a study done by **Uber in 2013**, most of us won't wait more than two minutes for a ride. Now think of how that dwindling patience translates into completing a task. Both employees and consumers simply won't tolerate interruptive, paper-based workarounds.

Keeping Security As a Top Priority

According to a recent report by **Cybersecurity Ventures, ransomware damage costs will rise to $11.5 billion by 2019, and a business will fall victim to a ransomware attack every 14 seconds.** As preventing and containing cyber threats continue to be a high priority, overworked IT teams are forced to tackle the issue from the top down, making

huge investments in cybersecurity solutions. Unfortunately, these solutions don't solve the vulnerability created by internal employees and external suppliers, who generate up to 60% of cyber threats via emails and unsecured documents. Reducing vulnerability at the individual level through tighter digital workflows and PDF management is a critical piece of an effective cybersecurity strategy.

Ensuring Authentic Sustainability

These days saying you're "green" means nothing; proving it means everything. More than any other generation, millennials place a premium on social responsibility. **According to Nielsen, 73% will spend more on a product from brands who prove socially conscious**. In a recent Millennial Employee Engagement Study, Cone Communications found that as employees, 88% of millennials say their job is more fulfilling when they have opportunities to make a positive impact on social and environmental issues. What's more, a full **89% want to be active participants in helping their company improve its responsible business practices by providing feedback, ideas, and potential solutions**. Claiming sustainability as a value while regressing to wasteful, paper-based process is a misalignment that both employees and consumers notice.

The Evolving Leadership Role of the CIO

As their responsibilities evolve from back-office support to consumer-facing strategy, today's CIOs are expected to move beyond technology pilots, socialize change, and scale the digital initiatives that move the business forward. "'Digital' is here and is mainstream," says Gartner analyst, Andy Rowsell-Jones. "CIOs are moving from experimentation to scaling their digital business initiatives."*

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>
> Andy Rowsell-Jones, Analyst at Gartner*

* = Gartner Press Release, Gartner Survey Shows Digital Business Is Turning CIOs Into Business Leaders

As organizations adapt to these trends and continue their journey to a fully digital workplace, CIOs will need to adjust priorities that directly support that move. One way to do that is by prioritizing the availability of digital tools for everyone.

Why Committing to Digital Tools for Everyone Must Be a Top Priority:

With the next disruptor ready to unleash their innovation—while hindered by as few inefficiencies as possible—there is simply no room for wasteful, siloed legacy processes. Disruption doesn't discriminate, and competition will continue to identify and eradicate inefficiencies in the business.

Here are four reasons to quickly prioritize a commitment to digital tools for everyone:

Increasing Productivity and Efficiency

Paper-based workflows are decidedly retro—and not in a good way. So how do you quantify the sheer time-wasting inefficiency of it all? According to Pricewaterhouse Coopers, **finding a lost document will cost a company $122 on average**. They also estimated that 7.5% of all company documents are lost altogether. Extrapolated across an enterprise that handles at least 10,000 documents, that could mean about 750 of those documents get lost, ultimately costing the enterprise $91,500. That figure doesn't consider the time and energy to recreate documents, which could easily push that number over the $100,000 mark.

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Improving Collaboration Across Teams

As team structures continually evolve, smarter collaboration across space and time will be even more critical. What does "smarter collaboration" mean? Smarter collaboration means more speed. If one person on the team has to stop, print, mark up, and scan, everyone slows down. Smarter collaboration means more accuracy. Nothing is more frustrating than careless mistakes or duplicating work because of version control. Smarter collaboration means more accountability. Without an audit trail, teams can't track who has seen or reviewed what, and no one stays accountable. When organizations empower smarter collaboration across teams, they can speed tangible business outcomes—faster market entry, shorter sales cycles, happier customers.

Accessing Data and Driving Actionable Insight

Solving business problems begins with asking the right questions and using data to surface truthful answers. There is little chance your organization can solve business problems if your teams are relying on data that live in a paper-based black hole. Can the sales team tell which parts of a contract are confusing? Can customer support visualize high-volume, slow-moving processes? No. No, they cannot. There is simply no way for teams to extract, aggregate, analyze, and derive valuable insight from a stack of papers.

Delivering a Differentiated Customer Experience

Committing to digital tools for everyone means ensuring that each team member in your organization can deliver a better, more consistent experience—regardless of whether an interaction is internal or external. For example, setting up your customer or vendor with fillable form fields and eSigning, versus sending them an email with a PDF attachment, is a much better experience that empowers efficiency on both sides of any transaction. When organizations provide digital tools to everyone, the entire organization is adequately equipped to serve every kind of customer more efficiently.
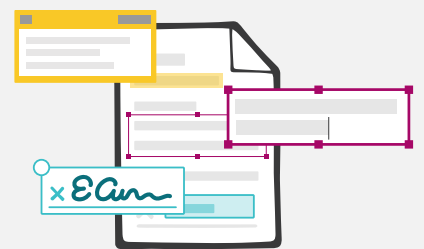
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Common Misconceptions Deprioritizing Digital

Enterprise organizations have been talking about ditching paper since the 90s, so why are we still having this conversation? Because this really isn't a conversation about the paper—it's about team productivity, digital transformation, and security. Even though IT leaders instinctively know moving to a fully digital process is important, it can be tough to make it a priority when everything else feels urgent too.

> " **As good as document digitization solutions were twenty years ago, the business need has changed, and many vintage systems show their age today."**
>
> **Denis Pombriant**
> Author at Beagle Research Group, LLC

Here are some of the more common misconceptions holding organizations back from a full commitment to digital tools for everyone:

Assuming the Lucky Few and the Silent Majority Don't Work Together

Under a faulty assumption that not everyone who touches documents needs digital tools, many organizations approve expensive legacy licenses for just 10% of the workforce, leaving the other 90% without basic tools like PDF management and eSigning capabilities. What most don't realize is that for the "lucky few" who do have access, productivity and efficiency gains evaporate the moment someone from the "silent majority" needs to touch the document. In addition, as knowledge workers continue recognizing the value of these tools, they are breaking their silence and more frequently demanding them.

The great news is that it's not as expensive as it used to be to equip the majority of the workforce with the basic tool sets they need to stay productive. A new breed of lightweight tools, including PDF management and eSigning, can replace bloated, legacy tools for a fraction of the cost.

Downplaying the Urgency

Providing widespread access to tools like PDF management and eSigning may oftentimes feel low priority. But when you track the life of a document across the enterprise, it becomes obvious that these tools are low-hanging fruit that play a critical role in daily workflows and larger digital iniatives.

Many organizations still confuse digitizing a document with a digital process, but they are not one in the same. For a vast majority, traditional document storage and retrieval merely continue supporting a manual process (hello, printing to sign and manual routing). A truly digital workplace continually identifies opportunities for digital workflows, automating a process and creating entry points for digital transformation across the organization. From speeding the sales cycle to improving NPS scores, documents are the most common tool teams use to make progress—and progress is always urgent.

Underestimating the Impact of Quick Wins

As IT leaders are pressured to drive digital transformation, their resource-constrained IT teams are facing a backlog of time-consuming, complicated projects, making it more important than ever to identify quick wins. The good news is that providing digital tools for everyone isn't complicated and delivers immediate positive results that are easy to quantify. For example, organizations without digital tools report an average of 45 days just to turn around a signed contract. Imagine what happens to the bottom line when the sales cycle decreases by more than a month.

Getting Started

Empowering your workforce with the digital tools they need, such as PDF management, eSigning, and the ability to edit workflows, is a low-input/high-output project IT teams can execute quickly. Here are a few ways to get started:

Demystify the Misconceptions

For you to champion the move to a fully digital workplace, you must first understand what's holding your organization back. Although every journey is unique, there are some common reasons organizations don't prioritize the decision to provide tools that support a fully digital workforce.

Two obvious causes are personal habits and a general comfort level with the status quo. It's human nature for teams to cling to **"the way we've always done it."** Unless employees can see the benefit of a change, common perception is often that learning something new will take time and discretionary effort—neither of which they feel they have.

Another reason organizations don't commit is a perceived lack of urgency. With most executive teams focused on high-level business objectives like product development, go-to-market strategy, sales performance, and cybersecurity, it's easy to make digitizing processes into a "nice-to-have" rather than a non-negotiable.

According to the 2018 Digital Transformation Readiness Survey, **90%** of IT leaders say they are struggling with growing technical debt, and more than **61%** must address a backlog of more than ten new applications or major feature requests.

Finally, for many IT teams, scalability issues, resource constraints, and application backlogs are barriers to progress on their journey to digital transformation (and a fully digital workforce). According to the 2018 Digital Transformation Readiness Survey, **90% of IT leaders say they are struggling with growing technical debt, and more than 61% must address a backlog of more than 10 new applications or major feature requests**. Add to that the challenge of finding the talent to tackle the work, and it's easy to see why digital tools get pushed aside.

Articulate the Business Case to Secure Broader Buy-In.

One challenge nearly every IT leader must overcome is articulating the link between tech initiatives and business outcomes. For many, the enterprise simply lacks the right metrics to justify a new solution. Yet even if there are some metrics to point to, IT and line-of-business leaders don't speak the same language and benefits just don't compute.

Here are some ways to think about articulating the business case for providing digital tools for everyone:

- **If the reason is employee habit**
  Create use cases that explain how tools like eSignature and automated workflows can drive productivity and efficiency within specific business units like sales, customer support, and product development. In addition, you can help line-of-business leaders visualize seamless change management by choosing tools that look like the ones they already use. For example, Nitro Pro has a Microsoft Office–like user interface, making it intuitive from day one.

- **If the reason is urgency**
  Tie the simplicity of this small change to urgent business outcomes. For example, explain how a digitized workflow with standardized PDFs, version control, electronic signatures, and audit controls can dramatically reduce the sales cycle, improve customer support delivery, and protect the enterprise from employee level cyber-threats.

- **If the reason is IT availability**
  Articulate the value of implementing solutions that are low input and high output. Providing digital tools for everyone requires very little investment from IT resources. Implementation is simple, and in the case of replacing legacy document management systems, like Adobe, no additional IT budget is required. On the flip side, the ROI is quick and quantifiable.

Expanded Access. Measurable Value.

The two words "quick" and "win" are rarely associated with IT, but switching to Nitro can change that—um, quickly. Here are three quick wins you can expect when you make the switch:

Recapture Resources
Most organizations save up to 50% displacing Adobe, freeing up resources to provide basic productivity tools to the entire team.

End Waste
Giving everyone the ability to manage PDFs without the need to print/mark up/scan can eliminate 50% of your printing costs up front.

Speed Business
Giving everyone the capability to eSign documents opens bottlenecks and can reduce document turnaround time by 80%.

The Bottom Line

Disruptive technology, consumer expectations, and even the competitive landscape itself are all moving targets. For the enterprise, future success requires IT leaders to drive digital transformation and deliver on the promise of a digital workplace. Faced with resource constraints and mounting requests, IT leaders should pounce on a quick win by choosing a strategic partner, dedicated to customer success who can help manage the move to a fully digital workforce.

Find out how Nitro can help you commit to digital tools for everyone »