



Collaborating in a Crisis: How Digital Workflows Enhance Productivity

🕒 3 minute read time

Authors: Shelby Penfield and Mette Adams, Nitro Software, Inc.

As we prepare for what work will look like after COVID-19, we have the unique chance to evaluate what worked (and didn't work) about our digital setups, what helped us collaborate, and what made it harder. We experienced the need for urgent digital transformation that was unprecedented. While businesses are getting a better understanding of what defines a "perfect" digital solution, decision makers also want to focus on what is smart, scalable, and most impactful.

In our recent research surveying 1,632 knowledge workers, we found that 95% of those surveyed still think that their organization could improve the way they handle documents and only three in ten employees say they have the tools they need. Additionally, at least sixty-three percent of knowledge workers electronically sign or approve documents daily, of which 75% are identified as PDFs. All in all, it has become glaringly apparent that digitizing and automating document processes is a central part of improving workplace productivity, collaboration, and even employee satisfaction.

What Do Teams Want / Need to Improve Collaboration?

Your employees already have an idea of how to improve efficiency and collaboration on documents. When we asked how document processes could improve, their top answers included:

- Better training
- More automated processes and workflows
- Increased standardization of processes
- Better/more tools to enable remote work

In other words, employees want effective digital tools along with training to make sure that everyone on the team is using them properly and following standardized workflows.

How Digital Document Workflows Improve Collaboration

With the right document tools, you maximize time spent working by eliminating bottlenecks and silos, giving organizations and individuals the ability to work from anywhere. Your document processes should allow your team to:

1. Annotate PDFs digitally. Even after the pandemic subsides, remote working isn't going away. When team members can collaborate on documents electronically with Nitro Pro or Nitro Sign, they can contribute their thoughts to a project – without having to print, markup manually, scan, and send more emails.

2. Track workflow progress. Few things are as frustrating as duplicate work. When you edit and email a working document to your team only to find that your colleague already sent similar changes, that's wasted time and money. Document sharing allows colleagues to see each other's changes and comments, ensuring that everyone is working with the latest version of the document.

3. Save time by getting forms and documents signed faster. Printing forms and chasing down signatures shouldn't be a part of the daily grind. Automating simple tasks like sending signature requests and automatic reminders leaves your team with more time to do their jobs.

4. Eliminate printing. It's no surprise that printing is down in the last several months. That's good news for more than just the planet. Printing documents for signatures is more expensive and more time-consuming than eSigning.

5. Track document activity. Checking in on colleagues' progress is easier with document activity tracking. When workers can instantly see who has opened, edited, or signed a document, they know exactly what their coworkers have or haven't done, saving them from making calls and sending emails to touch base.

The Past - Present - Future

2020 introduced the new remote workforce reality with varied working environments and flexing work hours that dramatically increased the need for companies to go digital on a whole new scale.

2021 brings the opportunity to get it right. That means exploring and embracing digital workflows that make it easier for your employees to collaborate and do their jobs well and more efficiently - no matter where they are.

The future holds great promise with smart innovation that is at your fingertips!