

The Cost of Wet Signatures: How Enterprises Save \$1.2M/Year with eSignature



Modern enterprises are increasingly recognizing the hidden costs of wet ink signatures—the traditional pen-and-paper signing of documents. Beyond the obvious expense of paper and ink, wet signatures carry numerous inefficiencies that can snowball as a business grows.

By contrast, adopting electronic signatures has proven to dramatically cut costs and boost productivity. In fact, many large organizations report saving over \$1 million per year by switching to digital signature solutions.

In this white paper, we explore where those savings come from, showcase real-world results, including a sample calculation breaking down \$1.2M+ annual savings, and compare Blueink—a leading eSignature platform—against both old-fashioned wet signing and competing eSign tools like DocuSign and PandaDoc.

The Hidden Costs of Wet Signatures

Relying on wet signatures incurs a wide range of hard and soft costs that often go unnoticed on the balance sheet. These include direct expenses (e.g., printing, postage, and storage) and indirect impacts (e.g., labor time, process delays, and errors). Individually, each cost might seem minor, but across an enterprise handling thousands of documents, they add up quickly. Below are some of the key cost factors and pain points associated with paper-based signing:

Printing & Supplies

Every agreement signed on paper requires printer ink/toner, paper, and often specialized forms or letterhead. Simply eliminating the printing, mailing, and storage of agreements can save around \$36 per agreement on average. For a company executing 35,000 agreements a year, that's about \$1.26M saved annually just in material and handling costs.

Clearly, the “cheap” cost of a sheet of paper (about \$0.08 in that case) multiplies into enormous expense at scale.

Mailing & Courier Fees

Wet signatures often mean physically transporting documents to signers and back. Standard postal mail, FedEx/UPS overnight envelopes, or courier services introduce not only dollar costs but also delays.

Postage and courier charges per document might range from a few cents for regular mail to \$20+ for overnight delivery. Multiply mail costs across thousands of contracts, and the expense is substantial. Every contract that no longer needs to be mailed or rushed via courier directly improves the bottom line.

Storage & Archiving

Storing paper documents isn't free—file cabinets and offsite storage facilities come with space rental costs, not to mention the cost of organizing and later retrieving files.

Industries with long retention requirements (e.g., government, finance, insurance, etc.) incur significant expenses maintaining archives of signed papers. There's also a risk of lost or misplaced files, which can incur costs to reproduce or legal risks if documents can't be produced.

By switching to digital storage of signed documents, enterprises eliminate nearly all physical archiving costs and dramatically reduce retrieval time. For example, going paperless saves businesses about [85% of their document handling costs](#) on average and 80% of shipping expenses—a direct result of not having to file and ship paper copies.

Administrative Labor

Perhaps the biggest hidden cost is employee time. Consider all the manual tasks that surround wet signatures—printing out documents, assembling packets, tracking down signers, scanning or re-keying signed information back into systems, filing documents, and correcting mistakes like missing signatures or illegible text.

These tasks consume valuable staff hours. A great deal of this labor is non-productive “paper shuffling” that eSignatures can automate. Studies have found that as much as [80% of manual effort in signature processes](#) can be eliminated with eSign workflows.

For instance, Royal Bank of Canada estimated \$8 million in annual administrative savings from adopting e-signing, thanks to huge reductions in clerical work. These freed-up hours can be redirected to higher-value activities that actually drive revenue or improve customer service.

Scalability of Inefficiency

It's important to note that these wet-signature burdens scale poorly. A process that is merely inconvenient at 10 documents a month becomes completely unmanageable at 10,000 documents.

As an organization grows, manual signing workflows tend to multiply the pain, requiring proportionally more staff, more storage, and more budget. In contrast, digital signature solutions scale effortlessly—sending 10 or 10,000 documents for eSignature can be done with a similar level of effort.

This is why enterprises that switch to eSignatures not only cut the unit cost per document but also avoid having to exponentially increase headcount just to handle paperwork. The next sections will quantify the real-world savings and efficiencies companies are achieving by ditching wet ink in favor of eSignature platforms.

Delays and Opportunity Cost

Beyond out-of-pocket spending, wet signatures introduce delays that carry an opportunity cost.

Every day a contract awaits a physical signature is a day of lost productivity or deferred revenue. Deals can stall and clients may get frustrated by slow, paper-driven processes.

According to a survey by the Electronic Signature & Records Association, [65% of businesses still using paper](#) reported that obtaining physical signatures extends their workflow by a full day or more. In today's fast-paced environment, those delays can be the difference in closing a deal or maintaining compliance deadlines.

Moreover, documents in transit by mail can be lost or misrouted, leading to further delays or even legal exposure if agreements aren't finalized in time. All these time lags ultimately have a financial impact.

For example, a sales contract signed today means revenue recognized sooner than one signed next week. Wet signatures slow down the speed of business, which in turn drags on an enterprise's agility and profitability.

Real-World Savings from eSignature Adoption

Switching to eSignatures doesn't just remove costs. It actively creates value by accelerating business processes.

In this section, we highlight concrete savings and improvements organizations have reported after adopting eSignature technology. Industry benchmarks and case studies consistently show dramatic reductions in turnaround times, labor hours, and operational expenses.

To start, the return on investment (ROI) for eSignature tools is impressively fast—81% of companies using eSignatures achieve a [full ROI in 12 months](#) or less. In fact, 25% saw ROI in 3 months or sooner.

These gains come from multiple sources: hard cost savings and soft savings like faster deal cycles and fewer errors. Let's break down the major areas of impact:

Labor and Productivity Gains

One of the biggest wins with eSignatures is the boost in staff productivity. Employees no longer need to spend hours prepping documents, chasing down signees, or re-entering data from paper forms.

The process of sending, signing, and processing agreements becomes largely automated and digital. The result is significant labor savings and the ability for your team to focus on more important work.

Faster Turnaround Times

With electronic signing, documents move at the speed of the internet, not the speed of paper mail. This means contracts and forms that used to take days or weeks to get signed can often be completed in minutes.

Faster turnaround not only delights customers and partners, but it also frees employees from having to follow up on signatures.

Fewer Manual Tasks

All the little tasks that go into managing paper essentially disappear with a digital workflow.

A study by a top US bank found that deploying eSign in branch offices removed 80% of document handling costs for loans. Clerical staff who previously spent their days collating forms and correcting errors could be reallocated to more productive roles.

Another bank, RBC, was able to save \$8 million per year in administrative labor after introducing eSignatures, reflecting massive reductions in time spent on manual processing.

Imagine reducing the headcount or hours required for paperwork by half or more. Those labor cost savings directly contribute to the bottom line. Even for smaller organizations, saving a few minutes on every transaction adds up to thousands of hours freed annually.

Measurable Productivity Improvement

By cutting out delays and busywork, eSignatures let your team get more done in the same amount of time. Many organizations have quantified this productivity gain.

One example is AHI Properties, which saw a [58% improvement in business productivity](#) almost immediately after switching from DocuSign to Blueink. Fewer bottlenecks and less back-and-forth translate into more output and happier staff.

Error Reduction and Compliance

Another area where eSignatures deliver substantial value is in accuracy and compliance. Human errors and compliance lapses in document handling can be extremely costly—leading to rework, legal issues, or lost business.

Paper processes are prone to mistakes: missing signatures or initials, incorrectly completed forms, illegible handwriting, or documents filed in the wrong place. eSignature platforms virtually eliminate these issues through automation, validation, and secure record-keeping.

Fewer Errors & Higher Accuracy

Digital signature workflows ensure that all required fields are completed before a document is finalized—no more missing signatures or forgotten dates.

Many platforms, including Blueink, allow you to set mandatory fields and use templates that guide signers step-by-step, drastically reducing the chance of an omission. The impact can be seen in real metrics: after switching to eSign, businesses often see an [80–90% reduction in document errors](#).

In one case, Bank of Montreal's eSignature rollout led to a [92% decrease in scanning errors](#) and a 66% drop in missing file occurrences within months. These error rate improvements save money due to less rework and also protect your company's reputation by ensuring customers' documents are correct the first time.

Built-in Compliance Checks

Compliance is critical, especially in regulated industries like finance, healthcare, insurance, and government. Wet signature processes rely on employees to follow procedure and manually track compliance.

eSignature solutions can bake compliance into the workflow—enforcing identity authentication steps, providing time-stamped audit trails, and automatically archiving signed documents to meet retention rules.

Blueink, for instance, generates a tamper-evident [Certificate of Evidence](#) with each signed document. The Certificate of Evidence is an audit trail detailing who signed and when, with cryptographic verification. This makes internal or external audits far easier and more reliable than chasing paper copies.

Moreover, leading eSign platforms are designed to comply with major regulations out of the box. Blueink is fully compliant with U.S. and international e-signature laws ([ESIGN Act](#), [UETA](#), [eIDAS](#)) and meets rigorous security standards like SOC 2 Type II.

It also adheres to industry-specific regulations including [HIPAA](#) (for healthcare privacy), [FERPA](#) (for education records), 21 CFR Part 11 (FDA electronic records), and [GDPR](#). By using a compliant eSignature service, enterprises can maintain regulatory adherence by default, rather than worrying about each individual document.

Security and Risk Reduction

Every paper document floating around is a potential security risk. It could be lost, copied, or seen by unauthorized eyes.

eSignatures greatly mitigate this risk by keeping documents in secure, encrypted digital systems. Access can be controlled and monitored. Many eSign platforms also include additional security features like [multi-factor authentication](#) (e.g., SMS PINs, ID verification) and secure cloud storage to protect sensitive documents.

In the event of a dispute, having a digitally signed document with an audit trail provides strong legal evidence—often more robust than a simple paper with a scribble on it. All these factors mean eSignatures not only reduce errors but also reduce the chances of compliance fines or legal challenges that can arise from mishandled paperwork.

Real-World Savings from eSignature Adoption

eSignatures create a win-win: your operations become leaner, faster, and more accurate while also upgrading security and compliance. Fewer costly mistakes slip through, and every document is accompanied by a verifiable digital paper trail.

These improvements further contribute to cost savings and illustrate why the ROI of eSignature technology is so compelling.



Blueink vs. Traditional and Competing eSignature Solutions

As we've detailed, the move from wet signatures to any eSignature solution yields huge benefits in cost and efficiency. Blueink, in particular, is designed to address all the pain points of paper-based signing.

By using Blueink, organizations eliminate printing and mailing costs, speed up turnaround by orders of magnitude, and free employees from administrative drudgery. For example, Blueink users can get documents signed within hours instead of days and often see immediate reductions in overhead.

One Blueink client in the education sector noted that using Blueink allowed them to send consent forms and get them [signed the very same day](#)—whereas using USPS mail previously took months.

The platform provides real-time tracking and automated reminders, so nothing falls through the cracks. In short, Blueink completely replaces the slow, error-prone wet ink process with a streamlined digital workflow while maintaining full legal validity and security.

Blueink vs. Other eSignature Platforms

Not all eSign solutions are created equal. Blueink competes head-to-head with well-known providers such as DocuSign, Adobe Sign, HelloSign (Dropbox Sign), PandaDoc, and others.

Enterprises evaluating eSignature software should consider factors like features, ease of use, support, and total cost of ownership. Here's how Blueink stacks up:

Cost-Effectiveness

Blueink offers significant cost savings compared to top competitors. In fact, Blueink's pricing is roughly 50% more affordable than DocuSign for similar plans.

Blueink also provides unlimited envelopes (documents) in many plans with no overage fees, whereas some competitors impose caps or charge extra when you send a high volume of documents. This means you can scale your usage without fear of surprise bills – a critical consideration for enterprise deployments.

The City of Mesa's CTO specifically cited Blueink's [80% cost savings for the city](#) after switching from a traditional eSign provider. For budget-conscious organizations, Blueink delivers enterprise-grade functionality at mid-market pricing—a true value-for-money advantage.

Dedicated Support and Flexibility

Blueink prides itself on a personalized customer support experience, which can be a stark contrast to some larger competitors. Users have complained that with certain big-name providers, support is slow or impersonal.

Blueink, being a more nimble provider, assigns a team of support specialists to its clients and boasts response times of just minutes. This level of service ensures your implementation and ongoing use of eSignatures is smooth.

Moreover, Blueink is willing to tailor solutions to unique business needs, whereas some competitors offer a one-size-fits-all approach. The result is higher customer satisfaction—Blueink has a 4.9/5 customer rating, reflecting its commitment to user success.

No Compromises on Security/Compliance

Despite being more affordable, Blueink doesn't cut corners on [security or legal compliance](#). As noted earlier, it meets the same strict standards (SOC 2, HIPAA, GDPR, etc.) that enterprise customers demand.

Documents signed via Blueink are just as legally binding globally as those signed via any other compliant eSignature service. This is an important point: when choosing an eSign provider, enterprises should verify that the vendor is certified and compliant with relevant laws— Blueink passes this test fully, which sets it on equal footing with the big players from a risk and compliance perspective.

Feature Set

Both Blueink and other top eSign platforms cover the basics (secure digital signatures, document templates, audit trails, etc.).

However, Blueink includes some advanced features out-of-the-box that either are not available or cost extra in competing solutions. Two standout features where Blueink leads are [Bulk Send](#) and [SMS Delivery](#), which we will spotlight below.

Blueink vs. Traditional and Competing eSignature Solutions

Additionally, Blueink provides features like built-in payments, in-person signing modes, reusable [Smart Link Forms](#), and a unique Certificate of Evidence for every signed document. Many of these capabilities match or exceed what alternatives offer.

Blueink's platform also emphasizes ease of use—with a clean interface and intuitive steps, even non-technical signers find it simple.

In summary, Blueink provides all the core benefits of eSignatures while also delivering unique advantages in cost efficiency and features. It is an attractive alternative to the DocuSigns of the world, especially for organizations that want enterprise features at a reasonable price point.

The next section will explore two specific features that highlight Blueink's ability to speed up workflows and cut costs compared to both wet ink and other eSign solutions.

Feature Spotlight—Bulk Send and SMS Delivery

Two capabilities where Blueink particularly shines are its Bulk Send functionality and its SMS Delivery option.

These features address common challenges enterprises face: sending a high volume of documents efficiently and ensuring recipients actually see and sign those documents quickly. Here's how each feature works and why it matters:

Bulk Send

This Blueink feature allows you to send documents to hundreds or thousands of recipients at once, instead of the tedious process of sending individual requests one by one.

For example, if HR needs 500 employees to sign an updated policy or a school district needs to send permission slips to thousands of parents, Bulk Send handles it in a few clicks.

You can upload a CSV or list of contacts, and Blueink will automatically generate and send out individualized signature requests to everyone on the list. Each recipient gets their own copy to sign, and Blueink tracks the status across the whole batch. The time savings here are enormous—what used to require manual prep of hundreds of emails or letters is now essentially automated.

SMS Delivery

Blueink offers a built-in text message delivery option for signature requests, which is a game-changer for responsiveness. Instead of relying solely on email, which can get buried in inboxes or ignored, Blueink can send an SMS notification to the signer's phone with a link to the document.

This approach leverages the fact that SMS messages have a 94% open rate within minutes—far higher and faster than email. In fact, texts have about a 45% higher response rate than emails for urgent actions.

By reaching signers on their mobile devices directly, Blueink's SMS Delivery dramatically reduces turnaround time.

Brightside Specialty Pharmacy noted that using [Blueink's SMS delivery](#) for workers' comp prescriptions changed their workflow entirely: "Patients sign instantly, mistakes are rare. Our document processing time went from 10 days down to less than an hour."

Feature Spotlight—Bulk Send and SMS Delivery

Together, Bulk Send and SMS Delivery illustrate Blueink's focus on speeding up your workflow and cutting hidden costs. Bulk Send slashes the labor and potential extra fees of high-volume document campaigns, and SMS Delivery accelerates signer response and throughput.

These features, combined with Blueink's robust core platform, give enterprises a powerful toolkit to modernize their signature processes beyond what traditional methods or many competitors can achieve.

How to Calculate Your Potential Savings

By now, it's clear that eSignatures can save enterprises money—but what about your organization's specific scenario?

This section provides a simple guide to calculate your potential savings and ROI from adopting an eSignature solution like Blueink. Every company's documents and processes are different, so it's worth doing a tailored estimate. Here's how to approach it:

1. Gather Your Document Metrics

Start by determining how many documents/agreements your organization processes that require signatures.

Break it down by type if needed (e.g., sales contracts, onboarding forms, legal agreements) and estimate the annual volume of each. For each type, note the typical number of pages and number of signers, since those factors can influence cost (more pages might mean higher print/postage cost, multiple signers might mean copies sent around, etc.).

For example, you might find you send 10,000 sales contracts (5 pages each, 2 signers) and 5,000 HR documents (2 pages, 1 signer) per year.

2. Calculate Current Per-Document Costs

Determine the cost per document for handling these via wet signature. This includes:

- **Materials/Printing:** Cost of paper and ink/toner per document. (e.g. \$0.05/page, so a 5-page contract = \$0.25)
- **Mailing/Delivery:** Postage or courier fees per document. (e.g., \$0.60 for standard mail or ~\$15 for overnight FedEx)
- **Labor Time:** How many minutes/hours staff spend preparing, sending, tracking, and processing the document. Multiply this by an average hourly rate to get a dollar figure. (For instance, 30 minutes of an admin's time at \$30/hour = \$15 in labor)
- **Storage/Admin:** Any other overhead, such as filing the document or scanning it into a system after signing. This might be a small per-document cost, but include it if relevant (e.g. \$1 for archival scanning and filing).
- **Error/Delay Cost:** Optionally, consider the cost of delays or errors. For example, if 5% of documents have to be re-sent or corrected, that extra work has a cost. You might translate that into an extra few dollars per document on average.

Add up these components to get a total cost per agreement under the current process.

3. Estimate eSignature Costs

Next, consider the costs with an eSignature solution:

- **Platform Subscription:** What you would pay for an eSignature service like Blueink, annually or monthly.
- **Labor Time:** With eSign, most of the manual work vanishes, but there is still some time to prepare templates or handle exceptions. Estimate the new average labor per document. It could be as low as a few minutes or nearly zero if fully automated. Put a dollar value on it.
- **Miscellaneous:** There may be negligible costs for eSign. Perhaps occasional API usage fees or digital storage, though many platforms include storage. Often this is very small per document, but you can include an allowance if needed.

Sum these to get the cost per document with eSignature.

4. Calculate the Savings

Subtract the eSignature cost per document from the wet-signature cost per document to get savings per document. Then multiply by your annual document volume.

For example:

- Wet signature cost/document = \$30
- E-signature cost/document = \$3
- Savings/document = \$27
- Annual volume = 15,000 documents

Annual savings = 15,000 * \$27 = \$405,000 saved per year.

Adjust these numbers to your reality. You might find even larger savings. For instance, if your current process involves expensive overnight shipping or numerous staff hours, the per-document cost could be much higher.

Remember to factor in the intangible gains: faster turnaround might mean earlier revenue recognition or less churn, which can be quantified in an ROI model as well.

5. Consider Error Reduction Value

It's harder to quantify, but try to estimate the monetary benefit of fewer errors and improved compliance. For example, if avoiding a single compliance penalty or legal issue is worth tens of thousands of dollars, that alone might justify the switch.

After running the numbers, most enterprises find the savings are compelling. It becomes clear why so many have gone digital—the question shifts from “can we afford eSignatures?” to “can we afford not to do this?”.

If you'd like help computing a detailed ROI, Blueink can assist. We often work with organizations to map out their current vs. future state costs.



Start Saving Millions of Dollars with eSignatures

Wet ink signatures have long burdened enterprises with unnecessary costs and delays. By switching to eSignatures, companies can save millions of dollars annually, eliminate errors, and accelerate their business processes.

The cost of doing nothing is simply too high in today's digital world. It's time to leave the pens and paper behind and embrace an efficient, cost-saving, and modern way to do business.

Interested in seeing how Blueink can transform your organization's signing processes? Contact us for a personalized demo or ROI consultation, and join the many enterprises already saving millions of dollars per year by integrating eSignatures into their workflows.

Your bottom line, your customers, and your teams will thank you.

B L  E I N K