

Star Building Systems Builds Greater Collaboration and Customer Service with DocuSign

Two of the greatest values at Star Building Systems, a leading manufacturer of custom designed metal building systems that provides buildings across the United States and Canada, are employing cutting-edge technology and providing world-class customer service. When the number of US state Professional Engineering Boards (P.E. Boards) that accept electronic signatures surpassed 30, Star Building's Director of Engineering, Dustin Cole, sensed that it was the ideal time to explore this business automation tool.

Cole quickly discovered areas where an e-signature solution could integrate with and optimize his engineers' processes while potentially generating heightened levels of customer satisfaction. What he didn't imagine were all of the added benefits Star Building Systems would also enjoy, like improved collaboration and significantly reduced organizational costs.

Surveying the problem area

Behind Star Building's dedication to employing advanced technologies is the goal of making it easier for engineers to be more efficient, and to find ways for them to work faster and smarter rather than harder and longer. This was part of the thinking behind the development of the firm's secured web portal, StarWeb, which enabled engineers and contractors to share drawings and other documentation online.

However, the inability to securely add professional seals and engineer signatures to these documents was a serious limitation, leading to cumbersome and time-consuming processes engineers were forced to perform solely for the sake of approving documents. With this in mind, Cole pinpointed various areas in his engineers' processes that could be improved with e-signature capability.

First, with engineers located in three different offices around the US, drawings were consistently being printed in the Oklahoma City home office, then routed to two other offices for sealing and signing, and finally mailed to the customer, incurring considerable printing, routing and handling costs, as well as time delays for each submission cycle. Additional demands that Cole's engineering team faced included customer pressures to expedite projects by providing sealed and signed drawings more quickly, as well as requests by architects or city code officials for duplicates of drawings that had already been submitted.

Results



Saved \$1000 per engineer from eliminated mailing costs



Automated and streamlined the business by speeding up the contract processes



Significantly boosted document accuracy



Delighted customers and partners with quick turnaround of documents

These customer requests to receive drawings as soon as possible increased Star Building Systems' costs by an additional \$100 for each overnight shipment.

By providing each of Star Building's engineers with the ability to securely and digitally sign and seal drawings from any location, and then load those sealed documents onto Star Building's secure online portal, Cole envisioned that each of these inefficiencies could be overcome.

Designing the solution

"What we were seeking in an e-signature solution first and foremost was security and compliance with state regulations," explains Cole. "We also sought a solution that would tie into our system in a way that would make it easy to use, if not intuitive, for our engineers."

One of DocuSign's most appealing aspects for Cole was that it allows processes to stay in compliance with federal, state, and institutional regulations pertaining to electronic signatures and the integrity and authenticity of electronic records. With over 30 state P.E. boards accepting digitally-signed e-submissions, particularly in the firm's key markets, Cole felt it was the right time to make the move away from paper. As for the security concern, DocuSign automatically invalidates if and when any changes are made to the drawings or documents after signing.

Further, DocuSign is built on standard PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) technology, which avoids vendor lock-in and enables third parties – regardless of the systems or business applications they use – to verify the digitally signed content for signer identity and intent, and data integrity.

Cole also sought an e-signature solution that would enable his engineers to continue using the same applications they were already using. DocuSign eSignature integrates seamlessly with the business applications engineers use most, including AutoCAD, Adobe PDF, and Microsoft Word. This compatibility enables Star Building engineers to create their drawings in AutoCAD as they had previously, apply the seals when the drawings are printed to PDF, and then apply their electronic signatures. Furthermore, using DocuSign eSignature, Star was able to develop a process where engineers could view several drawings and then digitally sign all drawings at once. These digitally signed PDFs are then shared with external parties in seconds via the Internet using email or StarWeb.

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Director of Engineering
Star Building Systems

“Before incorporating electronic signatures, our PDFs could only be used for reference. Now, not only can we use them for submissions and permits, we can also provide them to anyone in a matter of minutes,” explains Cole. “With DocuSign, our PDFs are authenticated and secure,” he continues. “This gives us and our external partners and customers who retrieve the information a highly valued sense of assurance in the integrity of the information we share online.”

In addition to equipping the engineering team with digital signing capability, Star Building Systems also integrated DocuSign within the StarWeb portal itself. This enables engineers to post secure and sealed PDFs that customers and partners can then log in to retrieve, regardless of the engineer’s physical location: “I can sign from my desk, or if I’m traveling to a job site I can sign from a hotel over the internet,” explains Cole. “There’s no delay on when drawings go out – anywhere I can get access to our network, I can sign a drawing.”

The ability for third parties, including contractors, to access the documents they need on-demand also generated highly improved customer service, while eliminating the need for Star Building Systems to spend large sums of money for overnight shipping.

“It used to be ‘we can get you signed drawings next day’. With DocuSign, it’s ‘we can get you the signed drawings in the next hour’. We want to provide world-class service and this helps set us apart from our competitors,” says Cole.

Leading the way to success

By implementing DocuSign eSignature, Cole enabled his team to meet the challenges of streamlining inter-office collaboration all the way to approval cycles and submissions. DocuSign eSignature also enabled the engineers to get sealed drawings to customers sooner and faster, and they happily gained back the lost time they’d previously spent on signing paper documents.

“The ability to sign, seal, and submit our drawings electronically frees our engineers from wasting valuable time signing upwards of 200 paper documents per day,” says Cole. “Aside from significantly boosting efficiency, our customers and partners have never been happier receiving documents so quickly.”

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DocuSign was so well received within Cole's team that engineers are now investigating on how to use it to sign additional documents other than drawings, including contract-related documentation and schedules. On an organizational level, Star Building Systems has more to celebrate than expedited project times and improved customer satisfaction; within only the first year of implementing DocuSign eSignature, they saved \$1000 per engineer from eliminated mailing costs alone – an added benefit even Cole couldn't have predicted.

The key benefits

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About DocuSign

DocuSign helps organizations connect and automate how they prepare, sign, act on, and manage agreements. As part of the DocuSign Agreement Cloud, DocuSign offers eSignature: the world's #1 way to sign electronically on practically any device, from almost anywhere, at any time. Today, more than 500,000 customers and hundreds of millions of users in over 180 countries use DocuSign to accelerate the process of doing business and to simplify people's lives.

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