



OPTIMIZING AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT

What Sets High-Performing Organizations Apart

Table of **CONTENTS**

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2

02 BREADTH OF THE STUDY

3

03 ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

5

04 FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

10

Sales 12

Procurement 13

Customer Experience (CX) 14

Human Resources (HR) 15

Legal 16

Information Technology (IT) 17

05 NORTH AMERICA PERFORMANCE

18

06 LOOKING AHEAD

21

AUTHORS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

23

Executive SUMMARY

Organizations today face increasingly complex agreement dynamics. The complexity is driven by changing macroeconomic factors, greater competitive pressure, emerging technologies like AI, and a growing number of agreement parties like technical partners and contingent workforces. A year ago, Deloitte and DocuSign highlighted a [global agreement trap](#) of \$2 trillion, representing the amount of global economic value destroyed by inefficient agreement processes and systems. This year, we set out to understand how agreement management solutions can help organizations achieve their goals and recapture that trapped value.

The 2025 study, which included over 1,400 business leaders globally, found that agreement management is a pivotal lever for organizational productivity and growth, directly addressing manual processes, disconnected workflows, and compliance and security issues. Key findings from the quantitative survey and additional qualitative interviews include:

01

EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO AN ORGANIZATION'S SUCCESS.

Organizations realize that agreement management systems drive business value, and agreement management is now an executive-level priority, with over 75% of respondents indicating that a senior leader is responsible for making agreement management more effective within their function and across the organization.

03

FUNCTIONAL LEADERS VALUE AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES BEYOND THE POINT OF AGREEMENT EXECUTION.

Nearly every function in the study credits core agreement management capabilities like contract creation and customer experience with helping them perform better. However, functions go further to derive significant value from agreement analytics and enterprise integration capabilities.

02

AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT CAN BE A SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS

77% of leaders in high-performing organizations credited agreement management with positioning them to outperform in core business areas, including strategic, financial, and productivity goals. Value is unlocked by removing friction within the organization, optimizing workflows, standardizing contracts, and providing proactive insights.

04

AI IS TRANSFORMING AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES.

Organizations are investing in and continuing to consider AI solutions. Leaders expect AI to deliver significant benefits by optimizing agreements using historical performance data, proactively engaging customers throughout agreement workflows, and extracting business insights related to costs and risks from agreement analysis.

BREADTH

of the study

A note on terminology: This study distinguishes between 'contracts' and 'agreements'. We view 'contracts' as formal legal documents that capture specific negotiated terms between parties at a point in time, often used in complex B2B relationships. In contrast, 'agreements' encompass a broader spectrum of activities involved in documenting consent, including the complete lifecycle necessary to establish, manage, and derive value from these relationships (see Figure 7 on page 7 for the complete lifecycle we reference). Therefore, consistent with our prior report, we will use "agreement management" to cover the scope of solutions, processes, and workflows, representing the market for solutions and processes that collectively maximize value from business agreements.

To better understand how agreement management creates value for organizations, we surveyed business leaders on organizational and functional performance metrics, contract management capabilities in place at their organizations today, and expectations of contract management solutions. Specifically, the 2025 year survey included over 1,400 business leaders across 14 countries: (Figure 1A & 1B).

Survey respondents represented organizations with **\$25M - \$20B in revenue** and **125 - 20,000 employees** across **nine industries**. They identified as **functional leaders** in one of the following: Sales, Procurement, Customer Experience (CX),¹ Human Resources (HR), Legal, or Information Technology (IT). Respondents were at or above the Director (or equivalent) level and identified contract management as a core responsibility they hold for their organization.

¹Customer Experience includes Marketing, Customer Support, Innovation or Sales leaders whose main remit involves improving Customer, User, or Channel Experiences, etc.

Figure 1A.
COUNTRIES AND REGIONS INCLUDED IN THE 2025 SURVEY



Figure 1B.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY REGION

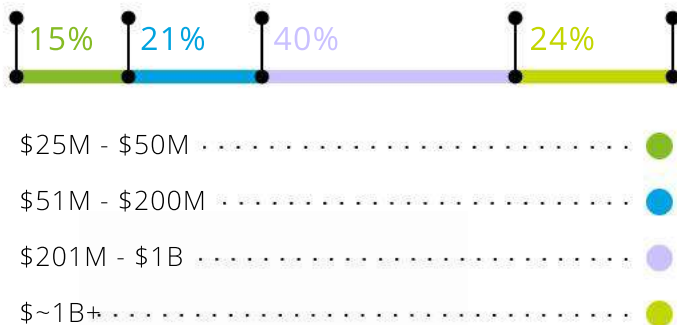
The study includes organizations from diverse markets, ensuring a global view of agreement management maturity (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY²**



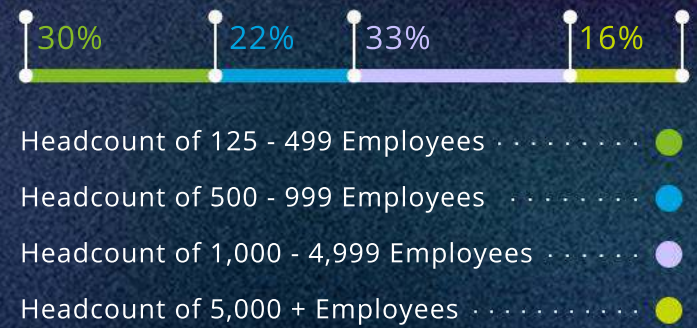
The analysis included companies of different sizes to determine whether maturity-driven performance benefits scale across organizations (Figure 3 & 4).

Figure 3. **PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY ORGANIZATIONAL ANNUAL REVENUE IN USD**



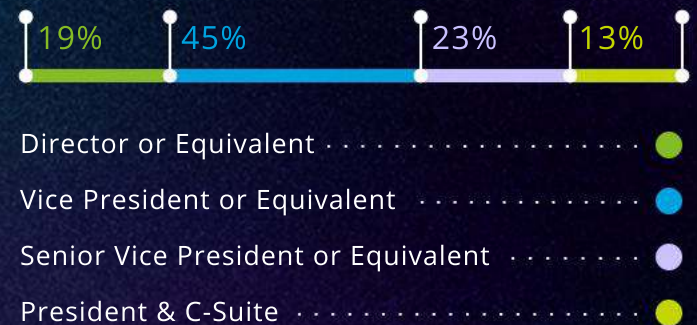
²Does not depict 1% of respondents who self-described an 'other' industry

Figure 4. **PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY ORGANIZATIONAL HEADCOUNT**



Participants included those with operational roles to senior leadership, ensuring the insights represented an organization-wide view (Figure 5):

Figure 5. **PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY TITLE**

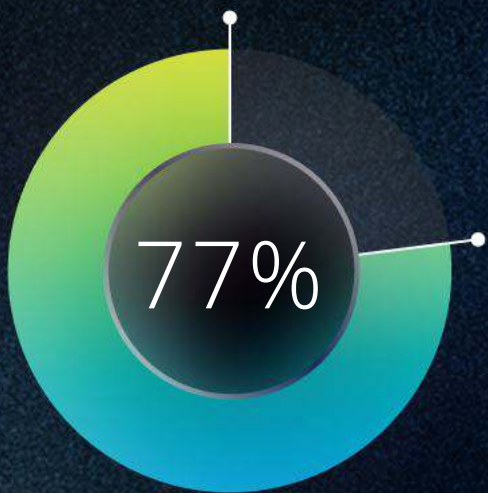


In addition, we interviewed executives across these intersections to contextualize the findings and gather insights into how business leaders perceive value from their solutions.

The resulting dataset represents senior leaders with direct knowledge of agreement management related to organizational and functional performance across a diverse set of organizational sizes, industries, and regions. This dataset allows us to draw meaningful conclusions about how agreement maturity influences broader organizational performance.

Organizational PERFORMANCE

An overwhelming 77% of leaders in high-performing organizations (i.e., those that outperformed their financial goals) **credit agreement management software, tools, and workflows with their success in areas core to their business.** In other words, practical agreement management tools that rapidly mature an organization's ability to manage contracts across the lifecycle are essential to respondents' success.



Percentage of respondents from high-performing organizations who credit agreement management for positive performance

CONSENSUS ON THE GLOBAL IMPORTANCE OF AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT

Contracts are the record of an arrangement between an organization and its customers, partners, employees, and vendors, and as such, leaders increasingly view agreement management as a core business capability. Whether Procurement and Legal leaders who need to assess their agreements against new business and macroeconomic factors, Sales leaders who need to optimize terms to capture upside, prevent leakage, or improve deal velocity, Customer Experience leaders seeking to remove friction in day-to-day customer interactions, or HR leaders who need to understand their level of risk across geographies based on employee obligations, the imperative is

clear: **being a competitive enterprise today means having the solutions in place to extract powerful insights and unlock value from your agreements.**

Specifically, leaders are looking for tools to decrease the friction in the signature process, help execute against agreement terms, and provide security and integrity for their agreements and data. Over two-thirds of leaders agree that the core functions of an agreement management solution include:

- Supporting Obligation Management
- Supporting Renewals Management
- Routing Agreements for Approval
- Obtaining Signatures Efficiently

Given its value creation potential, agreement management is now an executive-level priority. Across organizations of every size, **more than 75% of respondents indicated that there was a senior leader responsible for making agreement management more effective** within a function and across the organization. This oversight, even for small organizations, highlights how agreement management has become core to organizational success.

THE SURPRISING THING ABOUT HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS

High-performing companies are leveling up their agreement management capabilities to provide a competitive advantage. Specifically, we found that agreement management was credited as a driver of organizational performance: 85% of these respondents said agreement management contributed to their Strategic Goals, and 72% said agreement management contributed to their Financial Goals (Figure 6).

The link between agreement management and performance is even more evident in the context of the capabilities organizations have today. As with the [2024 Study](#), we took an expansive view of the definition of agreement management and

used this framework to evaluate the impact of specific capabilities on performance (See Figure 7 on next page).

Leaders in this year's survey described the level of maturity their existing agreement management solution has across these eight capabilities aligned to the agreement management lifecycle. The most advanced capabilities often featured automation, advanced analytics, or AI to support proactive features and suggestions, while the least mature capabilities required manual or out-of-tool work. We refer to more advanced, or next-generation, agreement management systems as those with more mature capabilities.

The proportion of respondents indicating their agreement management solution features the most advanced automation or AI (in order of the lifecycle) capabilities (See Figure 8 on next page).

When looking at leaders who reported advanced capabilities across most of these lifecycle stages, we found that these leaders reported **exceeding their strategic, financial, digital productivity, and customer experience goals 19% more often** than their peers, suggesting a link between investment in advanced agreement management capabilities and competitive advantage.

Figure 6.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS FROM HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS WHO CREDIT AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT FOR PERFORMANCE AGAINST KPI AREA

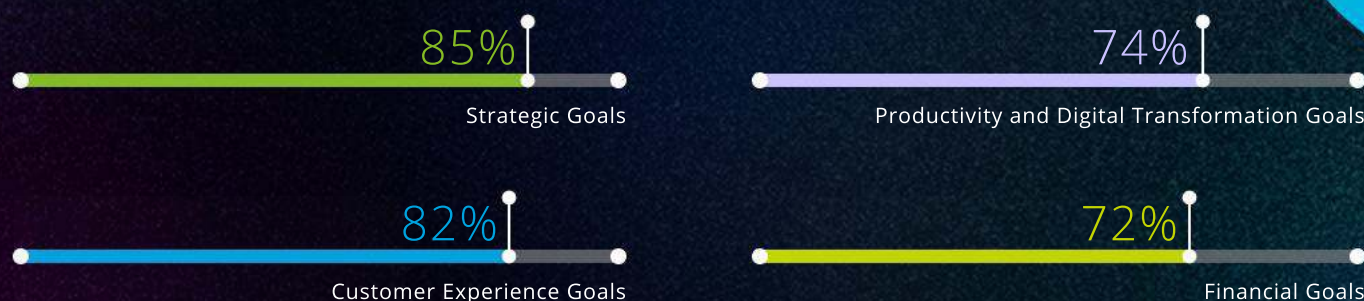


Figure 7. AGREEMENT LIFECYCLE AND ASSOCIATED CAPABILITIES³

STAGES

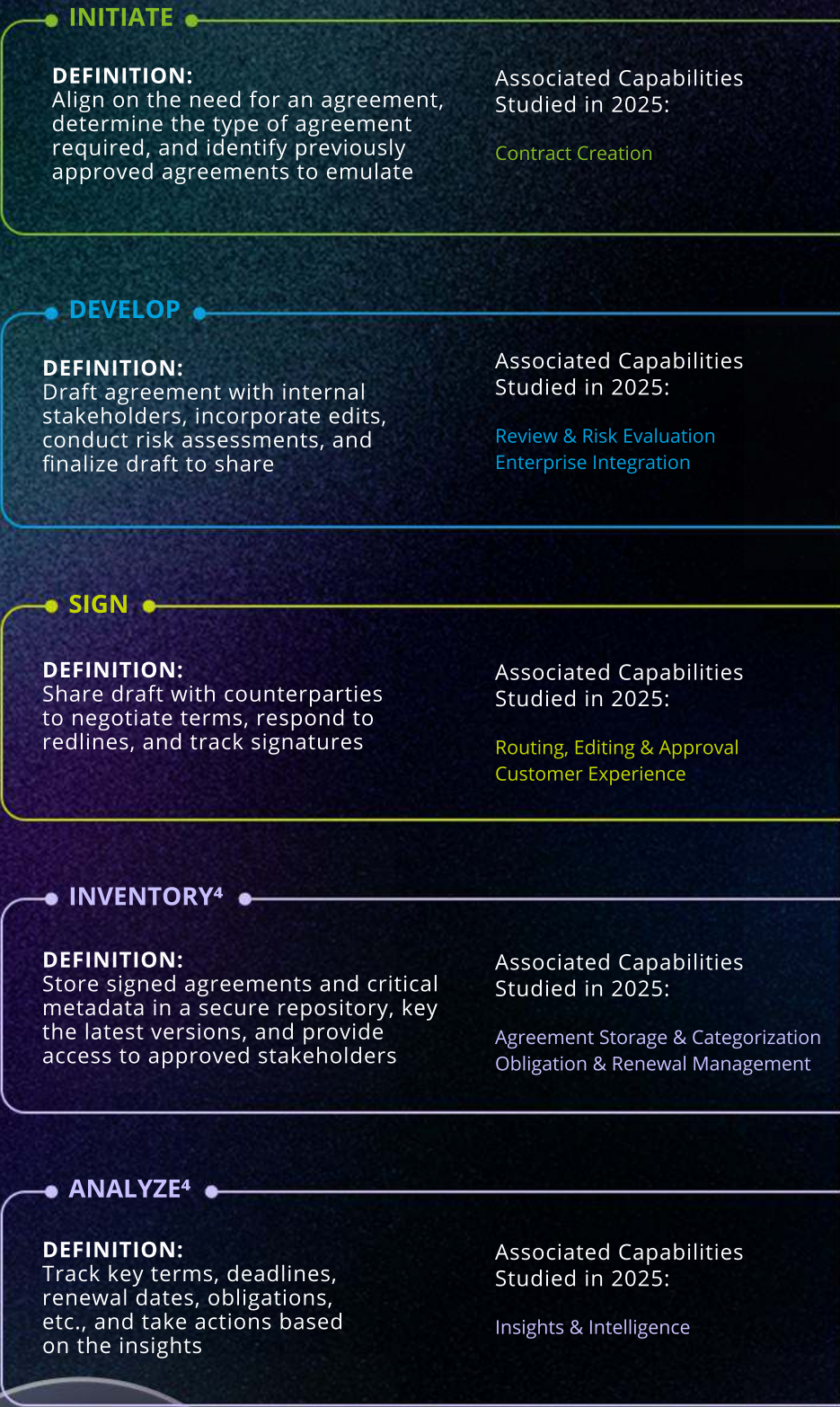
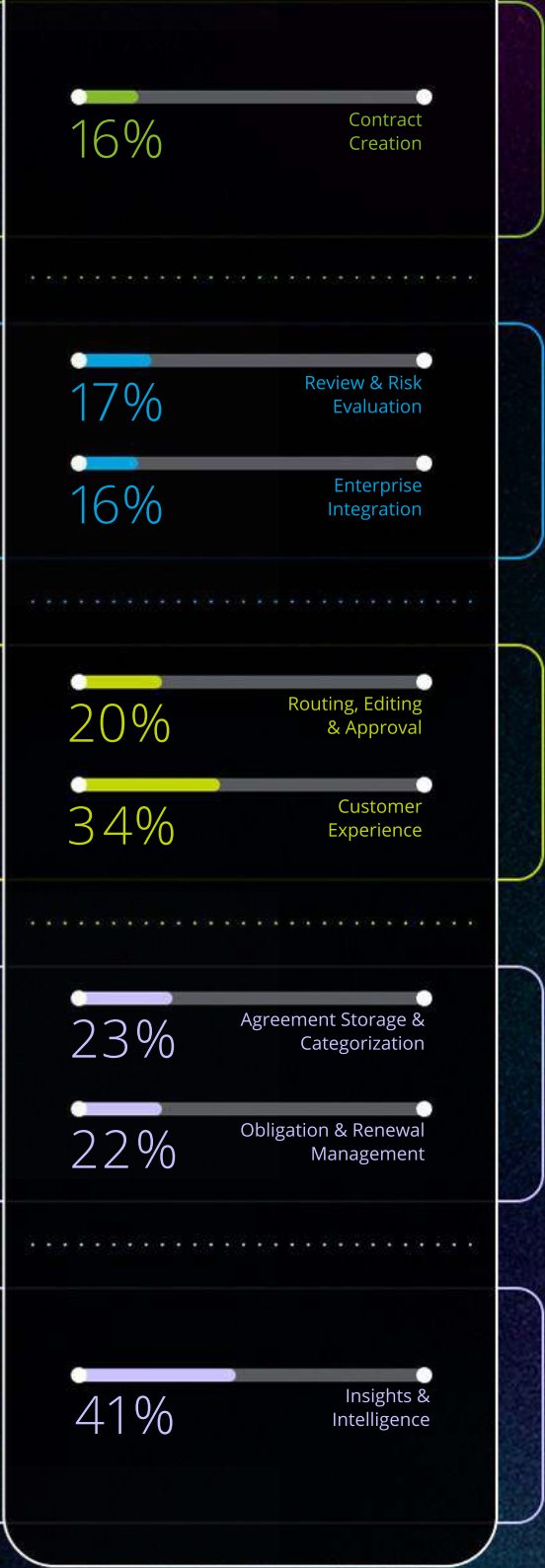


Figure 8. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING ADVANCED AI AND AUTOMATION IN CAPABILITY



CROSS LIFECYCLE STAGES

³Within this study, 'capability' refers to the specific features within agreement management systems that enable organizations to digitally manage their agreements throughout the entire lifecycle, from creation to analysis.

⁴The Inventory and Analyze activities occur across the lifecycle, but have been categorized into two stages given greater focus toward the end of the lifecycle.

CAPABILITIES AS VALUE LEVERS

Three themes emerge around how more advanced agreement management systems position organizations for better performance and to capture value. Specifically, they (Figure 9):

Figure 9.

THREE WAYS AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT DRIVES VALUE

- 01 Remove friction for agreement stakeholders
- 02 Provide insights that offer new ways to capture more value and reduce risks
- 03 Increase efficiency and improve the experience for employees and customers

REMOVING FRICTION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

Every organization's agreement processes are unique. Managing those nuances and training new staff can be a major source of inefficiency, especially for organizations with fast-growing sales teams. One Legal executive noted his startup's imperative for standardizing contract management, saying, "We simply could not scale if the only way to handle contracts was getting last-minute phone calls from a sales rep." In that case, as in others, more advanced Contract Creation capabilities can help.

Leaders with more advanced Contract Creation capabilities, or the ability to build contracts based on pre-filled templates that dynamically update based on user inputs, report **outperforming their financial goals 55% more than organizations that create agreements from scratch.**

The other essential capability to remove friction is Routing, Editing, and Approval, where organizations with more advanced solutions can review contracts and agreements with their customers in a single tool, have that tool dynamically update and route contracts for approval and support agreement redlining. Those with more advanced capabilities were 47% more likely to report outperforming their financial goals than their peers.

Removing manual tasks also helps unlock value by allowing organizations to focus on strategic goals. Leaders across every function noted that more advanced agreement management systems, often implemented with end-to-end transformation programs, freed up their time to work on strategic projects. Across all agreement management capabilities, **leaders with more advanced systems report outperforming strategic goals 27% more often** compared to low-maturity organizations.

DRIVE VALUE THROUGH PROACTIVE INSIGHTS

Even with advancements in digital infrastructure, understanding and tracking an organization's obligations and opportunities within agreements can be challenging, and having the ability to quickly and accurately review all contracts can be a strategic differentiator, especially in uncertain economic environments. One Software Start-Up leader noted that before having an advanced agreement management system, "if the CEO asked me a question, I was guessing or had to search for the answer for at least a week, but now I can query the contracts to find precisely where my obligations show up in minutes." Across the study, two capabilities that provide significant value for organizations are Obligation and Renewal Management and Insights and Intelligence.

BETTER EFFICIENCY THROUGH ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION

Agreement management complexity grows as more functions, customers, and decision-makers are involved. Advanced agreement management capabilities help organizations coordinate and deal with these complexities in an agile way. One European Fashion Executive described the experience: "We've had incidents and mistakes in manual contract systems. Since we've had a digital contract management system, we have eliminated 90% of the problems, like payroll and compensation, before we had them." Indeed, organizations with more advanced Enterprise Integration for agreement management, or systems more embedded with other key business platforms such as Salesforce, SAP, Service Now, Workday, etc., **report exceeding their financial goals 36% more often than low-maturity organizations.**

Ultimately, greater maturity in agreement management creates tangible value. Last year, we discussed the "agreement trap," where many organizations struggled to manage agreements effectively, extract critical agreement information, and proactively control risks from agreements, leading to significant value destruction. Based on this year's study, we can say that the **most advanced agreement management capabilities - those with advanced automation and AI solutions - can position organizations to recapture significant value.** Investing in advanced agreement management solutions has clear benefits for organizations, with unique sources of value across functions.

Functional PERFORMANCE

Agreement management - viewed through a process lens - involves nearly every organizational function. Executives are acutely aware of this necessity and see how much value sits across the agreement lifecycle. For example, a Director of Sales at a Global Shipping Company cited the complicated dynamics that require coordination, noting that “Contract management begins and ends outside the point of signature. My sales team can often spend more time selling within our organization to get approval from finance and legal teams than they do pitching the customer.”

Agreement capabilities must enable cross-functional coordination. Given that many functions are involved in agreement management, it is essential to consider the unique value it delivers within these functions. Our research identified the following (Figure 10):

Figure 10.

THREE WAYS AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS IMPACT FUNCTIONS

- 01 Functions are meaningfully different in terms of maturity. On average, Customer Experience, IT, and Legal teams have more mature agreement management capabilities than Procurement, HR, and Sales teams (See Figure 11 on next page).
- 02 Leaders see value from capabilities in line with function priorities: functions like Sales and Customer Experience report significant benefits from capabilities which provide ease of use and better external party interaction features, and IT and HR often report the most value from optimization and risk mitigation capabilities like Contract Creation and Obligation and Renewal Management respectively. Perhaps less expected, however, is the level of benefit all functional leaders report from agreement management capabilities; The next set of capabilities leaders credit most for positioning them for success after these functional specific ones are Enterprise Integration and Intelligence and Insights (See Figure 12 on next page).
- 03 Advanced agreement management capabilities directly impact KPIs across every organizational function. The following section reveals the measurable performance benefits each department can achieve through strategic agreement management.

Figure 11.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH EITHER GENERAL OR ADVANCED AI AND AUTOMATION
IN EACH CAPABILITY AREA, BY FUNCTION

CAPABILITIES



FUNCTIONS

● Sales

● Legal

● Procurement

● CX

● IT

● HR

Figure 12.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORT EACH CAPABILITY AREA AS ENHANCING THEIR
PERFORMANCE, BY FUNCTION

CAPABILITIES



Functional Performance **SALES**



Sales teams can unlock significant value through effective agreement management, accelerating deal velocity and boosting customer retention. Over 70% of Sales leaders credit agreement management for positive performance in the following areas (Figure 13):

Figure 13.
ACHIEVEMENTS FROM AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

- 01 Optimize contracts and improve forecasting
- 02 Increase Sales capacity to focus on deal strategy
- 03 Decrease time spent on contracting and deal execution, including with rapid quote generation

Sales leaders with more advanced agreement management systems were **42% more likely to report tapping into their historical agreements** to improve forecasting as part of their agreement Insights and Intelligence. These analytics can be a critical differentiator and sometimes go beyond forecasting to support Contract Creation. One Automotive Sales Executive noted that advanced analytics not only helped with forecasting but also projected the impact of different agreement optimizations. In the first year after implementing a solution with these capabilities, the executive improved their win rate by more than five percentage points.

Advanced agreement management tools can deliver substantial productivity and efficiency gains, freeing sales teams to spend more time in the field with customers. Organizations with mature Contract Creation capabilities **outperform productivity metrics nearly twice as frequently** as competitors lacking these capabilities. One Global Sales Executive realized the benefits of this time by reallocating an entire department of Sales staff who had been primarily chasing down status updates across internal teams to higher value tasks such as focusing on real-time collaboration and closing deals. He also highlighted that after using more advanced solutions, he decreased Routing, Editing, and Approval cycle time from over three weeks to 45 minutes and found his "teams focused on strategy instead of back-and-forth contract negotiations."

Sales leaders with more mature capabilities across every stage of the agreement lifecycle also reported an average of **29% fewer contracting-related deal delays** from approval bottlenecks, prolonged reviews, and similar obstacles. Intuitively, there were significant benefits in the early stages of agreement management, including Contract Creation, Risk and Consistency Review, and Routing, Editing, and Approval, where the average improvement was ~16% better over organizations with lower maturity. Perhaps counterintuitively, the benefits were even more significant for agreement management capabilities that are not as obvious. Organizations with more mature Enterprise Integration between agreement management software and other enterprise systems and more advanced Agreement Storage and Categorization, such as AI-enabled contract categorization, saw an average of 40% fewer deal delays. The greatest benefits were for organizations with more advanced features to enable seamless Customer Experience, where there were 42% fewer deal delays. In fact, these sales leaders were nearly **3x as likely to report exceeding their Contracting and Deal Execution metrics**.

Functional Performance

PROCUREMENT



Procurement executives face constant pressure to accelerate processes beyond their current capabilities and provide measurable improvements to the top and bottom line. Advanced agreement management solutions can help bridge this gap, delivering benefits in contract risk management, procurement cycle times, and supplier performance tracking. In these areas, more than 70% of Procurement leaders report agreement management tools helping to drive positive performance.

Review and Risk Evaluation capabilities can help proactively identify risks and management consistency with organizational requirements. Procurement teams with more advanced Review and Risk Evaluation capabilities are **69% more likely to report outperforming their contract and risk management goals** (e.g., KPIs for contracts renewed on time and contract dispute frequency goals) than their peers. One Hospitality Procurement Executive noted, “My team was too small for the caseload - spending even 45 minutes reviewing a contract could put us behind schedule - and so it was essential that we upgrade our contract management solutions.”

Advanced analytics and dashboarding can help teams monitor potential issues before they arise, allowing them to take proactive measures. As a result, leaders with more advanced Insights and Intelligence capabilities were nearly twice as likely to report success in reducing contract disputes.

While these efficiency metrics can be meaningful, an often underappreciated benefit of agreement management solutions is the ability to enable self-service of knowledge and insights. A Director of Procurement also noted, “Having the time back from reviewing contracts manually allowed my lean team to engage more strategically with our cross-functional stakeholders.” The tool enabled her team to set up an enterprise system of record for their vendors so stakeholders could find vendors who better meet their needs and understand the typical arrangements with each vendor. Indeed, Procurement teams with more advanced capabilities can reduce the time other functions spend on customized agreements by 21%. This benefit also extends to Procurement teams by giving them time to focus on more strategic work; those with more mature Insights and Intelligence capabilities were twice as likely to report exceeding their supplier performance goals due to increased transparency and opportunity identification.

“My team was too small for the caseload - spending even 45 minutes reviewing a contract could put us behind schedule - and so it was essential that we upgrade our contract management solutions.”

-Procurement Executive at a Hospitality Company

Functional Performance

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX)

Customer Experience⁵ leaders leverage agreement management as a strategic tool to enhance customer value throughout the sales and support journey. In fact, those CX leaders in our study with more advanced agreement management solutions report up to **31% lower deal abandonment compared to organizations with lower maturity, and 83% believe it helps them achieve their customer support and digital self-service goals.**

Agreement management solutions that make the customer experience more frictionless by pre-populating known partner or customer information help prevent issues during the agreement management process. Indeed, CX leaders that enable these seamless Customer Experience processes for their customers are **54% more likely to report outperforming their customer support & issue resolution goals as compared to their peers and are twice as likely to outperform their digital and self-service experience goals**, such as resolving requests through digital channels and completing forms. This is especially important for organizations with frequent or important agreement interactions, where the impact on customer experience can be even more significant.

⁵Customer Experience includes Marketing, Customer Support, Innovation or Sales leaders whose main remit involves improving Customer, User, or Channel Experiences, etc.

One European Banking leader observed that the agreement management systems that enable his field representatives to help customers sign up for new accounts at home are a critical touchpoint. The bank intended to transition to more digital paperwork. However, with the highly regulated environment, representatives needed to collect signatures across documents, hundreds of pages long, on tablets in rural environments. He observed, “Even if our sign-up process is not that slow from a technical standpoint, it feels like an eternity for our representatives and customers as each page loads on the tablet. It was inefficient and hurt our customer experience.” Improving the customer experience was key for them.

Customer Experience excellence demands agile responsiveness to changing market conditions. Improved agreement management capabilities empower leaders to rapidly update information and adapt to emerging developments without sacrificing quality or compliance. For instance, one CX leader for an automotive organization noted, “Universal updates across all 7,000 partners used to take weeks of manual updates; now, this effort only takes a few hours because we can quickly find the impact of contracts in our tool.” **Organizations with more advanced capabilities, especially around Contract Creation and Insights and Intelligence, were up to twice as likely to report outperforming their customer value goals** relative to peers.

“Universal updates across all 7,000 partners used to take weeks of manual updates; now, this effort only takes a few hours because we can quickly find the impact of contracts in our tool.”

-Customer Experience Leader at an Automotive Company

Functional Performance

HUMAN

RESOURCES (HR)

HR leaders harness agreement management throughout the employee lifecycle -- accelerating talent acquisition, streamlining contingent workforce processes, strengthening compliance frameworks, and even boosting employee engagement across the organization. **Over 70% of leaders report benefits across the entire employee lifecycle**, including (Figure 14):

Figure 14.
BENEFITS ACROSS THE EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

- 01 Supporting talent acquisition through the improvement of acceptance rates and per-hire cost rates
- 02 Improving employee engagement and experience, including satisfaction scores
- 03 Improving the productivity and efficiency of HR service delivery teams to deliver on post-hire processes such as including training, compliance management, and international transfers

Advanced agreement management systems help create a more frictionless hiring and onboarding process, **reducing the time new hires or candidates spend on onboarding paperwork and agreements by as much as 33%** compared to organizations with less mature capabilities. The same advancements can support existing HR employees' experience and efficiency.

One Healthcare leader responsible for onboarding new caregivers noted that by transitioning to a digital process, her HR staff went from working across nine applications to onboard new caregivers to just two. By standardizing the information entry process and connecting the data to their internal systems of record, her team could easily create the profiles, process the applications, and connect new employees - caregivers - to patients more efficiently. Teams like hers save time and frustration, which may be linked to why **HR leaders with more advanced Contract Creation capabilities reported outperforming their employee productivity and engagement goals 2.7x more often** than their peers.

Agreement management systems can also help HR teams manage risk. For HR, it is also critical to manage risk continuously, and advanced agreement management systems directly support these goals. One Global CHRO for a European company noted that his team previously managed obligations and risks across 16 countries on spreadsheets. By upgrading to an advanced agreement management system, his team used data-backed insights to track and avoid risks much more reliably. "Switching to our new systems gave me insight into how much financial exposure I had against different employee regulations across labor markets. We run payroll for 6,000 employees across 16 countries, so you can imagine how important limited mistakes and security are." Other HR leaders agree - respondents with more advanced Obligation and Renewal Management capabilities outperformed their goals 45% more often. Mature Enterprise Integration capabilities also proved to be a critical enabler for organizations operating in multiple labor markets, allowing them to exceed targets over twice as often.

Functional Performance **LEGAL**



Legal leaders must manage the tension between servicing the business quickly under significant caseloads and applying substantial rigor to mitigate risks. This Review and Risk Evaluation process can delay deals, but more advanced agreement management tools are helping to resolve challenges. **Over 70% of Legal leaders believe that agreement management tools helped improve caseloads, get better legal outcomes in disputes, and increase sales team satisfaction scores.**

A clear area where benefits should emerge for legal teams is in helping to support more accurate Contract Creation within an organization and improving the team's ability to manage and facilitate the review of contracts. Leaders with more advanced Contract Creation and Routing, Approval, and Editing capabilities reported outperforming their contract lifecycle time goals - including reducing time to draft, review, redline, negotiate, and approve agreements about **2.4x as often** as their peers.

Agreement management solutions also position legal teams as enablers for sales teams when organizations want to scale. One Legal leader at an early-stage company observed that the biggest obstacle to growth was the organization's new field sales team and the immaturity of its sales infrastructure. By investing in an agreement management tool, the legal team was able to standardize agreements and

help resolve common issues 'upstream' of their review, which had the dual impact of allowing the relatively new sales force to scale their processes and helping the legal team reduce out-of-compliance or last minute agreement requests, reducing risk to the organization. In fact, his story may not be unique. Leaders with more advanced agreement capabilities in Review and Risk Evaluation and Customer Experience for stakeholders, including guided navigation to fill out contracts, report **an average of 21% fewer agreements out of compliance with legal and business requirements.**

Fundamentally, Legal functions help reduce risk exposure from agreements, and to do this well, legal teams need to reference and review agreements quickly. This can be more difficult than expected, especially for organizations where agreements are stored in shared drives or not centralized. One Legal Operations Manager noted just how powerful it was to have a centralized repository of agreements with a new agreement management tool: "It became so much easier for us to search and sort agreements by keyword, which is essential for finding relevant agreements during due diligence efforts or when assessing the impact of a legislation change on our services." Those with more advanced Agreement Storage and Categorization features in their agreement management solutions, such as AI-driven categorization, tagging, and automated insights, were **48% more likely to outperform their litigation and dispute resolution** metrics, including case resolution time and favorable outcomes. More to the point, Legal teams can also focus more on high-value tasks requiring their expertise when they have reliable agreement management solutions to help with Review and Risk Evaluation. Leaders with those advanced capabilities spent 17% less time reviewing agreements than their counterparts. These agreement management solutions help resolve issues faster and maximize strategic insight.

"It became so much easier for us to search and sort agreements... when assessing the impact of a legislation change on our services."

-Legal Operations Manager at a Tech Startup

Functional Performance **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**



Over 80% of IT leaders believe that agreement management helps them achieve their cost and budget goals and create a better customer and user experience.

A significant area for IT leaders to manage agreements is for the enterprise applications they administer. Often, these come with overlapping timelines and windows to juggle for licenses and software access. One way advanced agreement management tools support IT leaders is by providing greater visibility into these timelines and financial commitments. And that visibility is valuable: IT functions with more advanced Insights and Intelligence - integrated dashboards and AI insights into agreements - **report 12% less system underutilization** compared to their peers who did not have these capabilities. One Compliance Manager described this impact for them: "Because our tool allows us to search all our contracts, we are much better equipped to respond to client inquiries within our established SLA times."

Beyond reducing costs, IT leaders see greater outcomes when agreement management systems integrate data across systems, minimizing touch points and manual data upload. IT Leaders with systems that prioritize ease of use in the Customer Experience through auto-filled forms, guided navigation, and integrated data across touchpoints report outperforming their speed and efficiency goals twice as much compared to low-maturity organizations.

Satisfaction also comes in the form of confidence in security. IT functions with more mature Contract Creation and Customer Experience capabilities report outperforming their goals on security and compliance **twice as much as those without**. The cybersecurity advantages of powerful agreement management extend throughout the entire organization. Leaders across HR, Sales, and IT consistently emphasize agreement management solutions reduce risk to their operations. One C-Suite leader of a Global Fashion Enterprise shared, "Security was a key purchasing criterion for us because our contracts hold some of our most sensitive data, and having a system that secures that data better than just our emails is essential."

"Because our tool allows us to search all our contracts, we are much better equipped to respond to client inquiries within our established SLA times."

-Compliance Manager at a Virtual Reality Startup

Performance

NORTH AMERICA

Just as significant differences across functions exist, we also found differences in agreement management expectations, maturity, and value across regions in this year's study. Executives across all regions consider it essential that agreement management solutions efficiently get to approvals of agreements, integrate customer information into agreements, and help compile insights about their agreements. All three capabilities appear in the top five expectations for their solutions. However, beyond these foundational capabilities, there are differences in expectations of agreement management solutions, which likely reflect each country's local economies, business practices, and sources of value. By applying enterprise solutions in a local context, agreement management reduces the operational friction to work within or across regions.

Business leaders in the US and Canada report high levels of agreement management capability maturity across the full agreement management lifecycle, consistent with the Deloitte and DocuSign 2024 report's insight that organizations in North America were the most likely to have core CLM systems in place compared to other regions.⁶ These two countries have a long history of highly regulated industries, which contributes to the relative maturity of capabilities as vendors can provide tailored automation for niche contracts,⁷ but they also show signs of disproportionate investment: **79% of executives across the US and Canada prioritize automation and AI capabilities** that enable a seamless Customer Experience.⁸ These investments may contribute to the region's ability to process agreements 8% faster than other regions that was discussed in the 2024 report.

There are also some differences in their relative capability maturity. 79% of US leaders report significantly more mature capabilities for Insights and Intelligence, compared to 64% of Canadian leaders. Similarly, 65% of US leaders report more mature automation and AI around Enterprise Integration, whereas only 46% of Canadian leaders do so, potentially reflecting the US' willingness to adopt digital solutions for core business activities sooner (See Figure 15 on page 20).⁹

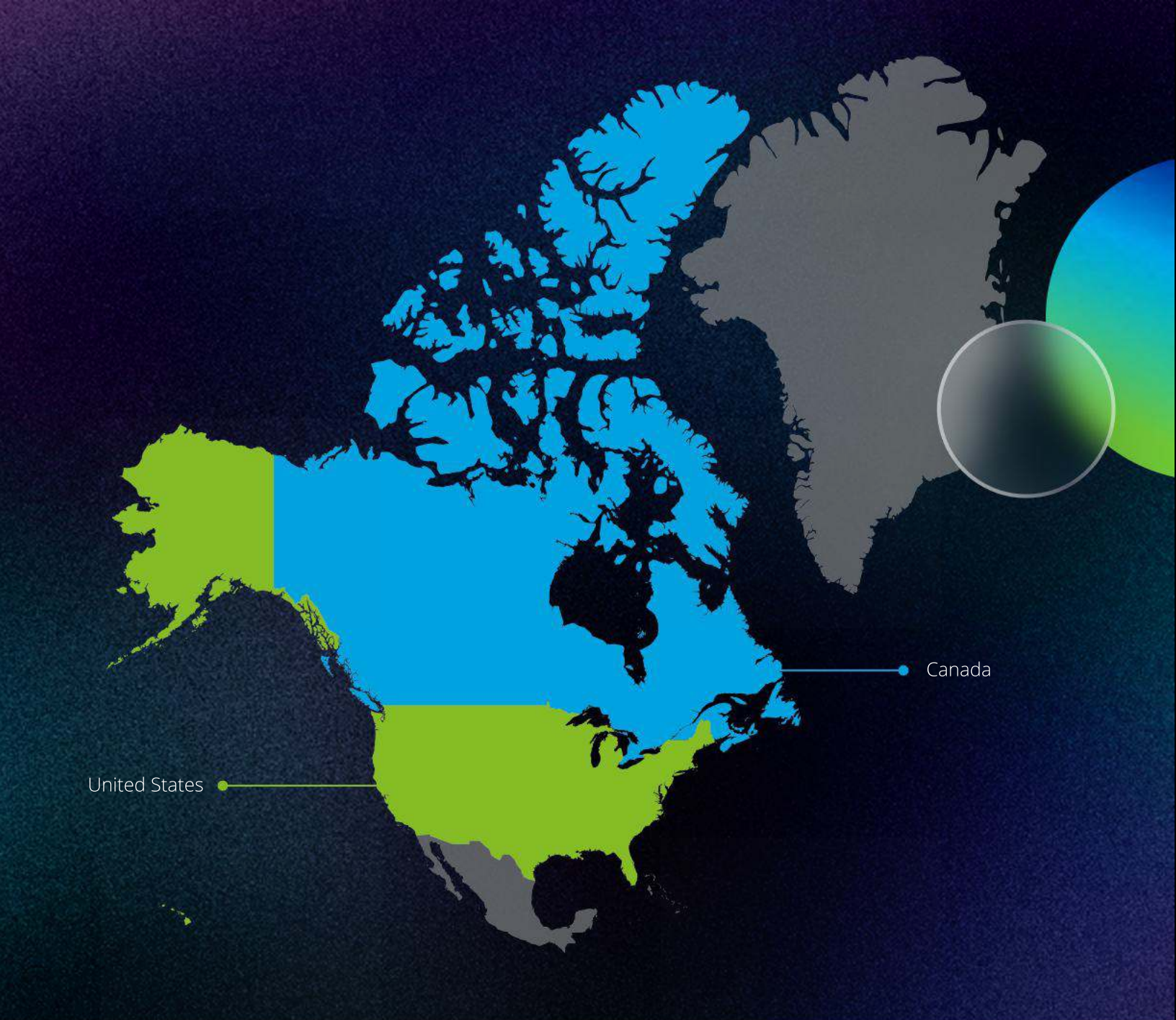
About a third of leaders in the US report each capability across the agreement management lifecycle as helping them deliver on their organization's targets, reflecting a relatively mature set of capabilities across the lifecycle. Canadian leaders, in contrast, report different views on which capabilities create value for them, with nearly half citing Contract Creation as the capability that helps enhance their performance. Still, less than a third say the same about capabilities further down the lifecycle, including Enterprise Integration, Agreement Storage and Categorization, and Obligation and Renewal Management, likely reflecting the differences in maturity between the two countries (See Figure 16 on page 20).

⁶*Unlocking the Value of Agreement Management, Deloitte and DocuSign, 2024*

⁷*Qualitative interviews*

⁸*This section refers to these capabilities by region as either use of standard digital solutions or advanced automations or AI*

⁹*Qualitative interviews*



United States

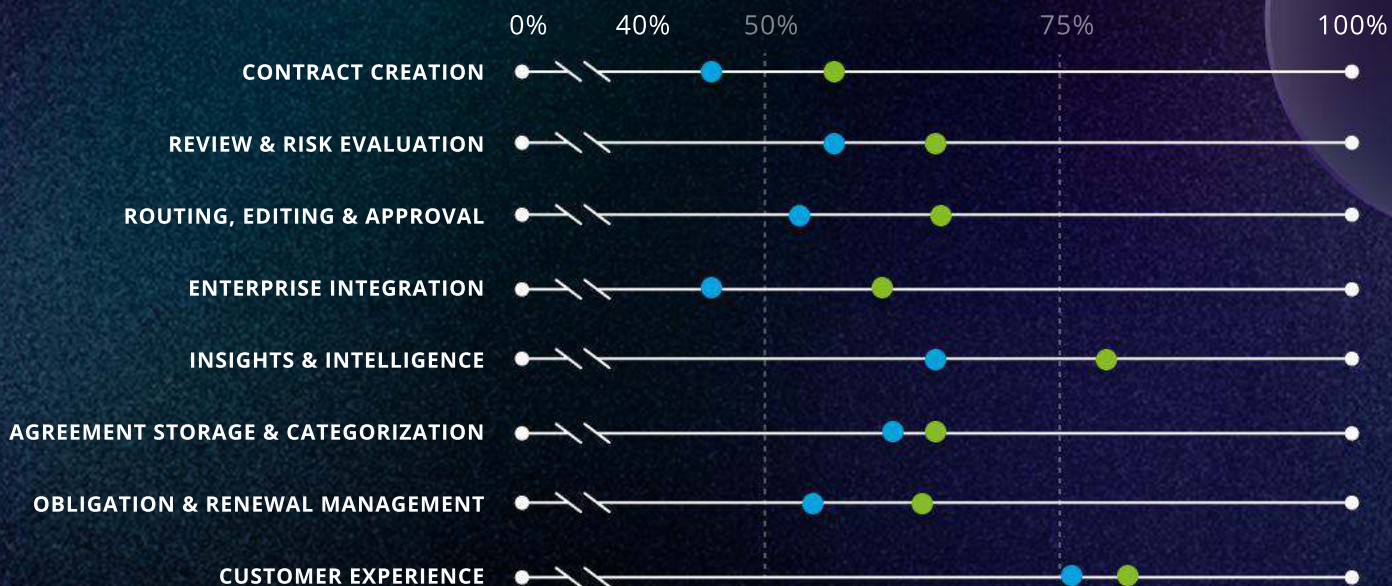
Canada

While there may be different sources of value from agreement management across the lifecycle, both countries display overwhelmingly high levels of trust in their agreement management capabilities. More than 80% of leaders in the US and more than 90% in Canada trust their agreement management workflow's ability to highlight local regulatory requirements and maintain their agreements' security and integrity. This reflects the maturity of capabilities in the region and the robust legal frameworks that allow vendors to map requirements accurately. This level of trust also firmly positions leaders in both countries to take advantage of AI as a growth and productivity lever. **More than a third of leaders in the US and Canada consider AI essential in Contract Creation**, specifically helping to optimize new agreements based on past agreements and enabling a more seamless Customer Experience. This suggests that while both countries have already invested in these capabilities, they are prepared to continue as AI and advanced automation unlock more value.

These regional insights set the stage for a very pivotal question: what do today's business leaders demand from next-generation agreement management solutions?

Figure 15.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH DIGITAL SOLUTIONS OR ADVANCED AI AND AUTOMATION IN
EACH CAPABILITY AREA, BY COUNTRY

CAPABILITIES



COUNTRIES

● United States ● Canada

Figure 16.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO CREDIT EACH CAPABILITY AREA FOR SIGNIFICANTLY
ENHANCING THEIR PERFORMANCE

CAPABILITIES



Looking AHEAD

Today, agreement management is a critical part of every organization, and investing in the right solutions can help organizations outperform their strategic and financial goals. Executives are also actively seeking ways for the new generation of AI-powered agreement management solutions to transform both the scale and quality of their agreement processes, and unlock an unprecedented level of business value. The leaders who are looking forward to AI-assisted capabilities have high expectations. For example, a Bank Director of Digital Innovation shared his hopes for AI to help *“make document interpretation faster”* and better support Review and Risk Evaluation and Agreement Storage and Categorization. He believed that *“AI can advance into contract interpretation”* and hoped it would help accomplish higher and higher value tasks.

However, as with other core technology systems, small steps are required to unlock their full potential. For example, data optimization, metadata tagging and de-duplication, and proactive change management. In the case of agreement management, systems must prove their security to organizations, have the capabilities to unlock latent insights, and provide the interface and tooling for end-users from any function to create custom workflows for their requirements efficiently. Indeed, most organizations acknowledge that the benefits of advanced automation and AI capabilities will take time to realize.

In a [separate study](#) on the State of AI in the Enterprise, Deloitte found a similar sentiment, with only 24% of organizations feeling highly prepared to adopt AI from a risk and governance perspective.

Moreover, that study found that 38% of leaders believe the most significant barrier to AI adoption was growing regulatory compliance concerns—a particularly critical issue in the context of agreements that will need to be managed.

Figure 17.
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS RATING EACH CAPABILITY AREA AS AN ‘ESSENTIAL’ AREA FOR AI



There are high expectations for AI globally in the near term (Figure 17). 48% of business leaders in our study believe even more advanced Contract Creation AI capabilities that optimize agreements based on past performance would be essential for them to achieve their goals, followed by 35% who would value AI in managing the Customer Experience in contract deadline notifications. Almost a third of leaders are also excited about risk-scoring use cases that can translate contract clauses and inconsistencies to an expected impact. In the next three years, respondents who value those capabilities are anticipating **58% of the workflows associated with optimizing contracts and supporting customers in managing milestones and 62% of Review and Risk Evaluation workflows associated with reviewing agreements to be AI-assisted.**

As the landscape for agreement management continues to evolve, customers should consider how agreement management capabilities can unlock value within a single function and the entire organization. The credit attributed to agreement management in this year's study cements the fact that it is an essential business system, unlocking value leading up to and beyond the point of signature. Inversely, vendors should help measure and communicate the value created across the lifecycle as functional buyers may not inherently think about the benefits to the organization. We offer the following principles to help guide both customers and vendors as they evaluate their investments and how value agreement management can help recapture value:

CUSTOMERS

EVALUATE AND INVEST IN AGREEMENT SOLUTIONS BY HOLISTICALLY CONSIDERING THE FINANCIAL, STRATEGIC, AND ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS BEYOND THE POINT OF SIGNATURE.

Agreement management is a core business capability, and to stay competitive in increasingly complex macroeconomic environments, organizations should understand their current agreements and proactively assess and optimize new agreements against risks and changing economic patterns. Organizations that still rely on shared drives and manual agreements will likely leave value on the table.

RECOGNIZE THAT UNLOCKING THE BENEFITS IS A JOURNEY.

While AI and advanced automation can unlock significant value for functions and organizations, these benefits are often the result of a multi-year investment in infrastructure, processes, and training. Benefits can be realized within a relatively short period - often helping to drive funding for the full transformation - but keeping an appropriate time horizon in mind will help communicate the value to stakeholders.

VENDORS

ARTICULATE THE BUSINESS VALUE OF NEXT-GENERATION AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

The value of advanced agreement management systems is real and highly powerful. Customers may be fatigued by hearing about AI-enabled systems, but they will understand if the solution with AI solves their business problem (e.g., industry benchmarks to optimize pricing within agreements). Agreement management vendors can shape the market and educate customers on the value of next-gen agreement management. Focus and clearly articulate the new business opportunities AI creates.

MOVE AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT TO THE FRONT OFFICE WITH A FOCUSED PRODUCT ROADMAP ON DIFFERENTIATED BUSINESS OUTCOMES.

Capitalize on innovation to make agreement management systems strategic differentiators. Customers expect AI to improve their agreement management experience and are willing to pay for advanced systems that allow them to differentiate and improve win rates. Agreement management systems have increasing potential for higher complexity contract work, given the strength of data access and abilities of agentic systems. Carefully prioritize features that improve agreement quality and outcomes rather than time savings, given potential fatigue with AI and productivity chatbots.

Authors & **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This report represents a portion of the responses captured in our study. If you are interested in a deeper dive, please contact the authors and contributors.

JONATHAN JONES

Managing Director, Legal Business Services & CLM

Deloitte Tax LLP

+1 973 602 6787 | jonathjones@deloitte.com

ROHAN GUPTA

Principal, Strategy

Deloitte Consulting LLP

+1 646 455 9632 | rohagupta@deloitte.com

JENNY SPIEL

Senior Manager, Strategy

Deloitte Consulting LLP

+1 312 219 1241 | jespiel@deloitte.com

Research, Analysis & Insights

The authors would like to thank **Chris Coelho, Pratyush Kumar, Jeremy Kattan, Drew McMahan, Christian Pankovcin, Kishlay Krishna, Vidhushri Singhal, and Akriti Kulshrestha** from Deloitte Consulting LLP for research and analysis, and **Allan Thygesen** and **Robert Chatwani** from Docusign for their contributions to this article.

Creative

The authors would like to thank **Will Rochfort** and **Becka Riccio** from Deloitte Digital.



OPTIMIZING AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT

What Sets High-Performing Organizations Apart

This publication contains general information only and Deloitte is not, by means of this publication, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, legal, tax, or other professional advice or services. This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional advisor.

Deloitte shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication.

ABOUT DELOITTE

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee (“DTTL”), its network of member firms, and their related entities. DTTL and each of its member firms are legally separate and independent entities. DTTL (also referred to as “Deloitte Global”) does not provide services to clients. In the United States, Deloitte refers to one or more of the US member firms of DTTL, their related entities that operate using the “Deloitte” name in the United States and their respective affiliates. Certain services may not be available to attest clients under the rules and regulations of public accounting. Please see www.deloitte.com/about to learn more about our global network of member firms.