5 Ways to Strengthen Client Relationships by Combining Workflows with Document Management

Competition is intensifying. Customers are informed, so it is no longer enough to have a great product or service. Clients expect a seamless digital experience and will constantly evaluate both how a provider delivers it and how its competitors compare.

Organizations have client engagement processes that they must manage end to end. **The complexity of these processes varies from business to business, but involves four stages:**

A company has a product or service

This could be software, hardware, physical products, knowledge and expertise or a mix.

A prospect is interested

An existing customer or someone new has shown interest.

The provider engages with them

This entails capturing, creating, storing and sharing documents and information.

The client is onboard

The vendor must monitor their experience to ensure they are satisfied with how things are going.

This eBook will cover three elements that impact the client experience across these stages:

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT, which covers all information relating to the client

WORKFLOWS that enable process automation and task management

SECURE PORTALS that facilitate the exchange of large amounts of data and other collaborative work

We will explore how combining these elements allows organizations to deliver maximum value to their clients.

Document management

Document management impacts the customer experience throughout the client engagement process:

A company has a product or service

The organization handles records associated with its offering, such as marketing, sales, human resources or finance.

Employees must be able to find relevant information so they can share it with the prospect.

A prospect is interested

A customer relationship management system may be necessary to capture their initial information.

The prospect may want a non-disclosure agreement in place before further exploring products or services.

The provider engages with them

As employees talk with the prospect by email or phone, they create documents and store, exchange and review them.

Decisions must be recorded as internal and external parties join the process and communication becomes complex.

The client is onboard

Knowledge workers record information on what has happened. They do this primarily in documents.

Staff must be able to find this information easily so leaders can make informed decisions about the client.

Each document the vendor compiles in these processes may need to be shared internally or externally, edited, used for collaboration or found to answer the client's questions.

Many businesses have multiple systems in which they keep information.

Little wonder that 57 percent of knowledge workers said in a 2019 survey that difficulty finding the right information is a top contributor to lagging productivity in the office. Another 49 percent reported spending between 30 minutes and two hours each day trying to track down information they needed to do their jobs, according to 8x8, a technology company that commissioned the research.

Workflows

Say a contract needs a review before it goes back to the client. The document is drafted and stored correctly with correct security permissions, but it is hard to tell if the reviewer has gone over the document or is aware of the deadline. With traditional approaches to document management, staff may not be notified of changes the reviewer makes to the file or the point where that person completes their work.

The answer to issues like these is workflows, which control and automate the flow of information and associated processes as data moves through an organization. Workflows remove inefficiencies and ensure people follow procedures in a timely fashion.

For instance, the tool can notify employees when supervisors assign tasks to them, and then ping managers once the work is done.

Collaboration portals

Innovators in customer service like Uber and Amazon have helped shape demands from business leaders for access anytime to information and personalized communication.

Portals can answer the call by providing secure ways to exchange information, something that enables businesses to be forerunners in driving digitalization and improving the digital client experience.

To be sure, typical file sync-based document portal solutions copy information from enterprise content repositories. This results in data duplication, which can create confusion about which versions of documents are up to date.

Best-of-breed systems avoid this issue by integrating with document management software and workflows. Connecting siloed systems, applications and repositories provides a full view of all relevant information across the company. This makes it easy for clients and staff to access relevant documents, people, processes, discussions and more.

All information, regardless where it is stored, can be accessed and managed according to commonly agreed processes, legal regulations or industry standards.

Customizable portals are optimized for improved client experiences. This strengthens customer satisfaction with more compliant service.

More power from combining technologies

While top-flight document management, workflows and portals can solve problems, using them together provides greater capabilities than deploying them separately.

A workflow may be powerful, but absent a data management product that uses artificial intelligence, employees will struggle to store documents correctly, avoid multiple versions and use correct permissions to protect the document.

Of the 69 percent of knowledge management workers whose companies use document management or file sharing services, roughly nine in 10 still experience document-version issues, according to a 2012 survey by the technology company Perforce.

Here are five ways to boost the client experience with document management, workflows and collaboration portals.

01 | Achieve a complete view of a client case in one place

It is easy to keep track of all information in an engagement by using portals and workflows to save and automate things like emails, attachments, agreements, contracts, non-disclosure agreements and policies.

When prospects show interest, workflows can populate a CRM with their information, automatically store relevant emails and documents, trigger an automated welcome email and notify relevant internal teams.

Document management and portals help companies avoid losing track of key information. If an account manager is away, another team member can look after their clients by finding in a portal all communication, documents and other relevant data.

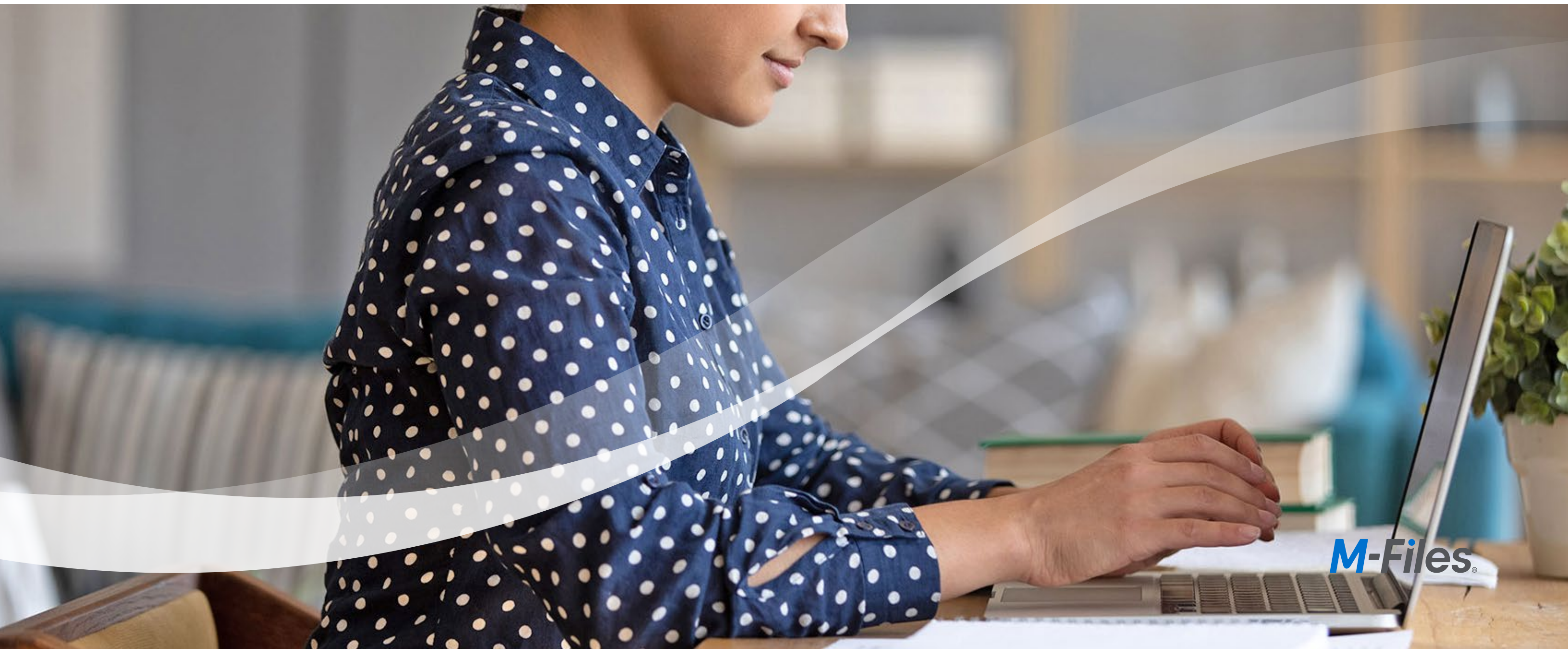
Aligning information management, workflows and portals provides an intelligent view of the client, enabling a company to consistently provide the best service.

02 | Automate repetitive client engagement processes that adapt to their journey

Workflows can streamline recurring client activities and reduce effort by keeping track of every step of an engagement. This helps ensure a provider's teams know what they are responsible for.

Workflows should be customizable for different client needs. If a customer wants an NDA in place before proceeding, a workflow should be ready to send one for review, amendment and sign off.

The technology should alert staff about missing documents. If a project has launched without a statement of work, that can trigger a workflow to create one from a template, send it for review and forward it to the customer.



03 | Empower self-service and keep clients happy and informed

Keeping customers up to speed is easy by combining document management, workflows and collaboration portals. Workflows can help line up signatures on a document, upload it to a portal and notify the client when it is available.

Information a client needs may be spread through different repositories. An AI-enabled document management system can perform federated search, meaning looking through in multiple silos simultaneously.

By integrating that software with a portal, customers can find out what information the vendor has and whether it is accurate, view contact information for contacts like account managers and send questions through a chat. Portals can also provide company news.

By giving clients a space where they can find what they need, a vendor's team receives fewer requests and can has more time for value-added work.

04 | Provide longstanding, personalized customer care

To continue serving, upselling or cross selling a client, a business needs ready access to every document and communication with the customer to inform its next decision.

Aside from needing all important information about the client and the engagement, a vendor must have a full audit history of every work process it performed. Document management and portals help find relevant data and communication, while workflows provide insight into which procedures worked as designed and which did not.

All of this provides better understanding of the client's experience. Providers can trigger reminders or emails to check up on customers, reach out with renewal proposals if a contract is ending or offer additional products or services at the right time.

Examining the processes and information from a client engagement can identify areas for improvement and continue developing the customer relationship to maintain their loyalty.

05 | Learning from a business' data

The right tools for document management, workflow and collaboration portals make a company's data more valuable by providing insights into its operations, client experiences, information and processes.

Many businesses are moving to take advantage of their information. About 99 percent of large enterprises are investing in big data and AI, with nearly 92 percent reporting in 2021 that the pace of their investments is increasing, according to a survey of senior C-suite executives by NewVantage Partners, a consulting firm.

Almost 78 percent of respondents said that they have deployed AI capabilities in widespread or limited production, up from roughly 66 percent in 2020.

Combining document management, workflows and portals allows corporate leaders to identify bottlenecks by examining the average time to complete tasks or when documents have too many tasks associated with them.

Process mining can show where firms can gain efficiencies and improve their clients' experiences by making more time for staff to focus on what customers want.

Recommendations for starting on combining document management, workflows and portals

The first step is discussing possibilities with a company's information technology team. Organizational leaders need to learn what tools they have for document management, process automation and collaboration, and then explain their goals and how IT can help.

A starter kit can be launching a project to explore better tools for achieving corporate goals. This should include assessing:

Integrations:

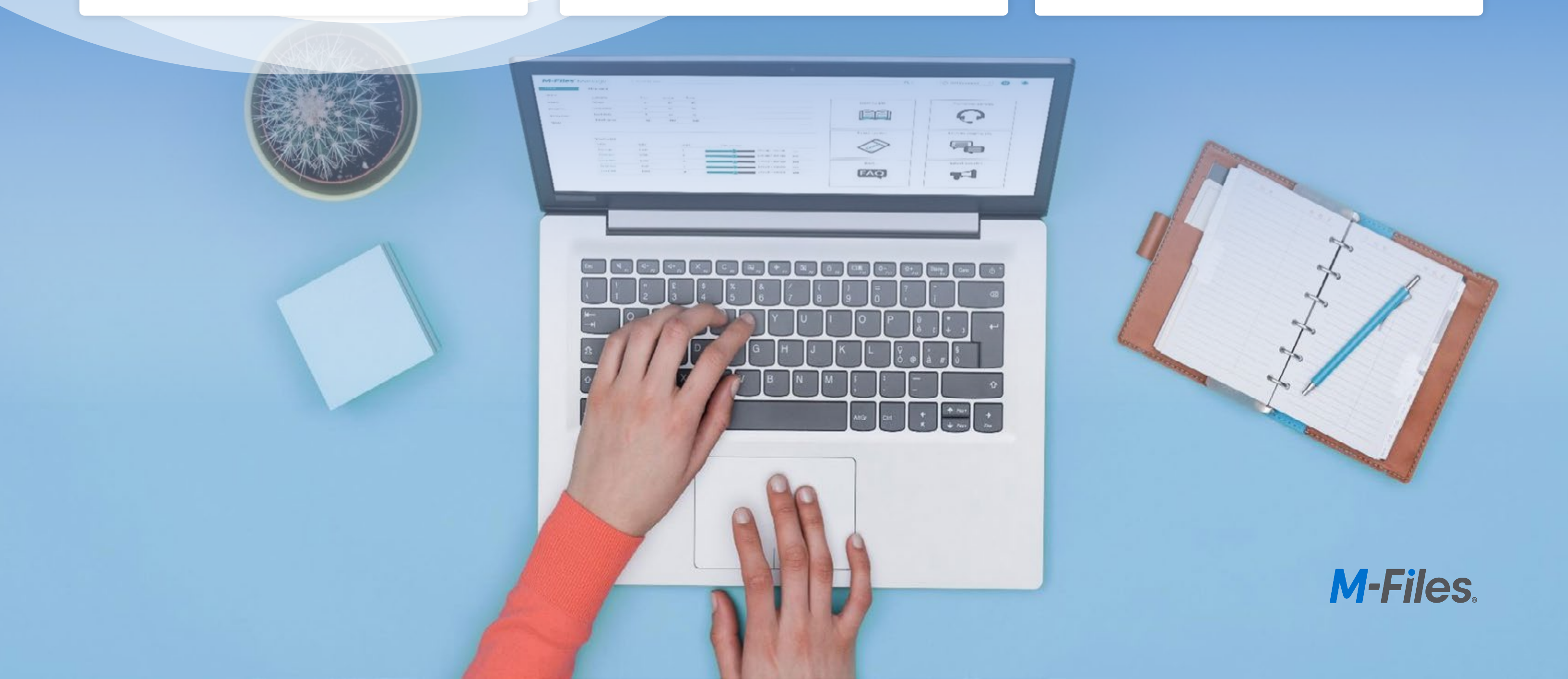
Tools for managing documents, automating processes and collaborating need to talk to each other and to other systems. If this is not happening, it raises the prospect of a lengthy migration process.

Human intervention:

Simple processes can be automated without someone looking at them each time, but more complex methods may require people's attention. It is important to determine where exceptions can occur and to be flexible in figuring them out.

Internal processes:

Implementing a strategy for document management, workflows and portals means reviewing and improving how an organization does tasks. Streamlining methods gives employees more time to serve customers.



About M-Files

M-Files' AI-powered intelligent information management solution connects all documents and information, across every platform and repository, then analyzes them to place them in context. This makes it possible to serve up the right information to the right people right when they need it—and automate information-driven business processes—while maintaining complete control and compliance. Thousands of organizations in more than 100 countries (including NBC Universal, OMV, SAS Institute, and ThyssenKrupp) use M-Files to manage their business information and processes—and give their employees a Smarter Way to Work.

For more info, visit **www.PeopleSenseERP**.com

M-Files has offices in eight countries.