



South Africa

Innovative, Green, and Efficient

**Digital signatures meets  
speed and security.**





# Introduction.

Stakeholders, whether customers, investors, or members of the c-suite, care deeply about the direction that a company is going in. It is not enough that an organisation is profitable; it must have a purpose - and increasingly, this purpose should keep ethical consideration in mind.

Three of the components that are commonly cited by stakeholders as being important are innovation, sustainability, and efficiency. These three characteristics are usually intertwined in successful business strategies: innovation can lead to the emergence of more sustainable business processes; the search for efficiency often necessitates new developments and, at the same time, reduces waste.

Innovation, green issues, and efficiency are crucial for maintaining a competitive advantage in the coming decades. Making them central to your strategy can have major positive impacts on all stakeholders in your organisation. In this whitepaper, we discuss the importance of these themes and how digital signing can positively influence them.





## CUSTOMERS

Customers prefer to buy from companies that are green and innovative. A growing ethical and environmental dimension has become apparent within consumer tastes - something that is particularly prominent among younger age groups. Innovation, meanwhile, helps companies ensure that they remain up-to-date with the latest technological and social trends.

Of course, meeting consumer needs will also lead to increased ROI. 74% of consumers believe that ethical corporate practices and values are important reasons to choose a brand.<sup>1</sup>

Among internet users, 60% say they would be willing to pay more for products that were eco-friendly, demonstrating the sales uplift that could be achieved by adopting green initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

## EMPLOYEES

Employees are often claimed to be a company's greatest asset, and retaining the most talented individuals depends on keeping sustainability and innovation front-and-center of your strategy.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents said that they were more likely to work for a company with strong environmental policies.<sup>3</sup> While over 70% of people surveyed are more likely to work for a company that has a strong green footprint.<sup>4</sup>

Companies that embed sustainability in their core business strategy treat employees as critical stakeholders, viewing them as just as important as shareholders. Employees are proud to work at these organisations and feel part of a broader effort.<sup>5</sup> In the developed world, a small but growing segment of "sustainability enthusiasts" view sustainability as a major factor in their job choices and are willing to accept lower compensation to work for an employer that meshes with their beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

Plus, the importance of sustainability appears to increase among younger generations, with 75% of millennials claiming that they would accept a lower salary if it meant working for an environmentally responsible company.<sup>7</sup>

Just like sustainability, innovation appears to have an important attraction on candidates. In fact, candidates turned out to be so strongly drawn to innovation that 69% of American workers would leave their current role for a position at a company considered an innovation leader.<sup>8</sup>

## INVESTORS

Investors are important for your business for more reasons than simply providing financial backing. They can also provide guidance and essential networking opportunities that help with business growth. Research indicates that investors generally prefer to invest in green and innovative companies. For example, research has shown that 81% of sustainable indices outperformed their peer benchmarks in 2020.<sup>9</sup>

Institutional investors are asking tough questions about corporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance and expect answers to be embedded in corporate strategy.<sup>10</sup> The results for both US and global indexes clearly demonstrate that innovative firms perform better in the stock market than their competitors.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, for many businesses, signing has not progressed significantly for decades. Despite the inconvenience that physical signatures pose, many contracts continue to be signed the old-fashioned way. This no longer needs to be the case. Here's how digital signatures can help with the delivery of a company strategy that is innovative, green, and efficient.



# Innovative.

## EQUIP YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

Your signatory (customers, employees, investors, etc.) generally has no idea how to sign documents when received as a PDF, and often does not have the right tools to do so. As such, the problem of how to sign a document continues to be placed on the signer. It is assumed that a signer has the right knowledge, software, and hardware (like printers and scanners) to be able to sign and return a document properly. This is despite the fact that today's consumer is used to digital processes and fast and straightforward services. The signing process should simply not be a bottleneck anymore for your signers, as this will deteriorate the signing experience tremendously.

## CREATE THE RIGHT BRAND IMAGE

An innovative brand image can be of great importance to your company. According to research carried out by McKinsey, 48% of executives agree on the importance of innovation for the growth of their business.<sup>12</sup> Innovative companies can benefit from a huge competitive advantage.

Brands need their customer experience to be as positive as possible, across every touchpoint. Digitalising the document signing procedure speeds up business processes and reduces the margin for error – all within a secure portal that protects important company and client data.

**“Innovation also has a positive impact on company culture as it increases the ability to acquire, create and make the best use of competencies, skills, and knowledge.”**<sup>13</sup>

- Viima



**“Companies with a customer experience mindset drive revenue 4-8% higher than the rest of their industries.”**<sup>14</sup>

- Forbes

## USER EXPERIENCE

As one of the crucial points of contact your customer has with you, it is vital that the signing experience is seamless, secure, and swift. They have chosen your brand, and now it's time to demonstrate that it is one that embraces cutting-edge technology. Make sure you position yourself as a brand that is not afraid to adopt modern approaches - particularly where it benefits your customers.

## OFFERING CHOICE

An integral part of delivering a great user experience is offering choice. Sign enables stakeholders to receive and sign documents on any device, from anywhere in the world, and through a variety of different channels such as WhatsApp Business Platform, email, and SMS. Not only does this offer greater convenience to your customer, but it also reduces turnaround time and demonstrates that you are a digitally savvy brand. The convenience and accessibility of digital signing processes cannot be overstated.

Digital signing has a positive impact on your signatories. It makes life easier and gives individuals more time to spend on meaningful tasks. Furthermore, it simply feels - and is - efficient and secure. In a world that doesn't always offer these experiences, why not provide this for your signatories, if you can?

By implementing digital signing, you can create loyal customers and advocates (even fans), and increase business results.



# Innovation points of Sign.

Sign everywhere, on any device, from any location, at any time  
- Sign is intuitive.

Invites can be sent via different channels: email, SMS, and WhatsApp Business Platform.

Different identification methods can be connected.

Digital certificates and an audit trail are part of a fully signed document.

It is safe, simple, and saves both time and paper.





# Green.

## GOING PAPERLESS FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CUSTOMERS

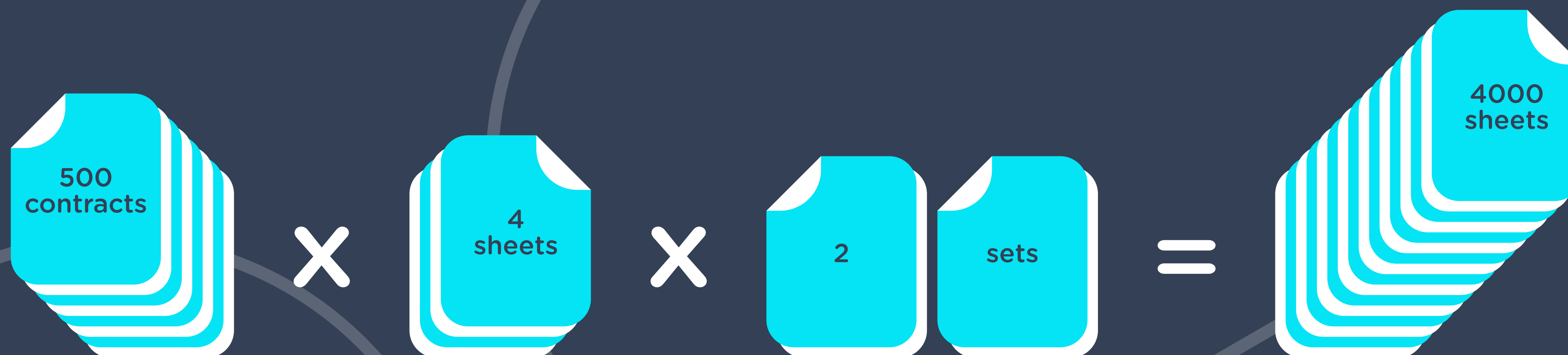
The carbon footprint of the paper industry is substantial. In fact, the industry is the fourth-largest contributor to greenhouse gases in the world. On average, 500 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> are emitted per kilogram of paper produced. Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, therefore, is viewed as one of the most important sustainability drivers within the paper production process.<sup>15</sup>

Using a traditional signing process, either the signatory or you must print the relevant document. However, paper use is not the only part of this process that harms the environment. You should also consider the use of other materials and their indirect effects. For example, a lot of ink is needed for printing documents, and the production of this ink also carries harmful side effects for the environment. Similarly, stamps and envelopes are needed for the sending of documents by post. Emissions by postal operators will have a negative influence on the environment, even if they aren't always easy to quantify.

You may realise that paper is bad for the environment. But do you know how many sheets of paper you use per contract?



# Paper Usage, Trees, and Deforestation.



One sheet of A4 (210 x 297 mm) weighs around 5 grams. While this may not seem like much, collectively, this can add up to a huge environmental impact. For example, if a business issues 500 contracts a month, each made up of four sheets of paper, and which must be printed twice, that adds up to 4,000 sheets of paper a month ((500 x 4) x 2). Added up, it's clear that office paper use can represent a huge environmental problem.



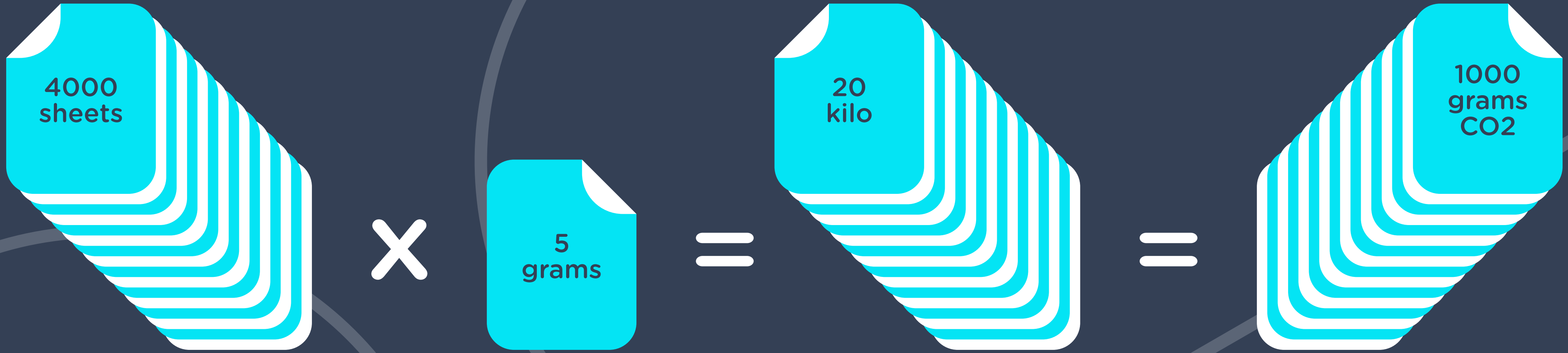
“We need trees for a variety of reasons, not least of which is that they absorb not only the carbon dioxide that we exhale but also the heat-trapping greenhouse gases that human activities emit.”<sup>16</sup>

- National Geographic





# CO2 Emission Because of Paper Production.



If one sheet of A4 (210 x 297 mm) weighs around 5 grams and an office uses 4000 paper sheets per month, that equates to 20kgs of paper used every month (4000 x 5 = 20,000 grams). This, in turn, means 1,000 grams of CO2 is emitted per month simply as a result of traditional signing.



# Efficient.

## SAVE TIME

With a digital signing process, it is easy to save time on document preparation. Employees no longer have to prepare a document on their device, print or email it, put it in an envelope, find a stamp and physically send it to the signatory. Saving time on preparing documents, reduces the costs involved.

After the document is prepared, there is further time saving to be had. Businesses no longer have to chase their signatory because Sign automatically reminds them to sign the relevant document and businesses are automatically informed when this has taken place. This means that the average time before companies receive a signed document can be shortened from 12 days to 9 hours.

Moreover, Sign can help save 10 to 15 minutes per document. For 500 documents per month, this can result in savings of 100 hours a month. Time that can better be spent on more meaningful tasks.





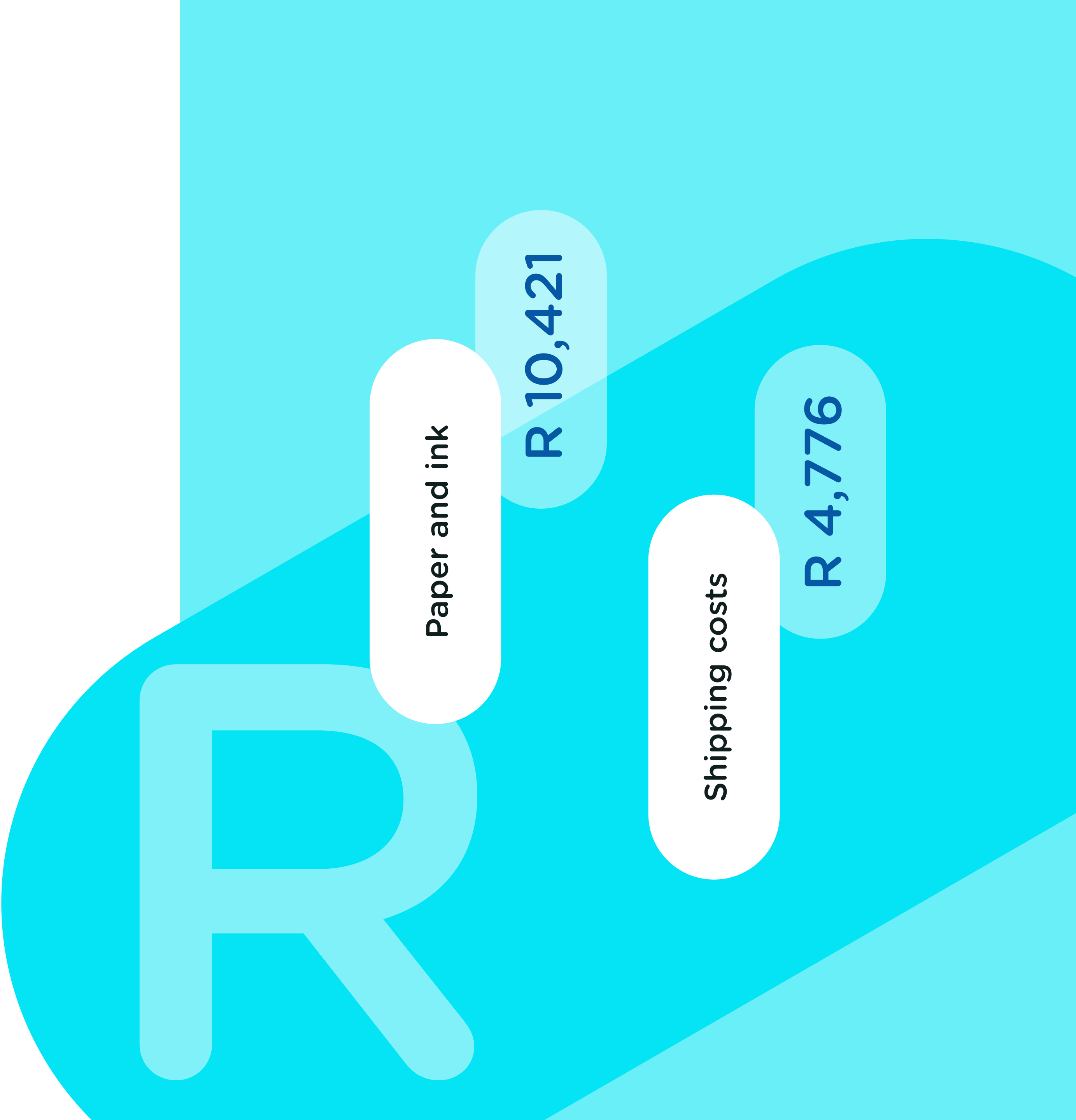
# SAVE COSTS

In our example of an office producing 500 documents per month, a total cost saving of over six thousand pounds can be easily achieved. These cost savings include:

Material costs, including:

- Paper
- Ink
- Shipping costs

The aforementioned time savings will of course also save you money. All these hours can be spent in other areas, allowing you to focus on the core business.





CM.com has developed a savings calculator to provide valuable insights into the cost savings your organisation can make by switching to digital signing. Try our savings calculator below:

Complete our savings check and calculate how much you can save with digital signing with Sign! Or contact CM.com directly for more information on Sign.

[Try now](#)

[Get started with Sign](#)





## REDUCE RISK

By increasing your efficiency, you can simultaneously lower your risk levels. First of all, it is important to point out that collecting signatures via Sign is legally binding, so the contracts that you finalise through digital signing carry no more risk than those completed with a traditional, wet signature.

What's more, there are laws around how long you can archive documents. It can be costly and risky to have to store physical documents somewhere but this is avoided with an electronic signing process. It means there is no longer a risk of losing an important physical document or the sensitive personal information that they may contain.

In addition, digital signing allows you to track who has signed each document and enables the validation of the identities involved in the signing process. Everyone that signs the document will have the proof they need, and you can access the audit trail to view when and where a document has been signed. A digital certificate ensures that the document and signatures have not been tampered with.





# Three Essential Benefits.

Initially, becoming more innovative, green, and efficient may sound as though it would require a massive overhaul of your business processes. In fact, such a transformation is available to every organisation - simply by adopting digital signing.

Sign is available to help you improve on three key aspects of your business strategy: innovation, green issues, and efficiency. Customers, employees, and investors all care deeply about these issues - which is why CEOs should too. Revamping your signing process could deliver enhancements that are felt by far more than just the staff involved in contract signing.

First, getting started with Sign couldn't be simpler. As a starting point, you can access the Sign web version to gain access to the numerous benefits mentioned in this whitepaper. There's no vendor lock-in, and you can scale up later as and when you need to.

We offer Sign at a low cost, while still making sure that it complies with the highest regulatory standards, including eIDAS. We pay a great deal of attention to UX to ensure that our users can gain access to the innovation, sustainability, and efficiency benefits that Sign provides, without usability issues getting in the way.

Developed by CM.com, a company with more than two decades of experience using mobile technology to enable people to communicate, interact, and make payments worldwide, Sign is part of our mission to make life easier, safer, and more beautiful.

Sign is a solution that can streamline the contract signing process for your customers and employees. So why not try digital signing for free with Sign today?



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CM.com (AMS: CMCOM) is a global leader in cloud software for conversational commerce that enables businesses to deliver a superior customer experience. Our communications and payments platform empowers marketing, sales and customer support to automate engagement with customers across multiple mobile channels, blended with seamless payment capabilities that drive sales, gain customers and increase customer happiness.

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