



# MOBILE SUPPORT AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES: USING EMERGING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE THE ADVISOR-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP



***Impact Financial Systems***

AUTOMATION DELIVERED

## INTRODUCTION

Emerging technology has affected every aspect of modern professional and personal life. For the financial services sector, advancing technologies have increased the expectations of investors and their advisors, especially in terms of flexibility and availability. Instead of meeting with investors in an office environment, financial advisors expect to be able to open new accounts, manage their existing accounts and move money anywhere, any time. There is also an emerging expectation that investors are able to initiate transactions.

[A report published by Wealth Management](#) further explains the power of mobile technologies for the financial services sector: “It allows [financial advisors] to meet with potential clients, show them a presentation, hopefully close a sale and capture signatures all on one device in a single meeting.” In order to support these demands, firms must embrace two specific technology trends: mobile-friendly applications and electronic signature (e-signature).

To support its clients’ changing needs, [IFS launched a new version of the IFS Automaton Platform](#) earlier this year, which included the support of a responsive user interface (UI) in its applications. As part of this update, IFS clients can create and configure applications with full functionality and optimized viewing across all devices. This major update allows financial advisors to serve their investors and meet their expectations with whatever device they happen to have available—phone, tablet or laptop.

**“ Not only do emerging technologies allow advisors to better serve their clients, but they also enable firms to recruit and retain the most talented advisors.”**

IFS has also established strategic partnerships with two of the most innovative e-signature vendors, [DocuSign](#) and [SIGNiX](#), to provide e-signature capabilities to its clients.

With more and more advisors and professionals trading in their laptops for tablets, responsive applications and e-signature capabilities will ultimately enhance the advisor-client relationship, enabling advisors to complete investor requests easier, faster and on-the-go. Not only do emerging technologies allow advisors to better serve their clients, but they also enable firms to recruit and retain the most talented advisors. As client expectations evolve with technology, advisors need access to the best tools to serve their clients. As a result, they are more likely to align themselves with firms that provide access to the latest technology tools and support innovative initiatives.

## MOBILE SUPPORT

This year, for the first time since the inception of the Internet, mobile browsing has surpassed browsing on personal computers. This significant shift in the way technology is used has changed the way businesses and consumers interact with each other. In order to keep pace with the competition and meet investors' changing needs and expectations, organizations must prioritize mobile initiatives. According to Ed O'Brien, Senior Vice President and Head of Platform Technology for Fidelity Institutional, "Investors today expect technology woven into everything they do, and that includes their financial advice." In fact, [one Fidelity study](#) showed that one-third of investors would switch advisors if they weren't active technology users.

Mobile technology presents financial services firms with a great opportunity to improve the advisor-client relationship, while also increasing revenue. For advisors, mobile technology is a powerful sales tool. According to the same [Wealth Management report](#) mentioned above, mobile technology enables advisors to complete the entire sales cycle on one device, in one location. The reports states, "From start to finish, advisors can demonstrate a product, collect client information and submit an order seamlessly from their tablet. With the power of mobility, advisors no longer need to return to the office and submit paper forms." Undoubtedly, mobile technology, as a sales resource, increases efficiency and shortens the typical sales cycle. It also allows advisors to open and fund accounts quicker, and thereby, begin trading quicker.

### Why Mobile Matters

- ✓ Mobile browsing has surpassed browsing on personal computers
- ✓ 1/3 of investors would switch advisors if they weren't active technology users
- ✓ Investors expect technology to be used when receiving financial advice
- ✓ 72% of Gen X/Y investors want easy access to their information
- ✓ 77% of people use their smartphone to research a product/service for their business

**Sources:**

[https://nationalfinancial.fidelity.com/app/item/RD\\_13569\\_42170.html](https://nationalfinancial.fidelity.com/app/item/RD_13569_42170.html)

<http://manningdigital.com/blog/2015/01/15/the-importance-of-responsive-mobile-web-design-for-b2b-sites>

In addition to benefitting the advisor and firm, mobile-friendly applications greatly benefit the investors and enhance the advisor-client relationship. With more than 75 percent of wealth management firms having initiatives that are intended to increase the time advisors spend with investors, it's important that firms embrace mobile technology. The following are just a few ways that mobile technology can enhance the client-advisor relationship:

**Increased Accessibility:** Thanks to mobile technology, investors can access their accounts anywhere, anytime, whether it's from the comfort of their own home, at a coffee shop, in their office or on-the-go. They also have greater accessibility to their advisors and can contact them to make requests with the touch of a button. This is increasingly important for younger investors who have high expectations relative to flexibility and accessibility. In fact, the same Fidelity study cited previously also showed that 72 percent of Gen X/Y investors want easy access to their information. With mobile technology, these investors can easily access their information and communicate with their advisors from any location, through any medium, and quickly take action on financial decisions.

**Emphasis on Convenience:** Not only does mobile technology give investors immediate, round-the-clock access to their information and advisors, but it also provides other benefits that contribute directly to increased convenience. One specific example, which will be discussed in further detail later, is the ability to support investors through paperless processes. With document integration and e-signature capabilities, investors can complete necessary paperwork directly from the device of their choice, rather than having to meet in the advisor's office or complete the paperwork physically and mail it back.

**Enhances In-Person Meetings:** Mobile technology allows advisors to have more meaningful in-person meetings with investors. Instead of being bogged down by administrative or paper-based tasks, advisors can share interactive presentations, and investors can actively participate in financial planning sessions. This collaborative approach builds trust between clients and investors, and gives investors a sense of ownership over their financial future.

## ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Electronic signature replaces the need for traditional paper-based signing. With e-signature capabilities, financial advisors and other professionals can send documents that require signatures to clients or other recipients. Documents are tagged in areas that require a signature and the recipient follows these tags, and their accompanying instructions, to legally sign the document. By working with credible e-signature partners such as DocuSign and SIGNiX, all signatures captured through IFS's applications are secure, legal and accepted globally.

Many of the world's largest corporations use e-signature to streamline their operations. SIGNiX cites Allstate, SunGard, Merrill Lynch and Raymond James Financial as just a few of their clients, and DocuSign works with LPL Financial, Pershing, Yahoo and American Airlines on their e-signature initiatives.

According to [DocuSign's website](#), DocuSign's e-signature capabilities provide numerous benefits for wealth management firms, including accelerating speed to assets under management, improving the experience for investors and advisors, reducing operating costs, enabling straight-through-processing and improving data security. Further, [SIGNiX breaks down some of the key benefits that come with e-signature for all stakeholders involved](#):

### INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY

**Firms:** E-signature allows for a faster signature process since clients or prospective clients don't have to wait on physical paperwork in order to sign. Likewise, the advisors don't have to wait on the client to sign and return that paperwork. A faster signature process means a faster onboarding process, organization-wide. More efficient onboarding equates to cost-savings and ability to focus on revenue-generating activities instead of administrative tasks.

**Advisors:** E-signature allows advisors to send and track documents from anywhere and any device. It also enhances an in-person experience they may have with a client or prospective client. Instead of sending paperwork post-meeting, the advisor can capture the signature in-person.

**Investors:** Clients can sign documents on any device, at any time, making the process of creating a new account, moving money or any other process that requires a signature, much more convenient. It also eliminates the hassle of physically signing paperwork and mailing or physically returning it.

## REDUCTION IN ERRORS

**Firms:** E-signatures provide the recipient with clear process markers and online guides that walk them through each document, reducing errors or omissions in missing signatures. When e-signature functionality is paired with IFS's rules-based applications, firms benefit from a significant reduction in paperwork and Not-In-Good-Order (NIGO) rates. These increased efficiencies ultimately lead to lower operational costs and ability to focus on revenue-generating activities.

**Advisors:** Advisors do not have to follow up with or wait on prospective clients to correct mistakes.

**Investors:** Gone are the days of receiving a mountain of paperwork with sticky notes marking where signatures are required. With e-signature, the process is completely paperless and instructions are intuitive. E-signature does not allow a client to finish the process until all required signatures are received, eliminating the risk of missing a signature.

## MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE

**Firms:** Overall, e-signature helps firms with signer authenticity, accountability and data integrity for critical forms and documents. By nature, if changes are made to a document post-signature, the signature is invalidated. E-signature vendors also track every part of the signature process, including the specific IP address and device used by the signee. Working with a credible e-signature vendor is critical in maintaining compliance.

**Advisors:** E-signature allows advisors to track documents and provides a detailed audit trail of activity, protecting them against potential fraud claims.

**Investors:** Investors can select personal, permanent signature styles. Signatures collected electronically are legally defensible based on metadata captured. As mentioned previously, changes made to a document post-signature invalidates the signature, further protecting the investor from forgery or information tampering.

## IFS E-Signature Partner & Security Spotlight

In order for an e-signature to be considered valid by FINRA, it must be an electronic mark "that clearly identifies the signatory and is otherwise in compliance with the [Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act](#), the guidance issued by the SEC relating to the E-Sign Act, and the guidance provided by FINRA through its interpretive letters, which address electronic approval processes generally." Both of IFS's e-signature partners provide reliable, defensible audit trails for their clients, along with the ability to verify who is signing a document through various authentication options.



- Helps firms meet compliance requirements by "controlling the signature process and ensuring all information remains secure"
- A complete and legally-binding court-admissible audit trail accompanies all documents
- ISO/IEC 27001 : 2005, PCI compliant & TRUSTe certified
- Learn more about DocuSign's security measures [here](#).



- Offers robust tracking & security features that allow clients to see exactly where a document is in the security process & protect against tampering & fraud
- Binds an individual to a digital signature through the "Flexible Identity, TotalAudit, Easy Verify & Signature History" capabilities
- Learn more about SIGNiX's security measures [here](#).

## INSIGHTS

Together, mobile support and e-signature capabilities directly enhance the advisor-client relationship. These important technologies increase accessibility for both investors and advisors, as well as promote collaboration and open lines of communication between advisors and investors. In order for firms to meet the changing needs of investors, as well as attract top-notch talent, they must embrace these technologies. Not only will these technologies enhance the advisor-client relationship, but they will also directly affect a financial firm's bottom line by increasing efficiency and improving customer service.

***Interested in learning how IFS can help your firm improve efficiency and increase revenue by embracing these technologies? Contact [sales@ifsautomation.com](mailto:sales@ifsautomation.com) or call 704.894.9331.***

***Stay tuned for our upcoming whitepaper on other emerging technologies like document integration and single signature, coming soon!***

## SOURCES

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