Today’s IT executives are faced with a diverse set of challenges. CIOs have invested heavily in expensive enterprise applications designed to automate core business processes. However, as their budgets shrink, IT teams are struggling just to maintain these core systems, let alone trying to customize them to meet their business managers’ constantly changing priorities.

Because making changes to these core systems requires significant investments in time, resources, and money, organizations often resort to creating inefficient manual workarounds for processes where the people involved are non-licensed or non-power users of the applications. This is especially true when the people are outside of the business’s firewall, such as partners, customers, and suppliers.

Additionally, IT teams struggle with how to enable departmental managers to efficiently generate and customize automated documents, such as invoices, statements, and catalogs, as well as how to allow individuals inside and outside of the organization to share and act on key documents without having the same software and hardware systems.

To meet their strategic business objectives, enterprises need a way to fully leverage the considerable investments they have already made in their enterprise applications, and need the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of various line-of-business managers.

Connecting people, processes, and applications through intelligent documents

Documents are a critical part of business processes and a primary method of communicating with people. Documents also provide a simplified interface for non-power users of core applications and can be easily changed and adapted to meet business needs. Today, enterprises use documents in a variety of ways, from gathering and distributing information to conducting transactions to routing approvals.

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform enables organizations to use secure and reliable intelligent documents as the preferred format for employees, customers, and partners to interact with enterprise applications at every step of a business process. With intelligent documents, enterprises can easily present personalized content, enable complex internal and external collaboration, capture the exchange of data and transactions between core applications and people or groups of people, and archive information in standard Portable Document Format (PDF).
Streamlining document-centric business processes

By leveraging the power and flexibility of intelligent documents, enterprises can overcome the challenges associated with adapting core applications to business needs. The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform solves four types of document-centric business processes:

- **Creating high-quality documents from enterprise applications or the desktop.** Enterprises need to create documents that easily communicate information to individuals. However, most core business systems have been intentionally architected to produce rudimentary documents, and insufficient tools and costly programming have made it difficult to easily produce high-quality, customized documents. The difficulty is compounded when the data comes from multiple sources. Adobe’s automated solutions merge content from enterprise applications—including text and images—with flexible templates to generate personalized, intelligent documents for delivery any time, anywhere, on any device. Adobe solutions also enable users to create intelligent documents directly from the desktop on an ad hoc basis.

- **Streamlining collaborative processes.** Collaboration can be a difficult task for an enterprise to accomplish because documents must flow within and between organizations, yet all participants in the review cycle may not have the same applications or system configurations to support proprietary or specialized document formats. Adobe solutions streamline collaborative processes across diverse groups of users. Intelligent documents can be created from nearly any source—from standard office productivity suites (such as Microsoft Office) and graphics applications to complex CAD authoring tools—and securely and reliably routed to users on any system or device for review, commenting, and approval, either with or without the help of a content management system.

- **Capturing data more efficiently from people inside and outside of the organization.** To communicate effectively with individuals across the enterprise, including partners and customers, organizations must provide a way for information to be easily and securely captured via a variety of channels, operating systems, and client devices, and then they must automatically validate, route, and archive that information. Adobe provides the broadest range of solutions for capturing data online or offline, across a variety of system configurations and client devices, for the convenience of users. By embedding complex business logic within the document, such as calculations and validations, Adobe solutions also enable more accurate and complete data to be easily integrated into enterprise applications.

- **Automating business processes not managed by core systems.** Enterprises today struggle with how to increase efficiency by including the appropriate internal and external users in their business processes. Adobe solutions automate document-based processes that involve interaction by employees, customers, and partners, while integrating data back into core systems at each step along the way. Adobe solutions include the ability to establish business rules and role-based processing, so enterprises can automate, track, and more efficiently manage processes that need to include individuals located inside and outside of the organization.

**The Persistence of Documents**

Documents remain a critical and familiar method for communicating, collaborating, and conducting transactions with customers, partners, and employees. However, current document-based processes are often unstructured and disconnected from enterprise applications, which results in inefficiencies, delays, and increased costs.
How the Adobe Intelligent Document Platform works

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform includes three key components: intelligent documents, universal clients, and a set of document services—the underlying Adobe technologies that create intelligent documents and integrate them into an enterprise’s business processes.

Intelligent documents

Intelligent documents combine the characteristics of familiar “static” documents with powerful business logic and data transport capabilities, and can be accessed via universal clients, such as the free Adobe® Reader® or Web browsers.

Universal clients

As the access point to intelligent documents, universal clients allow any person using the Adobe Reader or a Web browser to interact with intelligent documents. With over half a billion copies of Adobe Reader software downloaded worldwide, this application provides the greatest benefit to users, making intelligent documents viewable, both online and offline, across all major computing platforms and devices—including Windows®, UNIX®, Macintosh, and a variety of mobile platforms.

Adobe document services

Adobe document services enable the creation and management of intelligent documents and the integration of enterprise application data within them.

Document generation

Enterprises’ core applications generate transactional documents, such as invoices, statements, and catalogs. However, customizing these documents is difficult, particularly when the organization is operating in a multinational environment with multiple languages, currencies, and regulations and when personalization is required.

Adobe’s document generation services allow enterprises to dynamically generate, assemble, and manipulate high-quality, customized documents from enterprise applications in a secure and reliable format for delivery across the broadest range of platforms and devices. Adobe solutions also provide end users with the capability to create intelligent documents from the desktop for ad hoc distribution, collaboration, publishing, and archiving.

Collaboration

Most enterprises create documents that involve collaboration by teams of contributors. From legal contracts to sophisticated engineering drawings, these documents must be reviewed, commented upon, and approved by people working within and outside of the organization. Adding complexity, these documents often require multiple review cycles with multiple reviewers and approvals from individuals that may or may not own the authoring application.

Using Adobe collaboration services, enterprises can reduce time-consuming, error-prone review cycles by facilitating online document reviews and approvals across diverse groups of users. Reviewers apply feedback directly to the documents and approve them with digital signatures. The integrity of the source document remains intact, and comments can be tracked throughout the review cycle for auditing purposes. Enterprises can implement several levels of document collaboration, from simple ad hoc collaboration within workgroups to highly structured collaboration processes that can integrate with process management solutions.
Document control and security
To improve customer service and streamline processes, enterprises are increasing replacing business-critical, paper-based documents and forms with electronic versions. However, this growing shift from paper to digital documents for purchase orders, reports, financial statements, and more has raised security concerns around these documents and the information they contain.

Adobe solutions employ the industry’s most advanced and comprehensive products, technologies, and services to help protect a document’s authenticity, integrity, and confidentiality. Digital signatures enable users to certify documents and authorize transactions. Document controls help protect sensitive information by letting you restrict who can view, modify, repurpose, or print key documents.

Process management
Today’s enterprises are required to more effectively leverage core systems to automate a number of complex, forms-based transactional processes. From fulfilling external requests to routing internal documents for authorization, these processes involve capturing and managing data from a variety of individuals, which can require significant customization investment to core enterprise applications. Furthermore, gathering this information manually would require rekeying information into multiple systems, increasing the chances of human error.

Adobe solutions for process management deliver the broadest range of offerings for capturing data from internal and external users. Enterprises can create intelligent forms to extend core business processes without users having direct access to enterprise systems or being inside of the firewall. Additionally, enterprises can establish workflows based on simple or complex business rules, leveraging data captured within the form for processing to core business systems, such as CRM, ERP, and DCM systems.

Adobe solutions meet business needs
The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform provides the most cost-effective solution for enterprises to leverage their investments in existing core applications and have the flexibility to adapt to the rapidly changing needs of various line-of-business managers. By leveraging the power of Adobe solutions, enterprises can more effectively and efficiently meet their business needs.

About Adobe
Founded in 1982, Adobe Systems Incorporated (www.adobe.com), the leader in network publishing, offers a comprehensive line of software for enterprise and creative professional customers. Its products enable customers to create, manage, and deliver visually rich, compelling, and reliable content. Based in San Jose, California, Adobe is one of the world’s largest software companies.