



# Promoting growth and innovation.

PERSOL HOLDINGS improves business speed and compliance through electronic signatures with Adobe Sign.



*“Reliability was one of the biggest reasons for adopting Adobe Sign.”*

*Mr. Toshihiro Ozawa, Director, Executive Officer, PROGRAMMED Segment Lead, Chief Information Officer, PERSOL HOLDINGS CO., LTD.*

## SOLUTION

Adobe Sign, an Adobe Document Cloud solution  
Salesforce CRM

## RESULTS

-  Potential to save up to **¥60 MILLION** annually in stamp duty
-  Processing time **ACCELERATED** from days to hours; time to manage a contract **CUT** from 15 minutes to zero
-  A contract created and sent out in **10 SECONDS** instead of 7 minutes
-  Improved **COMPLIANCE** for documents of record



## PERSOL HOLDINGS CO., LTD.

Established in 2008

Employees: 32,654

Tokyo, Japan

[www.persol-group.co.jp/en/](http://www.persol-group.co.jp/en/)

### CHALLENGES

- Address inefficiencies in contract workflows from analog processes using paper
- Reduce risk from deficiencies in document management
- Handle growing labor and management costs
- Support diverse working styles

### USE CASES

- Administration & Control
- Digital Workflows
- HR Efficiency
- Sales Acceleration

### Promoting growth and innovation

PERSOL HOLDINGS CO., LTD. is the company that supports and drives consistent operations across the PERSOL Group. The PERSOL Group is a corporate group consisting of more than 90 domestic and overseas companies carrying out a wide variety of operations, from temporary staffing services and employment and recruitment advertisements, to IT outsourcing and planning development. PERSOL HOLDINGS undertakes a variety of digital transformations in the name of realizing the group vision, "Creating a social infrastructure for people and organizations that catalyzes growth and innovation."

PERSOL HOLDINGS and five other Group companies within PERSOL Group—including the MIIDAS and BRS business units for PERSOL CAREER CO., LTD.; PERSOL FACILITY MANAGEMENT CO., LTD.; PERSOL TECHNOLOGY STAFF CO., LTD.; PERSOL PROCESS & TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD.; and PERSOL TEMPSTAFF CO., LTD.—were early adopters of Adobe Sign, the Adobe electronic signature solution within Adobe Document Cloud. PERSOL HOLDINGS is also planning to expand use of Adobe Sign to overseas subsidiaries.

Using Adobe Sign, PERSOL HOLDINGS digitized workflows that were traditionally paper-based, such as contracts with clients and procurement, as well as workflow traceability processes. As a result, it has improved business efficiency and strengthened compliance.

Mr. Toshihiro Ozawa, Director, Executive Officer of the PROGRAMMED Segment Lead, Chief Information Officer at PERSOL HOLDINGS, and Ms. Yuko Baba, Group IT BITA (Business IT Architect) Department, General Manager at PERSOL HOLDINGS spoke about the road to implementing Adobe Sign and the results gained from digitizing document processes.

### Escape from analog

Every business in the PERSOL Group handles a tremendous number of documents, including estimates, orders, and contracts. Many of those documents use paper and are processed individually by each department, which causes various problems in terms of business efficiency, cost, and compliance. Among these, there are many detailed tasks associated with contracts, including printing, binding, stamping, and mailing documents. Not only does this take a great deal of time and effort, but it has the potential to cause management risks.

"Recently, we've started partnerships with numerous companies as part of our initiative toward open innovation, and our opportunities to develop new business has grown dramatically," says Mr. Ozawa. "We sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with other companies, but handling NDAs on paper can take several weeks, making it difficult to move forward. Depending on the type of contract, we may also be subject to costs such as stamp duty. If the correct stamp is not applied, we may be subject to an additional tax. Furthermore, managing documents is becoming more and more complicated, and it may be possible that upon completion of a contract, neither company has an official document of record."



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*Mr. Toshihiro Ozawa, Director, Executive Officer, PROGRAMMED Segment Lead, Chief Information Officer, PERSOL HOLDINGS CO., LTD.*

The Group began to realize that even though IT business applications continued to advance, people still spent a great deal of time on the analog business of processing large amounts of paper. This encouraged the Group to solidify a plan to digitize document workflows.

### Aiming for electronic signatures

When working toward digitalization of document workflows, the biggest hurdle was handling contracts that required signatures from outside of the Group. Typically, signatures involve a seal impressed on paper, making it difficult to digitize this process. PERSOL HOLDINGS investigated introducing electronic signatures to replace the use of seals.

PERSOL HOLDINGS approached introducing electronic signatures in three steps. First, it set goals that it wanted to accomplish after introduction. Next, it selected applications. Finally, it estimated results. PERSOL HOLDINGS set its goals as improving operational efficiency, reducing costs, reducing compliance risk, improving management of documents of record, and achieving paperless workflows to promote diverse work styles.

“Nowadays, when people talk about work style reform, one of the biggest things they’re talking about is eliminating paper processes,” says Mr. Ozawa. “Without this change, we cannot achieve an infrastructure suitable for diverse work styles. When we talk about dealing with diverse work styles, it’s not about solving how people are going to the office because they’re working on paper. Instead, I believe it’s about expanding the number of business processes that can be completed digitally.”

### Selecting applications and dealing with legal hurdles

The step that presented the most challenges for PERSOL HOLDINGS was deciding on applications. The company considered duty of confidentiality contracts, procurement orders, invoices, individual outsourcing agreements, employment contracts, and board of directors’ meeting minutes, but electronic signatures could not be used for any of these.

“There are a great many laws related to business operations, and it was a great deal of effort just to organize and understand information related to document handling,” says Ms. Baba. “For example, with employment contracts, the notification of working conditions must be a written notification. We realized that digitization wasn’t as simple as loading documents into Adobe Sign. Furthermore, we were expecting digital signatures to have the greatest impact on temporary worker contracts, but there were many vague areas when interpreting the laws, so we could not take this up right away.”



“By using APIs to link Adobe Sign and Salesforce, we can completely automate the front and backend system. Instead of taking seven minutes to create a contract, it now takes 10 seconds, and the 15 minutes of contract management cost per contract has been reduced to nearly zero.”

*Ms. Yuko Baba, Group IT BITA Department,  
General Manager, PERSOL HOLDINGS CO, LTD.*

Taking into account various legal factors, PERSOL HOLDINGS ultimately decided to start with outsourcing agreements and gradually expand digitalization of contract workflows involving outside parties. The Law on Book and Record Keeping through Electronic Methods has information related to contracts about business transactions, and many companies had already established a track record with these types of workflows, so it seemed comparatively safe.

### Expecting annual savings of 60 million yen

As a result of PERSOL HOLDINGS calculations, electronic signatures could reduce stamp duty costs by ¥60 million across PERSOL Group. There are approximately 60,000 order forms produced annually across PERSOL Group. The temporary employment business, which is a core Group business, processes over 45,000 individual temporary employment contracts annually. Digitizing all of these workflows was expected to produce considerably large effects.

### Results gained from three trial implementations

In September 2017, PERSOL HOLDINGS decided to introduce Adobe Sign. “Reliability was one of the biggest reasons for adopting Adobe Sign,” says Mr. Ozawa. “Adobe is the original developer of the PDF, the defacto standard for electronic documents. So we felt secure using Adobe Sign. We would like to expand usage abroad in the future, so it was also essential that we have a service that can be used globally.”

After introducing Adobe Sign, PERSOL HOLDINGS conducted several trials at PERSOL HOLDINGS and at Group businesses with the goal of expanding across the entire group.

The trial at PERSOL HOLDINGS involved diverse documents, including contracts and reports, and workflows that involved various departments. The goal was to investigate how much PERSOL Group could accelerate operations and reduce costs through Adobe Sign.

At PERSOL FACILITY MANAGEMENT, which was established in July 2017, all applicable processes were changed to standard processes ready for electronic signatures. The company identified specific challenges and established direction for each based on best practices. As this company itself was also new, implementation went extremely smoothly and quickly demonstrated strong results.

“Orders, receipts, and contracts previously took several days to process, but that time was shortened to less than a day, or just a few hours in many cases,” say Ms. Baba. “Furthermore, operations are much easier as processes are so simple, and orders can be completed immediately. People say that this helped to accelerate turnaround times.”

PERSOL CAREER runs a direct recruiting service for people who want to change jobs called “MIIDAS”. Those contracts are now processed using Adobe Sign with a goal of completely automating this service.

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Document Cloud

Adobe Sign

Salesforce CRM

“With MIIDAS, we have developed a fully automated system in which, after the applicant finishes applying for the service, the system searches for candidates, makes an interview offer, and schedules the interview automatically,” says Ms. Baba. “When we were using Salesforce as the contract management system, the final contract was exchanged on paper. We had to process this manually, which made managing the status of the contract difficult. By using APIs to link Adobe Sign and Salesforce, we can completely automate the front and backend system. Instead of taking seven minutes to create a contract, it now takes 10 seconds, and the 15 minutes of contract management cost per contract has been reduced to nearly zero.”

These three companies are already moving into full production. Preparations are underway for the temporary employment company PERSOL TEMPSTAFF and the business process outsourcing company PERSOL PROCESS & TECHNOLOGY to start using Adobe Sign. PERSOL HOLDINGS is also planning expansion of Adobe Sign to overseas subsidiaries.

### Looking toward for future digital revolutions

By introducing electronic signatures, PERSOL HOLDINGS has taken one giant step toward the digital revolution that the group is aiming for. However, there are still many hurdles that PERSOL HOLDINGS must face.

“After actually implementing electronic signatures, many issues came to the forefront,” says Ms. Baba. “Like the fact that there are many complex laws, and we cannot switch over procedures just because we have introduced electronic signatures. Furthermore, we keenly felt how essential it was to have full understanding of both clients and internal stakeholders. At the same time, those challenges produced results above what we expected. In addition to improving business efficiencies and reducing costs, we gained visibility into processes and we could easily create records of important agreements with legal value. Those were advantages that we hadn’t even expected. Both the pluses and minuses had great value, adding to our understanding.”

Finally, Mr. Ozawa says the following about the future of electronic signatures: “Electronic signatures are easy and convenient, but there is also a partner at the end of any customer contract. Even if we implement electronic signatures, the customer needs to agree to use the solution. This is particularly true in Japanese corporations where there is a tendency to not want to change existing processes. And trying to change the minds of each and every customer would take a great deal of time and effort. I think that there is a need to establish an electronic signature consortium and start by using smooth transactions between members of the consortium who have approved of electronic signatures. Once that becomes the defacto, we can quickly advance the acceptance of electronic signatures and improve productivity across society.”

For more information

<http://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/sign.html>



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