OUTLAW

Democracy International

Industry	International Development
Size	51 - 250 employees
Location	Bethesda, MD

Key Results

50% faster closing rate   **100% acceleration in batch auto-generation**   **Zero contract errors**

Who is Democracy International?
Democracy International has been developing new tools, research and approaches to strengthen peace and democracy for the last 15 years. Working with governments, ministries and NGOs, Democracy International has worked on some 200 projects that span across the globe.

"From request to approval to signature, the whole process has been streamlined and reduced the total time for contracts to be done by half. Now I can send a contract to someone on the other side of the world, go to sleep, wake up and find the contract is signed. I sign it and we're done. There's zero lag time — it saves half our day.

Evan Smith Vice President

Democracy International Centralizes their Distributed Workforce by Streamlining Contract Workflows

The Challenge

Democracy International's mission is to solve democratic and global development challenges around the world. Working with governments, ministries and NGOs, they collaborate on numerous contracts to develop projects to achieve a more peaceful society. In addition to complicated contracts, 90% of Democracy International is a distributed workforce — long before the coronavirus pandemic — with field offices across the globe. Without a centralized contracting system that could set standards and boost productivity across all their offices, they realized their manual contract process was becoming unsustainable.

For an organization dealing with multiple time zones, the manual contract process was drawn out and cumbersome. "Our contracts were tied to physical pieces of paper for approvals and requests. It was time intensive, where staff was walking around the office to print and sign," explains Evan Smith, VP of Democracy International.

The lack of centralization made it difficult to streamline the process and regulate all their contract templates. "There was the perennial challenge of ensuring all teams were using the same contract template and that rogue edits weren't being made," recalls Evan.

Working in multitudes of countries meant different labor rules — some regulations that could change randomly. It was becoming clear that the right contracting platform would not only streamline their contracting but be able to make contract changes at scale across their offices.

The Solution

Instant transparency from anywhere

After a short implementation period, Evan and his team were ready to use Outlaw, and they saw increased efficiency over their contracts right away. By utilizing the platform's Check-points, approvals no longer needed to be requested by an email exchange. Instead agreements could move forward through triggered notifications and automations.

Through Outlaw's dashboard and audit logs, Democracy International now had a completely streamlined internal process. "Anyone who is involved in a contract can have full transparency on the progress of the contract. Everyone knows where things are and when things get done. This is a useful accountability system we didn't have previously."

Getting back contract control across remote offices

Standardizing the contract process across their field offices was easy through Outlaw's template management tool Draft. Not only was it instantaneous for field offices to auto-generate contracts from approved templates, but they were customizable. "Before, our field offices would sign some version of a contract that had evolved slowly over time." By using built-in conditional logic and intake forms within the templates, contracts could now be tailored to the needs of each office, reducing rogue contracts down to zero.

After using a laborious combination of Microsoft Word and mail merge, Democracy International's HR team was also eager to switch and utilize Draft for batch contract generation. From annual bonus letters to integrating changed clauses in employee contracts in El Salvador, the HR team was able to consolidate multiple steps into one time-saving platform. "Sending out personalized contracts in bulk took forever previously — now it's maybe an hour."

The Outcome

"From request to approval to signature, the whole process has been streamlined and reduced the total time for contracts to be done by half." Evan explains further, "For example, now I can send a contract to someone on the other side of the world, go to sleep, wake up and find the contract is signed. I sign it and we're done. There's zero lag time — it saves half our day."

"What started out as a platform for the Programs team has expanded to Operations, and we're finding different uses on the regular. I really appreciate Outlaw's flexibility and how hands-on customer support is to help. All across the organization, we have been able to find new ways to leverage the platform to save us time and resources drastically."

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