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# Is Your Company Ready For The Future Of Work?

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FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY  
COMMISSIONED BY BROTHER INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION | JUNE 2021

## Workplace Disruption Will Permanently Change Future Work Strategies

The unexpected arrival of the pandemic in 2020 forced every organization to assemble a patchwork of unplanned workforce responses as many moved to remote-work solutions. Now, every firm faces difficult decisions around what the future of the office — and the future of work — will be. It is now time for organizations to decide where employees can or will work from in the future.<sup>1</sup>

In this environment, leaders must make a series of choices for how to best support their workforce with infrastructure that promotes employee safety, connects a distributed workforce, and fuels distanced collaboration. Document management (DM) strategies are a key enabler the future of work, but organizations must act to ensure these strategies support their employees' current and future needs.

### Key Findings



Document management strategies are a mission critical part of how organizations reorient their future of work strategies.



Most organizations believe their document management strategy can't satisfy their employees' current needs, and the problem will grow exponentially in the future.



Organizations need distributed document management infrastructure to support enduringly distributed employees and require solutions that will easily and securely integrate with existing platforms.

# Distributed Work Requires Distributed Document Management Strategies

Forrester predicts that around 60% of organizations will adopt a hybrid future work model, which is defined as at least 10% of employees working in anywhere-work mode at least two days a week.<sup>2</sup> This is similar to how our survey respondents plan to orient their document management strategies. When asked to rate their organizations' current printing and document management infrastructure from one ("Fully centralized") to 10 ("Fully distributed"), surveyed decision-makers selected a median value of six, which means their organization is currently hybridized with a slight bend towards distributed solutions.

**! Most firms will adopt a hybrid work model, and document management strategies are evolving to match.**

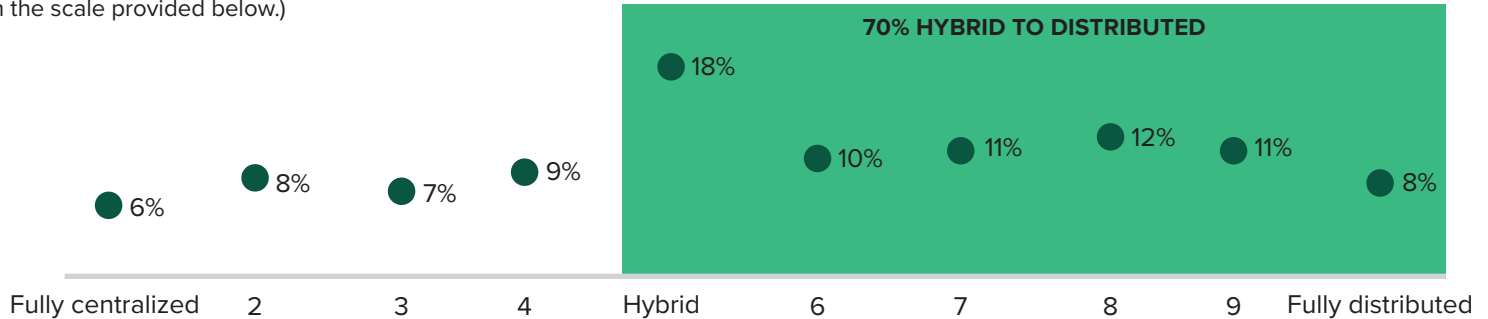
## “How would you describe your organization’s current printing and document management infrastructure?”

(Plot your answer on the scale provided below.)

### Current State (Q1)

Median (6%)

Mean (5.8%)



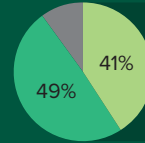
## Printing And Document Management Is Mission Critical For The Future Of Work

Firms are reevaluating their workplace infrastructure as they face shifts in the nature of the workplace. As they do so, organizations need to reinvent their critical work technologies. This includes printing and document management, which 94% of respondents described as mission critical for helping employees collaborate and get work done.

Organizations are looking to support distributed workers where employees are more likely to print or scan from home, and where at-office paper usage is shifting to the home as well. Interestingly, nearly two-thirds of respondents reported that a significant portion of their workforce will stay remote in the future, so many organizations are making longer-term bets on their infrastructure, rather than simply adjusting to a temporary change.

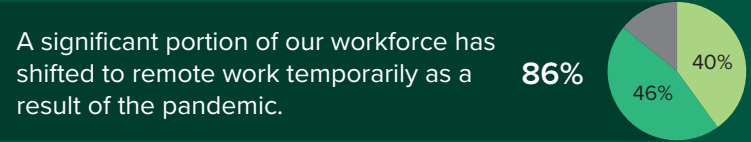
### “How much do you agree with each of the following statements about your company’s experience over the past year?”

● Completely agree ● Agree



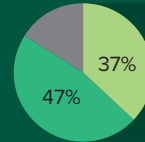
**90%**

Our organization is reevaluating (or plans to) its approach to workplace infrastructure and technology.



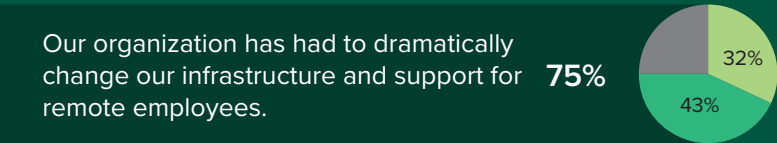
**86%**

A significant portion of our workforce has shifted to remote work temporarily as a result of the pandemic.



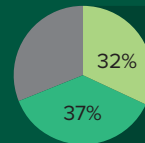
**84%**

Our document management strategy increasingly needs to account for at-home employee printing and scanning.



**75%**

Our organization has had to dramatically change our infrastructure and support for remote employees.



**69%**

Overall, our paper consumption and use of printers across the organization is significantly less than it was a year ago.

## Organizations Are Fundamentally Shifting Their Document Management Strategies

As anyone who has attended a virtual meeting during the pandemic can attest, successful future work strategies will rely in part on innovations for critical work infrastructure to succeed.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it's not surprising that the vast majority of respondents are in a state of flux when it comes to numerous aspects of their work environment.

Respondents showed that their organizations are poised to fundamentally upend how they support employees and customers through document management technologies that power both employee collaboration and customer experience like printing, copying, and scanning. Over half of respondents reported that their organizations have changed their approach to document management and, by the end of this year, nearly nine out of 10 respondents will have fundamentally changed to more distributed document management approaches.

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**“Given how the pandemic has changed many work environments, which of the following aspects of your work environment is your organization considering changing today and in the future?”**

- We have changed in the past year.
- We are planning to change by the end of this year.

Personnel and scheduling (staggered schedules and hybrid workforces) 41% 50% 91%

Virtual collaboration and remote-work software 62% 28% 90%

! Document management technologies including printing/copying/scanning 53% 35% 88%

Communication and mobile technologies we use with customers externally 53% 35% 88%

Company technology policies, manuals, and training 45% 42% 87%

Employee recruitment and onboarding 47% 36% 83%

Base: 118 US director-level or higher decision-makers who direct or influence their organizations' corporate printing and document management technology  
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Brother International, April 2021

## Fewer Than One In Five Are Ready To Meet Their Employees' Future Document Management Needs

Decision-makers are keenly aware of the factors that will upend their workplace infrastructure strategies. There's a lot of work ahead to get organizations ready for the disruption that's happening in the workplace, especially as it applies to how current document management infrastructure supports their employees' needs. Fewer than half of respondents reported that their organizations' current document management infrastructure meets employees' current needs, and their preparedness drops below one-fifth when they consider what their employees will need in the future.

**!** Most organizations' document management infrastructure fails to fully support employees.

**“How well do you think your organization’s current document management infrastructure supports your employees’ current and future collaboration and knowledge-sharing needs?”**

(Showing “Excellent support”)

**42%**  
Meeting our employees’  
current needs



**19%**  
Meeting our employees’  
future needs

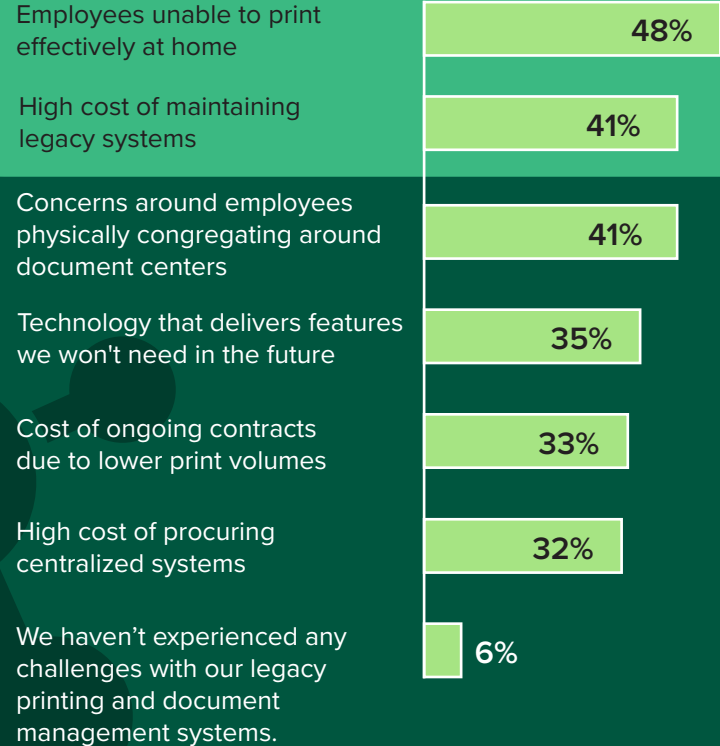


## Legacy Systems Hinder Organizations' Readiness For The Future Of Work

A distributed workforce means work happens anywhere — and that means printing, scanning, and copying happens anywhere, too. But respondents reported that legacy document management systems leave their organizations ill-prepared to securely and safely power employee collaboration and productivity.

Legacy systems make it hard for employees to print at home, while driving high costs and creating possible headaches for work strategies that must account for social-distancing considerations. Overall, just 6% of respondents avoided at least one of the challenges presented.

### “Which of the following challenges has your organization experienced with its legacy document management systems and/or contracts?”



## Want Happy, Supported Customers? Start With Happy, Supported Employees

Fundamentally, employees who have the resources and support to engage in a distributed work strategy are more productive and will do better work that delivers what customers want more frequently.<sup>4</sup> Respondents drew a direct line between supporting employees with document management strategies and better business and employee outcomes.

About half of respondents reported that, if their organizations can't provide better support for employees' collaboration and knowledge sharing requirements, the quality of employee work and employee productivity will suffer. Among the 94% of respondents who saw at least one negative outcome arising from inadequate document management infrastructure and strategies, around one-third believed that lost revenue, slower digital innovation, and less responsive customer experiences occurred.

**“Which of the following issues would your organization face if it weren't able to properly support employees' collaboration and knowledge-sharing needs?”**





## Distributed Work Isn't A Flash In The Pandemic — It's The New Work Reality

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated shifts that were gradually underway across a large number of technology and business areas, hastening organizations' efforts to digitize business and operations for better virtual customer connections.<sup>5</sup> But the large-scale bets these shifts represent show these choices aren't just about surviving the last year — they are about using a period of heightened disruption to shift and future-proof strategies.

Organizations' document management decisions are no exception. Respondents reported that their organizations' future document management strategies will become even more distributed in the future, as they adjust to ongoing workplace disruption and the advent of a more distributed new normal.

**! Document management strategies are about placing future bets, not just surviving current context.**

**“As you consider the future needs of your workforce, which of the following approaches to document management infrastructure best aligns to your organization’s plans?”**

(Plot your answer on the scale provided below.)

### Current State (Q1)

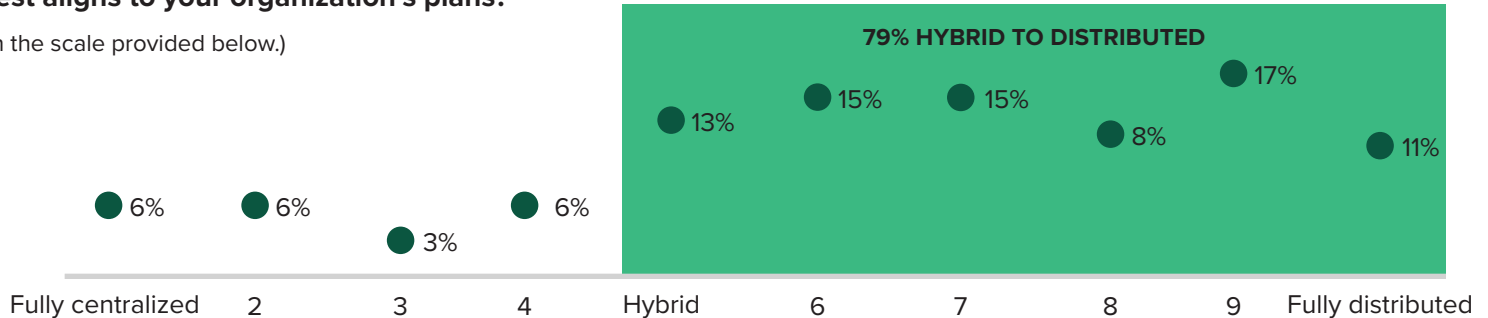
Median (6%)

Mean (5.8%)

### Future State (Q9)

Median (7%)

Mean (6.4%)



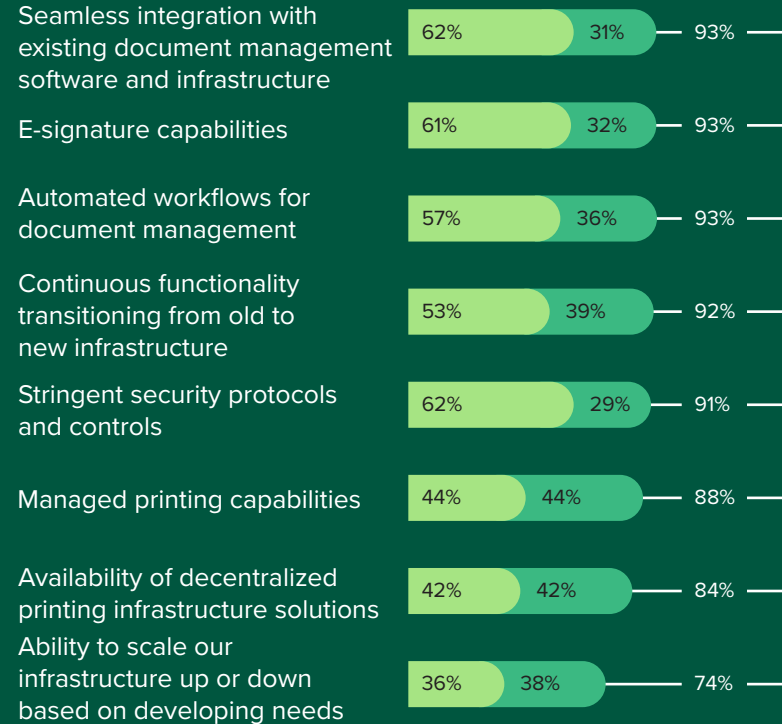
## Organizations Need Easy, Convenient, And Automated Document Management Tools

Organizations understand that even a decentralized office environment will require centralized investments in technology to provide remote access to common technological and information resources. As organizations evaluate and choose the tools that will power their future document management strategies, respondents reported their organizations are looking for tools that will easily integrate with existing software and infrastructure, since overnight wholesale change is unrealistic for most organizations today.

Organizations are also focusing on how document management can power customer experiences through e-signature capabilities, while also seeking solutions that can address concerns over data security. Decision-makers are interested in driving powerful, time-saving automation in critical document management workflows.

## “How important are each of the following features for your future document management infrastructure?”

● Very important ● Important



## Conclusion

The workplace is experiencing discontinuous change that will disrupt the foundations of what it means to work and where work gets done. Document management is no exception. As organizations consider their future document management strategies, leaders should bear in mind three principal trends:

- **Distributed, decentralized workplaces will become more commonplace.** This will necessitate new cloud-based connections and a document management strategy that addresses remote work.
- **Work experiences will evolve to meet changing customer demands.** Incorporating functionality like e-signature shows that organizations are applying internal lessons to external use cases as well.
- **Automation will drive efficiency.** Automation will allow employees and customer to connect through secure, coordinated, and efficient document management workflows.

### Project Director:

Nicholas Phelps,  
Principal Market Impact Consultant

### Contributing Research:

Forrester's Future Of Work  
research group



## Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Brother. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 118 printing and document management decision-makers. The custom survey began and was completed in April 2021.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Source: "Don't Miss Your Anywhere-Work Opportunity," Forrester Research, Inc., March 29, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Source: "Pick From Three Types of Anywhere-Work Strategy," Forrester (<https://www.forrester.com/fn/5s55P33ImFFYx3e32S46z7>).

<sup>3</sup>Source: "Don't Miss Your Anywhere-Work Opportunity," Forrester Research, Inc., March 29, 2021.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Source: "COVID-19 Accelerated Your Digital Momentum — Don't Slow Down," Forrester Research, Inc., February 25, 2021.

### ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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## Demographics

### GEOGRAPHY

United States (100%)

### DEPARTMENT

IT (47%)

Operations (25%)

Marketing/advertising (14%)

Procurement/infrastructure (13%)

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

500 to 999 (24%)

1,000 to 4,999 (48%)

5,000 to 19,999 (19%)

20,000 or more (9%)

### SENIORITY

C-level executive (13%)

Vice president (38%)

Director (49%)

A modern office interior with desks, chairs, and plants. The scene is dimly lit, with a large window in the background. The office features several desks with ergonomic chairs, a large potted plant in a grey planter, and a colorful abstract painting on the wall. The overall atmosphere is professional and contemporary.

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