

Remove  
'friction' from  
your workflow.





## Introduction

Do your customers get “friction” when they interact with your company? Customer friction is any step in the customer experience that impedes the customer from buying your product, having success with your product, or finding value in their interaction with you and your company. Between short attention spans and thin patience levels, organizations need to focus on creating frictionless customer experiences. Reducing customer friction can not only improve your customer experience but also help increase sales and build brand loyalty over time.



### What’s the Rub?

[What is the role of information management in customer experience?](#) The term “friction” is commonly used in marketing as it indicates a potential sticking point for a customer in their interaction with a company. In short, too much friction in the marketing and sales process holds an organization back from performing as it should. Friction often results in a lost customer.

The same kind of friction can afflict your everyday work processes as well. If workers must fight to find the information they need it can slow the pace of business and inhibit profitability. This is especially true when using antiquated and paper-based systems where activities are wasteful and should be automated.



### Freedom from Friction

One cause of friction is the fact that many key processes continue to rely on paper and manual workflow. According to the latest [AIIM research](#), only 49% of our respondents think they will have eradicated paper invoices by 2025. And [previous research](#) stated that over 30% report that most of their important business content is still referenced and filed using paper. This is especially challenging in info-intense activities like contract management, accounts payable, or new client onboarding.

Most companies spend a lot of time thinking about customer service. Very few companies spend time removing customer friction. But even companies with excellent customer service can be susceptible to losing both existing and potential customers to friction. Reducing or eliminating friction from your business can have dramatic effects including a higher lead-to-customer conversion rate, increased retention, and renewal rates, and enhanced productivity in the workplace.



## Free at Last

Amazon is one good example of a frictionless customer experience. From the early days of one-click ordering to now, Amazon has become very good at figuring out what the customer wants and how quickly they want it delivered. Amazon Prime – a huge and ongoing investment in frictionless two-day and even same-day delivery – changed the game of ecommerce.

More recently Starbucks took the friction out of getting your morning cuppa joe with an app-based order and pick-up process; a near friction-free experience perfected. I'm still amazed when I walk into a Starbucks, pass the always-long line and grab my coffee and go. In short, old ways of working are often no longer acceptable as improved process agility, better business intelligence, and superior service become hallmark capabilities of digital transformation.



## Data Barriers to Friction-Free Experience

One common issue that creates friction is a lack of customer data or data silos. Having historical customer data readily available can vastly improve your customer experience. For example, let's say your customer keeps having a problem with your product. They've called your customer service team twice, only to get a temporary solution that doesn't seem to last. Now, they're calling for the third time and are expecting you to fix this once and for all, but if you haven't recorded their prior interactions, your reps will have no idea that this customer has had this problem before. Rerunning the same troubleshooting steps you tried the last two times will only frustrate the customer, and prove you're incapable of fulfilling their need.



## The Human Touch

New technology and better data only go so far. To provide a truly superior customer experience requires a human touch. Give customers a great experience, and they'll buy more, be more loyal and share their experience with friends. That's what every company strives for. Yet so many consumers seem disappointed. There is an experience disconnect: companies adopt the latest technology but haven't focused on – or invested in – the most meaningful aspects of customer experience, the people.

What truly makes for a good experience? Speed. Convenience. Consistency. Friendliness. And a human touch – creating real connections by making technology feel more human and giving employees what they need to create better customer experiences.





## Focus on Friction

Digital Transformation has compelled companies to a renewed focus on removing friction. Several metrics bring clarity to the effort:



### Revenue Growth

- Improving bottom-line performance



### Profitability

- Cost and increasing sales



### Customer Experience

- Delighting customers is a differentiator



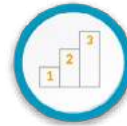
### Competitive Advantage

- Out-manuevering the competition



### Innovation

- Developing new products and new markets



## Three Steps to Eliminate Friction

To remain competitive, organizations are changing their approaches to eliminate friction in key business processes. Some signs of friction include high costs and error rates, slower cycle times, and a lack of process transparency that limits strategic decision-making. How can you eliminate friction? You can break it down into three important steps.



### Step 1 – Input

Over 30% of AIIM member organizations say that digital information is being printed and then processed alongside the paper. Overcoming this challenge requires that you have the ability to capture information from any source in any format, including physical documents, electronic documents, and document images via mailbox, email, fax, and file transfer. Key capabilities are advanced image processing and normalization to clean up documents and interpret codes.



### Step 2 – Analyze

The next step is to intelligently classify documents and extract metadata. This includes a clear determination of what type of information you are dealing with, the context of that information, and a validation that the content is accurate and correctly meets the needs of the process. This is also the time to recognize, read, and leverage barcodes, and implement audit trails for information governance.





### Step 3 – Deliver

Information: you've got to be able to capture it, you've got to be able to understand it, and you've got to be able to deliver it in ways that remove friction from the process. One of the biggest roadblocks is that information continues to be hard to find. It is not uncommon for organizations to have multiple repositories and systems all housing critical information that is isolated in discrete silos. This step is where you connect data and documents to workflows in ways that are intuitive, timely, and in real-time.



### Capture Advantages

[Digital Transformation allows you to capture a number of frictionless advantages.](#)

#### Where do you look for results?

Converting paper to digital documents can speed the pace of business. This creates the ability to accurately ingest multiple data sources and types of information. It also helps establish systems and approaches that can be seamlessly integrated with your already existing systems.



## An Aerospace Manufacturer is Flying High on Paperless Workflows

**Aerospace manufacturer Alp Aviation partnered with Iron Mountain to digitize and automate workflows throughout their business.**

Established in 1998 in Eskisehir, Turkey, Alp Aviation is a premium manufacturer of flight-critical and rotating parts, systems, and subsystems. During its 15-year history, the company has developed over 70 one-of-a-kind manufacturing processes. Alp Aviation's dedicated proprietary systems provide over 40% cost savings compared to classical production methods.<sup>1</sup>

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, most of Alp Aviation's 1,300 highly skilled employees started working remotely to serve a worldwide customer base that wanted new products, faster. At the time, most of the company's processes used a mix of physical and digital formats--including purchase orders, contracts, and correspondence. These manual, document-centric processes caused bottlenecks and delays and made accessing information difficult, especially for the remote workforce.

The company turned to Iron Mountain seeking help on its journey to becoming a paperless digital-first organization. Together, the two companies implemented Iron Mountain's enterprise content management platform (ECM), a low-barrier-to-entry information management solution that helped improve process workflows and deliver better, more efficient outcomes.

### **Bringing Transparency to a Murky Process**

Manufacturers in the aerospace industry are under constant pressure to maximize profitability and improve efficiency – forces that were heightened by the pandemic. Decision-makers at Alp Aviation realized that if they were going to continue to meet their customer's expectations, they were going to need to digitize. "The main reason for putting Iron Mountain's ECM into use at Alp Aviation was to transfer business processes that were carried out on paper in office and production areas to an electronic platform. We dreamt of a paperless environment," said Atilla Ünver, Director of Information Technologies at Alp Aviation.

At the time, many of Alp Aviation's sales and production systems were reliant on paper documents and manual data entry. As the business grew, this labor-intensive process became untenable. Paper documents were difficult to manage and often got lost, impeding the company's approval processes and ability to deliver products and services in an efficient manner. Furthermore, teams across the company did not share the same visibility into accounts and workflows, creating confusion between team members and inconsistent experiences for customers.

Through the ECM, Iron Mountain worked with Alp Aviation to scan and digitize its existing paper-based systems. New workflow management and automation processes ensured that all company and customer data was properly indexed in an efficient manner. The solution also gave Alp Aviation full control over document access and editing rights to ensure that the right employees were given instant access only to the information

they need at any given time. The company began to see benefits immediately. "We can now see where any form is in the process and where approvals are needed," explained Ünver. "Job approvers have full visibility into pending work lists, which has provided workflow efficiency and the problem of lost paper forms was eliminated."

### **Improving Outcomes Starts with Improving Internal Processes**

Alp Aviation manufactures a wide variety of aerospace components ranging from helicopter tail rotor drive shafts to flight-critical structural components and assemblies. One of the most crucial stages during manufacturing is the inspection and testing phase, which must be thoroughly documented, reviewed, and approved. Previously, the team's manual system acted as a bottleneck in the workflow, reducing efficiency and slowing delivery times for customers. The paper-based process also increased the risk of mistakes since there was no single pane of glass from which to view all activities.

Iron Mountain's solution helped Alp Aviation overcome these hurdles by implementing an automated process for forms processing. New digital workflows ensure the right paperwork gets to the right person at the exact right time in the process. Inspectors are now able to search for and retrieve all relevant paperwork related to the project at hand. And two-way integration with Alp Aviation's manufacturing execution system (MES) provides the unified view of operations the team had been looking for.

"New seamless integrations with our MES system have ensured that the quality inspection tests conducted during the production phase are carried out with exact precision, and on time. Using our newly designed workflows, the right forms reach the intended users, and processes are completed in the fastest way possible," said Ünver.

## Reducing Tech Burden for All Employees

One of the most important considerations for Alp Aviation when evaluating information management providers was the ease of use. The solution needed to provide seamless two-way integration with their existing technologies, scalability as the team grew and needs changed, and a user-friendly system that was easy to learn. Iron Mountain's solution met all of these requirements.

"The most important feature of the ECM system, in our opinion, is that without having any programming knowledge and infrastructure, a developer can design the processes and forms with very short initial training. And end users can easily access the forms from live platforms," explained Ünver.

So far, Alp Aviation has digitized over 100 processes using the solution and they don't have any plans of stopping. "Our process and form design project will continue until all processes at Alp Aviation evolve into a completely paperless environment," said Ünver.

**To learn more about how Iron Mountain helps customers increase efficiency and improve outcomes, [click here](#).**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.alp.com.tr/Hakkimizda>



## Moving Forward

Organizations must be more agile and intelligent in order to keep pace with their competition. One way to do that is by removing friction from the processes that drive your business every day. The opportunity is to apply information, technology, and people in ways that innovate, compete, and improve the performance of your organization. Look for providers and partners with the right mix of expertise, capability, and vision needed to help you make the most of your efforts.

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## About Iron Mountain

Iron Mountain protects, unlocks, and extends the value of your information and assets throughout their lifecycle - whatever they are, wherever they are, however they're stored. But we see this as so much more... it's your work. And in that work lies the insight and power to accelerate your business and drive your organization forward.

Since 1951, Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM) has been your strategic partner to care for this work. A global leader, and trusted by more than 225,000 organizations around the world including 95% of the Fortune 1000, we provide solutions that include information management, digital transformation, secure storage, secure destruction, as well as data centers, cloud services, and art storage and logistics. We help customers lower costs and risks, comply with regulations, recover from disasters, enable a more digital way of working, and reach their sustainability goals.

Our relationship is a true partnership where you trust us not only to preserve institutional knowledge and enhance efficiency, security, and access but to make your work mean more. Because in that work, is the power to not only accelerate business, but elevate it.

**For more information visit:**

[www.ironmountain.com](http://www.ironmountain.com)





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