

# Reducing Obstacles and Building Loyalty via Electronic Signatures

---

A CEB Insight Brief Commissioned by  
eSignLive™, a VASCO Company

## Key Findings

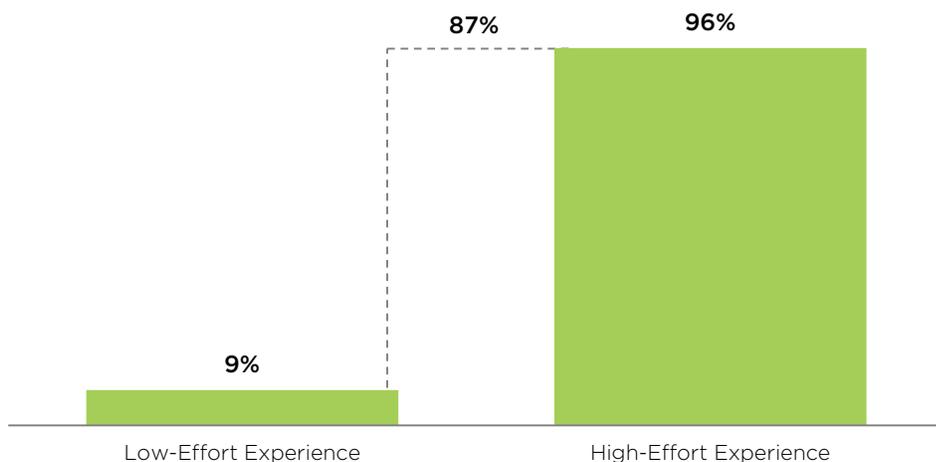
1. Clients have become digital and are looking to their wealth firms to provide a simplified and low-effort experience. Firms that fail to adapt to higher client expectations risk losing assets to competitors who can provide a low-effort customer experience.
2. Clients feel they collaborate more effectively with their advisor when technology is used, but most advisors are unsatisfied with the current tools at their disposal. As a result, there is growing concern among wealth executives over emerging low-effort technological threats, such as robo-advisors.
3. Given that 63% of clients who have a low-effort onboarding experience will recommend their advisor, firms need to move quickly to incorporate tools—such as e-signatures—to improve onboarding and eliminate account opening obstacles.

## Clients Seek Simplicity

To appeal to an increasingly tech-savvy and digitally oriented client base, wealth firms are investing in creating a comprehensive digital offering that spans research, purchasing, and ongoing transactions. This approach takes into consideration the decreasing demand for frequent advisor contact, as well as more sophisticated features in digital channels that can reduce the amount of client effort and reinforce loyal relationships. The shift from frequent in-person meetings to a more collaborative, multichannel customer experience is facilitated by technology, and is a response both to high expectations for digital service from customers, as well as an increasing threat from emerging online wealth management and planning providers, such as robo-advisors.

First impressions matter, and the impact of providing a low-effort onboarding experience on the overall loyalty of client relationships is significant. Customers who report having a high-effort experience are 87% more likely to switch firms than those customers who report having a low-effort experience (Figure 1). Clients look for a seamless and consistent experience with their wealth firm, no matter what product they are discussing or what channel they are using to access their accounts.

Figure 1: Disloyalty of Customers Reporting High vs. Low Effort Willingness to Switch Service Provider Based on Experience, 2014



*n* = 54,166 clients; tested more than 100 variables.  
Source: CEB analysis.

### About CEB

CEB is a best practice insight and technology company. In partnership with leading organizations around the globe, we develop innovative solutions to drive corporate performance. CEB equips leaders at more than 10,000 companies with the intelligence to effectively manage talent, customers, and operations. CEB is a trusted partner to 90% of the Fortune 500, nearly 75% of the Dow Jones Asian Titans, and more than 85% of the FTSE 100. More at [cebglobal.com](http://cebglobal.com).

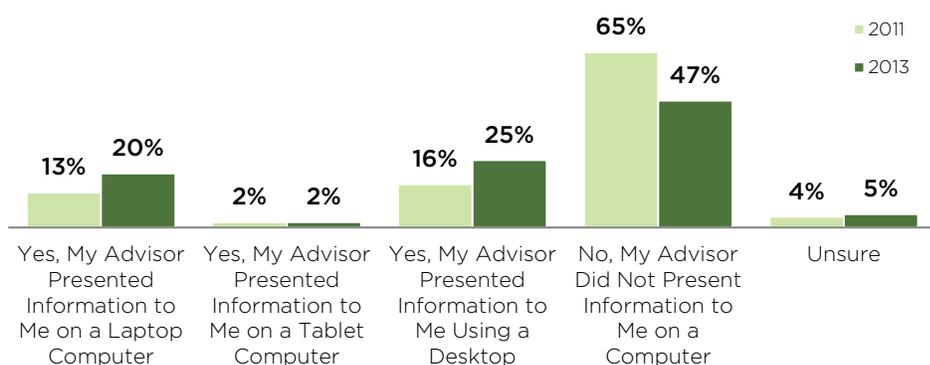
This study may not be reproduced or redistributed without expressed permission.

## Clients Expect Digital Interactions

Technology usage among consumers is high, and customers have come to expect digital interactions from service providers, including their wealth firm. Across all age segments, the majority of customers describe themselves as “technology-embracing.” However, although advisor adoption of digital tools is on the rise, nearly half of polled consumers stated that their advisor did not present information on a computer—either desktop or laptop—and only 22% were presented information on a laptop computer or tablet device (Figure 2).

Figure 2: In the Past 12 Months, Has Your Primary Wealth Manager Presented Information to You On A Computer Instead of Paper During An In-Person Meeting?

Percentage of Respondents, 2013



n = 229.

Source: CEB 2013 Client Experience Survey.

Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

## Better Technology Needed for All Advisors

Clients have come to expect to interact digitally with their advisors, but advisors need more effective tools to deliver. In CEB’s Advisor Benchmarking Survey, those client-facing tools that facilitate interactions, such as client web portals and mobile advisor tools, were ranked as less than effective (Figure 3). Wealth firms should be concerned with equipping advisors with digital tools, as many of their clients are also being targeted by emerging online wealth management providers. These self-service tools and online advisory services put consumers in direct control of achieving their financial goals with minimal advisor input.

Figure 3: Effectiveness of Technology

Mean Response, 2012



n = 1,004.

Source: CEB 2012 Advisor Benchmarking Survey.

Note: Note: Effectiveness scores were calculated by assigning the following numerical values to responses: 1 = Very ineffective, 2 = Ineffective, 3 = Somewhat ineffective, 4 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 5 = Somewhat effective, 6 = Effective, 7 = Very effective.

This study may not be reproduced or redistributed without expressed permission.

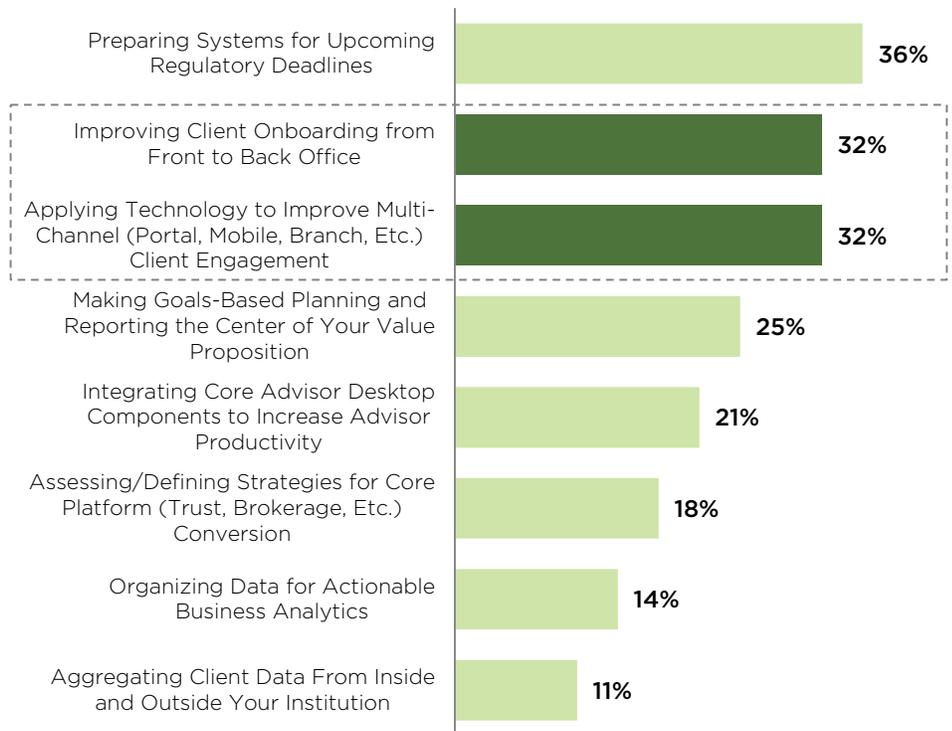
## Effort Reduction Focused on Onboarding and Channel Access

As wealth firms look to improve client-facing processes that are currently high-effort, onboarding and channel access stand out as two areas where firms should focus on for reducing their clients' effort. Most firms recognize this, and—aside from the perennial need to prepare for regulatory changes—improving client onboarding from front to back office and applying technology to improve multichannel client engagement are the top two priorities for firms (Figure 4).

Making the experience easier for clients not only drives initial engagement, but also drives long-term loyalty. However, many firms are still lagging on the digitization and automation initiatives that can facilitate easy onboarding. Failing to effectively modernize processes and information flows can result in a high-effort experience that runs the risk of endangering loyalty. Executives realize that multichannel engagement and onboarding are important projects, but are not confident in their ability to execute on those initiatives. Firms are seeking to get a better handle on the processes and workflows that contribute to advisor efficiency by investing in technologies such as business process management (BPM) and enterprise content management (ECM). These solutions can help uncover unanswered questions, such as how to approach signature capture, workflow, and storage for electronic or digital signatures.

Figure 4: What are the Top Two Areas Most Critical During the Next 12 Months?

*Percentage of Wealth Management Executives, 2014*



*n* = 28.

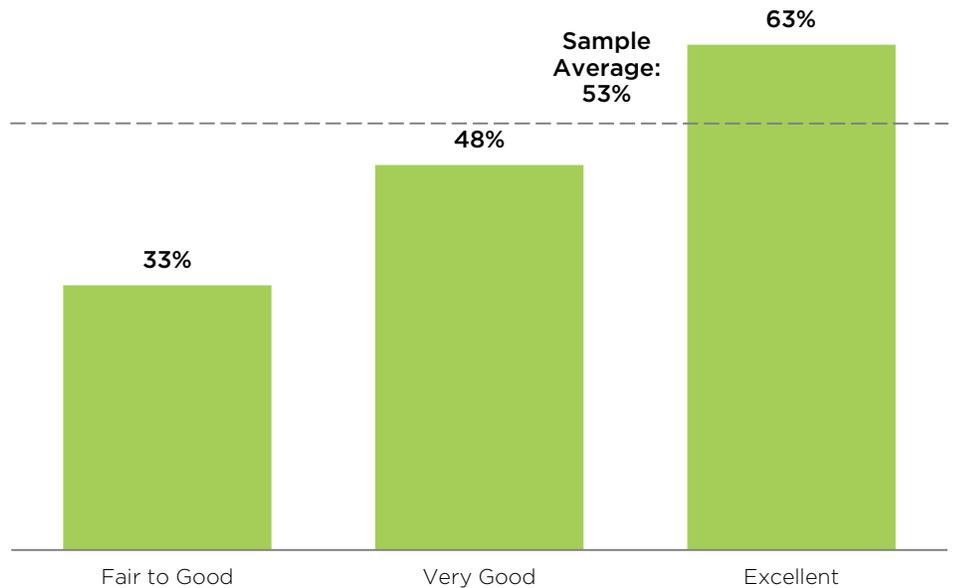
Source: CEB TowerGroup Wealth Management 2014 Agenda Poll.

## Excellent Onboarding Helps Win Referrals

Clients who give favorable ratings of initial interactions at their firm are almost twice as likely to recommend their firm than those who have a fair or even good onboarding experience (Figure 5). Traditionally, e-signature has taken a back seat to other technology priorities at wealth management firms. However, as it becomes clear that reducing paper-based workflows and simplifying onboarding processes can have a significant impact on generating loyal client relationships, firms should take a step back to consider where in the onboarding process they can make high-impact investments. The benefits of simplified transactions—often facilitated via e-signature—expand beyond onboarding to other transactions and workflows requiring signatures, and the adoption of this technology can help reduce obstacles and improve loyalty in other areas as well.

Figure 5: New Clients Who Recommend Their Firm, by Rating of Initial Interactions

Past 12 Months, April 2011



*n* = 132.

Source: CEB 2011 High-Net-Worth Client Experience Survey.

Note: New clients are defined as those with three years or less of advisor and firm tenure.

### eSignLive

eSignLive is the e-signature solution behind some of the world's most trusted brands in regulated industries and enables organizations to digitize business processes and conduct secure enterprise-wide customer-facing transactions. eSignLive is built on a single SaaS platform that can be delivered in the cloud or on-premises. Silanis Technology, the company behind eSignLive, is a wholly owned subsidiary of VASCO, which allows more than 10,000 customers in 100 countries to secure access, manage identities, verify transactions, and protect assets across financial, enterprise, e-commerce, government, and healthcare markets.

This Insight Brief was created by CEB for eSignLive's exclusive use. The content of this report is the product of CEB TowerGroup and is based on independent, unbiased research not tied to any vendor product or solution. May not be reproduced by any means without expressed permission. All rights reserved.

## Conclusion

To respond to both client expectations for digital service and competitive pressure from emerging online wealth management providers, firms must invest in creating a comprehensive digital offering that spans the full client lifecycle. Wealth firms need to move quickly to incorporate tools, such as e-signatures, to improve onboarding, eliminate account opening obstacles, and capture the significant benefits such process improvements can have on generating loyal client relationships.

This study may not be reproduced or redistributed without expressed permission.



Phone: +1-514-337-5255

E-Mail: [info@silanis.com](mailto:info@silanis.com)

Web: [silanis.com](http://silanis.com)