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PRESS RELEASE

Join and Merck to bring a state-of-the-art contract and document lifecycle management solution to the market

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Technology-driven companies are jointly working on a new CLM solution based on Microsoft 365.

More and more companies around the world are facing challenges when it comes to drafting, negotiating, and managing contracts as well as legal projects and disputes. In response to the rising demand, the science and technology company Merck and its software partner Join have joined forces. Together, they aim to provide a fully digital and integrated solution and are preparing to launch an end-to-end contract and document lifecycle management (CLM) solution.

- Fully digital end-to-end CLM enables handling of contracts in a more simplified and completely new way.
- Thorough workflow support in all contract phases from initiation till termination of contracts will benefit all involved parties.
- Based on Microsoft 365, the CLM avoids unnecessary complexity in the IT system landscape and brings important functionalities including seamless collaboration and IT security.
- The blueprint and starting point for the CLM is LEDOX, a contract management solution implemented at Merck last year.

The solution is designed from the end-to-end CLM process perspective and leverages a high number of easy-to-use standard functionalities of the Microsoft 365 suite to support that. With the symbiosis of both, it takes contract management to the next level. The intention is to holistically map corporate contract management to address the challenges faced by countless legal experts and their business counterparts worldwide. And besides handling contracts in a completely new way, the solution enables lawyers and business functions to execute complex legal projects as well as to manage corporate disputes globally.

“Our fully digital contract lifecycle management solution will provide answers to a whole range of the latest contract management issues: increased cost pressures in the legal area, barriers of collaboration between legal departments, business functions and third parties, as well as the desire for a single, secure location for all contracts and contract activities across an enterprise”. - Thomas Sachsendahl, IT Business Partner Legal & Compliance, Merck.

Mastering legal department, business and IT challenges

As part of this new solution, business users will benefit from the easy-to-access and fully automated design of standard contracts. For more complex contracts, a company's specialist lawyers can work directly in the solution, supported by the incorporated tools. In addition, the full integration of Microsoft SharePoint functionalities provides secure areas for negotiating and consulting with external contracting parties. The CLM also facilitates the handling of in-house contract portfolios and pools contracts in one solution.

“Different departments in companies have different needs when it comes to contracts: Business wants ready-to-use standard contracts to be able to react flexibly and quickly. Legal departments are entrusted with complex issues and want to be able to focus on this challenge. And IT executives want to avoid unnecessary complexity by constantly adding new solutions for each new task. The new CLM solution is designed to meet all of these needs”. - Christian Wittrich, Co-CEO Join GmbH.

Prototype already tested in-house

The blueprint and starting point for the CLM is the contract management solution “Legal Document Box”, LEDOX. This was developed jointly by Merck and Join and has been used internally at Merck since the end of 2020. After a successful launch and the experience gained from operational practice, such a solution for fully digital contract management is now to be made widely available.

“Having implemented LEDOX together, we quickly realised the potential of such a solution in our day-to-day business. After all, since the end of 2020, more than 4,000 people in 60 countries have relied on LEDOX – including our in-house lawyers. The simplification provided by this end-to-end contract management solution will also benefit legal departments, business and IT managers in many other companies in the future”. - Nina Stoeckel, Head of Group Legal & Compliance Operations, Merck.

Fully integrated functions on a familiar basis

The new contract lifecycle management solution is intended to provide support in all contract phases: from drafting and elaborating through contract negotiations with third parties and rewording to the acceptance and signing of contracts – in paper or digital form. In addition, all contract data management, reporting and archiving functions are covered by the solution. A special focus is on a CDA generator, with which Business users can independently generate Confidentiality Agreements – so-called CDAs or NDAs.

The end-to-end contract management solution is based on Microsoft 365 – a familiar and widely-used application package in the business world. This well-known user

interface will make it easier for users to get started with the software. The open solution should also integrate well into existing system landscapes and can be easily scalable if needed. In this regard, it's advantageous to be able to build on existing software licences and further exploit their possibilities. Users also benefit from the strong security and data protection concept of Microsoft 365. In this way, the CLM developed by Merck and Join will be able to leverage the mobile and cloud-based IT strategy of modern-day companies.

Merck Core Team: Nina Stoeckel, Thomas Sachsendahl.

Join Core Team: Christian Wittrich, Lars Bendler.

Merck, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and electronics. Around 58,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2020, Merck generated sales of € 17.5 billion in 66 countries.

Scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to Merck's technological and scientific advances. This is how Merck has thrived since its founding in 1668. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. Merck holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Electronics.

Join GmbH creates smart solutions for internal and cross-company communication and collaboration. As a technology-independent IT service provider with more than 20 years of IT project experience, Join uses a composition of standard products and services to implement individual customer needs professionally. The portfolio ranges from data integration, enterprise search and data analysis to multi-project management and the "Digital Twin" of companies in terms of structural and processual organization. A further focus is the development of practical SharePoint and Microsoft 365 solutions and modern workplace consulting.
