



# Making the Leap from a Manual System to a State-of-the-Art CLM



Floor care appliances and products

Industry

BISSELL Homecare, Inc., has been a family-owned company for more than 140 years and offers both home and commercial cleaning solutions through a wide range of innovative products. Based in Walker, Mich., with offices in Amsterdam, China, Mexico and the Middle East,

BISSELL supplies households and businesses across the globe with vacuums, sweepers, carpet-cleaning machines, hard floor cleaners and cleaning formulas. It is the top-selling brand in floor care appliances, based on NPD unit sales. For more information, visit [www.bissell.com](http://www.bissell.com).

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– Heather Drouin,  
Staff Attorney, BISSELL Homecare, Inc.



## Challenges

- 1 High volume of contracts processed manually by small legal team
- 2 Slow review process confusing to internal customers
- 3 Limited visibility and oversight of contracts, difficulty monitoring expiration dates
- 4 Unsustainable risk to organization, including unmonitored auto-renewal of contracts



## Agiloft benefits



Quick implementation and rapid adoption by users



Greater visibility of contract status for users companywide



Optimal balance of speed and risk management



Significantly improved efficiency and productivity

## Challenges

**\$60,000**

Cost to BISSELL of an unmonitored contract auto-renewal with legacy system



As a global enterprise with offices on three continents and customers around the world, BISSELL Homecare, Inc., generates a tremendous amount of legal documents on a steady basis.

Processing, managing, and monitoring about 2,400 contracts annually is the responsibility of the BISSELL legal team. That challenge was made even more daunting by a legacy system for manually managing contracts that was slow, inefficient and unreliable

Contracts from across the company, including offices as far-flung as Amsterdam, China and Mexico, come into the company's Michigan headquarters. There, those contracts are processed by a small legal team with three attorneys on the expenditures side and three on the revenue side. For years, an all-manual system was used to process contracts and requests that were received via email, recorded on spreadsheets, and stored in a repository.

This manual process was tedious and disorganized. Initial contract review took as long as 10 days. Attorneys had no visibility over contracts. Monitoring expiration dates was difficult. Requests for reviews required attorneys to search through emails to find the most recent version of a contract. The system was also a source of confusion for the legal team's internal customers, who frequently complained that they simply did not understand the process.

The BISSELL legal team was also hindered by a lack of ability to provide contract oversight. "The contract just went into a repository and that's where it sat," said Heather Drouin, Staff Attorney, BISSELL Homecare, Inc. "It was no different than throwing it in a filing cabinet and forgetting about it."

The unwieldy legacy system also represented an unsustainable financial risk to the organization. That risk was realized in 2022 when a contract auto-renewed at a cost to the organization of \$60,000.

The BISSELL legal team knew a contract lifecycle management update and upgrade was badly needed but experienced pushback to their request for a new system. "Some of the stakeholders didn't know what a CLM was," said Heather. "They thought we had a CLM because we had a process. And they didn't see how the sausage was made. They saw the end product and they signed a contract and they thought that was the end of it. They didn't see what goes in before and they don't see what goes in after they sign that contract."

By 2020, the legacy system was becoming increasingly unsustainable. "It just became necessary to change," said Heather. "BISSELL was growing, expanding. We had a lot of new associates' contracts coming in from everywhere. We had to find a way to wrangle things."

With a new general counsel backing their push for a major upgrade, the BISSELL legal team was able to sell upper management on the multidimensional benefits of a new, state-of-the-art CLM system.

## Business Overview

BISSELL launched a procurement process with an ultimate goal of finding a CLM solution that would deliver a highly secure, efficient, and scalable solution that could be quickly implemented. An initial search revealed that many of the programs on the market came with severe limitations.

“We started looking at some options,” said Heather. “They seemed too bulky, too expensive; we couldn’t justify the cost. Finding the time to implement it was becoming a problem. We were so busy we didn’t know if we would be able to carve out the time.”



Critical needs were identified by the BISSELL legal team, and CLM functions were prioritized. Chief among those requirements was that the system provide visibility for the entire contract lifecycle.

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– Heather Drouin, Staff Attorney, BISSELL Homecare, Inc.

The ideal system could not sacrifice safety for speed. Having the ability to accelerate processes was important, but only if it could be done in a way that would mitigate risk to the organization.

Other priorities were also identified. The new CLM system would have to enable visibility of contract status for all users. In addition, it must provide the ability to track every contract, service, subscription, and purchase across the global organization.

Integration with a reliable e-signature program, such as DocuSign, was required. And while it would be used primarily by the legal department, the CLM system must also be accessible to other departments, such as accounts payable, which would use the system to ensure that a contract is final and approved before processing a purchase order.

After researching, reviewing and comparing all of the established CLM leaders, one program was found to fulfill all the criteria. BISSELL selected Agiloft.







## The Project

### 18 months

Time to implement other CLM programs researched by BISSELL



### 3 months

Time to implement Agiloft at BISSELL



BISSELL needed a solution that could replace an outdated manual system with a robust, full-function contract management solution that was flexible and scalable. They found it in Agiloft.

When some stakeholders questioned why a non-revenue-generating function such as the legal department was investing in new technology, the BISSELL legal team reminded them of the unmonitored auto-renewal that had cost the company \$60,000. "If we could avoid even one of those a year, Agiloft pays for itself," said Heather. "It became very clear that we needed something."

Quick, efficient implementation was another priority. While other CLM programs would take 18 months or more to onboard, Agiloft could be implemented in much less time. The implementation ultimately took less than three months and was achieved by the BISSELL legal team with minimal pre-work required. "It didn't take long at all," said Heather. "The mapping was pretty simple. It was all part of the implementation. And it was broken down into bite-size pieces."

Since the BISSELL had determined that Agiloft was the CLM system most easily adaptable to their existing processes, disruptions were minimized during the transition.

Because Agiloft is a web-based and mobile-friendly solution that would not be hosted on the BISSELL server, implementation also required minimal involvement by the BISSELL IT team. The only IT resource required was a project manager who set up the new CLM system so it could be accessed with a single sign-on. "Now it's accessible to everybody in the organization with one click, very simple to get on," said Heather. "Nobody has to remember passwords and links and all of that kind of stuff."

Active contracts were quickly migrated to Agiloft. The process helped the legal team determine which contracts were actually active in a repository that, for years, had restricted their visibility. Due to the limitations of the legacy system, mega data was not readily available for the bulk of the expired contracts. A cost/benefit analysis weighed the value of the expired meta data against the administrative resources that would be required to gather and convert that data for the new CLM system. The legal team decided to leave the expired contracts in the legacy repository. "We can go look for it if we need to bring something over," said Heather. "It takes two minutes—if that—to bring it into Agiloft."

## Solution Benefits

With Agiloft fully implemented, BISSELL began seeing immediate—and significant—benefits.

Processing new contracts has been greatly simplified for the legal team. The legacy system required extensive back-and-forth discussions on new contracts between the legal team and their internal customers. The intake form provided by Agiloft now prompts internal customers to provide required information on new contracts. Upon receiving the form, the legal team can promptly delegate the contract to the proper person for review. Attorneys also receive automated emails when a new contract comes in so they can enter the system and start the review process without delay.

The BISSELL legal team quickly experienced major improvements in efficiency and productivity through the high level of contract visibility provided by Agiloft. “We were spending time answering the question, ‘Where’s my contract at, has someone looked at it?’” said Heather. “If I’m spending time to find their status, I’m not spending that time looking at their contract. It’s not as valuable work. We don’t need lawyers spending time saying ‘Your contract is in approval, your contract is out for signature.’ [With Agiloft] the users can see that directly themselves.”

Contracts now are easily accessible to internal customers across the company. Each user has a customizable dashboard that provides key information, including a status bar that allows them to click into a contract to determine whether it has been approved or is still pending approval. They are also able to quickly determine if any pending work needs to be done on the contract—and who needs to do that work.

Improved visibility includes the ability to monitor pre-signature contract status and progress, including change orders. That means that while contracts are being negotiated by internal customers, the BISSELL legal team can track the progress and provide input.



Greater visibility of contract status also helps expedite the approval process. “Our approvers before, some of them weren’t aware of a contract until they were asked to approve it,” said Heather. “That’s a little late in the game and it stalls things. They have visibility way, way before that now. And they can see the process as it’s happening, they can see the negotiations, they can weigh in on them. So for every level of the organization, being able to see a status, see where a contract is at and get involved has been helpful.” And if contract approval should become stalled, Agiloft can pinpoint the source of the delays.

Post-award, oversight extends to contract fulfillment, as Agiloft offers the ability to track deliverables and deadlines for active contracts.

As the end of a contract lifecycle approaches, improved visibility helps reduce the risk of that contract expiring. “We know where our contracts are, we know when they expire,” said Heather. “Somebody gets an alert. It’s on their dashboard every time they log in. If they have a contract expiring soon, nobody can say that they’ve missed that because it’s always available.”

Speed and efficiency have improved significantly. Under the legacy system, it took the BISSELL legal team three to five days to process a single contract. With Agiloft, they are now able to process as many as five contracts per day.



## +150 contracts

Additional contracts processed by BISSELL in 3-month period compared to same period in prior year



To the legal team, the easiest benefit to quantify has been the vastly improved operational efficiencies that have spurred a substantial increase in their productivity. “We do an incredible amount of contracts a day—I did five one day last week,” said Heather. “I just sat down and powered through them and moved through them quickly because I didn’t have to do the administrative work.”

“We processed 150 more contracts this summer than we did last summer without adding headcount,” said Heather.

Tracking addendums, extensions and other changes to contracts has also been simplified. “There’s version control that has been life-changing,” said Heather. “Before, we were searching through emails, sorting through the latest date and I had to assume that was the most recent version that we were going with. Now I see the version control ... I can click on the previous ones if I want to see the changes.”

“Other documents that might go along with the contract are all part of the record,” said Heather. “And they’re easy to upload, easy to approve. It’s all in one place.”

Contract workflows vary for BISSELL’s revenue and expenditure legal teams. Agiloft accommodates this variance by implementing parallel systems customized for each team.

The ease of getting up-to-speed on the new CLM is evident in the short amount of time it took to achieve complete buy-in for the system by the BISSELL legal team’s internal customers. “When I set out my goals for this year, one of them was to have 50% of our internal clients using Agiloft by the fourth quarter,” said Heather. “Before the third quarter, we had 100% of our internal clients using it.”

The new CLM was quickly adopted by authorized users in BISSELL’s Amsterdam and China offices. Plans are to additionally bring onboard teams in the company’s other international offices. Training is provided quickly and effectively through video and written tutorials.

“It’s like a breath of fresh air,” said Heather. “It sounds weird saying this but it’s so much different being able to actually do productive work during the day. A lot of the administrative stuff was wearing me down personally. I don’t want to spend all day chasing contracts if I can actually turn around productive work.”

## Next Steps

With 100% of their contracts now being processed in the new CLM, BISSELL plans to continue to take advantage of the flexibility and scalability offered by Agiloft.

Agiloft’s robust suite of features and functions create numerous opportunities to maximize the system’s benefits. For example, Agiloft will be invaluable as the BISSELL legal team transitions from standard templates to a more dynamic clause library with fully customizable language for various types of agreements. “We haven’t built out our clause library yet but the fact that we have the ability to do that was one of the selling points,” said Heather.

BISSELL managers have responded to Agiloft’s growing popularity with requests to set up teams on the system that would provide each manager with greater oversight over their team’s contracts.

Additional opportunities are available to deploy Agiloft for post-award contract management functions such as obligations tracking, jeopardy management, risk issues and change dispute resolutions.

“To have all these features along the way, they were all important to us in choosing the CLM,” said Heather. “And we’ve seen all these benefits in Agiloft.”



Easily integrated modules also are available to extend the capabilities of the current BISSELL CLM. This includes solutions for processes that connect to the CLM but go beyond it, such as allowing areas adjacent to the legal department to feed valuable information into Agiloft.

Agiloft's Sourcing and Supplier Information Management module, launched in early 2021, integrates seamlessly with BISSELL's CLM solution to reduce sourcing cycle times as well as automate supplier onboarding and compliance. Having tools dedicated to each phase in the sourcing management and supplier information management processes, and then having that information feed into the CLM, can be incredibly valuable.

Working as an extension of the CLM platform, the Sourcing and Supplier Information Management module helps sourcing professionals optimize spend, oversee quality and ensure that suppliers are complying with company policy as well as meeting regulatory requirements.

The BISSELL legal team also is exploring options for incorporating Agiloft into their due diligence process for new suppliers. This will enable them to prescreen companies before they are given the greenlight to engage in contracts with the company.

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## Let Us Show You

What Agiloft has done for BISSELL, Inc., it can also do for you. Let us show you how. In a few hours, we can set up a custom proof of concept featuring your toughest business process. Give us a call to schedule a time.

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## About Agiloft, Inc.

As the global leader in contract and commerce lifecycle management (CCLM) software, Agiloft is trusted to provide significant savings in purchasing, enable more efficient legal operations, and accelerate sales cycles, all while drastically lowering compliance risk. Founded in 1991,

Agiloft's adaptable no-code platform ensures rapid deployment and a fully extensible system. Using contracts as the core system of commercial record, Agiloft's CCLM software leverages AI to improve contract management for legal departments, procurement, and sales operations. Visit [www.agiloft.com](http://www.agiloft.com) for more.

