Ironclad vs. DocuSign CLM vs. Icertis

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This report synthesizes vendor pricing pages, Vendr marketplace contract data, verified G2, Capterra, and Gartner Peer Insights reviews, and independent CLM-industry research and pricing analysis. Pricing data reflects sources current as of July 2026. Full research methodology at unvarnishedreviews.com/methodology. Research Notes available on request at editorial@unvarnishedreviews.com.

The Verdict Up Front

Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) is a mature, well-reviewed enterprise software category, and all three platforms in this comparison, Ironclad, DocuSign CLM, and Icertis, are credible, capable products with strong satisfaction scores. None of the three publish list pricing. All three require a sales conversation before you see a number, and Vendr-sourced negotiation data puts real-world contracts for Ironclad and DocuSign CLM in the same overlapping $25,000 to $100,000-plus annual band, depending on seats, modules, and contract volume. Icertis sits meaningfully higher, with reported starting prices around $200,000 per year, reflecting its positioning toward the largest, most complex enterprise estates.

The finding that changes how most organizations should approach this evaluation is not a pricing gotcha inside any one platform, it is a question the category itself rarely gets asked out loud: does your contract volume justify a full CLM at all? Independent legal-ops research puts the economics inflection point at roughly 1,000 contracts per year. Below that, in-house teams handling mostly NDAs, vendor agreements, and standard customer contracts commonly report using a fraction of what they paid for, because the platform assumes dedicated legal-ops headcount to configure and maintain workflows that a smaller team never builds.

Platform Ratings at a Glance

Platform	G2 Rating	Capterra Rating	Gartner Peer Insights	Sample Size (G2)
Ironclad	4.4-4.5 / 5	4.4 / 5	4.7 / 5 (286 reviews)	285 reviews
DocuSign CLM	4.5 / 5	4.4 / 5	Not independently listed	Moderate volume
Icertis	4.2 / 5	Limited public sample	4.7 / 5 (203 reviews)	81 reviews

The sample-size gap matters as much as the scores themselves. Ironclad's 285 G2 reviews and DocuSign's broader install base reflect platforms sold well beyond the largest enterprises. Icertis's 81 G2 reviews, against a customer roster that includes Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, and Daimler, reflects a product built for and sold almost exclusively to Fortune 1000-scale legal and procurement operations, not a smaller reviewer pool signaling weaker adoption.

Ironclad: The Workflow Leader, With a Renewal Pattern Worth Negotiating Before You Sign

Founded in 2014 by Jason Boehmig and Cai GoGwilt, Ironclad has raised roughly $333 million cumulatively, including a January 2022 Series E at a $3.2 billion valuation led by Franklin Templeton's venture arm with participation from Accel, Sequoia, and Bain Capital Ventures. Its customer roster includes L'Oreal, Salesforce, OpenAI, Mastercard, Cisco, and Shell, and it has been named a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for CLM for three consecutive years through 2025.

The platform's defining strength is its workflow designer: a drag-and-drop system that lets legal teams build complex approval chains, routing rules, and conditional logic without engineering support, paired with real-time in-app redlining and collaboration. Ironclad recently launched Jurist, an agentic AI assistant purpose-built for contract review, extending capability it began building with GPT-4-powered AI Assist in 2023.

The documented friction: G2 reviewers consistently flag a steep learning curve and complex workflow configuration, to the point that a dedicated Ironclad administrator functions as a de facto required operational cost for larger deployments. Reviewers separately flag poor repository search as the platform's second most-disliked feature, with Capterra reviewers describing retrieval of older contracts as difficult at scale. Vendr's marketplace data adds the most consequential finding for buyers: Ironclad has been materially raising renewal rates, and without a negotiated cap, a $50,000 annual contract can reach $65,000 or more by year three. Reported pricing starts with a $15,000 minimum annual contract and scales into a $30,000 to $250,000-plus range depending on seats and modules.

DocuSign CLM: The Natural Extension for Existing DocuSign Customers

DocuSign CLM occupies a distinct competitive position: it is most often evaluated by organizations already using DocuSign eSignature, where CLM functions as a natural upsell rather than a from-scratch platform decision. Reported pricing runs from roughly $20,000 to $100,000-plus per year, overlapping substantially with Ironclad's band, and the two platforms are frequently shortlisted against each other in the same procurement cycles.

Independent buyer guides describe DocuSign CLM and Ironclad as functionally comparable for most mid-market and enterprise workflow needs, with the deciding factor for many organizations being which e-signature and document ecosystem they are already standardized on rather than a clear capability gap between the two. Organizations already paying for DocuSign's e-signature platform should weigh whether CLM's incremental cost is justified against Ironclad's typically shorter implementation timeline, which several independent comparisons note as a point in Ironclad's favor for organizations without an existing DocuSign relationship.

Icertis: The Enterprise-Scale Incumbent, Built for Contract Volume Most Organizations Don't Have

Icertis is the established leader for the largest enterprise CLM deployments, recognized as a Leader in the 2025 Gartner Magic Quadrant for CLM and serving organizations including Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, and Daimler. Its platform transforms contracts from static documents into structured, analyzable data, extracting obligations, risks, and performance metrics across entire contract portfolios, and it is purpose-built for global compliance requirements spanning multiple languages, currencies, and regulatory regimes.

Reported pricing starts around $16,667 per month, roughly $200,000 annually, more than three times Ironclad's reported starting point, and implementation timelines run months rather than weeks. Independent legal-ops guidance is consistent on fit: Icertis remains the right choice almost exclusively for Fortune 1000-scale organizations processing contract volume in the hundreds of thousands per year. Outside that band, its cost and implementation complexity are disproportionate to what most legal teams need.

Do You Even Need a Full CLM? The Question the Category Doesn't Ask

Independent legal-ops research is unusually direct on this point: if your organization runs under 200 contracts a year, mostly NDAs and vendor agreements, a document management system paired with an AI review layer and e-signature is cheaper and faster than any platform in this comparison. Ironclad or DocuSign CLM only pay back their cost with dedicated legal-ops headcount or an active customer success engagement; without one, organizations commonly report using roughly 20% of the platform they paid for. The economics flip in favor of a full CLM only once contract volume crosses approximately 1,000 per year. Between 200 and 1,000 contracts annually, with at least one operations administrator on staff, mid-tier platforms are frequently the better-fit purchase before a full Ironclad, DocuSign CLM, or Icertis deployment is justified.

A parallel development is compressing the bottom of this market further: AI-native contract review tools, including legal-specific AI assistants and review skills built into general-purpose AI platforms, are increasingly handling NDA and vendor-contract triage at a fraction of full CLM pricing, without a lifecycle-management rollout at all. For organizations whose contract volume sits below the 1,000-per-year threshold, this is frequently the more sensible starting point than any of the three platforms compared here.

Pricing (July 2026)

Platform	Reported Annual Range	Reported Minimum	List Price Published?
Ironclad	$30,000-$250,000+	$15,000/year (Vendr)	No
DocuSign CLM	$20,000-$100,000+	Not separately published	No
Icertis	$200,000+	~$16,667/month	No

All three figures are Vendr, G2, and industry-analyst estimates, not vendor-published rate cards. Treat every number here as a starting point for negotiation, not a quote.

Costs the Pricing Table Misses

- **Renewal rate escalation.** Ironclad's documented pattern, a $50,000 contract reaching $65,000 or more by year three without a cap, is the single most consequential line item absent from any initial quote. Negotiate a rate cap (3%-5% annually) at signing, not at renewal.
- **Dedicated administrator headcount.** Workflow configuration complexity across all three platforms, most acutely documented for Ironclad, effectively requires a named platform owner on the legal-ops team. Budget the headcount, not just the license.
- **Implementation timeline.** Icertis deployments commonly run months; Ironclad and DocuSign CLM typically run weeks to two months. Longer timelines mean longer periods of parallel-running old and new contract processes.
- **Underutilization.** Without dedicated legal-ops ownership, organizations across this category commonly report using a small fraction of licensed capability, a sunk cost the pricing table cannot show.

The Decision Framework

Choose Ironclad if: You run a Salesforce-centric or integration-heavy legal operation processing 500 or more contracts a year, have or plan to hire dedicated legal-ops headcount, and can negotiate a renewal rate cap before signing.

Choose DocuSign CLM if: You are already a DocuSign eSignature customer and CLM functions as a natural platform extension rather than a from-scratch evaluation, and your contract volume and complexity are comparable to Ironclad's target profile.

Choose Icertis if: You operate at true Fortune 1000 scale, with contract volume in the hundreds of thousands annually and global compliance requirements spanning multiple jurisdictions. Below that scale, Icertis's cost and complexity are disproportionate to the job.

Choose none of the three if: Your organization processes under 200 contracts a year, mostly NDAs and standard vendor agreements. A document management system, an AI contract-review layer, and e-signature will cost less and deploy faster, and you are unlikely to use enough of a full CLM to justify its price.

The Bottom Line

Ironclad, DocuSign CLM, and Icertis are all well-reviewed, capable platforms serving real, distinct segments of the CLM market: Ironclad and DocuSign CLM for mid-market-to-enterprise legal operations with meaningful contract volume, Icertis for the small number of organizations operating at true Fortune 1000 scale. The most consequential finding in this comparison is not a feature gap between them, it is that a meaningful share of organizations evaluating this category do not need a full CLM at all, and the ones that do should negotiate renewal rate caps before signing rather than discovering the escalation at year three.