



Getting value from case management

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No matter what industry you're in, your business has two types of work: predictable and unpredictable. Highly predictable work can be scripted and programmed, but unpredictable work requires quick thinking and constant decision-making. For decades, managing these different types of work has been a difficult and confusing task – generally involving two different management approaches.

Case management brings together the people and information needed to get work done completely and correctly the first time – every time. It empowers people and systems to respond to events and make faster, better, more accurate decisions – so they can work more efficiently while better serving customers.

Let's look at what case management can do for you.



Keeping customers happy

Customers expect the convenience of 24/7 service, but too often, this service comes at the cost of quality. Nobody likes clumsy interactive voice response systems, long hold times, unanswered emails, or impersonal and ineffective service. Yet these experiences are commonplace. Your customers will trust and respect you only if they feel that you know them, have their best interests in mind, and can resolve their questions and problems quickly and completely.

By making every customer interaction an opportunity to demonstrate excellent service, case management drives high levels of customer satisfaction and increases the value of customer relationships. Here's how:

Know your customers

A case management system makes it much easier for your customer-facing employees to know your customers' relationship with your organization. Because it connects to your customer records and tracks every customer interaction, it can instantly present critical details about the relationship. These include:

Accounts, purchases, and service history

Emotional relationship with the customer

Importance of the customer (large or small, growing or declining)

A case management system spares customers the hassle of explaining their situation every time they call. With full insight into customers' background information, your team can focus on understanding new information and engaging customers in more meaningful conversations.

Some customer cases are resolved right away; for others, resolution may take days, weeks, or months. During that time, the people who work on the case may change due to shift work, vacations, illness, or even company reorganizations. No matter. The system keeps track of all customer interactions so whoever works with the customer is fully aware of past interactions and issues.

Connect across channels

With the rapid growth of mobile devices, social channels, and remote work requirements, there are plenty of opportunities to serve customers and empower employees wherever they are. However, most business systems are designed for specific channels, such as a call center or website. When you use different systems for different channels, it's hard to give your customers a consistent experience.

Case management is designed to give customers the same experience across different channels. By organizing disjointed processes into a case, you provide a seamless experience that guarantees good service no matter how customers contact you. The same consistent message can radiate from the center out to all communication channels. A customer can start a case, such as an auto-accident claim, on a mobile chat and follow up later on the website, via email, or even through your call center. The case centralizes the communications into one record to ensure continuity.

Adapt to the situation

In many customer-facing situations, blindly following standard procedure isn't enough. It's frustrating when people refuse to apply some common sense and don't think about the bigger picture. Because so many customer situations require some exercise of human judgment, rigid systems and mechanical responses won't do.

Case management doesn't force your employees to follow a set script. Rather, it interprets the situation and intelligently guides flexible decision-making and action by asking and answering questions such as:

- Given the background and conversation, as well as your organization's goals, policies, and procedures, what are the customer's options?
- Which actions, products, or services would most likely produce the best outcome (based on data on all past customer interactions) for the customer and the company?
- If escalation is required, which option is best for this customer?

As the conversation with the customer proceeds, the case management system reevaluates the situation in real time and changes its recommendations so the representative can achieve the best outcome.

Get work done

Customers seeking a solution to their issues want more than just a response; they want a timely, complete resolution.

Too often, though, customers are placed on hold. Even worse, customers are regularly forced to manage the resolution of their cases themselves. They navigate the organization manually, following referrals, shepherding work from one representative to the next, and making repeated follow-up calls to ensure that their issue gets resolved.

Case management can help by:

- Allowing representatives to work fast by automatically pulling and displaying customer background information, as well as relevant product and service details. Representatives see the whole picture without having to flip from screen to screen or put the customer on hold to process a transaction. Intelligent guidance from the case management application closes performance gaps between agents.
- Ensuring that every case reaches resolution and nothing falls between the cracks, no matter how complicated the work becomes. It eliminates the overhead and anxiety of manually tracking work that has been handed off. Representatives can concentrate on getting the best result for the customer and the company. In the event a customer calls for an update on the case, a representative can quickly assess the situation, and determine the status and next steps.

Keep promises

How valuable is a promise fulfilled? Consider the financial crisis, when five banks were fined \$25 billion for foreclosure-processing abuses. For the overwhelming number of homeowners who needed assistance, the mortgage servicing industry was ill-equipped to help at a time when customers needed to know who they could trust.

Today, one of the largest of these banks uses case management to comply with federal regulations requiring them to give borrowers a fair shake. Its case-based default management system cut the time required to modify a loan from 120 days to just 30, meeting regulatory agreements and increasing loan processing throughput by 120%. Case management simplifies the communication between employees and customers as they both can check the status of an application. With expectations clearly set and communicated on both sides, banks will see significantly fewer calls regarding loan status.

Improving efficiency

Organizations have many case management challenges: customer, employee, and partner onboarding; warranty, insurance, and healthcare claims; incident management; and emergency response. Efficiently resolving them requires workers who can assess the problem quickly and access the right systems and data. They must collaborate across multiple functions, teams, and geographies, all while following company policies and procedures.

Case management brings together all the people and information needed to get work done and reach the best business outcomes. With case management, jobs are done faster and right the first time.

Additionally, it captures the essence of management guru Peter Drucker's concept of "management by objective," which states that people are more inventive and engaged when they work together to reach well-defined goals. According to Drucker, too many rigidly defined workflows and rules smother an organization's ability to innovate. Instead, the organization should give workers the information and the people they need to get the job done, so they can concentrate more on higher-value work.

Give just enough information

"Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink" was the **Ancient Mariner's** lament. You too may feel thirsty – for useful, actionable information in a sea of data. But you have to work hard to find what you need and avoid distractions.

Case management applications radically improve worker efficiency by automatically fetching and presenting the information people need at particular points in managing a case. Case management puts all the information – email records, chat history, and so on – in one place and organizes it for rapid review. Workers no longer have to consult multiple computer screens or rule books. The history of the case is immediately visible.

Because case management is sensitive to the context of the work being done, only the information relevant to the job at hand is displayed. Simpler screens are easier to read and less likely to create distractions and confusion.

Set priorities

A case management system optimizes team productivity by assigning the highest-priority work to the right people at the right time. Typically, work rosters made by traditional systems are delivered to teams in daily batches. Savvy workers cherry-pick easy items that will improve their metrics, leaving harder items to collect dust. Case management systems intelligently route priority tasks to the people who have the right skills for that work, ensuring that they're continuously engaged with important work.

Collaborate

According to Gartner¹, “The general market for social software and collaboration in the workplace has fractured into many separate collaboration capabilities that are often bundled into other products.”

Informal use of collaboration tools can be problematic as it bypasses enterprise security, control, and auditing of managed business processes. And when collaboration tools are disconnected from the work you’re trying to manage, you can’t manage risk or trust that the work is done.

As a result, the firm estimates that by 2023, “nearly 60% of enterprise application software providers alone will have included some form of social software and collaboration functionalities in their software product portfolios.”

This is exactly where case management comes in. It solves this problem by incorporating social collaboration into the case system itself. Users have tools to find and chat with colleagues who can answer their questions, advance or resolve a case directly, and even incorporate conversations from external social media networks. Because this activity occurs inside the case management application, these discussions become part of the case history. Everything is in one place for later review or audit.

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1) Forecast Analysis: Social Software and Collaboration in the Workplace, Worldwide (Gartner 23 August 2019)

Authors: Hai Swinehart, Craig Roth, Mike Gotta



Automate work

A case management system goes beyond workflow (the management of the receipt, routing, and reporting on work) to actually automate the response and resolution of the work itself.

Automation can drive tremendous productivity gains by allowing the system to handle decisions that don't require human judgment. Automation achieved through the application of policy (business rules) can make decisions based on the situation and its context. It can make simple decisions like approving an order based on the order size, the customer's credit rating, and the customer's business history.

Gaining operational visibility and control

You can't improve what you can't see. Undocumented manual processes run in the dark, which makes it hard to measure and manage both individual and team performance. With undocumented manual processes, bottlenecks and inefficiencies can fester until customers or employees complain. If you don't have visibility into the work, it's impossible to be proactive.

Case management gives you real-time views of work, as well as insight into trends and emerging problems, so you can take immediate action. The key to hitting service-level agreements (SLAs) is keeping an eye on milestones. A missed or risky milestone means that the time must be made up later through reprioritizing or temporarily assigning more resources. Early warning and swift action are critical to meeting SLAs.

Establish guardrails

If case management gives people leeway to exercise their judgment, how can you be confident that they'll do the right thing? Without a doubt, industry regulations must be followed. Company policies and procedures exist for good reasons and must be applied consistently.

Case management uses rules to automatically constrain options and drive outcomes. These rules are the policies of your enterprise and the regulations of your industry. The value of this capability has grown with the increasing reach and complexity of regulations.

Health insurance, for example, is a heavily regulated industry with state-by-state mandates on how quickly claims must be processed. Errors, inconsistencies, and duplications can complicate the processing of a claim, as can lapsed policies and late premium payments. All of these situations may cause delays, which can lead to fines and interest payments.

Audit

Every action in a case management system – automated or human – is recorded for audit. You can review everything that's happened in a case and find out who did what and when. Documentation, logs, and data can be produced and tailored to meet compliance requests and regulations.

A case management system also keeps an audit trail of system changes so that all changes in business rules are transparent. The operational and system change history are kept together – you can even replay actions from systems that have been updated in the past. Compliance officers can review actions and results from old system configurations without needing to rebuild or restore the old systems.

Changing at the pace of market demands

Business history is littered with cautionary tales of companies that lost customer focus as they grew, and firms that couldn't keep pace with nimbler competitors. Were these companies blindsided by change? Some were; others knew what they had to do but couldn't pivot.

From operational tweaks to profound enterprise transformations, case management provides excellent change management capability. Case management is outcome-oriented, keeping goals front and center throughout the initiative. Equally important, the technology involves and empowers the people closest to the business to change the way the business works.

Align business and IT

The success of your case management project depends on effective collaboration among business leaders, subject-matter experts, and information technology professionals. If you don't include business people in your case system design plan, your initiative will fail.

The good news is that case management systems inherently facilitate the necessary collaboration. And case management vendors provide methodologies to ensure that the right people are involved throughout the process.

Model work visually

It's much easier to collaborate when everyone is working from the same playbook. Case management design tools capture business requirements in a way that both business and IT can understand. It visually models all aspects of the system, including high-level case flow, detailed processes, the appearance of user screens, and data.

At any time, you can demonstrate and verify a case system, even in skeletal form, so that everyone can see that it accurately models the work you want to be done.

Case management's visually modeled WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) approach eliminates the misunderstandings that plague teams who construct applications with traditional methods. These traditional methods require business analysts to document requirements in painstaking detail; IT analysts to translate the requirements into IT designs; and programmers to implement the designs into finished applications. Too often, however, the results don't match expectations. The entire process can take so long that the system is obsolete before it's done.

Although it's possible to build a case management system by using traditional waterfall development methods, in which all requirements are defined before any functional systems are delivered, most case management systems are built with Agile development methods, in which systems are delivered in a phased approach. Each phase (called a sprint) introduces additional functionality and builds on what came before. An Agile approach not only delivers valuable functionality to the business faster, but also enables participants to review and refine requirements throughout the project.

Leverage business rules

Business rules are policies that govern how work gets done. Through these rules, business people can change the way a case management system works without running change cycles with the technical team. This procedure radically reduces the time it takes to update business policy in a fast-changing environment, as these examples illustrate:

- A business rule states that all transactions greater than \$10,000 must be reviewed by a supervisor. It turns out, this rule generates many more reviews than necessary – a more appropriate value would be \$20,000. With case management, an authorized business person is empowered to make that change directly – no programming required.
- Some insurance rules vary from state to state; others are common across all states. In an organization that uses case management, when regulations change, business people can change all rules directly in the system, and subsequent processing of claims against these rules follow the new regulations.

Design by doing

For many kinds of work, it's impossible to predict every situation. Staff may encounter circumstances that you didn't account for in your original case definitions. That's okay. Case management frees workers to perform ad hoc work as long as it complies with the policies that govern the work. Design by doing refers to case management's ability to define new case types based on ad hoc work that was actually done. These new case types can then be used by many people to do that kind of work in the future. Design by doing, like any other type of change management, requires thoughtful governance. Just because operational workers can change the way that work is done for the team doesn't mean that they should. Use design by doing to capture great ideas that feed into your change management discipline.



Repeat and scale

Standardization and economies of scale drive profitable growth and competitive advantage. It's also a key principle in simplifying and improving customer experience, from always-on global service to reducing costs by centralizing functions, such as:

Offering global customers around-the-clock service options with tiered service levels (such as platinum, gold, and silver)

Reducing operational costs and head count by centralizing functions

Introducing global self-service

Cross-selling products across the product portfolio

However, almost every process improvement and simplification initiative presents a conundrum. To get more consistent customer experiences and more efficient processes, you need to standardize policies and practices across departments, products, channels, and regions. But, a one-size-fits-all approach is impossible to achieve as different departments, products, channels, and regions have distinct needs and legitimate reasons to resist standardization. Railroading them won't work. What can you do?

Large enterprises use case management to solve this problem with a layered business architecture that establishes common policies and procedures that apply everywhere. Then, these enterprises can customize these common policies and procedures by specifying how particular groups' requirements depart from the standard. These departures from the standard (specializations) can themselves be layered. For example, a large enterprise can establish global standards that apply everywhere, tailor these global standards to meet regulatory requirements of particular countries, and then further specialize them to meet requirements of particular states or provinces.

The efficiencies produced by this layered approach can be enormous. Imagine a multinational insurance company that manages five lines of business through three channels in 50 countries. How many claims systems would it need? If you had to build a system for each country, line of business, and channel, you'd have 750 claims processing systems to build and maintain.

A better approach is to build a single claims processing system that's 90% consistent for every claim and 10% customized for customers' unique needs. As a result, you can give customers a consistent experience when the company processes a claim, no matter what products or region the claim involves. You can meet the varied – and often contradictory – regulatory requirements of different regions. Finally, you can get visibility and control of claims processing from top to bottom, no matter what channel originally sold the policy.

Rapid transformation starts with case management

Case management can help you be ready for what's next – unpredictable change, new rules and regulations, connecting with and keeping your customers, and taking care of your teams.

To see it in action, learn how **Cisco** uses case management to achieve end-to-end process consistency in 1:1 engagement.





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