Making the Case for Case Management

It’s been nearly two decades since the public sector took that first look into the soul of its customer service and asked: is it time to reinvent ourselves? Although interest appears to have waned in the interim, since 2009 the public sector has repeatedly publically committed itself to taking giant steps towards greater efficiency (see sidebar on page 3). The obvious question is what has changed? Between the ever-expanding digital universe and the ever-lagging economy, the answer should be obvious: Pretty much everything.

With constituent expectations soaring and budgets sinking, the link between process and service has never been more vital. This white paper takes a look at Case Management, an integrated IT infrastructure that makes this connection by driving responsiveness and flexibility into any process. Citizen Requests, events, deployments, inventories, you name it and case management can bring it into focus and help you reach the desired outcome.

NOBODY FEELS GOOD ABOUT BAD SERVICE

According to a recent survey of citizens’ perceptions about the service they receive, constituents strongly believe that the public sector needs to focus on optimizing these specific aspects of customer services:

- Efficient management of customer profile/background data (91%)
- Ease of access to information (45%)
- Reducing response time (42%)
- Information consistency (26%)

According to a recent survey of perceptions of customer service challenges, many public service professionals:

- Say that they are moderately to not at all satisfied with the customer service their agencies provide (54%)
- Believe “good customer service” can be defined as:
  - Improved services (70%)
  - Friendliness to customers (51%)
  - Shortest time to provide information (48%)
  - Shortest time to resolve complaints (44%)
Unpacking Case Management

In its most literal sense, case management is an integrated information management infrastructure. But to get at a more accurate description, it helps to start with a look at what Case Management is not and why that makes a big difference. First and foremost, Case Management is not Business Process Management (BPM). BPM is strictly about predictable workflows; its job is to move a process from one predetermined state to the other — regardless of what it is or why it is moving.

Case management, on the other hand, is about flow. Its job is to provide all of the functionality needed to resolve any case. The beauty is that the user’s needs and not the technology are in control. Most any objective can be a case. There are just two caveats:

1) Cases must involve complex tasks/relationships
2) They must open and close over time.

Given the indisputable link between large complex projects and documents, it is important to point out some key differences between “document management,” “records management” and “case management.”

- Document Management functionality is strictly focused on ensuring the efficiency of document storage and retrieval processes and practices.
- Records Management functionality is strictly focused on ensuring the compliancy (both short and long-term) of document storage and retrieval processes and practices.
- Case management functionality addresses both the document management and records management objectives, and a lot more.

**CASE MANAGEMENT AT A GLANCE**

A “case” is any project (response, service, transaction, etc.) that:

- Is “opened” and “closed” over a period of time
- Involves complexity (tasks, documents, multiple relationships)
- Seeks resolution

Case management technology is an easily integrated, flexible information management infrastructure that provides all of the functionality needed to resolve any case, as well as its associated tasks:

- Identify hiring, training or contracting needs in advance
- Determine the best use of human assets given workload and skills
- Manage (assign, schedule and track) people
- Manage (assign, schedule and track) tasks
- Customize workflows and automate processes
- Enable secure collaboration
- Store and access case documents and records electronically
- Meet compliance/regulatory requirements
- Analyze and report performance metrics
No two Citizen Requests are exactly the same, right? Little wonder that over the years there have been nearly as many disparate, ad-hoc technologies developed to respond to Citizen Requests as there are agencies charged with this high profile responsibility. Unfortunately today, as a result, there is a costly and complex Citizen Request Loop now well entrenched throughout much of the federal government. Navigating this loop (particularly across agencies) is at best time-consuming and at worst infuriating for citizens as well as for those who serve them.

The good news is that Case Management can help ANY agency rethink, simplify and streamline the process of responding to ANY Citizen Request. For starters while the nature of the information requested may differ from agency to agency, the fact is that there are just three variables that apply to every Citizen Request:

- Type of request (FOIA, etc.)
- Nature of request (what the customer specifically wants as well as applicable regulatory/legal requirements)
- Nature of agency (operational as well as cultural)

Think about it. Given that the process of dealing with any request is more similar than not, does it really make sense for so many agencies to reinvent the wheel from request to request? Not so much. With the help of Case Management the process of efficiently dealing with ANY Citizen Request is the same regardless of type, nature or agency:

- Assessment (determining what’s needed)
- Assignment (connecting needs with the people and resources necessary to address them)
- Tracking (knowing who is doing what when from start to finish as well as collecting data about why along the way)
- Analysis (disseminating and leveraging what you know about customers want now to anticipate and prepare for what they will want in the future)

\[\text{CASE IN POINT}\]

\[\text{Citizen Requests}\]

\[\text{MAKING A FEDERAL CASE OF IT}\]

- Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995
- President’s Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, OMB Memorandum M-10-06 (Open Government Directive), December 8, 2009
- Executive Order 13571 (Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service) April 27, 2011
- Executive Order 13576 (Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government), June 13, 2011
- The 25-Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management (IT Reform) Sep 23, 2011

\[\text{Making A Federal Case of It}\]
In Any Case, It’s Smart to Start with the End in Mind.

The key to choosing the right tool for the job is knowing what you must achieve and how your success will be measured first. As discussed throughout this article, Case Management can help you cut through the clutter of endless variables, streamline processes and get right down to doing what you do best: taking care of the people’s business.

\[1\] The 2011 Federal Customer Experience Study, August 29, 2011

\[2\] Report to Congressional Requesters, United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-12-461, April 2012.