The Smart Approach to Case Management

Harnessing the power of business rules and business process to drive intelligent, efficient case processing

BUILD FOR
CHANGE®

Pega®

Introduction

After automating a many-if not most- straightforward processes, organizations are turning their attention to the remaining business processes. They are finding that these processes pose significantly greater challenges when it comes to automation. Though not always called ¨case management¨ by name, these remaining work processes fall into that category of work. That is, while the work does have some loose process, it is generally semi-structured, collaborative, content-intensive, and subject to near-constant change — not exactly the profile of a prime target for ¨automation.¨ Nonetheless, these processes represent the next frontier when it comes to improving work management. So begins the search for solutions to address these problems.

To solve the problem of case management, one must first be able to identify a ¨case.¨ Cases can be nearly anything: an insurance claim, an application for a benefit, planning for an event, etc. The following graphic depicts the elements that are common to most cases. A case is a collection of multiple tasks, processes, other units of work, and content in support of a specific business objective.

This provides a baseline for what must be managed and accounted for when looking for a system to aid in case management. From the associated elements of a case, it is possible to derive some of the hallmark traits of case management:

▶ Collaborative in nature
▶ Content-intensive in nature
▶ Hierarchical in structure, with multiple levels of activities that need to be coordinated
▶ Dynamic: Each case is different, and the case's individual context dynamically drives how it must be handled.
▶ Variable degree of structure: Most cases include structured and unstructured pieces of work; the entire spectrum of work must be supported.
▶ Subject to change: Events i.e. anything that happens, both internal and external to the case can change its course.
▶ Ad hoc: The ¨events¨ mentioned above can make ad hoc changes necessary, such as associating other cases, or adding tasks, processes, rules, or content. Additionally, some types of work are simply a collection of ad hoc actions.
▶ Expansive: Case management typically spans multiple areas of an organization, adding to the challenge.
▶ Long-lived: Related to how expansive case management is; cases are frequently long-lived and need to be reopened or associated with other active cases.
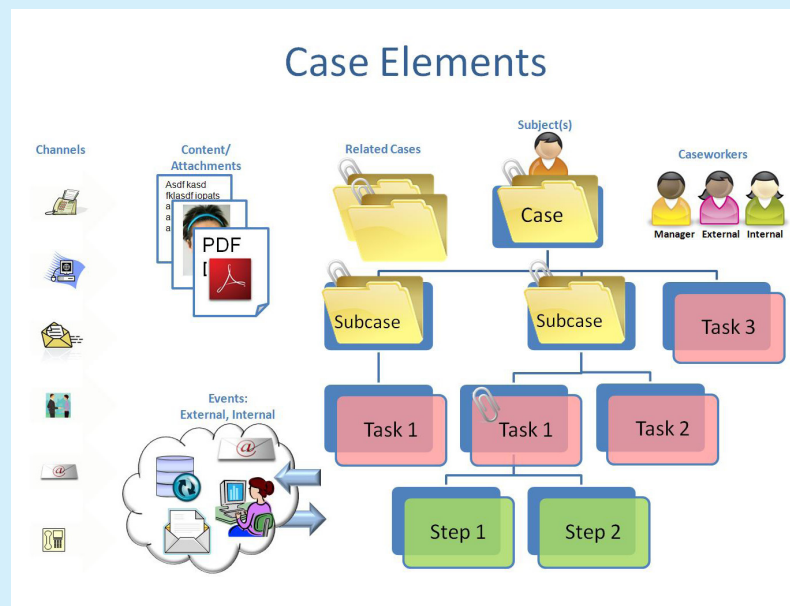
The figure above represents the generic elements of a case. It also demonstrates the hierarchical and collaborative nature of cases.

To fully support case management, an automated system must fully support all these aspects. But what is at the core of case management? Once this question is answered, we will be on our way to identifying a solution to manage cases.

Case Management: A Process Problem

Problem Statement

Case management is fundamentally a process problem. As such, it is best addressed by a business process management suite (BPMS). The trouble is that case management is a really, really tricky process problem, and most BPMSs don't support "really tricky" processes, period.

The fundamental reason that most BPMSs are unable to support case management is that they aren't "smart." Specifically, processes are not unified with rules. Two major functional deficiencies arise due to the disassociation of process and rules, making it nearly impossible for most BPMSs to support the dynamic nature of cases:

▶ Most BPMSs have a limited ability to orchestrate multiple processes into a unified whole (the case).

▶ In most BPMSs, processes must be basically structured and support only minor in-flight changes.

Solution: Smart Case Management with Unified Policies and Procedures

Pegasystems' approach to case management, Smart Case Management, is able to support the challenges inherent to case management. As was noted above, case management is fundamentally a process problem, just one of the more challenging ones. The Smart Case Management approach meets the challenge, precisely because it brings intelligence to the problem by unifying processes and rules. This unification of business policies with business procedures is why Pegasystems excels in areas where other BPMSs (not to mention other approaches to case management) fail.

What are policies? Some examples of different classes of business policies are listed below:

▶ Decision rules: for instance, IF customer's disputed amount is less than $25 and she is a gold customer, THEN write off the dispute

▶ Expressions: discounts or tax calculations

▶ Event rules: service-level actions (what should happen when a task is late) or correlation of events within a case

▶ Constraints: for instance, the amount paid on a claim should not exceed that prescribed by the claim policy

What Are Unified Policies and Procedures?

The examples in the previous section are business rules that control and "drive" the case. Pegasystems' Smart Case Management — as part of SmartBPM® — unifies a business rule engine with a business process management suite. In fact, in SmartBPM, business processes are actually a collection of business rules. What this means is that at every point within a process, a question can be asked (when the rule is invoked), and the answer to that question determines what is done next.

In addition to allowing for a hyperdynamic process, unified policies and procedures allow for very personalized user experiences, whether that user is a customer or a caseworker. As a case is being processed, rules are being invoked constantly to guide how it is handled.

Housing Assistance: Unified Policies and Procedures in Action

Let's say the case is an application for public housing assistance. First the rules verify the applicant's eligibility, checking that s/he is within the income limits based on family size, etc. The housing authority might also stipulate that some applicants be given higher priority, based on their reasons for requesting assistance, e.g. if the person is a victim of domestic violence, or an intimidated witness referred by the District Attorney's office those applications might receive higher priority.

The rules will indicate what documentation is required, depending on the circumstances of the application. Rules will route each case to the appropriate caseworker, again based on the case's context. Let's now say that the case involves a victim of domestic violence and that the violence falls into the category of a serious felony. This might mean that it needs to be routed to someone with a specialized skill set. The rules ensure that it is sent only to someone with the proper skill set. Up until this point, the work in the case has been fairly straightforward: gathering information and documentation. The workers performing these tasks probably didn't have significant access privileges to make changes to the case — rules dictated what access each role was given. Now the case is in the hands of a specialized caseworker with the authority to take action. Based on this role, s/he is sent to a screen with greater access privileges and complete visibility into the case. S/he can collaborate with others with fewer privileges, because based on their roles, their access to information and tools will be limited.

In Smart Case Management, rules provide the intelligence that drives the process, from process flow to security to a specific user interface and beyond.

The Power of Unified Policies and Procedures

Unified policies and procedures allow the organization to declaratively state the goal of a case process using the business rules. Thus, if the overall declared goal of the case is not being met, the process dynamically adapts to meet that goal. In other tools, the approach is more procedural, with the process chugging along and rules embedded only in simple if-thens but not in such a way as to handle previously unforeseen events.

At the time of case initiation and at every subsequent point of action, the full context of the case (customer value, location, products owned, prior interactions) is evaluated by the rules. Based on this, the right processes, tasks, subcases, policies, and user interfaces are selected — or even created. As the case context changes — a common occurrence in case management — so too do the elements (e.g., the processes and rules) supporting the case.

The Basis for Enterprise Case Management

Smart Case Management enables organizations to orchestrate the multiple processes of a case. The business's goal, embodied by the business rules, drives the processing of the case from the top level down to the most minor task nested within a subcase. This applies not only to subcases that are associated at the initiation of a case but also to those that are added subsequently. This begins the journey toward "enterprise" case management.

Unified policies and procedures further this journey by fostering "channel agnostic" case intake and seamless handoffs. Regardless of how a case comes into the organization, rules ensure that each is processed in the same manner.

Sample case detail view provided to an empowered worker (e.g. power user, manager, knowledge worker). Full context of the case is available, and full ability to take action.

When a case moves from one part of the organization to another, say from front to back office, Smart Case Management ensures that that transition is seamless, that the case is routed to the right person in the right unit, and that the case doesn't fall through the cracks during transition. At the same time, unified policies and procedures also ensure that newly created cases are associated with in-process cases if they are related, regardless of the originating channel or functional area. This ensures that as the case is processed, the caseworkers or systems doing the work are "aware" of the full case context.
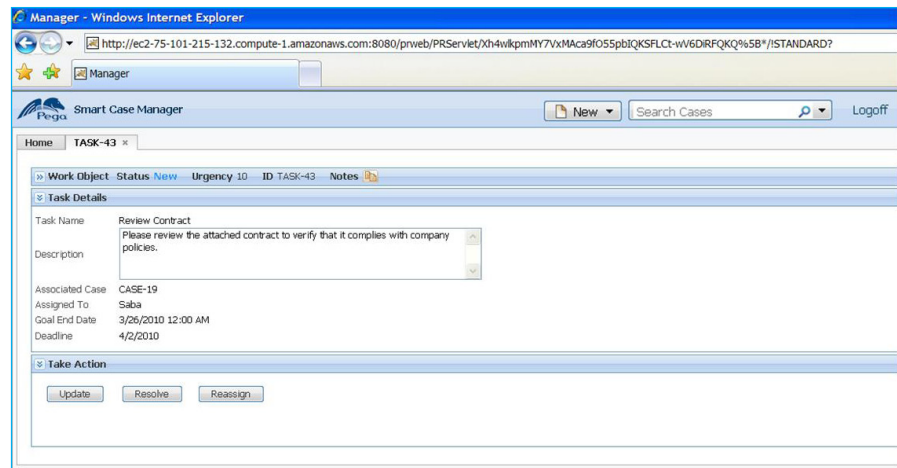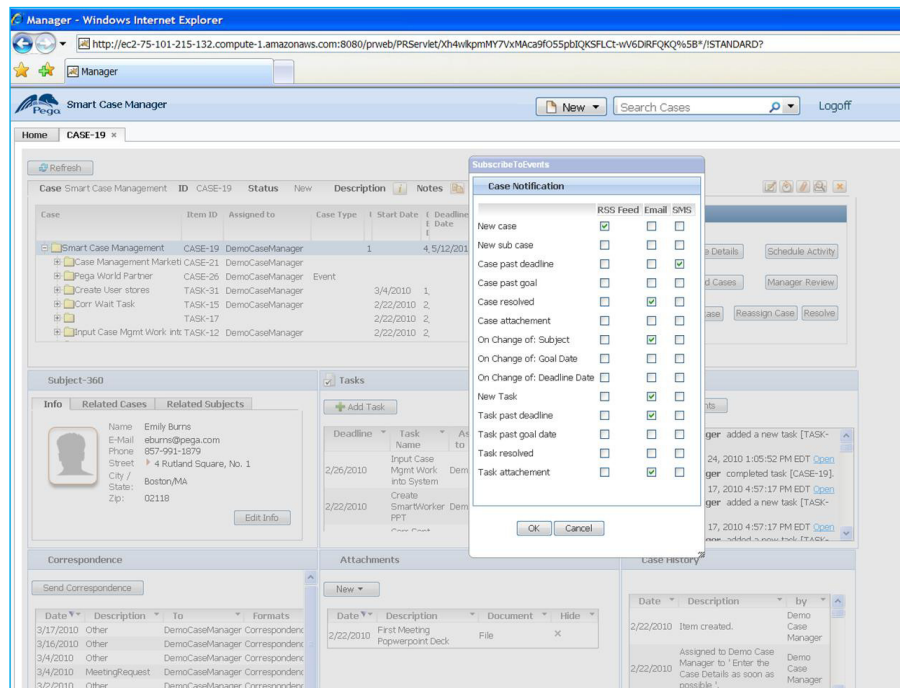
Improving Case Collaboration

Most cases are collaborative, with workers with a variety of skill levels working on various aspects. With unified policies and procedures, Smart Case Management fosters collaboration by allowing these different types of workers to be supported according to their needs. This is accomplished by using rules to dictate the type of screens and privileges that each user has. Thus a skilled manager-level worker may have the ability

Sample view of work assigned to a user without significant access privileges. Can be easily changed to increase of further decrease the level of access provided

to make ad hoc changes, see the entire case folder, and perform work in a very unstructured, even ad hoc, fashion. A worker at a different skill level might be presented with more-structured work, having only the information required for a specific task, being able to take only a few predefined actions. If the system were not able to support this broad spectrum of skill levels and work patterns, the work would go on, but it would go on outside the system. At that point, the organization would lose visibility into the case and run the risk of the case falling off track.

Collaboration is further encouraged by harnessing the power of events. When an event occurs—i.e., when anything happens to the case—users are notified of those events. Because of the application of unified policies and procedures, workers are able to specify which events they care about and how they want to be notified of those events. For example, a manager may care only when entire cases are past their due dates and may elect to be notified via e-mail. A caseworker who is collaborating with another worker on her case might want to know whether specific tasks have passed their goal dates, and she might prefer to be notified via a text message. All of this is supported by Smart Case Management, which fosters not only collaborative but also efficient case management.

Events and personalized event subscriptions allow users to stay abreast of changes in the case, work done by others, approaching deadlines, etc.

Conclusion

While case management is at its core a process problem, its native complexities require advanced process management capabilities. Pegasystems' Smart Case Management, with its unified policies and procedures, provides these advanced capabilities. Without this "smart" approach, it is simply not possible to completely — and cost-effectively — manage the complexities of case management.

Using Smart Case Management with its unified policies and procedures, Pegasystems' clients are able to significantly improve case management. They are able to:

▶ Ensure that cases don't fall through the cracks when moving through the organization

▶ Incorporate full case context into processing, ensuring consistent but tailored case processing

▶ Respond to events as the situation requires, whether in an ad hoc or an automated fashion

▶ Tailor caseworker tools based on role, increasing worker effectiveness and security and improving collaboration

▶ Foster collaboration; cases are processed as quickly as possible and employees are deployed in the most effective manner

About Pegasystems

Pegasystems (NASDAQ: PEGA), the leader in Business Process Management, provides software to drive revenue growth, productivity and agility for the world's most sophisticated organizations. Customers use our award-winning SmartBPM® suite to improve customer service, reach new markets and boost operational effectiveness.

Our patented SmartBPM® technology makes enterprise applications easy to build and change by directly capturing business objectives and eliminating manual programming. SmartBPM® unifies business rules and processes into composite applications that leverage existing systems — empowering businesspeople and IT staff to Build for Change®, deliver value quickly and outperform their competitors.

Pegasystems' suite is complemented by best-practice frameworks designed for leaders in financial services, insurance, healthcare, government, life sciences, communications, manufacturing and other industries.

Headquartered in Cambridge, MA, Pegasystems has offices in North America, Europe and Asia. Visit us at www.pega.com.