Global360

What to Look For in a Case Management Platform

Key Factors and Considerations

Overview

Selecting the right case management solution – with the right partner – can drive immediate value for your organization, give you a competitive advantage, and improve business performance. Based on Global 360's 20+ years experience and customer feedback, we have identified a few key business and technical factors that can help guide you through the selection process. By applying these key factors and considerations to potential vendors and their solutions, you will be able to select the right case management solution for your organization and processes.

Business Factors:

- Company Leadership, Experience, Longevity, and Financial Stability
- Proven Customer Success and High Retention Rates
- Industry Best Practices and Application Expertise
- Global 24x7 Support and Wide Geographic Presence
- Product Innovation and Market Leadership

Technical Factors:

- Platform Adaptability
- Configuration Tools That Accelerate Deployment
- Shared Case Folder and Collaboration
- Deep Integration With Content: Content-awareness
- Event Triggered Process Flows
- Performance Visibility and Optimization
- Rentention Management
- Security and Auditability

A Closer Look at The Technical Factors

While the business factors are self-explanatory, they should not be overlooked. Vendors with many years of experience should not be mistaken for those masquerading behind industry buzz words and the latest trends. A case management partner with exceptional experience and proven success can mean dramatic cost savings in planning, design, deployment and support of the solution you choose.

The technical factors require further definition and insight in order to truly understand the unique capabilities of an effective case management platform.

Platform Adaptability

Adaptability of a case management platform is a distinct factor. A basic case management solution may offer prebuilt template/workflows for one specific process or area. However, since case related processes are best known for unscripted flows, your case management solution should also provide process configuration tools that facilitate the creation of emergent processes (i.e., where hard coding is not required up-front, but rather users are able to adapt the process throughout its entire progression).

Your case management platform should start with a minimal feature set and provide the ability to add more required tasks, content and structure as process managers and users see trends emerging. When selecting a case management vendor, be sure to challenge their understanding and support of ad-hoc tasks and workflows. The ability to manage ad-hoc tasks and workflows should not be mistaken for dealing with the *predictable* exceptions on fixed process paths; the best case management solutions will understand how to deal with the *unpredictable* exceptions within already dynamic process flows.

Example — Financial, billing and credit card disputes. Processing payments is generally a structured process, but when a customer disputes a charge on their bill or demands a refund, dynamic actions and processing are required as the activities involved in the process vary depending upon numerous factors including: reason for the dispute, were the goods delivered or services provided, were they defective, etc. Reasons or resolutions for customer disputes that are unpredictable from initiation point of the dispute are best handled by case management solutions.

Configuration Tools That Accelerate Deployment

To facilitate rapid system deployment, your case management solution should provide highly customizable case folder templates. Customization should be offered through configuration rather than labor intensive coding. A template for a case folder defines the starting point – the first screen a user sees when they begin work. It captures the beginning state of the tasks, data, content, etc, so that a user isn't starting from scratch every time.

The configurable templates should focus on the specific needs of each user that interfaces with the case and provide that user with a single application that is tailored to their unique requirements. Your case management partner should offer configurable case management interfaces unique to the requirements of each user class (e.g., managers, analysts, researchers, processors) rather than a slightly modified version of the same application interface for all users.

Example – Financial Services, Account Management. Numerous people are involved with the opening of new bank accounts including branch associates, external agents, back-office processors, account approval participants and supervisors. These system users all benefit from information presented in a format specific to what they need to complete their work. Easily configured user interfaces reduce the complexity of the account application and assessment, speeding cycle time and increasing productivity.

Shared Case Folder and Collaboration

Case management solutions should provide a central access point, in the form of a shared case folder, for all case-related tasks, processes, documents, data, and other artifacts. Of equal importance is the ability for users to share information regarding their work via the shared case folder. A rich collaboration environment supports improved decision making, thereby reducing business risk.

Although the case folder provides a central access point, it is not always central to the process itself. In fact, there are three scenarios that all best-in-class case management solutions should consider: (1) the case is the coordinating object and incorporates processes as needed, (2) the Process coordinates the Case, and (3) the process drives the case but the case lives on past the process lifecycle. Being able to do all of these is critical.

When evaluating case management solutions, ask your vendors to see examples of case management folders and to discuss how those folders can support your processes and the business outcomes you expect.

Example — Court Records Management and Distribution. In courtrooms around the country, judges, attorneys and clerks are engaged in the life of a case folder within their case management solution. These case participants may require rapid access to information pertinent to the case at similar times for different reasons. In addition, since new information may enter the case folder at different times from any given participants, they need the ability to collaborate on various aspects of the case including: motions, filings, judgments, receipts, hearing scheduling, etc. The shared folder should allow for and track the appropriate access for all of the case participants.

Deep Integration with Content: Content-awareness

Much of the content needed for a case is pulled from numerous supporting documents. While most case management solutions expose this content via URL, a true case management system takes this one step further to not only access the content but to understand its context and any business rules that may apply to it. (e.g., if a SharePoint document has an amount > $1M, assign it to a senior underwriter).

Look for a case management system that manages all content natively as well as provides the ability to connect to external repositories like SharePoint. Case management solutions should present all content in a single view, seamlessly, so that the location of the content is transparent to the user.

Example — Joint Life Insurance Application. A husband and wife apply for life insurance policies from the insurance provider where they hold other policies. The providers case management solution not only must be aware of the documents and information required for the insurance policies, but also be able to identify the additional insurance policies (such as auto, home, etc) held by the husband and wife. The case management solution must provide quick, common access to all of this Information regardless of where it resides (whether inside the case folder or out) in order to help speed issuance or decline of the policy.

Event Triggered Process Flows

In case management, the case folder advances through events, both externally and internally. External events that move a case include receipt of a phone call, letter, fax, or email related to the case, where the contents of that message are added to the case folder, and new tasks or processes may be created. Internal events include assignments and business rules created within the case management system itself, including configurable deadlines that support the notion of business calendars. Ask the case management vendors you are considering to describe what types of events can alter the direction of process flows, no matter when they occur in the life of the process.

Example – Claim Disputes. A customer calls to dispute a health claim that was rejected. The claim that was otherwise on a path to be archived must now be reviewed in an Appeals process instead of proceeding on the standard path. The claim documentation along with medical records must be reviewed by doctors on both sides of the disagreement, and must be completed within a mandated time period. The exact process is different every time but the deadlines don't change.

Performance Visibility and Optimization

Performance monitoring and optimization of the case folder as it progresses through tasks and events is an important component of case management. Supervisors should be able to monitor the productivity of case workers and teams, and adjust QC/audit and priority review thresholds as performance conditions warrant.

A Case Management solution that provides a Supervisor / Manager user view facilitates effective management of teams and processes, enabling allocation of tasks and workload balancing. Your solution should provide supervisors with drill down reporting, enabling the ability to look for recurring patterns of ad-hoc tasks.

To maximize Supervisor/Manager user views, ask your potential case management vendor if they offer case management software that includes pre-built dashboards with functional KPI's providing visual representations of organizational and process performance.

Example — Claim Processing. It is widely understood that the faster the claim is settled then severity of the claim will be minimized. Therefore it is imperative that the claims manager and claim supervisors have access to all data required to efficiently monitor the progress of the claim. Management needs to know when a claim is received and when it has been completely processed in order to properly analyze this information and make the necessary work adjustments to optimize performance time.

Retention Management

As a case management system often serves as an organization's system of record, it is imperative that the system includes the ability to define a retention plan. This includes management capabilities such as retention intervals with support for legal holds and mandatory expiration. Question your potential case management partners on how their solutions will help manage your most complex retention and expiration requirements.

Example – Freedom of Information Act. Citizens have a right to access government records under the Freedom of Information Act. Case-related information containing government records must be maintained a defined amount of time and be readily available within requirements of the Act. Without retention management capabilities, cases and supporting information may not be proper retained.

Security and Auditability

Security should be applicable at a granular level (data fields) and adapt to the state / stage of the case. To ensure regulatory compliance, your case management solution should provide a complete audit trail of task, content, and data state changes for the case, including who accessed the case, when, and what changes were made. Be sure to speak with your prospective vendors about the most secure environments where their solutions have been implemented and how their solutions will aid in auditing case records and access.

Example – Private Information of Any Type. How many companies have been in the news for losing their customers' private information like credit card numbers, social security numbers or medical records? Since cases often deal with the most sensitive and personal information, it should go without saying that security is of primary concern.

Conclusion

It is Global 360's hope that the key business and technical factors outlined within this paper will be of assistance while you are considering your case management options. When you do make your final selection of a case management partner and platform, it is important that you feel comfortable and satisfied with that decision and that all of your questions have been answered. Therefore, we suggest that your case management research not stop at this paper, but continue with additional reading materials, webinars highlighting client successes, one-on-one interviews with key industry thought leaders, and demos with technology experts. Two examples of case management content – available at www.global360.com -- that can aid you in your decision making process include a webinar featuring one of our customers, Pinellas County, and an industry thought leader Bruce Silver. Additionally, please read Bruce Silver's case management white paper.

- Case Management Demystified Webinar
- BPMS Whitepaper - Case Management: Addressing Unique BPM Requirements

We would be happy to assist you with your selection process and to discuss the requirements unique to your business and industry. For additional information, please contact us at **www.global360.com/contact-us.**