



Case Management for Investigations: *Choosing the Right Tools to Improve the Process*



F R O S T  S U L L I V A N

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INTRODUCTION

Today's public-safety and enterprise organizations face a daunting challenge when it comes to investigations. They must juggle a wide variety of structured and unstructured data, and cope with dynamic business processes that must adjust in the face of new information and scenarios. Many organizations still take an unstructured, ad-hoc approach to investigations. But like all business processes, this work can be vastly improved when it is clearly defined and practitioners are given straight-forward tasks and metrics by which to work and measure success.

Case management software can offer significant benefits in this area by giving government agencies and businesses better control over costs and management, while ensuring that end users have the goals, information and flexibility they need to effectively produce results. These tools show users what resources they have at their disposal, how content should flow, and the best practices for investigation based on industry, government and internal mandates.

This paper will address the benefits of using case management software for investigations by highlighting three key themes: content and context sensitivity, flexibility, and extensibility. It will outline the need for such software in a data-rich world; highlight the benefits it provides to a variety of use cases; and offer best practices for selecting the right technology for any organization.

DEFINING INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The world is changing, and businesses and government agencies need to change with it. Thanks to a global, Internet-based economy in which Big Data offers both opportunities and challenges, organizations must rethink the ways in which they conduct investigations. Many companies and agencies still rely on manual, ad-hoc processes to collect, organize and store data, and they have little or no clear procedures for ensuring that information is sent to the right people at the right time, or that decisions and actions are being made and taken according to standard and proven best practices.

By leveraging case management software to lend discipline to the investigations process, companies and public service entities know that they will always have access to the most relevant and useful data, and that it is stored safely and securely for current and future use. Case management software also allows users to follow and even create processes for identifying the need for an investigation in the first place; route the necessary information to the best available person or team; follow best practices so that all processes and policies are in place for a successful outcome; and allow managers and other parties to review the investigation at all steps in the process.

Using software to support and manage investigative work is ideal for situations in which goals are understood but the specific tasks, order and stakeholders are not; access to information is critical to success; and tacit knowledge and business data—both structured and unstructured—must be captured, organized, analyzed, acted upon, and stored.

The result is better business outcomes, thanks to a completed case with all the documentation, process steps, decision points and audit log information in a single place. Users can also leverage information and analytics to help inform and support decision-making within the context of the case. And all the while, line-of-business and compliance managers can rest assured that all investigations are meeting the necessary metrics and regulatory or legal requirements.

Five Key Ways Case Management Software Improves Investigations

- Allows context to drive the process
- Provides rules-driven, automated processes
- Offers flexible worker and usage options
- Manages ad-hoc steps within the case structure
- Auditable for the future

USE CASES: KEY AGENCIES AND VERTICAL MARKETS

Government agencies and businesses of all kinds can benefit from advanced case management software and clearly defined investigation techniques. But industry-focused solutions go one step further and deliver access to information and analytics specifically relevant to those businesses; automated and flexible tasks based on industry needs; industry-oriented templates, best practices and rules; a final case “package” that is auditable, accessible and secure; and the ability to transform the business through Big Data analytics.

Organization Types

- **Law enforcement** can benefit from access to private and public information to conduct criminal investigations.
- **Public safety** institutions can formalize processes and procedures for managing everything from special events to natural disasters.
- **Corporate investigations** are more effective and targeted when they follow strict procedures and incorporate information from all company data stores (including contact center and supply chain information) and provide access to all experienced personnel.
- **Corporate risk assessment** is made better when it is triggered by key thresholds and includes analysis of unexpected but relevant public and proprietary information.

Vertical Industries

- **Healthcare organizations** can leverage case management tools to investigate disease/infectious outbreaks, monitor quality-of-care KPIs, identify insurance and other fraud on the part of patients and practitioners, and locate gaps in training and performance that need to be addressed.
- **Financial Services** companies rely on case management solutions for conducting background checks and vetting loan and mortgage applications, ensuring employees are compliant with all government and industry regulations, and identifying new business opportunities based on customer service trends.
- **Manufacturing firms** can leverage case management software to investigate production hiccups and product flaws, manage recalls, integrate with suppliers and buyers, and track all compliance and legal requirements.

- **Retail businesses** are deploying case management applications to highlight gaps in purchasing by both their buyers and their customers, manage returns and complaints, coordinate rebates and recalls with their suppliers, and respond to customer and employee fraud. Retailers, manufacturers, and distributors can use case management for investigations into cases of counterfeiting, tracking suspect shipments and handlers, using integrated forensic analysis to determine who is involved, and any associated individuals or groups.

TOOLS FOR TODAY—AND TOMORROW

Until recently, it was enough for advanced case management solutions to offer access to all pertinent information from a single UI, deliver flexible process controls to empower knowledge workers, provide analytics to improve process management, and empower line-of-business managers to make process changes to reduce turnaround time. Today, companies should expect even more from their case management software, including targeted solutions designed to improve return on investment and promote industry best practices, leverage Big Data with context-specific dashboards and analytics, enable mobile users, and support a cloud strategy as needed.

Today's investigative employees need better access to information—and the right people within their organizations—to help them make better decisions. By getting access to all relevant documentation from all appropriate stores and applications, updated throughout the lifecycle of the case, users can analyze the information they need when they need it—regardless of where it resides and whether it is structured or unstructured. Case histories and dashboards enable real-time notifications and checklists, ensuring that employees are following proper procedures at all times, and that their actions can be documented and audited for compliance purposes. And real-time access to team collaboration tools and intelligent search engines leads to better, faster decision-making among everyone involved in a particular event or investigation.



When it comes to using case management for investigations, flexible workflows and collaboration are critical for success.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A VENDOR PARTNER

When choosing a provider for case management software, it's critical to find one that understands the true value of an end-to-end content management and analytics solution. Each case should have its own folder for storing relevant documents and information; an integrated document viewer with robust markup capabilities; leading-edge document management functionality; and a centralized content repository for case data.

Three Pillars of Case Management for Investigations

- **Content and context sensitivity** ensure the right information gets to the right people, and that it is used the right way given the specifics of the case at hand.
- **Flexibility** allows users to follow proper procedure while adding new steps as needed.
- **Extensibility** makes it easy to give access to the application to everyone who needs it, regardless of their job roles, and to integrate it with other apps and services as needed

Better still, your case management solution should fit into your broader content management and collaboration solutions and processes, making it easy for users to access the information and people they need in order to develop the best outcomes for their investigations and their companies. Incorporating features such as presence information and instant messaging, email, document storage, team rooms and even conferencing can reduce case resolution times and increase time to ROI—especially if those tools are already in use within the organization and familiar to end users.

Finally, integrated content analytics is especially important for investigations, which often turn on finding connections and trends within and among different data sets. Such analytics should go beyond case-related information to include bigger data sets, such as geo-location, weather, traffic patterns and buying trends, as well as broader company- or organization-specific information, such as customer service reports, arrest records, product recalls, and so on.

Powerful data analytics tools will allow users to mine, analyze, visualize and share relevant information, and then use the results to better inform their and their colleagues' decisions. They should include robust and collaborative data intelligence, advanced search capabilities, and configurable connections analysis; and they must support structured and unstructured data from multiple sources, including embedded media and social networking sites.

Look for the Following Key Capabilities in a Case Management System

- A role-based user interface that merges information, process control, collaboration and analytics
- Dynamic, runtime work management capabilities
- Focused analytical tools for decision support
- Management of the entire case lifecycle
- Support for industry-specific templates, regulations and requirements
- Mobile clients
- A cloud-delivery model if desired

CONCLUSION

Like almost all business processes today, investigations require that companies and organizations pay close attention to the trends shaping the workplace and work life. It is no longer enough to treat investigations as ad-hoc endeavors, relying on paper-based documentation and unclear or uncertain policies and procedures. Instead, line-of-business and IT managers must work together to select and deploy case management software that will ensure that employees have access to all the information they need, when they need it; processes are well defined and appropriately followed; and outcomes can be tracked and measured for future use.

A robust case management solution should offer industry- and role-specific personalization, so that end users get exactly the data they need to advance the case; be flexible and extensible, so that it can be configured to meet unique business requirements; provide deep context for case work, so employees don't have to jump among data stores and applications; and enable a collaborative experience that brings the right people, processes and information together to drive case progression and ensure better outcomes.

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Silicon Valley

331 E. Evelyn Ave., Suite 100
Mountain View, CA 94041
Tel 650.475.4500
Fax 650.475.1570

San Antonio

7550 West Interstate 10,
Suite 400
San Antonio, TX 78229
Tel 210.348.1000
Fax 210.348.1003

London

4 Grosvenor Gardens
London SW1W 0DH
Tel +44 (0)20 7343 8383
Fax +44 (0)20 7730 3343

MELANIE TUREK

Vice President | Enterprise Communications | Frost & Sullivan
P: 970.871.6110
E: melanie.turek@frost.com

877.GoFrost
myfrost@frost.com
www.frost.com

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Frost & Sullivan
331 E. Evelyn Ave., Suite 100
Mountain View, CA 94041