

Building business solutions - intelligently

CASE MANAGEMENT 101

A PEGA
WHITEPAPER



There's little tolerance for disconnected approaches to work. This is true for the people doing the work as much as the customers and clients for whom the work is done. But there have been advances in how to manage all this work end to end – and it's called case management.

But...what *exactly* is it? Case management is a software-based approach to managing a set of processes that collect, track, and consolidate data to achieve a business outcome. The objective is to manage all the work needed to handle a given case, regardless of the type. When fully integrated, the result is a dynamic ecosystem of work that reflects the environments in which it's done.

We'll dig into what case management is and how you can use it to optimize your enterprise – from empowering your teams and reducing costs to crushing business complexity and driving seamless experiences. Combined with the power of low code and intelligent automation, you'll be able to build case-based solutions at the pace business demands.

Let's answer some questions about case:

- **What is a case?**
A case is the coordination of multiple tasks and activities – planned and unplanned – for a specific purpose.
- **How do most orgs manage cases?**
A lot of enterprises manage cases manually or with intelligent automation.
- **What makes case management a better approach to managing work?**
Case management is a software-based approach to managing, improving – and ultimately – intelligently automating work. It reduces redundancy, monotony, cost, and complexity.
- **What's the difference between a case and a process?**
A case is the work that needs to be done. A process (or processes) is the path (or paths) it takes to complete it.
- **How is a case different from a task?**
A task is a point-in-time assignment.
- **What does “ad hoc” mean?**
Ad hoc describes an unplanned task, defined in the moment of need and performed in real time, rather than as something purposefully designed into systems and applications.
- **What does “design by doing” mean?**
Design by doing is a process of defining the model for how to complete a piece of work by doing the work, then letting the software capture the process on the fly.
- **What is an “event” and why does it matter?**
An *event* is anything that happens. Events matter because they're often responsible for the changes that need to be made to a case.
- **If I decide to adopt case management, do I have to scrap my other applications?**
No, with a good case management platform you can use existing systems through a service-oriented architecture.

Understanding case

A case is a piece of work that delivers a meaningful business outcome for a customer, a partner, or even an internal stakeholder. The case contains all the data and objects that are required for processing and are generated through processing. Think of it as an electronic folder that includes all the tasks, documents, and information you need to complete a piece of work to reach an outcome. Unlike a folder, however, a case also contains the intelligence to retrieve the information you need, drive the processes you want, manage escalations and urgency, detect changes, and make the decisions needed to achieve the desired outcome.

Here are a few examples of work that can be managed as cases:

- Insurance claims
- Patient records
- Loan applications
- Identity theft investigations
- Customer requests
- Adding a new customer

Like a nesting doll, cases can also exist within cases. For example, customers at a financial institution can be managed as cases and in a single customer case, there might be several child cases for each account. Nested within one of those cases, there could be a case for identity theft investigation – we'll dig into this more later.

Processes and cases exist independently of one another. This is one of the key differentiators between case management and traditional business process management (BPM). That's because in traditional BPM, the process is almost always the case (i.e., the work) and cannot be extricated from it.

This separation of case and process is the principal reason why case management is so powerful. By keeping these concepts separate, a case can be managed as a holistic body of work. With traditional BPM, each of these processes would be executed as distinct and disconnected. With an intelligent case management approach, all these processes are tightly associated with the case – and the same is true of its child cases and their processes.

The compartmentalized nature of the work – first at the case level, next at the process level, and then at the level of the individual steps within a process – allows for very granular control of who does what work and who can see what information. One user might have the ability to see all cases and initiate any child cases or processes for each. Another might have access to only a single child case, or perhaps have access to information about all of the cases but is only able to perform actions on one of the child cases.

After you define your stages, you fill in the work to be done. That work most often takes the form of tasks and processes. Tasks are individual steps in the case, completed by one person, often in a single sitting. If you need to string a series of tasks together in a specific order or if

you want to include automated steps or decisions in your stage, it is useful to define a process. A process is a set of tasks, activities, material, and/or information flow. Often, your case management software will let you use graphical process models to define a set of steps, and then associate those processes with individual stages. This allows you to keep process models concise and manageable, while using the stages of the case to get an overall view into the end-to-end work.

Is case better for routine or ad hoc work?

Ad hoc work is an unplanned task, defined in the moment of need, and performed in real time – rather than something designed into systems and applications. Since large amounts of work can't be automated or even guided, this type of work is often called ad hoc. Essentially, people add tasks and decide next steps as the work progresses.

If work is manual and ad hoc, can case management still play a role? Yes. It supports ad hoc work in three important ways:

1. **It tracks what's happening.** Traditional ways of managing ad hoc work - such as spreadsheets, emails, and to-do lists – offer little insight or visibility into the work. Your case application will provide constant, real-time reporting – giving stakeholders and managers a consistent view of progress.
2. **It ensures consistency.** If certain tasks must be completed or certain pieces of data must be captured to complete work, your system will ensure that the data is captured and/or the task is completed.
3. **It provides insights for guiding and even automating future tasks.** You'll gain visibility into how much of the manual work is done and empowers managers to understand the patterns in that work.

Ad hoc actions exist along a spectrum. On one end is the ad hoc performance of defined actions, such as starting new child cases or processes. On the other end is the creation of completely new ad hoc work. This is work that has not yet been defined in any way and is created to handle exceptions. Supporting this type of work is one of the key features of case management software. In the absence of software, this work usually gets handled via email, phone calls, and meetings – with no record of its performance.

What's an event?

An **event** is anything that happens. Events matter because they can impact the way a case is handled. This is true whether you know about the event or not. In the cases where you don't know about an event at the time it occurs, the case handling will still be impacted – it will just be impacted later.

One of the goals for case management software is to be able to capture events as they're happening. The more responsive a case management platform is, the more accurately the work will reflect the dynamics of the case. Events can be used to keep people informed by triggering messages to a group of users. They can provide a means of monitoring and managing a case.

Getting work done

Case management focuses on better business outcomes. Other methods for managing work, like traditional business process management (BPM) or packaged applications, focus at a lower level – either managing an individual process or a specific piece of the case. Still, other approaches focus on the kind of work – supporting only automated work, only ad hoc work, or only content-intensive work.

Another way of understanding the distinction between case management and other approaches to work is to understand what it isn't:

- **It's not automating individual processes, even highly complex ones.** It puts those processes in the broader case context – current, past, and future. This is true whether that context is relative to the customer or a customer service representative (CSR).
- **It's also not *just* about supporting ad hoc work.** Support for ad hoc work is a crucial feature, just as support for automated processing and many other types of work is – but it is only one element.
- **It's not just another way of talking about content management.** Again, content is very important to case management, but it goes far beyond in terms of its requirements for process and creating an intelligent network of work.

The defining trait of software supporting case management is its ability to support *all* of the work being done on the case, creating a dynamic, intelligent ecosystem of work that is the case. Once that network is created, it can be made visible and actionable to all who should have access.

Conclusion

Digital transformation and innovation starts with case management. It can help capture and manage work across applications and people. And when coupled with artificial intelligence and low-code software development – you'll get speed, scale, and seamless experiences at your fingertips.

Discover how case management and intelligent automation can help you become more resilient, use disruption for positive change, and break down the silos between your teams and your customers. Visit us at [pega.com](https://www.pega.com).



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