Captaris
The Way Information Moves

WHITE PAPER

Automating Document-intensive Tasks with Workflow Software

How to Increase Profits and Simplify Compliance Efforts by Eliminating Paper from your Business Processes

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INTRODUCTION

Today businesses are under tremendous pressure from customers, competitors and regulators to complete work better, faster and more cost-effectively while at the same time providing more transparency and security. With the plethora of documents organizations must process each day as they interact with customers and conduct business transactions, simply controlling all the paper can be a daunting task. That's why results-oriented organizations are putting workflow software in place that brings together people, processes and documents to improve efficiency, reduce costs and meet compliance requirements.

This white paper will discuss how automating document-intensive tasks with workflow software can improve your bottom line and protect your organization from a variety of risks. It will also showcase how real-world companies are gaining impressive results by using document workflow solutions in critical areas such as purchasing and claims processing.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS PAPER?

Read this paper if …

- You have a process such as procurement or claims processing that is bogged down by paper
- You have claims or other business-critical documents that are piling up more quickly than they can be processed
- Your cash flow is negatively impacted by slow paper-handling
- You cannot produce records quickly enough when called upon for audits or litigation support
- You would like to add workflow to your Microsoft SharePoint system

THE PITFALLS OF PAPER-BASED PROCESSES

No matter what your business, documents such as purchase orders, claims forms, invoices and loan applications are crucial. They can also be overwhelming for workers and business processes. Often the problem is not the content of the documents. It's the paper shuffle that bogs an organization down.

Consider for a minute the typical day in an organization. People perform tasks, route information and make decisions as they complete business activities. In most organizations, this is a paper-centric process. Documents are printed out, filled in or annotated, placed in folders, then manually routed and re-routed around the office as tasks are acted upon and approved. Then as documents are shared with customers and suppliers they are emailed or manually faxed or mailed. Finally, they are copied and stored in filing cabinets and storage rooms around the office or at offsite storage facilities for later retrieval or destruction.

The pitfalls of such paper-based processes are many. Each step of the process is inefficient, time consuming, error-prone and filled with potential security holes. Documents are lost, misrouted, and important decisions are stuck in a bottleneck. Customers, suppliers and employees get frustrated. The consequences of so much paper can be serious, including high costs and service delays as well as compliance and legal exposure.

ELIMINATING PAPER FROM YOUR BUSINESS PROCESSES

If you are having a hard time staying ahead of the paper in your office, you are in good company. According to Gartner research director Toby Bell in his September 2005 report "Four Steps Will Bring You Closer to Content/Process Fusion," fewer than five percent of companies that could benefit from the content/process fusion approach, have implemented it. Why have so few companies done it yet? Companies that sell content and process fusion solutions have learned from experience that many organizations fear that a Business Process Management (BPM) project is too costly and complex to implement and use.

DISPELLING THE MYTHS ABOUT AUTOMATING DOCUMENT-INTENSIVE TASKS

In reality, BPM has come a long way. BPM is no longer only for large enterprises with boundless budgets, long deployment cycles and large IT departments and training staffs. As the following table illustrates, organizations of all sizes can rapidly and cost-effectively automate important tasks and eliminate paper from their business environments.

MYTH	REALITY
Costly Business process management projects can cost millions of dollars and are too costly for most small- and medium-sized organizations.	**Affordable** The cost of automating document workflow is very affordable today. Organizations can address point problems for a reasonable investment and realize a rapid payback.
Complex Solutions are difficult to install, deploy and manage.	**Simplified** Vendors have made great strides in simplifying workflow software solutions. Wizards, templates and technologies such as Microsoft .NET and XML make solutions fast and easy to deploy, adapt and manage.
Unused Software systems are too hard for people to learn and use. People will resort to familiar paper-based methods and productivity will be lost.	**Useful** Intuitive interfaces and integrations with common productivity tools such as Microsoft SharePoint make it easy for average workers to incorporate workflow into their routines.
Paperless is impossible There is no way to completely eliminate paper within most offices.	**Paperless is possible** Paper may always be with us, but the most successful organizations are able to eliminate paper from the business process.

BENEFITS OF AUTOMATING DOCUMENT WORKFLOW

Paperless is possible and it does not have to be costly, complex or hard to achieve. Paper can be replaced by digital documents in a variety of areas including claims processing, procurement, inventory management, loan processing and records management. Workflow software—which brings together information capture, processing, management and delivery capabilities—is available to automate any document-intensive task. This software offers a variety of benefits including:

Cost Savings

Paper, toner, printers, fax machines, postage, filing cabinets, storage and associated labor are significant cost drivers in document-intensive organizations with manual processes. Rejected claims are also a big cost driver for organizations with manual processes. In the healthcare industry for example, the cost to process a rejected claim can escalate to more than 10 dollars per claim. With an industry average of 40 percent rejected claims, this can be a serious expense. Workflow software helps reduce costs by eliminating the supply and labor costs associated with paper-based document processing and management. It can also further reduce costs by decreasing the number of rejected claims and by reducing the time and resources needed to support audits, litigation and compliance.

Improved Response Times

Organizations that rely on paper can add days or even weeks to their business processes. With workflow software, tasks can be automatically assigned, delivered, monitored and escalated to ensure they are completed in a timely manner. Workflow software also can provide document delivery and recognition capabilities as well as forms integration to allow organizations to better manage their disparate documents. Such control ensures that tasks are completed in a timely manner and documents are not lost, ignored or deleted. In addition, documents can be automatically delivered to recipients, and then, archived electronically for later retrieval. By documenting and automating the rules around processes, workflow software enforces accountability and empowers knowledge workers to quickly receive, analyze and correctly act upon time-sensitive information and tasks. As a result, staff can more rapidly and accurately respond to customers, partners and changing business conditions.

Security and Compliance

Heightened privacy concerns and tightened regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) require organizations to improve workflow, archival and records management capabilities. An automated workflow software solution provides a secure and standardized environment for customer, supplier and other vital business information. This minimizes the privacy and regulatory risks associated with manual document handling by enabling organizations to better control, manage and monitor who, where and when information and tasks were acted upon.

Efficiency

Reducing an organization's reliance on paper can dramatically improve efficiency and productivity. Automated workflow software makes it faster and easier to assign, prioritize, track and escalate tasks, thus allowing users to collaborate, act upon, distribute and store information more efficiently. It frees knowledge workers from redundant and time-consuming, paper-based administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on higher value activities.

Error Reduction

Human errors can cost organizations time, money and reputation. In some instances, for example in a critical healthcare decision, human errors can cost the very lives of those they are serving. By minimizing paper-handling and providing a structured electronic document workflow environment, organizations can dramatically increase accuracy and monitoring, thereby improving overall service quality.

Profitability

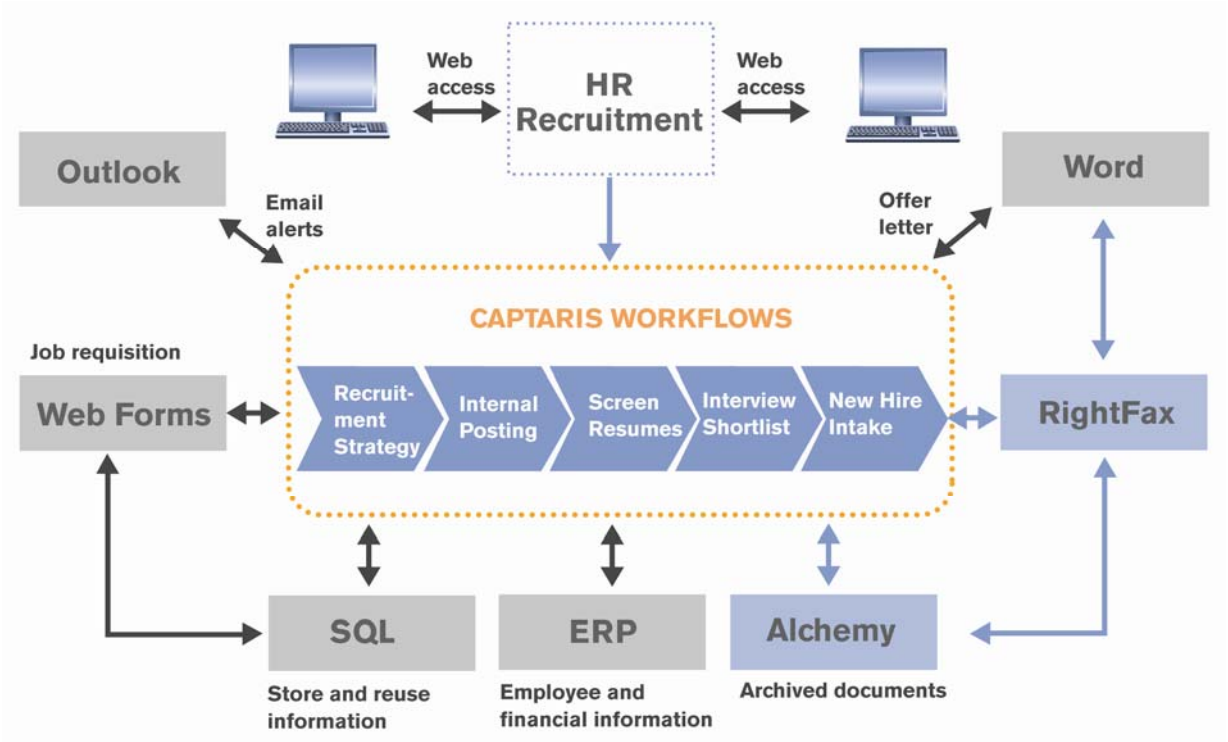
Cost, speed, efficiency and accuracy of information all feed into an organization's ability to develop profitable and loyal business relationships with customers and suppliers. By automating document workflow tasks organizations can eliminate operational waste and improve bottom line results.

INTRODUCTION TO CAPTARIS WORKFLOW SOFTWARE

Captaris Workflow provides affordable business process management solutions enabling organizations to create a trusted environment where people, processes and documents can come together to improve efficiency, address compliance and increase profitability.

It provides both technical and nontechnical workers with a workflow solution that is easy, flexible, integrated and accessible. It automates repeatable business activities involving document management and delivery, from simple workgroup tasks to complete enterprise-wide processes. This enables organizations to standardize and streamline document-based activities and track their progress in areas such as procurement, claims processing, loan approvals, medical records processing and human resources.

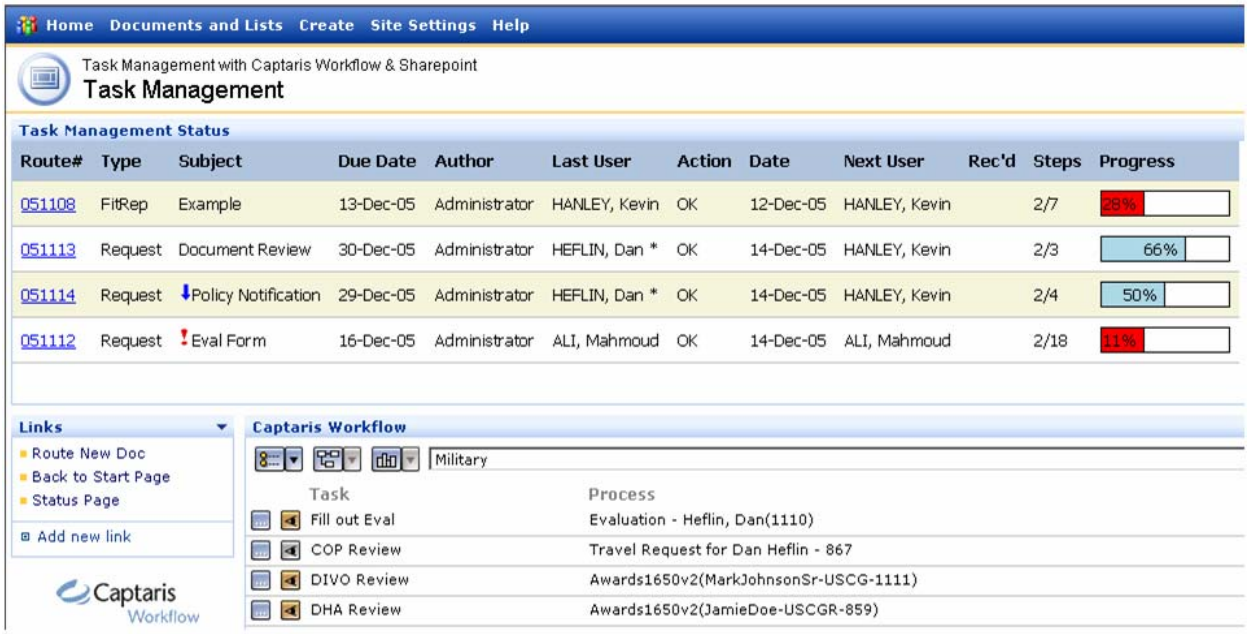
Figure 1: Captaris Workflow controls all the document and task processing steps in a Human Resources recruiting scenario.



MICROSOFT INTEGRATIONS

Captaris Workflow integrates with Microsoft servers and technologies to make it easy to define, develop and deploy workflow processes, rules and conditions within a Microsoft computing environment. In addition, Captaris Workflow is integrated with Microsoft SharePoint, InfoPath, Exchange and Content Management Server. By taking advantage of these flexible tools and integrations, organizations can maximize their investment in Microsoft infrastructure.

Figure 2: Example of Task Management with Captaris Workflow and Microsoft SharePoint



Document Workflow Solutions in Action

Today effective organizations are automating document-intensive processes and eliminating paper-based routines with Captaris document workflow solutions. As the following customers illustrate, organizations that implement a Captaris solution can dramatically reduce costs, improve productivity and address compliance goals.

PAPERLESS PROCUREMENT: SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (SCDOT)

Overview and Challenges

As a centralized source for pricing, requisitions, bids and other documents required to purchase goods to maintain the state's roads and bridges, the procurement division of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) handles millions of documents annually. Managing all these documents had become a nightmare. For example, the path for one hard copy requisition to become a purchase order included waiting for approval from up to four managers mailing it to headquarters, and then finally, filing the hard copy to fulfill the archival requirements of the South Carolina Procurement Code.

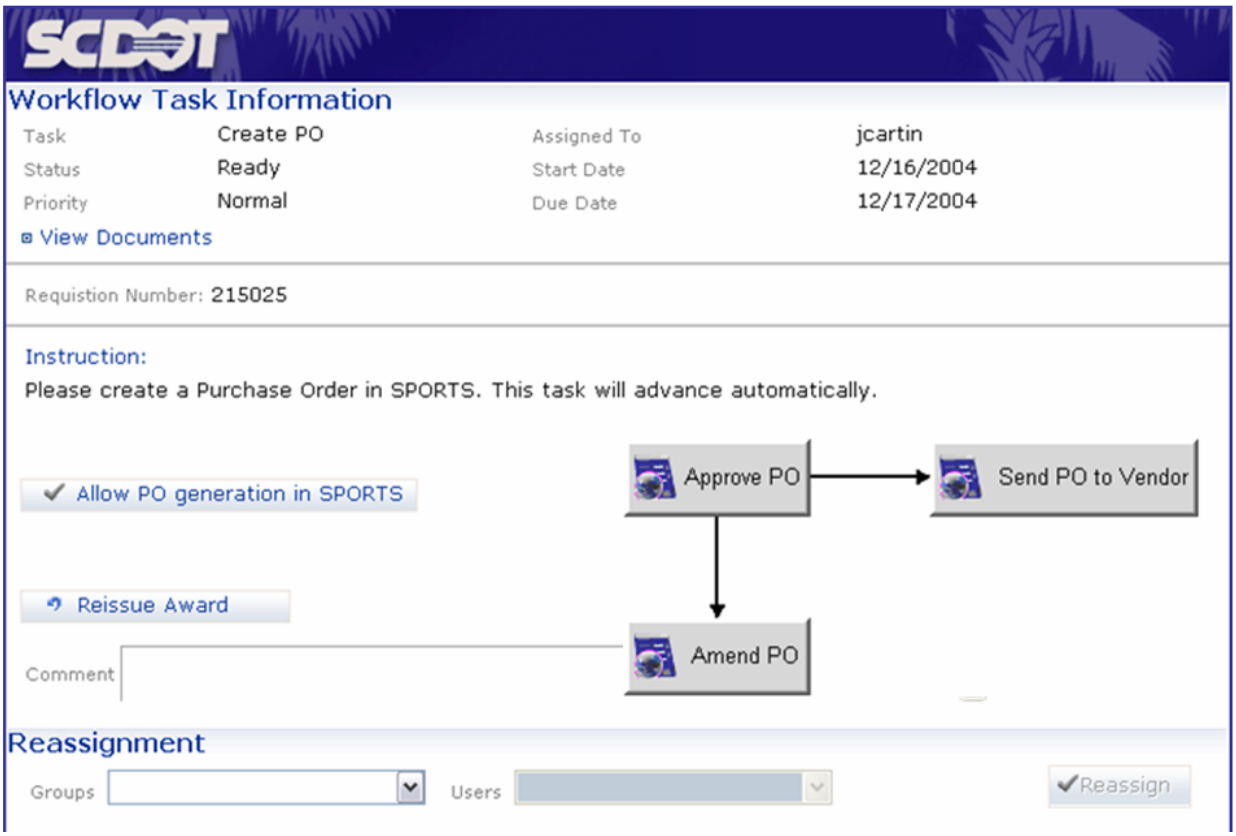
Paper-based Procurement Challenges

- **Time-intensive processes** To determine the status of an order, buyers had to make calls and chase paper.
- **Delays** Due to slow, manual methods, two weeks could elapse before orders were processed.
- **Managing paper** Hard copies were difficult to secure and organize by latest version and were easily misplaced.
- **Storage shortage** Growth and paper accumulation were causing them to run out of archive space.

The Solution

SCDOT implemented an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) powered by Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server 2003 and Captaris Workflow. This solution eliminates paper throughout the procurement process by providing automatic routing and workflow documentation as well as electronic storage and signatures. With this solution, as soon as requisitions are entered, the system sends a Portable Document Format (PDF) file to SharePoint with metadata. Captaris Workflow acknowledges receipt, and then, takes it all the way through the process to the signing of the purchase order, which SCDOT also does electronically through Captaris Workflow.

Figure 3: Example of an SCDOT Purchase Order Workflow Task



The Results

"By transforming manual processes that are labor intensive and extremely time consuming into fast, reliable electronic processes that require less human interaction, (Captaris Workflow) significantly increases office productivity." —Norma Hall, director of Procurement with SCDOT

Fast Return on Investment Nine procurement managers conducting monthly buyer audits used to take two weeks; this process now takes only one hour. This is an 80-fold productivity improvement. According to an in-house study, work-in-progress tracking was cut by 672 man hours per year, leading to an annual salary savings of nearly $12,000. Applying the same estimates, the process improvements alone total more than $164,000 in overhead savings per year. The system paid for itself within six months of installation.

Faster Turnaround Orders that use to wait up to two weeks for processing are now automatically entered for real-time accessibility. Projects are completed faster, and materials arrive when needed. Just-in-time delivery eliminates the need to stockpile items, resulting in big savings for tax payers.

Better Collaboration and Tracking One document can be shared by users in dozens of locations; version control improves collaboration and electronic files are easier to secure with PIN-based access.

Accessible and Expansive Storage Employees can access archived electronic files instantly without wasting time hunting for files in storage rooms. EDMS also automates record retention tasks in accordance with guidelines from the South Carolina State Archives Agency.

End-to-end Business Information Delivery SCDOT plans to add Captaris RightFax desktop faxing capabilities to the procurement office, so buyers can fax documents directly from Captaris Workflow, eliminating the need for outbound paper documents altogether.

FASTER CLAIMS PROCESSING: TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Overview and Challenges

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) is a nonprofit educational association representing 1,042 Texas school districts serving 4.3 million students. TASB provides a host of services to its members, including processing workers compensation claims. The claims department processes thousands of documents each day—team members measure the amount of daily work in terms of how high the stack of paper is. Claims are made up of very complex documents with an identifying header sheet followed by various associated disparate documents. By law, some documents require a three- to five-day turnaround, or the organization risks substantial fines if a deadline is not met. In addition, several departments require multiple hard copies of the paperwork resulting in increasing costs for supplies, maintenance and storage facilities.

Paper-based Claims Processing Challenges

- **High Costs** The costs for paper, supplies and storage were getting out of control.
- **Managing Huge Volumes of Paper** The claims department managed more than 100 forms. Three-foot stacks of new claims forms came in daily. These forms were shuffled between processors and supervisors for review and approval.
- **Disparate Documents** More than 160 different forms needed to be processed along with a host of supporting documents for each form.
- **Missed Deadlines** The state required a three- to five-day turnaround time on claims, or TASB could be fined and payment to claimants delayed.
- **Affordability** A previous workflow vendor had quoted more than one million dollars for a solution to automate claims processing. This was out of reach for TASB, and they had almost given up their quest to automate the process.

Solution

TASB implemented an automated mail processing solution powered by Captaris Workflow and Captaris Alchemy Document Management to enhance the efficiency of its workers' compensation claims processing system. Paper documents are now converted into digital files at the mailroom, automatically categorized along with the disparate documents and made immediately accessible. Electronic requests are filed and managed by Captaris Workflow through the approval process with employees receiving task notifications via email. Data fields are now automatically populated; improving data entry speed and allowing updated files to be available online in seconds.

Results

By integrating Captaris Workflow and Document Management with their workers compensation legacy application, TASB has been able to digitize all their paper forms, starting in the mail room. Now every document-handling step of the claims process is automated. As a result, TASB has been able to make the entire process compliant with regulations and legal requirements and provide workers compensation claimants improved service.

"The Captaris solution automatically places thousands of pages of mail at our fingertips every day, so we can push out critical information faster to help workers' compensation claimants receive timely payment or get back to work as quickly as possible." —Bonnie Hudspeth, business systems analyst and project manager for imaging implementation with TASB

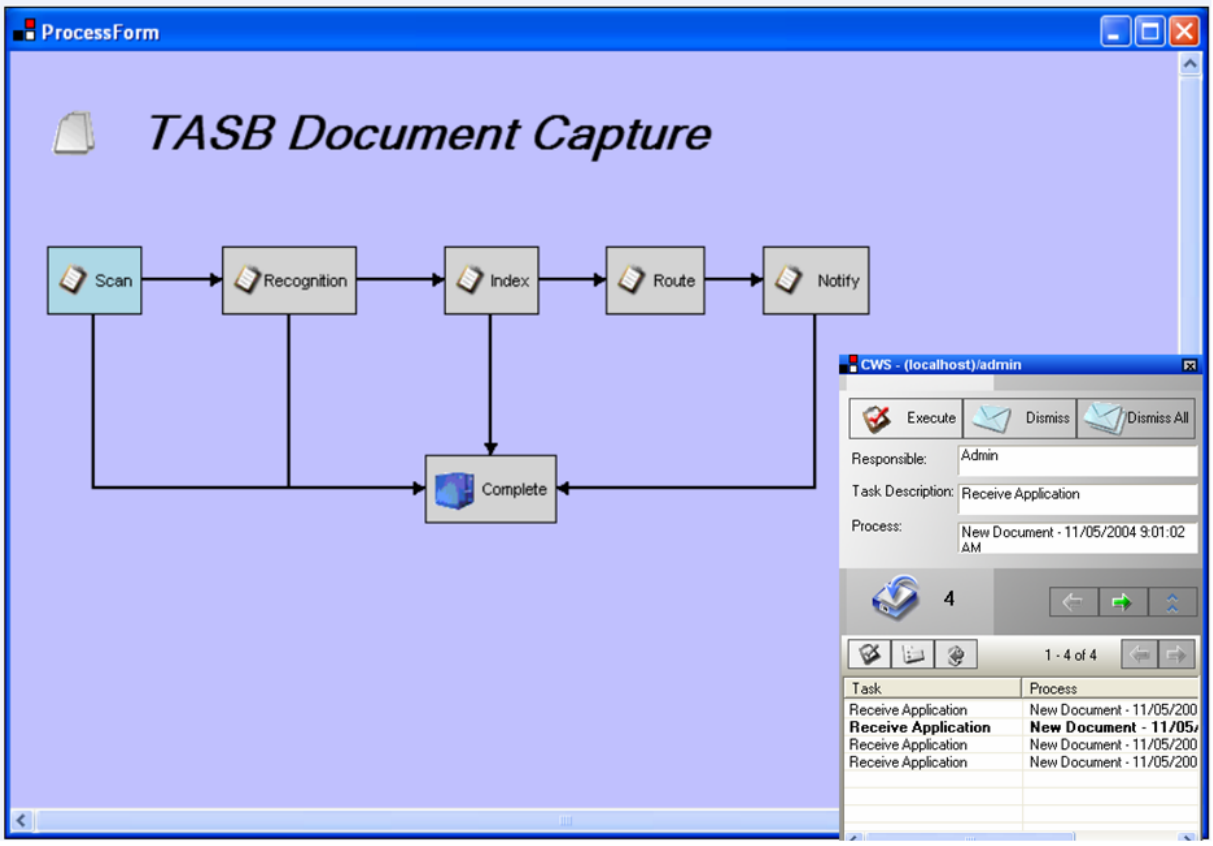
Cost Savings Virtually all paper supply, maintenance and storage expenses have been eliminated, and employees are able to focus on critical issues, rather than administrative tasks. As a result, TASB estimates a savings of more than $75,000 annually in operating costs.

Compliance Now that claims processing is automated and electronic, TASB turns around claims more quickly and security is enhanced. This helps TASB meet stringent deadlines, avoid potential fines and comply with regulatory standards.

Shorter Turnaround Times and Greater Efficiency Adjusters and bill reviewers now simultaneously receive and process medical reports on the day they arrive, which enables them to assist workers compensation claimants more quickly. Adjusters no longer have to spend time wading through a three-feet stack of paper claims each day and can quickly access medical reports and other documents needed for claimants, audits and legal hearings.

Cost Effective Captaris offered TASB a flexible, user-friendly and affordable combination of document workflow solutions. It was a fraction of the cost of the solutions that were offered by other vendors, making it easy to cost-justify.

Figure 4: Example of the TASB Document Capture process with Captaris Workflow



CONCLUSION

Paper-intensive tasks have many pitfalls and can cost organizations in many ways due to costly, error-prone and time-consuming manual processes. Organizations that remove paper from document-intensive processes are best equipped to address the demands of their customers, suppliers and regulators. Today, cost-effective and rapidly deployable workflow software solutions are available which enable companies to automatically capture, process, manage and deliver documents. These solutions can greatly improve business performance and eliminate risk by helping organizations optimize their people, workflow processes and business information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, manage, deliver). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit www.Captaris.com or call 1.800.443.0806.

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