

Mastering the Unpredictable

How Adaptive Case Management Will Revolutionize
the Way That Knowledge Workers Get Things Done

Keith D. Swenson

CONTRIBUTORS: Nathaniel Palmer, Jacob P. Ukelson,
Tom Shepherd, John T. Matthias, Max J. Pucher,
Dana Khoyi, David Hollingsworth, Frank Michael Kraft,
Henk de Man, Dermot McCauley, Caffrey Lee

Meghan-Kiffer Press
Tampa, Florida, USA, www.mkpress.com
Innovation at the Intersection of Business and Technology

CONTENTS

vii | FOREWORD: Connie Moore

11 | INTRODUCTION: Nathaniel Palmer

CHAPTER 1: The Nature of Knowledge Work

5 | Keith D. Swenson

This chapter introduces the concept of knowledge work and how it differs from routine work. Scientific management, from Frederick Winslow Taylor, has been at the heart of business process automation to date, but we see that it only works for predictable, repeatable processes. Knowledge work is not predictable in that way and requires a different approach. Several examples of knowledge work are presented to provide an understanding of the kind of work that is to be supported.

CHAPTER 2: What to Do When Modeling Doesn't Work

29 | Jacob P. Ukelson

Business process management teaches that you should start with a model of the process, but it is difficult to model a process for work that does not have a predictable process in the first place. The limitation of needing to model up front is explored. An alternative is proposed for handling these emergent processes. The answer is not to "attempt to make all the decisions ahead of time, but rather to put the right resources in the hands of the workers, so they can make the right decisions at the right time. The result is an approach that can still achieve the goals of understanding, visibility, and control of these emergent processes.

CHAPTER 3: Moving from Anticipation to Adaptation

41 | Tom Shepherd

Using examples of work from an insurance company, the qualities of emergent processes are examined to find that they are constantly changing. To handle this, tasks should not be rigidly fixed in an immutable process definition, but instead should be planned as the work proceeds. The planned tasks act as a guardrail to keep you from going off the road accidentally but can be changed as necessary during the work itself. This is the essence of "adaptability," which guides work and allows the plan to be modified at any time, but it does not enforce a particular pattern.

CHAPTER 4: Technology for Case Management

63 | John T. Matthias

This chapter discusses how case management systems have been marginally successful for courts in the past, and it envisions a new approach for identifying requirements and implementing systems. It presents a detailed view of the need for technology support of case management, how such systems have been constructed in the past, what possible improvements can be expected in the near future, and what one might be able to achieve with the right improvements.

CHAPTER 5: The Elements of Adaptive Case Management

89 | Max J. Pucher

Many current implementations of process and case management solutions are at odds with modern management concepts. While that applies to all workers, it is especially relevant for highly skilled knowledge workers. Motivation is achieved by empowering people to be valuable team members rather than through command-and-control-oriented process implementations. Adaptive case management sits at the center of gravity for process, content, and customer relationship management and therefore plays a key role for effective execution toward business goals. This chapter examines the requirements for the necessary technology components.

CHAPTER 6: Data Orientation

135 | Dana Khoyi

Business process management technology considers the process to be the focal point around which business information is organized. Knowledge work does not have a predefined process. Adaptive case management (ACM) therefore uses case data as the focal point around which processes are arranged. Using the example of an employee onboarding situation, the effects of data orientation are explored. The conclusion is that an ACM system must provide rich data representation and relationships, and in the end, the ACM system becomes a system of record for the case.

CHAPTER 7: Templates, Not Programs

145 | Dana Khoyi and Keith D. Swenson

In other parts of this book, you have seen discussions of templates. This chapter will go into some detail about what a template is. An important point is the difference between a template for an adaptive case management (ACM) solution and a process definition for a business process management (BPM) solution. Since both BPM and ACM use processes, data, forms, documents, etc., it would be easy to jump to the conclusion that an ACM solution is a lot like a BPM solution, but that is far from the truth. This chapter will explore in detail why these are so different and why this is necessary due to the inherent differences between BPM and ACM. What we will find is that a BPM solution is programmed in a very real sense because BPM addresses predictable processes. Conversely, an ACM solution cannot be programmed because the precise work pattern cannot be predicted. Instead, a template approach is used, which requires the active involvement of the case manager. We shall also see that the way a process is described in BPM and ACM is different as well because of the way that the process must be manipulated at runtime by the case manager.

CHAPTER 8: Healthcare

163 | David Hollingsworth

This chapter considers the nature of healthcare business as an archetypal example of a professional case management environment. The fundamental attributes of the care process are described, illustrating the importance of clinical knowledge as the basis for decision making and the difficulties of applying a traditional process management approach in this context, where unexpected outcomes may commonly arise. The role of the clinician within such an environment is considered as a "choreographer" of underlying clinical services, coordinating assessment and treatment delivered through a range of potential provider departments and organizations, across a range of care facilities. Potential opportunities are identified for improvement through access to integrated patient data and decision-support information, both facilitating enhanced clinical decision making. These two elements are considered key building blocks in the delivery of integrated case management within healthcare.

CHAPTER 9: Improving Knowledge Work

181 | Frank Michael Kraft

Elsewhere in this book, the challenges facing an increasing number of knowledge workers is discussed. This book is about how information technology can leverage the abilities of individual knowledge workers. This is not about individual tools; it is about a holistic approach: adaptive case management (ACM). But the approach will only work if individual knowledge workers draw immediate benefit from it. In this chapter, I argue that knowledge work will become easier, more fluent, if the right technology is provided. This is the basis for success within a network of knowledge workers, which in turn will yield the return on investment for the companies they work for. To accomplish this, the characteristics of knowledge work must be directly reflected within the information technology so that the use of such technology feels natural. I will discuss the technology needed to achieve this goal. In closing, I will sketch the full long-term potential for ACM.

CHAPTER 10: Innovation Management

211 | Henk de Man, Shiva Prasad, and Theodoor van Donge

As innovation work and management of innovation are extremely knowledge intensive, analysis of innovation provides a good opportunity to demonstrate adaptive case management (ACM) characteristics and to analyze and suggest practical ways of formalizing ACM, so businesspeople can share the same understanding of it and appropriate technology support can be developed. In this chapter, we will analyze and demonstrate how an ACM system, as an integral part of a broader business operations platform, can make management of innovation productive and innovation better sustainable.

CHAPTER 11: Achieving Agility

257 | Dermot McCauley

In the face of increasing global competition and rapid changes in technology, legislation, and knowledge, organizations need to overcome inertia and become agile enough to respond quickly. Organizational agility might indeed be one of the most important skills of a successful enterprise. Adaptive case management is shown to provide the right kinds of support to help an organization become more agile.

CHAPTER 12: The Next Evolution of Continuous Improvement

277 | Caffrey Lee and Julie Miller

You've outsourced down to the core, now what? This chapter discusses how some organizations will improve business processes quantitatively, while others will make qualitative improvements with dramatically different results. A detailed example of how a new product is developed shows that this kind of work is hard to predict. Such work can be supported through the use of regular email, but the advantage of using adaptive case management is that it makes what is happening visible to everyone, allows team members to coordinate their work better, and helps new members of the team come up to speed quickly.

CHAPTER 13: Historical Perspective

293 | Keith D. Swenson

This chapter presents a brief summary of the technical trends of organization support technology from the 1970s to today. While not a requirement for understanding adaptive case management (ACM), this summary is useful for those in the field to see how the other technologies fit into and ultimately helped the development of ACM. A mapping of terms used in various trends is provided to clarify how those trends fit into the status quo.

303 | EPILOGUE: Keith D. Swenson

307 | ABBREVIATIONS

311 | GLOSSARY

319 | BIBLIOGRAPHY

327 | AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

335 | INDEX