

# ACCELERATING THE CLAIMS PROCESS

## // The online superhighway

Today, most financial transactions occur instantly and consumers have come to expect the convenience of real-time Internet transactions, 24-7 connectivity and immediate access to online information. As a result, the claims industry has been forced to respond to consumer and market pressures to accelerate the processing of claims. This article outlines five ways that claims management solutions can speed up workflow, improve productivity and enhance claims decisions.

to perform. With today's rapidly changing claims environment, businesses must respond quickly, without waiting for IT assistance. To adapt to market fluctuations, firms are leveraging browser-based platforms to implement process changes rapidly and on their own. This flexibility allows companies to continually rethink processes and, where appropriate, redesign claims workflow for optimal efficiency and performance.

### 1] Flexibility to enable quick adaptation to market changes

A company's unique claims management strategy is the cornerstone to its competitive advantage. In the past, policies and procedures were hard-coded into claims systems. Changing a process meant retooling the software – a task that required a programmer

### 2] Prompt claims reporting via the internet

Timely and accurate reporting of claims is critical to achieving best-possible outcomes. Whether a business employs an in-house claims department or a third-party call centre, data reported in the front-end feeds directly into the solution to the back-end. This seamless data integration allows claims adjusters

**80%**  
of IT budgets are consumed by maintaining legacy systems because they lack contemporary automation capabilities and result in inefficient operations.



and other loss-control specialists to quickly initiate their role in the claims process, leading to optimal results. In addition, with the use of intelligent online claim forms, reporting potential via the Internet has dramatically increased. These smart forms use drop-down lists, auto-population of fields and threads of logic to navigate users quickly through the electronic claims submission process. Due to their intuitive, user-friendly design, online forms are often faster – not to mention less expensive – than a typical phone transaction.

### 3] Business rules automation enables straight-through processing

Ideally, claims companies must apply adjuster resources where they are needed the most. By leveraging a technology solution's sophisticated business rule engines, firms can increase their rate of straight-through processing. This means relatively simple and straightforward claims are settled with little or no human intervention. Firms simply tailor the business rules to review incoming claims and identify 'simple, straightforward' transactions – such as a workers' compensation claim with only one doctor's visit – to be routed for an immediate settlement and closure. These rules ensure

consistent quality in an automated claims-handling environment, while also enabling claims adjusters to focus their time and attention on the more complex claims that require their expertise and a personal service.

### 4] Paperless claims processing

Today, the vision of paperless claims processing is finally being achieved. To engage in a truly 'paperless' paradigm, businesses are completely avoiding the generation of paper documents, relying on the electronic submission and exchange of information. In this data-driven environment, information is entered into the technology platform once and made available to all parties via an end-to-end electronic infrastructure. This paperless model has expanded, as firms integrate optical character recognition (OCR) and electronically attach digital photos, videos and audio to claims files. As an added benefit, this data-driven strategy means more information is available for analysis, benchmarking and performance reports.

### 5] Modern infrastructure for rapid transformation

Maintaining legacy systems consumes as much as 80 percent of IT budgets, but these outdated systems lack

contemporary automation capabilities and result in inefficient operations. Rather than apply a risky rip-and-replace approach, businesses are leveraging service-oriented solutions as a means to rapid transformation. These online solutions provide a modern, modular infrastructure that allows firms to quickly deploy new functionality and automation tools on a component basis. At the same time, the infrastructure is highly inter-operable and can work in conjunction with legacy systems, allowing companies to control their rate of legacy replacement.

### Continual claims innovation

Claims leaders are continually striving to improve operations to streamline access to information and speed up transaction processing. With such online claims solutions, businesses have the IT infrastructure to support a highly automated workflow, and the ability to grow and expand with emerging needs. This system is the means to rapid process transformation, since it meets two important criteria – system flexibility and comprehensive components – all of which helps firms to align technology to support their overall claims strategy. ❏

