Case Study:
Choosing a Case Management System

Taking Your First Step

Case management systems are vitally important for human services agencies. They enable your organization to monitor client progress, provide tools to track the services your organization offers, and above all, allow you to understand the results of your programs. However, many human services agencies are struggling with their case management software - including dealing with disconnected data, manual processes, and costly upkeep on legacy systems.

At its worst, case management software can be unreliable, contain out-of-date information, and require more work from your staff than the benefit it provides. At its best, it can help your case workers collect data while they work, show staff the results of their efforts, and guide your organization to the most effective practices. Clearly a lot is at stake when choosing the right system.

Given the importance, it may seem daunting to undertake the process of choosing a new system. This white paper will both describe a successful methodology for choosing a case management system and also provide an example of a

client's recent selection process. We've included actual content and data from documents that the organization used. This organization eventually decided to adopt Exponent Case Management on the Salesforce® platform to manage its client data because it enabled staff to provide better services, save time, demonstrate results to all stakeholders, and organize data in a paperless system. You can use this report to guide you through your organization's process and leverage the tools developed by our client to inform your efforts.

1. Setting Goals for Your System
2. Designing a Selection Process
3. Creating a Framework to Evaluate Your Options
4. Analyzing Your Options
5. Making the Final Decision
6. Communicating Your Decision
7. Appendix

Choosing a Case Management System

1. Setting Goals for Your System

There are numerous reasons that you might be considering a new case management system. You might be tracking your clients in paper case files or in spreadsheets which have become too unwieldy to manage. Organizational leadership and staff may need better insight into how well your organization is serving clients in order to improve your programs. Or, your legacy system might just be getting too costly to keep up and may no longer be reliable.

These circumstances may prompt you to evaluate a new system, but first you'll need to identify the goals you are hoping to achieve. Your goals will be the guiding principles throughout your search, and should be developed with a group of stakeholders from across your organization who will serve as

1. Setting Goals for Your System (cont'd)

your system selection team.

Client Case Study

Our client was dissatisfied with their current system for several reasons, including unreliability, inability to easily customize, and inadequate workflow. Based on this experience, they identified a four part vision for their new client database (this organization used the term "client database" instead of "case management system" but these terms are synonymous). This chart and those to follow are in their own words.

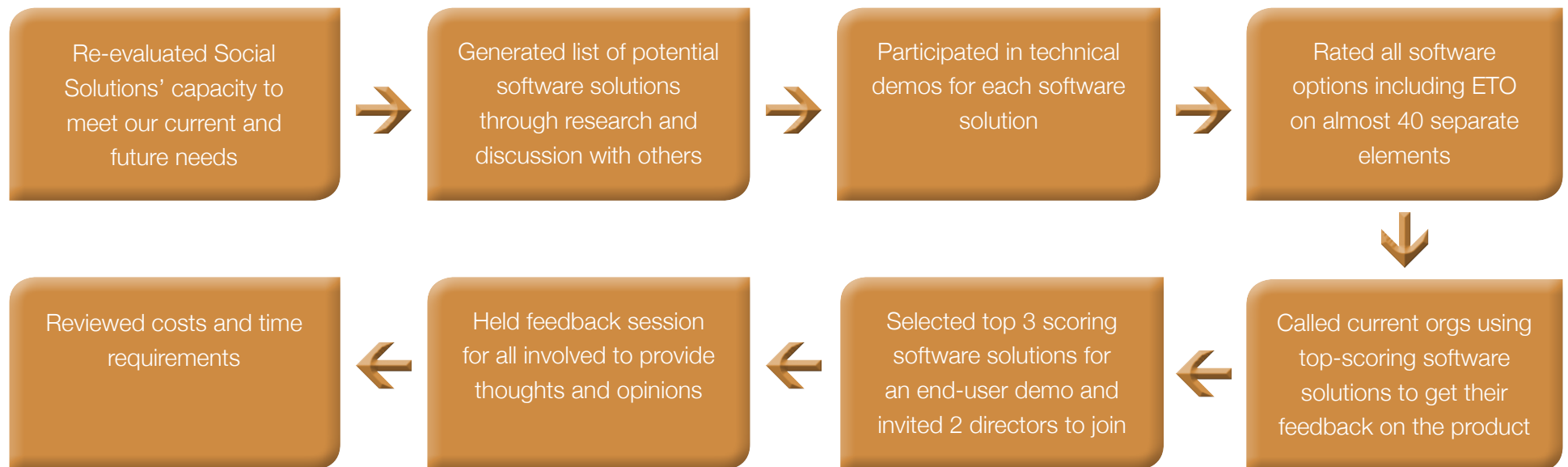| Vision	Database Requirements
A database that helps the organization provide excellent service	Our client database must contribute to our ability to provide excellent service to our clients. One aspect of this is the ability to coordinate services between programs. This also includes being able to provide prompt services to the client in remote locations such as scheduling appointments, making referrals, and accessing information.
A database that helps the organization be more efficient	The value of technology is that it helps organizations be more efficient. The client database will facilitate this by allowing for immediate data entry and information retrieval as well as avoiding duplication of efforts between program staff. Data entry and reporting will be quick and easy.
A database that helps the organization be responsive and accountable	The ability to generate reports on client trends and demographics will allow us to analyze information and quickly respond based on reliable data. Data collected will help the organization measure effectiveness of various interventions and provide evidence of program impact on clients' success. This will also enable us to track our progress on client, program, department, and overall agency levels. Finally, we will be able to report back to funders regarding our performance of outputs and outcomes.
A database that will help the organization manage client information	The client database will act as the file of record for all client information. This will promote our ability to gather a more complete picture of the client's needs on a holistic level and track the client's participation in programs throughout the agency. This will also help us move towards our goal of maintaining a paperless record system.

2. Designing a Selection Process

While each organization might develop a unique vetting process for their case management system, you'll likely want to follow a core set of steps.

1. Decide which stakeholders need to be involved in the process. Your team will likely include organizational leadership, program leadership, and IT, but also might consist of board members and external consultants.

2. Complete a scan of the landscape of case management software to understand all your options and an evaluation of the pros and cons of your existing system.

3. Create an assessment rubric that identifies the key features and functionality requirements of the system to support your organization's goals. This framework might also include pricing and contract terms.

4. Based on this rubric, collect data from different vendors about their products. There are numerous ways you can do this that we'll discuss later in the white paper.

5. Engage your key stakeholder team to rate or rank the products based on what you learn from the vendors (and potentially their clients!).

6. Finally, choose the best solution!

Client Case Study

Our client was looking to replace or update Social Solutions' ETO, and designed an 8-step process to come to their final decision.

Re-evaluated Social Solutions' capacity to meet our current and future needs	→	Generated list of potential software solutions through research and discussion with others	→	Participated in technical demos for each software solution	→	Rated all software options including ETO on almost 40 separate elements

Reviewed costs and time requirements	←	Held feedback session for all involved to provide thoughts and opinions	←	Selected top 3 scoring software solutions for an end-user demo and invited 2 directors to join	←	Called current orgs using top-scoring software solutions to get their feedback on the product

3. Creating a Framework to Evaluate Your Options

During a new system selection process, the bulk of your team's time will likely be spent on comparing case management systems. You'll first need to define a rubric, consistent with your goals, to vet each option. Initially, you might develop a priority set of "go/no go" criteria for the products that can disqualify some options immediately. For instance, if you are a multi-location agency, you may only consider Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions. These "must-have" criteria can narrow down the options to a more manageable set.

Next, when you are ready to more deeply analyze your options, you might consider reviewing the following characteristics of the product: features/functionality, platform features, vendor stability, product support, and implementation support.

Client Case Study

Our client determined that there were five general categories of characteristics for an ideal client database system. Within each category, the organization assessed client database products based on multiple criteria:

System Overview

- Technical Infrastructure to Host Data (servers, etc.)
- Backend/Core Programing Language (SQL, Oracle, etc.)
- Ease of Navigation/Simplicity of Use (end-user experience)
- Employee Access to Software (browser and software compatibility)
- Support Availability (number and type of support staff)

- Company Stability (size and age of organization, number of staff)
- User License Options (including collaborative partner access)
- Independence of Construct from Other Clients (being affected by fixes for others)
- Ability to Import/Export Data between Systems (working with other databases)
- Data Migration from Old System to New

System Configuration

- Supports Multiple Types of Programs
- Flexibility (ability to use system in different ways)
- Level of Customization (ability to change titles, colors, text)
- Security and User Access (on a program and element basis)

- Ability to create new data entry forms in-house
- Ease of editing/modifying data entry forms
- Ability to modify and control menu items and navigation bars

3. Creating a Framework to Evaluate Your Options (cont'd)

System Functionality

- New Enrollment
- Case Notes
- Scheduling
- Billing
- Name/Date/Time Stamp

- Workflow
- Batch Upload
- Mass Discharge/Mass Enrollment
- Client Dashboard
- Client Calendar

- Case Load Management
- File Attachments
- Group Assessments

Reporting

- Availability for Custom Reports (build ourselves rather than depending on vendor)
- Ease of Developing Custom Reports
- User Access to Printing Reports
- Query Functions

- Printing Options (including adding agency/program logos)
- Flexibility of Exporting Data into Other Programs such as Excel
- Usefulness/Availability of Reporting Dashboard
- Built-in Analytics (including graphs and charts)

4. Analyzing Your Options

Armed with your product evaluation framework, you can approach collecting data about your case management product options in numerous ways. You can request that vendors complete a questionnaire about the product, schedule an interview meeting with the vendors' teams, ask for a demo of the product, or combine all these forms of review. As mentioned earlier, it is vitally important for you to include the key stakeholders in the process so the entire team is on the same page about each product.

You might choose to use a ranking or rating scale to compare potential client database systems. Your team members should rank or rate the product against each aspect of the evaluation framework. You can calculate the sum or average of all of these ratings for each potential system or bring the team together to agree on a combined score.

4. Analyzing Your Options (cont'd)

At the same time, rating or rankings often can't express all the reasons for choosing a system. The selection team should deeply discuss the ratings and more qualitative aspects of the choice before agreeing on a final choice.

Client Case Study

Our client had each participating selection team member rate criteria based on the following rating system:

1. Deal breaker - absolutely will not work for our needs
2. Would require significant work-around in order to meet our needs
3. Would meet the bare minimum standards for our current needs
4. This is a good match for our current needs and could potentially meet future needs
5. A perfect match for our current and estimated future needs including "wish list" or extra items

Our client found that Exponent Case Management excelled in all areas - scoring at the top of the pack in each of the four key areas of evaluation. An excerpt of their consolidated ratings is represented below (a detailed breakdown of the criteria for each of these ratings can be found in the Appendix):

Category	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	ChallengerSoft
System Overview	22.00	28.50	30.00	28.00	**39.00**	31.75
System Configuration	24.50	19.00	22.75	20.00	**31.00**	26.75
System Functionality	39.00	33.50	39.00	27.67	**53.25**	45.50
Reporting	30.75	18.75	20.75	13.00	**36.67**	32.75
TOTAL	116.25	99.75	112.50	88.67	**159.92**	136.75

5. Making the Final Decision

Once you pick one or several finalist case management systems, you might want to wrap up your research by validating your rankings with client vendor references and then presenting your recommendations to your leadership or board.

Client Case Study

Mapping their decision back to their vision for their system, our client laid out a recommendation to choose Exponent Case Management on the Salesforce platform.

Database helps our organization provide excellent service: Our client database must contribute to our ability to provide excellent service to our clients. One aspect of this is the ability to coordinate services between programs. This also includes being able to provide prompt services to the client in remote locations such as scheduling appointments, making referrals and accessing information.	
Exponent Case Management	Exponent Case Management is designed to enhance coordination of services and has the ability to set security access on each element to determine which information to share or restrict. It has a robust scheduling and calendar system. Exponent Case Management is web-based and can be accessed anywhere internet service is available.
ETO	ETO has the ability to coordinate between programs but is not currently configured to do so. It does not have the ability to lock information on by element. ETO does not have a scheduling function that can be used between programs to coordinate client schedules and interaction. ETO is web-based and can be accessed anywhere via the internet.

Database helps our organization be more efficient: The value of technology is that it helps organizations be more efficient. The client database will facilitate this by allowing for immediate data entry and information retrieval as well as avoiding duplication of efforts between program staff. Data entry and reporting will be quick and easy.	
Exponent Case Management	Exponent Case Management has many tools to allow quick data retrieval and a great workflow system which makes data entry quick and easy.
ETO	The way ETO is currently implemented makes data entry and reporting cumbersome. It can be difficult to navigate through the menus. ETO has new functionality which can improve this situation, but would require a redesign of all programs in order to implement.

5. Making the Final Decision (cont'd)

Database helps our organization be responsive and accountable: The ability to generate reports on client trends and demographics will allow us to analyze information and quickly respond based on reliable data. Data collected will help our organization measure effectiveness of various interventions and provide evidence of program impact on client's success. This will also enable us to track our progress on client, program, department, and overall agency levels. Finally, we will be able to report back to funders regarding our performance of outputs and outcomes.

Exponent Case Management	Exponent Case Management shines in its ability to report and analyze data. The ability to utilize drill-down analytics allows managers to quickly see the big picture of where we are at a point in time but also go deeper to better understand how we got there. The ability to see these reports in real time rather than waiting for someone to generate them helps us remain nimble and responsive.
ETO	ETO has powerful reporting tools. When a report is developed and used correctly we can learn a great deal of information from those reports. However, since we are limited to the amount of access we have to coding, we are sometimes restricted in what we can do or must use the vendor to help develop reports. On-demand reporting for managers is lacking.

Database helps our organization effectively manage client information: The client database will act as the file of record for all client information. This will promote our ability to gather a more complete picture of the client's needs on a holistic level and track the client's participation in programs throughout the agency. This will also help us move towards our goal of maintaining a paperless record system.

Exponent Case Management	Exponent Case Management is well-known for its reliability and ease of use for data entry. It promotes sharing of information and collaboration between programs. There is an unlimited number of client records allowed and enough storage space to enable us to move to a paperless system whenever we are ready.
ETO	ETO is very reliable as a database of record provided that employees enter the data into the system. Because the current interface is not user-friendly, data is not always entered completely or timely. There is also a limit to the number of records that can be stored in the system.

5. Making the Final Decision (cont'd)

When comparing their final choice against the incumbent ETO system, the choice was clear.

PROS	
ETO	**Exponent Case Management**
• Powerful reporting tools	• Large customer base (100,000+ customers – 20,000+ nonprofits)
• Customizable forms	• Market leader (95% customer satisfaction)
• Familiar to users	• Very stable platform (#10 Forbes Most Trustworthy Companies)
• Community partners (HMIS, United Way)	• Easy-to-build forms
• New features have potential to address several of our issues	• Ability to work with multiple vendors
• HIPAA-compliant	• Extremely versatile
• Social Solutions is very familiar with our work and understands our organization	• Ability to use multiple browsers (and versions of browsers)
• Data from prior years is already in this system	• Better workflow management
• Staff already training on system	• Ability to create own apps or use apps designed by other developers
• Staying with ETO allows us to benefit from past investment in resources for solution	• Potential to be self-managing
	• Licensing allows sharing database with other organizations
	• Ability to grow with agency (salesforce.com: $280 million in R&D for 2012)
	• Exponent Partners Certified B Corporation
	• salesforce.com: #1 on Forbes World's Most Innovative Companies list
	• HIPAA-compliant
	• Drill-down analytics and powerful reporting tools
	• Much more storage space (a benefit as we consider going paperless)
	• Ability to use for other database needs such as volunteer management

5. Making the Final Decision (cont'd)

CONS	
ETO	**Exponent Case Management**
• Lack of stability	• Change in database to any other solution will require us to deal with data migration
• Small development staff and inability to commit to SLA	• Initial set-up expense
• Staff dissatisfaction	• IT staff must learn a new system
• Limited browser compatibility	• Agency staff will need to learn new system
• Shared environment without ability to control updates	• The unknown (it is always a risk going with something new)
• Licensing does not allow other organizations to use our database	
• Less access to backend code	
• Not user-friendly	
• Lack of workflow management	
• Cost by client count (at some point will need to decide between paying more or archiving old client data)	
• Element-based system rather than table-based which results in multiple instances of the same data	

6. Communicating Your Decision

After the choice of a new case management system is made, it's important that you communicate to your organization why that decision was made. Share with your staff what you've chosen, explain why you are making a change, and describe why you selected this product. Show them how the system will help them access key data they can use in their jobs and how they will be trained on the new system. You've made an informed decision that will help your organization better track your results. The next step is to demonstrate to your organization why the choice was made in order to ensure your system's long-term success.

About Us

Exponent Partners

Exponent Partners is a mission-based software consulting firm that helps nonprofits and foundations use technology to track results, build capacity, improve reporting, further missions, and increase impact. Exclusively focused on the nonprofit sector, we build cost-effective solutions on the Salesforce.com platform that manage fundraising, student data, client cases, and organizational outcomes.

We've worked with almost 400 nonprofit organizations on over 1000 projects in our nearly 10-year history as one of the leading partners of the Salesforce.com Foundation. Our expertise is in human services, education, foundations, and social impact. We offer services, products, and solutions based on each client's unique needs, time, and budget.

As a Certified B Corporation, we pursue our world-changing vision of revolutionizing the social sector by providing technology that makes the whole sector more effective.

For a free consultation about your project or to find out more, visit **www.exponentpartners.com** and contact us: **info@exponentpartners.com** or **800.918.2917**.

Exponent Case Management

Exponent Case Management is the future of case management. Offering industry-leading features and a world-class modern platform, **Exponent Case Management helps case workers collect data naturally while they work** and makes it possible for human services organizations to connect their day-to-day activities to their outcomes. Built on the Salesforce platform, it supports all types of programs and allows you to capture your unique data and results.

This state-of-the-art product provides all the core aspects of case management - including intake, assessment, referral, service tracking, service planning, reporting and more. Exponent Case Management is expandable to a full organization solution to give your staff the ability to manage fundraising, volunteers, general contact information, and more - all in one system.

Learn more about Exponent Case Management at www.exponentcasemanagement.com.

7. Appendix

System Overview	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	ChallengerSoft
Technical Infrastructure to Host Data (servers, etc.)	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.25	3.75
Backend/Core Programing Language (SQL, Oracle, etc.)	3.50	3.50	3.50	2.67	3.75	4.25
Ease of Navigation/Simplicity of Use (end-user experience)	2.50	3.00	3.25	2.67	4.25	4.00
Employee Access to Software (browser and software compatibility)	2.75	3.00	3.50	3.00	4.00	3.75
Support Availability (number and type of support staff)	2.00	2.75	3.00	2.00	3.50	2.25
Company Stability (size and age of organization, number of staff)	2.25	2.75	2.25	3.67	4.50	2.00
User License Options (including collaborative partner access)	1.75	3.75	3.00	3.33	4.00	3.50
Independence of Construct from Other Clients (our build being affected by fixes for others)	1.75	2.75	3.00	4.00	4.25	2.75
Ability to Import/Export Data Between Systems (working with other databases)	2.25	2.50	3.25	2.00	3.50	2.75
Data Migration from Old System to New	N/A	1.50	2.25	1.67	3.00	2.75
Subtotal	22.00	28.50	30.00	28.00	39.00	31.75

7. Appendix (cont'd)

System Configuration	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	ChallengerSoft
Supports Multiple Types of Programs	3.75	2.75	3.75	3.67	4.50	3.50
Flexibility (ability to use system in different ways)	3.25	2.75	4.00	3.00	4.50	4.25
Level of Customization (ability to change titles, colors, text)	3.00	1.75	3.50	1.67	4.25	4.50
Security and User Access (on a program and element basis)	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.67	4.50	4.00
Ability to Create New Data Entry Forms In-house	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.33	4.50	3.75
Ease of Editing/Modifying Data Entry Forms	3.50	2.75	3.00	3.67	4.50	3.75
Ability to Modify and Control Menu Items and Navigation Bars	3.50	3.00	3.00	2.00	4.25	3.00
Subtotal	24.50	19.00	22.75	20.00	31.00	26.75

System Functionality	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	ChallengerSoft
New Enrollment	3.75	2.25	2.75	3.67	4.25	4.00
Case Notes	2.25	3.50	3.25	2.00	4.00	3.25
Scheduling	2.50	2.50	4.25	2.75	3.75	3.75
Billing	3.00	2.75	2.75	1.50	4.00	3.00
Name/Date/Time Stamp	2.25	2.50	3.00	2.00	3.75	3.50
Workflow	3.00	2.25	2.75	1.50	4.50	3.50

7. Appendix (cont'd)

System Functionality	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	
Batch Upload	3.75	2.50	2.50	1.50	3.25	3.00
Mass Discharge/Mass Enrollment	3.25	2.00	2.75	2.75	4.25	3.25
Client Dashboard	2.50	2.25	3.25	2.25	4.75	4.00
Client Calendar	2.00	2.50	4.00	1.50	4.00	3.50
Case Load Management	3.25	2.25	2.25	2.00	4.00	3.25
File Attachments	4.50	3.25	3.00	2.00	4.50	3.75
Group Assessments	3.00	3.00	2.50	2.25	4.25	3.75
Subtotal	39.00	33.50	39.00	27.67	53.25	45.50

Reporting	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	ChallengerSoft
Availability for Custom Reports	4.25	1.75	2.25	1.00	4.67	4.50
Ease of Developing Custom Reports	4.50	2.00	1.75	1.00	4.57	3.75
User Access to Printing Reports	3.50	2.25	2.75	1.00	4.00	4.00
Query Functions	4.00	2.50	2.75	2.00	5.00	3.50
Printing Options (including adding logos)	3.25	1.75	2.50	2.33	4.67	4.00
Flexibility of Exporting Data into Other Programs	4.50	3.00	3.50	1.67	4.67	4.75
Usefulness/Availability of Reporting Dashboard	3.75	2.75	3.00	2.00	4.33	4.00
Built-in Analytics (including graphs and charts)	3.00	2.75	2.25	2.00	4.67	4.25
Subtotal	30.75	18.75	20.75	13.00	36.67	32.75