Data Automation and Office Efficiency

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70TH ANNUAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS CONFERENCE

International Foundation
OF EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

Overview

- Fundamentals of a Fund Office
- Office Efficiency and Data Automation
- Electronic Data Management System (EDMS)
- Administrator's Portal
- Compliance and Appeal Tracking System
- Case Studies
- Key Takeaways

Polling Question

Who is in the room?

A. Trustees

B. Plan administrators

C. Professionals

D. Other

Operational Fundamentals of a Fund Office

- Providing the essential infrastructure
- Ensuring efficient operations
- Administering benefits, in real time
- Growth is necessary
- Challenges
  - Operational challenges
  - Trustee challenges

Polling Question

What is your main struggle within your fund office?

A. Resistance to change

B. Growth (mergers or acquisitions)

C. Evolving technology

D. Natural attrition

Office Efficiency—Resistance to Change

- "That's the way we have always done it."
- Are procedures documented?
  - When were they last updated?
  - Do they contain detailed workflows?
- Operationally do you conduct brainstorming sessions?
  - Involve key personnel
  - Need for constant review (agile development)

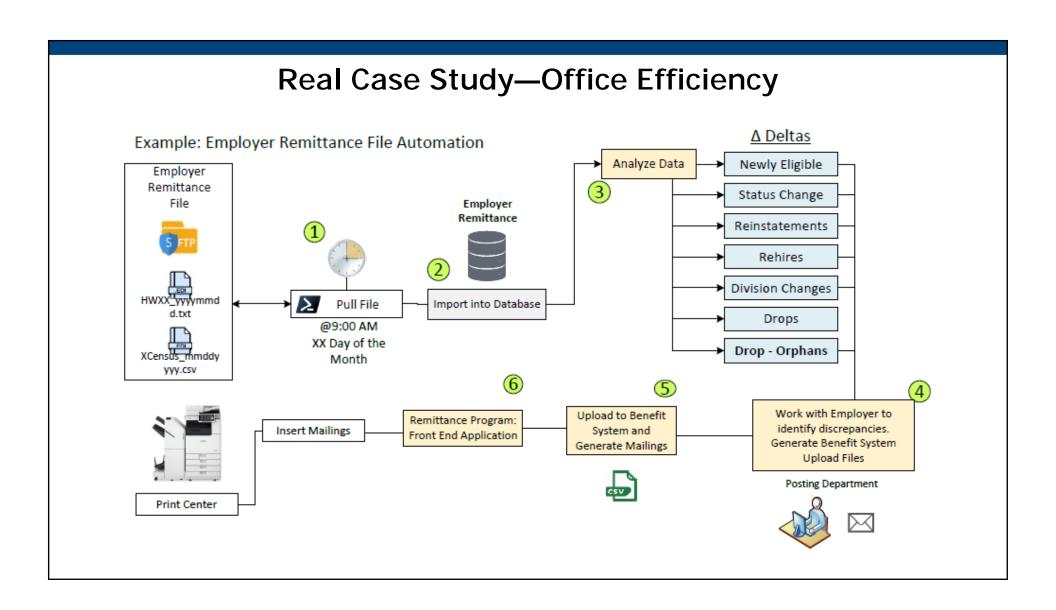# Office Efficiency—Blueprint for Success

- Navigating the obstacle
  - What issues are you having?
  - Do you understand the procedures in place?
  - Do you know your office structure and roles?
  - What barriers are perceived?
  - What is realistic and doable?

Office Efficiency—Understanding Your Data

- Do you know what data you're receiving?
  - Garbage in = Garbage out
- Do you know your current workflows?
  - Reviewing procedures and plans
  - Involving outside parties
  - Implementing a timeline (historical and future)
  - Gathering resources

Office Efficiency—Possible Solutions

- Do you know what's possible for your organization and/or benefit system?

  - If not, have you asked?

- When was the last time you reviewed your benefit system to understand other solutions?

  - When was the last time you upgraded your system?
    You can ask for specific programming (think outside of the box)

  - Example: Set programs (eliminate the need for manual processing)

Real Case Study—Office Efficiency

Example: Employer Remittance File Automation

Δ Deltas

- Newly Eligible
- Status Change
- Reinstatements
- Rehires
- Division Changes
- Drops
- Drop - Orphans

Employer Remittance File
- SFTP
- HWXX_yyyymmd d.txt
- XCensus_mmddy yyy.csv

① Pull File @9:00 AM XX Day of the Month

② Import into Database — Employer Remittance

③ Analyze Data

④ Work with Employer to identify discrepancies. Generate Benefit System Upload Files — Posting Department

⑤ Upload to Benefit System and Generate Mailings (csv)

⑥ Remittance Program: Front End Application

Insert Mailings

Print Center

Office Efficiency— Testing and Implementation

- Testing is absolutely needed BUT often overlooked

  – Does your staff know how to properly test?

  – Are vendors testing?

- Quality assurance check

- Timeline

  – Constantly review your timeline. It's ok to re-adjust!

  – Do not rush implementation if you know the data is incorrect

Polling Question

Electronic Data Management System (EDMS)—
Paperless may consist of:

A. Digital communication

B. Electronic signatures

C. Electronic Data Management System (EDMS)

D. Electronic board meeting materials

E. Database

Polling Question

Electronic Data Management System (EDMS)—
Is your Fund Office *entirely* paperless?

A. Yes

B. No

EDMS—Benefits

- Reduces costs
  - Operationally
  - Document and data recovery
  - Printing
  - Storage
- Increases productivity
- Work access
  - Simplifies sharing information
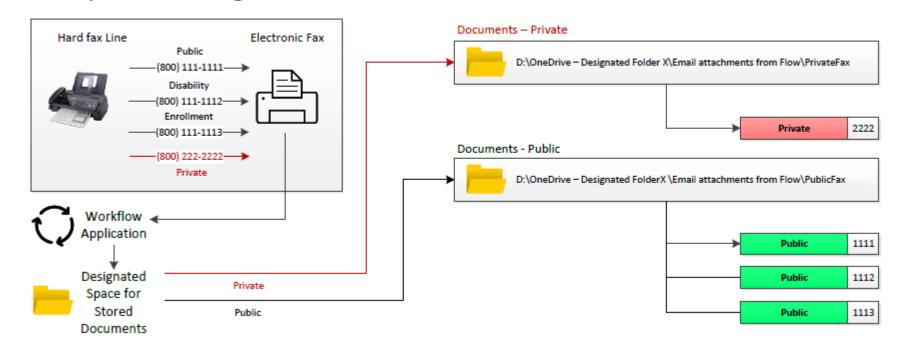
EDMS—Benefits

- Retention policy
  - When was this last reviewed by your legal counsel?
  - Set-up automated policies with electronic documents
- Get staff involved
- Volume of paper
  - Know what you have and how much
  - Choose electronic software and storage based on your needs

EDMS—A Different Perspective

- EDI calls and scanning workflows
  - Automate paper coming in through assigned workflows

- Staff training
  - Most important and critical, but often overlooked!

- Continue to review and improve process
  - Review your cybersecurity and data back-up with IT
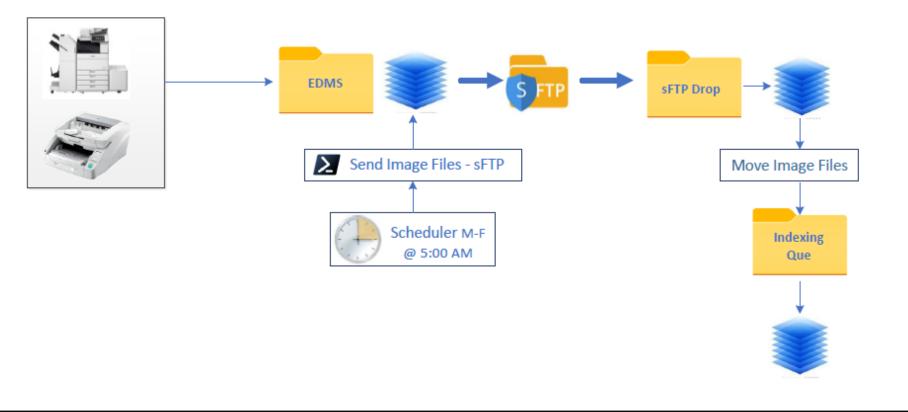 - Yearly review with staff. Find out what's working and not

Case Study—EDMS and Data Automation

Example: Incoming Fax Automation Workflow

Hard fax Line — Electronic Fax

Public
(800) 111-1111

Disability
(800) 111-1112

Enrollment
(800) 111-1113

(800) 222-2222
Private

Workflow Application

Designated Space for Stored Documents

Private

Public

Documents – Private

D:\OneDrive – Designated Folder X\Email attachments from Flow\PrivateFax

Private 2222

Documents - Public

D:\OneDrive – Designated FolderX \Email attachments from Flow\PublicFax

Public 1111

Public 1112

Public 1113

Case Study—EDMS and Data Automation

Example: Incoming Documents Automation Workflow

Administrator's Portal

- "Wouldn't it be nice to have everything centrally located?"

- How many have various spreadsheets located everywhere?

- Replace administrator's binder or network folders with a centrally located database

Case Study—Administrator's Portal

- Created a database to house:
  - Board of Trustees and subcommittees information
  - Plan design and benefit information
  - Collective Bargaining Agreements information
  - Employer information.
- Centrally located and increases efficiency
  - Reduces the need for multiple spreadsheets
  - Everyone has the same information, and it's updated at once

Compliance and Appeal Tracking System

- Documentation and appeal timing are critical
- A solid workflow keeps critical information from being missed
- Centrally located = Eases communication for staff and participants
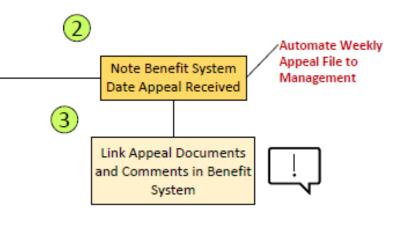- Automate reporting to pull an appeal report to ensure compliance with response times

Case Study—Compliance and Appeal Tracking System

Example: Appeals Tracking System

Created a Tracking System in Benefit System Program:

①

Enclosures	Date	Reviewer
Date Appeal Requested	mm/dd/yyyy	Mail Processor
Date Appeal Received	mm/dd/yyyy	Mail Processor
Administrator's Review	mm/dd/yyyy	Minnie Mouse
Appeal Confirmation Sent	mm/dd/yyyy	Minnie Mouse
Board Review	mm/dd/yyyy	Board
Appeal Decision	mm/dd/yyyy	Board
Date Response Sent	mm/dd/yyyy	Mickey Mouse

② Note Benefit System Date Appeal Received

Automate Weekly Appeal File to Management

③ Link Appeal Documents and Comments in Benefit System

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Key Takeaways

- Growth and change are inevitable, embrace it
- Identify key players and set expectations
- Define your goals, procedural changes and overall impact from an administration standpoint
- Reducing manual processes, reduces risk of error
- Automate manual workflows
- Understand how you can automate incoming and outgoing data and documents
- Continually review your workflows
- Aim to centrally locate data
- Never overlook testing and training

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Session Evaluation