GETTING INSURANCE REGULATIONS AND INTERNAL REVIEWS UNDER CONTROL

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Insurance Environment

The insurance industry deals with a multitude of state and federal regulations, on top of basic business and operational challenges. There are also environmental factors such as interest rate changes, market swings, and 'new' state or federal regulations. In addition to on-going promotional activities, this keeps the marketing, sales, and compliance/legal teams on their toes at all times; determining what immediate changes they may have to make, to their products and benefits to keep them viable and available to their customers.

These units must consider the different legal requirements from 50 states just to continue to do business as usual. But they also have to build into their processes the ability to immediately change direction when one of the above disruptive factors comes into play.
The US has many large insurance companies such as AIG, Haven Life, New York Life, State Farm, AAA Life, Globe Life, plus plenty more.

Each of these insurance providers have insurance agents that sell their products either as captive agents, independent agents, brokers, etc. Each of these groups work off different platforms/systems to provide their clients with the information needed to purchase the coverage being presented. Which means, the insurance companies have to provide the latest, regulatory approved content in many different ways and across different channels.

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Business Challenge

As part of one of the largest direct to consumer mailers, our team was falling behind the curve with getting new packages to market. With the volume of packages and pages that needed to be reviewed, we did not always catch changes that were made by the print vendors. This put us close to missing some of the regulatory rules, which could have cost the company a significant amount of money in fines.

We also missed turn-around times for social media posts, sales materials, and training documents for the field force. Finally, the internal company communications to the associates all the way up to the Board of Directors were always pushed to their deadline, if not beyond.

A lot of the timing issues had to deal with all the back-and-forth reviews within the department, between Compliance and Actuarial, as well as with the print vendors. For the direct response packages, there could be over 25 different versions of the same themed package, per product; and some of these packages had in excess of 15 pages. Each one had to be reviewed by multiple people within the marketing department, then by Actuarial and/or Compliance, then back to the print vendor to make the updates. This circular process continued, until all parties provided final approval. One of the major issues with this process was with the different versions being reviewed, it was very hard for management to know which, if any, packages were not on schedule.

But what really complicated this process was that the reviews comparing versions were being carried out manually, reading every word of every page of every package. A similar process had to be carried out for all the different communications, posts, materials, etc. However, these latter items needed to be completed sometimes within a day or a week at most. Additional staffing was not approved, so the teams had to find a more efficient way to get these items created, reviewed and to market. The processes were reviewed and revised, but it was not enough. Just having items going through a new process did not take into consideration the competing priorities, timelines, and resources each needed.

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The Plan

The department realized they needed a true business management process, with automated systems to get things to those who needed it, when they needed it and for final approval, before the deadline. The company did an RFP and came across cutting-edge software that included automated business workflow processing and proof review. The decision came down to a proof review technique that only one company was providing. This system would allow the reviewers to proof, side by side, each page of any package or document. The difference was that it showed the User any changes between the versions, down to the pixel level. Uniquely, this was for the entire package in one review interface (not page by page).

This Smart Review allowed the reviewers to not have to read every word of every page. They would go to a project view, which allowed them to filter the proofs. One of the filters called "changed" was great when a new version had been uploaded, any proofs that changed between revisions were highlighted with a blue border and a "Changed" flag on the thumbnail itself.

The user experience was optimized, and users could sort by colors or flags, so they only had to select from that sub-set of pages. This allowed all the stakeholders to quickly review only those pages that had been changed and verify that the package met all the requirements of all parties involved, in the timeframe expected. It also allowed them to see pages where changes had been requested, but not actioned, so they could be sent back to the print vendor for the necessary updates.

The creation of the process workflows was very easy to set up, making it possible to create specific workflows for each type of package, communication, post, or sales piece.

This system also had a built-in **conflict management process**.If two different areas had conflicting responses on the same page(s), a Conflict Manager would receive an immediate notification message. The Conflict Manager could then review the comments from both parties and determine which change to make, so that additional rounds of review did not have to happen. The conflict management process also notified the Conflict Manager if the package was out of line with the pre-defined timeframes for any step in the process. If something was going back and forth for review too many times, the Conflict Manager was again notified, so that they could pull the appropriate stakeholders together to determine what needed to be done to move the package forward.

What made this system even better, was that an approved **master generic file** could be loaded at the beginning of the process, to be compared against 'all' the state variations. All the variations would be loaded into one project, and the User could quickly compare each one against the approved generic one, to make sure that the only changes between the versions were the state regulatory ones.

The Transformation

To achieve all this, the Aproove Work Management system was implemented.

When it came to the direct response packages, initially we designed and configured over 25 different workflows. But, Aproove is constantly upgrading their system with new features, and within a short period we were able to reduce all 25 different workflows into a single workflow.

Aproove allows the Users to answer questions up front, when creating projects, to define what type it is. Once those data items are selected, the system used meta data values to set the appropriate workflow paths, reviews, and timelines for each variation, so they would get the appropriate reviews and signoffs based upon the type of package it was.

Having both process management 'and' the proofing process within one system, allowed for each step of the process, to be done automatically. As soon as a User completed their step, the next person/User in the workflow, was notified by email 'and' also pinged in their system dashboard. And each step in the process had its own deadline associated with it, to continue to minimize the turnaround time. Users received their task, and a deadline via an individual "to-do" list; allowing them to manage 'all' their work priorities from their dashboard.

When using these workflows and processes in production, it was determined that there were times that someone outside the licensed teams needed to be able to see the package or piece. As the needs and processes changed, the system was easily updated to meet the new needs. It allows for non-User subject matter experts to access just the section that their knowledge is needed on. Once the input is received, the system automatically moves the package onto the next step in the process.

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Note, the other types of marketing collateral and promotional material that needed review and approval did not have as complicated workflows as the direct response. However, they did need to make sure that teams of Users were contacted when each new task was assigned, because of the fast turnaround time associated with these other pieces. These Users also needed different types of rights to the system, to allow them to move packages forward, if someone missed a deadline.

The process management weaved in and out of this system makes it very flexible, and allows for different rights of Users, even if they are part of the same group.

In addition to the above, the system provides dashboards so that day to day users and management has a live and holistic view of all the projects in progress and their health/status.

After working with the system, and due to the number of projects that our unit created each month, customized reports were created to help track each month's set of projects as well as all the projects in progress.

In Conclusion

The deployment of this work management platform was considered a success. After getting all the workflows and business management rules in place for the direct response packages, the team saw a 15-week reduction in getting their new packages from idea to market. More importantly, it ensured that all the packages that the company created were compliant with the regulatory requirements. As an added benefit, all steps, comments, and approvals are captured and saved for any audits generated internally or externally.

The other pieces that were put in the system normally needed to be reviewed and approved within 5 days. Prior to using the work management platform, it always took the whole 5 days for the review. The teams are now seeing items approved within 2-3 days. This allows them to post earlier and more often and has reduced the stress in the unit. It also has increased their capacity, so they can try even more creative pieces.

Author Bio – Michael Ruff

Michael is a Senior IT & Marketing Project Manager, with over 30 years' experience in the Insurance industry. Michael is certified in Project Management, Agile Project Management and is a certified ScrumMaster. He has managed enterprise-sized projects for over 20 years, both from the IT and business points of view. When not working, Michael has led a local Scouting Troop since 2015, including high adventure hiking trips to the New Mexico Rocky Mountains in 2019 and 2022; and soon to be 2024.

You can find him on LinkedIn.

Benefits of Aproove Work Management for the client...

Business Benefits of Aproove Work Management

- Achieved significant flexibility with the platform - unifying previously disconnected processes into a single system of record
- Reduction from 23 complex workflows into a single meta-data driven workflow
- 15 week reduction in getting new promotional materials & packages to market
- All promotional materials & packages now brand & legal compliant
- 50% less effort required for approvals & reduced levels of demand & stress in the team

Functional Benefits of Aproove Work Management

- Individual to-do lists ensuring stakeholders get tasked at the right time in the workflow, enabling them to manage workload
- Workflow creation & automation based on business processes
- Dashboard now provides a centralized holistic view of all projects, with early warning visual indictors for projects at risk
- All steps, comments & approvals now captured & saved for any internal or externally generated audits
- Conflict management ensures projects never stall in cases of conflicting decisions, or missed deadlines

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Why Marketing Teams need Aproove Work Management!

You do **the Math!**

Aproove Work Management gives an instant return on
investment with an increase in productivity and efficiency.
The numbers don't lie!

56% Project Cycle Reduction

63% Review Cycle Reduction

76% Email Traffic Reduction

92% Achieve 100% ROI In Year 1

Marketing teams have more work with fewer resources!
Sound familiar?

In-house Marketing teams and independent Marketing companies face a landslide of work, which is often time-critical and requires different levels of work approval and business processes.
What happens when you are not getting feedback in a timely fashion, or you have to chase people all day? At best you will waste time, or miss a deadline, at worst you may be forced to send out content that has not gone through all the necessary compliance checks.

With Aproove Work Management software for marketing teams, you can set up your desired marketing workflows, which automatically task your stakeholders at the appropriate time in the workflow sequence. Task management tools work alongside marketing workflow management software ensuring your marketing content progresses, with no compliance steps missed.

Aproove Work Management offers a powerful marketing workflow software that puts you in control with automated conflict management features ensuring escalation, when deadlines are in danger or users disagree on a decision. You can even route the workflow based on predetermined decision scenarios, and with our user-friendly dashboard monitor the progress of all your projects from one central place. Now you have a full audit trail of who did what, and when.

Decrease the number of review cycles, automate marketing workflows that accelerate project times, ensure accountability, and achieve a high return on investment. Spend your time being creative and let Aproove Work Management take care of the rest.

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Six Aproove Work Management features for marketing teams

Annotations and Markup Tools
Multi-function markup & text extraction tool working alongside measurement & rotation tools etc.
More on Annotation Tools →

Version Comparison
Multiple ways to compare versions including side by side, overlay, pixel, and ghosting comparison.
More on Version Comparison →

Review Groups & Steps
Easily create review steps, assign reviewers, set deadlines & Step rules. Save settings as templates for re-use.
More on Review Groups →

Comments & @mentions
Powerful threaded comments for collaboration with the @mention capability to add contributors into a conversation.
More on Comments & @mentions →

User Dashboards
Never miss a deadline with a Business and Project specific dashboards along with individual and team "To-Do" lists to keep everyone on track!
More on User Dashboards →

Conflict Resolution
Conflict resolution managers can be assigned at different stages and in different groups, empowered to resolve conflicts to prevent endless loops & delays getting to sign off
More on Conflict Resolution →

Take a product tour!

Some Aprooving In-House Marketers!

AAA **Panasonic**

Kroger **cora** **HBC**

Check out more amazing features!

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