exponent case management

WHITE PAPER

Case Study: Choosing a

CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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the OVERVIEW

You've reached the conclusion that it is time for your nonprofit to invest in a new case management system. This is an important decision, and one that will reap significant benefits once you select the best solution for your organization's needs.

So, where do you start? The selection process doesn't have to be overwhelming; it can be broken down systematically in a way that you know exactly what you need to do and in which order to do it.

This white paper will both describe a successful methodology for choosing a case management system, and also provide an example of a client's selection process. We've included actual content and data from documents that the organization used to select and implement Exponent Case Management on the Salesforce® platform to manage its client data.

This report will guide you through the organization's process and leverage the tools developed by our client to inform your own selection process for a case management solution.

01 Setting Goals for Your System

02 Designing a Selection Process

03 Creating a Framework to Evaluate Your Options

04 Analyzing Your Options

05 Making the Final Decision

06 Communicating Your Decision

01 Setting Goals for Your System

The motivations for considering a new case management system can vary greatly from one organization to the next. You might be tracking your clients in paper case files or in spreadsheets which have become too unwieldy to manage. Or perhaps your nonprofit's leadership and staff need better insight into how well your organization is serving clients in order to improve programs. In some cases, a legacy system might be getting too costly to keep up and may no longer be reliable.

Regardless of the drivers that prompt you to evaluate a new system, first you'll need to identify your goals, which will become the guiding principles throughout your search. These goals should be developed with a group of stakeholders from across your organization; these individuals will serve as your system selection team.

About our Client

>$20M human services organization
>30 Programs
100,000 clients
>300 staff
Migrating from Social Solutions' ETO

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 staff at 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.

02 Designing a Selection Process

While each organization might develop a unique vetting process for their case management system, there is a core set of steps that you can follow.

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

02 Scan the landscape of case management software to understand all your options and to better evaluate the pros and cons of your existing system.

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

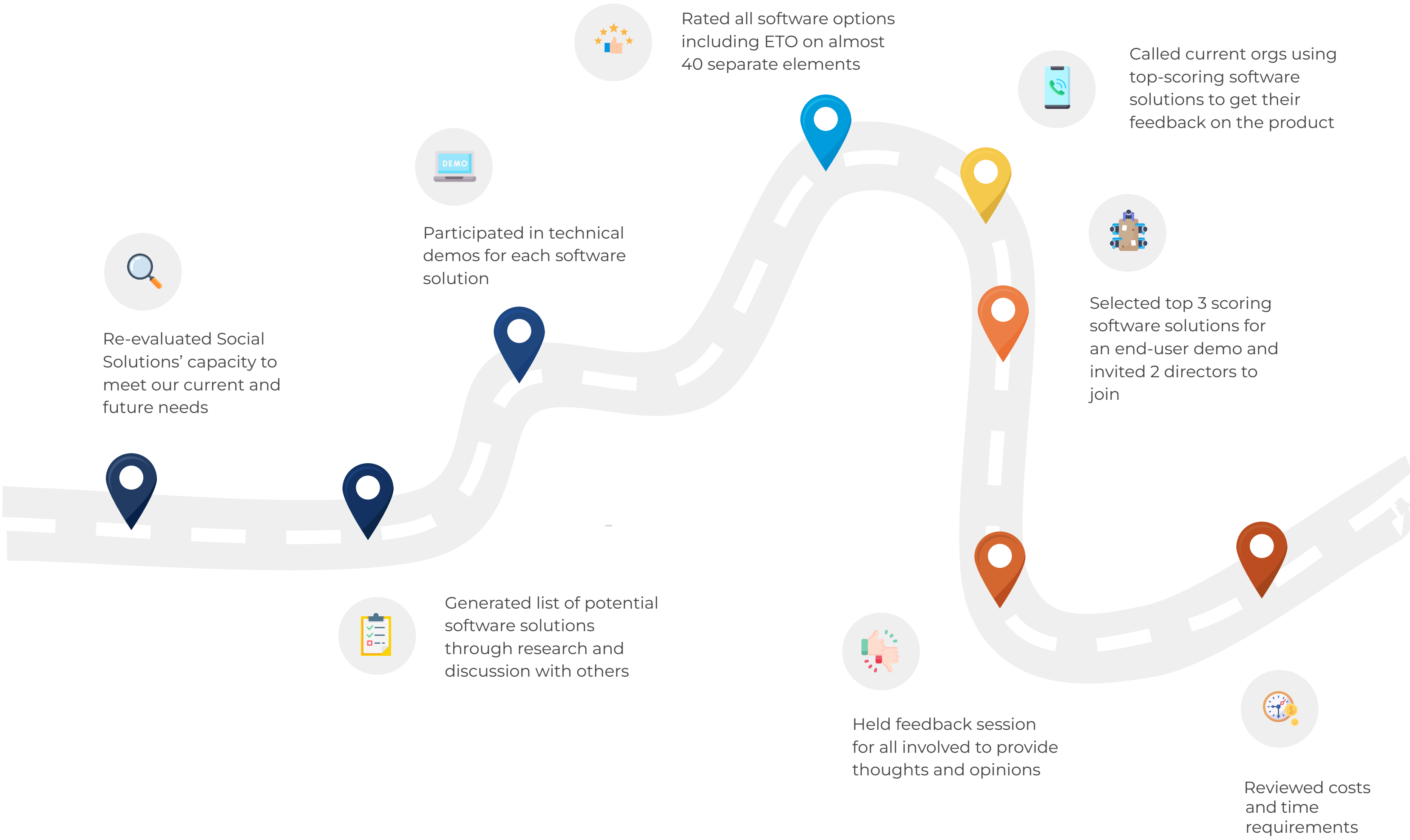
04 Based on this rubric, collect data from different vendors about their products. There are numerous ways you can do this that we'll discuss later in the white paper.

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

06 Choose the best solution.

Client Journey 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.



03 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; these criteria 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.)
- Company Stability (size and age of organization, number of staff)
- Backend/Core Programing Language (SQL, Oracle, etc.)
- User License Options (including collaborative partner access)
- Ease of Navigation/Simplicity of Use (end-user experience)
- Independence of Construct from Other Clients (being affected by fixes for others)
- Employee Access to Software (browser and software compatibility)
- Ability to Import/Export Data between Systems (working with other databases)

- Support Availability (number and type of support staff)
- Data Migration from Old System to New

System Configuration

- Supports Multiple Types of Programs
- Ability to create new data entry forms in-house
- Flexibility (ability to use system in different ways)
- Ease of editing/modifying data entry forms
- Level of Customization (ability to change titles, colors, text)
- Ability to modify and control menu items and navigation bars
- Security and User Access (on a program and element basis)

System Functionality

- New Enrollment
- Workflow
- Case Load Management
- Case Notes
- Batch Upload
- File Attachments
- Scheduling
- Mass Discharge/Mass Enrollment
- Group Assessments
- Billing
- Client Dashboard
- Name/Date/Time Stamp
- Client Calendar

Reporting

- Availability for Custom Reports (build ourselves rather than depending on vendor)
- Printing Options (including adding agency/program logos)
- Ease of Developing Custom Reports
- Flexibility of Exporting Data into Other Programs such as Excel
- User Access to Printing Reports
- Usefulness/Availability of Reporting Dashboard
- Query Functions
- Built-in Analytics (including graphs and charts)

04 Analyzing Your Options

Armed with your product evaluation framework, you can begin collecting data about different case management systems. There are a few ways to approach this step of the evaluation process. You can request that vendors complete a questionnaire about the product, schedule a meeting with the vendors' teams, ask for a demo of the product, or combine all these forms of review. As mentioned earlier, it is critical to include the key stakeholders in the process, so that the entire team is aligned about each product and has access to the same information.

You might choose to use a ranking or rating scale to compare potential systems. Your team members should rank or rate each option 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.

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 reaching an agreement on which option to choose.

Client Case Study

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

01 Deal breaker - absolutely will not work for our needs

02 Would require significant work-around in order to meet our needs

03 Would meet the bare minimum standards for our current needs

04 This is a good match for our current needs and could potentially meet future needs

05

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):

An Intro to Exponent Case Management

Driving radically better impact throught the power of data.

Watch a Live Demo

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**

05

Making the Final Decision

Once you pick one or several finalists, you might want to wrap up your research by validating your rankings with references provided by the vendors, and then present 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.

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..

PROS	
ETO	**Exponent Case Management**
• Powerful reporting tools • Customizable forms • Familiar to users • Community partners (HMIS, United Way) • New features have potential to address several of our issues • HIPAA-compliant • Social Solutions is very familiar with our work and understands our organization • Data from prior years is already in this system • Staff already training on system • Staying with ETO allows us to benefit from past investment in resources for solution	• Large customer base (100,000+ customers – 20,000+ nonprofits) • Market leader (95% customer satisfaction) • Very stable platform (#10 Forbes Most Trustworthy Companies) • Easy-to-build forms • Ability to work with multiple vendors • Extremely versatile • Ability to use multiple browsers (and versions of browsers) • Better workflow management • Ability to create own apps or use apps designed by other developers • Potential to be self-managing • Licensing allows sharing database with other organizations • Ability to grow with agency (salesforce.com: millions in R&D) • 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

CONS	
ETO	**Exponent Case Management**
• Lack of stability • Small development staff and inability to commit to SLA • Staff dissatisfaction • Limited browser compatibility • Shared environment without ability to control updates • 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	• Change in database to any other solution will require us to deal with data migration • Initial set-up expense • IT staff must learn a new system • Agency staff will need to learn new system • The unknown (it is always a risk going with something new)

06 Communicating Your Decision

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

About Exponent Case Management

Built on the Salesforce platform, Exponent Case Management allows you to directly connect your program data to your impact with funder and performance reporting at your fingertips.

We manage all aspects of your implementation and offer pre-configured modules for HMIS and Workforce Development that help get your programs online faster.

We've helped over 700 Philanthropic, Human Services, and Education organizations create radically better impact through the power of data. Whether you are just getting started with your technology strategy, need to consolidate or add new systems or require support along your journey; we can help you transform your organization's relationship with data and to chart a path to the next horizon.

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07 Appendix

System Overview	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	Challenger Soft
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**

System Configuration	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	Challenger Soft
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	Challenger Soft
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
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

System Functionality	ETO	ClientTrack	Penelope	Foothold	Exponent Case Management	Challenger Soft
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	Challenger Soft
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**