



Pulpstream



Intelligent Automation for Streamlining Your Return to Work Process

Are you spending more time and money on managing your RTW process and still finding things falling through the cracks? It's time to digitize this process.

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Introduction

No employer wants a workplace injury to happen on their watch, and inefficient and inflexible methods of managing “return to work” situations only create more stress for everyone involved.

Unfortunately, this stress is the reality for many organizations after an injury or illness.

Fortunately, advancements in process digitization technology and workflow automation have introduced new, more efficient ways for organizations to take control of not only their return to work (RTW) processes but also any other process that can drive their business’s growth and productivity.

What could streamlining and digitizing your return to work process do for your business, and how can you get started with your own return to work process transformation?



The Return to Work Process

Digitized or not, return to work processes are a vital part of your organization's foundation of employee wellness. But they are also a key variable in the health of your overall bottom line.

The return to work process is triggered after an employee is injured or becomes ill and seeks the attention of a medical professional. The employee's official medical diagnosis is then provided to the employer. At this point, [several federal and many state and local regulations](#) begin to apply, guiding how the case is handled and the responsibilities of each of the parties involved.

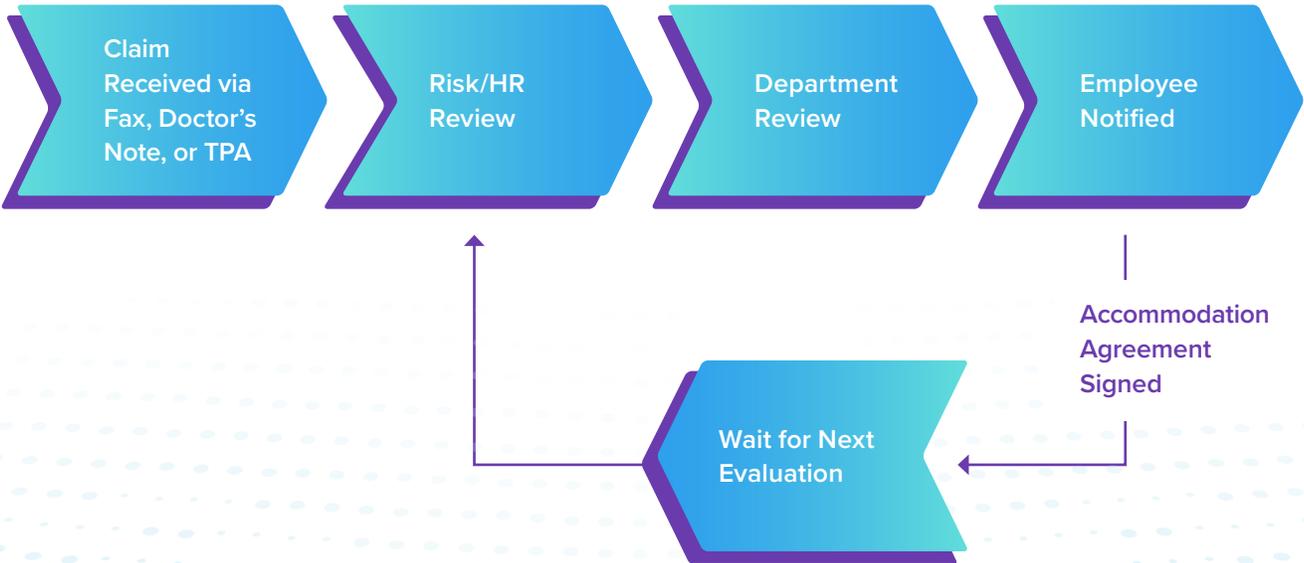
After receiving and accepting the diagnosis, the employer can either find a position that accommodates the employee's new work capacities given their recovery time or new permanent capabilities resulting from their injury, or they can provide paid leave until the employee's diagnosis changes.

Given the legal, financial, and intrapersonal variables, the employer needs to closely manage the employee’s case almost as carefully as their doctor will, ensuring that they are keeping up with regulatory, reporting, and employee wellness requirements.

This workflow and all of the related paperwork, updates, reports, and communications can be complex to handle for just one case. Add in the fact that many organizations can be managing multiple cases at one time, each with its unique documentation and timelines, and the entire return to work function can be difficult—and costly—for organizations to handle on their own.

Here is the flow of how an organization’s RTW process should work:

60/90 Day Review





Why a Return to Work Workflow is Needed

A well-designed and well-managed return to work program not only demonstrates an employer's focus on providing a healthy workplace environment to the employees, but it also meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Here are some core benefits of having a good RTW program:

- ✓ It shows the employer prioritizes its employees.
- ✓ It helps to keep employees engaged and productive.
 - ⊙ Without a program, employees that could be working with an accommodation are instead at home, lessening productivity and possibly adding additional stress for your injured employee.
- ✓ It mitigates legal liability.
 - ⊙ A good return to work program will make a good faith effort to provide accommodation to meet an employee's restrictions. An absence of such an effort may lead to legal liabilities.



How an Inefficient Return to Work Process Can Impact Your Business

The idea of changing your current process can seem difficult or time-consuming, but it is important to remember several key things:

- ✓ The longer you wait, the more your lack of efficient RTW processes could negatively impact your bottom line and the productivity of those involved in managing it.
- ✓ Missing a deadline or a key step of the process could open up your organization to the risk of noncompliance.
- ✓ Lack of streamlined communication between risk management, employee's department, and employee can result in wasted hours and increased costs.
- ✓ Time spent drafting accommodation agreements, emailing them, and obtaining employee and employer signatures can be significant.
- ✓ Lack of visibility into all aspects of a case and poor communication with the adjuster increases the overall cost.
- ✓ There are [no-code process digitization platforms](#) available that make reinventing your process easy and in the hands of your process owners.

So what are the potential hurdles in your current return to work process?
And what about the inefficiencies and costs that are hard to quantify?

Unfortunately, there can be many.

For example, many organizations use several different systems to record, track, and communicate updates on their return to work cases. Often, these are systems that were created for other purposes, such as email and text messaging applications and human resources databases. Many also rely on paper-based forms and letters, further slowing down the process and introducing additional direct and indirect costs.

In fact, [a 2015 U.S Department of Labor study](#) estimated that the average human resources department spent just over \$4,800 in labor costs just for the staff managing each return to work case. The study further estimated that, for an organization of about 1,000 employees, there was an average of 31 return to work cases per year. You don't have to do the math to see that the back-end costs of managing return to work cases can be significant.

It's estimated that the average human resources department spent just over \$4,800 in labor costs for the staff managing each return to work case in 2015.

In addition, managing your return to work process across these disparate systems can be complex while also making it even harder to provide the end-to-end visibility you need. This can lead to missed deadlines and the potential for payments that are not required—and collecting the information needed to make data-driven decisions is a complex task in itself.

And, when it comes to managing return to work cases, this lack of visibility and data makes prevention and root cause analysis of injuries harder. This can lead to additional negative employee experiences, additional injury cases, and additional employer costs.





What Digitization Can Mean for Your Return to Work Process

With significant indirect and direct costs for managing your return to work process, it is worth considering a different approach.

Fortunately, workflow and process digitization tools have evolved since you likely last looked into them. Today, solutions like Pulpstream offer no-code platforms to enable process digitization, empowering your process owners—those who live and interact with the process every day—to build and maintain their own automated and digital representation of your return to work management efforts.

Once these tools are in place, many organizations quickly realize numerous positive impacts to their overall operational efficiency, their bottom line, and—perhaps most importantly—their employee experience.

Here are just some of the many possible benefits your organization can expect to see once you have a digitized return to work process flow in place:

- ✓ Increased visibility, communication, and accountability from across the return to work process for case-specific and trend analysis involving internal and external stakeholders
- ✓ Integration and consolidation of the many disparate systems and workflows—digital and manual—from across your enterprise, including payroll and human resources tools, paper-based forms, and ad-hoc email and SMS communications
- ✓ Reduced costs from unproductive processes, decommissioning of legacy systems, and fees from third-party organizations that might currently be managing your process
- ✓ More efficient task management and process movement with the use of automated routing, rule-based decision points, and built-in notifications
- ✓ Flexibility to modify and adjust process flows without coding or the route of a case as needs and conditions change
- ✓ Increased user interaction through customizable and web-enabled employee self-service forms and dashboards
- ✓ Integration of incoming faxes from doctors' offices into cases, thus removing the need for separate document handling
- ✓ Streamlined communication with adjuster
- ✓ Streamlined accommodation agreement eSigning across all parties
- ✓ Access to data to support risk management



Side Effects of Outsourcing Your Return to Work Process

Is your organization currently outsourcing your return to work processes and case administration to a third party?

On paper, outsourcing might look like an effective and comprehensive solution to the problems that come with having to handle inefficient processes in-house. However, once you dig deeper, you find that this option can have its own hidden costs, especially when compared to a no-code process digitization platform.

Though costs vary, outsourcing your return to work process could be costing your organization hundreds of dollars per case. Some cases are complex and require unique accommodations and planning, but others are more straightforward and come with a temporary disability diagnosis. In the second case, your organization is paying hundreds of dollars for someone else to manage a case that requires relatively simple case management and no accommodation actions.



This is where a process-driven platform with built-in rules and logic can automatically route each claim correctly and prevent unnecessary, costly expenses.

Lastly, moving your return to work case management to a third-party platform doesn't fully eliminate the interactions that employees and those handling claims need to have with the process. Many of the administrative costs mentioned earlier can still apply, even if your process is handled elsewhere.

Instead of turning to outside help, bring your process back in-house with an automated platform. Save on outsourcing costs, empower your employees, and make your process more efficient and personalized.

Outsourcing can result in costs of up to \$400 per claim! Are you bleeding money by outsourcing?





How Pulpstream Can Help

For your payroll processing, you have a dedicated, tailor-made solution. The same likely applies to your finance and accounting systems and other key business processes.

Why shouldn't a function as important as your return to work process have its own digitized solution? Pulpstream's no-code platform enables your in-house team to design, implement, and maintain not only your return to work process but also any other business process that helps make your business tick. Given the flexibility and built-in tools within the Pulpstream platform, your team has no limits when it comes to the type and number of processes you can digitize.

Taking it one step further, you can even integrate other existing systems into Pulpstream process steps with simple code snippets or even between individual processes managed within Pulpstream.



Pulpstream delivers all of the features and benefits of modern process digitization platforms—and so much more.

For example, Pulpstream also:



Gives organizations a platform on which to capture, design, and build an ideal return to work process using a built-in component library.



Offers process owners the ability to design and maintain their own processes, dashboards, and custom reports without the time- and cost-intensive development and testing work.



Provides secure and reliable cloud-based hosting, which supports and enables business continuity.



Allows for access from any device, anywhere, at any time, even offline with logging and auditing capabilities.



Offers advanced features such as APIs and system integrations, DocuSign, and SMS- and email-enabled input to make it easy to create the processes your organization needs.

Empower Your People and Processes with Pulpstream

At the end of the day, it is an organization's people that sets them apart from the competition; employees are your most important asset.

So if it were possible to create a streamlined, agile, and cost-effective way to manage not only your return to work process but also any other workflow that makes your organization tick—all without having to touch lines of code—who wouldn't want that option?

With Pulpstream, this alternative could be your organization's new reality. Pulpstream gives your team the power to capture and reimagine your return to work process with digitization. Take advantage of an integrated platform with customizable dashboards, interactive reports, and secure, internet-accessible workflows that are there for your team no matter how, when, and where they work.

The end result is smoother, more efficient processes that not only help reduce the risks to your business but also help your employees when they need it most.

Ready for a customized and digitized process solution that is designed to meet your particular needs?

[Set Up a Demo](#)

