5 Reasons High-Performing Agencies Use a Service Enablement Tool

Overview

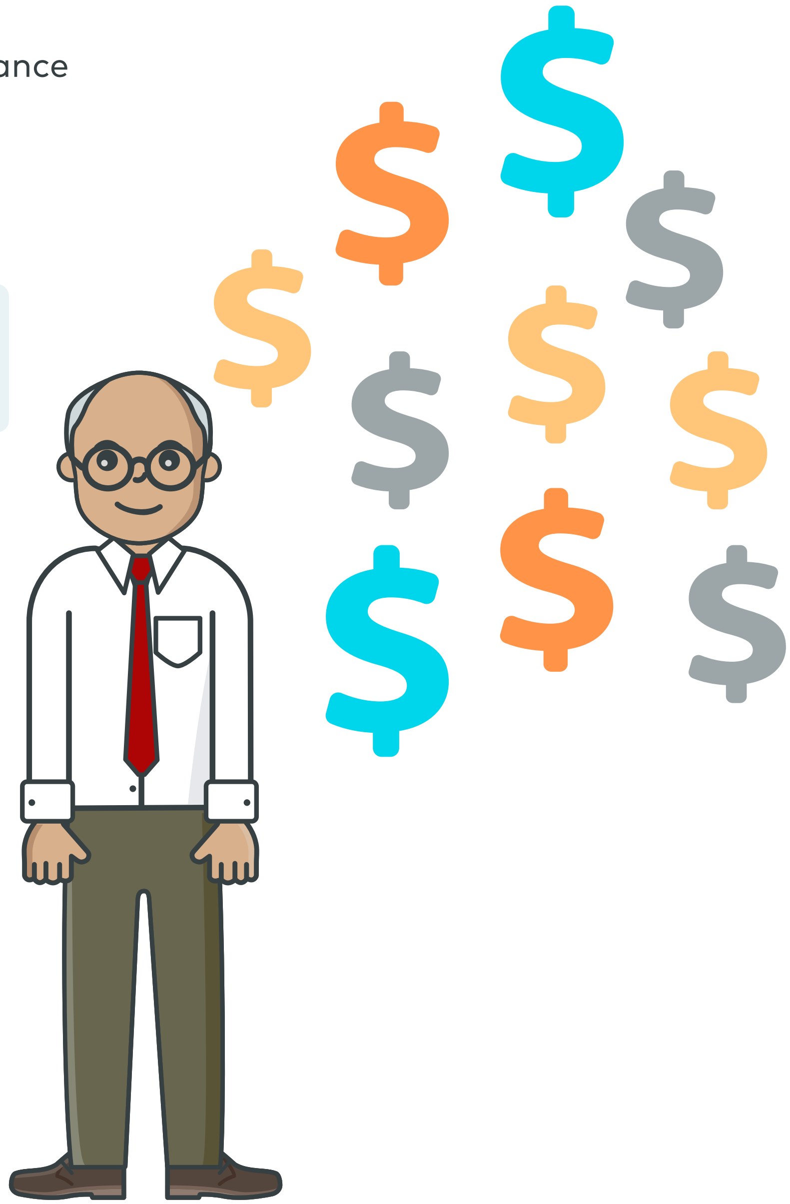
Why you should consider a service enablement tool

We have heard the age-old story of independent insurance agency growth.

It sounds something like this...

ahem

"Sell more insurance!"



We won't sit here and claim that that selling more insurance won't grow your business.

But we *are* here to pose a question: is that enough?

Is premium and revenue growth the singular most important pinnacle of achievement?

Or...could there be another path to better margin, more profit?

And could it be found somewhere outside of sales—like in your service arm?

By the end of this piece, we'll show you how bringing organization, analytics, automation, and transparency to your service department can maximize efficiency and create a more profitable agency.

That was a lot of words.

Don't worry.

We're here to break them down.

Step

by

step.

What is a service enablement tool?

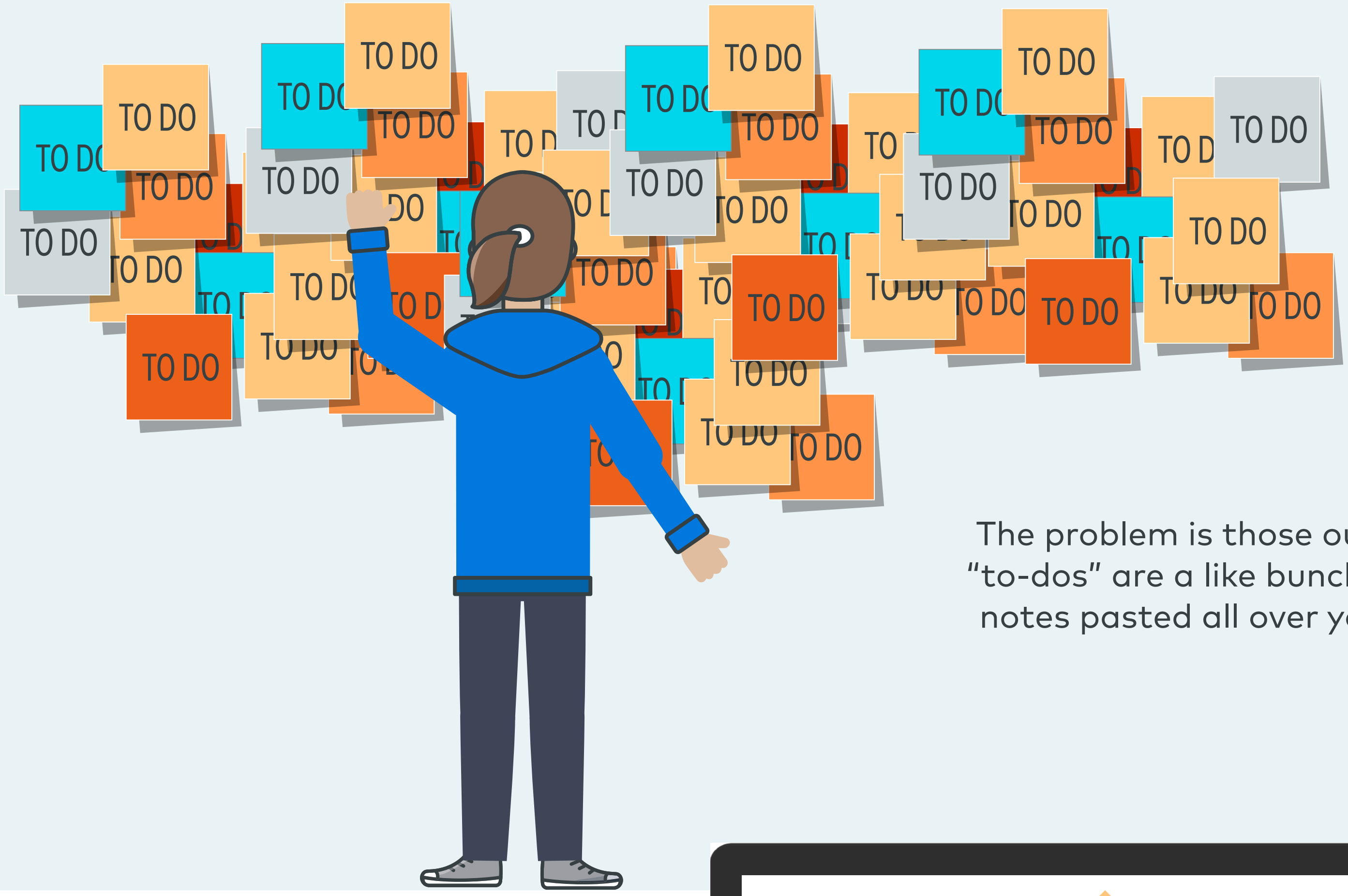
Right now, your team probably uses an agency management system for their daily tasks.

The AMS is the backbone of the independent insurance model.

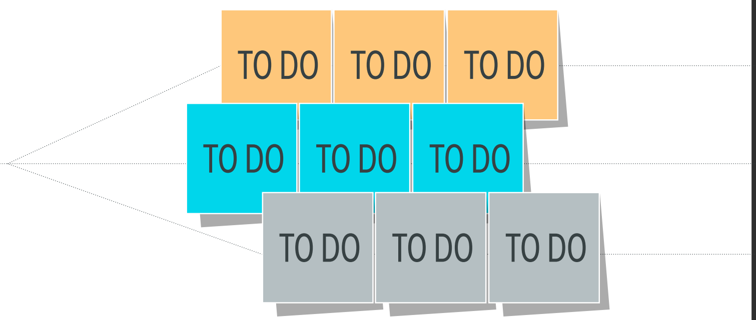
It keeps policy information safe and secure. It also connects carriers and agencies so that policy information is up-to-date. And it assists your service team with the ability send proof of insurance, capture application information for prospects and keep a list of outstanding To-Dos.

A service enablement tool **does not replace your AMS.**

A service enablement tool
enhances your AMS.



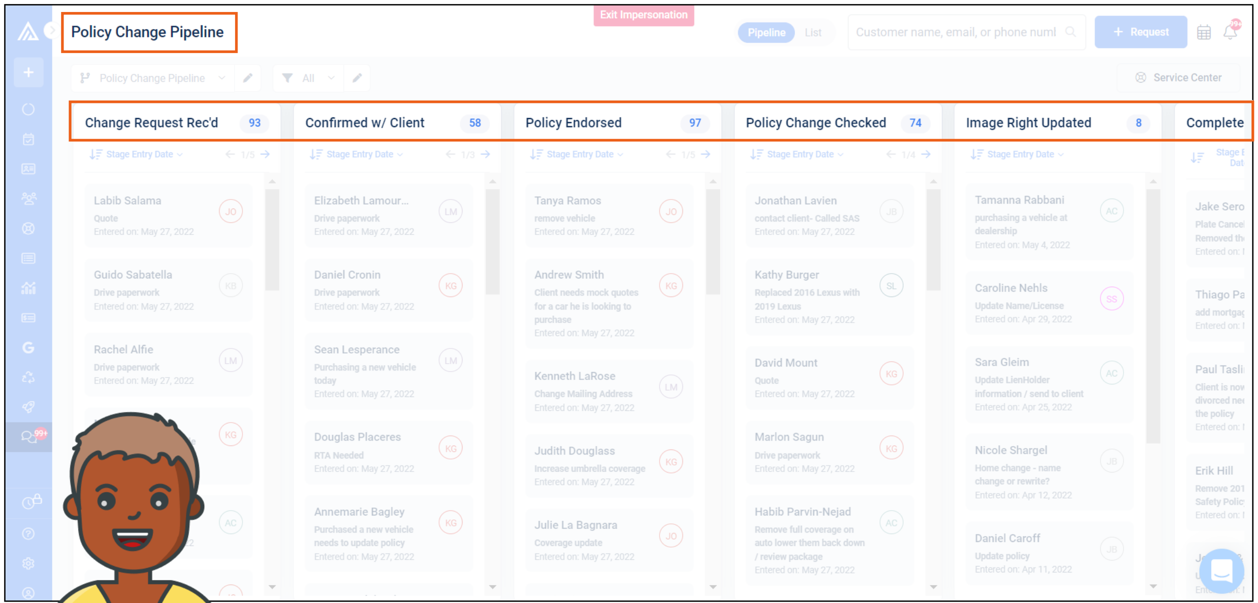
The problem is those outstanding "to-dos" are a like bunch of sticky notes pasted all over your AMS.



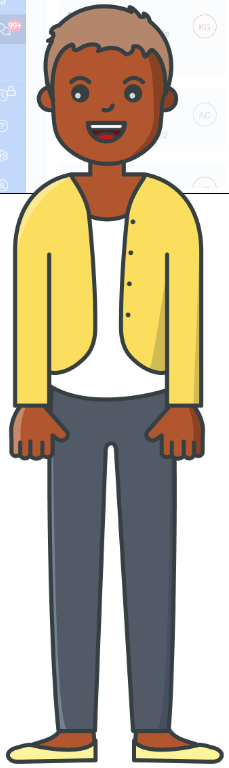
A service enablement tool uses a pipeline to organize those "sticky-note-like" tasks into a digital workflow.

The pipeline establishes consistency and standardization, empowers automation and can be reported on to create transparency.

Take a look at a real agency's Policy Change pipeline below.



This is your policy change process!



As you can see, a robust service enablement tool is built on the backbone of well-documented processes.

If you don't yet have processes developed inside your agency, it may not be time for your agency to adopt this tool.

If you do feel comfortable with your current processes, here's how a service enablement tool takes your team to the next level.

The top 5 benefits of a service ticketing system

BENEFIT #1 Thanks to digital workflows, your team is more organized and cross-functional.

Right now, your team most likely uses tasks to manage this workload.

Need to review a renewal?

✓ Create a task.

Need to send new applications for that renewal to the customer?

✓ Create a task.

Need to send those applications to the carrier?

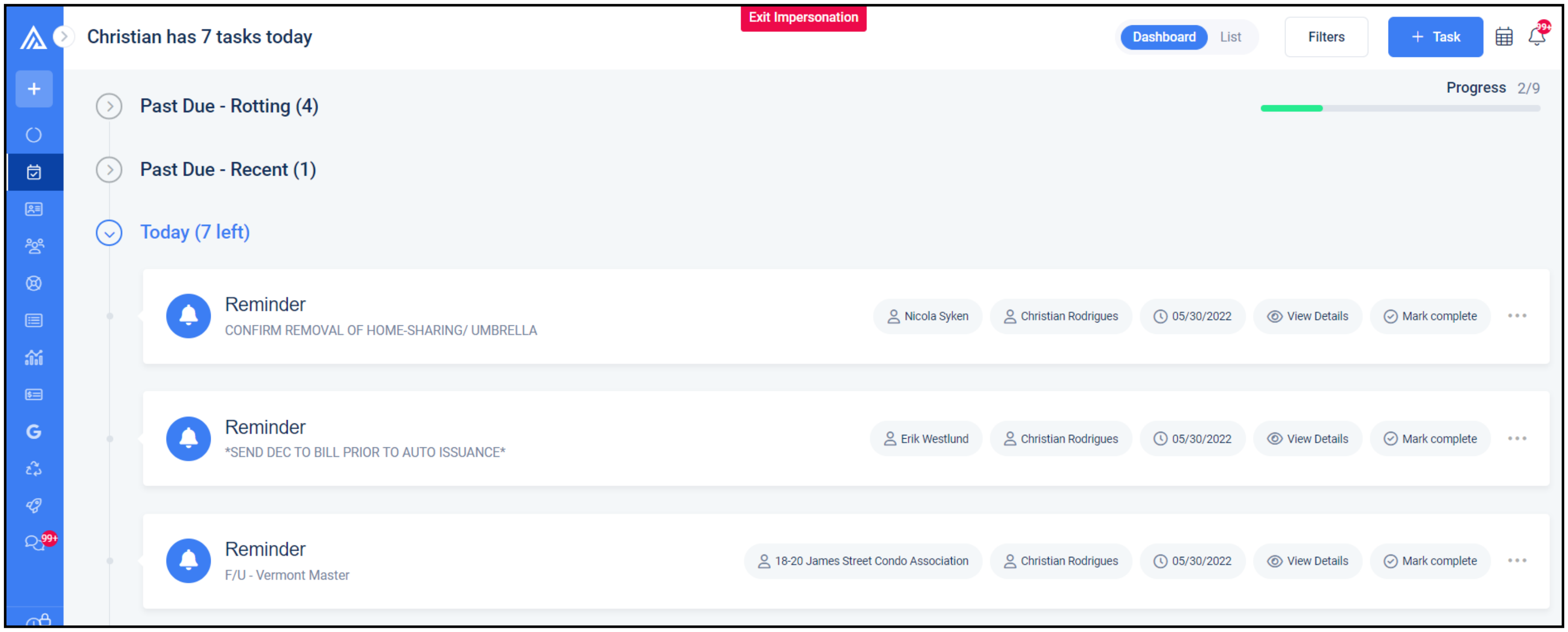
✓ Create a task.

✓ Create a task. ✓ Create a task. ✓ Create a task.

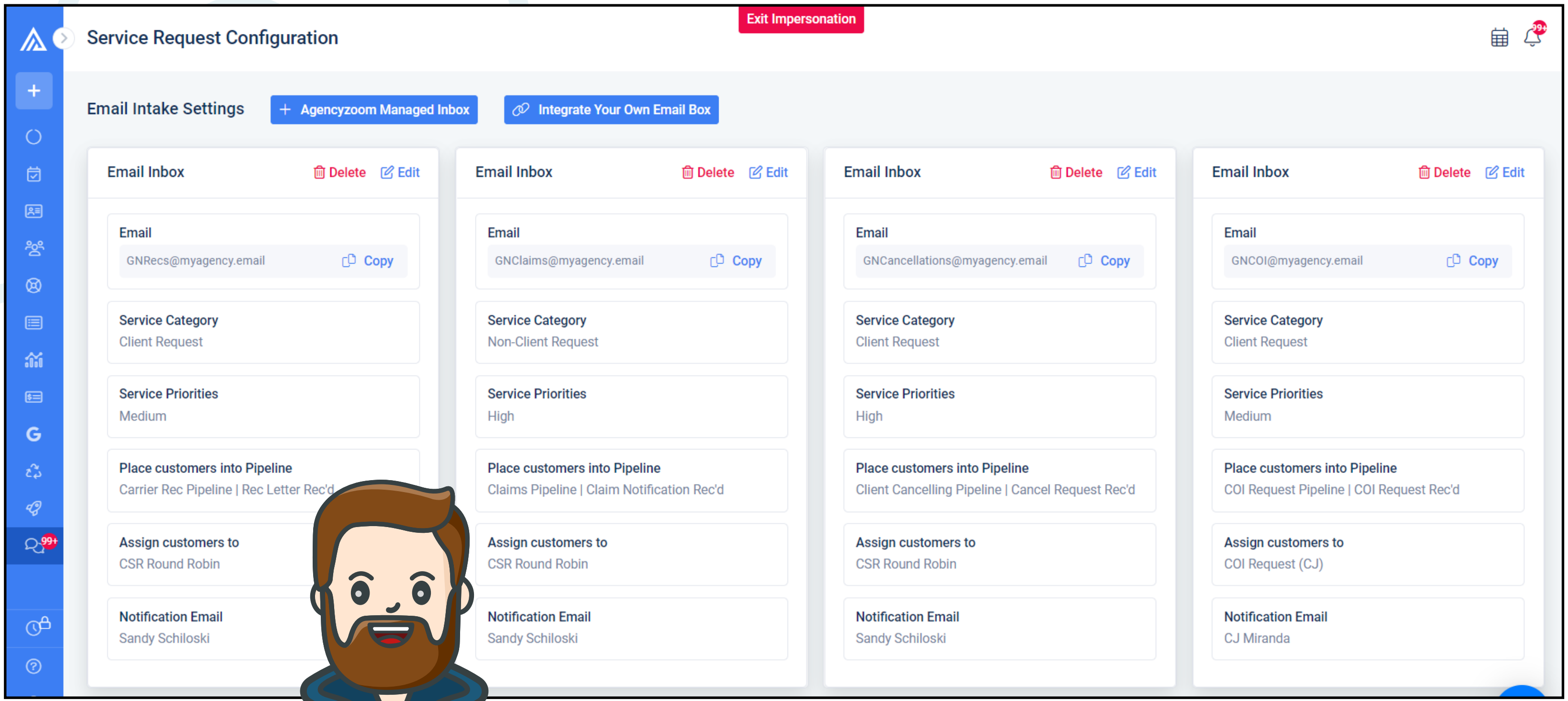
While all these tasks help remind your team about their work, they don't help your team prioritize work.

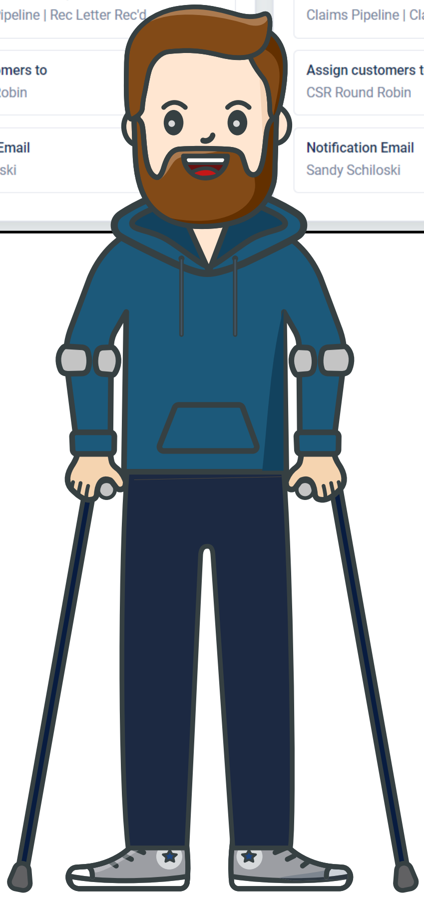
And there's a BIG difference between not forgetting your work...and prioritizing your work.

Let's take a look.



- Each of these tasks is tied to a pipeline.
- If a task has been open in its stage for too long, it's prioritized at the top of the list.
- If a task is tied to a quickly approaching deadline, it's prioritized at the top of the list.
- Instead of tasks being randomly worked on, these To-Do's are carefully sequenced to ensure your team is working on the most important items at the right time.
- In addition, pipelines bring clarity to the service workflow.
- So, producers and account managers can now work seamlessly together.
- For example, once a policy is moved to a sold stage in the sales pipeline, it can be automatically kicked over to service's onboarding pipeline.
- That's the sound of sales and service working effortlessly together.





PRO-TIP: We also recommend integrating your info@insuranceagency.com email or requests@insuranceagency.com email to your service enablement tool. That way service requests automatically drop-in and can be handled immediately. No more managing a separate inbox.

BENEFIT #2 You can stop waking up at 2 a.m. wondering how much certificates cost you.

We can't improve the performance of our service team if we don't know what they're doing.

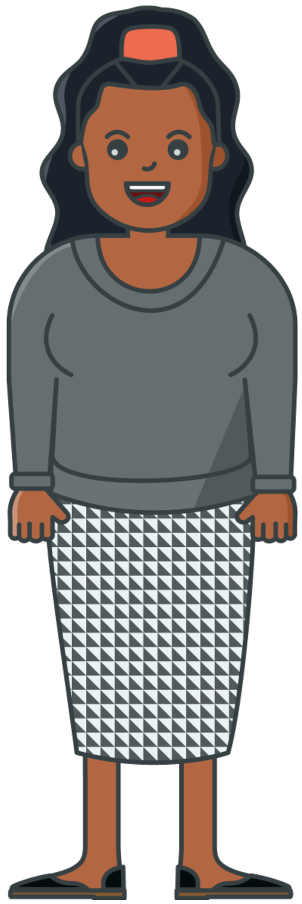
Most agencies are blind to:

- How many certificates they send each day, week, month, quarter, year
- How many policy changes they process...and for what accounts
- How long renewals actually take to process...with certain carriers
- Which team members have the most amount of work

When your team tracks their work inside of a service ticketing system, you can now measure it. Once you've baselined performance, you can look for bottlenecks.

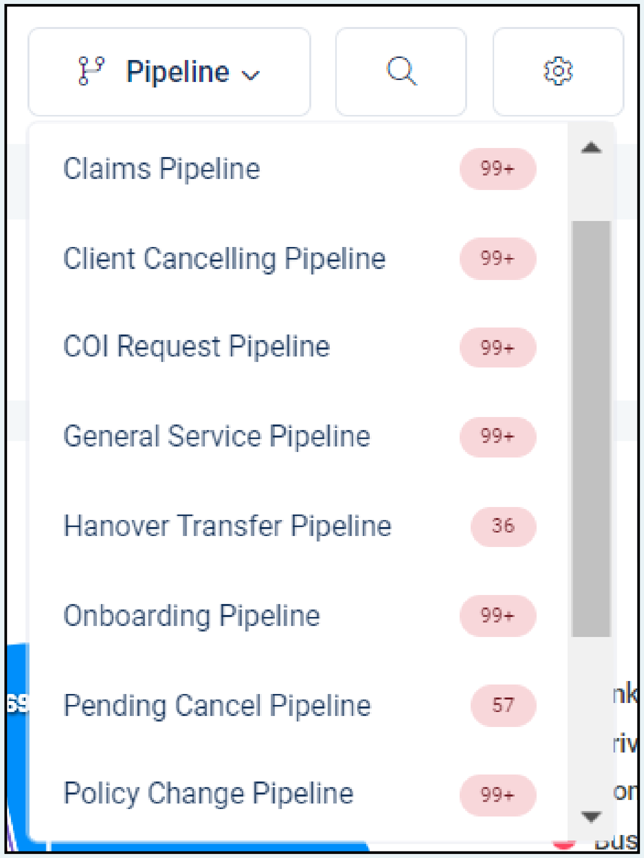
Maybe a certain process has a step that is constantly holding up the request because a specific carrier is involved? Or a specific third party?

Maybe it's time to revisit the process and look for creative solutions. Listen to your data. It shows you where to put your shovel and dig in.



You're looking under the hood of a real agency!

PRO-TIP: We recommend that agencies only create eight to 12 service pipelines. Agencies with more pipelines tend to have issues with reporting complexity.



This is a real agency's data!

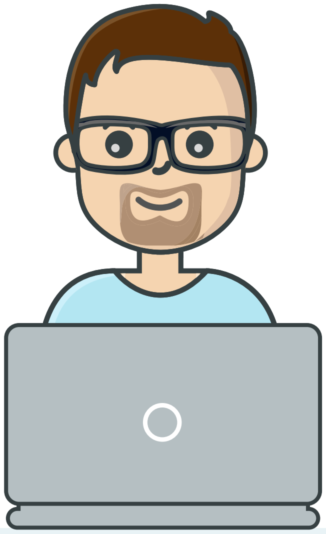
BENEFIT #3 Find your real top performers (and create more of them).

There is magic in transparency.

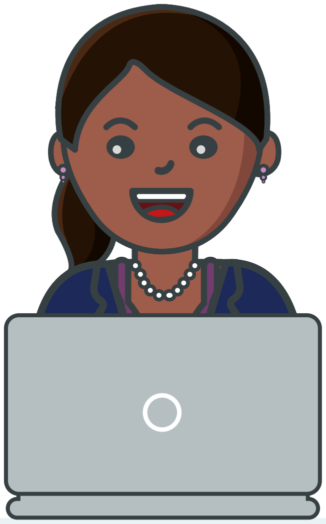
Without it, true accountability and real praise are nearly impossible.

Without it, it's difficult for your team to work collaboratively.

With it, your team can see your agency move and breathe for the first time.

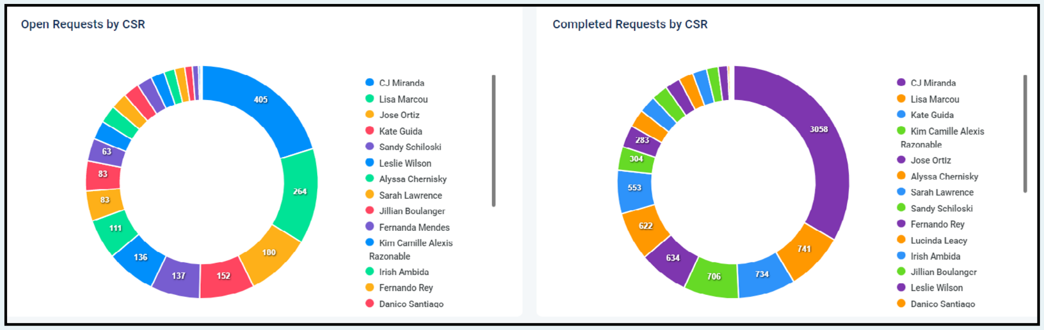


> If Joe can see every renewal Sally is working on and where she's at in the process. Oh, and if Joe knows Sally can see his...Joe will probably be a bit more fired up after his morning coffee.

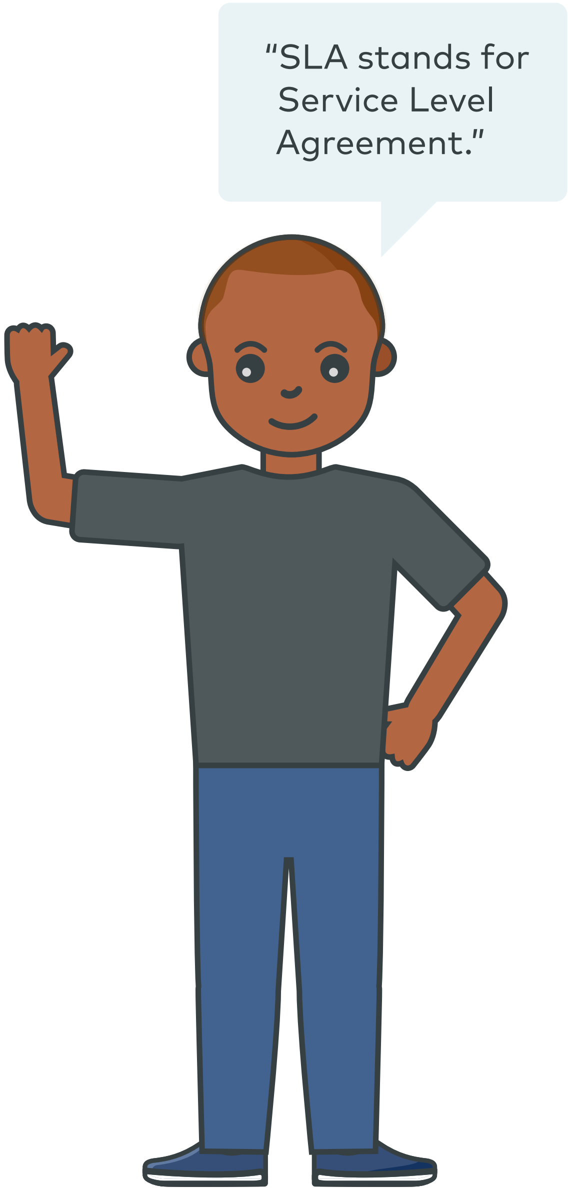


Some agencies even have real-time dashboards of service pipelines on TVs in their offices!

Remember that data is often most powerful as a carrot, not a stick. Instead of focusing on low performance, showcase what high performance looks like. **Praise it. Reward it.**



BENEFIT #4 Create SLAs that wow your customers.



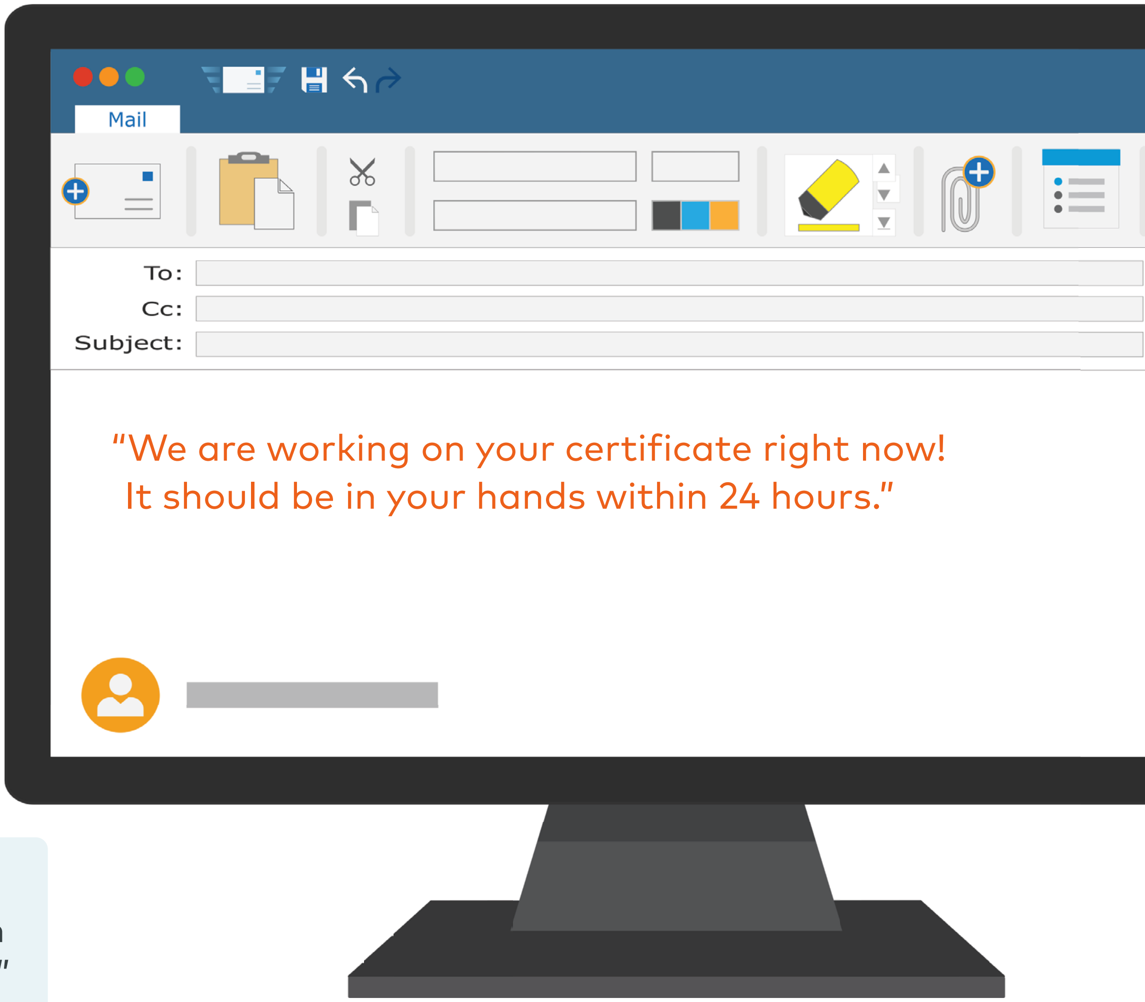
An SLA is a document that covers details about service quality to let customers know what level of service delivery they should expect. A good example could be a mattress company. What are the expectations that the company sets with their customers around delivery?

Most insurance agencies don't have a formal SLA. However, we can still appreciate the principle: setting expectations around a standardized process creates an amazing experience over...and over...and over...... and over.....and o-...you get the point.

How long should it take your team to turn around a certificate? Or add a new driver to an auto policy?

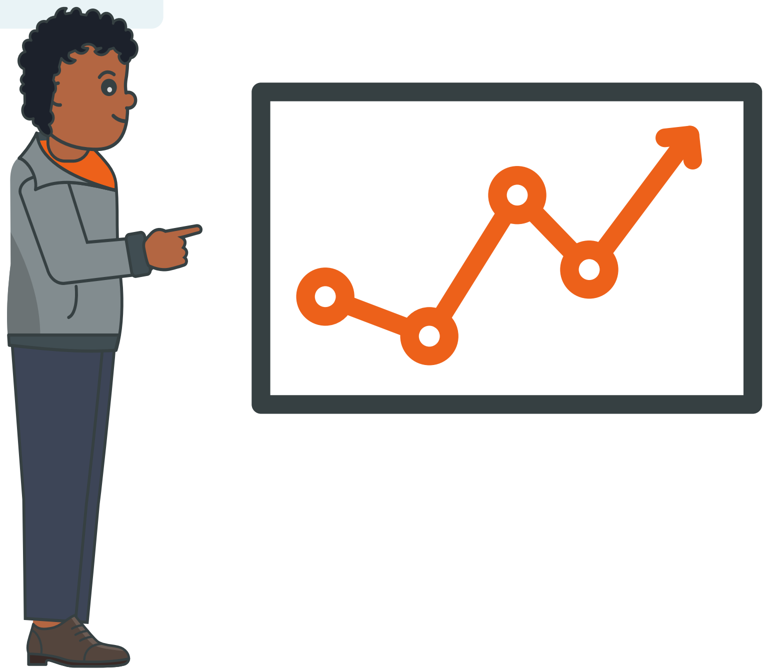
Once your team has worked inside their service ticketing system, you should have enough data to set a baseline for these expectations.

It could be as simple as an automated email that's delivered after a certificates request comes in saying:



Or it could be a tool your sales team uses during the quoting process:

"Did you know our service team typically processes certificates in less than a day? Here's the data."



BENEFIT #5 Save your team time with automation.

This is, by far, the benefit agencies are often most excited about.

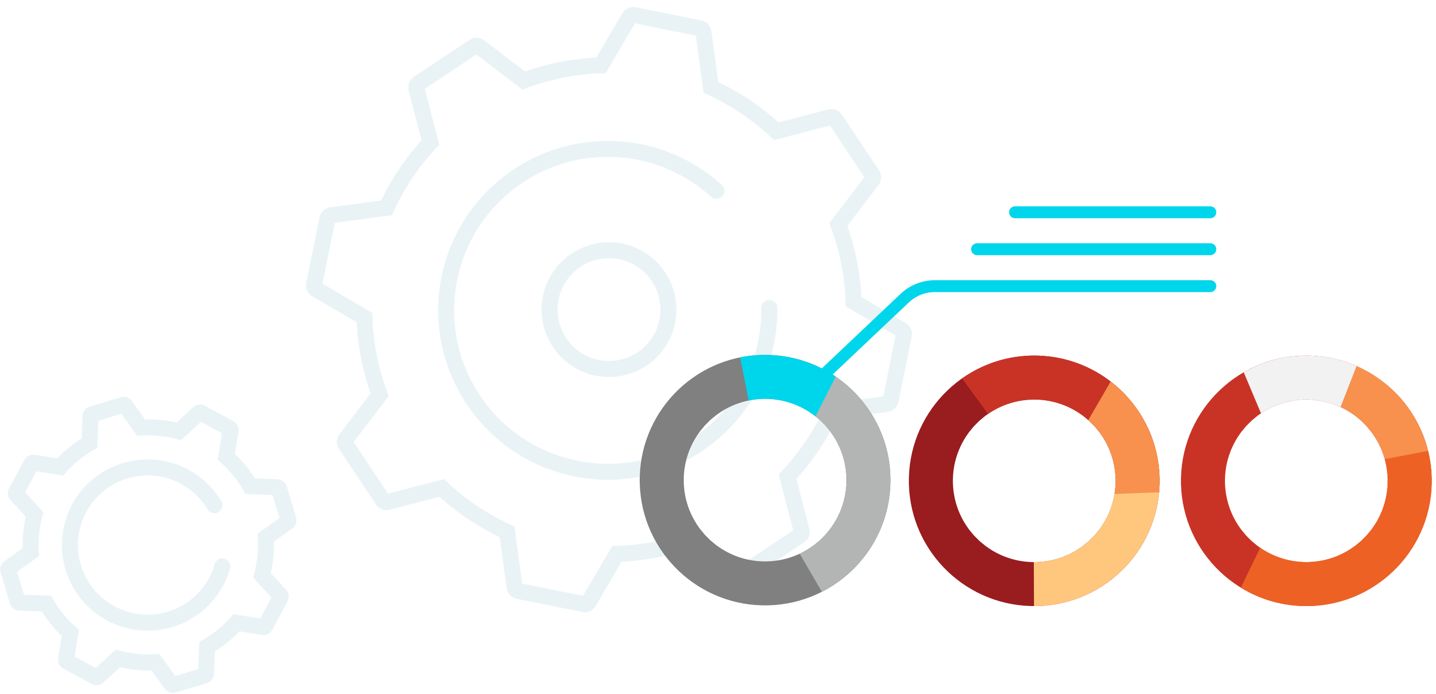
Who doesn't love a little automation?

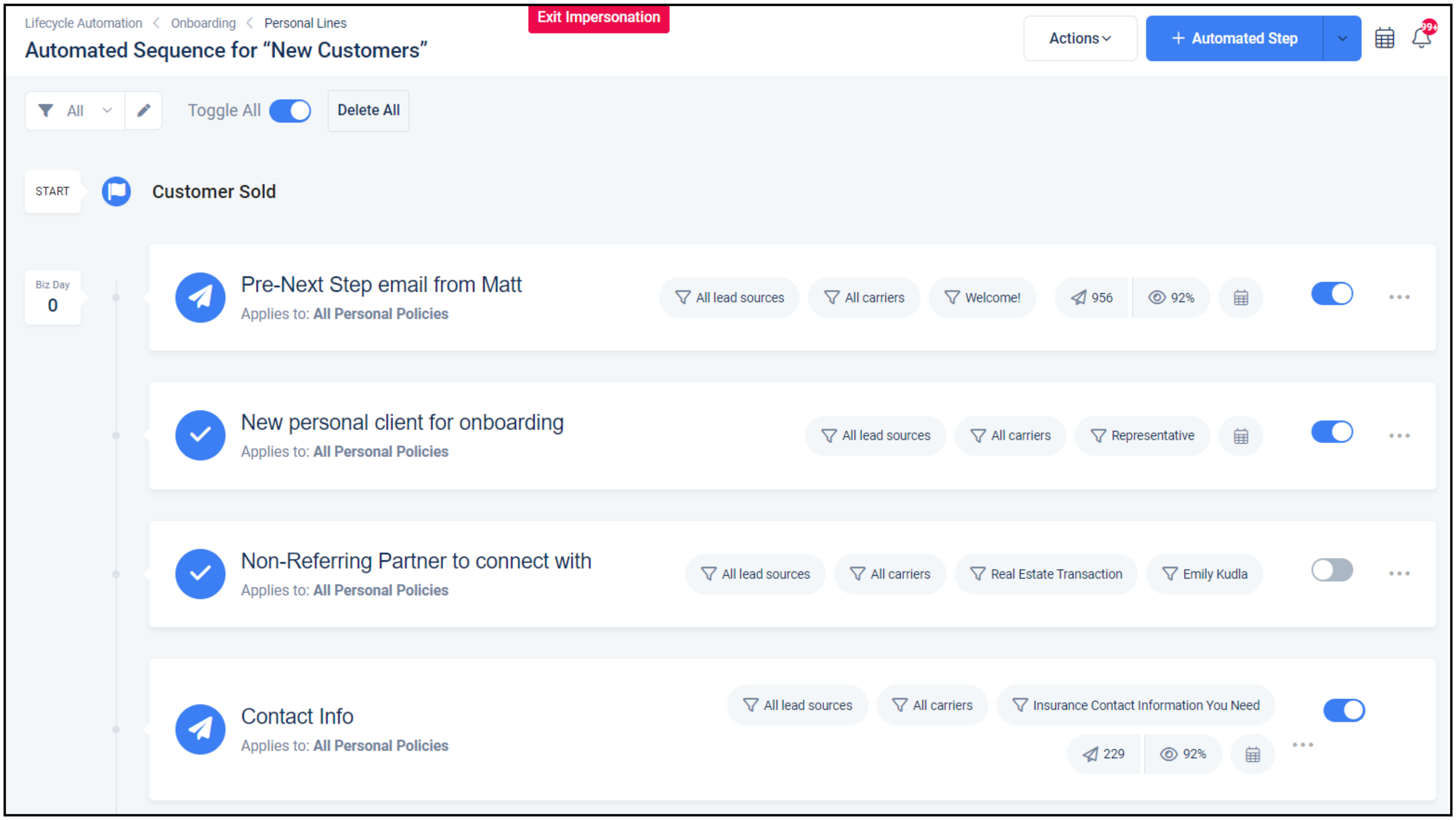
There are two types to consider:
internal task automation and **external communication automation**.

You can create an automated reminder if a service request sits inside a pipeline for more than a certain amount of days. You can also send automated texts or emails during the service request process to keep your customer updated on its status.

While automation can certainly be a shiny object, we recommend agencies start small.

Complex automation can hurt the service process if it's not built thoughtfully.





For example, let’s say that one of your clients asks to add a driver to their auto policy. So, they call their favorite Account Manager one morning. The Account Manager creates a ticket, which kicks off a short email campaign: (1) an email thanking them for submitting their policy change request that’s delivered the same day, (2) an email that’s delivered the next day letting them know who is working hard on their request. But later that afternoon the client calls back and asks the Account Manager to cancel the request. Unfortunately, because of the way it’s built, the automation will still send the second email even after the Account Manager closes the service request.

So, start small. Make it simple. Build from there.

How To Find The Right System For Your Agency

Each service enablement tool has different pros and cons. The right AMS for your agency depends on your vision and resources.

	AgencyZoom	Salesforce	Hubspot	Zendesk	Better Agency
AMS integration options	All management systems except Epic	Only Veruna	No	No	Only Better Agency AMS and NowCerts
Built for insurance	Yes, fully built-out for insurance agencies	Some policy fields are built; no workflows	No	No	Yes
Cost to customize	No, anyone can customize!	Yes, you will need to pass a Salesforce-certified Admin course or hire someone who has	No, anyone can customize!	No, anyone can customize!	No, anyone can customize!
Overall cost	$	$$$	$$	$$	$$

Vertafore

Salesforce is a powerhouse CRM that has a product called Financial Services Cloud (FSC). While FSC does have some policy fields built-out, there are no insurance service pipelines or workflows out-of-the-box. In addition, while it touts limitless customization, this customization comes at a high cost. Salesforce certification is strongly recommended before experimenting with development and customization. It's a great product for the agency that wants a product that could do literally anything and has the budget to back it up.

Hubspot and **Zendesk** both have service enablement tools. However, these companies operate outside the insurance industry and don't understand the unique needs of an independent insurance agency. They don't come with pre-built workflows or policy fields. You must start from scratch after purchase. In addition, there is no direct integration with Agency Management Systems.

Better Agency is an "all-in-one" experience: AMS and CRM combined. It comes with pre-built workflows and automations meant for the independent agent. They are currently favored by agencies heavy in personal lines and do not have direct integrations with any AMS other than NowCerts.

AgencyZoom is equipped with pre-built sales and service pipelines, automation and dashboards. That said, everything can be customized within a few clicks to match your unique processes and needs. While AgencyZoom is fully-integrated with QQCatalyst and AMS360, it is also bi-directionally integrated with most other agency management systems.

We highly recommend you take the time to demo each of the above systems. Every agency has a different set of needs and resources.

PRO-TIP: During the demo, ask how the tool works with your processes. It's best to write out each step of the process and ask to demo the tool accordingly.

Get started today!

If you want to dig in today, you can sign up for a free 30-day trial of AgencyZoom.

After you've set up your account, we'd love to give you a hands-on demo and show you how AgencyZoom can help increase the performance of your service department!

Start your free AgencyZoom trial

Vertafore

999 18th St | Denver, CO, 80202 | 800.444.4813 | Vertafore.com