

5 reasons why a workflow tool is a smart investment for your upstream oil & gas business



## Let your workflow be your workhorse

Think back on your most recent workweek. Chances are, a large portion of your time was spent doing repetitive, manual tasks, yet at the end of the day, there was still work to do.

Would adopting generic, automated business process tools help? Probably. But it isn't easy to integrate these tools into upstream oil and gas solutions. Plus, the cost of building and configuring is often not worth it. However, the right automated workflow tool, when developed from the ground up in conjunction with upstream oil and gas solutions, can provide immediate value with little configuration and cost. Importantly, too, this type of tool can span an entire company, benefiting everyone and all organization functions.

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# The major issue with current business processes

Today, most companies rely on outdated, manual business processes with significant use of disconnected tools, including spreadsheets, email, sneakernet (walking around getting signatures and approvals), and saved files on shared drives. In many cases, these processes have not been updated since the time your software solutions were initially deployed. Outdated processes often do not fully leverage the current capabilities of these solutions and rely on manual, offline processes to complete integration and critical tasks.

Due to gaps in functionality or differences in business logic between systems, many companies leverage internal IT teams to build custom processes and integration points that are often specific to one aspect of the business process for one department. They don't cover an entire process across departments and out-of-box, third-party solutions cannot be found. While these manual systems, shared files, and email approvals can work, they're inherently ineffective, prone to error, and can prove hard to audit.





## What to look for in a workflow tool

The best workflow tool is an enterprise-wide solution for all roles in a company and integrates with applications you use every day. Ideally, it's an automated tool that is web based, allows access from anywhere on any device, and provides the ability to design custom workflows. It should also be a tool that is easy to learn, scalable, supportable, and reliable.

The best workflow tools are also equipped with easy-to-measure key performance indicators (KPIs) and dashboards that can be used out of the box. With homegrown systems, you have to manually extract data before you create a dashboard, and there are generally fewer bells and whistles.

# Your checklist of workflow benefits

To make sure a workflow system delivers maximum value to you and your organization, look for a tool that provides the following benefits from day one:

## 1. Increases efficiency

A new workflow must ensure that data is only captured in one place across the company, eliminating headaches around data accuracy and reconciliations across systems from redundant data entry. An HR-focused workflow, for example, should make it much easier for every employee on every team in your company to request time off, manage related documents, obtain an approval, and automatically notify the requester once their time off is approved.

## 2. Reduces repetitive tasks

With an automated workflow system, there's no more dual data entry, scanning or saving, and uploading reports to SharePoint or a document repository after each task is complete. Everything is automated. The same with approvals, there is no need to track people down or email out the work once it's approved and completed. For example, when processing revenue, prior to distribution, companies often require approvals from managers. This can be automated so no one has to send an email and then save the email as support for audits. When you make the small, mundane tasks easier, you increase team satisfaction. And, as we all know, a happier team is a more productive team.

## 3. Supports cross department processes and sets predefined reminders to keep everyone on track

Think of workflow as an organized structure that makes it clear to everyone what is needed, what tasks are ahead, who is responsible, and when deliverables are due. In this way, a workflow tool is good for new hires as well, acting as a guide to get them trained.

# Your checklist of workflow benefits

## 4. Fosters continuous improvement

Especially when compared with manual, ad hoc processes, conditions and steps established in a workflow are easier to alter for your needs as you grow or shrink your business. A workflow with the ability to analyze multiple runs of a workflow process can identify areas that can be improved and puts the steps in place to ensure they are followed.

## 5. Streamlines approvals and audit management

When processes require approvals, a workflow tool can decrease processing time by providing online and mobile approvals, while also producing an audit trail for the approval. As an example, manual journal entries often require approval and associated documentation for the record; workflows can automate this process and provide a system of record for the approval and attached documentation.





# Tracking how work is completed and routed

By using a workflow tool, you have something that stores your business processes in an easy-to-understand “swim lane” process diagram. This lets you understand how effective your company is at managing and streamlining processes. This is especially important when a process spans departments and teams. Dashboards and analysis tools can highlight the duration of each process and identify exceptions and bottlenecks. These KPIs are key components of each workflow, and dashboards associated to these KPIs show the progress of certain tasks. A manager will be able to assess critical data around process productivity such as:

- Understanding if a person who was assigned a task spent five minutes or five days completing that task
- Determining how many cases are open that need to be finished
- Seeing if one person has 10 tasks while another has two and being able to better distribute work

The insights gained in these areas give managers the ability to determine how to make their business more efficient, improve embedded steps, and allow for continuous improvement of all processes.

# How many of these workflow-related problems look familiar?

You and your teams don't have time to waste, especially in today's vastly changed economic climate, where our workdays have moved almost exclusively online. An increasing number of upstream oil and gas operators have recognized that a workflow tool can save time and money and will help them operate more consistently and profitably.

By automating redundant, monotonous tasks, a new workflow system can significantly reduce the amount of time spent on various tasks and do so right from the start. Some operators, for example, have used their workflow tool to capture material transfers at the point of transaction in the field. This eliminates the need for manual capture of transfer on paper, entry of that detail into two different systems, and monthly reconciliations between the two systems, which can result in as much as a 50% improvement in process. This doesn't even include the fixing of errors that are inherent in manual, disconnected processes that are caused from miskeyed information and potential decisions that may be based on poor information. Using the material transfer example, if a company orders more material because they thought they were out, when in fact it was just entered incorrectly, it can cost the company significant money.



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# Five typical, time-wasting inefficiencies

Here is a list of five typical, time-wasting inefficiencies that many companies face, along with the respective ways in which a workflow tool can solve these all-too-common problems:

# Five typical, time-wasting inefficiencies

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## Why IFS Energy & Resources — Workflow?

Workflow is designed for the upstream oil and gas operator with standard, oil and gas-specific workflows available out of the box; integration with any accounting, land, and production system; and the ability to easily create or modify workflows for your specific needs.

Workflow creates efficiencies for the upstream oil and gas sector by leveraging an expansive industry knowledge to automate tasks that are specific to your needs – tasks that are often done manually outside the system, sometimes spanning your entire organization. Leveraging ProcessMaker, a market-leading workflow engine, Workflow offers predefined upstream oil and gas-specific workflows like revenue close processing and new entitlement deck notifications.

Is Workflow right for your business? Let us build you a workflow model that shows you how we can enhance your legacy system with automated tools to give you crucial time back from laborious, error-prone manual and repetitive tasks. With a workflow tool in place, you can free up your time to focus on what really matters: high value analysis and improved decision making.

Learn more: [www.ifs.com/energy-and-resources-workflow](https://www.ifs.com/energy-and-resources-workflow)

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## About IFS

IFS develops and delivers cloud enterprise software for companies around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations.

Within our single platform, our industry specific products are innately connected to a single data model and use embedded digital innovation so that our customers can be their best when it really matters to their customers – at the Moment of Service™.

The industry expertise of our people and of our growing ecosystem, together with a commitment to deliver value at every single step, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector.

Our global team of over 5,500 employees every day live our values of agility, trustworthiness and collaboration in how we support thousands of customers. Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at [ifs.com](https://www.ifs.com).

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