

# TREATING HEALTHCARE APPEALS & GRIEVANCES WITH AUTOMATION

## Abstract

Chelsea Williams, Director of Service & Operations at a leading American healthcare payer company, was looking to transform its fragmented, manually intensive appeals and grievances (A&G) operations. Concerned about the frequent delays, errors and missed SLAs in processing appeals, she turned to their long-standing partner, Infosys BPM for help. This case details how Infosys BPM introduced targeted solutions, a robust governance model, and process automation to reduce turnaround time by 50%, achieve 100% deviation accuracy, meet all SLAs, and enable the processing of an additional 45,000 appeals per month.



## When the appeals begin to hurt

Chelsea Williams, Director of Service & Operations at a leading American healthcare payer giant, manages its overall budget and oversees its widespread operational policies and procedures. She is primarily responsible for carrying out the necessary quality control measures for maintaining optimal efficiency in processes while keeping up with regulatory requirements. However, she soon realised she was in dire need of external intervention.

While reviewing her operational reports, Chelsea came across displeasing statistics. Her operations team had lately received a high volume of appeals and grievances

(A&G) from Commercial and Medicare providers but failed to process them on time. Moreover, the clinical return rate for these cases had jumped up to a concerning ~8%, indicating frequent errors and deviations. When she brought up the issue with her team, it was discovered that the reason for these delays and errors was their inefficient and manual intensive process. The team had to constantly toggle between 15+ fragmented applications to identify and address the provider appeals. To add to the confusion, the appeals would often get routed to wrong SMEs, resulting in frequent errors, increased volumes due to case returns and prolonged resolution

time. This led to increased effort and cost required to resolve the grievances, significantly driving operational expenses.

With every oversight leading to further delays and missed SLAs, Chelsea realised she needed a comprehensive process transformation and a strong governance structure in place. Determined to find a solution, she approached Infosys BPM, trusted partner for two decades. She approached Devika Bhatnagar, Infosys BPM's Project Lead and outlined the current situation, highlighted the lack of process efficiencies and emphasised her need for a robust transformation to meet SLAs and significantly reduce delays.

## Bringing in technology-assisted care

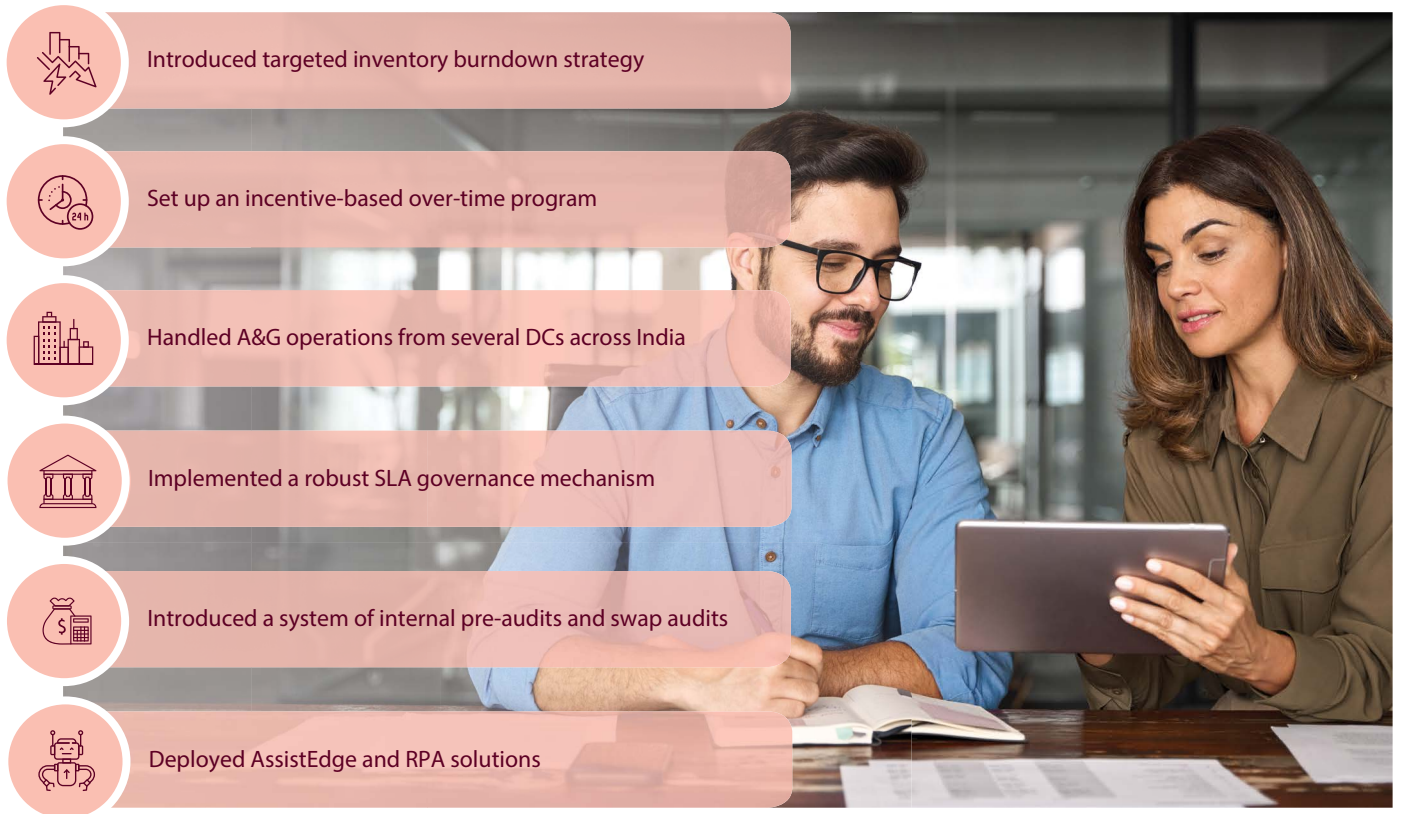
To gain an in-depth understanding of the scenario, Devika first brainstormed with her team of process executives, who were already familiar with the organisation's operations and outlined optimal strategies to approach the project.

Devika kickstarted the project along with her team by tackling the excessive backlog

in A&G inventory. Initially, gathering information from the fragmented networks of 15+ application screens was a challenge; eventually however, they were able to work around the issue. They introduced a targeted inventory burndown strategy, categorising each case based on its tenure (new or old), while ensuring that each case

would receive equal attention every day. Devika also set up an incentive-based overtime program, offering financial benefits to associates who would spend extra hours clearing out the backlog.

## Approach summary



Introduced targeted inventory burndown strategy



Set up an incentive-based over-time program



Handled A&G operations from several DCs across India



Implemented a robust SLA governance mechanism



Introduced a system of internal pre-audits and swap audits



Deployed AssistEdge and RPA solutions

Next, Devika identified and appointed a skilled pool of professionals to assist her executives in handling the organisation's vast A&G operations spread across multiple Infosys delivery centres across India. Infosys established a robust governance mechanism and internal audit system for identifying defects, tracking trends,

and minimising processing errors. These consistent observations provided regular feedback to help Chelsea's clinical teams prevent mistakes before processing cases. As the final step, Devika, and her team deployed Infosys' AssistEdge customer service platform and AI-driven robotic

process automation (RPA) solutions throughout the A&G processes. While there were some challenges in synchronising the solution with the legacy application, the team managed to effectively implement these advanced technologies to good effect.



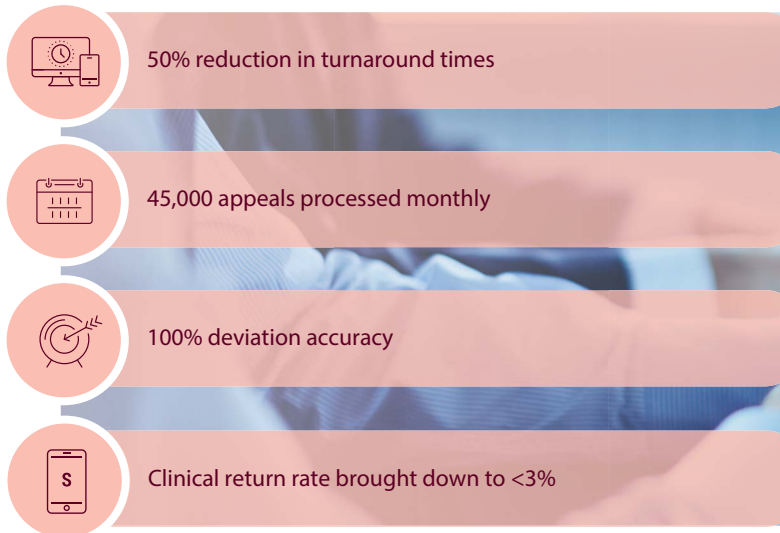
## The benefits of healthier operations

With targeted strategies and comprehensive solutions, Devika and her team's efforts translated into multiple benefits for Chelsea's organisation. The new governance

model did wonders in eliminating errors in routing and processing appeals, helping the team achieve an impressive 100% deviation accuracy. With the new system in

place, they were able to successfully reduce the backlogs and inventory, which led to a consequent 0.1% reduction in the ageing category.

## Key benefits



Much to Chelsea's relief, the turnaround time reduced by 50%, minimising delays and allowing her teams to comfortably process around 45,000 appeals every month. This ballooned into a significant improvement in the organisation's CSAT score, while, also bringing down the clinical return rate to under 3% from the earlier

~8%. Apart from the drop in number of review cases for the company's nurses and doctors, the process automation also helped reduce a substantial amount of operating costs.

While reviewing the latest performance reports, Chelsea was delighted to see that her team was now meeting all the

SLAs she'd set, with ease. Happy with the outcomes, Chelsea appreciated the efforts of Devika and her team, highlighting how their valuable contributions helped her meet the company's long-standing internal targets. It's safe to say that this project has further strengthened the relationship between their respective organisations.

*\*Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.*

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