Managing and Organizing Attachments in Applied TAM

SESSION HANDOUT

Applied Client Network

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Prepared for Applied Client Network

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Target Audience:

	Accountant/Bookkeeper		Producer
	CSR		Trainer
	Carrier		Vendor
X	IT Manager/Systems Coordinator		ALL
	Operations	X	Other: Administrative
	Principal/Owner		

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Seminar Type: Leadership/Management/Repots

Seminar Level: Basic: An introductory level course is basic in nature and addresses fundamental concepts. We expect attendees to have a basic level of insurance knowledge, have been oriented to an agency or brokerages' processes. For functional courses, it is *not* necessary for the attendee or participant to have previous knowledge of the agency or brokerage management system or software program.

Class Description: The key to effective documentation is the ability to find it. This session will help agencies identify the best layout for attachment categories, subcategories and description when working within The Agency Management system.

Learning Outcomes:
• Identify the importance of standardize category use in Applied TAM
• Recognize a useable process for creating the necessary standardization and employ it within your agency

Assumptions: This seminar is based on the following
Applied TAM Version 2015

STORING information in TAM…it's really about RETRIEVING information

More and more agencies have embraced electronic storage of information and have begun scanning and attaching documents to clients in TAM.

TAM provides an amazing amount of customization, most of which the average agency doesn't take full advantage.

While clearly identifying attachment categories and subcategories may not seem like an important part of the journey to a paperless environment, many will argue it's the MOST important step, because of the age old adage – Garbage In, Garbage Out.

Playing Devil's Advocate – Why is it garbage if it is a readable, electronically stored document? Isn't that the end goal getting rid of the paper??? Calling it garbage is harsh!

Well imagine this situation: It's 20 years ago and your agency buys a brand new file cabinet. You have several meetings deciding all the "important" details… WHERE the file cabinet will go, WHO will do the filing, WHAT will go in the file cabinet... but you never came up with a solid standard for HOW the papers get filed. So some people file by the client's last name, others file by the date the work was processed, another files according to the issuing company and one CSR files based on the color of the paper! At first it's not THAT difficult to find stuff, but after your agency has been using that file cabinet for a while, it becomes more and more difficult to find the papers you need. The same thing will happen to your electronic file cabinet if you do not IDENTIFY, DOCUMENT and AUDIT your attachment categories and sub-categories.

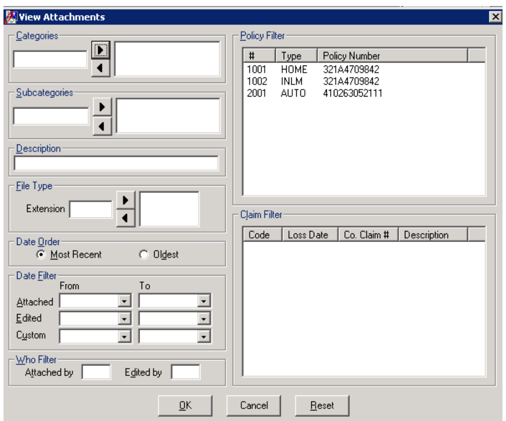
It's not too late to create a standard if you have already started scanning. We will address that issue toward the end of class!

Where To Begin… The End

So you have decided that you need to have an agency specific list of attachment categories and sub-categories, now what? It's all about the meetings! Get a group of people together that represent a cross-section of the agency and begin brainstorming! Start at the end, think about HOW you would want to find a document, assuming that a client may have over 1,000 attachments after a while of electronic storage. Have lots of GIANT post-it notes or white board space and just have people start talking. You may have to get them started or lay down some ground rules… my favorite ground rule is no "mode of transportation" categories. "Mode of transportation" categories identify HOW you sent or received the information you are filing. For example – Fax – E-mail – Snail Mail. This is a difficult concept to introduce to some because you say – what type of documents do you file – they say faxes! While it IS true they are filing a fax, the reality of the situation is in a few short months, when they are looking for that CHANGE REQUEST that they received from a client, they probably won't remember that it arrived via fax. So when looking at a client's attachments in TAM, if 450 of the 1,000 attachments are “FAX”, 500 attachments are “E-MAIL” and 50 are “DOCUMENTS”, it will be very difficult to use a filter to find a Change Request!

Did you say Filter?!?

TAM filters are the key to finding information quickly. Filters allow you to see only the attachments that meet the criteria of the filter that you have defined. Below is the filter screen for attachments.



There are several options that you can use to reduce your attachment list when you are looking for something specific… assuming everyone is using all the fields the same way, every time they attach a document.

A couple of notes about the filter options…
It is difficult to match on a Description since it is a free form field.
You cannot filter on a policy if the policy that attachment was associated with has been deleted from the system.

It is important to make sure that the group that is defining the attachment categories and subcategories have a solid understanding of how the filter screen works. Understanding the power of the filter will enable them to make informed decisions when creating the category lists.

Process Recap

So far we have acknowledged the importance of the defined category fields, assembled a group that represents your agency, we have brainstormed – listing what types of documents we will be storing, and we have learned the attachment filter screen. The next step is digesting the brainstorming list.

Back to Brainstorming

The next step is to return to the brainstorming list your group created. Here’s where things get challenging. You need to decide how to categorize all the things on your brainstorming list. (And also decide which items are unnecessary now that you are more familiar with filters.)

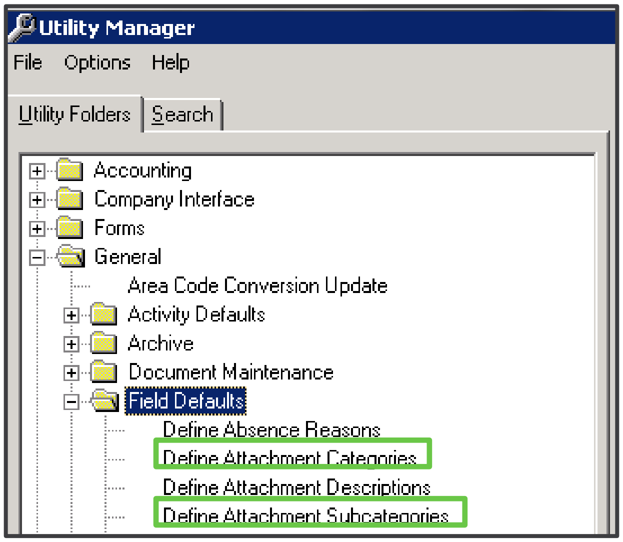
One of the most important ideas to keep in the front of everyone’s mind is – how will we want to filter our list when we are looking for things. Will we want to be able to see all the documents required to reshop the account in one list?… if so, you need a Marketing category, then assign the items on your list that would be subcategories under Marketing.

Don’t forget all the groups that will be imaging – including benefits, accounting and human resources!

That's a Big List

It is not unusual for even the smallest agency to have 10-20 categories and 30-50 subcategories. These numbers may seem overwhelming to you, but remember, different departments use different fields. Each person in the agency may only use 5 categories and 10 subcategories.

Adding Attachment Categories and Subcategories



Now that you have a list with all your categories and subcategories, the TAM Administrator needs to add the lists to the management system.

From the Home Base screen:

- **Utilities**
- **General**
- **Field Defaults**
- **Define Attachment Categories** or **Define Attachment Subcategories**

Attachment Security

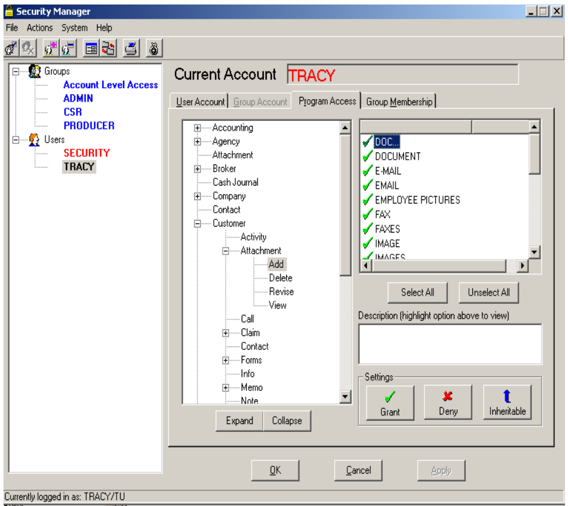
You can apply security restrictions to attachment categories, but not subcategories.

There are four rights that can be granted to each attachment category – Add, Delete, Revise and View. **Add** allows a user to add an attachment of that category type. **Delete** allows a user to remove an attachment of that category type from the system permanently. **Revise** allows a user to change an attachment of that category type – if the attachment is revisable – like a word document. And **View** allows a user to open an attachment of that category type.

Different groups can have different accessibility to categories. The accounting group may be the only people who can View and Add the accounting attachments; however, managers may have the View right for the same attachments.

There is also the "all" option. You can give a group – like administrators the View All, Add All, Revise All and/or Delete All rights. This gives that user the right to view, add, revise and/or delete attachments regardless of their attachment category.

You cannot apply security settings until the attachment categories have been added to the system.



Also, consider if you will allow access to the ***Insert in Validation Window*** that allows Categories, Subcategories and Descriptions to be added to the lookup window when attaching.

Implementation Time

Once the attachment categories and subcategories have been defined, added to the system and secured, it's time to introduce your new standards to the masses. Instead of reviewing all the options to the entire staff, focus your efforts to similar groups. Show your CSR's the categories that pertain to them. Provide them with a "cheat sheet" with their lists – excluding items that they won't use in their daily life.

Keeping the introduction and training focus to work groups will allow people to see the simplicity of the system and embrace it. The other option is to display all the lists on the overhead and have people already writing off the process because it's "too hard" or "too confusing".

Don't forget to train the people who will be retrieving information from the system – your producers. Making them comfortable with filters will help them to efficiently pull information up on their screens.

What About Attachment Descriptions

Attachment descriptions are a free form field, which means the users can type in the description for their attachment, you don't have to create canned descriptions.

Attachment descriptions are very important when you are attempting to efficiently retrieve information. Attachment descriptions are a single line of information about that attachment.

You can create commonly used entries as a time saver for your users, like 2008-2009 policy term.

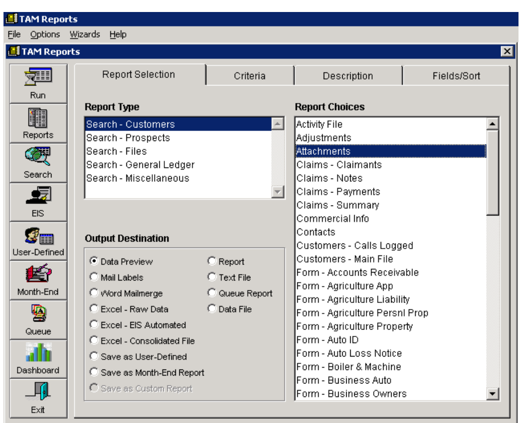

Defined Attachment Descriptions

Code	Description
ENDORSEM	END #XX EFF MM-DD-YY
POLICY	YYYY-YYYY term

Once you have created categories and subcategories, you can provide advice to users to make it more efficient. For example, if your category is Marketing and your subcategory is Driver List, there is no need to type "Driver List" in the description because it is already defined as such in the subcategory field. This will be a hard habit to break for many.

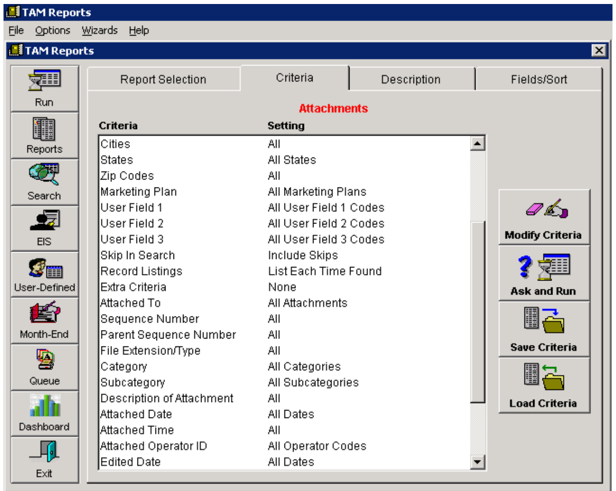
Auditing…It Will Make or Break You

So far you have brainstormed, added, and trained, but there's one more thing left to do and that's audit!
Auditing ensures that your staff is using the fields as they have been trained. Running a search on your attachment database regularly will provide you with a picture of what's going on with your staff.



From Home Base screen:

- **Reports**
- **Search**
- **Search-Customers**
- **Attachments**



On the Criteria tab:

- Set **Attach Date** to the date range being audited

"Old" Categories – Should You Delete Them?

There will most likely be some previously defined categories that you will not want to use in your new environment. The million dollar question is, do you delete those category types or leave them in the system? There is no right answer. If you delete an attachment category you lose the ability to search, filter and secure it. For example, if you delete DOCS, in order for a user to be able to view an existing document that is coded as DOCS, they must have the VIEW ALL right in security manager, which means they could view ALL attachment categories, including management, accounting and HIPAA categories, if they exist. That may not be a good thing. You COULD change the attachment category of all the attachments for the category you want to delete, but that is currently a manual process.

Some attachment category types are system categories and cannot be deleted.

Purging Attachments

The Business Plan

TAM has the ability to purge attachments. But just because you CAN purge attachments, should you? That is a very complex question.

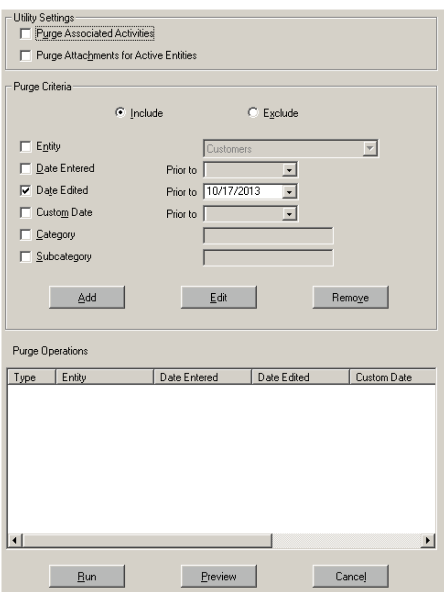
Here are somethings that you need to consider:

- What are the record retention laws that you are required to follow?
- Do the contracts that you have with your carriers have certain retention requirements?
- Does the type of business you write affect your record retentions policy?
- Lastly, you MUST factor in personal comfort right, right?!?

If you are going to purge anything from your system, please develop a policy and procedure for what you purge and when you purge it. If you purge, it should be a part of your normal business processes, not a need jerk reaction to a situation.

The Technical Details

If the decision is made by your agency that you will purge attachment, this section will explain how to perform the purge in Applied TAM. No one can be in TAM while you are purging. It is also suggested that LAN TAM users verify that a have a good, current backup, in the event that they need to restore.

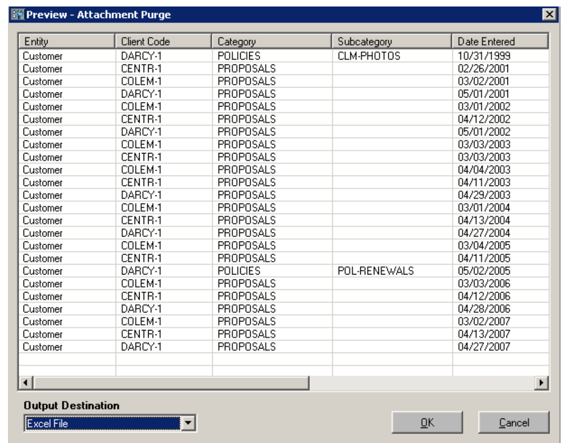


To locate the utility for purging attachments, you must be in Security Manager OUTSIDE of TAM. Go to General, Purge, Attachments, and then the big black arrow. You will be brought to the screen below.There are three sections to this screen – Utility Settings, Purge Criteria and Purge Operations.

In Utility Settings, you can select to purge an activity if it is linked to the attachment to be purged. If you do NOT select this option, the activity will remain in TAM – with all the original details – but it will be stripped of the attachment. The other option in this section is the purge attachments for active entities. If you have this box checked, clients flagged as Active WILL have attachments purged IF they meet the criteria you define for the purge. If this box is unchecked, only Inactive clients' attachments will be purged if they meet the criteria you define.

In the Purge Criteria section you will define the criteria that you want the system to use to identify and remove attachments from the system. To set a criterion, check the desired box on the left, then select the desired entry or date. If there is another criterion that you want to use, check that box and select the desired entry or date. When you have finished completing the desired criteria, click the Add button. Please note there are Include and Exclude radio buttons above the Criteria options. You need to select the correct radio button for the operation that you are building BEFORE you click the Add button. Repeat this step for as many of the criteria as you need to get the data set correct. You can choose many of the different options if you needed that level of filtering. If you have added an operation that is not correct, you can modify it by highlighting the line that needs to be modified in the Purge Operations box. Make the changes you need and click the Edit button. If you have added an operation that you later decide that you do not need, highlight the operation in the Purge Operations box and click the Remove button.

Once you have added and verified that you have all the operations that you need to get the desired results from the purge click the Preview button. You will be presented with the box on the right. It is strongly recommended that you save a copy of this preview for your records. There are three options for the output of the preview – Print, Text File, and Excel File. Saving it as an Excel file will give you the ability to sort and filter it later – if needed, will allow you to save the file anywhere on your network – or in a cloud, AND it saves some trees. (Can you tell that Excel File is the author's favorite choice???) Once you select the correct Output Destination, click the OK button. You will be taken to a Save box, complete the name and location appropriately and click the Save button. You will be taken back to the Preview window, click Cancel.


Preview - Attachment Purge

Entity	Client Code	Category	Subcategory	Date Entered
Customer	DARCY-1	POLICIES	CLM-PHOTOS	10/31/1999
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		02/26/2001
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/02/2001
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		05/01/2001
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/01/2002
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/12/2002
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		05/01/2002
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/03/2003
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		03/03/2003
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		04/04/2003
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/11/2003
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		04/29/2003
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/01/2004
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/13/2004
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		04/27/2004
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/04/2005
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/11/2005
Customer	DARCY-1	POLICIES	POL-RENEWALS	05/02/2005
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/03/2006
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/12/2006
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		04/28/2006
Customer	COLEM-1	PROPOSALS		03/02/2007
Customer	CENTR-1	PROPOSALS		04/13/2007
Customer	DARCY-1	PROPOSALS		04/27/2007

Output Destination
Excel File
OK
Cancel

WARNING---A PURGE CANNOT BE UNDONE!!!!!!!! Now, if you are 100% certain that you want to purge, click the Run button. You will have to click through a warning stating that purging is permanent and cannot be undone. The purge will begin running and give you a message when it is complete.