



SUNGARD EXP

Case Study: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia (BCBS-GA), founded in 1937, is the state's largest health insurer. BCBS-GA provides health benefit products and administrative services to more than two million Georgians, nearly 20 percent of the state's population. Its mission is "To make access to quality, affordable health care available to as many Georgians as possible." BCBS-GA provides numerous plans to its customers, including standard indemnity, POS, PPO, HMO, Medicare + Choice, Medicare supplement and other packages. The company has 12 service centers statewide and has many prominent companies enrolled in its variety of plans.

In 1997, HMO Georgia, Inc., received commendable accreditation for its HMO and POS products from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). In 1999, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia's Preferred Provider Organization, BlueChoice PPO, received full two-year accreditation from the American HealthCare Commission/URAC (Commission/URAC) for its health network and utilization management. BCBS-GA constantly strives to increase the quality of the service it provides, and maintains accreditation by NCGA, the AAEHC and maintains Quality Improvement Teams to continuously monitor and upgrade processes.

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THE CHALLENGE

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia was an early adopter of scanning, OCR, and forms processing technologies for HCFA claims processing, having purchased an OCR/Forms system from MicroSystems Technology in 1994. However, in mid-1997, both the Data Acquisition team (technical support) and Claims Entry Services (end user) became dissatisfied with the efficiency and support of the system.

Their desire to improve operational performance was a main driving factor in deciding to upgrade the system. Claims Entry Services (CES) wanted to increase the number of claims per operator per hour and also wanted better reporting to track performance, system efficiency and operator productivity. The Data Acquisition (DA) team wanted to decrease the amount of technical support required to keep the system operational. They also wanted to increase the scanning capacity and improve image quality while decreasing scanner cost and maintenance cost. Both CES and the DA teams wanted to decrease the amount of production down time due to software problems. BCBS-GA experienced high support costs system-wide for maintaining the original OCR/Forms processing system. All of these factors contributed to increased costs of paying the claim and thus contributing to higher premiums.

BCBS of Georgia uses the images and information collected from the HCFA forms to feed internal claims processing and image storage systems. These systems depend on the accuracy and speed of data collection from the front-end system. BCBS-GA uploads the image of the claim to IBM Image Plus, and the data (or claim information) is uploaded to the in-house developed Common Coder System. The efficiency and accuracy of the data collection is a crucial part of the day-to-day business for this insurer.

THE SOLUTION

After installing the OCR/Forms system, BCBS-GA spent the next year evaluating several alternative solutions. They selected an informal, interdisciplinary team including in-house technical personnel and end user personnel and in-depth vendor involvement. The Data Acquisition (DA) team would locate vendors that offered solutions, set up a test environment, and then the end user – Claims Entry Service personnel would test and help evaluate each proposed solution.

Numerous vendors provided on-site demonstrations and pilot systems. Acceptance was gained by obtaining evaluation units from the vendors and allowing the end users to test them in a production environment. In this way both the CES and DA team were able to “try it before you buy it.” By doing this, the CES team did not resist the change because they had provided the input that helped select the final solution. Often, end-users have solutions thrust upon them, and BCBS-GA believes the CES team appreciated being involved in the evaluation process and everyone is happy with the results.

In mid-July 1998 BCBS-GA replaced their existing software with SunGard’s EXP FormWorks solution. This change allowed the OCR verification operators to more than double their output from 120 claims per hour per operator to 260 per hour per operator. Accuracy was significantly increased with the EXP FormWorks solution. In addition, they procured and installed two new ScanOptics 9020 200 page per minute scanners which increased scanning speeds and image quality over their older more expensive scanners. The BCBS-GA team was able to accomplish their goals of increasing quality and efficiency by upgrading both the scanning and OCR/Forms processing technology.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Both the Technical Team and the CES end users met their goals with the installation of SunGard's EXP FormWorks solution. In addition to increasing operator throughput from 120 claims per hour to 260 claims per hour, the following other improvements were noted.

"From the DA team's perspective the amount of technical support by the DA team is reduced. If there is a problem with the EXP FormWorks system, someone from SunGard EXP will dial in to our network and fix it. The primary support person we call at SunGard EXP is the person who installed our system and is very experienced and familiar with our system's history," says Spencer Lyda, BCBS-GA Information Analyst on the DA team. He went on to say that "SunGard EXP maintains an exact copy of our system's software at their site so any revisions can be tested before they install it on our production system. This has been key to minimizing any production downtime."



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A spokesperson for the CES team said that "EXP FormWorks allows us to measure and report claims per keyer per hour (currently average 260), the daily system inventory (often there is no backlog), and the individual keyer and OCR accuracy and productivity. This is a huge improvement over our original system."

The original OCR/Forms implementation was not yet paid off, so BCBS-GA had to consider the cost of buying out the lease as part of the total ROI. Still, the new system paid for itself within a year, due to increased efficiency more than doubling throughput, and increasing the reliability of the system. With these results BCBS-GA reports there is less pressure to increase customers' premiums and turn around times are quicker, thus saving money and increasing customer service and satisfaction. Data entry and system support personnel could be reallocated to other tasks.

"Without SunGard's EXP FormWorks solution and their support personnel, this system and these results would not have been accomplished," Mr. Lyda reports.

As far as future plans, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia will be increasing the number and types of documents that go through the EXP FormWorks OCR system and they plan to add UB92 claim forms and Member Enrollment forms in the coming year. "We couldn't be happier," says Mr. Lyda, " and we have the team at SunGard EXP to thank."

About SunGard EXP

SunGard EXP helps empower managed care organizations to capture, manage, store and deliver content in order to automate workflow, enhance processes, track productivity, promote collaboration and deliver time-sensitive client communications. EXP features industry-leading technologies with EXP MACESS, EXP AG, EXP Web, EXP Mailing, EXP SCORE and EXP Capture, creating a comprehensive, single-source solution for the managed care industry. Offering single department to enterprise-wide solutions, EXP uses a proven implementation methodology that helps ensure the predictability of results.

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