

Product and System Assessment for Mid-West Insurance Organization

Edgewater Technology develops custom strategy to ensure Insurance organization is prepared for future business growth and acquisitions

Edgewater Technology's Product and System Assessment provided:

- Short-term and long-term recommendations for continued growth;
- Technical architectural recommendation for future growth;
- Migration strategy roadmap; and
- Resource education roadmap, including development training plans, management and execution of training.

The Company:

This organization, founded in 1960, provides Insurance products and financial services to education employees, trade association members and employer groups throughout the United States. The organization has grown to become one of the largest private, family-owned Life Insurance organizations in the United States. Their core products include Disability Income Insurance, Life Insurance, Supplemental Health Insurance, Dental, and Annuities. Headquartered in the Mid-West, they have more than 1,400 employees in 26 locations across the United States. Their distribution channel consists of captive agents as well as brokers.

Over the years, they have grown both organically, through new product development, and via acquisition. As more products were added to their portfolio and along with acquired organizations, the overall architecture was becoming complicated with many disparate systems. This Insurance organization realized their current system infrastructure was increasingly lagging behind in support of their business and the industry. With the capital in place to continue to grow their core business, their focus turned to the current technical infrastructure, several administration systems and the many support systems surrounding their administration systems.

The Challenge:

To better support short-term and long-term business growth with a focus on satisfying their goals, objectives and costs, there were several challenges the organization faced. First and foremost, senior executives needed answers as to how to approach the consolidation of their health/worksite product administration systems into a single, shared enterprise-wide system. The organization had several different distribution

channels and different, yet similar, product portfolios. All of these aspects could not be negatively impacted as they moved towards an enterprise-wide solution. Senior executives shared a vision of using the latest in technology coupled with a sound infrastructure and business model to ensure their integrated system(s) were able to carry them forward for the next 15-20 years. They also saw the need to align their product portfolio to the needs of their end users, brokers, captive agents, employer groups, and consumers. The consolidation, the system integration and development using the latest technology and alignment of the product portfolios were all entwined and one could not be solved without planning for the other three.

The Solution:

With a focus on the goals and objectives of the business, Edgewater Technology assigned a team consisting of a Senior Consultant, Principal Architect and two Insurance Principals. The goal of the team was to focus on five main areas in order to effectively plan and present a strategic short-term and long-term roadmap. The Edgewater team worked closely with the organization's senior executives in order to focus the analysis and solutions around the:

- Business analysis of common and unique product requirements within and amongst the various organizations;
- Technical analysis of their systems and architectural vision with a focus on all systems, home grown, vendor and acquisition;
- Review any custom application and vendor packages, allowing for a targeted approach to solutions;
- Identify current architecture, scalability, performance, and other critical characteristics of all systems across all the organizations; and
- Thorough analysis and synthesis of all data.

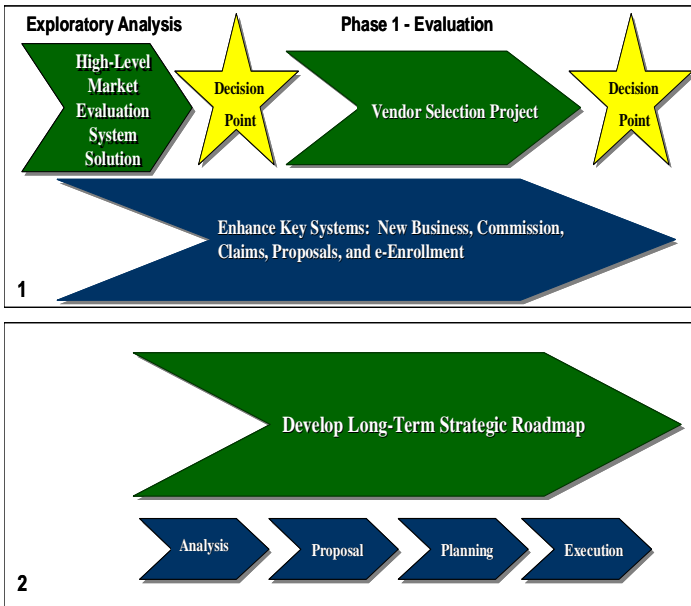
After this 12-week effort was completed, Edgewater presented four key documents to the senior executives including a:

- Product assessment;
- Technical assessment;
- Master assessment; and
- Short-term and long-term strategic roadmap.

The Benefit:

Short-Term Recommendation

The short-term tactical recommendations defined a plan of action, designed as a measure towards gaining the objective goals of the organization. These recommendations were geared towards the core business processing between the organizations to identify similarities and differences. Identification of these similarities and differences set the stage to determine what enhancements would be needed from the core business process that would eventually be supported within the enterprise-wide system plan. Along with this, a vendor selection process was proposed to determine what health/ worksite product systems were available in the market today that the parent organization should potentially consider. These recommendations will begin to build the foundation for the organization to achieve their key business objective of business growth over the next three to five years while ensuring all work was complementary to all long-term goals and visions.



Long-Term Recommendation

The long-term strategic recommendations focused on three areas of interest to the organization. First, the establishment of an architectural vision which included focusing on the assessment stage, proposed architectural vision and the planning. Second, a migration strategy roadmap would be developed to focus on the architectural vision and the logical sequence of business processes for the migration of new technologies. Finally, and equally as important, was the change management process. This focused on the resource educational roadmap which included development training plans, management and execution of the training and assignment of internal resources to key projects utilizing the recently acquired technology.

The strategies combined, helped the organization ensure they offered more robust comprehensive systems capable of handling their growth into the future, combined with the ability to support the systems internally.

