EDGEWATER TECHNOLOGY

Internet/Intranet-Based Inquiry Tracking Solution for Large Managed Care Organization

Edgewater Technology unites customer service across three business units of a large managed care organization in the South Central part of the United States.

Edgewater Technology's solution:

- Reduces training time and costs for customer service representatives.
- Increases customer satisfaction levels through the delivery of faster, more complete customer service.
- Increases accuracy by reducing the number of areas representatives must manually input information.
- Provides faster access to information reducing overal call time to customer service call centers.
- Provides inquiry tracking and routing to log, route and report on calls for accountability.

Statewide Coverage

As the largest health insurer in the state, this company is licensed to offer health plans to all counties within the state. It has hundreds of thousands of customers - from individual policyholders and group health plan administrators to health insurance providers. These customers require a high level of service and detailed information about their plans.

As this insurer continued its regional growth, it recognized the need to modify their current customer service model to increase the efficiency and quality of each customer call.

Disparate Practices

As with many large organizations, this company invested heavily in mainframe legacy systems to store their volumes of customer information. As the company continues to grow, it is apparent that there are some limitations with the legacy systems that could impact customer service.

Their old process, using the mainframe legacy system, was disparate between their major business units. This separation of data required Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to launch many different searches while they were helping one customer. Typically, when a customer called with a question regarding his or her benefits, the representative would initiate a search to find the appropriate information. In order to begin a search, the CSR must key in the member's ID, name and other pertinent data, along with the claim number. In most cases, customer inquiries were multi-layer, meaning they required different information from different business units. Under this model if the same customer had a subsequent question about how this company handled a specific claim, the representative would have to log-in to another system, re-key the member and claim information, and begin to search for the settlement information. Should further inquiries be necessary or to adjust the claim that was just researched, the CSR would have to repeat the same log-in procedure.

Another issue with this company's mainframe legacy systems was data display. With this system, information was displayed on screen as two letter codes. CSRs would then have to locate a particular code on a paper-based list of decoded values and then translate this information to service the requests.

All of these issues added up to decreased efficiency levels of customer service and increased training and costs for CSRs along with high turnover rates.

The Business Solution

Edgewater Technology mapped a plan for how they would unite all of these systems for the ultimate goal of improving customer service levels and overall call center efficiency. This company had made a significant investment in their mainframe databases and wanted to leverage their core products with their new system. Edgewater's extensive experience in bridging the gap between mainframe systems and more flexible Internet- and intranet-based solutions played a critical role in the new system.

Internet/Intranet-Based Inquiry Tracking Solution for Large Managed Care Organization

The result of several strategy sessions with Edgewater and this company is a state-of-the art Internet/Intranet-based inquiry tracking system and customer service workstation. The benefits of this system are identified as follows:

- Providing up-to-date health insurance information across the company's customer base;
- Providing valuable workflow-tracking that identifies, tracks and resolves customer service issues;
- Providing the company with tangible information on how it is resolving customer issues;
- Logging the paths that CSRs take to reach successful conclusions;
- Reducing training time and costs by having one common user interface;
- Reducing actual call time by eliminating the need for CSRs to access multiple systems, thus allowing each CSR to respond to more calls per day;
- Implementing ad-hoc reporting capabilities via a single GUI reporting tool;
- Simplified system and security maintenance with the use of database driven codes and descriptions.

Finally, there is a cross-business training benefit to this new system. As part of the new system Edgewater developed, there are common screens for each of the three business units, with only a few unique screens in each business unit. This in turn, decreases CSRs training time allowing this organization to spend their resources continuing growing their business and serving their members.

The Technical Solution

The inquiry tracking and customer service workstation is three-tier architecture: a browser client, component-based middle-tier that includes business and data services, and host-based database procedures and data management and storage. The client-tier also allows for the development of web-based servers so that users are able to access the customer service functionality through commercial browsers. This architecture also allows maintenance and enhancements to occur without the user's knowledge.

To insure patient health records be kept confidential, the application uses a field level security model. Each user is assigned to a security group, which has access to only the appropriate application fields and functions for their tasks.

The individual client workstations access browsers running on Windows Terminal Servers, which allow the client to use low cost network PCs on the CSRs' desktops. Edgewater implemented a single application log-on account to the databases, allowing the application to use connection pooling and improve overall performance.

Technologies and Tools

- Active Server Pages
- DB2 Connect
- JavaScript
- Microsoft Windows Advanced Server
- Microsoft COM
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Microsoft Internet Information Server
- Microsoft Transaction Server
- Microsoft VB
- Netscape
- Seagate Crystal Reports
- Seagate Crystal Info Server
- Visual Basic Script