INFOSYS' INTEGRATION & COLLABORATION SOLUTION HELPS MERCY HEALTH PLANS ENHANCE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Abstract

Client Overview

Mercy Health Plans (MHP) is a full-service health management company providing a full range of HMO, PPO, and POS benefit plans. Employers, state and local government agencies, school systems, unions, and individuals representing 250,000 members in 7 states are insured through MHP's commercial insurance products. MHP also provides benefit coverage to Medicare and Medicaid recipients, as well as third party administrative services for employers who choose to self-fund their health benefits program.

Mercy Health Plans is a subsidiary of the Sisters of Mercy Health System— a three billion dollar Catholic Health Care System —based in St. Louis, MO. MHP was established in 1994 to address changes occurring in health care delivery and to ensure that health plan members continue to receive quality, accessible and affordable health care.

Business Need

In early 2005, Mercy Health Plans was in the middle of a coordinated series of projects, designed to improve their competitive positioning. Enhanced customer service, being a strategic competency and differentiator in the market, was selected as an additional area of focus. Although efforts were made to provide information through other avenues, majority of the customer contacts was through the telephone. For this reason, MHP selected to enhance the capability of Customer Contact Representatives (CCR) to efficiently and effectively serve their customers.

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As is common throughout the industry, the CCR in the contact center access multiple applications to input or extract data to respond to customer inquiries. MHP noticed that due to data inconsistency across different applications, and lack of integrated information, the CCR addressing the customer request was not able to provide a timely response, reducing the level of service below targeted levels. "The time it took to enter and re-enter data across systems was outside our established parameters," said Steve Kelley, Director of Operations Consulting and the Project Manager. "Our objective was to seek out a solution that provided the necessary efficiencies that would enable our CCRs to focus on customer service, not the applications."

MHP considered various options and decided to deploy Infosys' Integration and Collaboration Solution (ICS) solution, which:

- Eliminates service costs and streamlines operations by improving CCR productivity

- Reduces re-keying of data while accessing different applications

- Integrates different applications into a unified user interface

- Supports multi-channel delivery of customer service functions

- Allows access to different applications using Single Sign On (SSO)

- Protects existing manpower and technology investments

The Infosys Approach

Infosys focuses on enhancing the productivity of CCRs through a more efficient use of existing applications. The business applications accessed by the CCRs were diverse in technology and presented specific challenges in navigating and retrieving caller information. The need, therefore, was to adopt a solution that could help navigate the multitude of systems and screens while efficiently retrieving information to answer callers' inquiries.

To implement ICS, Infosys adopted the following approach:

Discovery – Infosys carried out a discovery phase during which ICS solution implementation options and high-level scope was decided. The different applications to be integrated were also identified.

Requirements Gathering – Infosys conducted a detailed requirement analysis to capture different workflows in each application that could be automated. Requirements for six different applications and thirty-one unique workflows were gathered thoroughly. In parallel, technical feasibilities of different approaches for the solutions were analyzed.

Delivery – Based on the technical analysis, Infosys designed, developed, tested and delivered thirty-one workflows built on a .NET platform
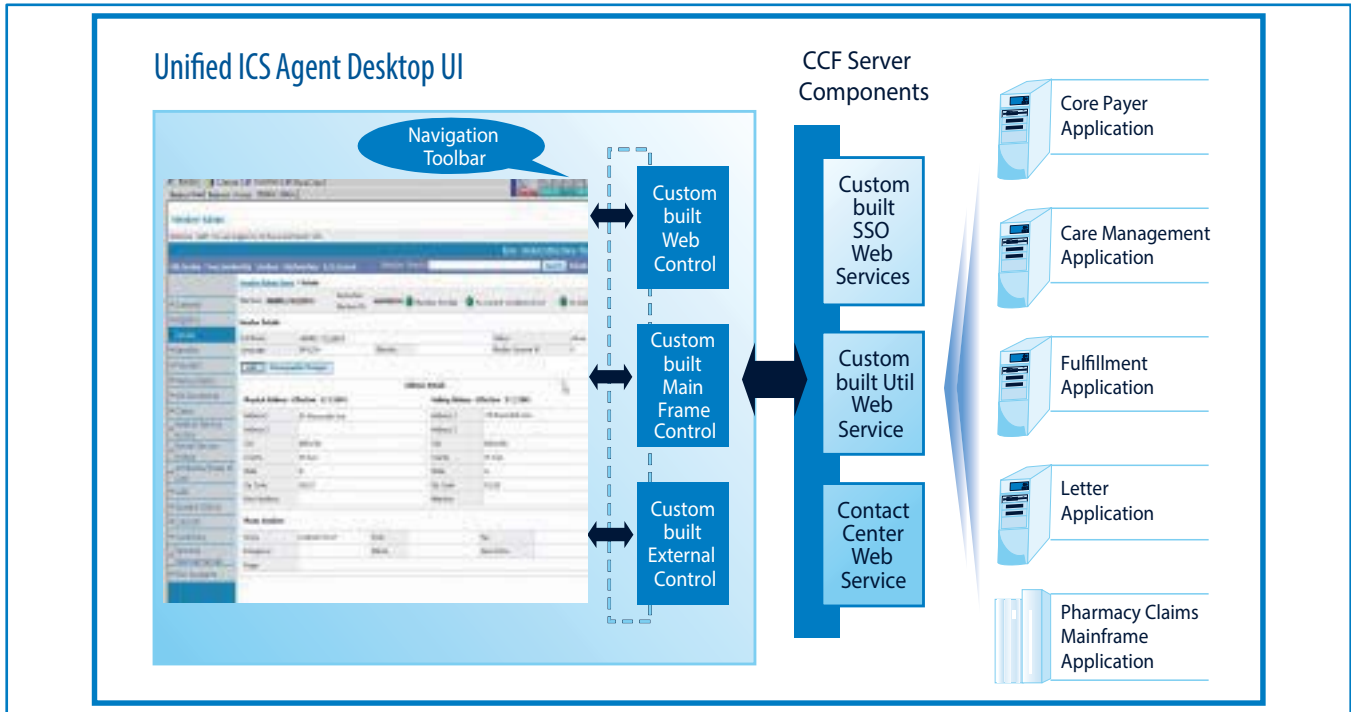
Scalability – Infosys built reusable components for integrating different types of applications, providing a robust and scalable platform for cost-effective expansion.

User Certification – Infosys provided support to MHP to conduct the user certification phase, wherein the developed solution was scrutinized by the MHP QA team.

To ensure the twin advantages of low costs and quick turnaround time, the Infosys team leveraged the Global Delivery Model (GDM) and completed all the client's imperatives in thirty-one weeks.

Challenges

Since the solution involved integration of different applications, some of the complexities encountered during implementing the solution were as follows:

- The native applications had specific behaviors that had to be retained while integrating with Infosys' ICS. For example, a web application was used that spawns a new child-window for different modules. This demanded that each module be opened in a different tab control. Such behaviors demanded the writing of generic components that would take care of specific behaviors of each type of application (Web, Windows and Mainframes)

- Data exchange and scripting at the UI level is important for automating workflows. For this to work, the individual applications needed to be capable of providing Control IDs of different controls that appear on screen. The windows application to be integrated in ICS failed to provide the same, which led to more R&D work and the development of a generic book library

- There were design challenges, including capturing, encrypting, storing and using the application credentials of the agents. These were necessary to incorporate the SSO.

Solution Architecture

The scope of the ICS solution implemented at MHP was limited to integrating different applications on a unified desktop. The technical architecture built to accomplish the same is depicted above.

The architecture was developed based on Microsoft's Customer Care Framework (CCF), which provides different layers and components to enable hosting of such disparate applications. This framework was then extended by adding custom-built components like Web Control, MainFrame Control, External Control, Navigation Toolbar and SSO Web Service to develop the complete ICS solution.

Client Benefits

Reduction in response time and enhanced productivity – User-friendly navigation and caching context data to eliminate redundancy in data entry will support the efficiency of CCRs, thereby increasing productivity.

Limited training cost – Since there were no amendments in the applications, the training cost involved was minimal and limited to the use of the unified desktop.

Eliminating Swivel Chair phenomenon – Since all applications are integrated in a single unified desktop, the agents are able to serve a customer, without physically moving from one system to another.

Leveraging existing investments – The solution was built by leveraging the existing business applications, thereby protecting past manpower and technology investments.

Significant cost benefits – Significant cost benefits resulted from Infosys' proven GDM.

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