NASCO

IBM solution revolutionizes account setup, maintenance and benefits plan accuracy

Overview

The need

To support growth, better maintain its infrastructure and handle increasing complexity in benefits rules and International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-10 requirements, NASCO sought outside help.

The solution

IBM® Global Technology Services® and IBM Research collaborated with NASCO to develop an automated benefits analytics solution that transformed the company's business capabilities.

The benefit

NASCO attained greater operating efficiencies with radically improved benefits processing using First-of-a-Kind (FOAK) analytics tools and a scalable infrastructure that meets its evolving needs.

Headquartered in Atlanta, NASCO provides IT solutions to Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) insurance plans across the United States. Founded in 1987, the service provider has processed more than one billion claims and supports more than 20 million healthcare insurance members on behalf of BCBS.

Finding superior coverage for customer needs

For nearly three decades, NASCO has served as a trusted partner for some of the largest healthcare insurers in the United States, processing millions of highly sensitive insurance claims records. Insurers rely on NASCO for speed, accuracy, secure data handling and compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)-regulated processes and services.

When NASCO sought to help its customers automate benefits plan design, it turned to IBM. "Our IBM support team looks for opportunities to leverage its array of resources to bring value to NASCO," says John Ladaga, chief executive officer at NASCO. "What I think IBM does really well is use the bigger muscle behind the company to support our business."

"Our IBM sales executive continually finds ways to bring value to NASCO. The IBM healthcare leadership, consumer healthcare and sandbox teams are a key differentiator and instrumental in delivering thought leadership to our company."

— John Ladaga, chief executive officer, NASCO

A highly competitive marketplace and recently instituted regulatory mandates created an unprecedented need for NASCO customers to manage increasingly complex health benefits plan options. As the complexity of benefits plan rules increased, rigid, error-prone account setup processes made it difficult to keep up with changes, thus increasing costs associated with coding and processing benefits. To support the needs of customers and incorporate continuous improvement objectives, NASCO turned to IBM to engineer new service solutions to transform its benefits-processing capabilities and further strengthen its business-critical IT infrastructure designed for reliability.

Collaborating for business transformation

Since 2000, IBM Global Technology Services—Strategic Outsourcing has continuously supported and aligned NASCO's IT infrastructure to meet the client's current and anticipated business needs. The IBM team delivered customized infrastructure services to meet NASCO business objectives, and the solution's performance is measured against a comprehensive set of service level measurements (SLAs) and other mutually agreed upon annual objectives. The strategic outsourcing relationship provided IBM with a strong foundation to understand the data and information required to address business challenges and opportunities. When coupled with IBM's deep healthcare industry experience and IBM Research analytics capabilities, IBM was uniquely positioned to work with NASCO to address benefits plan development and maintenance challenges that plagued its insurance customers.

IBM Research and NASCO collaborated to design an automated analytics tool that streamlines and transforms the way benefits plans are designed by analyzing benefits rules and incorporating International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-10 codes. The First-of-a-Kind (FOAK) tool provides an efficient and cost-effective automated process that helps NASCO customers clearly define their unique benefits plans and empowers NASCO to further expedite its claims-processing capabilities.

Solution components

Services

- IBM® Global Technology Services® — Strategic Outsourcing
- IBM Research

"With help from IBM, we're creating a system that's going to revolutionize the way our plan customers customize benefits plans for a population that wants and needs more health options."

— Mike Malec, chief administrative officer, NASCO

Evolution yields to exceptional service

Through the business relationship that began as a traditional infrastructure and applications outsourcing agreement, NASCO obtained value-added services that spanned beyond its anticipated operational efficiencies and cost savings. The IBM team combined its business acumen and industry insights with IBM resources to design transformational business opportunities. John Ladaga, chief executive officer (CEO) at NASCO, comments, "IBM has had numerous innovative ideas and solutions that they brought to the table from their research labs and other areas of IBM to help us make sure that our products and solutions are able to continue to scale and perform as needed."

The leading-edge tools lessened the complexity of the benefits plan design landscape, accelerating contract setup, improving accuracy and reducing design cost for insurers. They also accelerate NASCO's ability to respond to new government mandates, including the changes to benefits logic as a result of healthcare reform requirements and modifications to the healthcare industry's ICD-10 codes and regulations. The collaborative relationship allows IBM to remain aligned with NASCO's short- and long-term goals. Ladaga states, "The IBM healthcare leadership, consumer healthcare and sandbox teams are a key differentiator and instrumental in delivering thought leadership to our company."

For more information

To learn more about IBM Strategic Outsourcing Services, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:
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Global Technology Services
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Produced in the United States of America
July 2014

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