

Case study

Equitable Life of Canada speeds time-to-market



HP Exstream helps users design and deliver multilingual customer communications for faster entry into new markets

Industry

Financial services

Objective

Accelerate average batch document processing times for multilingual projects to support entry into the French-speaking market

Approach

Researched customer communications management software options, before shortlisting three vendors and conducting proof-of-concepts

IT matters

- Rapidly creates, manages and delivers various multilingual documents via a single platform, speeding time-to-market
- Generates 25,000 statements in 10 minutes rather than hours, boosting productivity
- Average overnight batch correspondence processing times are up to 500 percent faster, saving time and money
- Simplifies product design and testing, reducing training times
- The fully integrated solution allows for variable content to be delivered to multiple channels, delivering design flexibility

Business matters

- A multilingual processing capability supports the company's business expansion strategy, facilitating initial entry into the French-speaking Quebec market
- Rapid product development and testing increases productivity, accelerating time-to-market
- Rapid troubleshooting aids the production process, resolving problems in minutes rather than hours
- Optimized workflows ensure timely delivery of high-volume output, satisfying production schedules



“HP Exstream software offers a simple streamlined architecture, is easy to deploy and execute, and sits well with our existing Microsoft® operating environment. Compared to our earlier production environment, we estimate overnight batch correspondence processing times are now between 400 and 500 percent faster.”

Cam Crosbie, vice president and chief information officer, The Equitable Life Insurance Company of Canada

Multilingual customers, multilingual documents

Equitable Life of Canada is one of the country's largest mutual life insurance companies. Needing to support a move into the French-speaking market, the business required a software solution to create and manage its multilingual documentation. HP Exstream provides a single platform, reducing average overnight batch correspondence processing times by up to 500 percent, saving time and money.



Equitable Life
of Canada®



Challenge

National institution

The Equitable Life Insurance Company of Canada, also known as Equitable Life of Canada, is one of the country's largest mutual life insurance companies. Established in 1920, it provides various financial products including individual life and health insurance, savings and retirement products, group benefits, and commercial mortgages. Based in Waterloo, west of Toronto, more than 10,000 independent advisors represent the organization across Canada. The organization has no shareholders and policyholders receive dividends supported by distributed earnings from the business.

Business strategy required multilingual output

Traditionally, Equitable Life of Canada had produced all customer-facing documents with a combination of internal systems and an older, soon to be unsupported document generation technology. Typical outputs include policyholder contracts, letters and statements, checks and, for the Group Division, bills and explanation of benefits documentation. Standard production runs for policyholder correspondence are approximately 12,000 per month with an additional 12,000 per month created for the customers' financial advisors. However, the previous vendor no longer supported the outdated technology, which was cumbersome to use and slow to generate the required document volumes.

Another important factor also came into the equation as Richard Crowley, senior project manager, Equitable Life of Canada, explains: "Conventionally, we have only conducted business within the English-speaking provinces of Canada. However, we recently made a strategic decision to expand the life part of our business into the Quebec market, a French speaking province. Our demanding objective was to enter this market by July 2010.

"Unfortunately, our existing technology could not produce multi-lingual documents very well and generating high-batch volumes was exceptionally slow. We therefore needed a modern software platform capable of delivering multi-language communications for our document processing and generation system and could also accelerate average batch processing times. Our immediate priority was to create all policyholder correspondence in French."

Equitable Life of Canada reviewed the market, identified a dozen potential vendors and, following a request for proposal, shortlisted three candidates including HP. The company then asked the vendors to conduct an on-site proof-of-concept for one week to demonstrate how their solutions would handle typical outputs using supplied input files. "We wanted to see how the solutions physically generated correspondence and determine how long they would take to produce 25,000 three-page statements," continues Crowley.



“In terms of batch production performance, HP Exstream stood head and shoulders above the other two offerings. HP Exstream generated 25,000 statements in about 10 minutes rather than hours. We also found the simplicity of the solution’s architecture and the design and testing tools especially attractive. Compared to the other solutions, HP Exstream employs a single design interface or multiple formats and, consequently, we felt training users would be simpler and less time consuming. Clearly, HP was the correct partner choice for us.”

Fully integrated document processing solution

HP Exstream customer communications management software provides Equitable Life of Canada with a single platform to create, manage and deliver various multi-lingual correspondences. The fully integrated, end-to-end customer communications solution offers the company variable design, testing and real-time composition capabilities as well as advanced data and content integration, 20+ output formats and controlled editing of interactive documents. Moreover, HP Exstream optimizes workflows and high-volume outputs to ensure timely document delivery.

During the project, an HP solutions architect built an architecture plan and migration roadmap to guide Equitable Life of Canada through the plan.

To execute the scheme, HP Professional Services provided an HP Exstream consultant to mentor employees about the software solution and support its introduction to the production environment. Prior to the start of the project, Equitable also sent all team members on five days of Exstream training. Equitable Life of Canada adopted a phased approach. Initially, correspondence documentation associated with three personal business lines would enter production followed by all other documents connected with these lines and, finally, all types of documentation relating to any other lines of business.

“Working with HP Exstream is very easy and the first-class support we received from HP allowed entry to the Quebec market on time,” states Crosbie.

Batch processing times fall five-fold

Equitable Life of Canada now has a single software platform to generate policyholder contracts, letters and statements, checks, bills and other documentation rapidly in English. The company’s document processing and generation system is also producing contracts and statements in French to penetrate the Quebec market. Equitable Life of Canada will shortly employ the system to produce additional French documents as it introduces savings, retirement, whole life and segregated fund offerings to French-speaking prospects.

Customer solution at a glance

Application

Customer communications management

Software

- HP Exstream

HP services

- HP Professional Services

Compared to the earlier technology, HP Exstream has accelerated batch process time drastically. A 25,000 three-page statement run now takes about 10 minutes rather than hours and high-volume overnight batch correspondence processing times are between 400 and 500 percent faster. Productivity has increased too.

“We have seen significant productivity improvements with product development and testing,” says Crowley. “If a developer needs to amend a legacy document, for example, the process is now four to five times quicker, and impact analysis is also faster.”

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During the migration phase of the project, Equitable Life of Canada made an interesting observation. A developer used HP Exstream to resolve a production issue rather than the legacy technology as the company had already transferred most of the code to the new platform. She solved the problem in 15 minutes rather than the generally accepted two hour time frame they were used to working with.

“Although increased productivity will inevitably save time and translate into cost savings, this project relates to enhancing output speed, accelerating time-to-market and improving the customer experience. Ultimately we have achieved the business goal entering the French speaking Quebec market on schedule, ensuring key business growth,” concludes Crosbie

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4AA3-3293ENW, March 2013, Rev. 1

