

Case study

Equitable improves customer experience with communications



HP Exstream enables leading insurer to streamline document production processes and improve quality and clarity of communications

Industry

Insurance

Objective

Improve document production and customer communication management

Approach

Issued Request for Proposal, ran Proof of Concept tests and viewed demonstrations

IT matters

- Reduces policy document production times by 50 percent
- Cuts underwriting times by 50 percent
- Decreases number of document templates by 94.4 percent

Business matters

- Lowers costs through increased staffing efficiencies
- Delivers improved management reporting
- Improves the clarity and quality of customer communications



“Using HP Exstream has freed up our minds. It’s easier to locate content, and we don’t have to ponder problems. We can just take what we know, plug it right in and get it out the door instead of having to use reference manuals or figure out how to write the code. It’s just so easy.”

– Carlyn Campbell, director of electronic document production,
Equitable Life & Casualty Insurance Company

Escape from proprietary systems

Utah’s Equitable Life & Casualty Insurance Company had to generate 400 policies a day with a staff of two locked into proprietary production systems. Now document generation has been streamlined, and the quality of customer communications improved with HP Exstream.



50% Reduction in document production costs

Challenge

Locked into proprietary systems

Official documents can create a paradox. On the one hand, it's important to understand what they say but on the other hand, their official or legal terminology can be difficult to comprehend. Insurance policies are a great example which is why many insurance companies now accept the need to re-design customer communications, making them more personalized and easier to read.

Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, Equitable Life & Casualty Insurance Company needed to address this trend and also faced significant production challenges. With a department of two people generating 400 policies a day and a growing business, it needed to streamline document production processes to realize its corporate aim of being 'quick and nimble'.

Employing 200 people and licensed to operate in 45 states, Equitable is a life and health insurance firm specializing in the senior market for people age 55 years and older. Its main products are policies which supplement the federal government's Medicare national insurance programs for older people. In addition to these supplement plans, it offers senior life insurance, cash policies and a cancer-specific plan. Equitable also acts as a Third Party Administrator (TPA), acting on behalf of smaller insurance specialist companies who do not have sufficient resources or knowledge of the Medicare market.

"We try to make our documents very clear and easy to understand," explains Equitable's director of electronic document production, Carlyn Campbell.

"A lot of times our hands are tied by the state government which require certain language and terminologies, but on the whole, we try to make our documents very readable – very customer-friendly and not insurance-centric."

"I am in charge of all of the policy printing, and we are now producing about 400 policies a day. Previously, the problem was that we were locked into a proprietary system from one of our print vendors and were using their proprietary programming language. As we brought in more third party clients, this meant more proprietary coding and manually building special forms. The volume was getting so big that I was concerned that our two-person department would just not be able to keep up if we brought in any more clients.

In addition to the volume of documents we were producing, we also needed to be able to make changes to existing policies and documents. "If we had to make a change to a policy, for example if one of our clients got a new president, this meant that the signature on every page had to be replaced on a plethora of forms that I had to go through and change individually."

Typical Equitable supplement policies are nine to 12 pages long but some other policies can be up to 40 pages and the client information is always changing.

"We store a scanned copy of the physical insurance application they filled out when they applied for insurance so those are all unique. The federal government also allows ten different types of Medicare supplement plans so each one of those is unique, based on the benefit schedule. Also, each state has its own requirements so just about every one of them is unique," explains Campbell.



“Also, sooner or later, customers are going to file a claim so we have to be able to reproduce whatever they were sent if they ask for a duplicate. I have to be able to recreate the communication chain back as far as I can go.”

Equitable needed a new solution that would be easy to use and would enable the small production team to make one-time changes that would automatically ripple through all the relevant documents, eliminating the need for multiple individual alterations.

“We were also looking for a solution that would make use of commonality so if there was one paragraph that was frequently used, we would not have to re-type it hundreds of times,” adds Campbell. “We needed to re-use paragraphs and segments instead of having to re-write pages of code. We wanted to make the process better but also easier so if I was not here, it could still carry on. As it was before, everything was residing on the printer and I knew where it was because I have been doing this for 17 years. However, my technician didn’t necessarily know where it was located. Our old way of working was not user friendly and was certainly neither quick nor nimble.”

Solution

Flexible power with strong support

Seeking an answer, Campbell saw the HP Exstream Customer Communication Management (CCM) solution featured at the annual Xplor International Conference. This prestigious international document production community, provided a great opportunity to see HP Exstream in action. After recommending HP Exstream, issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) and completing a Proof of Concept (POC) the decision to go with HP Exstream was ratified.

“HP specialists visited our offices along with a technical team to demonstrate HP Exstream,” explains Campbell. “I sent them some of our forms from which they created one of the policies and it was amazing. Everyone was so helpful. My main drivers for implementing HP Exstream were that HP is a large company so I knew that I would be able to get really good support. I could just call a team and they would be able to help me out. It’s a flexible solution and the fact that it is worldwide looks really good to me because if we bring in clients from other countries, HP Exstream will be able to cope with other languages and text formats. Additionally, the ability to re-use content was also attractive.

“We engaged HP Exstream Professional Services team for the implementation. The team was instrumental in the set up process and also delivered a conversion assessment although Equitable did most of the conversions in house. The Professional Services team has been an excellent resource.”

HP Exstream is designed to help users make the most of every customer touch point by creating personalized, real-time customer communications which can be delivered through their preferred channel, including web, email, print and SMS. Insurance carriers like Equitable can benefit from using HP Exstream because they can significantly reduce costs by providing a single software solution for policies, bills, quotes/proposals and correspondence. It also supports straight-through processing for high-volume and on-demand communications.

Customer solution at a glance

Software

- HP Exstream v9.0.106
- Command Center

Benefits

Increased efficiency at reduced cost

Equitable is just starting out on its HP Exstream journey and has begun by converting policies to the new system which is also being used to create its 1099 federal tax returns. Once all the policies are converted, it will be expanded to the correspondence system, premium billing notices and explanation of benefit documents.

Some significant benefits have already been achieved. Document production times have been halved and the ability to proof PDF files rather than paper has also halved underwriting times. There has also been a dramatic reduction in the number of document templates. The company originally held some 18,000 unique pages and that has now been reduced to under 1,000. For example, there used to be 43 different state variations on one policy and they have now been cut down to just one. Increased efficiency and automation has also reduced costs by enabling the company to implement staffing efficiencies.

“Our policy content is pretty much locked down because of the way they must be approved by each state, but with HP Exstream, policies are more readable and clearer because we’re able to make them more visually pleasing from a layout perspective.”

– Carlyn Campbell, director of electronic document production, Equitable Life & Casualty Insurance Company

“We used to run a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) workflow so copies of the original client applications were store as TIFF images and we could only access them for 90 days before they were put into the archive system,” explains Campbell. “By moving to HP Exstream, we have been able to go to a PDF workflow so we can pull them in from our archive solution. Now we can attach images all the way back to the beginning instead of just for 90 days. This has helped the Policyowner Service Department because they no longer have to spend a lot of time searching the archiving system.”

The HP Exstream powerful reporting functions have enabled Equitable to create many new reports. As jobs run through HP Exstream Command Center, reports are automatically generated to show which policies are processed and a CSV file is created which enables the Underwriting Department to make sure that customers get the correct documentation and to audit everything that is created. It also gives a clear view on departmental performance metrics.

Currently, all policies are printed in-house and mailed out, but in future Equitable intends to use the multi-channel delivery options offered by HP Exstream to allow for electronic delivery to a variety of devices. The team will be implementing the product’s interactive capability to address additional correspondence needs, replacing various home-grown departmental solutions. The company is also looking to improve compliance and implement digital signatures leveraging the HP Exstream integration with several leading e-signature companies in the future.

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