



Empowering Member-Centric Healthcare with Integrated Data

Major Healthcare Insurer Sharpens Focus on Members, Unifies Business with Informatica Data Integration Platform

FAST FACTS

BUSINESS INITIATIVES

- Minimize the pain/impact of mergers and acquisitions
- Improve member health outcomes and lower medical costs
- Attract and retain customers and members
- Enhance ability to meet regulatory and audit reporting requirements
- Reduce operating costs and optimize profitability

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

Implemented the Informatica Platform to integrate operational, clinical and external data spread across multiple data warehouses and data feeds. By establishing a single data warehouse platform, Highmark empowered clinicians, financial managers, and members with timely, trustworthy data to improve outcomes, control costs, and boost member satisfaction.

“With our Teradata enterprise data warehouse and the Informatica Platform, we are able to provide members with a complete, integrated picture of their health situation and the services available to them. This pays off by promoting a smart lifestyle via usable health and wellness advice that helps members to maintain or improve their health.”

— Sue Jones, Director of Business Information Applications, Highmark

At the Forefront of Consumer-Centric Healthcare

Created in 1996 with the merger of two of Pennsylvania’s top health insurers, Highmark is one of the largest health plans in the United States, providing coverage to more than 4.7 million people. Highmark prides itself on its commitment to affordable, quality healthcare and its unwavering focus on the members and communities it serves.

Highmark has backed its commitment with strategic investments in new information technologies that are helping providers deliver timely, cost-effective treatments while also helping members become more proactive and smarter about managing their healthcare through Highmark’s health and wellness programs. The new systems are also improving operational efficiencies, boosting administrative and IT productivity, and streamlining compliance with constantly changing federal and state regulations. Together, these investments are helping Highmark manage spiraling medical costs, offer consumers more choices, and make healthcare more affordable and tailored to individuals and businesses.

To arrive at where it is today—a leader in consumer-centric healthcare—Highmark first needed to consolidate and modernize its information systems, including several data warehouses it inherited from prior mergers and acquisitions. “We were suffering from the complexity that comes from mergers and acquisitions,” says Sue Jones, Highmark’s director of business information applications. “In addition to different operational systems, we had multiple data warehouses on multiple platforms supporting different business units.”

BENEFITS

- Provided a single trusted source of business and clinical information by creating a central enterprise data warehouse, thereby lowering risk and operational costs
- Responded faster to business questions on claims utilization and financial performance
- Improved ability to respond to audits and meet regulatory reporting requirements
- Empowered members with information and tools to manage their health and access services

NUTS AND BOLTS

- Products: Informatica PowerCenter®, Informatica PowerExchange®, PowerExchange for MQ Series
- Solutions: Data integration, data warehousing
- Sources: Multiple internal and external claims processing systems and Teradata work tables
- Target: Enterprise data warehouse

The disparate repositories, often containing duplicate and overlapping data sets, created barriers to effectively making enterprise decisions and ensuring Highmark was delivering the insurance products consumers needed. “We found it very difficult to get a single version of truth,” Jones explains. “People were getting different answers to what they thought were the same questions.” Highmark also found it increasingly difficult to respond promptly to audit and compliance requirements.

In addition, any reports or analyses that combined data from multiple sources were inherently less reliable and took more time and labor to generate and validate. “If you needed to analyze our full book of business, you had to reach across three different environments with three different data models and then try to integrate it to complete the picture,” says Jones. “You had to be a skilled technician just to generate basic reports.”

Building a Unified Data Warehouse

A few years ago, Highmark tackled its data integration challenges by launching an IT modernization project that, among other things, merged the company’s three major business intelligence (BI) systems, as well as multiple data marts, into a single enterprise data warehouse running a Teradata solution. Highmark recognized, however, that the data warehouse was only one piece of the puzzle and that it would need a comprehensive data integration platform to successfully manage the new and evolving environment. Highmark selected and implemented the Informatica Platform to create a unified and scalable environment for integrating data from its business and clinical systems into the new data warehouse.

The new BI platform processes about 2.6 billion records from sources ranging from Highmark’s claims and clinical systems to outsourced pharmacy benefits managers and other health-services providers. The source data includes multiple file types and formats, such as mainframe files, custom flat files, relational databases, and XML. “Inbound data sources vary widely,” Jones says. “Informatica’s universal data access capabilities let us handle whatever the source systems produce. We can take the data whenever they can give it to us, which allows us to support many operational functions in addition to the common analytical ones.”

Highmark relies on the Informatica Platform to transform the data and load it into the data warehouse, where business and clinical users access it to help run everything from claims adjudication and wellness programs to supplying information to member portals and government agencies. “There are myriad data transformations and movements that are needed, especially for running claims processing,” Jones says. “We are modernizing our internal claims systems, integrating externally adjudicated claims, and acting as a third-party administrator for smaller, specialized health plans. The Informatica Platform is in the middle of the whole process, retrieving data, transforming it, and loading it to targets.”

Beyond Hand Coding

Jones says that adopting the Informatica Platform was absolutely essential to building and maintaining the new BI warehouse. “We could not have done this the traditional way, by hand coding the data integration,” she says. “There is simply no way we could have kept up with the rate of change, our growing data volumes, and the scale of operations we have now.”

Since launching the enterprise data warehouse several years ago, Highmark has put it to work supporting almost every facet of the business, contributing to improved decisions and regulatory compliance and helping attract and retain customers. Originally employed to compile and analyze medical and Rx claims data, Highmark’s information warehouse has become the single source of truth in other areas of the business, supporting operations and analytics in financial management, marketing, membership programs, wellness coaching, and fraud detection.

Managers have gained significantly better insight into financial transactions and can now trace each line item in a claim to a specific entry in the general ledger or on a particular customer invoice if applicable. The data warehouse is also tied into administering Highmark’s high-deductible health plan products. Better visibility into claims and financial data has allowed Highmark to remain agile and profitable while providing attractive healthcare options to its members.

Focusing on Members

One of Highmark’s recent initiatives was to leverage the data warehouse for its next generation specialty provider and clinical wellness programs. By augmenting clinical information with claims data, Highmark now arms its clinical staff with timely information to help high-risk members avoid dangerous and costly episodes. For example, clinicians can reach out to members to make sure they’re taking their medications and regularly visiting their primary care physician. To compile the information, Highmark used the Informatica Platform to aggregate data feeds from a variety of claims systems and medical partners.

Integrating data and organizing it by member is absolutely critical to Highmark’s member Web portal. “Members can now view their claims history, manage their spending accounts, and get advice on selecting the type of insurance plan that makes sense for each individual. This tool will be one of the keys to Highmark’s success going forward,” Jones says, adding that “this would have been impossible in the past, because information was so spread out over multiple platforms and applications.”

This initiative and others are all part of Highmark’s customer-centric strategy that aims to empower members with relevant, customized health information and tools. “With our enterprise data warehouse platform powered by Teradata and Informatica, we are giving members a complete, integrated picture of their health situation and the services available to them,” Jones says. “This pays off by promoting healthier lifestyles and smarter healthcare decisions while ensuring Highmark can continue to meet or exceed members’ needs as new challenges arise.”

Learn More

Learn more about the Informatica Platform. Visit us at www.informatica.com or call +1 650-385-5000 (1-800-653-3871 in the U.S.).

About Informatica

Informatica Corporation (NASDAQ: INFA) is the world's number one independent provider of data integration software. Organizations around the world gain a competitive advantage in today's global information economy with timely, relevant and trustworthy data for their top business imperatives. More than 4,000 enterprises worldwide rely on Informatica to access, integrate and trust their information assets held in the traditional enterprise, off premise and in the Cloud.



Worldwide Headquarters, 100 Cardinal Way, Redwood City, CA 94063, USA
phone: 650.385.5000 fax: 650.385.5500 toll-free in the US: 1.800.653.3871 www.informatica.com

© 2010 Informatica Corporation. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. Informatica, the Informatica logo, and The Data Integration Company are trademarks or registered trademarks of Informatica Corporation in the United States and in jurisdictions throughout the world. All other company and product names may be trade names or trademarks of their respective owners. First Published: September 2010