

Dental Practice Board teams with IBM to improve operational efficiency

Overview

■ **Customer challenge**

To meet targets for improved operational efficiency through enhanced management of the Dental Practice Board (DPB) infrastructure

■ **Solution**

IBM Global Services – A seven year full scope strategic outsourcing contract for managing the IT infrastructure

■ **Customer benefit**

Improved operational efficiency, reduced costs, transference of risk, greater economies of scale, improved customer service.

Customer profile

The DPB is responsible for paying dentists promptly and accurately for treatment provided by the National Health Service (NHS) in England and Wales. In total, it handles approximately 46 million claim documents a year.

Improving payment processes

In accordance with government targets, the DPB wanted to raise quality of service, improve its infrastructure management and reduce IT costs.

The DPB chose to outsource the management of its IT infrastructure to IBM. At the same time, the outsourcing agreement enabled the DPB to improve its payment processing and develop innovative applications that allow easier access to information for its customers.

IBM chosen from 50 contenders

In 2002, the old contract with IBM Global Services expired and the DPB put out an invitation to tender for a new contract. Chris Edmonds, DPB Corporate Secretary says: “We were looking for a partner that was forward thinking, innovative and able to deliver business value through technology. The NHS is modernising and our IT infrastructure needs to adapt to change. At the same time we needed a partner that could address our day-to-day IT concerns quickly and effectively.”

After looking at proposals from 50 companies, the organisation decided to renew its contract with IBM. Derek Rosewell, IT Services Manager at the DPB, explains: “We wanted our bidders to demonstrate original thinking and out of all the companies we met, IBM was the one that came up with the most innovative ideas. IBM was also able to assemble an impressive team with the right knowledge, skills and public sector experience to meet our requirements.”

Under the new contract, IBM is responsible for looking after all of the DPB’s desktops and servers, electronic claims processing systems, and local and wide area networks, and will support this via a centralised IT help desk.

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Focus on customer service

The new contract enables the DPB to focus more on serving the customer. In the past, the organisation was responsible for managing its suite of PCs and laptops; now maintenance of the entire infrastructure has been transferred to IBM. Rosewell comments: “By outsourcing our infrastructure management to IBM, we felt we could enhance the quality of our IT services and save money at the same time.”

The new arrangement enables IBM to take a more proactive approach to developing the DPB’s infrastructure. For example, IBM is helping DPB create a more integrated, centrally managed client/server environment. “This is exactly the kind of innovation we need to help us reduce costs and improve operational efficiency,” says Edmonds.

Business agility

The new deal has delivered several other important benefits. For example, DPB’s technical helpdesk has now been transferred to IBM. As a result, it now offers longer hours of service and higher quality technical support.

IBM is also responsible for managing the organisation’s business continuity systems and improving its networks. During the past few years, the DPB has added a number of servers to its environment; these are now managed through a dedicated IBM backup centre. The DPB also uses IBM’s own network to provide laptop users with

better connectivity when they are working offsite. Edmonds says: “The old system we had was very unreliable and unpopular with staff. The new network will enable employees to work effectively, wherever they happen to be.”

Delivering a resilient and flexible infrastructure

The DPB is also handing control of its enterprise server to IBM. Edmonds says that this is expected to result in higher availability and the ability to support batch processing around the clock.

IBM has already started work on improving the DPB’s infrastructure, and a new claims processing application based on IBM @server pSeries using WebSphere and DB2 is due to be rolled out shortly. Centralisation of all the DPB’s PC’s software will be completed next month and a disaster business continuity project will be concluded by the start of next year.

“The deal with IBM will enable us to provide customers with a superior standard of service and ensure that our stakeholders get a first class service well into the future,” Rosewell concludes.

For more information

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