

Sykes-Health Plan Service Bureau Finds OCR for Forms™ A Valued Tool for Customer Service

Background

Sykes-Health Plan Service Bureau, Inc., (SHPS) is not shy when it comes to implementing high-tech solutions to streamline its business. For the Louisville, KY-based provider of outsourced health care and benefits management services, efficient, accurate and speedy automated forms processing is strategically important. The company's focus is on delivering results to its clients, which include Fortune 500 companies like Lucent Technologies as well as big name insurers like Blue Cross & Blue Shield companies, US HealthCare and Prudential.

SHPS processes thousands of different health- and benefits-related forms for its clients daily. With varying degrees of complexity these forms include: COBRA and HIPAA documentation, Flexible Spending Accounts, general health care benefits, physician medical protocols, utilization and case management, as well as HCFA1500s and Explanation of Benefits (EOBs).

Not a Bad Problem to Have

As SHPS continued to draw well-known, established clients with big needs, it faced an important decision: How to accommodate all the new business. Business was good, but SHPS knew it had a problem and wanted to be careful about the "solution" it chose. And since forms processing was a major component of its business, its employees faced an ever increasing amount of work. Management began looking for ways to ease the load while continuing to grow the business. SHPS needed a solution that would offer the broadest range of applications for forms processing. An innovative product called OCR for Forms™ offered that, and more.

SHPS found the answer in this pioneering software developed by Microsystems Technology, Inc. First introduced by Tampa, FL-based Microsystems in 1991, it quickly became a leader in the forms processing marketplace winning "Product of the Year" as well as the Editor's Choice award from *Imaging and Document Solutions Magazine* in 1992, 1998 and 1999. The information capture software for paper forms automates data entry, taking data from paper and facsimile to ASCII text. With such an efficient business tool, an end-user, like SHPS, could then store the data in a database and access it when needed.

A Tool for Maximizing Efficiencies

SHPS first implemented OCR for Forms in 1997, using the forms processing software for in-house functions. Soon, however, it realized it could package the applications of OCR for Forms and offer it as

a service to its customers. Todd Bartlett, vice president of Carrier Support Operations, is responsible for the software's usage. He gives a rundown of the state-of-the-art, high-speed, high-accuracy equipment used in his department: Two Kodak 5500 D scanners, several servers, optical storage, CD-ROM burning and duplication equipment.

State-of-the-art operations are critical to SHPS' business allowing it to meet heavy demands and maximize turnaround time to its clients. SHPS' systems department is totally self-sufficient, staffed with certified technicians that respond instantly when an issue arises. Bartlett notes, "We've got the latest in digital imaging technology, the latest and greatest in PC technology and OCR for Forms is a part of that."

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He says the main reason for choosing OCR for Forms was the functionality of the software. "It gives us a lot more flexibility than we used to have and greatly reduces programming time," he adds. SHPS found the Microsystems software differs from other form design technology in that it is extremely user-friendly and therefore highly preferable to other products. OCR for Forms produces results for SHPS, as well as their clients.

A Tool for Achieving Results

With OCR for Forms, Bartlett streamlined his staff to 24, down from 38, while doubling the number of forms processed weekly to 43,000. "In the end," he says, "we've gained 30% to 50% efficiency in all of our data entry folks' ability to get the job done."

Another benefit of the software is its adaptability. SHPS is now on its third generation of upgrades to OCR for Forms. With each generation it becomes more user-friendly and has a higher level of functionality. All application development of the product is done in-house with two developers devoted full-time to tweaking OCR for Forms templates to fit SHPS' expanding applications.

Creating Additional Value

SHPS and its reseller, Paperless Technologies, Inc. (PTI) have devised another way of growing business. David Szetela, president and CEO of PTI, says there's a huge demand for imaging systems. Szetela is often able to introduce new, smaller clients to SHPS via his own sales call. He says when a prospective client balks at the initial price tag on an imaging system, he is now able to offer an alternative. "Instead of buying an imaging system from me," he says, "I tell them to take their paper, put it in boxes and send it to

SHPS and you'll get your data back in a manageable form." Here SHPS can provide the service at 10% to 15% of the cost of purchasing an imaging system outright.

This is a relatively new aspect of PTI's relationship with SHPS, but one that is creating immediate benefits for both. SHPS currently has five proposals outstanding and Szetela says it's increased his prospect base by one third.

What's Next?

Bartlett says his department's forms processing business makes up about 5%, or \$5 million, of SHPS' overall business. But it's been growing at a steady clip of 20% annually. "And that's without an aggressive marketing plan," says Bartlett. This year he's anticipating growth will jump to 50%.

Always on the lookout to further automate processes, SHPS will continue to use OCR for Forms to enhance its service offerings to its clients. In order to gain market share in the future, SHPS, Inc. has to outthink, outperform and outmaneuver its competition. OCR for Forms has become a critical tool in that process. Says Bartlett, "It's one of the first tools we break out of the toolbox."

NOTE: SHPS, Inc., formerly Sykes HealthPlan Services, is a subsidiary of Tampa, FL-based Sykes Enterprises, Inc. (Nasdaq: SYKE), a global leader in providing vertically integrated, technology-based solutions worldwide. For more information, visit the SHPS web site at <http://www.shps.net> and the Sykes web site at <http://www.sykes.com>.



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