

Improving the Patient and Provider Experience: The Systems Behind the Smiles

AT A GLANCE

Not too long ago, we spoke of front-office versus back-office.

The front-office dealt directly with customers. The back-office played crucial but supporting roles behind the scenes.

Increasingly—and especially in healthcare—these layers are merging. Back-office systems are becoming front-office systems, as customers—especially younger ones—prefer mobile apps over human interaction. These trends dictate complete transparency of any systems directly or indirectly affecting your customer's journey.

Healthcare is full of complex systems. Your customers—*members, patients, providers, and partners*—increasingly call the shots. Our challenge is to design, manage, and improve our systems so we can maximize their smiles.

KEY CHALLENGES

Healthcare payers and providers have many different challenges. However, when it comes to the systems behind the smiles, all face four key challenges:

- 1 Improving collaboration
- 2 Sharing data
- 3 Managing risk
- 4 All while improving member and provider experience

SOLUTION

In response to these challenges and requirements, health plans are increasingly turning to modern Business Process Management (BPM) to quickly and easily create powerful software applications that can tie together systems and help deliver a unified—and overwhelmingly positive—customer experience.



Smiles

The sum total of these systems and processes must be aligned to support improved member and provider experience. This represents “The Systems Behind The Smiles.”

There is no magic bullet (i.e. technology) we can place in front of healthcare customers to magically transform their experiences with the healthcare system. In fact, 40-60 percent of customer dissatisfaction is due to systems, not smiles. No matter how personable or well-trained front-line customer service representatives are, the systems they rely on can (and often do) determine the outcome of customer experiences.

For a health payer, customers range from insurance plan members, who sometimes become patients, to health providers and provider organizations dealing with those members and patients. Meeting these customer experience challenges requires mastery of complex, dynamic, and mission-critical patient data management processes. Requirements include access to multiple systems of record (care management, claims, recruiting, member services, and compliance), while ensuring standardized cross-functional workflows, as well as data governance and quality assurance. What’s more, the systems put into place to share data, encourage collaboration, and manage risks so that all involved can simply count on them working right the first time...and every time thereafter.

The Solution

In response these challenges and requirements, health plans are increasingly turning to modern Business Process Management (BPM) to quickly and easily create powerful software applications that address their unique needs.

Integrated

The first requirement for new applications that directly or indirectly influence customer experience is integration with existing legacy infrastructure.

Health payer systems include a wide variety of information applications:

- Portals
- Customer handling
- Provider and member intake
- Quoting and underwriting
- Contract and provider network management
- Credentialing and membership management
- Benefit plan management
- Claims processing
- Clinical systems



What is Business Process Management in Healthcare?

Business Process Management, relatively new to healthcare, is a way to marry process and data and quickly create health apps with great workflow.

Instead of using writing computer programming code, such as C# or Java, draw processes in a process modeler. Draw the forms you want to appear at certain steps in the workflow. Pop-up some dialog boxes to connect your mobile health app to healthcare data and to customize business logic. Then launch for native mobile apps that can run on multiple mobile platforms without having to test every single instance.

BPM's Third Way

Traditional health and payer IT has had to choose between two evils for creating new software and compensating for old software.

First, there is the choice of buying software someone else has created to solve what is considered standard problems versus using traditional programming methods to create your own solution.

Second is the choice between ripping-and-replacing healthcare enterprise-wide systems versus adding even more isolated silos of data and workflow.

Today, that choice is not necessary. Modern BPM is a genuine alternative and escape from both of these false choices.

Low-code software development has been around for years outside of healthcare. It's just taken this long for it to diffuse into healthcare, where it's perhaps most needed!

Today in healthcare, either we use existing, packaged software which may or may not fit out workflows and rarely fully addresses our challenges, or we write healthcare software from scratch ourselves.



In the first case, we are dependent on someone else, who may or may not understand (or even care) about our workflow, not to mention keeping that software up to date. In the second instance, let's call a spade a spade: you often get stuck with a mess. Healthcare organizations typically don't have full time mobile programmers. If you hire someone to create an app, it's expensive to create and then even more expensive to maintain.

Instead, consider the third alternative: the right BPM infrastructure. Imagine you can draw your workflows and automatically turn them into cross-platform—but still native—mobile applications. Imagine the time from health plan product idea to health plan app becoming days...not months...or years.

Modern BPM offers an alternative to choosing between replacing legacy health plan systems and continual addition of stopgap applications that each address an isolated problem (and also create new silos of data and process).

BPM allows you to keep the systems you already have—with all their important historical data remaining intact. Add new systems to keep up with new customer requirements in a way that increases speed to market with new health plan products, maximizes flexibility after implementation, and provides complete transparency of health plan data and processes.

Modern Business Process Management really is a new way to escape health payer IT dilemmas of the past:

- Don't buy software that doesn't fit.
- Don't write your own software from scratch.
- Don't add more siloed applications.

Do create powerful, unified, cross-functional applications with integrated access to workflows, as well as legacy and new data sources.



BPM: Healthcare's Systems Behind the Smiles

If we were to update that original quote behind “The Systems Behind The Smiles,” it might go something like this.

“What’s needed in hospitals, clinics, health plans, and every place else in healthcare are systems—not just smiles—that guarantee good service. Every healthcare organization is composed of systems. Those systems must work together to create a process that is efficient and responsive to a healthcare customer’s wants. And what better software to create efficient and responsive processes than modern Business Process Management?”

REFERENCES

1. Customers For Life: How to Turn that One-Time Buyer into a Lifetime Customer, Carl Sewell, Paul B. Brown, Doubleday, 1990.
2. Business Process Management: A Comprehensive Survey, Wil van der Aalst, ISRN Software Engineering, Volume 2013 (2013).

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