

Medscheme Maintains Competitive Advantage Through Technology

industry:

Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals

country:

Middle East & Africa

business challenge:

In today's highly competitive service industry, enhancing the customer experience can represent one's sole means of differentiation. Medscheme sought to ensure it continued to deliver first-class customer service

solution:

Centralise streamline, virtualise and upgrade the existing contact centre for enhanced customer service and system survivability

services:

Virtualisation consulting services which included an assessment of the contact centre infrastructure, its integration points into enterprise applications and the design of the enterprise telephony routing strategy

results:

- improved service levels and more efficient use of human resource

Executive Summary

Leading medical aid administrator, Medscheme, identified several inter-related technology challenges ranging from common business inefficiencies associated with its decentralised architecture, to pressing concerns around system survivability and maintaining its competitive advantage. Dimension Data has countered these issues with a **carefully scoped and designed end-to-end solution** that leverages the skills of several of its lines of business as well as deep collaborative relationships with key contact centre vendors, Avaya and NICE. The **outcome is a sleek, integrated solution that maximises availability, provides best in class functionality and critical business continuity, helping Medscheme achieve its most critical business objective** - a significantly enhanced end user experience.

Client Overview

Medscheme has been at the forefront of developments within the healthcare industry for over 35 years and is currently South Africa's premier medical scheme administrator and health risk manager. The company has diversified, and its core businesses of healthcare administration and health risk solutions form the pillars of a fully integrated healthcare offering.

The company's business philosophy focuses on building close partnerships with its clients and supporting them in achieving

their strategic objectives. Medscheme measures its success in terms of its clients' success. This philosophy, underpinned by a unique combination of reliability, experience, expertise, innovation and state-of-the-art technology, position Medscheme as the ideal provider of integrated services to medical schemes, corporates and individuals.

Business Challenge

Handling in excess of 680,000 calls a month, and more than a hundred calls concurrently over peak call periods, Medscheme's three contact centres in Roodeport, Cape Town and Durban are the real work horses of the organisation. Although each centre was fairly efficient in its own right, running three almost independent systems was heavy on operational costs, requiring unnecessary duplication of resources.

The Group felt that by implementing a more centralised operational model it could improve efficiencies. This prompted Medscheme to explore various means of streamlining the Group's vast contact centres and networks. The intent was not just to trim costs, but also facilitate upgrades and maintenance in order to offer the continuous improvements expected by its clientele.

In a business where constant availability is non-negotiable, Medscheme needed to provide the Group and its customers with critical business continuity. Its sprawling architecture supports over 2,400 users across the three sites alone, making a dedicated disaster recovery site unrealistic.

The Way Forward

Medscheme's needs for this project went beyond the scope of a simple telephony upgrade or virtualisation project, leading to the appointment of Dimension Data,

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one of Africa’s leading systems integrators, to take on the task of ensuring that that Medscheme’s technology is capable of supporting its position as administrator of choice in the South African fund administrator space.

Solution Delivered

Dimension Data assisted Medscheme with the scoping, design and implementation of a comprehensive virtualised enterprise telephony solution. The solution has ensured that the Roodepoort, Cape Town and Durban sites now function as a single, logical, telephony system where costs and processes are more easily controlled.

As part of this virtualisation project, certain architectural components from the existing system have been reworked to improve system availability. This includes eliminating as many single points of failure as possible and distributing the data load across multiple port networks to increase the survivability of the telephony system.

Reducing unnecessary duplication of components throughout the entire telephony network has simplified the environment considerably. This enables Medscheme to maximise its existing licensing investments. The decreased complexity also translates into easier management going forward.

The implementation of an interactive voice response (IVR) solution allows Medscheme to provide information and automate certain repeatable processes using pre-recorded prompts customised for each fund. The IVR is integrated with assisted service for a seamless caller experience and is easing the pressure on call centre agents, improving productivity and slashing wait times.

Services Provided

Medscheme’s operations could ill-afford any unscheduled downtime and it was crucial that the project be rolled out in a controlled manner that covered all possible contingencies. This made Dimension Data’s consulting services especially important.

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This enabled Medscheme to accurately quantify the impact of migrating to the proposed virtual solution to not only maximise potential value, but also put the necessary measures in place to avoid any unnecessary disruptions to the business.

Surveyor, a specialised telephony expense management tool offered by Dimension Data, provided Medscheme with critical understanding of its entire communications infrastructure, as well as current expenses and areas where consolidation and cost savings could be achieved. Because the solution takes into account how the business actually works, the end result is an ideal fit. The solution has had a significant impact on the bottom line, trimming costs through the elimination of duplicated tasks, simplification of the overall infrastructure and better utilisation of the organisation’s licensing agreements with both Avaya and NICE

Value Derived

1.1. Maximum uptime for enhanced customer interaction

The solution provides Medscheme with much needed geographic redundancy. The Cape Town call centre has become an enterprise survivable site (ESS) and is able to support the call centre in the case of a system failure at the main site in Roodepoort. As a secondary measure, Durban has been established as a local survivable processor (LSP) with redundancy from the other two locations if necessary. This scaled design protects against data loss and - most importantly - interruptions in service delivery in the event of system failure. The system is designed with high availability in mind, for fast and efficient customer interaction at all times.

1.2. Best fit tailored to client’s own needs

The redesign of the system is based on Medscheme’s actual activity, as assessed by Surveyor, Dimension Data’s specialised telephony expense management tool. As a result the solution is entirely right-sized, neither over- burdened or over-capitalised.

1.3. Better utilisation of pre-existing resources

Virtualising the systems into a single logical system provides Medscheme with the desired centralised administration and the accompanying process and cost efficiencies. It also allows the organisation to utilise its telephony resources and services across its existing

WAN infrastructure.

The introduction of IVR and its associated self-service capabilities has freed up 20% more talk time for call centre agents who were previously inundated

with-authorisations and other repetitive administrative tasks. This eliminates the need to potentially recruit and train (and remunerate) more staff to accommodate growing caller volumes.

The client effectively has more resources in terms of time and personnel which can now be redirected towards other activities. This has included re-deploying teams of call centre agents to dedicated outbound campaigns aimed at increasing member satisfaction through the proactive clarification of medical aid benefits.

1.4. Holistic approach for best nett result

Medscheme is a sought after partner in the medical aid administrator space. As the creation of an outstanding member experience becomes paramount, medical aids are looking beyond just the ability to offer functionality. They want usability. The solution has been designed holistically, and as such compounds the incremental effects around customer interaction, networking and data centre services. The end result is one with significant impact on the business, driving up service delivery and improving efficiencies in the service arena and empowering Medscheme to meet its stakeholders' expectations.