



PharmaCare prescribes IBM e-business solution to cure refill inefficiencies.

Application	B2C prescription refill and CRM order tracking system
Business Benefits	Reductions in cost and time to place mail-service pharmacy prescription refill orders
Software	IBM WebSphere® Application Server IBM WebSphere Host Publisher IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Enterprise Edition for Windows NT®
Servers	IBM AS/400® IBM RS/6000®
Business Partner	Specialized Software, Inc.
Services	IBM Global Services

In the competitive healthcare management industry, pharmacy benefit managers must find new ways to enhance member services without driving up costs. One leading pharmacy benefit manager, PharmaCare, has met both of these goals by leveraging the Application Framework for e-business, developed by IBM, to automate its mail-service prescription refill and order tracking processes.

A subsidiary of CVS Corporation, PharmaCare provides a full range of pharmacy benefit management services to managed care and large case employer clients throughout the country. These services include a mail-service pharmacy through PharmaCare Direct, located in Fairfield, Ohio.

“Using the Application Framework for e-business, we’ve been able to develop an e-business solution that provides us with a scalable platform for creating innovative applications. In doing so, we’re not only meeting existing challenges but also laying the groundwork for the future.”

– Bill Derrig, Senior Vice President of Cost Containment, PharmaCare



Both patients and health plans can realize significant savings if patients refill mail-service prescriptions online through the PharmaCare Direct medication dispensary service.

e-business — redefining the competitive environment in your favor



Behind PharmaCare Direct's user-friendly Web interface stands a powerful transaction management system built on WebSphere Application Server.

Its new business-to-consumer (B2C) mail-service prescription refill and customer relationship management (CRM) Web-based solution — PharmaCare.com — enables members of client Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and large employer groups to place mail-service prescription orders and check the status of their orders online. They can also complete a health assessment questionnaire, receive answers to frequently asked questions and locate the nearest retail network pharmacy.

Previously, to place prescription refill orders, patients had to either call PharmaCare Direct's member services department, use a toll-free voice response unit or initiate a refill request by mail, which added the standard postal delivery time to the refill turnaround. Even if patients had already placed a refill order and just wanted to inquire about its status, they could do so only through the member services department, during normal working hours. A Web-based solution was the obvious choice to improve both value and service.

IBM — the right choice

In order to automate the order fulfillment process, PharmaCare needed to deploy a solution that would integrate front-end Web transactions with its legacy back-end order management system. Not wanting to change existing IT systems and reprogram legacy code, PharmaCare sought an e-business solution that would enable it to leverage its existing systems.

After carefully evaluating a number of solution providers as well as surveying several analyst reports, PharmaCare opted in favor of IBM. A key factor in the company's decision was the Application Framework for e-business, with its detailed road map for building robust, scalable IT infrastructures and integrated applications. "Using the Application Framework for e-business, we've been able to develop an e-business solution that provides us with a scalable platform for creating innovative applications," notes Bill Derrig, PharmaCare's senior vice president of cost containment and executive-in-charge of e-business solutions. "In doing so, we're not only meeting existing challenges but also laying the groundwork for the future."

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— Dave Pelkey, Vice President of Information Systems, PharmaCare

Meeting aggressive deadlines with a best-of-breed solution

IBM Global Services worked with the PharmaCare management team to create project objectives and timelines. And IBM Business Partner Specialized Software, Inc. worked in conjunction with the IBM Global Services team to develop and integrate applications using the IBM WebSphere software platform for e-business, including IBM WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition, and IBM WebSphere Host Publisher. "IBM and Specialized Software were the only vendors able to meet our requirements for speed of delivery and functionality," says Dave Pelkey, PharmaCare's vice president of information systems. "They offered a comprehensive e-business solution based on the WebSphere software platform that seamlessly provides secure integration between front-end Web transactions and our legacy back-end systems."

PharmaCare.com has enabled PharmaCare to reduce costs while providing members with 24 hours, 7-days-a-week access for placing mail-service prescription refill orders and obtaining a variety of valuable information. Pleased with the initial results, Greg S. Weishar, president and CEO of PharmaCare, notes, "It costs us almost 90 percent less to process a prescription refill request through PharmaCare.com than by phone or by mail." Through the online service, members can also obtain mail-service prescription refills much faster, with turnaround time reduced up to 75 percent, from 3 or 4 days often to 1 day.

A fully integrated solution

Collaborating with the IT team from PharmaCare, IBM Global Services and Specialized Software were able to develop and launch PharmaCare.com in less than four months. The interoperability and flexibility of the WebSphere software platform were important factors in this success. David Krikorian, vice president at Specialized Software, notes, "The open standards-based architecture of the WebSphere software platform for e-business eliminated the need to write custom code, thereby enabling us to reduce development time by 50 percent."

"The WebSphere software platform for e-business is the linchpin that holds the solution together. Because of it, we were able to build an extremely powerful and robust architecture."

*– David Krikorian, Vice President,
Specialized Software, Inc.*



Like patient care, e-business application development requires the coordinated efforts of a team of experts. PharmaCare chose Specialized Software and IBM for its e-business venture.

Members use password-protected user names to access the PharmaCare.com Web site, which resides on a Microsoft® Windows NT server. IBM DB2 Universal Database Enterprise Edition for Windows NT stores logon profile information, encrypted passwords, order status information and more. "DB2 turbocharges our Web applications, giving us a robust, flexible foundation on which to build for the future," says Pelkey. "We considered other database solutions but found that DB2 is unparalleled in functionality and scalability." Areas for future development include e-mail reminders and direct links from prescriptions to pertinent drug and disease state management information.

WebSphere Application Server and WebSphere Host Publisher power front-end Web applications and provide integration with back-end systems. When members order mail-service refills or check the status of orders, Java™ servlets—developed by Specialized Software and supported by WebSphere Application Server—prompt WebSphere Host Publisher to connect with legacy back-end applications residing on an IBM RS/6000 server. "The WebSphere software platform for e-business is the linchpin that holds the solution together," notes Krikorian. "Because of it, we were able to build an extremely powerful and robust architecture."

Prescribing a cure for now and the future

Wanting to remain on the cutting-edge of its industry, PharmaCare is planning to work with the teams from IBM Global Services later this year to integrate IBM MQSeries®, which will connect front-end Web transactions with legacy data hosted on the AS/400 server. This will substantially reduce the time and cost of updating members' information. "We're very pleased with the relationship we've developed with IBM and Specialized Software and are excited about what we might do together in the future," notes Pelkey. "The combination of the WebSphere software platform and DB2 Universal Database provided us with an immediate cure, and its reliability and scalability assures a healthy solution—for now and the future."

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For more information about PharmaCare
and Specialized Software Inc., visit:
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