

CASE STUDY: HEALTHBANKS BUILDS PATIENT EDUCATION PORTAL WITH GREYSTONE SOLUTIONS



Using Microsoft® ASP.NET, Microsoft® SQL Server 2000 and Microsoft® Commerce Server, Greystone Solutions built a Content Management Portal for HealthBanks, Inc. and re-architected the Company's data model to work with Microsoft Commerce Server. The system replaced a legacy content management system built in Visual Basic that was unable to deliver the personalization, scalability and simplified management interface that HealthBanks required. In building the new Content Management Portal, Greystone used the catalog capabilities built into Microsoft Commerce Server, creating a system that not only delivered accurate data, but also enabled HealthBanks to easily construct personalized mini-catalogs of information for physicians and their patients.

Situation

Founded in 1993, HealthBanks is the leading provider of services that enable learning and communication between patients, physicians, and the healthcare community at large. All product offerings are driven by one common belief: that the physician-patient relationship is the center of the most effective, highest quality health care.

At HealthBanks, pharmaceutical organizations sponsor the Company's network of programs. Sponsoring organizations choose from offerings that include a sales force effectiveness initiative called FieldBanks and a proprietary patient-level data program called PatientInsights.

At one time, a critical part of the HealthBanks network was its Patient Education Portal, a solution driven by a content management system. Originally built in Visual Basic, the Content Management System contained in-depth information from across the HealthBanks enterprise such as: cardiology, fertility, oncology, pediatric endocrinology, primary care, psychiatry, pulmonary medicine, and urology.

"The first version of our Patient Education Portal provided patients with a private and accurate means of learning about a wide range of complex disorders," said Anthony Piccione, VP Product Development.

Although the legacy system offered medical content that had been peer-reviewed by leading medical professionals throughout the country, the Company sought more from their portal.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

HealthBanks is the leading provider of services that enable learning and communication between patients, physicians, and the health care community at large. HealthBanks programs are sponsored by pharmaceutical organizations to which HealthBanks provides sales force effectiveness programs and proprietary data services.

Service Offerings

Portal Solutions

Industry

E-Business
Pharmaceutical
Education

Challenge

HealthBanks wanted to enhance their current portal with a higher level of personalization, scalability and management simplicity.

Solution

HealthBanks hired Greystone Solutions to build a new Patient Education Portal.

Microsoft Software Used

- Microsoft® ASP.NET
- Microsoft® SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft® Commerce Server

Benefits

- Scalable platform
- Easier content management
- Robust built-in capabilities to grow with site

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HEALTHBANKS CASE STUDY CONTINUED



"We wanted to push our education offering to a new level," said Piccione. "Namely, we sought to build a foundation to deliver a personalized experience to each and every patient. Anyone who has been successful in health care knows that the best quality products and services need to have the flexibility to be customized."

In order to deliver this higher level of flexibility, HealthBanks developed a unique set of requirements.

"We needed to support the ability for each physician to customize information for the specific needs of his or her own patients and practice," said Piccione. "A doctor in Boise is going to have much different needs from a doctor in Los Angeles. There were several companies doing similar things, but nothing as high-quality, customizable, and scalable as our vision."

Solution

After evaluating the capabilities of several vendors, HealthBanks chose to update and build its content management system and Patient Education Portal with Greystone Solutions, an outsourced development firm based in Boston, Massachusetts.

"We interviewed a number of companies," said Piccione. "In the end, we chose Greystone because every employee we met — from the top down — was not just aware of technology, but wanted to help us achieve our business goals."

In planning the new portal, Greystone's first challenge was how to enable the heightened level of personalization required for the project. Currently, HealthBanks employees customized content for individual physicians. In the future however, that situation was slated to change.

"For the Patient Education Portal, it was critical that physicians could eventually add and edit their own content," said Bob Shear, President of Greystone Solutions. "This is a major requirement, considering that more than 5000 physicians use HealthBanks systems."

After reviewing the various solutions available on the market at the time, Greystone chose to build the Patient Education Portal with Microsoft Commerce Server.

"The catalog capabilities in Microsoft Commerce Server were well suited for our current and future needs," said Piccione. "To begin with, Commerce Server was able to blow apart the limitations of our previous data model, which was centered on trees and nodes."

In the legacy portal, HealthBanks created one web site that contained a standardized set of information, and each physician received a local copy of the standard site. Any customization was managed on a case-by-case basis.

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VP Product Development
HealthBanks, Inc.



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HEALTHBANKS CASE STUDY CONTINUED

Benefits

Enhanced Personalization

The new Patient Education Portal offers a number of benefits to HealthBanks. To begin with, the underlying Content Management System enables the creation of mini-catalogs of information that are tailored to the specific needs of physicians and their patients. For example, doctors can add or remove treatment options, video tutorials and care suggestions.

"The new content management system allows us to offer an unprecedented level of personalization," says Piccione. "In turn, that helps us establish stronger relationships with the users of all of our portals. All in all, the new system is an integral part of our business."

Today, the new Patient Education Portal enables HealthBanks staff members to easily edit unique mini-catalogs of health content for physicians. In addition, the new Portal can support thousands of simultaneous content editors of varying degrees of technical expertise. In the future, this interface can be used directly with physicians so that they may edit their own web sites.

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The screenshot displays the 'healthbanks CMT' interface. At the top, it shows 'Application ID: AAG3939' and 'Application Type: Master Content'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Application', 'Tree', 'Categories', 'Sponsors', and 'Targets'. The main area is a table with columns for 'Status', 'Application Nodes', and 'NV'. The table lists various content items such as 'Fertility', 'Welcome', 'What is Infertility?', 'Normal Process of Fertilization', 'Definition of Infertility', 'Lesson 1', 'Page 1', 'Section 1', 'Section 2', 'Page 2', 'Lesson 2', 'What Causes Infertility?', 'Oncology', and 'Urology'. Each row has an 'action' button and a dropdown menu. At the bottom, there are 'save', 'cancel', and 'help' buttons, and a link to 'Select a different application'.

In this example, a HealthBanks staff member easily edits a unique mini-catalog of health content for a physician. The Patient Education Portal was designed to support thousands of simultaneous content editors of varying degrees of technical expertise. In the future, this interface can be used directly with physicians so that they may edit their own web sites.





Scalable Platform

When compared to the previous versions, the new Content Management System and Patient Education Portal support a far higher level of scalability. According to the Microsoft Corporation, the Commerce Server framework behind the Patient Education Portal supports millions of users, manages thousands of catalogs, and stores gigabytes of data.

However, as every technology professional knows, any system is only as scalable as the underlying architecture design and quality of implementation.

"At HealthBanks, we take a long-term view," says Piccione. "Building a system is like building a house, you can take short-cuts or you can build it to last. Greystone recognized we were installing a new foundation and it needed to be done right. In addition, Greystone's integrity to problem solving was fantastic. They would not let up on any problem, no matter how big or small."

Easier to manage content

The Patient Education Portal also provides powerful and extensible tools to simplify the configuration, deployment, and management of health care information.

"When designing the Patient Education Portal, the interface was another key area for us," adds Piccione. "I'm proud to report that the new portal offers a simple and intuitive navigation system that is far easier to maintain."

Robust built-in capabilities to grow with site

Built with Microsoft Commerce Server technology, the Patient Education Portal provides a powerful set of capabilities that HealthBanks can use at a later date, including user profiling, content targeting on a per patient basis, multi-language, and advanced business analytics.

"We like the fact that the Patient Education Portal will continue to grow with our business," says Anthony Piccione. "You can do a lot of things with the underlying framework — Microsoft Commerce Server — and it's up to you how you do it, such as personalized email campaigns."

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VP Product Development
HealthBanks, Inc.

For More Information

For more information, please contact us today!

- 617.832.9200
- sales@greystone.com
- 186 Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111
- www.greystone.com

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you build your next project with Greystone!

