

# BUPA HONG KONG



**BUPA**  
Health Insurance

**“THE SOLUTION HAS CERTAINLY SAVED US TIME, FREED A LOT OF OUR RESOURCES TO FOCUS ON OUR ACTUAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND, YES, SHARPENED OUR COMPETITIVE EDGE.”**

**– RAYMOND YU, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS, BUPA HONG KONG**

Established in 1947, BUPA (British United Provident Association) is one of the world’s leading providers of health insurance. Today, BUPA provides coverage to more than eight million people and 40,000 companies in more than 190 countries around the world.

Since 1976, BUPA Hong Kong has been the territory’s only specialist in health management. It currently provides a wide range of health insurance plans as well as total health solutions to more than 150,000 individuals and 2,500 companies in the territory.

## **CHALLENGES FACED**

As insurance providers race to harness the power of emerging technologies, outsourcing the implementation and management of these technologies has become a critical area of opportunity for those looking to sharpen their competitive edge, increase productivity and efficiency, and reduce operating costs.

BUPA is an industry pioneer in outsourcing<sup>1</sup>. The company’s approach to outsourcing was outlined more than 20 years ago in conjunction with its business strategy. It has evolved to be a key contributing factor in the organization’s overall growth. In effect, IT outsourcing has become vital to BUPA’s goal of providing consistently outstanding health management services to its customers.

BUPA needed a new IT infrastructure that would provide up-to-date and accurate business intelligence to BUPA analysts. It required powerful data extraction tools to analyse subscription trends and patterns of medical claims. The company also needed access to historical data,

which was critical both to understanding the market and customers, and in formulating the right pricing structures and product strategies. This technology would serve BUPA’s ultimate aim: to increase productivity, improve customer service, retain existing clients, generate new business, and further strengthen its market leadership.

“Our IT infrastructure had to integrate totally into our daily business operations so that we could cater to our customers’ needs and address changes in the most efficient and effective way,” said Dr Damien Marmion, Managing Director, BUPA Hong Kong. “At the same time, we were looking at cost savings to improve business revenue margins so that we could reinvest all our surplus in developing better-value health care services to benefit customers.”

## **A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION**

The first step was to replace the existing VAX system with a new Oracle-based platform (CAESAR). The Information Systems (IS) team, led by Raymond Yu, Assistant General Manager of Information Systems, BUPA Hong Kong, began to investigate business intelligence tools that could integrate with the core system, CAESAR, and help further the company’s long and short-term business objectives.

The IS team evaluated a range of vendors’ products from Business Objects, Cognos, Computer Associates, Hyperion and Oracle. After several rounds of short-listing, they selected a Cognos solution: Cognos PowerPlay® for OLAP analysis; Cognos Impromptu® for report authoring; and Cognos DecisionStream for its data extraction capabilities.

<sup>1</sup> BUPA won an award for “Best Practices in Outsourcing” from the Hong Kong-based association Best Practice Management in 2003.

The Cognos solution would allow BUPA analysts to view more data – historical and current – in greater detail, as well as enhance their accuracy and speed of delivery. BUPA could also provide regular, ad-hoc, and custom-designed reports for its internal and external customers.

The Cognos solution integrated seamlessly with CAESAR and took just six months to deploy. To ensure a smooth transition, BUPA used its extensive outsourcing experience to work in partnership with Cognos, keeping Cognos closely informed of its business strategy and the targets it expected to reach with the new solution. For its part, Cognos demonstrated a high level of commitment and professionalism, working with BUPA's in-house team during implementation, and providing training to build their knowledge about the new platform, despite scheduling difficulties and a tight timeline.

Since the Cognos solution was launched in December 2004, BUPA staff have found it makes their lives easier. "Our staff now have a very powerful suite of applications at their fingertips," said Raymond. "The most immediate change is that they now have access to a rich vein of accurate, meaningful information for decision making. They can drill down into the data and perform complex comprehensive analyses. And of course it offers a more intuitive, user-friendly environment."

## **BUILDING ON GOOD RESULTS**

Have BUPA's objectives been met? "The solution has certainly saved us time, freed a lot of our resources to focus on our actual business operations and, yes, sharpened our competitive edge," said Raymond. The company however is not planning to rest on its laurels. The next steps are to build on the platform to deliver new business opportunities, access to new markets, and new business models.

Raymond believes that further integration of the Cognos solution with other departmental systems, including those for sales and marketing, can reap even more benefits for the company.

Among the first tasks Raymond will set for the Cognos solution is to refine BUPA's 20 years of customer records to gain the most relevant aspects. This will provide more concise data, which offers a clear, accurate version of information from which BUPA can analyse the needs of both potential and existing customers.

As BUPA continues to realize its outsourcing goals, its business strategy also grows increasingly closer to fulfilment. "The less the business manages operationally, the more successful it can be," Damien said. "BUPA always focuses on what we are the best at, that is, providing personalised and good-value health insurance and services."

## **WHY COGNOS?**

Cognos delivers a complete range of integrated, scalable software for corporate performance management. Cognos products let organizations drive performance with enterprise planning and budgeting, monitor it with scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 23,000 customers in over 135 countries.

