Humana Case Study

"Buzz" Enables Humana Associates to Serve Customers Better
Through Faster Access to Knowledge and Expertise

SOCIALCAST
by vmware

"We chose Socialcast for its ability to integrate with other business systems through its Reach extensions, and because of the robust privacy and security features that gave us the confidence our data would be protected."

— Jeff Ross, Community Manager for Enterprise Social Media, Humana

Humana

Humana Inc. is a leading healthcare company offering a wide range of insurance products and health and wellness services. One of the country's largest Medicare providers and a top health insurer, Humana provides Medicare Advantage plans and prescription drug coverage to more than 4.5 million members throughout the US. It also administers managed care plans for other government programs, including Medicaid plans in Florida and Puerto Rico and TRICARE (a program for military personnel) in ten southern states. Additionally, Humana offers commercial health plans and specialty (life, dental, and vision) coverage. All told, Humana covers more than 11 million health plan members in the United States.

Business Challenge

Humana delivers cutting edge healthcare products and services to millions of customers. To be successful, Humana associates must be able to reach out to other associates to collaborate, ask questions, or find needed expertise. In a decentralized, diversified company of Humana's size, cross-company collaboration was becoming difficult, and information had become fragmented, trapped in "silos of data" and hard to find.

Socialcast democratizes information by making associate-to-associate communication seamless

In 2009 the company's Enterprise Innovation Team was tasked with finding a way to improve communications between associates through a more informal, internal forum—a place where everyone's voice could be heard, while keeping information and proprietary data safe. Any proposed solution had to keep data secure to ensure Humana remained compliant with the healthcare industry's stringent privacy requirements.

The goal was to flatten the organization and democratize information by making associate-to-associate communication easier and a seamless extension to their daily flow of work. Humana wanted to ensure that collaborative capabilities were directly accessible within various enterprise application environments—not an additional "inbox" to log in and out of each day.

Socialcast Solution

Humana had been relying on Microsoft® SharePoint® as an internal communication platform; yet the team felt they needed a better way to collaborate interdepartmentally and share data across multiple business systems. Humana also needed to seamlessly bridge various silos of data that existed across Humana's large, extended organization in order to help associates work more efficiently.

"We initially tested another online platform, one of the larger enterprise social networking solutions on the market. After about a year, adoption by our associates was good," said Jeff Ross, Community Manager for Enterprise Social Media at Humana. "The success of an initial pilot encouraged us to go out and look for a more robust solution that offered the option to host our data on-premise for security reasons. We embarked on a comprehensive evaluation of enterprise social networking tools including Jive, NewsGator, Socialtext—roughly eight or 10 solutions. We chose Socialcast for its ability to integrate with other business systems using its Reach extensions, and because of the robust privacy and security features that gave us the confidence our data would be protected."

Humana easily imported all their data from the pilot system into the Socialcast platform and launched their community to the whole company in May, 2010. Jeff Ross commented, "At first we were nervous about importing all our data into Socialcast, but the process was remarkably easy and most importantly, Socialcast took extra steps to ensure our data was kept secure throughout the process." Socialcast was deployed as an on-premise solution with the appropriate security measures to ensure Humana remained in compliance with the healthcare industry's data privacy regulations.

Socialcast's security capabilities ensure that data is compliant with healthcare industry regulations

Humana refers to their Socialcast community as "Buzz" due to the hive of activity created by associates when Socialcast went live. "Our team looked at all the tools available in the Enterprise Social Networking space. In terms of cost, best-of-breed functionality and features, as well as an on-premise option for security purposes, Socialcast was the best option," said Ross.

Business Impact

Since the launch of Buzz, Socialcast has been a hit among Humana's associates. There are over 22,500 active users across all of Humana's locations with nearly 500,000 posts in Socialcast since Humana launched the community. More than 6,000 posts are created each week. Currently, over 1,150 groups have been created, and 80% of questions asked within Buzz are answered.

Socialcast Reach extensions embed Buzz activity directly into SharePoint sites

In addition to Socialcast being the best out of box solution, for security purposes Humana elected to have their Socialcast deployment on-premise to keep their data highly secure and to ensure that they stayed in compliance with the healthcare industry's security regulations.

One of the reasons why Socialcast has been so successful is because it is integrated into Humana's other enterprise applications using Socialcast Reach extensions. More than 100 Reach extensions have been implemented throughout the organization, most of which involve adding functionality to existing SharePoint sites. Humana has created team and topic oriented integrations in SharePoint. "Ironically, what SharePoint misses is the ability to have easily-discovered, interactive discussions organized around groups and common interests, and that's where Socialcast really shines" notes Jeff Ross.

80% of questions asked within Buzz are answered

Humana also quickly learned how to extend their social layer further using Socialcast's robust APIs. For example, the Human Resources department developed several ways to harvest discussion data from Buzz to encourage participation and engagement among associates in the community.

Nearly 20 different applications have been built to help Humana measure and monitor associates' engagement on Buzz, and reward the associates who were using the social features correctly. These tools have helped Humana learn about what their associates respond to, and provide insight to executive leadership on how to drive internal adoption of Buzz. *(Cont.)*

"Socialcast's growth and usefulness has surpassed everyone's goals and expectations. Without Socialcast, we'd have to revert to collaborating through emails and forwarded messages. I can't imagine going back to the way things used to be—we'd have a minor riot on our hands"

— Jeff Ross, Community Manager for Enterprise Social Media, Humana

Business Impact

(Cont.) In 2011, Humana set a business goal of increasing productivity and knowledge sharing. With the help of Socialcast, this goal was achieved. By integrating enterprise social networking capabilities directly within other enterprise applications, communication and collaboration is seamless—Socialcast is a platform that lets people 'work where they work'. "Socialcast's growth and usefulness has surpassed everyone's goals and expectations. Without Socialcast, we'd have to revert to collaborating through emails and forwarded messages. I can't imagine going back to the way things used to be—we'd have a minor riot on our hands," continued Ross.

Future Plans

Moving forward, Humana wants to cross-pollinate activity from Buzz with external social media initiatives. Buzz has done such a good job developing the social skills among associates that Humana is going to start taking their suggestions for the company Facebook page content, YouTube videos, and Twitter posts. The goal is to encourage associates to become part of the external social media experience, solidifying Humana's position as a thought leader and innovator in the industry.

SOCIALCAST
by **vm**ware®