



Case Study

Flexible, Easy-to-Use Policy Administration with Policy Decisions



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Customer Name:

American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company

Challenge:

American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company (American Hardware) wanted to upgrade its policy administration solution to take advantage of new technology.

Solution:

Insurity's Policy Decisions, a proven Web-based policy administration system that enables commercial lines carriers to lower expenses, improve customer service and increase revenue.

Results:

- Significantly enhanced policy administration
- Increased user productivity and efficiency
- Seamless upgrade requiring no user training
- Automation features minimize user error and wasted time

Overview

For more than 110 years American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company (American Hardware) has provided commercial property/casualty insurance, including auto liability, specialty lines and workers compensation for small to midsized businesses. Typically selling direct through employed sales representatives, American Hardware has a presence in all but a handful of states. An Insurity customer for more than twenty years, American Hardware decided to upgrade its policy administration solution in 2008 with the .Net-based Policy Decisions.

A Twenty Year Relationship

In 1986 American Hardware decided to automate its policy administration by deploying a solution from Insurity designed for the MS-DOS operating system. The original solution worked so well and the relationship was so successful that in 2003, when American Hardware decided to upgrade, the company converted to a newer, Web-based solution: Commercial Intellisys.

"We continue to work with Insurity because after all these years we remain impressed with the commitment of their employees," said Kelly Becker, vice president, administration at American Hardware. "They take the time to understand our business and make sure we get the unique features and functionality that we need."

The insurance industry, however, is highly competitive and ongoing technological innovation continues to provide new ways to enhance operational productivity and profitability. Mindful of this dynamic environment, American Hardware continues to examine company procedures, operations and resources with the goal of identifying new process improvements and efficiencies.

"We are always interested in new ways to drive growth and technology that can help us produce quotes at a reduced expense," said Becker. "As a result, we're always examining ways to produce policies faster while still meeting our client's needs and expectations."

While the conversion to Commercial Intellisys was a success, new technology made it obsolete by 2008. Insurity proposed that American Hardware convert again, this time to the .Net-based Policy Decisions. In August 2008, after a lengthy review, American Hardware made the switch.

"While we were unsure about converting so soon after the last upgrade we went with Policy Decisions because it would enhance navigation and usability," said Becker. "In addition, it would be easier for both our in-house team and Insurity to maintain and customize."

Making the Switch to Policy Decisions

Policy Decisions is a proven, Web-based policy administration system that enables commercial lines carriers to lower expenses, improve customer service and increase revenue by providing a fully automated and extensible



application that reduces policy maintenance time while improving agent experience and speed to market.

Policy Decisions automates rating and issuance support for all major commercial lines of business and numerous proprietary lines. In addition, it features full policy lifecycle transaction support, full maintenance of ISO and customer-specific rates, forms and rules changes and delivers enhanced underwriting decision-making with point-of-sale application data-capture, third-party data integration, scoring, and referral-management. Finally, because it utilizes service oriented architecture, Policy Decisions supports integration with third party data or systems.

American Hardware was initially hesitant to convert from Commercial Intellisys to Policy Decisions because technology conversions are notoriously time consuming and can temporarily impede productivity. Upon making the decision, however, the company was surprised to find that the conversion was painless and almost instantaneous.

“It was the best upgrade we’ve ever done,” said Becker. “The upgrade took substantially less time than previous conversions, including the conversion from our first to our second solution.”

Benefits

According to American Hardware, Policy Decisions significantly enhances the productivity and efficiency of its employees. The benefits begin with overall ease of use enabled by the .Net and the modern design and architecture. Navigation is designed so that employees can access the policy information they need immediately, without having to progress through a linear, static sequence of screens, clicks and procedures. In addition, the solution’s look and feel was designed to emulate common websites and software programs, simplifying user training.

“Because the user interface and navigation were so intuitive, we didn’t even have to retrain employees to use the system,” said Becker. “There were no classes, no documentation, and the users were able to take full advantage of Policy Decisions right away.”

Policy Decisions is also having a notable impact on how American Hardware approaches regulatory maintenance. The company operates coast to coast and must comply with a different set of regulations in each state. Reviewing and accepting changes from ISO and the states can be cumbersome and time consuming;

Insurity simplifies this process by providing American Hardware with aggregated information and a simple mechanism for reviewing and accepting changes as needed.

“Regulatory maintenance with Policy Decisions is a significant feature and one of the highlights of the solution. When there’s a change we just click what we need and Policy Decisions takes care of the rest” said Becker. “In addition, we find Insurity to be extremely useful for their interpretation of ISO changes.”

One of the signature benefits to American Hardware comes from automated forms support. Policy Decisions knows which forms are appropriate based on which coverage is selected, thereby eliminating the need for employees to page through lengthy lists of forms organized by state and line of business. The system also automatically fills in variable information for new and renewal policies and endorsements and takes into account ISO updates.

“Forms support provides us with huge productivity gains,” said Becker. “It allows our employees to focus on higher value work and minimize the possibility of user error and time wasted on mundane tasks.”



Policy Decisions provides a range of additional benefits. The system helps American Hardware streamline its underwriting processes by allowing employees to focus only on the exposures that, by virtue of their job description or area of focus, they need to review. The solution also features an Underwriting Maintenance Kit, which American Hardware can administer on its own, with the ability to add, remove and edit user authority levels, underwriting questions, underwriting rules, and screens as needed without assistance from Insurity.

Furthermore, the Virtual Policy® feature in Policy Decisions enables salespeople to view policies online as PDF files, minimizing the time and expense associated with printing and storing paper files. Finally, because of its service-oriented architecture, Policy Decisions was easily integrated with American Hardware's claims system, streamlining the coverage confirmation process.

Moving Forward Together

The advantages of American Hardware's relationship with Insurity goes far beyond the product benefits delivered by Policy Decisions.

"We have a true alliance with Insurity. They take the time to understand our business and our unique needs and work to fulfill them," said Becker. "In addition, they have architected the system to enable our own associates to make changes to our underwriting process in Policy Decisions, minimizing our reliance on Insurity for every modification or customization."

American Hardware and Insurity also work together on product development, to help ensure that Policy Decisions constantly improves over time. American Hardware has participated in testing and provides feedback to upgrades and features early in the development cycles, thereby ensuring that next-generation features reflect the company's real-world requirements.

"Policy Decisions and Insurity position us for the future with the newest technology and a platform flexible enough to integrate with other tools and adaptable enough to evolve and grow as we do," said Becker.

Results

American Hardware believes that Insurity's Policy Decisions is significantly enhancing the productivity and efficiency of its employees. The benefits began with the upgrade, which was quick and painless, resulting in virtually no downtime, manuals, training classes or associated costs. Additionally, navigation was designed so that employees can access the policy information they need immediately without having to progress through a linear, static sequence of screens, clicks and procedures. Finally, features such as automated forms support and regulatory maintenance enable employees to focus on higher value work and minimize the possibility of user error and time wasted on mundane tasks.

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