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Features

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Enables
Real-Time BI
for George
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Ensemble Enables Real-Time BI for George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates

REVIEWER: Praveen Toteja, CIO for George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates.

BACKGROUND: The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) is a nonprofit academic multispecialty medical group practice in Washington, D.C., that includes more than 270 physicians and 41 medical and surgical specialties.

PLATFORMS: The MFA executive dashboard is running on a Windows 2005 platform and utilizes an HP 30 server. Information is extracted from five separate applications/repositories. End users access the dashboard via Web browsers.

PROBLEM SOLVED: MFA physicians are quite sophisticated end users and very knowledgeable about the potential benefits of IT. These physicians were using information from multiple systems that was summarized into monthly reports to manage their practices. In 2005, they began requesting that performance and financial management data be delivered much more rapidly in order to enable problems to be recognized and addressed more quickly and, thus, to improve overall practice management. MFA selected InterSystems' Ensemble universal integration platform to integrate the disparate information applications/repositories and build an executive dashboard application to provide the requested information on an effectively real-time basis. The system went live on the Web in July 2005 and now provides physicians with the requested information in the time frame they consider necessary.

PRODUCT FUNCTIONALITY: Ensemble is used to

integrate information from data repositories and systems that include IDX Flowcast, Allscripts TouchWorks, Great Plains financial software, ADP payroll system and an Excel budgeting database. Information from these sources is gathered, synthesized, summarized and displayed on a front-end graphical dashboard that was built on Ensemble featuring a business activity monitoring (BAM) framework. Physicians can access the dashboard via the Web 24x7 and have found it much easier to identify potential problems and to make the changes needed to meet MFA practice objectives.

STRENGTHS: Ensemble product strengths were key to the success of this project. Ensemble Studio is a development environment that enables technical specialists and business analysts to easily work together to achieve rapid integration and development. Ensemble BAM Framework includes prebuilt components, such as speedometers; light bars; and line, bar and pie charts, to create an interface that provides physicians with a real-time illustration of their individual performance metrics. Ensemble Management Portal enables customizable, end-to-end management.

WEAKNESSES: Our biggest problem has been freeing staff to get trained in Ensemble system management. With no training, we needed to lean very heavily on InterSystems for advice. Some of the system management interfaces, such as for automating backups, weren't documented in the initial version. This problem has been successfully addressed by InterSystems.

SELECTION CRITERIA: MFA evaluated multiple integration platforms. Ensemble was

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InterSystems Corporation
One Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02142
(617) 621-0600
www.intersystems.com

selected because it has the capabilities that we felt would enable rapid integration, development and deployment. The system went live less than six months from initial conception and design.

DELIVERABLES: Deliverables include a graphical dashboard illustrating individual financial and clinical data for physicians and providing executives and department chairpersons with a near real-time view of more than 30 financial, clinical and operational key performance indicators as well as a year-to-date summary of billing and scheduling data that is never more than one day old. Physicians also have access to a best-practices database via the Ensemble-based system.

VENDOR SUPPORT: InterSystems provided outstanding support throughout the executive dashboard integration project. In fact, MFA had been using another application built on InterSystems' Caché post-relational database prior to the selection of Ensemble for the dashboard project. This vendor had already established a successful support track record with the Caché-based system - one which was strengthened during the integration initiative.

DOCUMENTATION: Once the system management interfaces, such as for automating backups, were completely documented, the Ensemble documentation proved to be highly usable.