



## *Case Study*

# **An US Based Life Expectancy Reports Provider**

This company is an Atlanta, Georgia, USA based Life Expectancy Reports (LER) provider for the Life Settlement Industry. As a part of their service offering they need to process thousands of medical record pages every day in order to evaluate the life expectancy of the people who want to get their life insurance policies settled by settlement providers. Before contacting us for a software based solution they typically had to handle papers manually, sort them into chronological order, extract medically relevant information from each page, prepare a medical summary of the case and finally using a proprietary life table, fix the expected duration of remaining life for the applicant.

## **The Problem**

The above manual way of handling led to a number of problems for the company that were proving to be significant deterrents to their growth. The problems can be enumerated as follows:

1. They had to rent a huge warehouse at significant cost to store all the medical records.
2. The papers needed to come to them physically through post, which again meant a huge cost in postage and courier charges.
3. The manual process of chronological sorting of physical papers was extremely slow and inherently error prone, leading to frequent embarrassments.
4. Frequently they received the same file twice from different providers and then it would be profitable to retrieve the previous sorted file for the same case to reduce the workload significantly. But, physical storage meant a very inefficient search-retrieval process which also meant additional costs as the warehouse charged extra for these services.
5. Finally they could not attract and retain suitable staff to do this mundane chronological sorting of paper documents in Atlanta.

## **The Solution**

We needed to solve two basic problems here to provide them a lasting solution:

1. We needed to figure out a way to convert the papers to electronic documents and provide a software interface to do the chronological sorting. This would make storage cheap and will provide an efficient way to do the sorting, and
2. We needed to find a way to solve their problem of staff attrition.

We solved the first problem by writing a server based, distributed software that would automatically upload scanned pages straight from the scanners to a server. Then we wrote a browser based program to do the chronological sorting through an intuitive and easy user interface. Next we provided them with a team of Business Processing Executives in Kolkata, India who would check the scanned images against the data files created from them, then sort the records appropriately. Finally we put together an IT infrastructure consisting of scanners, servers and softwares for secure transmission of files, at the Client offices in Atlanta and also in our Kolkata office. The transmission of files would happen through the Internet using data encryption for security and privacy of data.



This solution was put in place by end of February, 2005 and actual work started in April 2005. From then on approximately 20,000 pages get scanned every day at the Client offices using high speed scanners and are transferred securely through the internet to our office servers in Kolkata. Our processing executives do the chronological sorting during our daytime and the results are transmitted back to the Client servers before their extractors and underwriters start working the next day based upon our electronically sorted files.

## Further Engagements

Once the above engagement started and their confidence in our services grew, they wanted us to take up more jobs for them.

1. They wanted to build a paper-less office and wanted us to put an electronic work flow in place for the whole range of their back-office work. This included extraction of medically relevant information from the sorted files, creating medical case abstracts, underwriting and then raising invoices and managing collection. For this they contracted three programmers from our IT department on a monthly retainer to create and maintain these programs on an ongoing basis.
2. They also started a secondary service of 'redacting' (in other words blocking out so as to make it impossible to read select words or phrases – e.g. identifying character strings like, name, address, dates, social security numbers etc – within the documents), within medical records for insurance companies involved in litigation. For this too we created the electronic work flow and now this service is a significant residual revenue earner for both Client and Tathya.
3. About 8 months back, after long deliberations, they also agreed to outsource the extraction part of the work flow to us. Preliminary training of Indian doctors ended by February, 2008 and the process went into commercial production by March, 2008. Currently 12 doctors and 15 KPO executives participate in this highly knowledge intensive work-flow and they currently process 3,000 pages of patient medical records per day. A team of 3 dedicated system engineers and programmers maintain the system and provide IT support both to the end client as well as our in-house KPO team.

## Benefits Accrued to the Client

1. Outsourcing of the chronological sorting of the medical records to India removed a major bottleneck in their process. This increased their ability to take on more work by at least 500%! Within 6 months of starting to outsource, Client grew from a 15 person team to a 60 strong team. The Managing Partner of Client went on record at a seminar on Outsourcing to acknowledge this and cite the project as anecdotal proof that outsourcing does not kill US jobs – in fact, on the contrary it generates more jobs when done correctly.
2. Conversion of the physical medical records into electronic medical records made things immensely efficient for their underwriters who can now retrieve any previous file almost at the click of a mouse button. The efficiency increase have never been measured formally, but, subjective estimates by Client functionaries place it at more than 200%!
3. Client now has a strong IT team with two specialists in-house and three in Tathya and a seamless project management protocol that has been tuned to perfection over the last 20 months. This means a huge cost saving for them – about 40% compared to maintaining a completely in-house five person team.