TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE COSTS INTO GOLD, WITH AUTOMATION ALCHEMY

Abstract

When Gabriel Monteiro, an AVP responsible for the medicaid enrolments of a healthcare giant, sought a technology solution to keep rising operational costs under check, he turned to long-time outsourcing partner, Infosys BPM for help. This case study details how Infosys BPM built and deployed over 100 automated bots, delivering $2.5Mn in annual cost avoidance along with a significant 33% boost in process efficiency.

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Where costs are a serious priority

Gabriel Monteiro is an Associate Vice President with a US-based healthcare giant. Since the company's mission is to provide healthcare benefits at minimum cost, its operational budget is tightly controlled. To prune costs, Gabriel — who oversees the enrolment side of the company's Medicaid business — outsourced 22 US states worth of enrolments to Infosys BPM. Resultantly, a large team from Infosys BPM — cross-located in India and the US; and led by Account Manager Sagar Natarajan — started managing Gabriel's enrolment operations.

In a meeting with Sagar at the initiation of the partnership, Gabriel outlined his vision.

Through the outsourcing arrangement, he wanted to leverage Infosys BPM's proven process management expertise to bring in noiseless operations, zero slippages, and positive net promoter scores. Sagar and his team started working on this brief, and soon began providing seamless healthcare services to the company's Medicaid plan members.

Over the years, as the business continued to thrive and more individuals enrolled under the company's healthcare plans, the volumes handled by Sagar's teams grew significantly. The costs of operations kept pace with the rising delivery pressures because the costs of staff working overtime

– especially in the onshore location – was quite high. Another serious problem was the fluctuation in monthly volumes; they rose significantly during season changes and natural disasters – such as during the COVID era which saw an average ~50% uptick. As a result of these challenges, Sagar began struggling to control operational costs and maintain the SLAs, despite optimising his team schedules. So, in one of his regular status update meetings with Gabriel, Sagar highlighted the situation and suggested bringing in a technology solution for continued cost-effectiveness of the outsourced operations.
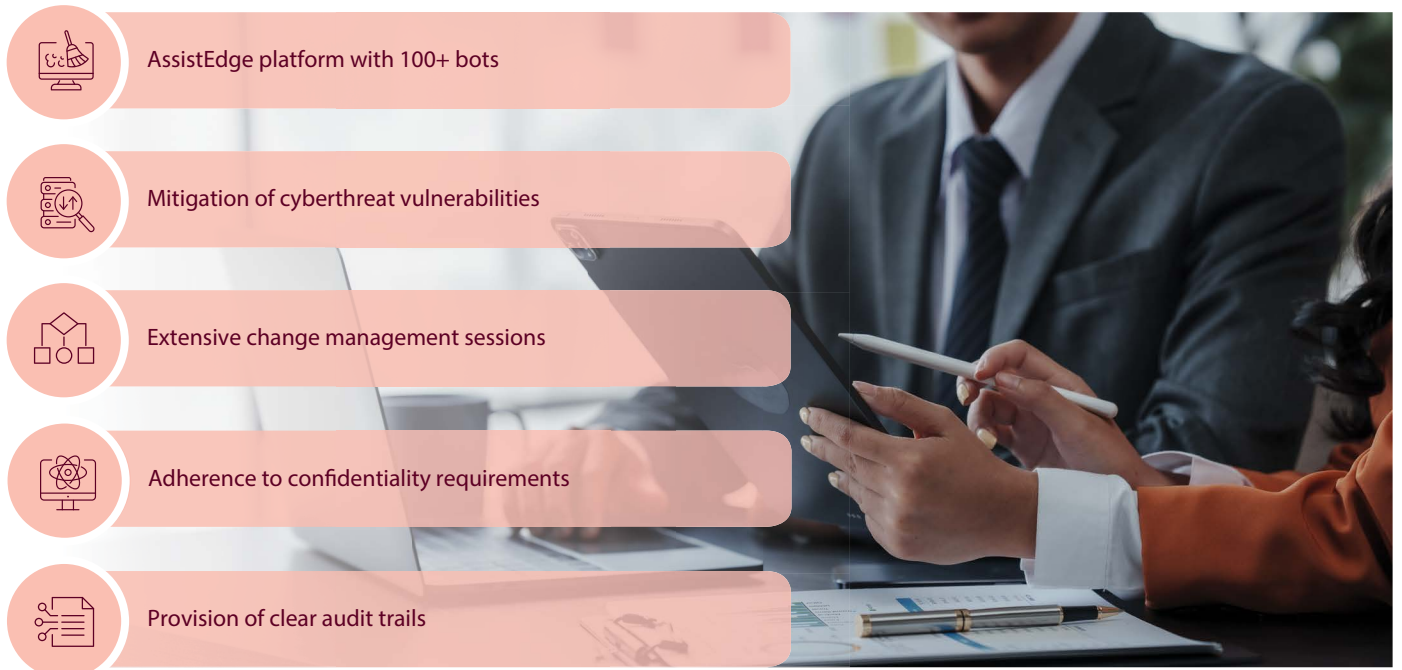
A herculean challenge

Given Sagar's warranted concerns around continued operational cost-effectiveness were the team to be scaled-up, Gabriel signed off on the suggestion of deploying new technology for leaner operations.

There was a catch, however. He required the investment to be minimal, and additionally requested at least a 25% overall efficiency gain in the processes post-transformation. Lastly, he wanted the solution to accelerate

handling of some of the requests — especially during crisis and peak seasons — for a 36-hour turnaround instead of the existing 3 days per request. And so, Sagar had a herculean task on hand.

Approach summary

- AssistEdge platform with 100+ bots
- Mitigation of cyberthreat vulnerabilities
- Extensive change management sessions
- Adherence to confidentiality requirements
- Provision of clear audit trails

Sagar was happy enough to take up the challenge. The quantum of work, under separate lines of businesses such as billing and reconciliations, member management, claims and support queries – totalling around 125K transactions per month — typically required the efforts of ~50 personnel at a minimum. To efficiently deal with this volume of work, he directed Infosys BPM's technology team to create over 100 automated bots using AssistEdge — Infosys' customer service automation platform — along with other supporting technologies.

However, as the team worked on building the automation, Gabriel informed Sagar that some stakeholders within the business had multiple concerns around the solution.

These revolved around the costs, whether the technology would be intrusive, and whether it would comply with the sensitive data regulations and policies that the company was subject to.

Setting up a series of meetings with these stakeholders, Sagar explained how the AssistEdge platform would sit on top of the technology stack and would neither disrupt existing workflows nor require any upgradation of existing IT infrastructure. He also reassured them that it would perform its tasks based on the company's rule base and provide clear audit trails to trace back any transaction in the enrolment lifecycle. He then detailed out how the service accounts were being set up in such a manner to maintain confidentiality

and to adhere to all the typical offshoring policy restrictions that applied. Finally, the stakeholders were greatly relieved to hear that since the automation was being built completely inhouse by Infosys BPM's technology team, the cost to deploy the solution would be minimal.

These change management sessions were beneficial, and from then on Sagar's team, facing no other major challenges, went on to deliver the entire process upgradation without any further delay. Further, because they built the bots using the latest versions of the software tools, the solution met the company's IT security requirements for mitigating all possible cyber threat vulnerabilities.
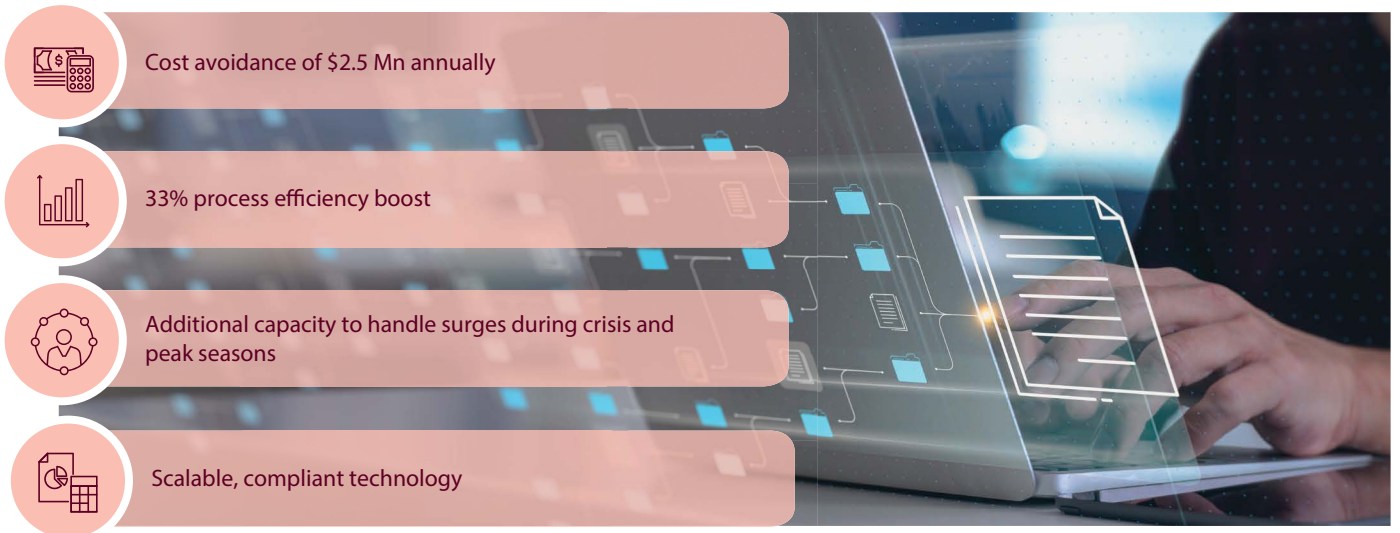
Performance boost at minimal cost

Prior to the deployment of the AssistEdge based solution, most the company's enrolment work was being done in the US. However, with the bots on the job, there was no longer any need for hiring fresh

resources in the US to meet the increasing workload. This led to major cost savings for the operations. In addition, the bots were efficient, handling transactions much faster than was usual earlier. This was a huge

boost especially during the crisis and peak seasons, creating additional capacity to handle more work.

Key benefits

- Cost avoidance of $2.5 Mn annually
- 33% process efficiency boost
- Additional capacity to handle surges during crisis and peak seasons
- Scalable, compliant technology

Gabriel was greatly pleased with the outcomes of the process transformation. Overall, the program saved the need for more than 40 additional staff which would have costed his operations ~$2.5 Mn annually for sustenance. Apart from this significant cost avoidance, what made him happier was the faster handling of requests — boosting process efficiency by 33% — and the easy scalability of the solution.

Now, with the success of the automation-led transformation, Gabriel and Sagar are working towards bringing in further intelligent automation solutions towards even more cost-effective operations.

Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.

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