

Completing an ACA Systems Support Project on a Tight Open Enrollment Deadline



A major integrated managed-care organization offered Freed a challenging proposition to create a new web tool for small business customers and brokers designed for use across multiple states. To support 2014 health care reform changes, the educational tool needed to be delivered to completion by fall 2013. Freed Associates took a leadership role in this project by providing strong project management, analysis, and business management to successfully launch the product and meet rigid timeline and budgetary requirements.

Situation: Fixing Under-informed Consumers and Overloaded Systems

The heart of healthcare is information and for small business owners unsure about how new healthcare regulations would impact them, information was a premium. Our client, a major managed care consortium, needed a new system, and needed it fast. The goal of the ACA Systems Support Project was to assist our client with an educational tool to support small business owners and brokers by providing easy-to-access information about their new options under healthcare reform.

To fully support 2014 open enrollment activity across multiple regions, the deliverables were required by fall 2013. This self-service website would create a viable solution to enhance user engagement and reduce the level of inquiries to the client's already overburdened call center resources. The web-based solution was one tactic within

a broader communications campaign.

With only a few months' lead time, Freed was consulted for our expertise and flexibility in managing a project of this scope to ensure that the tool was fully functionally before the compliance date deadline.

Solution: Understanding the Market, Understanding the Technology

As lead on this project, Freed consultant Kali Taylor was responsible for scoping the project, management of the design, development, launch, promotion, enhancement, and management of the small business web-based decision support tool, titled: "The Small Business Health Care Reform Advisor."

Freed conducted extensive research into the client's current online broker quoting tools across each of its regional divisions. We collaborated with the client's digital agency, marketing, and sales organization. The entire project was under the purview of Freed's team of experts who fully developed the concept by providing content strategy, including ad hoc copywriting and editorial services. We also synchronized variables in content across the different regions.

Freed collaborated with client stakeholders in marketing and other operations to maximize their technical resources and project governance processes. We encapsulated their vision in the final product and we were able to reduce active client participation in the process through tight scope management and utilization of Freed's extensive resources.

Results: On Time and On Budget

The Small Business Health Care Reform Advisor web tool was successfully launched on time. Because of the timely project management provided by Freed consultants, we were able to conceive and implement a product that gave small business clients and brokers access to accurate, timely, unbiased information regarding small group coverage in 2014.

The project encompassed the necessary content and functionality, was within budget, and was managed with an eye on protecting the client's valuable time contribution through streamlined communications processes.

Customer and broker engagement feedback was positive and metrics showed that the project met the goals set out by the client:

- 6,800 current and potential small business customers and brokers visited the tool between mid-September and mid-December. Engagement for the California region exceeded its goal of over 5,000 unique visitors by year end.
- Visitors accessed an average of almost six pages per visit, spending over five minutes.
- Over 50% of tool users rated the information provided as "extremely" or "very" informative.

- Approximately 60% of tool users rated their perception of the client as “more positive” after using the tool.

The Small Business Health Care Reform Advisor was launched successfully within strict timelines and has continued to provide online broker quoting tools and self-service options for small group customers and brokers across multiple regions. The tool has been successfully transitioned for internal use by the client’s staff.

Regulations change almost as much as technology. While both can be bewildering, the goal is still the same: utilize the latter to help keep your clients apprised of, and in compliance with, the former.