

Jump-starting Operational Improvements in Marketing Communications for a Major Health Plan



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When a health plan with millions of members experienced challenges delivering targeted marketing communications to its individual and family members, they turned to Freed as a trusted partner.

The ACA has had many downstream impacts for health plans, including growth in membership and a more complex population profile (on/off exchange, transition from other plans, “grandfathering,” more state requirements). In addition, our client recently centralized the development of marketing communications for this line of business and has planned other initiatives that will impact marketing operations. The marketing communications team interacts with 10+ other departments, multiple state regulatory jurisdictions, as well as production and fulfillment teams, complicating any process improvements. Phrases used to describe the existing situation included “fire drill,” “heroic effort,” and “process breakdown.”

Goal

Our client was strained by its manual processes and unable to support future demands and to handle contingencies. Our challenge was to identify and initiate organizational and process improvements to meet the changing demands. Initial discovery revealed a lack of process management and no operational metrics. Freed recognized the need to bring awareness to specific gaps in performance and to provide a structure that would enable the client team to take ownership of the improvement process.

Strategy

The strategy was to assess current issues and provide a roadmap to implement needed operational improvements. Freed’s contribution included:

1. Providing a clear catalog of operational issues and their impact on performance
2. Defining a prioritized set of recommendations for improvement
3. Collaborating with the client team to develop an action plan for near-term improvements

Tactics

The emphasis of Freed’s tactics included close collaboration, precise observation and focus on client success. The team performed the following key tasks.

1. Interviewed key team members and representatives of all internal business partners to obtain current and precise observations of operational pain points
2. Validated findings with the client and other stakeholders as necessary
3. Developed recommendations iteratively with key team members, business partners, and supporting teams
4. Presented recommendations to key business partners and executives to obtain buy-in and adoption
5. Worked closely with the Improvement Team Lead to develop an Action Plan for the most critical

recommendations

Results and Conclusion

Freed was able, in a diplomatic and constructive way, to assist the client in recognizing the essence of the problem and in taking ownership of the operational improvement process. As a result, the client has practical tools to initiate improvements, including an Action Plan for immediate priorities.