High performance. Delivered.

Insight Driven Health

Service-Oriented Architecture Transforms Healthcare IT in Andalucía

Client Background

The Andalusia Health Service's (Servicio Andaluz de Salud – SAS) service excellence has established a strong benchmark for healthcare delivery in Spain. SAS serves eight million people in the autonomous region of Andalusia through an extensive public healthcare network of 27 hospitals, 1,500 primary healthcare centres and 85,000 healthcare professionals.

Business Challenge

In recent years the security, sustainability and reliability of healthcare information exchange between different public healthcare bodies and their information systems has become increasingly critical. Guarantees are necessary at the local hospital, regional, national and international levels.

To meet this challenge, SAS adopted a new IT strategy to transform and upgrade its IT systems, obtain a

corporate services catalogue, rearrange and standardise the communications infrastructure and consolidate terminology used throughout the entire Andalusia Healthcare System. In terms of the new SAS IT strategy, SOA (Service-Oriented Architecture) is being adopted and implemented within the Spanish healthcare sector for the first time. The aim is to help healthcare professionals through increased data processing and analysis capacity, and by standardising, automating and optimising processes, while reducing the cost of technology projects.

SAS' sub-directorate of Information and Communications Technologies defines and executes information and communications technologies (ICT) policies, and is managing the SAS systems transformation and upgrade process in addition to its ongoing IT support for SAS professionals and public health services.

How Accenture Helped

The collaboration between SAS and Accenture has been critical to the implementation of the SOA strategy. Accenture's role includes the creation of a dedicated team to coordinate all other suppliers, healthcare centres, the Regional Government Ministry, regional community-assisted centres, laboratories, public healthcare companies, and other satellite systems.

With around one hundred standard corporate business services, the sub-directorate processes the messaging generated by 19 SAS hospitals,

five public non-SAS hospitals, the emergency health services, the Spanish National Health System, 11 non-SAS systems, and other Regional Government Ministry projects. The sub-directorate of ICTS promises both present and future cost savings. Its reuse rate is rising, as is demand among new business areas and each of the new departments in various Andalucía hospitals.

High Performance Delivered

In the last decade Andalucía has committed to the modernisation of its information systems, with an initial focus on primary healthcare. In 2006, SAS decided to extend this modernisation to specialised healthcare which, both in terms of time and cost, was based on transforming legacy technologies and infrastructures. For this reason, the SOA strategy adopted by SAS became one of the modernisation project's key facets. In the time since the strategy was first implemented in September of 2009, both economic and change management outcomes have justified the investment. SAS achieved a saving of 86 percent on previously forecast development and implementation costs on the specialised care project. Other early successes include:

- An almost incident-free installation process, with SOA up and running in 19 hospitals. Plans are in place to implement the specialised healthcare project throughout the remaining hospitals over the next two years.

- Hospitals have received SOA training and normative guidance from the dedicated team to ensure that all decisions are aligned with the corporate SOA strategy approach.

- Healthcare centres are seen as benchmarks not only in Andalusia, but in Spain and across Europe. Seville's Virgen del Rocío Teaching Hospital and Granada's Virgen de las Nieves Hospital of Granada are actively collaborating with STIC to incorporate the same corporate services into their centres. SAS' technology modernisation project is being used as a platform from which to boost the standardisation, modernisation and homogenisation of their hospital information systems.

SOA strategy also improves control over project definition and progress by means of standardization in every business area, every use case, project by project. In addition, loose coupling has been introduced among applications to allow independent, low-impact development, which has resulted in further cost savings with respect to ICT projects. Overall, the SOA project has significantly improved the scalability and sustainability of SAS' IT systems.

SAS' knowledge management has also been positively impacted by the SOA project. An effective internal capability, without the need for external suppliers, has been developed. By cataloguing the organisation's master tables, data consistency and semantic interoperability have been enabled throughout the organisation. Information is now available in real time, since the solutions are developed on event driven architecture, using the provider–subscriber yardstick. This is helping SAS to be both internally and externally interoperable.

For more information, please contact

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