northdoor casebook

Northdoor successfully completes the London Market's largest data migration project for Markel

With the help of Northdoor, Markel successfully migrates over 40 years of legacy data, 12 million ledger entries and over two million inward policies from eight core systems. To date this is one of the largest data conversions to take place in the London Market and alongside the conversion, one of the largest system implementations. Go live was accomplished in March 2013 and seen by all at Markel as a relatively smooth process.

About Markel

Markel International is a specialist insurer with offices in the UK, mainland Europe, Asia Pacific and South America. The company writes UK and international business through Markel Syndicate 3000, Markel International Insurance Company Limited and its Brazilian reinsurance company and in 2012 had gross premiums of $888 million. It's a subsidiary of Markel Corporation, a NYSE quoted business currently capitalised at around $7 billion with combined assets of around $23 billion and shareholder equity of $6 billion

The Challenge

In 2009 Markel decided that it needed a new underwriting system. Having decided on a system, it then set about determining how to migrate data from the multiple source systems to the new system. To undertake this migration Markel opted to partner with IT consultancy, Northdoor. In particular, Markel felt that Northdoor had the domain experience, a structured methodology and a wealth of pre-written scripts. However there was limited knowledge within Markel about the source systems which made it more challenging for Northdoor to evaluate.

The Northdoor Solution

Upon appointment, Northdoor was tasked with implementing a series of data migration projects that would successfully migrate eight core systems into the new system. Additionally Northdoor undertook the migration of key risk and claims data held within an internal service company system. Les Agambar, Enterprise Architect at Markel International comments:

Northdoor's solution

- Domain experience of undertaking large migrations in the insurance market
- Proven and structured methodologies
- A wealth of pre-written scripts

"It was a real achievement for Northdoor to get the project delivered with the data proving very stable at the cut-over go-live transition."

Les Agambar, Markel

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"We needed to seriously think about what was involved from the outset to ensure that we didn't underestimate the size and complexity of the task. Northdoor undertook a detailed evaluation of our legacy systems to understand as much as possible about the historical data."

Once this task had been completed Northdoor set about evaluating the new underwriting system. The new target system and all the applicable data fields were broken down into their relevant subject domains and the project team was then required to conduct the following activities:

- High level data mapping to understand how the target screens map onto the existing source system screens.
- Following this ETL (extract, transfer and load) implementation was undertaken
- And finally unit testing was conducted to ensure that it all worked in the target system

Quality of Data Paramount

In terms of challenges, the Markel business analysis team had to work on understanding how to integrate the target system within their existing business processes at the same time that the data conversion team were undertaking their data mapping and initial ETL implementation. In total, nearly 18,000 source fields were reviewed as part of the mapping (planning) process and 2,000 validation checks were made to ensure the highest quality data was imported into the new system. Throughout the various stages of the migration Northdoor provided real-time management information and shared dashboards so that Markel had visibility of the project. Data conversion was a lengthy process but once completed, the go live transition phase was quick and completed in March 2013.

Les Agambar concludes: "It was a real achievement for Northdoor to get the project delivered with the data proving very stable at the cut-over go-live transition. I know this involved a significant amount of commitment and extended hours from the Northdoor team for a period of over two years. Thanks to Northdoor we now have an IT infrastructure that supports our business requirements now and in the future."

Benefits

- A successful data migration - over 40 years of legacy data, 12 million ledger entries and over two million inward polices
- At the cut-over, go-live transition stage, data proved to be very stable
- High quality data imported into the new system

"I know this involved a significant amount of commitment and extended hours from the Northdoor team for a period of over two years."

Les Agambar, Markel

To know more and do more, contact Northdoor

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