

Enterprise Rational Unified Process & Integrated Tool Implementation



Snapshots of Rational Implementation

- Standardized the development lifecycle using the Rational Unified Process
- Integrated the Rational toolset to support RUP
- Implemented a nine-month project in three months

Situation: Highmark, Inc. is the largest health insurance company in Pennsylvania based on membership, and one of the largest health insurers in the United States. Their 1,700-person IT department had no standard or consistent processes in place across the entire organization for software development. Different projects used various tools, methodologies and modeling for development.

"We're trying to become more efficient, shorten project time, decrease defects and standardize terminology across the organization to simplify our interactions with clients."

– Kathryn Cunningham, Project Director

Challenge: Disparate tools and standards were creating system administration challenges and customers were often confused by varying terminology. Additionally, inconsistent processes resulted in budget and scheduling inaccuracies, defects released into production and breaks in existing functionality. Highmark had previously attempted to implement the Rational Unified Process within several projects but had not successfully overcome the barriers to getting everyone on-board.

"Duplicate development lifecycles were resulting in increased development time. Different terminology was used between development groups and business areas were frustrated because there was no consistent process. We had to agree on a strategy to move forward."

– Mark Vescovi, Director, Technology Management

Solution: Highmark hired **cognence** to employ its APEX transformation methodology to develop a standard software development lifecycle using RUP supported by the Rational toolset. The company also needed mentors to train IT employees on the tools and help implement best practices. Experts in enterprise-wide Rational implementation, **cognence** consultants first performed an assessment to understand the problems Highmark was experiencing. **cognence** then assembled a 25-person guiding coalition encompassing all of the functional sets of responsibilities across the software development lifecycle to plan and drive consensus on the tailoring and deployment effort. The company then executed against the plan to customize the Rational Unified Process and establish the enterprise Rational tool infrastructure.

"cognence has an excellent understanding of the Rational tools and they were willing to work with us to derive a process that would work within Highmark, because they understand that every company is different. It wasn't like working with most consultants who come in and try to dictate the process. It was more of a partnership." – Mark Vescovi

Results: Highmark now has a customized Rational Unified Process supported by the integrated Rational toolset that it can use across projects moving forward. Highmark began rollout to pilot projects and, upon success, Highmark will deploy this established software development infrastructure and methodology on new projects.

"This project was done on an accelerated schedule. We started in January and began pilots in April. It was a three-month turnaround time, and this kind of tailoring can easily take nine months to a year. Highmark provided a large team of nearly 75 people to contribute, and that's what made this possible. I've never seen this level of commitment to change before."

– Craig Rudman, **cognence** Lead Consultant

"The working relationship with our team was much better than many of the other consultants we've worked with. Employees of the company rolled up their sleeves, got their hands dirty and picked up leadership roles when it mattered most. They recognized what was needed and worked hard to do it. All in all, it was a positive experience."

Kathryn Cunningham
Project Director

