Carewatch selects Macro 4 solution for greater control over document-based customer communications

Home care services provider can now tailor invoices easily to meet individual customer requirements

Crawley, UK, February 9, 2016 - Carewatch Care Services, a leading, national provider of care services to people in their own homes, has chosen a customer communications management solution from Macro 4, a division of UNICOM® Global, to help it better control and improve the quality of document-based communications with its customers, which include Local Authorities and NHS Trusts, as well as clients who pay privately for care services.

By working with Macro 4's Columbus solution, Carewatch can now more easily tailor the layout, design and content of their invoices to meet the requirements of different customers. The company, which issues around 63,000 customer invoices a year, has implemented Macro 4's Columbus DoXite[+] software to streamline the process of creating invoices in a range of customized formats. As a result Carewatch can be more responsive to customer needs, while incurring fewer costs.

An important reason for choosing Macro 4 was the broad scope of the company's Columbus software suite for information delivery, which enables companies to transition easily from paper to digital communications.

"We could see that Macro 4's Columbus software also has the potential to help us in other areas such as embracing web and mobile delivery of a range of business documents. It made sense to choose one trusted technology partner who can help us improve both printed and digital communications in a totally integrated way, rather than just providing a single 'point' solution," said Paul Clutten, IT Director at Carewatch.

Carewatch has over 100 company owned and franchised offices, with over 8,000 carers in the UK. The company provides a full spectrum of home care support services and delivers over 170,000 hours of care every week, enabling individuals to stay independent in their own homes.

Invoices are an important form of customer communications for Carewatch, and they incorporate a detailed breakdown of the visits and time that employees spend providing care services to individual clients in their homes. All invoice data are generated by the company's billing and rostering application which is used by Carewatch offices throughout the country to log carers' timesheets. However, modifying existing invoice templates and altering document content was very problematic, as Julie Room, Sales Ledger Manager at Carewatch, explains:

"We serve a range of clients, many of whom have their own specific invoicing requirements. For example, some clients ask us to exclude any details that could identify individuals receiving care services, in order to meet their privacy obligations.

Other changes, such as new company addresses or branding, are driven by us. Making these adjustments was a laborious process because we couldn't do it ourselves. Every change involved technical development work being carried out by the company that supports our rostering software."

Whenever a change was needed Carewatch would have to email their requirements to the rostering software provider and wait for the work to be completed, which could take up to several weeks. A charge was also incurred for each change.

"Often several calls would have to be made to the rostering software company to explain our requirements, as there was scope for misinterpretation," said Julie Room. "Delays - which might run to days or sometimes weeks - could potentially hold up invoicing. And of course our business is so important for people's welfare that once we're contracted to start providing care services on behalf of a new customer we would need to start immediately, even if the new invoice template wasn't ready."

"We wanted to find a quick, easy way to create and amend our own documents in-house so that we could avoid delays, improve service to customers, reduce costs and enhance the appearance of our invoices - and that's exactly what Macro 4's solution lets us do."

Using Columbus DoXite, Carewatch now has complete control over document design and can select which information from the billing and rostering system is included in its invoices, based on business rules. The software provides the ability to generate tailored documents on a large scale, in a wide range of electronic and printed formats, without the need for programming skills. Carewatch users can design their own document templates with ease, adding dynamic graphical content and altering the message, appearance and document format to suit the individual recipient.

Ola Adewale, a data analyst at Carewatch, who helps to manage the invoice templates, said: "Columbus DoXite is very easy to use, so we can update and improve our documents quickly. Common elements like logos can be changed in just one place and then automatically applied to every document type that's affected, which saves additional time. Now we can make changes in a couple of minutes instead of a couple of weeks."

The ease and flexibility that Columbus DoXite provides for modifying document content has enabled Carewatch to rationalize the total number of templates that are now in use from around 40, to approximately a dozen, which further simplifies the invoicing process.

+ Columbus DoXite is developed by DETEC Software GmbH, also a division of UNICOM Global.

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About Macro 4 www.macro4.com

Macro 4, a division of UNICOM Global, develops software solutions to improve the performance of business-critical applications and processes. Macro 4's solutions for information delivery, data management, fault analysis, mainframe modernization and performance management are easy to use, fast to implement and deliver value quickly in even the most complex IT environments.

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