

Sammons Financial Group

EMC Document Sciences xExpression improves responsiveness and eliminates redundant costs



Business overview

Sammons Financial Group is comprised of insurance and financial companies owned by Sammons Enterprises. These companies share resources and services for optimal efficiency and growth. In 2004 the group had more than \$25 billion in assets and over 1.5 million life and annuity policies.

Challenges

Beginning with one life insurance company in 1995, the Sammons Financial Group grew to four business units and by 2002 had launched a broker/dealer business called Sammons Securities Company. During this short period, the group grew significantly. By 2004 it had more than \$25 billion in assets and over \$241 billion of life insurance in force.

As the number of insurance subsidiaries under Sammons Financial Group increased through acquisition, so did the number of disparate print processes and software packages. By 2003 there were five legacy platforms for policy administration and no unified document generation system, making it difficult to deliver consistent communications to the market and limiting the ability to make significant changes. Units throughout the group operated independently of one another and had limited ability to share documents, content, and other resources. More than ever, the group needed a strategy for tackling these multiple systems.

Document composition represented a particular challenge. Designing new applications was a time-consuming process and it required in-depth product training. To more effectively support the significantly larger organization, it was decided that Sammons Financial Group needed to consolidate and modernize its IT application set by standardizing document composition capabilities on a single platform. By doing so the company could become more responsive to client needs while at the same time reduce IT costs.

EMC solution

In 2003 the Sammons Technology Enhancement Program (STEP) was set in motion. This initiative had a lofty ambition: replace current systems with a new generation of solutions that would dramatically improve administration, workflow, and output management.

“We assembled a team with representatives from both IT and the business units,” said Gary Gaspar, Vice President and CIO of Sammons Financial Group. “The team defined a unified architecture and conducted a thorough evaluation of potential technologies.”

Sammons Financial Group decided to move from a legacy-based architecture to a modern architecture that would feature a Web-based front end, batch and realtime output, and both print and electronic distribution channels. Flexibility was imperative to enable Sammons Financial Group to easily react to market demand.

A new policy administration system was chosen, along with a unified group-wide distribution management system, underwriting system, workflow system, and a single platform for document generation. Sammons Financial Group chose EMC® Document Sciences® xPression® to streamline its document generation processes.

“We selected xPression for its ease of use, scalability, and support for robust business rules,” Gaspar said. “Some of our documents have as many as 1,000 variables, while others have only a handful. Being able to easily develop these applications and others as needs arise is crucial.”

xPression is used by four groups within the organization: policy administration, new business, field administration, and annuity administration. The types of documents generated include annual statements, on-demand and event-driven correspondence, direct and list billings, agent commission statements, annuity contracts, and policies. Several hundred thousand documents are printed annually. Today document generation from these four separate systems is now being produced by the xPression platform.

Key improvements delivered by xPression include imaging, state exception handling, dynamic graphic processing, table generation, and online quality assurance. xPression’s support for standards such as XML ensures that it will be able to communicate with databases and other systems.

“We found that with xPression we get more personalization, less rework, and more efficiency when composing our most complex documents,” Gaspar said.

The STEP initiative has positioned Sammons Financial Group to be more responsive—a key driver in the industry. Consolidating multiple systems onto xPression will simplify operations and improve processing efficiency, while reducing IT costs.

“Our STEP initiative will enable us to communicate more effectively with our customers, while managing our expenses,” said Gary Helder, Vice President of Administration for Sammons Financial Group. “xPression has eliminated a number of manual processes, provided a platform to give us the flexibility we need to develop new output management applications, and the toolset to modify them as the market demands.”

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Summary

By choosing EMC Document Sciences as part of their STEP initiative, Sammons Financial Group has streamlined and modernized its document generation processes. Among the highlights:

- **Faster composition:** Less training is required to develop even the most complex applications, and applications are completed faster.
- **Personalization:** Flexibility to add as many variables as needed increases customization.
- **Multichannel delivery:** Output can be batch or realtime, via electronic or print, based on customer preferences.
- **Streamlined operations:** xPression plugs into workflows and leverages all forms of content.
- **Graphical output:** Increased support for imaging, graphics, tables, and dynamic graphic processing makes documents easier to comprehend.

About EMC

EMC Corporation (NYSE: EMC) is the world's leading developer and provider of information infrastructure technology and solutions that enable organizations of all sizes to transform the way they compete and create value from their information. Information about EMC's products and services can be found at www.EMC.com.



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