

BizTalk 2010 EDI for Health Care

HIPAA Compliant 837 Solutions



Mark Beckner

Apress®

BizTalk 2010 EDI for Health Care: HIPAA Compliant 837 Solutions

An Apress Advanced Book

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*To my dear wife who home birthed our two boys and is an
acupuncturist. Because of your "ideas," we have yet to file a claim for these kids
that has been transported through any EDI or claims management
processing system, BizTalk or otherwise.*

—Mark Beckner

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Foreword

As a health care practitioner, I have never written a line of code, yet I am responsible for orchestrating some of the best health care applications in the industry. Imagine developing an application that pays a doctor for services before the insurance company has even received the bill! That's risky! I know how far I can push the technology envelope and I enjoy salaciously pushing it. I build people advanced technological tools, yet I hunt and peck my own keyboard. Technology to me is a ball you constantly move forward, because if and when it stops, your game is over. The technology covered in this book is the tool to move your technology ball forward.

Since the early eighties, I have been a part of and followed the evolution of both hardware and software. My first computer cost me \$10,000, not including a keyboard, monitor, or operating system. I could have bought a car for what I paid for that small, heavy, metal box. I used it to develop my first successful medical billing application. My first experience with electronic data interchange (EDI) came in 1986 and utilized a rudimentary format that failed entire batches of bills because of one missing piece of information. That was bad. On the other hand, I began to receive payments in less than 14 days, and in some cases less than a week. That was good. I speculated that my EDI process bypassed human claim adjusters. I was communicating to the master claims system and my bills were triggering checks. I will never forget one healthcare CIO saying he would have to build in controls to slow down payments because they were being made too fast. Wow. My conclusion—EDI works.

Fast forward 12 years; I built the blueprint for an internet-based EDI system that not only transmitted the universal medical bill HCFA-1500, but would also transmit all supporting medical documents. iHCFA was born. Unfortunately, I realized after reading an article in *Barron's* that I was about 14 years ahead of the industry. One major insurance company after another realized they were saddled with legacy systems unable to utilize the efficiency EDI presented. One more hurdle to overcome.

So, how long does a technological solution last and how quickly does technology improve? It is like a snapshot in time. In my opinion, he who has the better system wins, especially as we become more comfortable with technology and its devices. Steve Jobs made a decision to not allow an iPhone user to change their battery. Was this because he knew the iPhone would last a lifetime, or because he knew his users would become bored and expect something new? Staying ahead of your competition is the key to success.

Once in a while, a technology hits the street that moves application development light years ahead in just a matter of minutes. Why it happens and who funds it is not important. What is important is that someone somewhere saw a need and an opportunity to create something that could standardize an industry. In my world, this technology warp was

Foreword

Microsoft BizTalk Server, a readily available application with the ability to provide a working nervous system to the complex world of EDI. This is a system which provides the end user the ability to bolt on customized components, rudimentary or sophisticated, and allow the BizTalk infrastructure to take over and guide the data to a proper outcome.

BizTalk becomes an *out of the box* application that enables the user to save years of development time. For me, it became a technically superior product which I could customize in less than six months. The decision to use BizTalk was a simple one. My only deficiency was guidance.

All technology needs is someone capable of navigating through the most treacherous waters. BizTalk, a Microsoft product, provides a plethora of options. At its helm is the man who wrote this book, even though he was 2,000 miles away, Mark Beckner. Mark is a BizTalk expert and he can navigate the BizTalk waters like a beacon in the night. Mark assisted us in implementing BizTalk as the backbone of a new EDI system that would take our healthcare transactions to a new level. Mark utilized the many robust internal features of BizTalk to halve our development time and, in today's highly competitive technology world, this became a differentiator for us.

Mark provided us with stable guidance that allows us to utilize our current system as a blueprint to a new BizTalk-based system. The insight Mark provides is the same insight the reader will find in this book. Mark provides real-time solutions to a complex EDI world, ultimately simplifying the hardest of tasks. Getting to the experts is often half the battle when it comes to development efficiency and Mark has provided his expertise in a transparent, open fashion, enabling anyone to take advantage of BizTalk and its product lines. In my opinion, this book will fast track your success just like BizTalk fast tracked mine.

William J. DeGasperis, DC
President & CEO
Atlantic Imaging Group and iHCFA