

# Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Counts on CommonLook® to Achieve Document Accessibility

## Challenge

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) is a non-profit mutual insurance company founded in 1939. The company serves 4.5 million customers in Michigan and an additional 1.6 million customers in other States. It is the largest health insurer in the State of Michigan. BCBSM has 8,100 employees.

In 2016, BCBSM's Information Technology Department kicked off an important accessibility project which included a significant volume of document remediation. The "Meaningful Access" project contributed to achieving compliance with Section 508, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the PDF Universal Accessibility (PDF/UA) specification.

Sachin Parekh is BCBSM's IT Manager. "This was a mandated project and we had budget and authority for it", said Mr. Parekh. He estimated that close to 1,500 documents would have to be remediated.

## Solution

Document remediation is the process of converting a normal digital publication into one that is accessible to individuals with disabilities including auditory and visual disabilities.

Since 2012 CommonLook had been providing document remediation services to another section of BCBSM. Based on past project success, Mr. Parekh brought CommonLook representatives to the table to address a much larger requirement for remediating documents under the 508 legislation.

Outsourcing the remediation project to CommonLook meant that the IT team could meet their deadline, on budget. Through the outsourcing process, the internal team could also be brought up to speed on the finer points of document remediation as it relates to the legislation.

Vendor planning and consultation occurred over a six-week period, during

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

### INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

### CHALLENGES

- Achieving compliance with document accessibility legislation
- Remediation of a large volume of documents, including materials from external insurers
- Remediate a high volume of documents while staying within budget
- Implementation of an essential IT project, on time and in budget

### RESULTS

- Successful remediation project completed by working with external vendor to meet timelines and compliance project standards
- Guidance from CommonLook helped staff get up to speed on remediation practices and processes
- Fast project turnaround, regardless of size or complexity
- Collaborative approach fostered a productive ongoing relationship with the vendor



which all aspects of the document remediation process were discussed in the context of BCBSM needs. The remediation process, and its impact on high quality and reliability, were of utmost importance.

## Results

CommonLook successfully completed the remediation project for BCBSM. “The value really was that we were able to meet the timelines for the project while we were in the process of learning what we had to do to comply”, said Mr. Parekh. What also impressed Mr. Parekh were the turnaround times. “It didn’t matter if we sent them one document or a hundred, the turnaround time was still five days”.

When they were finished, the number of actual documents remediated included both system generated PDF documents and static PDF documents available through the BCBSM’s web sites.

Today, across their divisions, BCBSM continues to outsource a significant volume of documents for remediation by CommonLook. This includes many documents from other insurers whose plans are administered by BCBSM.

Because CommonLook provides similar services to other organizations in the health insurance field, they could draw on that experience and show the BCBSM IT team the best approach and most effective process to use for document remediation.

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**Mr. Parekh, IT Manager**

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## Tallying the Benefits

- Lower costs than doing the work inhouse, while staff also received guidance on achieving compliance with the legislation.
- Reduced internal staff workload and stress.
- Faster remediation project completion, and progress towards accessibility compliance.
- Experience with other CommonLook clients was leveraged to meet their challenge.
- Excellent service and response time ongoing.