

## Premera Blue Cross Simplifies Web Content Management to Keep Constituents Informed



Premera Blue Cross  
Mountlake Terrace, WA  
www.premera.com

**Industry:**  
Healthcare

**Annual Revenue:**  
\$2.4 billion

**Employees:**  
3,000

**Oracle Products & Services:**  
Oracle Universal Content  
Management

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Premera Blue Cross, a health benefits company serving more than 1.6 million members primarily in the northwestern United States, is committed to improving its members’ health and to maintaining more sustainable costs. The company believes the key to success is education and collaboration with members, employers, physicians, hospitals, and the extended health care community, to encourage cost-conscious actions, improve medical quality, and support members at every stage of health. Due to the size and distributed nature of Premera’s business, timely and effective communication with its many external audiences, as well as its own staff, is easily one of the most business critical functions the company undertakes. The Web plays an important role in this process.

In 2002, Premera found managing its ever-growing public Web sites, portals, and intranet content to be an increasing challenge as the company quickly expanded. Specifically, manual publishing techniques created information technology (IT) bottlenecks leading to outdated information, as well as inconsistent branding and messaging across all of the company’s Web properties.

Additionally, Premera sought to improve its business processes by implementing Web-based workflow and version control capabilities. Premera also had a significant need to dynamically watermark many of its medical policies—which appear across its public Web sites, portals, and intranet—as well as a need to streamline its Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) documentation processes.

**Key Benefits:**

- Simplified multi-site content management
- Enabled HIPAA compliance
- Provided quick, easy updating and branding features
- Reduced shipping and printing costs
- Enhanced business communications

To address these issues, Premera selected Oracle Universal Content Management, previously called Stellent Universal Content Management, over a number of competing technology solutions.

“We chose Oracle to power multiple Web properties for two reasons,” said Dave Young, vice president of IT Applications, Technology Services & eBusiness for Premera. “First, Oracle’s open architecture provides a single platform and interface to develop extended applications. Second, we can use the Oracle system to easily distribute content ownership and Web publishing responsibilities to business users through workflow automation—keeping our Web presence up-to-date and on-brand.”

Premera has experienced many business benefits as a result of its Oracle Universal Content Management implementation, including more timely and effective communication with internal and external audiences; reduced costs and increased productivity related to Web publishing; enhanced customer service; and compliance with the HIPAA mandate.

**Multi-Site Web Content Management**

Premera primarily uses the Web content management and records and retention management components of Oracle Universal Content Management architecture. Specifically, Oracle Universal Content Management serves as the content foundation for Premera’s four public Web sites, four types of portals (seven in total), company intranet, and HIPAA document repository.

Premera’s current Oracle-powered Web properties include: Premera.com, supporting Premera Blue Cross in Washington and Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska; Web sites for the company’s LifeWise affiliates in Arizona and Oregon, and one for Premera’s LifeWise Assurance Company, which offers group life, accidental death, short- and long-term disability, and stop-loss insurance. Premera.com serves as the primary Web site for the company, providing a gateway to its member, employer, broker, and health care provider constituents in Washington and Alaska.

Premera employees create all non-transactional public Web site and portal content—including policies and procedures, claim forms, plan information, news, tips for staying healthy, treatment guidelines, pharmacy benefit guides, generic drugs calculator, etc.—in native formats (such as Microsoft Word documents) and

place it into the Oracle system via a Web browser. The Oracle system then automatically publishes this content in Web-viewable formats, such as HTML and PDF. To help manage the transactional content on its Web sites and portals, Premera leverages an ASP.NET framework that pulls content from the Oracle repository.

Oracle Universal Content Management also serves as the content foundation of iWeb, Premera's one-stop internal resource for company information. The front page of iWeb has the latest company news, cafeteria menu, weather updates, and traffic reports. Premera also tailors its intranet content according to the location and management status of the individual logging in to the site using Oracle's security and personalization features, as well as applets and dynamic third-party Web links.

From iWeb, Premera employees can easily branch off into any one of the company's approximately 60 departmental micro-sites, which serve as information centers for the company's numerous departments, including human resources (HR), communications, finance and IT, among others. For example, Premera will soon leverage its intranet to make many HR functions nearly paperless, minimizing lost documents. Premera will use the Oracle system to manage HR forms available for download on the intranet.

### **Customization to Meet Specific Needs**

Premera has also leveraged the Oracle system's open architecture to customize features and functionality to meet specific needs. For example, custom layouts enhance content pages with user functionality that is wrapped around the article. New services were written to replace the personal URLs feature with additional capabilities. In addition, iWeb customers can personalize their Web sites using Oracle to improve internal business communications.

Oracle Universal Content Management's expiration capabilities help ensure the timeliness of Premera's Web site, portal, and intranet content, which is particularly important for high turnover content, such as company news and policy and procedure updates. Premera can automatically rotate this content out of prominent viewing locations and, if necessary, remove it from any Web property at a specified time.

### Records Retention for HIPAA Compliance

Premera uses Oracle Universal Content Management's records and retention management capabilities to formally manage documents outlining the company's approach for meeting federally mandated HIPAA requirements. These requirements aim to improve the efficiency of healthcare delivery by standardizing electronic data interchange, and protecting health data confidentiality and security. To demonstrate compliance with this regulation, Premera must assess and document its privacy practices, information security systems and procedures, and use of electronic transactions. It also must develop and retain a tested action plan for complying with various aspects of the Act, as well as document technical and management infrastructure processes for implementing these plans.

With the Oracle system, Premera is able to set very specific retention rules related to managing the thousands of HIPAA documents it creates, facilitating continuous compliance with this daunting mandate. A robust workflow and version control system ensures the appropriate company stakeholders review and sign-off on each piece of HIPAA-related documentation and only the most current version of such documentation is readily accessible. Premera also uses Oracle's records and retention management capabilities to manage intranet documents that it must classify as records.

The Oracle system provides Premera a single, structured location with automated workflow for key HIPAA documentation internal and external auditors need to access and review—making compliance audits much easier and faster. Premera also leverages Oracle's metadata capabilities to set up HIPAA-specific fields to enhance content searches and retrieve information about a document's creation. Overall, HIPAA violations can be quite costly, and Oracle Universal Content Management gives the company the records and retention management framework needed to remain compliant.

### Quick, Easy Updating

With Oracle, Premera keeps its Web properties up-to-date with rich content that is consistently presented across the company's Web sites, portals, and intranet. Due to the Oracle system's native-format contribution and automatic Web content conversion

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capabilities, each of Premera’s departments (down to the business users themselves) now “own” their respective portions of the company’s intranet, and are responsible for ensuring their continuous timeliness and accuracy. A few of Premera’s departments contribute content to the company’s public Web sites, leveraging a Oracle-based workflow. As a result of distributing Web content ownership to business users, Premera’s IT department can focus on more complex and critical projects than updating Web pages with minor content revisions. The use of Web-based templates and a formalized workflow process ensures the Web sites Premera employees create are consistent with corporate messaging and branding requirements.

### **Reduced Shipping and Printing Costs**

In addition, because Premera now uses the Web to publish and distribute much of its member, provider, broker, and employer information, printing and shipping costs have decreased considerably. Today, every time an update to a medical policy or reference manual is required, the change is simply made in the document’s native format and the Oracle system automatically publishes the revised information to all of the appropriate Web properties at once—eliminating the need to reprint and ship revised documents, as well as manually update multiple instances of the same information across the company’s numerous Web properties.

### **Simplified Rebranding Functionality**

The Oracle system also enables Premera to use and reuse content intelligently across multiple Web properties. Many of the company’s medical policies apply to each of its businesses, but must include the proper branding. Instead of creating numerous versions of the same document for each brand, Premera uses the system’s dynamic watermark to dynamically apply the appropriate branding prior to publication of this content on any of the company’s Web sites, portals, or intranet. As a result, Premera saves considerable time not only creating and managing these policies, but also ensuring consistent branding is applied and that users have 24x7 access to this critical content.

### **Enhanced Business Communications**

Furthermore, Oracle makes it easier for Premera’s departments to manage and customize their intranet micro-sites to enhance business communications.

“It is much easier for customer service representatives to search for and retrieve policy and procedural information on the company’s Oracle-powered intranet,” said Gail Workman, manager of Customer Service Quality & Communications for Premera.

### **Advanced Futures Uses**

The use of Premera’s public Web sites, portals, and intranet only stands to grow as more information, features and functionality, and Web properties are added in the future. Premera is currently piloting Oracle Universal Content Management’s really simple syndication (RSS) features to enable its communications department to more easily update the rest of the company on industry news.

Specifically, communications personnel will be able to subscribe to specific external RSS feeds, and Premera will ultimately incorporate that content into the Stellent system and dynamically publish it to iWeb, automating a process that previously included a manual search and consolidation of news from health-related Web sites. Oracle’s RSS features also could allow employees to subscribe to the company’s own RSS feeds and receive notification when Web content of interest is updated. Premera’s other future plans include adding more robust search functionality to its Oracle-powered Web properties.

### **Why Oracle?**

Oracle’s product meets Premera’s critical needs for a product that the company could deploy rapidly, and that would offer automatic content conversion and publishing to multiple Web formats. It is an easy-to-use application for both technical and non-technical staff. Finally, it includes the version control, archiving, and records and retention management functionality Premera required.

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*Premera Blue Cross is a health benefits company serving more than 1.6 million customers ranging from individuals to FORTUNE 100 companies. Operating as Premera Blue Cross in Washington and Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield in Alaska, the company works with nearly 18,000 health care professionals and 100 hospitals in Washington, and 840 health care professionals and 23 hospitals in Alaska. Also part of the Premera family of companies is LifeWise, which provides health care coverage and services in Washington, Oregon, and Arizona.*