

CASE STUDY



SERVICING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS WITH OPTIMAL SECURITY



COMPANY PROFILE

COMPANY: 4myBenefits
INDUSTRY: Benefits Administration Services
ARMOR SOLUTION: Armor Anywhere
CLOUD PROVIDER: Armor's Private Cloud
WEBSITE: <http://4mybenefits.com>

OVERVIEW

A small benefits agency develops a software-as-a-Service (SaaS) product offering and looks for a partner to host the application securely and compliantly.

ABOUT 4MYBENEFITS

The health insurance industry has changed dramatically since the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was fully implemented in 2014. The ACA made significant changes to both group and individual health insurance, which brought about the development of new products and virtual marketplace platforms, as well as increased compliance and reporting requirements.

Despite challenges and complexities during the enactment of the ACA, it has presented even greater opportunities to affected health insurance organizations. It was in this environment that 4myBenefits, a small benefits administration agency, saw an opportunity for growth.

Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1999, 4myBenefits is dedicated to improving and streamlining benefits communication and administration for both small and larger employers. More than 20 years later, they are now a national benefits provider with more than 600 clients, distributing services through a vast network of brokers and consultants.



4myBenefits was one of the first companies to pioneer the broker-centric distribution model, which in turn shaped the landscape of today's broker technology marketplace. They now offer a variety of technology platforms and outsourcing options for their brokers to provide a tailored benefits experience for each employer. The advantage of offering entirely web-based services is that it eliminates the need for costly servers, IT infrastructure, and reliance upon paper.

"Online, employees can access personalized information on their benefits, PTO, and more. Administrators can manage eligibility, broadcast information, and automate repetitive tasks and workflows," says Jeff Wickham, director of product development at 4myBenefits.

4myBenefits also offers electronic data interchange (EDI) services to ferry enrollment information from the employer directly to the carrier. These services, used by over one million employees, "dramatically reduce costs and errors, improve overall turnaround, and streamline the benefits administration process," says Wickham.

All of 4myBenefits' solutions and tools are designed to make the benefits selection and enrollment process easier and more relatable.

SECURITY CHALLENGE

The ACA was written into law in 2010 and contained many provisions. One such provision was the need for establishing public health insurance marketplaces, where individuals and small businesses could shop and compare health plans. The public marketplaces were launched in 2014, along with a requirement that large employers report offers of health insurance coverage to the IRS. This reporting is used to determine individual eligibility for marketplace health plans, and to ensure compliance with the employer mandate to offer coverage to full-time employees.

"We came to the realization that no one in the industry had quite yet delivered one solution for everyone to use, and we saw that as an opportunity," explains Wickham. "There wasn't an option to resell an existing solution, so building a new one was the best way."

Wickham gathered a small team of developers to create the initial phase of their solution in their on-premise environment, managing it internally and servicing the brokers directly.

By 2016, 4myBenefits embarked on scaling their business by building several additional niche SaaS products that would allow their brokers to self-serve and free up company resources to focus on further growth and development. With this decision however, 4myBenefits realized that there were potential challenges and complexities they had to address before making these solutions publicly available.

Wickham and his team were not equipped to make the product publicly accessible without having it formally assessed to ensure that it was fully secure and compliant because of the personal health information (PHI) and other highly sensitive data they processed. With that, they began the search for an external partner that would bring the security expertise they needed.



Around the time we decided we wanted the platform to be public facing, there were a number of high-profile data breaches in the news, so security was particularly top of mind.

— Jeff Wickham,
Director of Product
Development,
4myBenefits

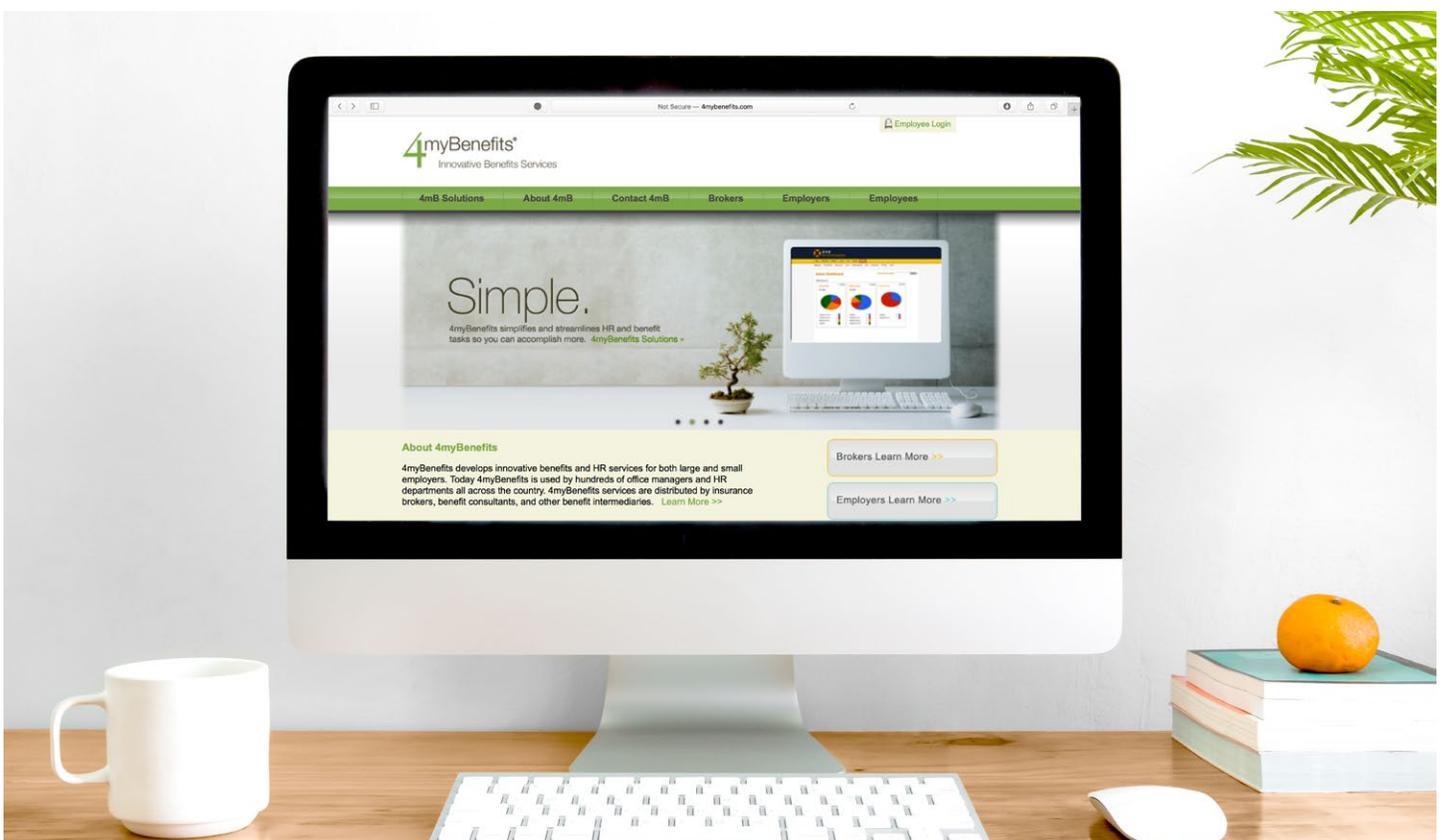
FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

4myBenefits initiated an extensive search process, starting with larger cloud providers like AWS and Azure. However, their need to have dedicated instances would cause them to lose some of the pricing advantages that came with public cloud providers. Additionally, 4myBenefits realized that the complexity of securing those instances would take a level of cybersecurity expertise to resource and fund, further impacting their bottom line.

The company went on to evaluate private cloud providers and found that many lacked self-service portal capabilities to manage and monitor their environment, while others did not meet the compliance and security standards mandated under the ACA. Because of the requirement for dedicated instances, providers with solutions that were delivered “as-a-service” were not viable options to consider.

Through the search process, 4myBenefits determined that they needed a partner who could serve as an extension of their team, provide a self-service portal as part of their solution, has a robust security offering, and is price competitive.

Armor seemed like a great fit and gave us the flexibility we were desiring for the security. They were also incredibly affordable – we were getting security experts as team members, along with getting infrastructure, too.



WHY ARMOR

Through the search process, 4myBenefits found that Armor met all their search criteria. Armor consistently executed on the company's goal of securely hosting applications, proactively monitored their environment, and alerted 4myBenefits of any issues with proposed resolutions. As Wickham stated, "Armor's service is not simply good, it is consistently impressive."

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Our biggest appreciation with Armor is how they truly extend our team.

Armor also provided a fully compliant infrastructure that would address 4myBenefit's need to comply with the ACA. "Our biggest achievement would be that we're able to confidently answer a wide array of security questionnaires from large organizations," said Wickham. "We felt that Armor equipped us to handle these compliance audits and questionnaires efficiently. I think that's a big plus."

Because of their partnership with Armor, the 4myBenefits team has been freed up from managing infrastructure and security and is able to focus predominantly on product development while keeping development overhead low. "Our biggest appreciation with Armor is how they truly extend our team," commented Wickham.

Best of all, Armor has brought greater visibility into 4myBenefits' security program. Prior to Armor, 4myBenefits wasn't as vigilant about tracking metrics, but they are now able to measure the effectiveness of their security program through the metrics that Armor provides.

4myBenefits took advantage of a market opportunity, and it ultimately paid off. By finding the right partner, 4myBenefits was able to focus on their core strength, product development, while leaning on Armor to make sure their company and platforms are fully compliant and secure.





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