

Hospital System Cuts Call Times, and Increases the Number of Calls Analysts Process by 20 to 30 Percent

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Alverno Information Services

Industries
Healthcare

Products
HEAT® Service & Support™
HEAT® Self Service™
FrontRange™ IP Contact Center
HEAT® Plus Knowledge

Internal customers supported:
30,000

Average service desk calls per
month: 11,000

Help desk agents: 13

Operating environment: Windows

Business Benefits Realized:

- Analysts spend more time resolving issues and less time gathering customer information – driving the average call time from 7.2 minutes to 5.6 minutes.
- Call answer times are down to five seconds.
- Abandon rates dropped from 10-19 percent to 5-6 percent.

Help desk services are critical to productivity in any environment, but in a medical setting, they support timely, quality patient care. At Sisters of St. Francis Health Services, Inc. in Indiana and Illinois, that means quickly answering and resolving 11,000 calls every month from 30,000 end users across 12 hospital campuses and medical centers, a centralized lab and Consolidated Business Office.

“Every one of our customers is serving a patient or serving someone who is taking care of a patient,” said Vicky Hime, IS Support Services, at Alverno Information Services, the IT services division of the Sisters of St. Francis Health Services. “So, we are very focused on taking care of the incident quickly so that our customers can get back to doing their real work of patient care.”

In this diverse and fast-paced environment, calls range from simple password resets to troubleshooting on vital patient records systems, and callers range from maintenance staff to physicians and executives.

As a nonprofit organization, Alverno Information Services is challenged with meeting a growing number of calls – without adding help desk analysts.

Voice Capabilities Integrated Seamlessly with HEAT

In 2002, Alverno Information Services implemented HEAT® Service & Support™ from FrontRange Solutions as its service management solution. Over time, the organization had increased its automation with HEAT, and further reduced the burden on analysts by adding HEAT® Self Service™ and HEAT® Plus Knowl-

edge. Yet, Alverno still needed to improve its performance on service-level agreement (SLA) metrics, most notably to increase the number of calls that each analyst handles in a day.

“We wanted to shave seconds off a call anywhere we could. The more calls we can process, the more we can handle with our current staff,” Hime said. “We looked at all the different ways we could shorten calls, but you can only go so far without adding more technology.”

To that end, Alverno looked into integrated voice systems. The team evaluated FrontRange™ IP Contact Center (IPCM), an IP-based contact management software solution that integrates seamlessly with HEAT. Not only did IPCM offer the best combination of functionality, but also attractive pricing. “No one else could come close to the cost of IPCM,” Hime said.

The organization also engaged the FrontRange Professional Services Organization to implement IPCM and build the base system. The process took just six weeks. Then, the actual roll-out happened in only one day – faster than the team planned.

“In 24 years of working here, I don’t remember a time when we’ve had something go out ahead of schedule,” Hime said.

Intelligent Call Handling

IPCM functionality improves the team’s call handling efficiency and customer service. Most of the 30,000 end users have employee identification numbers, which they now enter anytime they call the help desk. IPCM recog-

nizes the ID number and triggers a HEAT screen-pop displaying the caller's information for the analyst.

Even if employees log in at an alternate desktop on the system, IPCM recognizes their location from the number where they call and populates a "campus code" field. That way, the analyst immediately knows the person's location. Taking it a step further, integration with the department's asset tracking capabilities gives analysts the caller's work station asset tag information. Previously, analysts spent up to a minute gathering asset tag numbers and pulling up the caller's asset via their remote control tool. This automated identification of the caller, caller's location and work station assets all contribute to shorter call times.

IPCM also processes callers intelligently by playing "forced first announcement" messages. When a more widespread problem occurs in a certain location, the team records and plays a related message for callers in that affected area. IPCM also enables Alverno to tell callers their approximate wait times, reducing abandon rates.

Alverno also added important priority-based call routing for physicians and hospital VIPs, so the system recognizes high-priority ID numbers. Also, physicians are asked to press "1" when calling. IPCM immediately moves these calls to a senior analyst or to the top of the queue. As a result, doctors spend less time waiting than before.

Previously, only one analyst could retrieve system voice mails and HEAT Self Service logs coming into the help desk mailbox. IPCM now brings those logs and voice

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mails right into the IPCM call queue so each analyst can access those messages and begin resolving issues as they complete calls. IPCM also creates a skeleton HEAT ticket for voice mail messages, which saves analysts the time of opening a new ticket.

Additionally, IPCM allows Alverno analysts to work from home, when needed. Two analysts work remotely regularly, while others do so in extenuating circumstances. During a recent snow storm, when several analysts could not get out of their driveways, 40 percent worked from home the first day and 70 percent the second day.

"During our last snow storm, we didn't miss a beat," Hime said. "There was no change in service levels because of the storm. Without IPCM, we would have suffered that day with so many analysts out."

Intelligent Call Handling

With IPCM in place for just a few months, Alverno Information Services has already improved on several critical SLA metrics. Screen pops and integration with asset tracking let analysts spend more time resolving issues and less time gathering customer information. As a result, the team far exceeded its goal of shaving seconds off calls – driving the average call time from 7.2 minutes to 5.6 minutes.

That contributes to faster call answering

times, which are now at three seconds. Before, Alverno had three to five calls in the queue, and now there's rarely a wait. The abandon rate, however, proved to be the most significant improvement, dropping from 10-19 percent to five to six percent.

"The abandon rate is the big story," Hime said. "We're not losing the calls. It has been a big boost in morale for the team." Customers, too, are pleasantly surprised at how much analysts know about their identities and locations before they pick up the phone.

Ultimately, Hime feels these call handling improvements have increased the number of calls each analyst can handle by 20 to 30 percent. Next, Alverno plans to implement IPCM's password reset functionality, and dashboard capabilities so analysts can track their own and other analysts' metrics. Those additions, and an ongoing marketing campaign for employees about entering user IDs when they call the Help Desk, will continue to improve Alverno's statistics.

"Shorter call times enable analysts to handle more calls in a day," Hime said. "We cut our call times by nearly one third and we would expect that to continue as we add functionality. We can keep up with increasing call volumes without having to add analysts at the rate we have in the past."

About FrontRange Solutions

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