

Unified Communications Case Studies

UC in healthcare contact centers

Here's an example from Nemertes' research of a healthcare organization taking advantage of unified communications to realize tangible operational savings while improving patient care.

In this scenario, a healthcare organization operates a phone-based "Ask a Nurse" program that fields calls from individuals who want advice from nurses. Key challenges include staffing the contact center and responding to patient inquiries as quickly as possible.

Using UC capabilities, including instant messaging and voice conferencing coupled with presence awareness, the organization realizes the following tangible benefits:

- Increased throughput of contact centers. By leveraging unified communications, nurse agents can use presence information to quickly find experts able to assist with patient questions. Measurable benefits include increased contact center throughput reducing staffing requirements and reducing the need to expand contact center capacity.
- Faster response time to patient needs. Increased ability to quickly respond to patient calls, conference in medical experts, or use instant messaging to talk to physicians leads to faster resolution of patient requests without requiring physicians to call patients, improving customer satisfaction.
- Improved ability to support distributed workers. By using IP-based communication services to enable telecommuting, organizations can avoid opening new contact centers and hire workers in regions with lower employment costs. One Nemertes research participant saved \$11 million by using UC to enable virtual agents versus building a new fixed contact center to meet expansion requirements.

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- Potential to easily deliver new services such as video or text chat through Web sites, or via kiosks in offices or healthcare facilities.
- Integration with medical records systems and Web conferencing applications for groups of nurses and doctors to quickly access and jointly review patient data, speeding diagnosis and response times.

UC, in this particular example, allowed the provider to hire nurses out of region, increase existing contact center capacity, and avoid opening a new physical contact center to support growing patient demand for care.

Collect Vacations

Use a number of key UC features in their business. For example, Modular Messaging enables Collect Vacations to consolidate management of voicemail and email into one mailbox, so they can listen to emails and reply to voice messages with email. Those messages can even be accessed on PDAs. Collect Vacations use the “find me” feature extensively; business cards at Collect Vacations have only one number—customers dial it to connect with Collect in the office, cell or at home. Collect also take advantage of click-to-IM, click-to-call and click-to-Microsoft Live Meeting, while leveraging presence to see who’s available.

Additionally, the management team uses the system to monitor employees—listening in on calls to see how questions are handled and to evaluate sales techniques, and using IM to assist with those calls. And in the contact center, Collects unique routing protocols ensure that customer calls are always answered.

Reference: Network World (July, 2009)