

Healthcare Company Maintains Personal Customer Relationships



Executive Health Resources implemented customer collaboration solutions to provide efficient, high-touch experience.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Executive Health Resources



Industry: Medical Necessity Compliance

Location: Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

Number of Employees: 2500 Employees, including 1000 Physician Advisors

CHALLENGE

- Maintain excellent personal relationships with hospital clients as company grows
- Quickly respond to client service requests
- Help ensure business continuity

SOLUTION

- Cisco customer collaboration solution for rules-based call routing, integrated with internal customer database
- Cisco IP Communicator for connecting remote employees to corporate Cisco Unified Communications system

RESULTS

- Continued providing high-quality, personalized service as client base grew to more than 2300 hospitals and health systems
- Gained ability to change client's call flow in as little as one day
- Acquired flexibility to work from anywhere, even if offices are closed

Challenge

Founded in 1997, Executive Health Resources (EHR) provides medical necessity compliance management solutions to more than 2300 hospitals and health systems throughout the United States. EHR employs more than 1000 Physician Advisors with more than 60 distinct medical specialties. To date, the company has performed more than five million medical necessity reviews, conducted hundreds of audits at hospital facilities, and successfully identified and reversed thousands of inappropriate medical necessity denials.

To attract and retain clients, EHR focuses on building trusted personal relationships. To this end, EHR's Physician Advisors work in teams assigned to a specific group of hospitals. "Hospital staff want to work with doctors they know well, and who are very familiar with their hospital and their staff," says Luisa Contreiras, Chief Technology Officer for EHR. When EHR began with just a few hospitals, clients directly dialed their Physician Advisor. "As we grew, we were committed to maintaining personal relationships and a small-company feeling," says Contreiras. "We measure success not just by how quickly we answer a call, but by how quickly our client can connect to the best team member to answer their question or fulfill their request."

Clients expect to be able to reach an EHR Physician Advisor from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. Eastern time, 365 days a year. Therefore, EHR needs to make sure it can continue serving clients without interruption if

company offices are closed because of inclement weather or disaster.

Finally, EHR needs the ability to quickly respond to customer service requests. “In order to respond to client needs, we sometimes need to modify our routing in just days,” says Contreiras. “We wanted a unified communications system and a services partner that would give us that flexibility.”

Solution

EHR met its goals for highly personalized and efficient customer interaction with Cisco® Unified Communications Manager and a Cisco customer collaboration solution. Cisco partner ShoreGroup designed and implemented the solution in just eight weeks, using Cisco Telephony Integration Object Server to customize Cisco Agent Desktop and integrate with EHR’s customer database.

When a client calls EHR, the Cisco solution recognizes the calling phone number and then automatically logs into the internal customer database to retrieve the client information, Physician Advisor team, and relationship details. With this information, the solution routes the call to the appropriate team, displaying the detailed client information on the Physician Advisor’s Cisco Agent Desktop. Mobile physicians and nurses appreciate being able to quickly connect to a person familiar with their case and not having to wait for a new person to look up details.

“We never lose sight of our main goal, making sure clients can pick up the phone and reach a Physician Advisor who has a deep understanding of their hospital’s operations. This was true when we had 200 clients and, with the help of Cisco customer collaboration solutions, it remains true today, with more than 2300 clients.”

— Luisa Contreiras, Chief Technology Officer, Executive Health Resources

Cisco customer collaboration gives EHR clients flexible options for reaching a secondary contact if their usual team of Physician Advisors is working with other clients. In this situation, Cisco Unified IP Interactive Voice Response (IP IVR) automatically asks callers whether they would like a call back or would prefer instead to connect with another Physician Advisor qualified to help them. And when clients call after business hours in their time zone, the system routes their call to another Physician Advisor in a different time zone.

In EHR’s Command Center, personnel constantly monitor real-time operations. If call queues begin backing up, staff members can dynamically add other physicians, helping EHR meet demanding call volumes even during the busiest times.

All EHR personnel use Cisco Unified IP Phones, and also have Cisco IP Communicator on their laptops so that they can work from anywhere in the event of inclement weather or disaster. “Cisco IP Communicator is part of our business continuity strategy,” Contreiras says. “Whether EHR staff are working at headquarters, a regional office, or at home, our clients have the same experience when they contact us.”

Results

High Customer Satisfaction Through Personalized Experience

Using the Cisco customer collaboration solution, EHR has continued to deliver its hallmark personal service as the client base has grown. “We never lose sight of our main goal, making sure clients can pick up the phone and reach a Physician Advisor who has a deep understanding of their hospital’s operations,” Contreiras says. “This

PRODUCT LIST

Unified Communications

- [Cisco Unified Communications Manager](#)
- [Cisco Unified IP Phones 7970](#)
- [Cisco Unity® Connection](#)
- [Cisco IP Communicator](#)

Customer Collaboration

- [Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise](#)
- [Cisco Unified IP Interactive Voice Response](#)
- [Cisco Telephony Integration Object Server](#)

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Responsiveness to Changing Client Needs

Clients also appreciate that EHR can quickly implement their requests for new routing options. For example, a client that adds a cardiology service from EHR can request a menu option to contact EHR’s team of Physician Advisors specializing in cardiology. “We made a call flow change to accommodate a critical client request in just one day,” Contreiras says. “Without the Cisco solution, we

couldn’t have done it at all without outside help, much less in 24 hours.”

Business Continuity

Medical necessity compliance is mission-critical for hospitals, and part of EHR’s competitive advantage is its ability to continue operating even if Physician Advisors cannot get to the office. During a record-breaking snowstorm in January 2011 and Hurricane Irene in August 2011, employees could not commute to any East Coast office, and instead worked at home using Cisco IP Communicator on a laptop. Clients dialed the same number they ordinarily do to connect to their usual Physician Advisors. “We did not miss a beat, despite record high call volume,” says Contreiras.

Next Steps

Now EHR is exploring new ways to take advantage of the Cisco solution to make customer collaboration even more personalized and efficient. One plan is to more closely integrate the Cisco solution and the internal customer database to provide more information to Physician Advisors.

Contreiras concludes, “For maintaining a high-touch, personalized collaborative relationship over the phone, the Cisco customer collaboration solution is perfect.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Collaboration, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration>.

To join conversations and share best practices about collaboration, visit:

<http://www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation>.



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