HEALTHCARE SUCCESS STORY

Progressive Medical Center Improves Communications Condition by Switching to ShoreTel

ShoreTel offers the high availability and reliability healthcare organizations need, and improves overall productivity.

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare is a progressive, technologically advanced healthcare leader in Northern Nevada. The stunning three-story, 352,000-square foot facility at the heart of a spacious 80-acre medical campus overlooks picturesque Carson City. Carson Tahoe has set new standards in women and children’s medical services, surgical services, outpatient services, and oncology. Each floor is designed with patient comfort and family convenience in mind, with private rooms throughout the facility and a guest bed to accompany each patient bed. Also, healthcare previously unavailable in the valley, such as open heart surgery, is now available at Carson Tahoe.

The Search

In 2005, Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare started building a brand new facility—a 146-bed hospital with approximately 250 physicians and staff. To streamline communications throughout this facility, Carson Tahoe wanted to converge its voice and data networks and add the powerful features available with unified communications (UC). With existing NEC PBX-based systems already deployed at most of the 18 buildings across campus, the organization realized it needed a new solution—one that would offer a lower cost of ownership and offer advanced features as well as wireless functionality.

The technology team at Carson Tahoe looked at UC solutions from Cisco, InterTel, NEC, and ShoreTel®, and worked closely with the consultant who had designed the organization’s network infrastructure. This consultant realized that the hospital had unique needs because of its architectural and technological design—it had many closets on each floor, each housing one switch. This meant that the solution of choice had to move from a centralized computer room in the basement to the edge of the network, and it had to be centrally managed.

The hospital also had other crucial requirements. For instance, the system required a highly reliable distributed architecture with failover in the event of a...
C Carson Tahoe employees can quickly type in a name, bring up a number, and make their calls from local online directories—all with the click of a mouse, right from the desktop.

“Users like seeing their voicemail and e-mail in one place,” said Mr. Jackson. “They’re more productive because they respond to the right people faster and they can quickly transfer callers to the right destination. With Personal Call Manager, dialing an employee is just a matter of typing in a name and choosing the contact on the screen—there’s no need to memorize numbers. ShoreTel has improved communications internally and externally.”

ShoreTel’s Find Me feature allows Carson Tahoe employees to have callers reach them wherever they are—at their desk, on their cell phone, or at home if they choose. “Some users have calls routed to their cell phones so that when they travel, they can be reached easily,” said Mr. Jackson. “It allows them to be productive from the road, and it also means there are fewer calls they have to return when they get to their destination or when they return back to the office.”

Carson Tahoe uses various workgroups, such as its IT support center, main admitting office, cancer center, and imaging department. ShoreTel’s workgroups capability makes the creation, operation and management of these teams easy. The ShoreTel UC system also enables workgroup supervisors to train new employees faster, ensure agents are delivering consistent service, and obtain a comprehensive view of how calls are being handled by each agent. Performance and statistical information provided by the ShoreTel UC system gives Carson Tahoe an overview of how each workgroup is performing and further improvement possibilities.
Carson Tahoe also uses ShoreTel’s hunt groups capability, which ensures that live calls are answered by making multiple people available to answer. When a person is on the phone or unavailable, calls are routed to another extension, preventing callers from unnecessarily reaching voicemail. “Our objective is for all of our callers to get to a live person on a 24 x 7 basis, and ShoreTel enables us to meet this objective,” said Mr. Jackson.

**Simplicity and Savings**

ShoreWare Director, ShoreTel's browser-based management interface, allows the IT staff to access the system from anywhere on the network and manage the entire system from in house, including voicemail, automated attendant and desktop applications. When a new user is added, an administrator simply clicks “add new” and enters the user’s name. The system automatically updates the centralized database and voice switches, creates a new mailbox, and updates the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature and online directories—all in a matter of seconds. Changes are made just as quickly and easily.

“It’s the easiest system in terms of moves, adds and changes, as well as system administration—even for a network person with no experience in phone systems,” said Chris Woody, Network Administrator for Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare. “We’ve reduced systems management time significantly and realized big savings there."

**Disaster Recovery and Reliability**

A key feature of the ShoreTel UC system is its distributed architecture design, which is ideal for multisite organizations and helps provide a higher level of reliability than server-centric solutions. This appealed to Carson Tahoe because high availability is so crucial and disaster recovery is such a priority in the healthcare environment. Also, ShoreGear Voice Switches are built with dual Ethernet ports. This inherent redundancy in the hardware is essential for operating rooms and other hospital environments in which communications cannot fail. With ShoreGear Voice Switches, if a packet stops, the switch automatically switches to the other port.

In addition, ShoreTel’s call control software is distributed to every voice switch, which eliminates any single point of failure. In the highly unlikely event a ShoreGear Voice Switch fails, the other switches on the network automatically assume the call-processing load. With the distributed nature of the ShoreTel UC system, it is easy to reroute calls and continue business as usual.

**The Right Fit**

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare is pleased with the ShoreTel UC system—the organization has realized significant savings, enhanced employee productivity, and continues to improve its business processes based on a state-of-the-art communications system. “One of the biggest benefits of the ShoreTel UC system is the ability to have data available on callers and call histories,” said system...
administrator, Mr Jackson. “We can even review outbound calls if we need to. The ability to do this data mining makes a big difference over the old system.”

Carson Tahoe is looking forward to working with ShoreTel on some further integration, such as Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and more wireless deployments. “We like working directly with ShoreTel and we receive an immediate response whenever we need anything,” said Mr. Jackson. “ShoreTel has taken the initiative to make a complicated product easier. It meets all our requirements, including a distributed architecture, centralized management, and support for both digital and analog devices. “We’ve realized measurable productivity improvements and we’ve enjoyed true ease of management,” he adds. “ShoreTel has met all of our requirements and given us some added benefits we didn’t expect.”

About ShoreTel

ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simple unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can’t match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com