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Case Study

Easy, reliable call logging for mission critical applications

Client: Medical Services Organisation SA (Pty) Ltd
Industry: Medical Scheme Administration

Background

Medical Services Organisation (MSO) is a privately held company providing hospital risk management services to over 20 mainly South African medical schemes including well-known schemes such as Spectramed, Medihelp, Genesis and BUPA International. MSO's staff of 120 nurses takes around 65,000 calls per month from medical scheme members seeking authorisations of hospital admissions. Most of these, around 85%, are pre-authorisations for elective procedures; the remainder are post-authorisations for emergency admissions or admissions in progress.

The company was founded in 1995 and bought out by its management in 2001. It is the recognised market leader in hospital benefit and disease management and has twice been named by PMR Africa as the Diamond Award winner for hospital utilisation management services in the "medium sized companies" category. Recently it has also won the same awards for its managed oncology programme.

Business need

"The nurses in our contact centre deal with calls that are often clinically complex, highly emotional and financially significant for medical schemes and their clients," says MSO operations director Carol Garner. "It's absolutely critical to our business that every call is recorded, and that we can find call records when we need them. We could cope if we lost half our phones for a few hours, but not the call logger. It has to be 100% reliable."

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Garner says MSO receives daily requests from medical schemes to retrieve call records. "For example, we may approve a treatment subject to time or value limits; if the client later disputes a payment and complains, we need to be able to produce the call record to confirm exactly what was authorised."

Call records not only need to be found, they need to be found quickly and to be clearly audible. "We have service level agreements with most of our clients that impose severe daily penalties if we aren't able to retrieve calls quickly," says Garner.

MSO's previous voice logger "served us well for 12 years," says Garner. "But it was old technology based on tapes, which meant it took a long time and some specialist expertise to find and retrieve the calls, and we could keep calls for at most a week before we needed to load a new tape. Finding a month-old call could require loading three or four tapes and lots of prayer that it would be audible. So in April 2007 we embarked on a year-long mission to find a new call logger.

We went to local and international conferences, asked questions until we were blue in the face and had all sorts of people knocking on our door.”

“I’m a nurse, not a techie; I have 120 staff and I don’t have time to fiddle with a voice logger that won’t do what I tell it to.”

Garner says MSO’s requirements of a new logger were straightforward: “Let me take a call, listen to a call and retrieve an audible call in minutes through my PC, and make it simple. I don’t care about the underlying technology, I just needed something that would work.”

Solution

During MSO’s year of searching, Garner tested several different solutions. “Many solutions met our criteria on paper, but they all fell short either on simplicity – their processes were too cumbersome and complex – or on the audio quality. We finally tested AMETHYST at the same time we implemented a new call centre solution, and it met every part of the criteria I laid down.”

AMETHYST has been in constant use at MSO since the beginning of the test period. “I cannot tell you how liberating it has been,” says Garner. The ability to listen to and retrieve calls through a secure Web interface has been a revelation: “I can do what I need to do, when and where I need to do it, whether it’s in my lounge at home or a hotel overseas. I spend a lot of time travelling and the ability to monitor things and get involved if anything is escalating is invaluable.”

“We would have spent double if we had to for this solution,” adds Garner. “Getting the right functionality was our first priority, price came second.”

Garner says the installation was “seamless, efficient and delivered on time. Training was offered but I really didn’t see the need, it’s so simple to use. I’m exceptionally happy with the AMETHYST system. It’s been more exciting than my new car.”

AMETHYST has offered the 100% reliability and speed Garner sought, with excellent audio quality and ease of use. “Because it doesn’t need any special skills we now have five people who can retrieve calls as opposed to two previously,” she says. “The number of licences we’ve got within the package price is great: We are freed from reliance on one or two individuals, which makes the process much more secure. I can email calls to myself or directly to my clients at the medical schemes.

“My clients are all very happy with the increased speed we’re able to offer.”

“I went around the world to find the perfect solution,” concludes Garner. “There is so much out there, and everybody throws tech jargon at you and promises the earth. But when it comes to delivering simplicity and ease of operation, I didn’t find anything that beat AMETHYST. It meets my needs 100%.”