

VERTEKS CONNECTION



volume 10 number 1



THE RIGHT PRESCRIPTION

Verteks helps BioPlus Specialty Pharmacy improve communications and protect against disaster with solutions from ShoreTel and Quorum.

Pharmacy operations have changed dramatically in the past several decades as technology has automated many of the time-consuming manual tasks associated with dispensing medicine. This not only enables pharmacies to reduce errors and increase efficiency but to focus more on customer service and patient outcomes.

BioPlus Specialty Pharmacy takes that emphasis to the next level. BioPlus is a privately held, pharmacist-owned specialty pharmacy that works closely with payers and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as with prescribers, to get prompt treatment for patients requiring a range of infusion and specialty services, including for hepatitis C, cancer, bleeding disorders and other complex, chronic conditions. The company doesn't just dispense medicine but designs individualized therapy management plans to reduce side effects and ensure that medications deliver the desired results.

Effective communication is critical in this high-touch service environment, as BioPlus directly supports patients nationwide to achieve optimal health outcomes. Headquartered in Altamon-

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The Right Prescription

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te Springs, Fla., and licensed to do business in all 50 states, BioPlus operates a call center staffed with patient care coordinators who serve as a key contact point for patients. Until recently, however, BioPlus had an outdated phone system with no real call center capabilities. The company turned to Verteks Consulting for help.

“We were looking for a new phone system because our existing system didn’t have all the features and functionality we needed,” said Fred Gagle, Vice President of IT, BioPlus Specialty Pharmacy. “We looked at various systems and narrowed it down to ShoreTel. And Verteks came highly recommended as a ShoreTel partner.”

Now BioPlus counts itself as one of Verteks’ satisfied customers. The Verteks team completed a painless implementation of the ShoreTel system, and deployed a disaster recovery solution that relieved a major headache for BioPlus.

A Shot in the Arm

Verteks began by gaining an understanding of the pharmacy’s needs and objectives. The Verteks team then designed and implemented the ShoreTel Unified Communications (UC) solution and provided training for BioPlus staff.

“The installation and training went really well. It was a smooth transition,” Gagle said. “In fact, many employees commented on how pleased they were, not only with the technology but with Verteks. Verteks did a remarkable job with the implementation, configuration and training of the phone system.”

“The overall support of the phone system has been excellent as well. Verteks knows our installation and configuration, plus they are very responsive.”

The need for improved contact center capabilities was a key factor driving the move to a new phone system. The ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center solution provides BioPlus with valuable real-time reporting.

“Our patient care coordinators work with patients to arrange deliveries, make sure they are taking their medications correctly, and serve as a liaison between the doctors’ offices

and pharmacists. They also call patients regarding refill reminders and to put them in touch with our financial assistance team as needed. They are there to support the ongoing care of our patients,” said Gagle.

“There are a lot of inbound and outbound calls, and many insurance plans have strict guidelines on call reporting. We didn’t really have much of a contact center solution before — we were getting our reporting from our phone bills, and it was a manual, time-consuming process. Now the ShoreTel system helps us keep track of all those metrics.”

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Positive Outcome

The ShoreTel UC solution also has advanced functionality integrated into the system. Specifically, BioPlus is taking advantage of the system’s presence capabilities and mobility features.

“We use the ShoreTel Communicator for instant messaging and to check the status of somebody who’s on the phone or unavailable. It has really helped improve our internal communications,” Gagle said. “We use ShoreTel Mobility as well — we can place and receive calls on our mobile devices and it looks as if we’re at work.”

The ShoreTel solution is also much easier to administer and maintain.

“It’s leaps and bounds beyond what we used to have before,” said Gagle. “The ShoreTel director is very intuitive, and Verteks did a good job training my teams so that we could administer the system on a day-to-day basis. We are able to do a lot of the small changes ourselves.”

With 124 users, training was a key component of the project. Verteks provided comprehensive training to ensure that BioPlus could gain maximum value from the system.

“Verteks was here for several days providing training in multiple sessions and doing some additional customization,” Gagle said. “I couldn’t have asked for it to go any better — the whole implementation and the technology from ShoreTel. ShoreTel is a really good company and Verteks is a really good ShoreTel partner.”

Strong Medicine

Once the ShoreTel solution was in place, Verteks worked with BioPlus to implement the Quorum onQ disaster recovery solution. The company did not have failover to a second site and was concerned about the risk of a disaster affecting the data center. Verteks recommended Quorum.

“We had not heard of Quorum but really liked what it did,” said Gagle. “We had demoed five or six other solutions and Quorum was the most cost-effective. Also, the technology, the dashboards, the ease of administration and the features Quorum provides are unlike any of the other options we were looking at.”

The Quorum solution provides onsite backup to a high-availability appliance and data replication to the Quorum cloud. In the event of a system failure, the onsite appliance can provide recovery within minutes, while the Quorum cloud provides one-click recovery in case of a data center disaster.

“In the past you had to set up another data center — rent floor space and cabinets and power and bring in servers and circuits and software licenses and all that. It was very expensive for us,” Gagle said. “The Quorum Solution is there when you need it but when you don’t it’s not taking up a lot of resources. It’s a very low-cost solution compared to all the other products we looked at.”

BioPlus is the epitome of the 21st-century pharmacy — efficient, technologically savvy and focused on customer service. Through its partnership with Verteks, BioPlus has further enhanced its operations with a solid communications platform and protection from disaster — solutions that support its vision to lead the innovative practice of patient-centric, outcome-oriented pharmaceutical care.

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Virtual Solution, Real Results

ShoreTel enables businesses of all sizes to gain the benefits of virtualization in a customizable solution without complexity.



Virtualization provides organizations with key business benefits, including a smaller IT footprint, streamlined operations, faster application rollouts, increased availability and improved disaster recovery capabilities. Now ShoreTel is enabling organizations to take advantage of virtualization within the communications infrastructure.

ShoreTel 14.2, the new release of its Unified Communications (UC) platform, allows companies of all sizes to deploy a ShoreTel communications system in a virtualized environment. With ShoreTel 14.2, organizations can mix and match hardware-based and virtual appliances within the same network, and manage it all using a single web-based interface. Organizations have the flexibility to select the UC deployment model that best suits their business and infrastructure needs, while reducing hardware and operational complexity and increasing availability, scalability and reliability.

“The time is now to take advantage of virtualization for unified communications – the infrastructure is in place, the market is ready, the channel is knowledgeable, and customers are clamoring to virtualize their PBX and entire communications platform,” said Pej Roshan, vice president of product management at ShoreTel. “Virtualization complements our distributed architecture and allows customers to benefit from virtualization features and ShoreTel’s inherent N+1 redundancy to deliver high availability at the lowest cost. In addition, virtualization sets the foundation for customers to

With ShoreTel 14.2, customers can mix and match hardware-based and virtual appliances for highest reliability and scalability at the lowest cost.

consume VoIP services via on-premises, hybrid, and cloud deployment models.”

The ShoreTel UC Virtualization Advantage

Although communication systems requirements vary widely from company to company, the availability of virtualization technology is changing how UC is deployed in small to midsize businesses (SMBs) as well as large enterprises. According to a recent survey, 77 percent of SMBs are now using some form of virtualization. ShoreTel allows these organizations to leverage the virtual servers they already own and operate.

“Our customers are already taking advantage of virtualization or are heading in that direction. ShoreTel 14.2 enables them to expand their virtualization initiatives into the IP communications environment,” said Don Gulling, President, Verteks Consulting. “ShoreTel has long provided the lowest total cost of ownership in the industry, and is now

extending that leadership with its virtual appliances. We are very excited to bring this uniquely flexible and scalable option to our customers.”

ShoreTel 14.2 isn't just for SMBs. The new ShoreTel virtualization solution also allows easy scalability for enterprise-grade customers by quadrupling the port capacity per appliance. ShoreTel virtual switches support up to 1,000 phones and 500 SIP trunks. This increased capacity simplifies deployment and eliminates the need to manage multiple appliances, especially for customers that choose a centralized UC deployment.

Optimizing the UC Environment

One of the primary advantages of virtualization is better use of IT resources. According to VMware, most physical servers operate at less than 15 percent of capacity, which is highly inefficient and introduces server sprawl and complexity. VMware also reports that server virtualization delivers 80 percent greater utilization of server resources and a 10:1 or better server consolidation ratio, resulting in up to 50 percent savings in capital and operating costs.

In the past, only non-real-time UC services such as voice-mail or unified messaging were virtualized due to the laten-

cy-sensitive nature of real-time IP communications. Now, however, VMware's vSphere platform is capable of supporting UC capabilities from end to end. ShoreTel 14.2 enables all ShoreTel UC components, including call control, SIP trunks, and collaboration applications, to be virtualized and implemented on industry-standard virtualized servers, thus consolidating the server hardware across multiple applications, reducing energy requirements and minimizing hardware footprint.

In addition to improving utilization, virtualization enables customers to quickly and easily migrate UC services to another server in the event of a hardware failure. Customers can take advantage of features for higher availability, such as VMware vSphere High Availability, and zero-downtime live migration of running virtual machines with VMware vSphere vMotion.

“These solutions, combined with ShoreTel's industry-leading reliability, improve application availability and enhance the disaster recovery practices companies already have in place,” Gulling said. “We believe ShoreTel 14.2 represents a major advancement in unified communications that is a real game-changer for our customers.”

all your technology needs under one umbrella



Unlike many other consulting firms, Verteks has developed unmatched expertise in several critical areas, which allows us to serve as a central source for a broad range of high-quality solutions to complex IT issues. Contact us today and let us show you how we can help you simplify your business with technology.



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Managing the Supply Chain

Study identifies key trends to help companies improve their operations.

Recent headlines have illustrated how rising complexity in global operations can lead to significant breakdowns in the supply chain — the most scandalous example being the discovery of horse meat in processed beef products across Europe. Investigators say the multi-tiered nature of the food industry’s supply chain invited instances of fraud by several suppliers.

In the technology industry, the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan and devastating floods in Thailand in each of the past two years have caused serious disruptions in the flow of microprocessors, hard drives and a host of other components. These events, and more, have led organizations in all industries across the globe to reassess the complexity, security and reliability of the modern supply chain.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of supply-chain management for the modern organization. Reliable product delivery not only impacts sales revenues and inventory levels, it accounts for up to 70 percent of costs in some organizations, including capital expenditures, transportation costs and real-estate utilization.

A recent report from the University of Tennessee’s Global Supply Chain Institute pinpoints 10 “game-changing” supply chain trends that can help companies improve their operations. The Institute defines a game-changing trend is one that greatly impacts

a firm's shareholder value and can be extremely difficult to implement successfully.

"This research confirmed that world-class companies need to revisit these trends on a regular basis to stay abreast in today's dynamic and rapidly changing environment," said Paul Dittmann, executive director of UT's Global Supply Chain Institute. "Companies also must be open to considering new challenges, such as the application of business analytics to big data and cloud-based applications."

The Institute surveyed 163 supply chain professionals from 132 global companies to develop the list. Companies surveyed ranged in size of revenue from \$75 million to \$500 million. Twenty-seven percent of the participants were retailers, 59 percent were manufacturers and 14 percent were service providers.

"The study highlights some of the latest trends that companies must consider as they look to the future," said Brad Newman, principal at Ernst & Young LLP, a cosponsor of the study. "While there have been strides made to address such issues as cross-functional integration and collaboration, companies need to be even more diligent about how they leverage new sources of data to address the unique needs and economics of different customer and product segments."

The 10 trends addressed in the survey are:

Customer relationship management

Leading companies are successfully segmenting their products and customers and developing tailored supply chain solutions for each segment. This approach allowed one firm to eliminate nearly half (48 percent) of its inventory while still improving on-shelf availability from 96 percent to nearly 100 percent.

Collaborative relationships

A win-win collaboration between supplier and customer may be rare, but it can produce amazing results. These collaborations should be built on a foundation of common metrics, shared benefits and trust. OfficeMax collaborated with its supplier Avery Dennison to increase revenue by more than 22 percent, achieve product availability of more than 99 percent, decrease inventory by 34 percent, and save more than \$11 million in logistics costs.

Transformational strategy

Only 16 percent of firms have a documented, multiyear supply chain strategy, yet developing these strategies can produce spectacular results. Whirlpool used a transformational strategy to deliver record-high service levels while decreasing

inventory levels by more than \$100 million and logistics costs by \$20 million.

Process integration

Of great concern to supply chain organizations is the functional silos that still exist and disrupt supply chain performance. One opportunity that can have tremendous impact is integrating purchasing and logistics. Although both functions are traditional supply chain functions, the research confirmed significant payback when these two areas align their objectives and operating plans.

Driver-based metrics

Simply changing the performance measurement and goal-setting system inside a firm can greatly enhance overall supply chain performance. Procter & Gamble applied this concept and dramatically increased customer service levels, market share and sales.

Information sharing and visibility

Firms are changing the game by sharing and linking together masses of information from multiple sources (big data) and interpreting the data using business analytics expertise.

Demand management

Increasing forecasting accuracy along with integrating the demand and supply functions across the supply chain can drive higher revenue, lower working capital and decrease costs. Leading companies are leveraging big data and new approaches to better forecast demand.

Talent management

Talent management is the number one requirement for transforming a supply chain. Critical competencies in hiring top supply chain talent include global orientation, leadership and business skills, and technical savvy.

Virtual integration

One of the fundamentals of a great supply chain is for a company to stick to what it does well — its core competencies — and leave the rest to world-class service providers. When outsourcing, firms should create a win-win vested outsourcing framework with its service providers.

Value-based management

Supply chain excellence is the key to creating shareholder value. On average, the supply chain controls 100 percent of the inventory, manages 60 percent to 70 percent of cost of goods sold and provides the foundation to generate revenue by delivering outstanding availability.

Virtualized phone system?

It's for you!



ShoreTel 14.2 allows companies of all sizes to deploy a ShoreTel communications system in a virtual environment. With ShoreTel virtualization, customers can select the UC deployment model that best suits their business and infrastructure needs – virtual, physical or any combination of both. The benefits are immediate – reduced hardware and operational complexity, higher application availability, increased scalability and reliability. ShoreTel virtualization is currently available from Verteks. Contact us today to learn more.



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