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CASE STUDY

i-Sight Customer Service Software Improves Patient Satisfaction at Renowned California Hospital

“In just two months, according to Craig Owens, the center’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, the i-Sight system has proved its value. i-Sight tells us where our problems are and what kinds of things we need to be working on. It’s definitely helping us get where we want to go in terms of customer satisfaction.”

OTTAWA, Canada – June 30, 2005 – Customer Expressions, a leading provider of customer service software, case management software, and corrective action (CAPA) management solutions, today announced that Eisenhower Medical Center of Rancho Mirage, CA, has deployed i-Sight Customer Service and Complaint Management Software as part of a strategy to improve patient satisfaction.

In just two months, according to Craig Owens, the center’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, the i-Sight system has proved its value by delivering significant improvements in:

- the number of patient complaints captured;
- the timeliness of the hospital’s response to those complaints; and
- the quality of documentation and reports

According to Owens, the i-Sight customer service software “tells us where our problems are and what kinds of things we need to be working on.” He adds, “It is definitely helping us get where we want to go in terms of customer satisfaction.”

THE CHALLENGE

Sometimes, the only thing worse than receiving customer complaints is not receiving them. That, in effect, was the challenge that confronted Craig Owens, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Eisenhower Medical Center (www.emc.org), a comprehensive healthcare institution in California’s Coachella Valley that is renowned for its centers of excellence in cardiovascular, orthopedics and oncology.

Recently identified as a 100 Top Hospital, Eisenhower, in addition to clinical excellence, is now focussed on achieving top patient satisfaction scores.

Owens and other senior managers at the center’s 253-bed Eisenhower Medical Center knew instinctively that some of the people who received treatment at the hospital were dissatisfied with the service they had received. But until recently, the hospital did not have a reliable way of tracking how many people were dissatisfied, and what exactly they were unhappy about.

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THE CHALLENGE



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At the root of the hospital's problem was the computer program that it had been using for several years to log customer service inquiries and patient complaints. In theory, the system was supposed to help Owens and his colleagues respond quickly to reports of poor service – for example, a patient who felt he had been forced to wait too long before seeing a doctor. "As an organization, we are passionate about pursuing a high level of patient satisfaction," Owens explains. "It's like a restaurant that has a reputation to protect. If you make a mistake and someone is upset, you want to be able to fix that immediately."

Unfortunately, Owens says, the complaint tracking and customer service software on which the hospital had been relying simply wasn't up to the task. For one thing, it was so complicated and difficult to use that only two people on the hospital's entire staff had enough training to be able to enter service requests and complaints into the system. Other employees who were aware of service complaints often did not bother to tell anyone because the process for doing so was too cumbersome. "It was as though there was a built-in deterrent in the reporting process," Owens says.

Owens was also frustrated by the amount of time and effort required to analyze the complaints and generate reports. "Every time we needed information out of the system, someone had to sit down and write a custom report," he says. "It was extremely time-consuming and inefficient. The basic problem was that the architecture of the system was closed and reprogramming cost an arm and a leg," Owens says.

THE SOLUTION



To improve the hospital's customer service and handling of complaints, Owens knew that it was essential to find tracking software that was cost-effective and simple to use, yet powerful and flexible. After researching several alternatives, he settled on i-Sight Customer Service and Complaint Management Software from Customer Expressions, the leader in web-based case management solutions.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between i-Sight and the system it replaced is its user-friendliness. No longer does the hospital need two specially trained administrators to enter complaint reports; instead, approximately 40 employees can now access the system directly from their desktop computers. In the near future, Owens says, that number will probably rise to 80 or 90. An hour or so of training is all that is required to become comfortable with the i-Sight user interface. That, in turn, greatly increases the odds that a service request or complaint will be entered into the system. It also reduces the likelihood that a patient will have to tell his story more than once – a potentially significant source of frustration.

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THE SOLUTION

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As a result, says Owens, "I'm not nearly as concerned as I was in the past about complaints slipping between our fingers. We've made it a lot easier for people to report, which means we're capturing more of the complaints." In only two months after i-Sight was deployed, Eisenhower Medical Center saw a dramatic improvement in the rate of complaint capture.

i-Sight has also significantly improved the timeliness of the hospital's response to complaints, by ensuring that each report is routed automatically to the appropriate individual for investigation and action within a specified period of time. Serious complaints are automatically escalated to a more senior manager, "The system tells us where our problems are and what kinds of things we need to be working on," Owens says, "so that we can constantly improve." He adds that i-Sight has greatly improved the quality of documentation and reports, which in turn makes it easier for the hospital to identify and address problems.

Owens has a simple test for determining whether a customer service and complaint management system is doing its job well. "At the end of the day," he says, "you want people's perception of your organization to be better than it would have been otherwise." How does i-Sight stack up in his view? "I think [i-Sight] would meet the needs of pretty well any hospital. It is definitely helping us get where we want to go in terms of customer satisfaction."

About Customer Expressions

Based in Ottawa, Canada, Customer Expressions (www.customerexpressions.com) is a leading provider of web-based case management solutions for regulators and enterprises focused on quality assurance and customer service. Customer Expressions has gained an international reputation for best-in-class software that enables managers to improve customer retention and profitability. The privately held firm provides i-Sight, integrated case management software for complaint handling, corrective and preventive action management (CAPA Management), compliance monitoring, and other business processes that require case management.

About Eisenhower Medical Center

Eisenhower Medical Center is a not-for-profit, comprehensive health care institution distinguished nationally as a 100 Top Hospital by Solucient®, the market leader for benchmarks and trends in business health care. Eisenhower's campus includes the 253-bed Eisenhower Hospital, the Betty Ford Center at Eisenhower, the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center at Eisenhower, and the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences at Eisenhower. The medical center is renowned for its Centers of Excellence in Orthopedics, Cardiovascular at the Eisenhower Smilow Heart Center, and Oncology at the Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center. Situated on 130 acres in Rancho Mirage, the medical center has provided a full range of quality medical and educational services for more than 30 years for residents and visitors to the greater Coachella Valley. For more information, visit www.emc.org.

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