



Imaging Centers Improve Customer Service with New Centralized Contact Centers

SimonMed Imaging is the largest outpatient imaging provider in Arizona, with one of the most advanced and specialized imaging networks in the Southwest. A physician-based practice, SimonMed has the most experienced group of subspecialty trained radiologists in the Southwest and provides full service radiology services, including comprehensive Women's Imaging with completely digital mammography, breast ultrasound and MRI, and stereotactic, ultrasound and MRI guided breast biopsies.

From open bore 3T MRIs to advanced Oasis open MRIs, SimonMed is a leader in providing the newest and best technology to the community. This strong commitment to state-of-the-art technology is a key competitive differentiator for SimonMed, and allows them to provide the best patient outcomes and customer satisfaction.

Challenge

SimonMed has recently experienced a significant bout of growth, adding locations organically as well as growing by merger and acquisition. They currently operate 27 locations throughout Arizona, with plans to continue expanding into new geographies at an accelerated rate.

This rapid growth, however, left SimonMed with disparate technology systems and legacy equipment across their enterprise. The lack of continuity and integration severely limited their ability to accurately allocate and share resources, and managing multiple systems meant that reporting and metrics suffered as well.

Collectively, SimonMed's offices perform tens of thousands of imaging sessions per week, so maximizing and optimizing the appointment scheduling process is a critical driver for their business success. SimonMed accepts appointments both from referring physicians' office staff and from individual patients directly, and considers customer satisfaction from both groups to be critical. In order to better serve their patient customers and to meet SLA's for their referring physicians, SimonMed needed to standardize and integrate their technology systems, particularly the appointment-setting contact centers.

A Trusted, Experienced Partner

SimonMed began their upgrade process by evaluating several manufacturers' product offerings, and once they'd narrowed their choice to Cisco, invited several Cisco implementation partners to propose a complete, integrated solution. Nexus was able to leverage their dedicated healthcare practice, proving experience both with the technology itself, and with the unique needs and challenges of the healthcare industry. Nexus' extensive experience with regulatory issues, understanding of the unique mission-critical environment, and ability to bring in expert resources at every stage of the planning and design process, gave SimonMed the confidence that Nexus was the right partner for their implementation.

Due to their rapid growth, SimonMed also needed a partner flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of their dynamic environment. In fact, during the implementation process, seven additional sites were added to the initial deployment plan. Nexus was able to leverage their strong Cisco partnership to deliver from a procurement perspective, and the experienced Nexus team stepped in to deliver from the engineering and implementation side.

Scalable, Borderless Solutions

Stage One of the implementation process involved deploying a Unified Communications enterprise platform and fully upgrading the existing contact center. In this initial phase, approximately half of the existing 27 locations were fully migrated, and VOIP handsets were added to the remaining legacy offices to integrate schedulers with the new contact center. Over a roughly four-month period, Nexus replaced the outdated Nortel BCM with Cisco's ContactCenter Express, using premium agents to support skills-based routing, interactive voice response, and screen pops from CRM. Currently supporting 40 agents, the solution Nexus integrated is completely scalable to accommodate further anticipated growth.

The new borderless network allows for seamless and efficient sharing and managing of resources across SimonMed's various locations. Regardless of their physical location, appointment agents are managed as individual resources and calls are routed as though they were all in the same building. By "virtualizing" the agents themselves, the system can now identify the best call routing based on a series of criteria that no longer relies on particular location or geography. If primary-responder specialists in one location are currently assisting other customers, calls are seamlessly routed to the next available resource on the network.

Results

From the outset, one of SimonMed's key measures of success was to identify ways to reduce the total cost of ownership. The solution set Nexus implemented does this in four key ways:

1. Consistency in platform allows SimonMed to take advantage of economies of scale: fewer resources & skills are required to support the technology, fewer service spares are needed, and simultaneous upgrades across the network ensure all users are working with the most recent version (from both a feature functionality standpoint as well as bug fixes)
2. Nexus' straightforward solution design allows SimonMed to self-manage their systems and use Nexus only as a 2nd tier option for problem escalation
3. Cisco contact center technology allows for implementation over a disparate geography with transparent feature functionality
4. Scalable solution allows for future growth without platform obsolescence

"We've found Nexus to be the perfect integration partner for SimonMed," said Gregg Barker, CIO of SimonMed. "They understand our business and the healthcare industry, and were able to help us design and implement a solution that would maximize the quality of care and service that we provide to our patients and referring physicians."

Using the newly-implemented call center management and monitoring tools, SimonMed now has access to a single unified set of metrics, facilitating business decisions that improve response times and increase customer satisfaction. Benchmark metrics now provide quality assurance statistics, measuring call handling times and monitoring agent performance, allowing SimonMed to respond to any exceptions with relevant training. The new systems also enable them to staff each location according to historic metrics and reallocate resources based on real-time metrics, making them immediately responsive to changes in demand. And the ability to route callers borderlessly across multiple physical location drives down customer hold time and increases both patient and referring physician satisfaction.