

AIRLIE WOMEN'S CLINIC+SHORETEL

ShoreTel UC system saves precious time for patient care at Airlie Women's Clinic



New facility opens the door for telephony upgrade

Airlie Women's Clinic decided to open a second facility. While the additional clinic was nearby, it was impractical to operate two separate telephony systems and pay a high price for POTS calls between the two practices.

Burgeoning medical practice faces a dose of reality when opening a second facility

With about 50,000 patients on file, the Melbourne-based Airlie Women's Clinic is one of the most successful medical practices in Victoria, Australia. The clinic is staffed by female general practitioners who have a particular interest in preventive care, women and family health issues, and counseling.

A turning point in the success of Airlie Women's Clinic was the decision to open a second facility. At the time, Airlie Women's Clinic employed three receptionists to handle up to 800 calls per day using a 10-line Commander traditional telephone service. The practice needed one communications system to work across the two practices to improve efficiency and gain significant cost savings.

"The efficiency of the clinic's telephony and related operating costs became a major concern when reviewing the opportunity to open a second practice," says Robert Szwarcberg, director of the Airlie Women's Clinic. "Front-of-practice efficiency is critical in the delivery of high-quality patient care. Communications is also a significant contributor to overhead, so we are concerned about the high cost of operating two systems," says Szwarcberg.

Challenges:

With plans to open a second practice near its Melbourne location, Airlie Women's Clinic needed a single IP-based communications system to help improve efficiency and reduce costs.

ShoreTel Solution:

The Airlie Women's Clinic deployed a ShoreTel UC system comprising a ShoreTel 90 Voice Switch and 19 easy-to-use ShoreTel IP Phones, plus ShoreTel Call Manager.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- Saved 26 hours of call management time
- Improved QoS – shortened time-to-answer callst
- Easy medical staff connectivity with ShoreTel's screen phones and one-touch buttons
- More efficient call management calls and call queues

Retaining the existing system and adding another one to the second practice was not viable. As a traditional telephone system, the Commander system couldn't link to additional locations. It was also struggling to accommodate the clinic's needs at the time, which included making and answering hundreds of calls each day. Callers were regularly placed in lengthy queues. The clinic was also experiencing line dropouts and lost calls after callers were put on hold. On top of that, there was no effective reporting on the status of the system.

ShoreTel IP enables the clinic to unify and upgrade its communication system

After reviewing options, Airlie Women's Clinic selected a ShoreTel UC system. The solution comprises a ShoreTel 90 Voice Switch, 19 easy-to-use ShoreTel IP Phones, models IP265 with color screens, seven cordless headsets, as well as one ShoreTel Supervisor Call Manager license, one ShoreTel Operator Call Manager License, and seven ShoreTel Agent Call Manager licenses. The clinic also deployed 10 ShoreTel Personal Call Manager licenses.

Airlie Women's Clinic management reviewed alternative systems prior to selecting ShoreTel, including a hybrid offering from Panasonic and an Avaya IP telephony system.

"Neither Panasonic nor Avaya could provide us with the benefits offered by ShoreTel," says Mr. Szwarcberg. "ShoreTel is essentially plug-and-play: simple to install, easy for staff to use, and it allows us to move or add additional phones at little or no cost other than the price of the additional handsets. ShoreTel also offered us the lowest total cost of owning and maintaining a telephone system over its projected life."

"Hybrid technology meant that expansion of the Panasonic system would be expensive, especially if we continued to grow. It also provided no flexibility to change our internal systems or fix our existing problems. It also offered antiquated integration with headsets," comments Szwarcberg. While the upfront costs of the Avaya IP telephony system were comparable, the product didn't offer the same level of flexibility.

"The Avaya offering didn't readily allow us to downsize or de-feature. Our reception staff preferred the look of the ShoreTel phones and the ease of use of the ShoreTel Call Manager software compared to the competitive products," remarks Szwarcberg.

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Robert Szwarcberg, Director
Airlie Women's Clinic

Airlie Women's Clinic staff planned the configuration and installation of the ShoreTel system according to the clinic's needs. Deployments, installation, and training were completed over a few days with a seamless overnight cutover. "The deployment went as smoothly and as quickly as ShoreTel said it would," says Szwarcberg. "There were no hitches."

Training receptionists and medical staff on the ShoreTel UC system was easy, and the company was fully operational on the system immediately after cutover. "The impact of ShoreTel on the productivity at Airlie Women's Clinic was realized from the first morning," comments Szwarcberg.

ShoreTel efficiencies result in lower costs and better patient care

Once the ShoreTel solution was operational, it became clear that Airlie Women's Clinic no longer needed three receptionists. As a result, management was able to reassign a receptionist to work directly with doctors to create more time for them to spend on direct patient care.

"Thanks to call management alone, ShoreTel is saving Airlie Women's Clinic a minimum of 26 work hours per week; 75 percent of calls are answered within 30 seconds, and 90 percent of calls are answered within one minute," says Szwarcberg.

This was a major improvement from Airlie Women's Clinic's previous system, which placed calls in long queues, creating patient service issues, and burdening receptionists with many conflicting demands. With the deployment of the ShoreTel system, the clinic's ISDN connection now provided 20 incoming lines for less monthly cost than it had previously using 10 lines.

Making the most from the efficiencies provided by ShoreTel Operator Call Manager and voicemail, the receptionists in each practice use two PC monitors and hands-free cordless headsets.

Calls at Airlie Women's Clinic are now answered by the click of a PC mouse. With ShoreTel Agent Call Manager on one monitor, receptionists answer incoming calls using cordless headsets and view the entire phone system activity, including the number of calls being queued and which phones are busy.

"THANKS TO CALL MANAGEMENT ALONE, SHORETEL IS SAVING AIRLIE WOMEN'S CLINIC A MINIMUM OF 26 WORK HOURS PER WEEK; 75 PERCENT OF CALLS ARE ANSWERED WITHIN 30 SECONDS, AND 90 PERCENT OF CALLS ARE ANSWERED WITHIN ONE MINUTE."

The second monitor provides access to doctor schedules, current patient activity, waiting room status, and patient details so that appointments can be made during the call.

Szwarcberg says the impact of the ShoreTel UC solution at Airlie Women's Clinic from the efficiencies gained, productivity lift, improvement in staff and patient service, and overall practice satisfaction have had a far greater impact on its bottom-line results than cost reduction.

"If we had known how much ShoreTel was going to improve our operations, we would have installed it long before we needed a multi-location telephony system," adds Szwarcberg

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