

U.S. Army Hospital Improves Service With Avaya and Interactive Northwest Solutions

Winn Army Community Hospital is located at Fort Stewart, Georgia. Opened in 1983, it replaced the World War II era Fort Stewart Hospital, a cluster of 70 one-story temporary wood buildings interconnected by ramps and corridors.

The four-story facility was named after Brigadier General Dean F. Winn, a U.S. Army Medical Corps Orthopedic surgeon whose career spanned the years from 1914 to 1948. Winn commanded four Army hospitals during his distinctive career.

A Business Challenge

Winn Army Community Hospital had been using an older self-service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform. Callers had difficulty distinguishing which department or location they needed for services, resulting in additional manpower needs of the hospital staff. The hospital was also looking for efficiencies in providing information to callers and call center staff.

Challenges included

- Improve automated call routing capabilities to connect patients to the right organization in the shortest time and with the least amount of effort.
- Improve responsiveness to messages by implementing an application that automatically returns calls at the appropriate time.
- Improve automated access to information by providing an enhanced lab test results application.
- Shorten call durations and improve patient satisfaction by implementing “screen pops” of the Patient Record screens.

Avaya and Interactive Northwest, Inc. (INI), a Platinum-level member in the Avaya DeveloperConnection program, had been providing services to Winn Army Community Hospital for several years. The companies’ long-term relationship with the hospital provided credibility in the client’s decision to invest in the joint Avaya/INI solution, which included developing more advanced capabilities utilizing speech recognition and screen pops.

Additional solution benefits included reducing hold times and improving information delivery.

Key Capabilities of the Solution

Avaya Interactive Response is an industry-leading platform for voice-enabled self-service applications for enterprises.

Avaya AES provides an enhanced set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), protocols and Web services that expose the functionality of Avaya communication solutions to corporate application developers, third party Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) and system integrators.

Avaya Dialog Designer is an open standards-based Integrated Development Environment (IDE) using the Eclipse.org development framework. It provides a drag-and-drop environment for the development and maintenance of speech and touch-tone applications.

INI SureConnect application provides callers the option of scheduling a callback rather than remaining on hold, providing efficiencies for the call center and convenience for callers.

INI CTInsight application retrieves and routes records from the hospital database and delivers them to the call center agent’s screen along with the call.

INI Lab Test Results application delivers results quickly, 24/7, ensures privacy, and reduces the need for staff assistance to provide results.

Seamless Transition to a New System

INI employed its trademarked Project Life Cycle process to manage the project’s stages:

- 1) conceptualization
- 2) proposal
- 3) design
- 4) development
- 5) delivery
- 6) ongoing support

An embedded legacy IVR system was utilized until the new system went live, easing transition and allowing quality modifications and tuning. As with all speech projects, INI focused on tuning and continual improvement to provide a better customer experience.

The Avaya/INI team set up the hospital network using Avaya IP telephony and contact center software running on Avaya media servers and gateways. The network also included Avaya Interactive Response, a standards-based self-service platform for contact centers that automates voice transactions. INI integrated a variety of software applications into the Avaya platform that are designed to help Winn Army Community Hospital deliver top-quality service. The applications were developed using Avaya Dialog Designer, a tool that simplifies the development of speech self-service applications.

Connecting calls to the right department. The INI applications used by the hospital employ the latest speech recognition technology from Nuance Communications to enable callers to use natural language commands to connect to the right department or clinic. As the application is fine-tuned for local speech patterns, it can ask simple questions and interact with Avaya’s IP telephony software to route calls based on the answers provided. If the system doesn’t understand a response, it simply asks questions in order to clarify. Callers don’t have to wait for an operator, and no human intervention is required.

Reducing hold times. Patients calling to make an appointment at the hospital or one of its clinics no longer have to remain on hold to keep their place in queue if the department they need to reach is busy. They can schedule a callback – either as soon as someone is available or at a specific time of day – without losing their place in line. Their call is handled in the same order it would have been had they remained on the phone.

Providing faster, more efficient call handling and access to information for patients and operators. Winn Army Community Hospital is expanding its use of its Avaya Interactive Response system to deliver lab test results quickly and securely. Thanks to an Avaya-compatible application from INI, patients simply call in at their convenience, enter a personal lab ID number and have their test results read to them via text-to-speech technology.

For those callers who need operator assistance, patient information is delivered to the operator's PC screen along with the call. Avaya contact center applications integrated with INI's CTInsight application retrieve and route records from the hospital database. As a result, calls can be handled more promptly and patients don't have to repeat information.

Using technology to improve customer service. For quality control and staff training purposes, the hospital now is able to record calls and examine how well they are handled. That means improvements can be made over time in the service the hospital delivers. The new capability is based on IP telephony call recording software from Witness Actionable Solutions, a division of Verint Systems Inc.

Benefits for the Hospital

- Patients benefit from shorter hold times, improved service, and faster access to personnel and test results.
- Winn Army Community Hospital, its 20 clinics, and approximately 70 operators have access to the same kinds of sophisticated communications capabilities used by the world's largest corporations.
- Staff satisfaction is improved from receiving more complete information with calls, reducing the need to ask callers for information.
- Staff efficiency is improved by eliminating unnecessary tasks through automation, allowing more rapid, personalized service for complex requests.

ABOUT DEVCONNECT

The DeveloperConnection Program (DevConnect) is a comprehensive set of innovative sales, support, marketing and services programs through which Avaya works with members to develop and promote their products and solutions that interoperate with Avaya solutions.

For more information, visit DevConnect at www.devconnectprogram.com

ABOUT INTERACTIVE NORTHWEST

Interactive Northwest, Inc. (INI) was founded in 1992 to provide custom communication solutions built upon leading IVR and telephony platforms. One of the first companies to provide combined expertise in network and host connectivity, database integration and telephony networks needed to deploy advanced communication solutions, INI is recognized today for its expertise in the voice response, speech recognition and computer telephony integration (CTI) arenas.

INI sets itself apart in three areas critical to the success of self-service systems: Deep technical expertise in the underlying technologies – networking, operating systems, database integration and computer telephony; A recognized talent for natural end-user dialog design; A disciplined, highly tuned project management process that ensures successful solution implementation. INI employs a complete Life Cycle Project approach which facilitates, from inception to ongoing support, trusting relationships with clients.

By balancing the client's infrastructure requirements with the end-users' expectations for self-service interactions, INI is able to deliver effective solutions with a high degree of quality and satisfaction for clients, partners and end-users alike.

For more information, visit www.interactivenw.com.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya delivers Intelligent Communications solutions that help companies transform their businesses to achieve marketplace advantage. More than 1 million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, use Avaya solutions for IP Telephony, Unified Communications, Contact Centers and Communications Enabled Business Processes. Avaya Global Services provides comprehensive service and support for companies, small to large. For more information visit the Avaya Web site: www.avaya.com.

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