Nebraska Medicine Transforms Communications Experiences with Avaya OneCloud™ CPaaS

Nebraska Medicine

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Nebraska Medicine knew it had to prepare for unprecedented increases in call volume from the community. Using Avaya OneCloud Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS), it was able to quickly deploy a smart, cloud-based conversational platform to help prioritize essential calls and reduce stress on customer service agents and other internal resources while continuing to deliver extraordinary patient care.

Omaha-based Nebraska Medicine is one of the state's largest healthcare systems, with an extensive network of nearly 40 specialty and primary care health centers. Its mission is clear: lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all people and communities through premier educational programs, innovative research, and extraordinary patient care. The organization has been named best in state by U.S. News & World Report for nine years in a row and has also been listed as one of the top 100 hospitals in America by Becker's Hospital Review. With this recognition based in part on patient surveys, they view their most valuable asset as the healthcare professionals who provide extraordinary patient care each and every day.

The CDC turned to Nebraska Medicine as a first-line leader in the fight against COVID-19, relying on them for the care of rescued Americans returning home from China at the onset of the outbreak as well as when the situation began

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to escalate in the U.S. With heightened uncertainty, hunger for information, and the sheer volume of misinformation being shared in the world, the hospital knew it had to prepare for unprecedented increases in call volume from the community. Using Avaya OneCloud Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS), it was able to quickly deploy a smart, cloud-based conversational platform to help prioritize essential calls and reduce stress on customer service agents and other internal resources while continuing to deliver extraordinary patient care.

Preparing for Crisis as a First-line Leader

The hospital's IT Telecommunications Team got to work quickly to ensure their support line could accommodate the deluge of inquiries related to symptom monitoring, self-quarantine, referrals for clinical services and more (data reports show that incoming calls to the health system increased by over 250% from June through August). There could be no compromise to quality and the need for speed was critical, all while over 90% of agents faced the new reality of working remotely.

"We knew we were about to experience an enormous increase in call volume and had to do something; something that gave us the flexibility to add capacity to take more calls without affecting normal traffic and allow for any 'surge' of COVID traffic when it occurred. I had heard about Avaya OneCloud CPaaS and the capabilities of its smart conversational platform application and knew it would be useful in our environment. It was off-premise, in the cloud, and as a long-time customer who has benefited from ongoing Avaya innovation, we knew we could trust an Avaya solution," said Frank Plummer, Manager of IT Telecommunications at Nebraska Medicine.

Within days, the hospital had a fully operational solution with custom voice menus to help callers quickly find relevant information through its 24/7 support line. Callers experiencing symptoms who wanted information on self-quarantine or the latest on COVID-19 were directed to the Nebraska Medicine website. Callers who were existing patients and experiencing symptoms were instructed to schedule an e-visit with professionals to determine next steps for care. The solution

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automatically routed new patients unfamiliar with Nebraska Medicine into a separate group to handle basic questions, while existing patients would instead launch into medical history and existing records. If call traffic surged on any given day, IT admins could quickly add new agents to the queue so that calls could be answered without delay while they monitored them through the OneCloud CPaaS portal.

Protecting healthcare professionals and all employees - their most valuable assets - was also paramount. Avaya and Nebraska Medicine designated a call flow for its network of over 8,000 employees in the event a worker began experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Avaya and its partner, a trusted member of Avaya's specialized ecosystem of experts, leveraged the deep knowledge and understanding that their long experience with Nebraska Medicine had given them. They worked diligently to ensure the hospital could provide employees with a dedicated and easy path to reporting symptoms through the automated system rather than flooding the organization's call center agents. Scripts were easily developed for managing the various call flows, with different considerations depending on the specific caller.

Navigating Change with Cloud Solutions

"Flexibility is key in the current landscape as COVID-19 has made it difficult to predict what we'll need to handle next," said Plummer. "Essential calls in the Northeast U.S. region increased by more than 60% over normal volume in April 2020 alone." Avaya OneCloud CPaaS, based on a flexible consumption model, enabled Nebraska Medicine to scale to handle any number of calls with the benefit of only paying for usage. The hospital can alter menu options depending on changing developments, and dual language ensures an optimal calling experience.

"By having the cloud IVR handle the first level of triage, agents are freed up to handle more complex or pressing issues and our IT organization can focus on continuing improvement in other key areas," Plummer said. The Avaya partner added, "We could only have done this with Avaya. Anything else would have taken an unacceptably long time, carried too much cost, reduced operational capacity at the edge, or compromised the quality metrics our customer needs to deliver."

Nebraska Medicine has upheld its reputation for community care with the help of Avaya OneCloud CPaaS. "We were able to adapt quickly. The deployment has without a doubt been successful in terms of offloading traffic and easing the burden on our internal contact center agents without compromising our standards and quality of patient care," said Plummer. The hospital is poised to continue support to

its communities during the pandemic as predicted "second waves" may become critical in the future. Providing agents with remote capabilities will keep all employees safe while delivering superior healthcare services to its patients.

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About Nebraska Medicine

Our health network covers metro Omaha and extends across the region providing you access to more than 1,000 doctors and nearly 40 specialty and primary care health centers to help keep you healthy. Our two hospitals, Nebraska Medical Center and Bellevue Medical Center have more than 800 licensed beds to deliver our promise of "Serious Medicine, Extraordinary Care." Our more than 8,000 employees are honored to be part of the region's leading academic health network. Learn more at **www.nebraskamed.com.**

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter.

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