

Iowa Hospital Reduces Help Desk Resolution Times, while Creating a Quieter Facility



Customer: Montgomery County Memorial Hospital

Location: Red Oak, Iowa

Industry: Healthcare

About the Company

Less than an hour from Omaha, Nebraska, Montgomery County Memorial Hospital serves approximately 22,000 people across the county. The busy, 159,000-square-foot hospital processes 45,000 annual outpatient visits. Through professionalism and unmatched care, MCMH strives to be the preferred health resource in southwest Iowa.

"There's so much that this software does. It's just incredible really. Every department in this hospital can and will eventually use IssueTrak in some form or another."

-Ron Drake, Help Desk Coordinator

Business Challenge

Montgomery County Memorial Hospital (MCMH) in Red Oak, Iowa strives to create a quiet, relaxing environment for patients, families and staff. So when team members resorted to overhead paging to get help with technology or maintenance issues, MCMH knew it needed a better solution.

At the time, a 50,000-square-foot hospital expansion seemed the perfect opportunity to upgrade the internal infrastructure as well, including the help desk. Since opening in 1989, MCMH has grown from 15,000 to 45,000 annual outpatient visits, stressing the current facilities.

Ron Drake, Help Desk Coordinator, was tasked with revamping the hospital's IT help desk and helping process requests related to the building expansion. At the time, the incumbent software lacked much-needed reporting capabilities and didn't adequately track assets.

"We spent a lot of time with inefficient processes," Drake said.

Additionally, MCMH used three different databases for requests for IT, facilities (maintenance) and environmental services (housekeeping) – a challenging and costly infrastructure to maintain. When Drake learned that an upgrade to the existing IT help desk solution alone would cost \$90,000, he started exploring alternatives.

Solution

Drake and the team spent two months researching help desk solutions, narrowing the list to a few vendors to provide demos. Web-based IssueTrak help desk software came out ahead for its rich functionality. Even with more capabilities than the competitors, the software also carried a lower price tag.

Further cinching the deal, the application offered enough flexibility to extend well beyond the IT help desk to track requests and assets in areas such as facilities and housekeeping – enabling MCMH to replace the databases for those departments as well.

"Hands-down, the ease of use of IssueTrak

and what it can do for our departments is phenomenal. It's very flexible and very easy to integrate," Drake said. "We can use one solution for all our needs."

Four help desk staff members have full license access to IssueTrak, while another 300 hospital staff can use IssueTrak to add or view issues – without additional cost.

First, the IssueTrak team implemented the solution for the hospital's help desk, customizing it with the fields, workflows and notifications specific to that team. After the IT implementation, MCMH easily added facilities and housekeeping requests – with their own unique fields as well – giving the hospital a central location for tracking everything from a light bulb change request to major equipment outages to required preventive maintenance.

Before, staff either announced a need via overhead pager or filled out a written work request. Now, they call or email the help desk, kicking off a service request that notifies the correct team to address the issue. When an issue is resolved and closed, notification emails automatically go out to the requesting staff member.

Likewise, if service people need more information in order to process a request, they enter it into IssueTrak, which immediately alerts the submitter that more information is required.

Benefits

Easier Asset Location

With IssueTrak, the hospital maintains comprehensive records of all IT assets and equipment in the now 159,000-square-foot building. The solution keeps all details, including an asset's current location, purchase date and any previous service

issues. Plus, IssueTrak serves as the single place for warranties and other asset documents, which can be tied to the related asset.

Now when looking for a specific item, the requester simply provides the serial number, enabling faster location.

"The ease of being able to track inventory to where it is located helps with service calls," Drake said. "All the information is right at your fingertips and service providers can get there quicker."

Supporting Preventive Maintenance Compliance

Detailed asset management additionally supports a critical hospital requirement: scheduled preventive maintenance, a regulatory requirement. To comply, MCMH must have equipment inspected on a specific schedule.

Reporting for Better Decision-Making

With IssueTrak, the hospital also accesses detailed reports not available previously. For example, with each service request categorized as critical, medium or low, MCMH analyzes the number of issues that fall into those various categories and average times to address each. In response, the team can identify steps to speed up resolution times.

Similarly, the hospital can report on equipment outages and replacements to determine the average life spans of assets, and budget accordingly.

Faster Resolution

With a central location for all service requests, MCMH has reduced the time to close issues, thereby increasing hospital staff productivity. That has led to overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff members across the hospital.

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Ron Drake

“We are able to resolve and close issues some times two to four times faster than we did before,” Drake said. “With their problems solved more promptly, staff are able to keep working.”

“Equally important, the hospital set a goal to reduce and try as much as we could eliminating overhead pages, creating a more peaceful setting for patients. We are well on our way to meeting our goal. Staff members now know that calling or emailing the help desk brings about an even faster resolution than an overhead page.”

“We are trying to make our hospital very quiet for our patients,” Drake continued. “Having the centralized help desk has eliminated 75 to 80 percent of overhead pages. We’ve seen a very sizeable improvement.”

IssueTrak Service: “Very knowledgeable and Prompt”

Next, MCMH plans to apply IssueTrak to managing recurring service performed by outside vendors on equipment in radiology, physical therapy and social services. Additionally, the accounting department is evaluating it for use in tracking its issues.

For each type of use, MCMH can configure unique fields and call flows. As much as he’s learned already, Drake doesn’t feel like he’s taken IssueTrak to its limit yet.

“There’s so much that this software does. It’s just incredible really,” he said. “Every department in this hospital can and will eventually use IssueTrak in some form or another.”

As he learns, he knows he can count on the people at IssueTrak to help maximize the software for various hospital departments. In the past, support representatives have accessed MCMH’s

system remotely to troubleshoot or demonstrate as needed.

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About IssueTrak

IssueTrak develops, sells and supports issue tracking software. First released in 2000, its signature software package has become a robust platform for internal and external customer support, IT help desk, workflow management, and issue tracking throughout the enterprise. The 100% web-based software is currently used by more than 1,700 companies in 36 countries, and across 54 major industry groups. Based in Virginia Beach, VA, the company is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and has been recognized with a number of awards, including the Inc 500, Inc 5000, and Deloitte Technology Fast 500.