



White Paper

Tips for Introducing Updated Communication Technologies in Healthcare

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The Ponemon Institute consistently highlights the prevalence of outdated communication methods in healthcare. Their 2019 study, "The Impact of Outdated Communication Technologies on Healthcare Providers," found that a significant portion of healthcare providers rely on pagers, fax machines, and insecure email. These legacy systems oftentimes are used because of a fragmented infrastructure within healthcare systems. Many systems have a complex hodgepodge of communication platforms that don't integrate well. This can lead to information silos and hinder collaboration.

Industry reports from healthcare IT organizations acknowledge the challenges a health system has to overcome to modernize its communication tech. For instance, a 2023 report by HIMSS Analytics found that interoperability and data exchange remain major hurdles in U.S. healthcare, indicating the persistence of fragmented communication systems.



Even so, hospitals recognize the need for updated communication tools to help keep patients safe. They are increasingly adopting new technologies like secure messaging apps, communication systems with real-time features, and artificial intelligence (AI).

Approaching healthcare leadership about upgrading communication systems requires a well-structured and compelling argument. Below are some helpful tips and suggestions you can use when making your request.

1. Frame the Problem with Data (Current State Analysis)

Don't just say "it's old." Quantify the problems with your current system by identifying compliance risks, costs, and pain points.

Give examples of data breaches or near misses due to outdated security protocols (especially HIPAA). Break down the frequency and high maintenance cost of repairs for legacy systems. Present analytics about long caller wait times, average hold time, abandonment rates, peak hour statistics, inefficient call routing, misdirected calls, and time spent identifying the correct department/person.

Highlight areas of patient dissatisfaction and staff frustration/turnover: Track and present negative patient feedback, complaints related to communication, and HCAHPS scores (if applicable). Involve HR and IT for support about agent burnout and difficulties with archaic systems. Demonstrate that you've already engaged with relevant stakeholders and have their support. This shows a unified front.

Explain how the lack of integration between systems (EHR, scheduling, billing) leads to communication silos, redundant data entry, and fragmented patient information.

2. Present a Clear Vision of the Solution

Avoid sounding like you are just complaining, and help give yourself a head start by researching the kind of tools and software you need to achieve your organization's communication goals.

Focus benefits like:

- Enhanced Patient Experience and Satisfaction: Faster response times, personalized communication, multiple contact channels (phone, chat, secure messaging), improved appointment scheduling and reminders. Studies show that 80% of patients prioritize good communication.
- Improved Operational Efficiency: Reduce call handling times, automate routine inquiries, streamline workflows, improve call routing, and relieve administrative burden on staff. These optimizations can also lead to significant cost savings.
- Increased Staff Satisfaction and Retention: Easier-to-use systems, reduced stress, access to comprehensive patient information, improved collaboration tools.
- Enhanced Patient Safety and Quality of Care: Real-time data sharing, reduced miscommunication, better coordination among care teams, improved triage protocols.
- Data-Driven Insights: Ability to track key metrics (first-call resolution, patient satisfaction, call volume trends) to continually improve operations.
- HIPAA Compliance and Security: Emphasize how a new system will bolster data security and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Scalability: The ability to handle future growth and new service offerings.
- Showcase Specific Technologies (but keep it high-level for leadership):
 - **Integrated Communication Platforms** – Systems that unify voice, chat, secure messaging, and potentially video.
 - **Intelligent Virtual Agent (IVA)** – Use AI tools to automate routine calls and guide patients.
 - **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Integration** – To provide agents with real-time patient information.
 - **Electronic Health Record (EHR) Integration** – Seamless access to patient medical history.
 - **Mobile Communication Platforms** – For staff to manage calls and communicate securely on the go.



3. Quantify the Return on Investment (ROI)

This is crucial for leadership. Money is tight for healthcare systems, but spending funds wisely can be an excellent investment. Show how automation can enable your call center to run efficiently even when staffing is low. There will be a decrease in maintenance and support costs with a new system (after the initial investment). Updated tools help reduce medical errors and adverse events (which can be very costly) and lower patient no-show rates due to effective reminders.

Highlight other benefits and explain their value:

- Improved hospital reputation, patient loyalty, and patient and employee retention.
- Better staff morale and reduced burnout.
- Enhanced compliance and reduced legal risk.
- Competitive advantage.
- Improved HCAHPS scores can positively impact reimbursement.
- Capacity for higher patient volumes due to improved efficiency.

Be sure to calculate an ROI ratio (net financial returns from improvement actions / financial investment in improvement actions) and provide a clear timeline for ROI so leadership knows when they can expect to see a return on their investment.

4. Crafting Your Strategic Presentation

Once you have gathered the supporting data and resources, be mindful of understanding the priorities of your healthcare leadership. Are they primarily focused on financial performance, patient outcomes, quality of care, or a combination of these? Tailor your message accordingly.

Start with the "Why." Begin by clearly articulating the critical need for an upgrade based on the problems you've identified, and tell a story backed with hard data, anecdotes, and real-world scenarios to illustrate the impact of current system limitations on patients and staff.

Address potential concerns proactively:

- Integration with existing systems: Explain how the new system will seamlessly integrate with EHR, billing, and other critical hospital systems.
- Propose a Phased Approach (if applicable): If the upgrade is massive, consider breaking it down into manageable phases with clear milestones. This can make it feel less daunting.
- Disruption: Outline a plan for minimizing disruption during implementation (e.g., phased rollout, comprehensive training, support during transition).

- **Staff Adoption:** Discuss your training plan and strategies to ensure staff buy-in.
- **Showcase Success Stories** (from other hospitals if possible): Research and present examples of how similar upgrades have benefited other healthcare organizations.
- **Be Prepared for Questions:** Anticipate potential questions and have well-researched answers ready.

Finally, provide a clear call to action. What do you want leadership to do next (e.g., approve budget for a pilot, form a steering committee, greenlight a full implementation)?

By following these tips, hospital call center managers can build a compelling case for communication system upgrades, demonstrating a clear understanding of the challenges, the proposed solutions, and the tangible benefits for the entire healthcare organization.

Related Amtelco Case Studies:

**Valley Health
Winchester
Medical Center**

**Providence
Swedish**

**State University of
New York (SUNY)
Upstate Medical
University**

**Piedmont
Healthcare**

**St. Luke's
Hospital**

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