


 **SEARCH**

**Healing With Handhelds At Mercy Gilbert**  
By William Atkinson



**Mercy Gilbert Medical Center** in Gilbert, AZ, is a four-story, full-service, acute-care hospital covering 60 acres. Owned by Catholic Healthcare West, it has 182 private rooms, with the capacity to grow to 400 beds over the next five years. It opened its doors in June 2006. An additional 40 acres are set aside to house a medical office building and research/lab facilities.

The hospital was designed, built, and is currently operating to reflect, in every possible way, a healing environment - one that helps patients feel safe and comfortable, and one that reminds the staff each and every day why they chose healthcare as their profession. In fact, Mercy Gilbert has been awarded the "Healing Hospital" designation by the Baptist Healing Trust (Nashville, TN), which has three requirements for the designation: a healing physical environment, the integration of work design and technology, and a culture of Radical Loving Care.

Medical professionals are well aware of the noisy environment that exists in most hospitals -- especially loud intercom messages every few minutes that distract staff, and cause discomfort for patients, especially those in need of sleep.

As such, when Mercy Gilbert was being designed and built, managing the level of noise in patient care areas was of utmost importance. As Laurie Eberst, RN, President/CEO of the hospital notes, "I wanted Mercy Gilbert to be free from overhead paging, in-room intercoms, loud machines rolling down long hard hallways, and voices calling to each other at the nurse's station."

She continues: "For a hospital to promote healing, it needs to provide a quiet environment that allows patients to sleep. Patients' bodies perform the most repair during sleep. Cells regenerate faster during sleep."

In addition, a noise-free environment promotes a calmer, more stress-free environment for employees and physicians, and also reduces distractions that can cause errors (such as medication errors). "So why," she asks, "in the very setting where healing is most needed, do hospitals allow for high levels of noise and sleep deprivation?"

At Mercy Gilbert, all patient hallways are carpeted. Cleaning machines have a special silencer to avoid startling patients while passing their rooms.

In addition, there is no overhead paging system except for emergencies. Nursing staff carry wireless phones that allow for direct connection with physicians, patients, and families. "Before we opened, we knew that we wanted a wireless solution, and we looked at a number of different vendors," says Kim Hashim, chief nursing officer. "We did some research at other hospitals, and found a solution that we felt would be a good choice for us. The demonstration from the vendor confirmed this."

According to Bob Campbell, vice president, strategic business development, the hospital wanted a strategy that would improve internal communications in a way that was efficient. At the same time, the organization wanted a solution that would not interfere with quality-of-life and environment in the hospital, especially as it relates to noise levels.

Noise wasn't the only issue, though. Overhead pagers aren't always efficient or effective in getting the right messages to the right people at the right times. "We wanted an internal communication system that would lend itself to one-to-one, point-to-point communication," says Campbell. "We also wanted a system that would integrate with some of our other hospital information systems, such as nurse call."

When the hospital researched the market, it concluded that **Polycom SpectraLink** was the superior vendor. Management decided to install the Polycom SpectraLink 6020 Wireless Telephone System for Healthcare.

SpectraLink technology is capable of integrating with the top-selling nurse call systems and other healthcare solutions. Polycom's Open Application Interface (OAI) allows third-party

**MOST READ STORIES**

- > Updated: BlackBerry Bold Yanked In U.K, On Hold In U.S.
- > BlackBerry Takes The World By Storm
- > Your Top 5 Product Picks For Fall
- > The All Wireless Workplace: What's It All About?
- > International Wireless Expense Management: The Unlocked Device Conundrum

**WEB SEMINARS**

**Key Secrets To Optimizing Field Service in a Down Economy**

November 4, 2008 | 2:00 p.m. ET

[Register Now](#)

**Panelists:**

- >> Peter Crocker, Sr. Research Analyst, Mobile and Wireless Practice, **VDC Research**
- >> Greg Lush, Chief Information Officer, **The Linc Group, LLC**
- >> Scott Cone, Director, Business Development, Field Service, **Hitachi Consulting**
- >> Susan Nunziata, Editor in Chief, *Mobile Enterprise*

Join us when our panel of experts reveals the secrets for optimizing your field service organization. You will learn how to improve your coordination of multiple assets and workers across a wide geographic area, upgrade your first-time fix rates, and build a sound business case for implementing mobility solutions in your field service enterprise. [Register Now](#)

**Raising the Bar in Field Service Automation**

October 22, 2008 | 2 p.m. ET

[View Recorded Event](#)

**Panelists:**

- >> Eugene Signorini, Vice President, Enterprise Applications & Mobile Solutions, **Yankee Group**
- >> Glenn Servis, Senior Director of Information Technology, Toshiba America **Medical Systems (TAMS)**
- >> Dave Croteau, Senior InTouch Manager, **Toshiba America Medical Systems (TAMS)**
- >> Igor Glubochansky, Director, Industry Solutions, **AT&T - EBS**
- >> Jim Somers, VP, Marketing, **Antenna Software**

Is your field service organization still struggling with deploying more advanced capabilities? Are you looking for the next frontier for mobilizing your field

applications to send text messages to the wireless telephone's display, and provides for user response through the handset's keypad.

SpectraLink can also be integrated with any messaging system, including telemetry, patient monitoring, HVAC, and alarm systems, which eliminates the need for separate radio pagers for healthcare staff. Additional features include:

- immediate text display of patient, room, and call status;
- real-time location tracking;
- direct call-back to patient room speaker; and
- automatic forwarding to alternate caregivers.

"Another reason we selected SpectraLink was because of the service they provided, such as in training and availability for dealing with any problems," states Hashim.

In terms of training requirements, the hospital found that the technology is very intuitive and easy to use. "However, it is also very flexible and programmable, so the training focused on helping the staff leverage the technical capabilities of the phone," reports Campbell. "The vendor did a great job of not only training the end users, but also training the technical people who support the product."

**Benefits**

The technology provides healthcare staff with mobility, allowing them to perform their work from anywhere within the facility. Staff have immediate access to each other and to patients. Nurses no longer miss calls or waste time travelling between the nurse station and patient rooms. Physicians can contact nurses directly for orders, and transporters can receive calls directly from other departments for patient transport information. "In addition, if the pharmacy has a question, it can connect directly to the nurse for clarification, via almost instant contact," adds Campbell.

According to Campbell, the system has been very reliable, with almost no downtime. It is also very easy and intuitive to use in terms of its functionality.

"As a result of the installation, we have been able to keep noise to a minimum," he continues. "This has led to an improvement in patient satisfaction. There is also better communication between patients and their primary caregivers, as well as better communications between the caregivers themselves, because they can contact each other quickly and efficiently, rather than having to hunt for people."

Hashim reports that the staff has responded very favorably to the technology. "They like the various options, such as whether it rings or vibrates, as well as the volume control they have on the ring, if they select that option," she explains. They also like the variety of features. That is, staff members who are not technically-oriented like the simplicity and ease of use. Others, who are more technically-inclined, like the fact that there are additional features that they can access and use if they want.

SpectraLink integrates well with the hospital's other technology. According to Campbell, the hospital utilizes Cisco for telephony wireless and data wireless, and SpectraLink is integrated into the hospital's Nortel switch.

The next step is to integrate SpectraLink into the hospital's nurse call system. "As the hospital grows, we are adding more services and systems," says Hashim. "Right now, our nurse call system is in the process of being integrated with SpectraLink, so when patients call nurses, the calls go through their phones."

As things are currently set up, the only overhead pages are for emergencies. "In the future, once we complete the integration of SpectraLink with the nurse call system, we will go to emergency notifications through the SpectraLink phones," says Hashim. "At that point, there will be no overhead pages."

The long-term goal? "At some point in the future, we plan to integrate SpectraLink into some of our patient monitoring devices, so the devices can send alarms to the caregivers via the wireless phone system," says Campbell.

service technicians? Attend and learn how you can gain greater visibility, business intelligence, total cost of ownership (TCO) and cost reductions and more into the enterprise through mobility!

[MORE WEB SEMINARS...](#)

**WHITEPAPERS**



**Mobile Connectivity in the Enterprise: The Pervasive Communications Challenge**

10/7/2008

As more companies rely on wireless connectivity to provide mobile services to remote workers, satellite-based communications is emerging as a viable and cost-effective partner solution to cellular and Wi-Fi. Mobile satellite terminals are smaller and more portable than ever, and can provide better coverage in adverse and challenging situations. [Download Now](#)



**Culture Shift: The Most Overlooked Piece of Successful Wireless Management**

9/18/2008

Every enterprise today deals with an unprecedented explosion in mobile devices and wireless costs, greater complexity of support and increased security risks. Read this new white paper and you'll learn about five (5) key strategies that can help you to change your company's culture and reap the rewards of better mobility management. [Download Now](#)

[MORE WHITE PAPERS...](#)

MEDIA KIT | CALENDAR OF EVENTS | EDITORIAL CALENDAR | PRIVACY STATEMENT | TERMS & CONDITIONS | ABOUT US | CONTACT US | PARTNER PAGE

All materials on this site Copyright 2008 Edgell Communications. All rights reserved.

**MOBILIZER**  
*Field Service* FROM THE EDITORS OF MOBILE ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**