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CareTech Heals Itself and Client, Continuum Health Partners, of Frustrating Delays and Unnecessary Costs in Service Request Management

Customers:

CareTech Solutions, Inc., Troy, Mich.

Continuum Health Partners, New York City, N.Y.

Challenge:

Reduce the waste associated with inconsistent processes and service performance levels for system and account access, hardware purchases, and other requests.

Solution:

Kinetic Request automated service request management system.

CareTech Results:

- Expedited fulfillment of a routine service request—in one day instead of four.
- Reduction in time spent managing paperwork by service desk and human resources staff.
- Reliable electronic audit trail for monitoring approvals and requests.

Continuum Health Partners Results:

- Fulfillment costs cut in half.
- Request fulfillment reduced from up to two weeks to less than three days.
- High-level technical staff now able to focus on higher value work.

CareTech Solutions, Inc. provides more than 150 U.S. hospitals and healthcare systems with information technology and Web products and services that help improve patient care and lower healthcare costs. From implementing emerging technologies and developing customized Web-based solutions to supporting day-to-day operations, its services span the entire patient-data life cycle.

CareTech Solutions' 24x7 service desk solution was activated in all Continuum Health Partners hospitals on Jan. 15, 2009. It provides end-users of each hospital's clinical information systems (such as hardware devices, desktop applications and software, and local and Internet connectivity) with continuous healthcare IT support, backed by on-shore healthcare-specialized staff at CareTech's resolution center in Troy, Mich.

Approval bottlenecks frustrate

CareTech's previous request approval process combined technology, email and paper. It depended on key players being present, so when one of these people was offsite, the process stalled. Even when requests moved forward, time-consuming circling back for missing approvals was required.

Karl Graham, director of customer support at CareTech Solutions, understands better than anyone how this inefficient approval process stymied request fulfillment. He leads the team that provides support services for both CareTech's Contract Support Center (CSC, headquarters) and its clients.

"Although we didn't have the ability to track how long it took for requests back then," says Graham, "I'd guess that delays added at least an extra four days. Needless to say, this time lag made the process extremely frustrating. We wanted to speed up the process, which meant we needed the ability to approve requests via Blackberry. We also wanted to be able to maintain an audit trail."

Short route to Kinetic Request

Part of the CSC team is dedicated to BMC® Remedy and responsible for the company's incident management system, which is designed around Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards. Those standards require the ability to track problem tickets and requests for system access, change control, etc. Looking for a more accelerated, cost-effective way to fill this need, this team researched and purchased Kinetic Request and oversaw migration to the system.

Kinetic Request was a natural for CareTech because it was compatible with BMC Remedy. Graham explains, "We were familiar with other Kinetic Data products, so we felt confident that Kinetic Request would meet our service delivery management needs."

A cure at home

The request approval process immediately turned around, according to Graham. “It was a complete 180. We now track requests and process them more quickly. All approvals are completed faster. The CSC staff is much happier. They tell me they love it.”

In fact, CareTech was so pleased with its successful experience that it now offers Kinetic Request to clients, adapting it to their specific requirements. Graham says, “Kinetic Request is another tool that automates and improves our clients’ processes. It gives them the capability to audit equipment usage, such as pagers, cell phones, etc. Any service or product that speeds up a process while freeing up user time is a hit.”

A cure for clients

CareTech implemented Kinetic Request for Continuum Health Partners (CHP), a New York-based, five-hospital healthcare provider. CHP was experiencing similar frustrations and delays that were caused by their email-based approval process.

All forms were emailed to a department mailbox, initiating a fulfillment process that could take up to two weeks. The email system did not have the functionality to prioritize requests; urgent requests were treated as routine requests. All were fulfilled in the order received—one at a time. The delay in urgent requests translated into significant lapses in productivity. Additional delays were caused by inaccurate or incomplete information provided in the forms. In fact, 30 percent of the requests needed additional follow-up with the user.

In addition, this system provided no way to track approvals to see where they were in the queue or how close they were to being completed. Forms were not synched with emails, further challenging auditors.

CHP Director of Service Delivery Eli Tarlow sums up the situation: “We knew we weren’t utilizing our resources efficiently, and we wanted to work smarter. It was a matter of finding the right tool. We investigated building a Web-form automation system but quickly realized that it would take too long to implement, and it wouldn’t easily integrate with our existing ticket system, which was a requirement. As soon as CareTech introduced us to Kinetic Request, it was obvious that this was the solution we needed.”

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Building a better service experience

Kinetic Request has revolutionized service delivery's productivity for the staff responsible for CHP's first- and second-level IT support. The new system is being used for 85 percent of the organization's service requests, with the remaining 15 percent currently in migration. As a result, CHP has eliminated its service request backlog, with a typical request fulfilled in less than one day. Accuracy is no longer an issue because the system controls the process, ensuring that a request is not generated until it is completed accurately and does not progress without the appropriate approvals.

The new system is also responsible for fulfillment cost savings as well. Tarlow estimates that Kinetic Request has cut the cost of fulfilling a request by 50 percent. "In addition," he says, "my staff can now take on 80 percent more work. Our highly paid technical analyst staff is able to focus on the highly technical work they are best suited for instead of chasing requests."

Today, 15,000 CHP employees can use Kinetic Request for system-access- and non-access-related requests. In the first 10 months since implementing the system, CHP has used Kinetic Request to process about 10,000 requests. Tarlow says, "We love the service it provides. We knew it was a success when a member of the senior leadership team previewed the product and said, 'This is great! Now, how can you get it to work on my Blackberry.'" Not long after, CareTech made that happen.

CHP's success is an example of how organizations are looking for ways to leverage their existing systems by enhancing flexibility, agility, scalability and reliability. CareTech plans to continue offering and implementing Kinetic Request on the BMC Remedy platform to help clients speed up their request workflow and resolution.

About Kinetic Data

Kinetic Data is the only company exclusively focused on developing business service management (BSM) and service delivery management (SDM) software tools built on BMC Remedy.

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