



Take Your Marketing to New Heights

VERTICAL MARKET SERIES: [Healthcare](#)

Prescribing a Solution for Healthcare IT

Disclaimer

What follows is simply the result of industry analysis and a review of solutions available. In no way does Directive / JoomConnect endorse or defame anything included or omitted, this text is simply intended as a referential resource to assist MSPs in evaluating their preparedness to embrace a new industry as a source of clientele.

Copyright © 2016 Directive. All rights reserved.



Introduction:

“Above all, do no harm.” While this phrase doesn’t actually appear in the Hippocratic Oath that all medical practitioners must take, it could certainly apply to the MSP who seeks to serve the healthcare industry vertical. Providing solutions for healthcare providers is a serious responsibility, as patients are indirectly depending upon you to deliver reliable and secure solutions. After all, any downtime a medical facility may experience could have much more immediate circumstances that directly affect the patients under its care.

Hospitals are extremely aware of this need for heightened systems as well - the US Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that IT security analyst jobs will increase by 18% in the decade between 2014 and 2024, largely in part due to the requirements of healthcare IT. Other projections claim that cybersecurity for healthcare alone will experience a compound annual growth rate of 13.6% between 2016 and 2021. Therefore, it is a particularly wise decision as an MSP to move into this high-demand vertical sooner than later, before the needs of potential clients potentially balloon beyond your capabilities as an MSP.

The IT Needs of the Healthcare Industry

While the typical checkup might leave one with the impression that the most IT needed for the members of the healthcare industry amounts to a few computers, printers, and a tongue depressor, a quick glance through even a small hospital or clinic establishes how mistaken that impression is.

- Beginning in the waiting room, there are computer, telephony, and printing systems present that need to be functional in order for the healthcare provider to remain efficient, organized, and accurate.
- Depending on the specialty of the doctor, there may be diagnostic systems in the examination area that will need to be connected to the network for their data to be processed, stored, and printed. After a patient’s appointment has been completed, their medical records will likely be updated on a interconnected healthcare network their providers utilize to allow for a more comprehensive health record to be available as needed.
- The patient may need lab work or imaging performed as a part of their treatment, each of these procedures requiring specialized equipment and connection to a printing solution and a data storage system. Their doctors will then require systems capable of accessing and displaying these results for review and diagnosis.
- If the patient is deemed to require hospitalization, systems will be necessary in that facility for patient registration and population monitoring, creating, storing, and consulting records, monitoring biometric information and vital statistics from the patient themselves, as well as any imaging or similar diagnostic equipment used in the procedural rooms.
- The hospital pharmacy will require inventory systems in order to keep track of medications as they are dispensed.

- Due to the highly mobile tendencies of most healthcare workers in this environment, they will require a mobile solution allowing them to communicate with others as needed.
- Finally, when the time comes to discharge the patient, a printing solution will be required to provide the former patient with their discharge instructions. In order to restock the materials the patient had utilized, orders will need to be placed and monitored online if the inventory record indicates a shortage in the facility. The hospital's financial department will need to have detailed records of a patient's treatment to digitally provide to the patient's insurance provider to receive reimbursement.

Mind you, this list isn't based on an actual audit of a healthcare institution's needs, and so it almost guarantees that there are other solutions being put to work at some point in a patient's care cycle. Each client will require a different level of service and their own suite of solutions.

Briefly touched upon in the list above was the aspect of connected care, or maintaining a patient's record online for improved collaboration between members of a healthcare network. A client will very likely require assistance in establishing, improving upon, and maintaining this network, as well as making the necessary preparations to update or expand upon it. The focus of an IT solution as applied to a healthcare provider should be to improve that provider's ability to monitor their patients, allow collaboration between physicians through (as much as is possible) interoperability and complete reporting practices.

Additionally, due to the extremely sensitive nature of essentially all of the information a healthcare system stores - be it the personal health records of their patients, their financial records, or other private data - a security system is absolutely necessary to implement. This is only reinforced more by the prevalence in ransomware use by malicious hackers, and a demonstrated willingness to put patients at extreme risk by remotely manipulating hospital equipment until they are paid. In order to preserve their patients' safety during their treatment, hospital systems and other medical providers will require substantial security solutions, both physically and online.

Data Storage

As should be of no surprise, hospitals have a staggering amount of data to store and maintain as they care for their patients, including medical records, financial data, and forms and other internal documents. Employee personnel files, payroll, and supply inventory records will also add to the need for a scalable and secure storage solution with considerable capacity. Since many interconnected healthcare networks require access to the same data from geographically separate locations, a properly secured cloud solution (with an isolated, regularly updated backup solution in place) would be ideal for a hospital infrastructure to maintain.

Security Concerns

As mentioned above, security is of tantamount importance to a healthcare organization. As a hospital or other medical establishment grows, not only will they accumulate a larger and larger staff whose financial records would entice hackers to attempt infiltration, but they will also collect a sizable cache of private information from their patients for hackers to steal and exploit for profit. Therefore, you should be sure to

implement a comprehensive computer security solution, as well as establishing a set standard for all employees to adhere to as they access the network.

On the topic of the network, it wouldn't be a bad idea for a hospital system to run any applicable systems on a virtual private network, rather than on a traditional Internet browser to reduce the risk of external intrusion. Typical Internet connectivity tends to be crawling with threats that could potentially find their way into any system, either through some unknown vulnerability or user error. A VPN can help to negate this risk, preserving a system's security.

Returning to physical security concerns for a moment, hospitals also have areas restricted for health and privacy reasons. An effective way to help enforce those restrictions would be to implement some security features on entry points, such as ID card reader access solutions. This would not only prevent unauthorized non-staff from entering areas that they should not, but with proper documentation and transparency, it could be used as an aid to locate on-site medical personnel in cases of emergency to tend to their ailing patient. However, this approach requires jumping through some legal hoops, but a truly security-concerned client may be willing to go to such lengths to secure their organization's assets.

Mobile and Remote Functionality

If anything should be clear by this point, it is that despite many patients keeping to their bed for most of the time, hospitals are abuzz with movement at all hours, with patients being discharged, new patients coming in, and doctors and nurses running to attend to issues as they arise. In addition to all of this, there are the other staff members going about their duties as well - the custodial staff restocking the essentials for proper sanitation during patient treatment and dining services staff delivering meals and taking orders.

With so much movement going on in an information-driven establishment, staff members will need to have a reference resource available on-hand to check patient needs, receive messages, and consult records. Additionally, those custodial and dining service staff will need to have some record of what, be it tissues or turkey and rice, is needed in which room. Hand-held devices and tablets provide these functions very effectively, and can hold up very well to the demands of a hospital environment with rugged and easily sterilized protective accessories.

- Additionally, healthcare IT can allow a physician to keep the patient and their family fully informed by sharing medical documents with them over a secure path online, or discuss their case with a telephony system.

Selecting the Proper Management Software

As with the other industry verticals in this series, there are a great assortment of management software's available for both private practices and hospital systems. Depending on the needs of each of your particular clients, as well as the level of compatibility a solution needs to have with other area healthcare providers' systems, the selection of practice management software will change. What follows are brief example offerings you could elect to familiarize yourself with.

For Practice Management:

- **Duxware** - Priced at \$300 each month, Duxware provides cloud-based support for over 1000 profiles and support during regular business hours. Its features provide a variety of functions, including office record keeping for patient records, with multi-office and multi-physician capabilities for larger group practices. Duxware also allows scheduling for both physicians and patients, and full financial support options with claims management features, insurance eligibility verification, and patient billing, all with HIPAA compliance.
- **Radekal PM** - Radekal PM is positioned as a solution for any practice looking to boost their productivity, supporting over 1000 profiles for \$150 monthly on a HIPAA-compliant platform. Available as a cloud-based application or as an installed program on Windows desktops, Radekal PM offers a full list of features. As a part of the program, healthcare providers can manage prescriptions electronically with pharmacies and maintain an electronic health record for their patients to review via a patient portal. Also functional as a multi-office, multi-physician program, Radekal PM manages patient records and registration, and allows for scheduling both patients and physicians. On the monetary side of things, Radekal PM handles claims management, verifies insurance eligibility, and patient billing.
- **Yocale** - Marketed as a solution for any appointment-based business, Yocale can be used to manage over 1000 profiles for \$25 per month. Delivered as a cloud-based service or as a mobile app for either iOS or Android, Yocale isn't HIPAA compliant, but offers the same multi-office and multi-physician ability, with patient scheduling, registration, scheduling, and billing. It also offers physician scheduling and a patient portal.
- **Ultra Charts** - Focusing on smaller practice sizes, Ultra Charts can only support up to 99 users and is installed as a Windows program. Starting at \$448.83 per month, per user, Ultra Charts can handle a near-comprehensive list of tasks while remaining HIPAA compliant. Able to manage multiple physicians in multiple offices, it allows for a simplified patient and physician scheduling process, along with patient portals and registration. Ultra Charts can also handle the patient records for the practice, and allows for e-prescribing, electronic medical record review, insurance eligibility verification, patient billing and claims management. Support for Ultra Charts is available online or during business hours.

For Hospital Management:

- **BrickMed Office** - Designed for smaller healthcare practices with up to 50 users, BrickMed Office comes with a one-time price tag of \$2,995 installable on either Windows or Mac desktops. Serving more of the administrative duties, BrickMed Office provides appointment management functionality, along with the potential for claims management, expense tracking, patient records management, physician management, and revenue management. Support for BrickMed office is available online or during business hours.
- **Health.NET** - Available for a rate of \$49 per user per month, Health.net comes as a Windows installation and is aimed toward a target with a user maximum of 99. Equipped with the tools to manage accounting,

appointments, claims, inventory, out-patients, patient records, physicians, policies, and revenue, Health.NET also can handle tasks like billing and invoicing, budgeting, forecasting, and expense tracking, with support available not only during business hours and online, but also through a 24/7 phone representative.

- **ProMed** - Aimed to serve larger campuses, ProMed has a target user size of anywhere up to and over 1000, delivering a solution for a one time price of \$1000. Compatible with either Windows or Mac, ProMed can handle accounting, appointments, beds, claims, in-patients, inventory, out-patients, patient records, physicians, policies, and revenue, managing all of those factors. ProMed also features billing and invoicing capabilities, and expense tracking.
- **Suvarna-HIS** - For a price of \$300 per month, Suvarna-HIS provides a basic, one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare management. Capable of bearing over 1000 users, this management system can be deployed over the cloud, installed on Windows, or used as an Android or iOS mobile app. With support available online, Suvarna-HIS manages appointments, claims, human resources, patient records, and physician schedules..

A Brief Note Regarding Implementation

Consider the typical day-to-day duties of a medical provider, the nurses and doctors that deal with a multitude of stresses and issues on a daily basis. To counter the mounting stress of medical practice, these providers cling strongly to routines and protocol, which is something that introducing a new update (or entirely new solution) will almost assuredly change. In order to ensure that your solutions are being implemented properly, it may not be a bad idea to implement a few training sessions as to how to properly use the solutions you are providing them.

This, of course, will require you to accept two realities: first, that you will need to become intimately familiar enough with your solutions that you are able to teach others, and that secondly, in order to do so, you may need to commit quite a bit of time to these sessions, as the rotating, demanding schedules of hospital employees means that there is zero chance that they will all be available at a single given time to attend a training session. Arranging this may require the assistance of the facility's human resources department, so reaching out to them early in the process may be another strategy to take into consideration.

Developing Innovations in Healthcare IT

Reflecting upon the swiftly evolving tendencies of both medicine and information technology, any healthcare IT provider would be wise to stay in the know in regard to medical advancements and how technology use in medicine is adapting to meet them. As a few examples:

- **Interoperativity between health systems:** A widely discussed topic, as patients typically see - taking their general practitioner and the specialists they refer out to into account - numerous doctors who all maintain generally discrete records of patient health. Increased interoperability would allow this information to be shared with a wider range of specialists.

- **Improved diagnostic tools:** Have been in constant development. One in particular takes its inspiration from the tricorder from Star Trek, as tech company Qualcomm created a contest to inspire teams of developers to replicate the capabilities of the tricorder, a version of which was used as a medical diagnostic device in the show.
- **Advancements in remote monitoring:** Have enabled researchers and developers to prove that doctors observing a patient's vital signs and other critical health data from a distance is a reality that may not be so far off. Israeli company Tyto Care, created a device that evaluates health parameters and sends them directly to a doctor for diagnosis, effectively removing the need for a visit to an office as germey as a petri dish.
- **Lightbulbs with disinfecting properties:** These are already being developed. Indigo-Clean, one such light bulb, is capable of eliminating harmful bacteria with advanced LED technology to supplement the typical disinfecting procedures. This creates the potential for hospital rooms to be cleaner, leading to fewer institutional infections thanks to an infrastructure upgrade.

While these technologies have yet to become available to the mainstream, it cannot possibly hurt to keep abreast of advancements that can affect your industry, as it allows your clients to potentially become industry thought leaders and early adopters.

For More Information:

If there are any other questions you have about marketing yourself to the healthcare industry vertical, or the verticals of any other industry, please don't hesitate to reach out to JoomConnect. Armed with the knowledge to improve your efforts, we can share our advice with you and assist you in their implementation.

To speak to us about your marketing strategy, call 888-546-4384 , or email us at info@joomconnect.com

JoomConnect's marketing solutions and innovative platform integration can help your MSP develop a marketing strategy!

Learn more today by calling JoomConnect at 888-546-4384
or visiting us on the web at: www.joomconnect.com

