

Unified Communications Helps Manage Home Healthcare Franchises

Nurse Next Door uses Cisco Unified Contact Center to improve patient appointments and employee scheduling

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>NURSE NEXT DOOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified Communications • Vancouver, BC • 30 head office employees, serving 1,000 franchise and corporate field staff
<p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralize patient scheduling to ease technology burden on existing operations and new franchisees • Implement a solution for tracking appointments and services across the country • Find a flexible technology that can manage long-term business growth
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified communications for call center and patient scheduling
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule over 3,200 appointments per month • Streamline calls through intelligent routing and call analysis • Allow company to scale quickly and easily as business operation needs increase

Business Challenge

Nurse Next Door is a Vancouver-headquartered business that provides in-home care services on a franchise model. These services range from companionship to complex medical and palliative care. For founders John DeHart and Ken Sim, the genesis of Nurse Next Door grew out of personal experience and frustration with the lack of consistent and comprehensive in-home care services.

“During pregnancy, my wife was confined to bed rest,” said Ken Sim. “I was shocked that the caregivers sent to our home were not properly certified, insured, or thoroughly screened. With the aging baby boom generation, we saw significant market potential in building an infrastructure that could provide caregiver operators with an easily deployed business model.”

Since 2001, Nurse Next Door has grown 3400 percent and opened five franchise locations to date in British Columbia. DeHart and Sim chose a franchise model with a centralized system for client information because that offered the optimal way to scale the business and serve the

largest possible audience. It would also ease the burden on franchisees that were not familiar or adept with business management processes and technology.

“We recognized that, in order for the business to be successful, franchisees would need to start out with a hard focus on developing a base clientele and delivering premier patient care, not struggling with setting up technology systems and processes,” says Ken Sim. “Proven technology would be key to effectively tackling this growing market opportunity.”

Network Solution

To smooth the integration of new franchise locations and centralize operations, Nurse Next Door began working with [UNIS LUMIN](#), a [Cisco® Gold Certified partner](#), in June 2007 to deploy a [Cisco Unified Communications](#) infrastructure that allows the head office to execute all the communications and scheduling requirements for all franchise locations.

"Nurse Next Door has an innovative business model that lends itself particularly to a technology-based solution," says Anthony Sarar, account manager, UNIS LUMIN. "After in-depth planning, we determined a [Cisco Unified Contact Center](#) implementation would best serve their unique needs."

"Our Cisco Unified Contact Center is a cornerstone of our business operations," says Sim. "With the diverse staffing requirements needed to run a patient-focused business, employee scheduling and subsequent administrative tasks can be an overwhelming task."

Nurse Next Door's centralized call centre has enabled the 15 call centre employees to schedule over 3,200 monthly appointments for corporate and franchise staff. These include over 1,600 nurse practitioners, physical therapists, in-home companions, and housekeeping staff.

The Cisco Unified Contact Center delivers a comprehensive solution that provides intelligent routing and call analysis, helping to streamline calls to reach the most relevant resource. Calls on hold are automatically routed to the first available employee, making it possible to deliver service that matches Nurse Next Door's high expectations of patient care. The system also simultaneously monitors the agents available, including their specific skills, while keeping track of call wait time.

To create a smooth process for registering new clients, Nurse Next Door employees carry a wireless tablet notebook for initial home assessments. The customer's data is uploaded on location from the tablet to Nurse Next Door's call centre, and a scheduler calls the customer to arrange an appointment. The Cisco solution also reminds caregivers about appointments through outbound calls and/or contacts alternate staff members to provide services, and executes invoicing information.

"We needed a complete technology solution that complemented our business from front to back," says Sim. "Cisco has given us the tools that will allow Nurse Next Door to grow significantly over the next several years."

"Cisco Unified Contact Center is a cornerstone of our business operations."

—Ken Sim, Co-founder, Nurse Next Door

Business Results

By deploying [Cisco Unified Contact Center](#), Nurse Next Door can now easily scale to serve hundreds of franchise operations across the country. The technology is proving its value by providing cost-efficient and transparent operations for local entrepreneurs looking to deliver an uncompromising focus on patient care service delivery.

"Using an [IP-based solution](#) allows the franchise owners to concentrate on what they are good at - recruiting qualified personnel and providing patient-centric care," says Sim. "They don't have to worry about rescheduled appointments, late night client calls, or whether a caregiver is double-booked."

Next Steps

“Nurse Next Door now has a solid and flexible infrastructure to support their innovative business model,” says UNIS LUMIN’s Sarar. “Our next step is to help them leverage their unified communications infrastructure to deliver increased capabilities including video-based functionality.”

With rapid success in British Columbia and an aging population, Sim and DeHart are looking forward to extending Nurse Next Door’s franchise reach across Canada, secure in the knowledge that the [Cisco Unified Communications](#) infrastructure will allow them to easily scale along with growth opportunities.

“In recent months we’ve been delighted by the growing response to our unique business model and brand,” said Sim. “We see great things ahead as we continue to grow our business with Cisco and UNIS LUMIN.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications, go to:

<http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/sw/voicesw/index.html>

For ongoing news, please go to <http://newsroom.cisco.com/canada/>

For more customer success stories visit <http://www.unislumin.com>



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