

CLIENT On Call Central
PROJECT Case Study: Orthopedic Physicians Anchorage
OBJECTIVE Create a compelling case study highlighting OPA's faster response times and improved patient care using On Call Central

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But they still weren't sure this particular agreement had been a good idea. They didn't know if the technology existed for what they wanted to do.



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Problem

According to their CEO, Rick Watson, OPA's agreement with Alyeska presented a unique challenge.

OPA wanted the ski patrol to be able to call a surgeon directly when they needed consultation about an injury on the mountain. "We wanted to be able to give the ski patrollers access to our surgeons that was very timely and didn't have to filter through our live answering system, which had come to be very cumbersome, slow and inefficient," said Watson. "These were injury cases, and we wanted to be able to respond immediately."

OPA physician liaison Kris Keddington says the answering service would take as long as 15 minutes to page a surgeon after receiving a call. "The answering service has other customers," adds Watson. "Some are non-medical customers: taxi cab companies, bus lines, plumbers... It could take them a while to contact our surgeon."

A second delay occurs after the doctor gets the page. Watson says his surgeons report waiting on hold as long as 15 minutes before the answering service could convey their message.

Finally, surgeons often had difficulty following up with the original caller due to errors in the information the answering service provided. Says Watson, "It was so cumbersome – and they would always get us wrong. They would get our name wrong. They'd get the on-call surgeon wrong, even though we were very diligent about getting them the right information. It just seemed like it was beyond them to be efficient and effective in providing this service."

Solution

When OPA signed their sponsorship deal with Alyeska, they weren't yet aware there of a better option for their after-hours calls. "At the time, we weren't even sure we wanted to provide this kind of a service to the ski patrol, because we weren't sure it was possible," says Watson.

Luckily, Watson met On Call Central CEO Sidney VanNess at a Medical Group Management Association meeting, where VanNess described On Call Central to him.

VanNess explained that On Call Central is an easy-to-use Web-based medical answering service that tracks, routes and archives patient calls, physician responses and post-call patient directives. Using the latest technology to eliminate communication breakdowns...