



Success Story

Improved patient service was the main objective in the AZ Damiaan hospital's decision to switch both its outpatient clinic appointment booking service and the Operational Management ICT helpdesk to the Unify OpenScape Contact Center solution.



Az Damiaan
Dicht bij het leven

The goal for the AZ Damiaan hospital in Ostend, Belgium is to be a best practice in healthcare. Keeping up to date with technology is part of that mission. To provide better service to its patients, referring physicians and medical staff, AZ Damiaan opted to implement the OpenScape Contact Center solution.

The Task

In 2012, AZ Damiaan's two sites were merged and the hospital administrators wanted to improve the appointment and ICT helpdesk service offered to patients and medical staff, while streamlining the task for its reception desk agents.

Before, calls were answered at the registration desk in a cascading order, which often led to long wait times and to an unequal work load balance between helpdesk agents. Without any way of monitoring calls, the hospital had no idea of the number of patients lost due to long wait times, and staff resource allotment was based on anecdotal experience rather than actual data.

The Solution

- OpenScape Contact Center Enterprise to reduce wait times, drive first-contact resolution of appointments and monitor calls and peak times
- OpenScape Contact Center Manager to separate call flows between outpatient clinic and ICT helpdesk
- Agent Desktops to provide a better view into the purpose of the incoming calls as well as the state of the agents and queues
- Callback to reach patients who choose not to wait
- Call Director to direct calls to the right department
- Email Management to assemble a database in order to send appointment reminders
- Combination of OpenStage 40 desktop phones, with wireless headsets and DECT

The Benefits

By separating the patient registration and call center desks, employees in both areas can fully concentrate on their tasks, reducing wait times for callers and work stress for staff. The callback function helps to avoid caller frustration. OpenScape Contact Center Enterprise also allows for a priority line for referring physicians and internal specialists. Thanks to the real-time and cumulative reporting, managers can anticipate peak times and adjust staffing resources accordingly. The average wait time for patients calling is 20 seconds, while the average time to handle a call is typically limited to 57 seconds.

Patient care and service come first



When the Heilig Hart Hospital and the Sint-Jozef Hospital in Ostend merged to become the AZ Damiaan hospital in 1999, it became the biggest hospital facility in the Belgian coastal region, with 523 beds, 81 day hospital beds, 100 physicians and 1,380 employees. From the start, hospital management aimed to centralize all activities into one



“To further reduce wait times, we offer the callback option. Statistics show we have about 15 callbacks a day, which shows that our waiting times stay within limits.”

Bernard Meyers, Head of Outpatient Clinic and Reception Department, AZ Damiaan

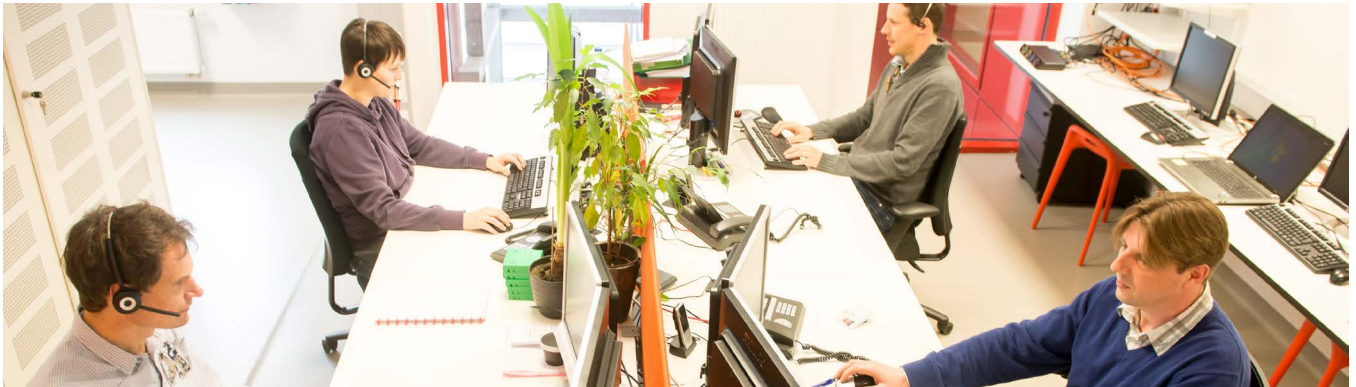
location. The master plan designed to achieve this, culminated in the move to the brand new hospital building, equipped with the latest technology, in October 2012.

“AZ Damiaan wants to be a best practice in healthcare,” says Kevin Mollet, Staff member PR & Communication. “To achieve this we created a contemporary, high-tech environment. This ranges from a highly advanced, automated medication distribution system to the right equipment for robotic surgery. We want to be up to date when it comes to innovations within the medical domain, but also with everything surrounding it. Our main goal is to offer our patients the best reception, service and care possible, in accordance with our tagline: ‘Close to life.’”

“And that’s where the revision of our outpatient clinic appointment booking service comes in,” adds Bernard Meyers, Head of the Outpatient Clinic and Reception department. “We have about 140,000 outpatient clinic contacts a year, a number that’s steadily increasing. The OpenScope Contact Center lets us separate the outpatient clinic’s appointment booking service from all other voice communication in the hospital.” Prior to moving, incoming calls were put through to the staff

members occupying the registration desks. They arrived at the first desk, only to cascade to the second desk if the first desk’s line was busy. This forced employees to divide their attention between face-to-face contacts with the patients registering and callers, prolonging wait times for both parties. This was also stressful for the employees, as they had to check on physician availability in the presence of a waiting patient. There was no means to know if people failing to get through eventually called back. It also created an unequal work load balance as the person at the first desk received the majority of calls.

The ICT helpdesk in the Operational Management department was experiencing the same problems. Fast access to the helpdesk is essential, as several crucial operational systems are IT-related or IT-driven, from monitoring systems at the side of the operating tables to the badge identification of medical staff required to perform medical actions. “When all helpdesk agents were occupied or assisting on location, callers got a busy signal or a continuous ringtone, which was far from ideal,” says Siegfried Verbeke, Project Leader Operations Management. “We had no idea if and how many calls went unanswered.”



Setting the right priorities

Bernard Meyers took advantage of the relocation to re-evaluate the procedures of the Outpatient Clinic and Reception department, and convinced management that the investment in a contact center would pay off not only in staff performance, but also in patient service. A thorough market investigation specifically aimed at healthcare solutions brought him to the Unify Experience Center in Huizingen. An in-depth exploration of the Unify solutions and their capabilities showed that an upgrade of the hospital's existing OpenScape 4000 communication platform with the addition of the OpenScape Contact Center was the solution they were looking for.

"Everybody benefits from this solution," says Bernard Meyers. "It allowed us to install a priority line for referring physicians. In general, a doctor's call will have a higher level of urgency. The same goes for our internal specialists: OpenScape Contact Center allows us to recognize their calls and handle them with the utmost priority. At first, our employees were wary of the changes, but splitting the registration desks and call center allows them to better concentrate on the task at hand, which has lowered their stress levels. They also feared that merging two locations and switching to a different working method would result in staff reductions, but the opposite is true. We notice an increase in contacts. This should be no surprise,

because in the end, it is the patient benefiting most of all. Callers are now only having to wait an average of 20 seconds before their calls are answered and they're only having to spend on average 57 seconds to have their requests handled. This brings first-contact resolution for a singular appointment to no more than one minute and 17 seconds. In general, wait and user involvement time add up to less than a minute for physicians and specialists."

The IT helpdesk also installed a priority line for hospital specialists. If one of the hospital's doctors calls, it might be for something as simple as not getting access to a patient's file, but there also might be a problem with an IT-driven life-saving device. Either way, the patient is the ultimate beneficiary.

Real-time and cumulative reporting make things work

Thanks to the real-time and cumulative reporting, Bernard Meyers and Siegfried Verbeke are not only able to show management the benefits of the contact center, but they're also able to anticipate or react to peak times by adjusting staff resources.

"Before, we sometimes received complaints that phone calls weren't answered or that it took a long time before a helpdesk agent became available," says Siegfried Verbeke. "We had no arguments to counter this. Now, we can look up the data and find that calls are generally no longer

than 12 seconds in the waiting line. Before we had no clue if anyone else was trying to reach us when every agent was occupied. Now, one of the bars on our screen gives a perfect indication of the number of calls waiting to be answered. If the number of calls in queue reaches a certain threshold, we can add a third person to the helpdesk, which is generally serviced by two people. Agents whose assistance is required on the spot can change their presence status, making sure no calls are routed to them during their absence."

"We use this feature to finish up handling an appointment, or to give the agent some time to catch a breath in between calls," adds Bernard Meyers. "Two other options brought major improvements as well. Thanks to the Call Director IVR (Interactive Voice Response), patients calling in are greeted by a pleasant recorded voice, adding a more personal touch to the first contact than a ringtone. It is followed by a string of waiting music we purposely kept limited in time. When the IVR takes over again, it informs callers that instead of staying online, they can choose the callback option. Thus the system will have their number pop up and be dialed automatically when the appointment booking desk slows down. Statistics show that we have about 15 callbacks a day, which shows that our waiting times stay within limits."

Ready for the headset

"We are also very happy with the wireless headsets," says Siegfried Verbeke, "as our agents often need to operate their computer while assisting callers." "We want to roll this feature out in the near future as well," says Bernard Meyers. "When we moved there were so many changes at once that our agents were not yet ready for headsets. I must say that Unify did a perfect job preparing and training us for the use of the contact center. The implementation went very smoothly as well. The few hiccups at the beginning were immediately addressed and solved."

Meanwhile, the use of OpenScape Contact Center's email response

feature is in the pipeline. One use Bernard Meyers sees is sending appointment reminders to patients so as to reduce no-shows. But a reliable email database is yet to be assembled. Siegfried Verbeke is also contemplating integration of the contact center with the ticketing system and sees advantages in web collaboration. At the moment there is no demand from other departments to connect to the contact center. "But it is definitely worth checking to see if they could equally benefit from using the solution, as we're looking for continuous improvement of our services, communications and accessibility," concludes Kevin Mollet.



"Thanks to the wireless headsets our agents have both hands free to operate their computer while assisting callers, and if assistance on the spot is needed, they can adapt their presence status to make sure no calls are routed to them during their absence."

Siegfried Verbeke, Project Leader
Operations Management, AZ Damiaan

About Unify

Unify is the Atos brand for communication and collaboration solutions. At the core of the Atos Digital Workplace portfolio, Unify technology enables organizations of all sizes to transform the way they collaborate, creating a more connected and productive workforce which can dramatically improve team performance, individual engagement and business efficiency.

Unify products represent a strong heritage of technology innovation, reliability and flexibility. Their award-winning intuitive user experience can be delivered through almost any device and in any combination of cloud or on-premise deployment. Augmented by Atos' secure digital platforms, vertical solutions and transformation services, they set the global standard for a rich and reliable collaboration experience that empowers teams to deliver extraordinary results.

unify.com



The information provided in this document contains merely general descriptions or characteristics of performance which in case of actual use do not always apply as described or which may change as a result of further development of the products. An obligation to provide the respective characteristics shall only exist if expressly agreed in the terms of contract. Availability and technical specifications are subject to change without notice.

Unify, OpenScape, OpenStage and HiPath are registered trademarks of Unify Software and Solutions GmbH & Co. KG. All other company, brand, product and service names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

Copyright © Unify Software and Solutions GmbH & Co. KG, 2018. All rights reserved.