Even faster
Customer story

The six hospitals and five outpatient centres of HCA International are among London's top-quality healthcare facilities. The Health Protection Agency found that HCA patients are six times less likely to contract MRSA[1]. All cardiac arrest patients are treated within the requested three-minute time-frame and subsequent survival rates are twice as high as national standards, while infection rates for cardiac bypasses are half the national average.[2] From an organizational standpoint, HCA International sets its own standards as well: twenty-four hour report turnaround time (TAT) - wishful thinking in most other healthcare facilities – has been a reality here for a long time. Anything left to do? Certainly. Why not bring the TAT down to two minutes and forty seconds, for example?

[1] Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is resistant to a large group of antibiotics called the beta-lactams, which include the penicillins and the cephalosporins. MRSA caused infections in humans are very difficult to treat.

[2] HCA London Quality Report, August 2007

Dr. James Bell starts his working day with ultrasound reporting followed by MRI, CT and finally plain film reporting; sixty to a hundred examinations each day. "24 hours turnaround time is an enormous delay," he says. The back and forth between physician and secretary interrupted and delayed the workflow. "Report, sign off, authorize and move on to the next examination – that is my logic."

Today he uses SpeechMagic.

"Reports are turned around in a few minutes, never longer than an hour", he reports.

Over the last eight years, Dr. Bell has used several different speech recognition products; but accuracy levels did not allow their incorporation in normal working practice. SpeechMagic, however, left him "very impressed".

"It does phenomenally well in recognizing the radiology vocabulary." Even on days where he uses it with a terrible cold, and background noise. Still, a two-way 'warm-up' phase is needed, he admits. "Embrace it, go for it, but give it a few weeks before you make a final judgement."

Right. From the start.

Thorough preparation is indeed the key to success, confirms Kaye Bonython, Imaging Informatics Programme Manager at HCA.

"We took a fairly unique approach," she highlights. Six-week long "very serious" pilots of three products, including full integration into the GE Centricity PACS, were conducted, before HCA settled for Euromed's MedSpeech powered by SpeechMagic™.

As most of the implementation difficulties had been addressed during the pilots, the actual roll-out was a breeze.

Using the experience from the PACS implementation, Ms Bonython involved senior physicians for lobbying. They then rolled-out at one site, made everyone comfortable there, before moving on. Significant resources were allocated to training, including a champion at every site for first line support. A minimum of three one-to-one training sessions of three hours each were conducted for every user, to reduce the level of reluctance and fear – as users not only had to get used to speech recognition, but also to the new digital recording hardware.

The support paid off. "Users have been much more positive than we expected," reports Ms Bonython.

HCA also took the opportunity to standardize radiology reporting across the organization, without enforcing the new style on everybody.

"Some radiologists prefer a personal style, more like a letter. We've been able to accommodate that as well."

Right report. Right time. Right place.

HCA's initial goal was to have 60% of radiologists using speech recognition by the time implementation was complete. Two thirds of the way down the road, 92% have adopted SpeechMagic.

"It means that the profiles are good, that reports are turning around faster and that integration is optimal," says Ms Bonython.

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Kaye Bonython, Imaging Informatics Programme Manager at HCA International, London

"Report, sign off, authorize and move on to the next examination – that is my logic."

Dr. James Bell, Consultant Radiologist at the Wellington Hospital

Report turnaround time is in the vicinity of 2:40 minutes - from beginning of dictation to sign-off.

"Our American colleagues told us, that doctors in the US rejected speech recognition," remembers Ms Bonython. "In our hospitals too we had to deal with concerns. People had negative past experience with speech recognition and they thought it would result in too much time added to their reporting schedule."

The initial negative thoughts simply vanished once SpeechMagic has been presented; radiologists understood that it could improve the timing.

Time factor

HCA places great importance on customer satisfaction. Providing timely reports to patients is extremely important to patient management.

"Many patients come to have an imaging procedure prior to their meeting with an outpatient consultant. They want to have the image done immediately, get the report and leave. There is no doubt that SpeechMagic has improved patient service – they know their consultant can base decisions on both - image and report", says Ms Bonython. "We give them a higher level of confidence."

With pressure being taken off the transcriptionists, they can also contribute their share to service quality. They spend more time with the patients, delivering reports and organizing departments.

"I can give it a whole hearted endorsement," says Dr. Bell, concluding that despite the fact that some of the back office work (traditionally done by transcriptionists) incurs to radiologists, at the end of the process, it's a win.

"Rather than reports dragging on for days or weeks, all the work of that day is finished at the end of the day."

Facts: HCA International

- Based in Central London, UK
- 6 main hospital sites and five outpatient centers
- 770 beds across the city
- 330,000 radiology examinations per year
- 157 radiologists serving approx. 5,000 referring physicians

Facts: Powered by SpeechMagic™

- 2:40 minutes turnaround time
- 130 users trained
- 93% of 21,700 dictations generated through speech recognition

Figures as of August 2008