



SUCCESS STORY

TEM tools increase the accessibility to healthcare for patients



Uppsala County Council reduced lost calls and shortened queuing times for its customers calling in to the central switchboard once it started using a new tool for its Telecom Expense Management.



20 percent lost calls. Average answering time; 35 seconds. Not enough agents in the switchboard. These were just some of the problems that Jan Asklöf encountered when he was appointed Telecom Manager for the Healthcare sector of Uppsala.

“Whilst it was not exactly a catastrophe, there was lots which could be done to improve both the accessibility and the call flow through our switchboard. I researched how the telecom flow had performed over the recent years, and set goals for improving that performance and where we should be in two years time,” says Jan Asklöf.

One of those goals was to reduce the amount of lost calls to less than five percent. As well as increase the general accessibility, i.e. the time the patients have to queue before talking to an operator to be connected to less than ten seconds. An average of 28,000 calls come in each week, and are handled by 21 operators.



More than just Call Accounting

To access, follow up and analyze statistics to establish the current situation Asklöf used the existing TEM solution from ProOpti. The system was installed in 2002, but has only been used for call accounting since then.

Uppsala County Council is divided into 10 departments with various sub-departments, each consisting of areas of responsibility which are supposed to be billed internally for their external calls.

“Besides internal call accounting we wanted help from the Teleopti [now ProOpti] solution to evaluate the quality of service we were providing to our patients on incoming calls, not just the main switchboard but also extensions and group numbers,” Asklöf continued. “The solution graphically demonstrated the amount of lost calls and also strain on the agents manning the switchboard, as well as the time taken to answer.

Achieving their goals

“*We reached our goals a year earlier than we had expected and we have maintained that high level of service ever since.*”

To obtain their goals Jan Asklöf studied the various work routines. One problem was that the main switchboard which was manned 24x7 was under-staffed during times of peak demand.

“I created new schedules which better matched the call flow. The statistics showed, for example, that there was a peak in demand at around 21.00. Instead of letting staff end their shift at that time we extended their shift to a finish time of 22.00,” says Asklöf.

Asklöf also appointed three Team Leaders whose main purpose was to be responsible for the day to day operations and staffing the Switchboard. The Team Leaders also had to support their agents by handling calls as well when there was a peak in demand. To reach the goals Jan studied the statistics generated on a daily basis from ProOpti’s solution and shared the results with the team. This in turn helped create a culture of responsibility and understanding among the personnel.

Accessibility made visible

The Telecom service department at the County Council of Uppsala are responsible for the department's 8,000 direct extensions. Out of these, 800 are IP-based and 500 are mobile extensions. The direct extensions generate more than 45,000 calls per day.

In 2007 a new version of ProOpti's solution was implemented in order to obtain statistics on an extension level. This information shows how many calls there are per extension and day and if the employees answer within 10 seconds according to their new telephone policy.

One of Asklöf's colleagues, Eva Alfvén Johansson, visits the different departments; the hospital, dental care departments etc. She shows the data from Pro for group numbers and extensions for how long an average call is and how long the queues are.

"They are often surprised when they see when the peaks are during the day or how long patients need to queue before getting assistance," says Alfvén Johansson. Then Eva sits down with a representative from the department and together they work out a plan for improving performance and therefore, accessibility.

"If the statistics prove that most patients call at 08.00, then the solution must be to increase the personnel answering the phone this time of the day instead of having the same number of staff at all times of the day."

Another example is that some callers might not need assistance immediately. Maybe it is sufficient to get them routed to a voice mail.

No lecturing

According to Jan Asklöf, it is not their intention to lecture. Instead they want to inform and give advice for better accessibility. In the future the plan is to let the departments follow up and analyze their own telephony results. "Some 150 employees have permission to use the Pro solution. They can either use the module for call accounting or for call statistics for their department.

Better results

"We have not yet investigated if the patients experience better accessibility," says Jan Asklöf. "However, after an inquiry internally it was evident that the employees calling internally felt that it had improved considerably."

Areas for improvement

The Academic Hospital in Uppsala is one department where there is a lot left to be done:

"We are trying to make them aware of the situation, change and make their call flows more efficient. Their main problem is that the incoming call queues are far too long and healthcare personnel do not have enough time to call back those patients who have left messages."





We must make more people within the organization aware that Pro exists and that they can use the statistics to make improvements. Moreover we need to focus on other issues, for example how the agents address the patients. We need to work more closely with the IT department in order to take care of issues via mail or chat.

Jan Asklöf, Telecom Manager

The Pro solution

Pro is the name of the TEM solution used by Uppsala County Council. This software is integrated in a server which is connected to the County Council's MX-One PBX. The fact that some calls are made via IP is not a problem.

Next step

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5 Tips for how to improve accessibility with a TEM Solution

1. Decide what you want to measure and why
2. Find out how the software meets your demands and how the results are presented in tables and graphs. These must be easy to understand
3. Inform and involve the personnel working in the organization, agents, customer service. Create a feeling of participation and understanding
4. Set up goals and follow up on a regular basis. Display the results openly if it is a group that measured
5. Discuss the result. What can you do differently to obtain the goals?

Facts

- Jan Asklöf works at County Council Service which is a real estate and service department within the County Council of Uppsala. The Telecom department consists of 28 employees. 21 are agents working in the switchboard.
- Pro is a web based solution on a server connected to the County Council's PBX, an Aastra MX-One TSW. However, the Pro solution is platform independent. Once every 24 hours Pro collects data from the PBX.
- All calls going through the PBX are registered in Pro. Therefore, the Telecom department can obtain data from the PBX, the extensions or group numbers and they can access a large amount of standard report but even create their own dynamic reports.
- Each month the Telecom Department automatically accesses a file from Pro with data which is sent directly to the ERP-system. From the ERP system all departments receive the bill for their own telecom costs.



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