



INDUSTRY: HEALTHCARE  
DATE OF INSTALL: NOV 2007

## CHALLENGE:

Today's Healthcare environment is a hyper-competitive arena where patients have more choices than ever before for the type of care and the physicians that they choose to treat them. Today's patient expects that they will not only get the best possible care but the highest level of service from their physician as well.

The Buffalo Spine and Sports Institute realized that in order to successfully compete in today's fast-paced, healthcare industry they had to be not only the best clinically but also the best in delivering the highest levels of patient service. Because so many of their customers interact with the Institute over the phone they also realized that their current Avaya system was inadequate at allowing them to deliver that high level of service and the time had come for them to seek other alternatives.

## SOLUTION:

ShoreTel and CoreIP Systems provided the Institute with a comprehensive voice solution allowing the practice to attain the highest customer service levels possible.

## Buffalo Spine and Sports Institute Sees Significant Patient Service Improvements with ShoreTel IP Telephony

Today's healthcare environment is a hyper-competitive arena where patients have more choices than ever before for the type of care and the physicians that they choose to treat them. Today's patient expects that they will not only get the best possible care but the highest level of service from their physician as well.

Buffalo Spine and Sports Institute (BSSI) is a physician's practice dedicated to the diagnosis and management of patients with spine, sports and occupational injuries, as well as degenerative and other painful musculoskeletal disorders. With 5 locations throughout Western New York State, BSSI provides a non-operative, integrated team approach that seeks to optimize an individual's function, rehabilitation and pain management.



The BSSI realized that in order to successfully compete in today's consumer

driven healthcare industry, being the best clinically is not enough. They believe that not only do you need to be the best clinically and have superior patient outcomes, you must be in a position to deliver superior patient service and exceed patient expectations. In BSSI's continuing efforts to deliver superior patient service and exceed expectations, it became apparent that the first interaction with their patients was on the telephone and because so many of their customers interact with the Institute over the phone they also realized that their current Avaya system was inadequate at allowing them to deliver that high level of service and the time had come to seek other alternatives. "We handle over 300 phone calls a day from our patients", said Kathy Gross, Patient Services Manager, "In order for us to deliver a high level of customer service to them we needed to reduce wait times, increase the level of live agents talking to patients and be able to give the patient a single point of contact in the practice."

"Darryl Ernst, BSSI's Executive Director, added, "Our challenge is gathering good information about our patient's needs over the telephone so that we can organize our resources in a manner that best serves the patient as well as measure our performance against industry benchmarks. Our new ShoreTel system has allowed us an opportunity to implement a best practice solution. Our old phone system provided very little data and no ability for us to measure our performance against patient need and industry benchmarks.

BSSI had some very specific requirements for a new phone system including:

1. It had to be flexible and scalable.
2. It had to be able to provide quantifiable and reportable data regarding internal staff performance and external performance with patients and physician offices.
3. It had to have provide a low Total Cost of Ownership over the life of the system.



#### BENEFITS:

- 90% of all calls answered by a live person
- Average wait times for patients reduced to 1.5 minutes
- Reduced calls going to voice mail to 12% of total
- Nearly eliminated patient complaints due to old phone system
- Management reporting and analysis significantly improved
- Able to add or move new or existing staff in under 5 minutes without a service call
- Increased staff productivity and accountability
- Control staffing costs

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Buffalo Spine has been working with Managed Technology Service Provider CoreIP Systems for a number of years, so Ernst and Gross visited the organization to learn more about IP telephony solutions in early 2007. CoreIP presented a solution from ShoreTel® and Buffalo Spine And Sports Institute also looked at a carrier-based solution as well as a new Avaya system. However, the decision quickly became clear to Buffalo Spine that ShoreTel was the right solution for them. “Even though we could have stayed with Avaya and leveraged some of our existing hardware we went with Shoretel based on their superior functionality and features compared to all the other vendors, “ said Ernst.

#### CONNECTING CALLERS WITH CLINICIANS

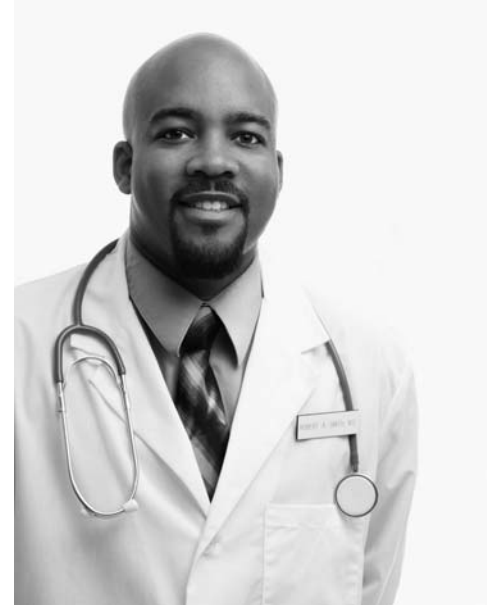
Buffalo Spine And Sports Institute is heavily utilizing ShoreTel's Workgroups, which enables it to consolidate specific inquiry calls to one number, and calls are routed to the next available patient services representative. The clinic has specific workgroups dedicated to such areas as appointment scheduling, triage, prescription refills, billing support, referrals, authorizations and insurance.

“A typical day may see us handle upwards of 300 phone calls and by using the ShoreTel Workgroups features we have been able to reduce average wait times to under 90 seconds, on average we have increased calls being handled by a live person to 90% and when a patient is waiting for a representative they are automatically notified of the expected wait time and also given options to leave a voice mail if they choose to. Patient complaints have been reduced to a fraction of their level before we were using our ShoreTel system” said Gross.

From a management perspective Buffalo Spine and Sports Medicine is now able to run daily, weekly and monthly reports on all call activity in their workgroups and for their individual patient services representatives. They are able to report on every key customer service metric for how they are responding as an organization to their patients.

#### EMPOWERING PATIENT SERVICES STAFF

“The reporting functionality of the ShoreTel system is a tremendous benefit for us,” said Gross, “We are able to now track, analyze and store all the key data about our patient service efforts and use it to focus on areas where we need to improve and track areas where we are performing well to ensure we continue to meet those high standards. We are now able to benchmark and analyze not only our external contact with our patients but use it to allow us to create internal benchmarks as well to hold staff accountable and increase their efficiency. In addition we are also able to enhance our staff training by using features such as call recording, whisper page and monitoring.”





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- Darryl Ernst  
Executive Director

The Institute is also now able to analyze the quality of their individual patient care representative across key metrics such as:

- Total # of calls per day taken
- Average calls per day answered over a period of time
- Average duration of each of those calls
- Amount of time logged into the workgroup

Buffalo Spine’s patient services representatives also appreciate the ShoreTel system for a number of reasons. By being able to see all the inbound calls in their queue and manage calls from their own individual desktops they are able to better self-direct their work now. Also, by getting specific reporting and feedback from management they are able to benchmark themselves compared to their colleagues in the group. “Because we have happier patients due to reduced wait times and a reduction in calls going to voice mail our representatives are better able to focus on the critical issues of providing care that we are dedicated to and it makes their job so much easier” said Gross.

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#### IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

“The implementation, training and after install support program was very important to us”, said Ernst. CoreIP Systems did an outstanding job in ensuring our satisfaction during this whole process”. CoreIP Systems designed a customized training program for Buffalo Spine’s staff and conducted it after hours so as to not disrupt the practice’s daily business, they also worked directly with the practice’s telecom vendor to make sure that the transition to their new phone lines was seamless and then cut the new ShoreTel system over after hours on a weekend to eliminate any downtime. “CoreIP Systems’ service and attention to detail throughout the whole process was remarkable. They really took the time to understand our business to ensure we had the right solution and then worked really hard to ensure the implementation and training was smooth. On the day we cutover they would not leave the building until going to every individual’s desk and personally asking them if they had any questions or needed any support. They did a terrific job with the whole process.”

#### EASE OF MANAGEMENT

Buffalo Spine And Sports Institute uses ShoreTel’s ShoreWare Director for end-to-end management of the ShoreTel system. ShoreWare Director is a browser-based management interface that provides easy access to the system from anywhere on the network, enabling easy management of everything, including voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. It takes seconds to add a new user and the system automatically updates the centralized database and every voice switch. At the time the new user is



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added, a mailbox is automatically created, the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature is updated, and online directories are revised. Changes are made just as quickly.

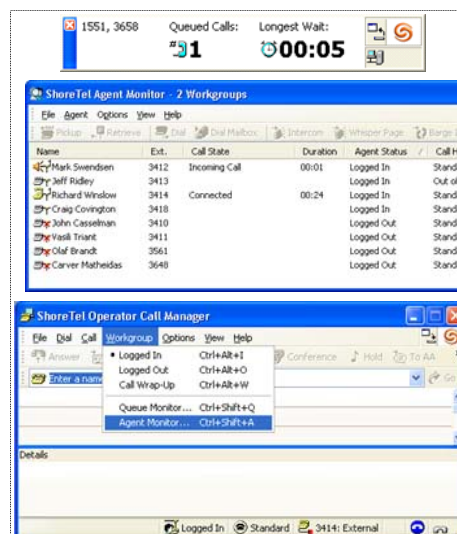
“In the past if we needed to make changes to our old system we had to call our vendor, request a service call and then wait up to 2 days for the service call to be completed. Now, with CoreIP Systems and ShoreTel we are able to make most of the basic changes ourselves immediately and we don’t have to pay for a service call.” said Ernst. “In addition when we do need CoreIP Systems’ help most of the time their support is done remotely and they react very quickly to our needs.”

### SHORETEL TELEPHONES - A PERFECT FIT

The ShoreTel IP telephony system provides integrated messaging, such as directory dialing, contact screen pop, and calendar integration. This means that in addition to ShoreTel’s highly functional telephones, Buffalo Spine and Sports Institute employees get unified messaging so voice mail shows up in their e-mail inbox, desktop call control allows them to control the way their phones work, and features like Find Me allows them to have calls track them down wherever they are—at their desk, on their cell phone, or at home if they choose.

### READY FOR THE FUTURE

Buffalo Spine And Sports Institute is ready to grow with ShoreTel and is extremely happy with the service received from both ShoreTel and CoreIP Systems. Darryl Ernst summarized, “We now have the right platform that will allow us the ability to connect all our offices as well as potentially integrate ShoreTel with our practice management system, thus allowing for an even higher level of service to our patients. ShoreTel and CoreIP Systems focuses on customer satisfaction more than other vendors I’ve dealt with and we really value all of the information we get from the system, from data on calls received and length of calls to how long people have been kept on hold. It’s night and day going from the old system to the ShoreTel system now and we couldn’t be more satisfied. ShoreTel has significantly enhanced our communications practices both externally and internally.”



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