



Artisoft's TeleVantage® Helps Rehabilitation Agency Connect with All its Customers

Rehabilitation therapists are more efficient and responsive, thanks to flexible software-based phone system

Diversified Services for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Audiology is a private rehabilitation agency headquartered in Kenmore, New York. Employing 80 physical therapists, occupational therapists and audiologists, the majority of the company's business is providing contractual rehabilitation services to hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies and educational programs. In addition, Diversified Services offers private rehabilitation services at its offices in Kenmore, West Seneca and Hamburg, New York.

While many aspects of health care have changed since Diversified opened its doors in 1984, one part of the company had remained the same — that is, until recently — its phone system. The old phone system's capabilities were very limiting. Company president Sal Gruttadauria realized that the staff was having trouble keeping up with, and being responsive to, the nearly 400 calls per day that the company received from clients and partners. To make matters worse, the existing phone system had no voice mail capabilities.

Call volume pushed staffing resources to the limit

The old phone system routed every call through Diversified's receptionist, who then had to transfer each call to the right therapist. Since most of the therapists work outside the main office (either in a hospital, nursing home or other facility), the therapists' personal secretaries would have to take a message and then track that person down to deliver it.

"Finally, I realized we had to make a choice in order to improve our internal and external communications," said Gruttadauria. "We either had to invest in a new phone system that would help us manage our calls, or hire another receptionist to handle the massive call volume and dispersed staff. Instead of adding to our payroll, we decided to purchase a new phone system that would allow our employees to become more productive and efficient."

Gruttadauria received several recommendations regarding a new phone system from the computer consultants that do business with Diversified. One value-added reseller, iVergent, suggested the Artisoft® TeleVantage® system, after being impressed with all of the features and capabilities during a product demonstration.

TeleVantage's powerful, software-based system changed the way Diversified does business

Gruttadauria recognized immediately that many of TeleVantage's features would make a significant and valuable difference in the way Diversified communicates — between employees and with their customers.



Personalized call handling improves customer service

"Ninety-nine percent of our calls are from agencies," said Gruttadauria. "The remaining 1% of the calls come in from the patients themselves. Before we installed TeleVantage, everybody who called in was routed through the auto attendant. When we implemented TeleVantage, calls could now be routed directly to the person that the caller is trying to reach by dialing their extension. The agencies were pleased with the new efficiency that the system provided and the easy navigation prompts. They were now able to reach the right person directly through personalized routing."

"We quickly learned that some of our patients, especially the elderly patients, were not as comfortable with the automated attendant," said Gruttadauria. "But this system is so flexible that we were able to set up a direct dial-in number, just for them, that connects to a live person who can direct their call accordingly. This has worked very well. We advertise this same live voice number for patients that are hard of hearing, in the phone book."

Follow-me call forwarding boosts efficiency

Trying to manage calls for 80 people was overwhelming for Diversified's one receptionist. "The old phone system wasn't working for anybody, especially our customers," said Gruttadauria. "Members of our staff ended up taking time to catch up on their messages, or playing unnecessary phone tag. With follow-me call forwarding, Diversified's off-site staff are now able to receive their calls anywhere, and they can choose to take the call, reroute it to another system user, or allow the caller to leave a message in their voice mail."

TeleVantage's benefits are quantifiable right to the bottom line...

According to Gruttadauria, call-forwarding provided another huge benefit for after-hours emergency call coverage. "Before we had TeleVantage, an answering machine picked up all of our after hours calls. One of us had to remember to check it frequently at night and on weekends to scan for any emergency messages. Now with call forwarding, any after-hours emergency caller is prompted to press zero for immediate assistance and the call gets routed to a live person. The call can be forwarded to me at home or on my cell phone. Also, if I'm not around, it goes to the next person on the routing list. We all have extra peace of mind knowing that we are always available to our patients in case of emergency."

Call management administration ensures timely service

From an administrative standpoint, TeleVantage provides Diversified with a full set of capabilities, allowing the system administrator to monitor activity such as call volume and voice mail backlog. For example, the system administrator is able to determine if one of the therapists has too many unanswered voice mail messages, and can alert management of potential delays in responding to customer calls.

Graphical system administration reduces dependence on service calls

Just a few months after installing TeleVantage, the company had a power outage that shut everything down. Because he was initially worried that all of his systems would have trouble recovering, Gruttadauria placed a service call to iVergent, but when the electricity came back on he was able to successfully and easily reset the system himself, making the call unnecessary.

Installation a snap from a VAR that excels at customer service

Value-added reseller iVergent installed TeleVantage for Diversified in January of 2000. The process was completed overnight, so there was virtually no impact on daily operations. "One of the most reassuring things for me was that iVergent and Artisoft were willing to stand behind their product," said Gruttadauria. "Even after the product had been installed, we had a few small questions and requests, and iVergent came over right away. Both Artisoft and iVergent sold me on their honesty and commitment, and they have already proved it with their attentive on-site service."

Initially, some of the Diversified staff resisted using a computer-based phone system. Gruttadauria's favorite testimonial was when a secretary, who was originally very vocal in her resistance to the change, enthusiastically professed her love of TeleVantage. It didn't take very long for the entire staff to get comfortable with the system, and many are becoming TeleVantage experts.

TeleVantage's benefits are quantifiable right to the bottom line

Diversified is no longer using a full-time dedicated receptionist. The incoming voice calls have been reduced so dramatically that the therapists no longer need their own secretaries to take messages for them. Instead, one secretary is able to handle several therapists' calls and still have time to perform other job duties. According to Gruttadauria, Diversified has saved the cost of salary and benefits for one or two full-time receptionist positions. Even with future growth in mind, they don't anticipate needing to add personnel to the front desk staff. "That is one of the beauties of TeleVantage, that it will grow right along with us."

Problem

- Diversified Services needed to keep up with a heavy call volume, while remaining responsive to urgent calls.
- They needed to be able to get calls and messages to the right therapist quickly.
- Staff and patients needed to be sure that emergency calls would always get immediate assistance.

Solution

- TeleVantage gave Diversified the efficient call handling, follow-me call forwarding and personalized service to meet the critical demands of a health-care agency.

Results

- Off-site staff can now receive and manage their calls easily.
- Emergency calls are immediately routed and answered, including after-hours and on weekends.
- Diversified enjoys improved efficiency, easy system administration, and the security of knowing that callers are getting the fast and personalized service they deserve.

"That is one of the beauties of TeleVantage, that it will grow right along with us."

— *Sal Gruttadauria*
President, Diversified Services for
Occupational Therapy,
Physical Therapy and Audiology
Kenmore, NY



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