

Englewood Hospital Performs Surgery on Its Hiring Process to Bring New Staff Onboard Rapidly

Englewood Hospital and Medical Center in Englewood, New Jersey, is a prestigious 520-bed work environment for healthcare professionals, an acute-care community teaching hospital affiliated with New York City's Mount Sinai School of Medicine. While the hospital has been highly successful in attracting bright and talented employees, its manual, paper-based method of bringing them on board until recently was slow and often costly.

A facility internationally acclaimed for advanced clinical programs in breast care, bloodless medicine and surgery, and cardiac care, Englewood Hospital and Medical Center (EHMC) has attained Magnet status, the highest level of recognition for extraordinary patient care, granted by the American Nurses Credentialing Center to only two percent of all U.S. hospitals. Englewood's administrators recognized, however, that its hiring system lacked the efficiency that was evident in the other areas of this world-class medical and academic institution.

The primary source of this inefficiency was a time-consuming, error-prone system through which new hires completed paper forms to gain access to EHMC's information technology network and software applications. The process required a new employee to fill out the form with pen and paper. Administrative personnel then physically walked that paperwork from the Human Resources Department to the HR Department director, to a vice president, and finally to the Information Technology Department. Within the IT area, the paperwork was manually routed to the IT system analyst who is responsible for granting the new employee access to the appropriate applications.

The obvious delays resulting from this sluggish trek through back offices were compounded by the fact that the paper-based system provided no means for tracking the status of the forms as they made their way through the process. If a completed form were lost, or if information were missing, neither HR nor IT staff had any way to determine what had happened to the form or where it was at the moment.

As a result, the average time required to complete the entry of information from new hires and provide them access to the EHMC IT network was 12 days—a waiting period during which the employee was unable to engage fully in his or her job.

EHMC understood that new technology could resolve these problems, speeding time to employment and reducing costs in the hiring process. The institution's administrators sought a solution that would automate the process for new staff members to obtain access to applications and that would shorten the time required to move a new employee through the onboarding process. They realized as well that an automated system would reduce errors, virtually eliminate misplaced documents, and improve the consistency of the hiring process for the organization.

With these overall goals in mind, EHMC looked for technology that would:

- Provide electronic-form submission and legally binding digital signature solution to replace the paper-based system
- Allow staff to track the progress of requests for access to applications as well as to audit the approval and request history
- Reduce the error rate in the submission of forms and the processing of requests by authenticating users and issuing digital signature certificates to each employee
- Decrease the time needed to provision new hires with the network resources they required

To work with them on a solution, EHMC managers chose Microsoft Gold Certified Partners i3solutions of Sterling, Virginia and IntelliSafe Technologies of Chesapeake, Virginia. After strategic consultation with EHMC, i3solutions and IntelliSafe designed and developed for the hospital, a Workflow Automation system that was a key feature of the new Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007.

The new workflow technology provided an electronic form that could be approved with electronic, rather than manual, signatures. IntelliSafe offers the only Microsoft® based digital signature application that ensures the authenticity and originality of any file. The IntelliSafe Vault addressed EHMC's critical need for conducting completely electronic transactions and approvals. IntelliSafe delivered their entire staff with the ability to create, sign and securely store legally binding, authoritative documents in a completely paperless environment.

"Our state-of-the-art digital signing solutions combined with i3solutions' advanced integration capabilities enabled Englewood Hospital to expand its compassionate care in such a loving and humanistic environment," stated Dr. Peter Natale, Vice President of IntelliSafe Technologies. "We are thrilled to be a part of this important transition."

It streamlined and automated internal processes for EHMC, not only enabling all requests to be tracked through the entire process, but also automatically generating reminders to alert those who had a task pending or who were past due in reviewing and approving a form. Now the electronic forms could be routed to every touch point and approved electronically in just seconds.

"We are proud to combine the enterprise innovations from Microsoft and the IntelliSafe platforms with our extensive SharePoint integration experience in the healthcare vertical to ultimately benefit the healthcare and privacy needs of Englewood Hospital and its surrounding communities," stated Scot Johnson, CEO of i3solutions.

The Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 solution is saving time and resources for EHMC in a number of ways. In relation to workflow, the hospital can trace all employee information to revisit documentation and ensure nothing "slips through the cracks." Moreover, since the process is now automated, Englewood is experiencing a significant decrease in the number of errors as compared to its previous system.

"The i3solutions team [was] able to transform our reactive processes into a more robust, proactive system – improving the process and saving us valuable time and resources," said Gary Wilhelm, manager of EHMC's business and financial systems. "Instead of taking up to an average of 12 days, new employees' information is almost immediately uploaded and all necessary system access is fully accessible in a matter of days. This enables new employees to be fully oriented and working on the first day of their employment, thereby improving productivity and increasing operational efficiencies."

Beyond the improvement in its new-hire processes, SharePoint Server 2007 and the IntelliSafe Vault for Microsoft Office 2007 has provided a number of other benefits that have improved access to information, security and efficiency:

- The new technology includes an intranet where all information can be archived in a knowledge repository and viewed by authorized employees at any time from anywhere via the Web.
- Web sites can be created and maintained by individual departments within EHMC.
- Employees and physicians can access electronic documents from the intranet in the medical center, at home or while traveling through a virtual private network.
- The hospital's disaster-recovery capabilities have been improved with electronic copies of forms that can be backed up and stored offsite, whereas paper forms are subject to loss from fire, water or other hazards.
- HIPAA forms can now be signed and securely stored electronically
- The system enables auditing, electronic tracking and status determination for department calendars as well as forms.
- Staff can collaborate on documents through the SharePoint intranet site and approve the content with legally binding signatures, from any location.
- Paperwork, filing of papers, expenses for supplies and required IT resources all are reduced.

Microsoft is helping Englewood Hospital gain a much more productive and robust future through SharePoint Server, with its ability to automate workflow and speed the hiring process.

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