



Vertical Steps Up Productivity for Foot and Ankle Centers of North Houston with Wave IP



Putting Best Foot Forward to Accommodate Growth

Houston is an area with a massive footprint. Covering various regions within this heavily-populated city, Foot and Ankle Centers of North Houston provides superior foot care to adults and children throughout the community. Serving more than 9,000 patients annually, the busy practice is staffed by 10 podiatrists, plus nurses, administrators and other office personnel. As it prepared to add its newest and sixth location to accommodate growth, the group realized its legacy communications system would not provide the functionality required to meet the evolving needs of its staff and patients.

George Brower, president at Effective Integrations, the network consulting company in charge of IT administration for Foot and Ankle Centers, explains.

“Our previous system provided connectivity, but we couldn’t leverage it to enhance our procedures,” said Brower. “It didn’t integrate with any of our existing systems or deliver on features that would assist in our goals, and we had no clear-cut plan on how to scale the technology as we grew.”

To remedy the situation, Brower consulted with Cameron Giddings, a communications consultant with Vertical Communications’ Houston office. Giddings explained how the Vertical Wave IP® Communications Platform could enhance workflows, boost productivity, reduce costs and improve patient satisfaction. Vertical presented Foot and Ankle Centers with a long-term strategy to address their needs by adding powerful Wave IP systems and upgraded communications software at all six offices, all through an economical lease program.

CASE STUDY



Customer Snapshot

FOOT AND ANKLE CENTERS OF NORTH HOUSTON

Houston, Texas



LOCATIONS

6 offices throughout
Houston area

SYSTEM USERS

45+

VERTICAL SOLUTION

- Wave IP Communications Platform
- Wave Appointment Reminder
- WaveNet
- ViewPoint Desktop

Automating 200 Appointment Calls per Day

Foot and Ankle Centers' busy offices received up to 200 patient calls per day to schedule appointments – so many that the staff was not able to manage and respond in a reasonable timeframe. Appointments were being lost and patient visits were being delayed – all costing the centers time and money.

To remedy the situation, Giddings recommended the practice add the Wave Appointment Reminder tool to automate scheduling tasks. The application also enables staff to easily create reports on the status of each appointment. Brower's team then customized the solution to integrate with the facility's HealthFusion medical records software, creating a seamless reporting system that mines patient records while maintaining HIPAA compliance. This enables Foot and Ankle Centers to send automated communications to patients via email, text and voice mail, including appointment reminders with interactive rescheduling options, as well as proactive pre- and post-appointment messages offering additional care and consultation.

With Appointment Reminder, Foot and Ankle doctors have reported fewer missed appointments – which translates to less lost revenue.

"The Appointment Reminder feature has increased the center's revenue by managing patient flow more efficiently. It allows the centers to not just confirm appointments, but also to 'backfill' slots that become open due to cancellations," said Vertical's Giddings. "Foot and Ankle had tried to achieve this with other technologies in the past, but with no success."

"Vertical's solution has established a level of interaction with our patients that didn't exist before," confirmed Brower. "In the old universe, patients waited until they were in pain, and then sought out a doctor's care. The Wave IP solution allows doctors to reach out to patients with supportive messages, reminding them that the center is at their disposal, and invites them to contact their physicians with any concerns. The technology has completely enriched the patient experience."

For more information on products and solutions from Vertical Communications®, call 1-877-VERTICAL, or visit www.vertical.com.

"Wave Appointment Reminder is a lifesaver that drastically reduces the administration time and cost related to managing appointments. It allows our staff to focus on duties more directly related to patient care."

Gayle Kanewske
Office Manager
Foot and Ankle Centers of North Houston

"We're extremely pleased with Vertical's Wave IP solution, especially considering the range of locations we maintain," added Gayle Kanewske, office manager for Foot and Ankle Centers. "The Wave IP's Appointment Reminder tool is a lifesaver that drastically reduces the administration time and cost related to managing appointments. It allows our staff to focus on duties more directly related to patient care."

A Step Up in Flexibility

Foot and Ankle doctors and staff also take full advantage of the ease of communicating across their new network, including instant messaging capabilities to reach each other in real time from different stations and locations. The practice is also able to swiftly add and remove users from any location on the network, a hallmark of the Wave IP's user-friendly ViewPoint interface.

"With ten doctors and multiple locations across a vast metropolitan area, we've got a lot of ground to cover. We're extraordinarily busy and need to communicate without a hitch," said Kanewske. "The Vertical solution is easy to use, and modify, saving time and labor."

"The Wave IP platform is constantly evolving," said Brower. "As we update and explore its inherent capabilities, we'll look to add even greater functionality. The solution has already improved the way we manage appointments, and allowed us to enhance relationships with patients. As the practice grows and our relationship with Vertical expands, we expect to improve our efficiency and agility even further."

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