



Customer Case Study

Modernizing IT Infrastructure on a Budget



MercyOne Newton Medical Center



MercyOne Newton Medical Center is a fully owned hospital of MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center and a member of MercyOne Network. It is located in the city of Newton, Iowa, county seat of Jasper County and has a well-deserved reputation for bucking the trend of diminished health care in rural America by enhancing the quantity and quality of its services during the last two decades.

Highlights

Challenges

- Mapping IT environment to plan upgrades and integrations
- Upgrading Meditech medical records system
- Modernizing IT infrastructure with limited resources
- Replacing departed IT support resources

Challenges

Modernizing IT Infrastructure on a Budget

Few industries have as many critical moving parts as healthcare. Front line workers — nurses, physicians, and the rest of the care staff — depend on a litany of devices, software, and communications networks to provide the best possible care to their patients.

Like many healthcare facilities, Iowa-based MercyOne Newton Medical Center needed to balance delivering the essential back IT infrastructure to support daily operations with the economic realities of the industry. Facing increasing budget constraints and an exodus of tech talent, the hospital needed a cost-effective, reliable way to keep its technology updated and provide support staff to manage it without breaking the budget – all during a global pandemic.

“Over the years, our IT infrastructure had become outdated with several generations of products held together by proverbial duct tape,” says Heather Wolf, Senior Administrator and Manager of HR at MercyOne Newton. “We didn’t have the budget to do a complete overhaul, and we also lost a significant portion of our IT staff, which left us just trying to get by as best we could.”

Wolf knew that the team faced an uphill battle in modernizing its infrastructure and right-sizing its support staff. Hiring new IT talent would be prohibitively expensive for the hospital’s budget and onboarding new employees could take months. At the same time, understanding where, when and how to refresh the technology environment presented a monumental challenge that eventually would require some outside assistance.



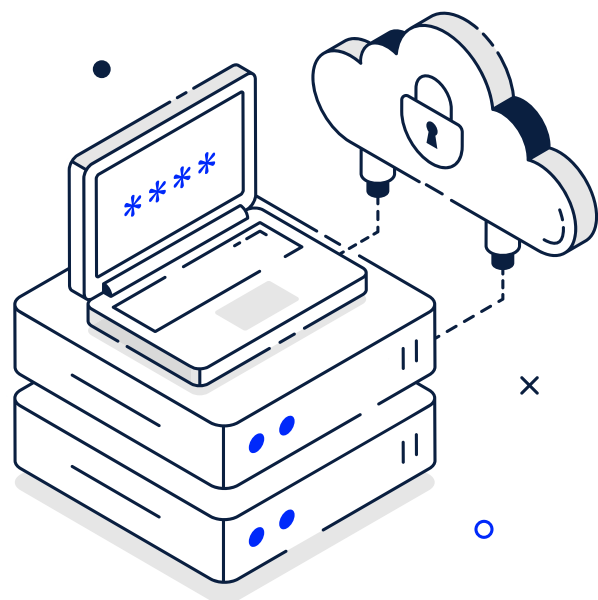
Solution

- Network core replacement
- Edge closet replacements
- Storage upgrade and replacement
- VMware farm upgrade and replacement
- Wireless management
- Retirement of archaic hardware with hardware as a service (HaaS)
- Managed services

Results

- Replaced internal IT team with cost-effective managed services
- Converted CapEx to OpEx to upgrade and refresh hardware more cost-effectively
- Renegotiated software licensing to reduce costs and maintain regulatory compliance

“We didn’t emphasize IT documentation in the past, so when we suddenly had to replace the institutional knowledge of five or six of our most experienced team members without a roadmap, things became quite dire,” Wolf says. “We reached out to some of our MercyOne partners who recommended contacting US Signal, and after comparing them with a handful of other potential partners, we realized they’d be the best fit for helping us right the ship now and sustain it in the future.”



“It was evident from the start that US Signal wasn’t just in it for the paycheck and that they truly had our best interests at heart from the very beginning.”

Solution

US Signal worked at Wolf’s direction to quickly map the hospital’s existing technology footprint, document it, and produce a roadmap for strategically rolling out a technology refresh. With limited financial resources and no capital budget, the team created a hardware-as-a-service model for refreshing the environment with monthly payments rather than a large initial outlay.

At the same time, US Signal temporarily replaced the hospital’s departed staff with on-site resources to help manage daily IT demands while also taking on responsibility for managing a large portion of the hospital’s technology ecosystem, including network, wireless and their Cisco UCS infrastructure through a managed services agreement.

“Not only did US Signal alleviate a huge burden and a ton of stress by taking over the day-to-day operations and long-term support, but they were even able to get creative with cost models for

new hardware and helped negotiate better rates on software licenses,” Wolf says. “They were so thorough, communicative and efficient. It’s what anyone would and should hope to find in a partner — especially when your technology becomes something of an existential threat.”

In addition, MercyOne was faced with updating and migrating their medical records system (Meditech) to the new infrastructure. While outside the scope of US Signal’s established catalog of services, the US Signal team stepped in and partnered with MercyOne in the scoping discussions with Meditech, ensuring that the updated contract pricing was fair and that the migration to the new infrastructure went smoothly.



Results

Wolf says that while quantifying the cost savings from the creative hardware-service model and renegotiated software licenses are hard to quantify right now, she says it's the relationship with US Signal that's proven the most valuable to the medical center.

"A year ago, we were terrified of how we'd survive with failing and outdated technology and how we didn't have the resources to do anything about it," she explains. "US Signal delivered the expertise, strategy, and muscle to bring us back from the precipice and put us on a sustainable path forward."





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