

# Esse Health reduces costs, adds advanced reporting capability with new IP communications solution

## SITUATION

The business model of Esse Health is based on the ability of its physicians to deal with insurers as a group. This way they can provide a higher level of personal care to patients, and also respond more effectively to outside factors that continue to impact the managed care industry.

For Esse Health, which operates in a highly regulated environment with 75 independent physicians in a sprawling metropolitan area, communication is vital—and not only for the well being of patients, but also to the very existence of the enterprise. To meet its mandates, the organization realized that its phone system needed major surgery.

“Our PBX system was aging, with no scalability, and maintenance was extremely expensive,” says Brian Romine, System Administrator of Esse Health.

But nothing is simple in the healthcare industry. For starters, CMA directives and HIPAA regulations touch nearly every aspect of operations. “We had to meet every regulatory standard, be prepared for audits, and still meet our technical needs. We were looking for the right solution for now, but it had to be flexible and deliver what we’d need in the future,” says Romine.

Esse Health took its pulse and concluded it needed a turnkey solution from an outside source—and that called for a partner with a spotless reputation, one who could guarantee the right price and provide ongoing support.

## SOLUTION

Esse Health gave the nod to World Wide Technology. “They’re a company with an impressive track record, and one of our partners had worked with them with great results,” says Romine.

WWT worked quickly to plan and implement an IP communications system for 130 users at the corporate facility and one of 30 remote sites. The solution connects the Call Center to key office systems, so it not only keeps physicians, patients and staff in touch, but provides the added capability to generate a range of reports required by healthcare providers.

More than a simple phone system, the IP communications solution reduces maintenance costs associated with conventional systems, supports users with added phone features, and also delivers flexibility for expansion as the organization brings on additional offices.

## COMPANY PROFILE

Esse Health is a group of 75 independent physicians who practice in 30 locations throughout St. Louis. With more than 25,000 patients, Esse Health is the region’s largest independent physician practice.

The IP communications solution comprises:

- Cisco Routers
- HP Servers
- Cisco Phones
- Cisco Call Center Software
- Company Directory

“Cisco reliability, the research behind it, the price compared to other vendors, and all its features made this easy to say yes to.”

## RESULTS

“WWT pulled it all together in just four weeks, from start to finish, and we were astonished,” says Romine.

**High maintenance fees have been eliminated**, and administration and facilities burdens have been lightened. But the benefits are not just a matter of dollars and cents.

Users are always connected, and the wealth of features, such as email access and report generation, are making **day-to-day operations more productive and reliable for everyone**. “In the beginning, our people weren’t sure about the change, but with training from WWT, they’re into it now and understand what it brings to our growing organization.”

And growth is important to Esse Health. “We’re the largest provider of our kind in the area, but we still have plans to expand,” says Romine. **Adds and changes are simple now**, and the company is confident it has all the scalability it will need.

Equally important, **strict regulatory requirements of CMS and HIPAA are being answered with confidence**. “Right now, with the reporting features the system gives us, we have accurate and detailed reporting to prove we’re meeting key standards.”

**“We’re a stronger group now,”** says Romine. “WWT has earned our confidence and we’ll continue to rely on them as we grow.”



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