SPEED System
Cure to some of healthcare's changing challenges

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Background: Faced with changing healthcare demands

Singapore is now seeing a rapidly aging population. And with it, the transformation of care is needed for the Regional Healthcare System. In addition, to make healthcare cost more affordable, Ministry of Health has in recent years rolled out numerous initiatives (e.g. Pioneer Package, Higher Subsidies & etc.).

All these changes are putting demands on the healthcare industry which she has to grapple with.

Objective: Needed new ways to meet changing healthcare demands

Payment Enquiries team handles incoming billing queries (e.g. disputed medical bills) from patients. The number of incoming calls has increased by 23% from 5,649 queries in January 13 to 6,930 queries in January 14.

With the current labour crunch, the need to look out for innovative / sustainable ways to meet the increasing volume become more pressing.

Solution Approach : Collaborated with IT Department and vendor to look for new and efficient ways

To look for new and efficient ways, the followings were done to:

- Identify waste, streamline the processes and explore with IT Department on the possibility of systemising the process.

- look out for innovative / sustainable ways to streamline the process by exploring with various vendors to customise the solution.

- award the project to the external vendor after fine-tuning the solution based on staff feedbacks and winning staff's buy-in.

After many rounds of discussion, SPEED system costing $25,500 was developed.

Implementation: Rolled out SPEED system in Dec 14 (Featuring Top 3 innovative/time-saving functions)

1. Innovative feature of "Auto-routing" emails to staff with the appropriate skill set; freeing up staff (previously routing emails) to answer incoming calls.

"Auto-route" feature pick up combination of keywords from incoming emails. And "auto-route" straightforward emails with keywords (e.g. "required bills / receipts") to junior staff and complex emails with keywords (e.g. "disputed") to senior staff. More incoming calls were handled as the staff that previously manually route email was free up to answer incoming calls. Leveraging on the strength of each staff also resulted in more calls being answered.


SPEED SYSTEM — Auto Route Feature
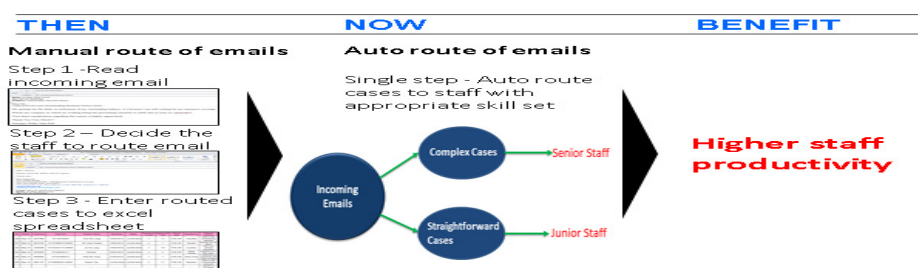
2. Time-saving feature of "Auto-Remind / Escalate" to remind clinics/wards to get back on the status of disputed cases; reducing overtime.

"Auto-remind/escalate" feature to remind the clinics/wards to get back on the status of the disputed cases. This resulted in overtime reduction as staff need not send out manual reminder to clinics/wards that are usually performed after office hour.


SPEED SYSTEM — Auto Remind / Escalate Feature
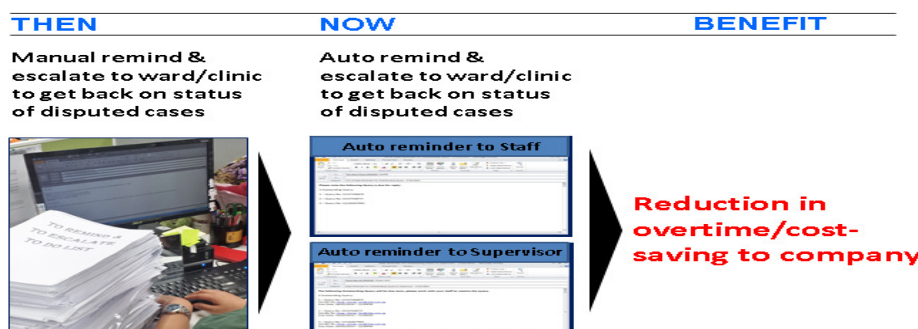
3. Another innovative feature of "Pop-up" to prompt staff to hold back "Reminder informing patient of their outstanding medical bills". (Resulting in better patient satisfaction.)

"Pop-up" feature to prompt staff to hold back "Reminder informing patient of their outstanding medical bills" after staff categorised query as "disputed" in SPEED system.


SPEED SYSTEM — "Pop-up" Feature
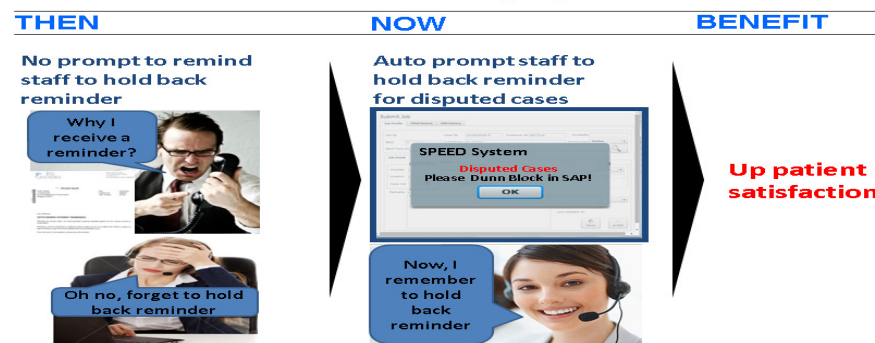
Outcomes: Resulted in 20% productivity increase, 53% overtime reduction & improvement of Compliment / Complaint ratio from 6:4 to 8:1

The implementation of SPEED system has resulted in:

1. Higher productivity with 20 % more incoming queries being handled.

With the freeing up of one headcount from staff previously routing emails and leveraging of staff's strength, more incoming queries could now be handled. (20% or 1,320 more queries per month.)
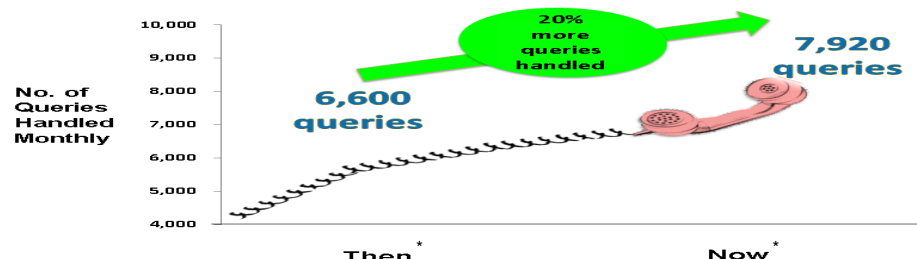
2. Better staff's morale with 53% reduction in overtime.

The number of overtime hours per month had reduced by 53% or 80 hours per month
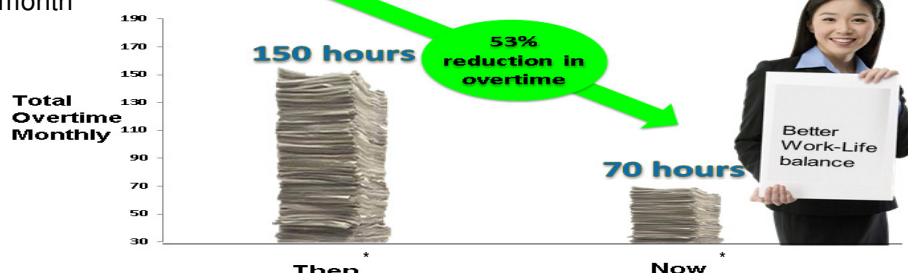
3. Up patient satisfaction with Compliment / Complaint ratio improving from 6:4 to 8:1.

Then : Jan'14   Now: May'15

Conclusion : Implemented Speed System to optimise use of human capital to meet healthcare's changing demands

The project's objective to meet healthcare's increasing demands by exploring innovative / sustainable ways and leveraging on new technology was achieved. The investment will pay for itself (breakeven point) by second year with an impressive 56% Return of Investment (first year).

The successful rolling out of SPEED system paved way for more transformative changes to meet our patients/stakeholders' rising expectation going forward. It also paved way for us to resolve upstream challenges.