

ST MARY'S NHS TRUST



ST MARY'S LOOKS TO A CONVERGED FUTURE WITH DAMOVO

St Mary's NHS Trust has relied on Damovo for nine years to manage its entire voice infrastructure serving 3,500 staff. When the contract came up for renewal, the Trust went to the open market asking for a supplier to provide support for both the voice and data networks, and a five-year plan to ensure that new technology was rolled out as part of the contract.

Damovo proved it was a leading provider of effective business communications by winning the contract against stiff competition. Although the contract is still in its early stages, the Trust already recognises the benefits of services such as Damovo's remote 24x7 network monitoring provision, which is now starting to deliver results in the form of reporting for senior managers – something that has been difficult to achieve with the limited resources available to date. St. Mary's is pleased with Damovo's committed approach to the relationship.

Crucially, St Mary's recognises that with Damovo supplementing the onsite team, it will be able to provide a better service to patients by helping clinicians perform their jobs more effectively.

Developing leading edge communications

Located in the heart of Paddington, London, St Mary's NHS Trust provides a wide range of general and specialist hospital services from the world famous St Mary's Hospital and the Western Eye Hospital in Marylebone. The Trust considers itself to be forward-looking and believes Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has a significant role to play in giving the Trust its leading edge.

The Trust has a long-standing and trustworthy relationship with Damovo, which manages its entire voice infrastructure for 3,500 staff. The service was outsourced to Damovo nine years ago and the contract covers the Trust's campus, which extends over more than one site.

A CONVERGED VOICE AND DATA COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Although the relationship was beneficial to St Mary's, government regulations required the Trust to re-tender the contract on the open market. Rather than put forward the same proposal as five years ago, however, the Trust sent a proposal out to tender for a converged voice and data communications network. This meant that any future provider would have to deliver not just telephony as a managed service but also the Trust's data network. Given the scale of the transition, the Trust wanted a communications provider that could produce a comprehensive five-year migration plan to reduce risk and ensure its migration to a converged network was carried out as smoothly as possible.

Prior to the tender, the Trust undertook a significant upgrade of its Ericsson MD110 communications system to the latest IP-enabled software release. **"Now we want to be able to use some of the new technologies and features the system has given us, such as Voice over IP (VoIP), and better voicemail functionality,"** says Phil Jones, director of ICT at St Mary's NHS Trust.

Damovo provides the creative solution

The tender process was submitted to the open market and after carefully considering all submissions, St Mary's whittled the shortlist down to two providers. Shortly afterwards, in January 2006, Damovo was awarded the contract. **"Damovo offered us a strong and coherent five-year plan at a reasonable cost,"** explains Jones.

He denies that the existing relationship had any part to play in the Trust's decision. **"We defined a list of technologies we were interested in and implemented a scoring system for responses that ensured a level playing field for all,"** he says.

The five-year plan proposed by Damovo includes the following elements:

- Year 1 – examine the provision of voice services (as done in previous years by Damovo) and carry out an IP readiness test to assess the work required to move to VoIP;
- Year 2 – upgrade data network, examine QoS and gradually begin migrating to VoIP;
- Year 3 – upgrade the voice network and migrate to IP over data, while undertaking further data upgrades;



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Year 4 – migrate more services to the IP network and trial the converged voice and data network;

Year 5 – move to the converged voice and data network and begin operating as a fully mobile site.

"We currently have a whole range of issues with our ICT systems, so Damovo will help us gradually bring everything up to date," says Jones. In line with the recommendations made above, Damovo also suggested the Trust implement Ericsson's Mobile Extension. The latter application integrates mobile phones with the communications system. Once installed, clinicians and other staff will be able to access their voicemail and other phone settings from any phone.

PROVIDING A REMOTE MONITORING SERVICE VIA A SECURE CONNECTION

In addition, Damovo will provide a remote network monitoring service from its Horsham headquarters via a secure connection to the NHS N3 network. **“This is one of the key benefits because it makes us far more agile, especially when providing services out of hours,”** says Jones. **“Now if there’s a problem with a switch or another piece of equipment on the network, Damovo is able to tell us immediately via SMS text, email and a call to our Out of Hours Support team before we get calls from users, so we can proactively resolve any problems.”**

While Damovo monitors the network, St Mary’s ICT department will take responsibility for rectifying any problems, according to agreed service levels the IT department has with each hospital department. For example, it has an agreement with Accident and Emergency (A&E) to fix any network problems within two hours. **“So we might have to source and fit a switch out of hours, but it will be made easier by Damovo alerting us to the problem in advance,”** explains Jones.

The contract is still in the very early stages and Damovo’s engineers have only just begun to familiarise themselves with the Trust’s data network. However, Damovo’s support teams have already impressed Jones and his team. **“Even before Damovo officially began supporting our data network, I rang Damovo’s 24x7 customer contact centre about an issue on the network, and they were extremely helpful in offering advice to solve the problem,”** recalls Jones. **“Staff here have also reported that they’re pleased with how the relationship is developing.”**

Delivering a superior service to patients and clinicians

Jones is excited about Damovo’s proposals for the Trust’s network over the next five years. **“Damovo was very creative in its suggestions and they asked a lot of very good questions,”** he says.

As a result of their recommendations, Jones says: **“Clinical staff will see a step change in what they can do with the Trust’s systems. It will make a big difference to the Trust and how clinicians carry out**

their jobs.” For instance, when the Trust becomes a fully mobile site, clinicians will be able to keep in touch with those that matter from anywhere on campus.

Also, **“Instead of having to wander between a terminal and a patient’s bed, clinicians will be able to access data – perhaps through a wireless PDA – from the Internet or intranet,”** he says.

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COST SAVINGS ASSOCIATED WITH HAVING A CONVERGED NETWORK AND SINGLE SUPPLIER

Although it's too early in the five-year plan for these benefits to have been realised yet, the Trust already recognises the cost savings associated with having a converged network and single supplier. In an environment where resources are scarce – priority must be given to the health and treatment of patients.

“Instead of reacting to problems, we can be more proactive and deliver a better service to the Trust,” he explains. **“With Damovo collecting data, we can conduct trend analysis and identify any bottlenecks in advance.”** In addition, the Trust's head of IT operations has access to information and statistics about the state of the network, number of faults and so on. **“While we have always had the ability to collect detailed technical data, we have not had the resource to present these statistics in the way a director would expect to see in order to ascertain the level of service provided. Now we can,”** says Jones. **“Thanks to Damovo, we will now have a better feed of information.”**

The Trust also recognises Damovo's proactive stance in continually recommending any new technologies it thinks can improve the communications network – even where these are not part of the five-year plan. For example, Damovo has been recently discussing with St Mary's the possibility of implementing a voice recognition system. **“How it works is when you call someone, you say their name instead of dialling their number, and the system finds the right person for you. It means you don't have to know the phone number of the person you want to speak to or have a telephone directory to hand,”** says Jones.

“So people ringing St Mary's will not necessarily need to call the switchboard – freeing up our operators' time – and we will not have to print hundreds of telephone directories, which are immediately obsolete as soon as they're printed,” he continues. **“Switchboard operators can be given new tasks, such as logging helpdesk calls, so the helpdesk can then focus on solving problems rather than answering phones.”**



All in all, it is another way for the Trust to improve the service it offers patients and their families. **“It is part of our continual drive for greater efficiency. How do we update how we do things to give a more efficient service?”** he asks. **“Voice recognition is a relatively new application in the hospital environment and will put us ahead of the game.”**

“St Mary's NHS Trust is one of the more forward-looking medical institutions and recognises the value of converged communications in delivering a better service to clinicians and patients,” says Paul Renucci, managing director of Damovo UK. “We are really pleased to be working with St Mary's and are committed to the success of the five-year plan we've put together for the Trust.”

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