

iCare

Makes hospitals efficient



Overview

iCare is a simple to use ticketing system to manage routine interdepartmental requests at hospitals. It gives complete control to senior management on internal processes and drives accountability among staff and improves efficiency in handling internal customer requests.

The Origin

Running large hospital operations was not new to Ramesh when he took over as the COO of Aster CMI Hospital. The challenge was the same as at any other hospital. He knew he could not be in every nook and corner personally. He had to depend on his staff taking personal responsibility. However, as the COO, he knew the buck stopped at his desk.

Ramesh envisioned a system that would become his eyes and ears on the ground. It would allow him to dive down into the details of any patient and employee request, and would also present a few simple KPIs in dashboards to manage the pulse of every operational detail. The system would bubble up exceptions for his attention and would allow for objective comparison of departmental and process KPIs with their associated Turn Around Times (TAT).

Thus was born iCare. Accessible on smart phones and Internet, iCare enables every employee in the hospital to raise requests and assign them to appropriate departments. Requests are queued for action and their responsible owners are notified. The owners are expected to act on these requests and close them with in the predefined TAT. Requests not closed with in time will escalate through the organisational hierarchy for follow up. Departmental heads are held responsible for meeting their TAT requirements.

With clear ability to monitor hand offs and assign responsibility, iCare has brought in transparency into request resolution process. Employees spend less time following up on requests and are able to deliver more as they focus on their core responsibilities.

Aster CMI

Location: Bengaluru
Size: 500 beds

Hospital Bio

Aster CMI, Bengaluru is a DM Healthcare's continuation of its endeavour to create world-class, patient centric hospitals driven by medical innovations and a culture of excellence. It has state-of-the-art facilities offering comprehensive primary care to quaternary care services.

" iCare has helped us create an efficient work culture by bringing in accountability and transparency into everyday activities. It has significantly reduced efforts required in coordinating interdepartmental processes, thus lowering our cost of operations. "



Ramesh Kumar
COO, Aster CMI Hospital

How has iCare helped Aster CMI drive employee empowerment?

Cost Savings per month
>2 lacs

Requests closed within TAT
82%

Requests served per month
>4500

The Challenge

Interdepartmental handoffs in a process are generally the points of failure. Typically handled over phone calls in most hospitals, their rules of engagement are many a times not clearly defined. Even when defined, they are difficult to monitor and manage given the lack of process data.

Our study indicates that nursing is usually the first point of contact for most patient requests regarding Food & Beverage, Maintenance and Housekeeping issues. Most conscientious nurses make an attempt to pass on these requests to relevant departments, but they have little time to follow up given their clinical duties. This leads to delayed closures and multiple follow up cycles by the patient. Some requests eventually are never closed as they fall through the cracks leading to suboptimal patient experience. Nurses have to focus on patient's clinical needs more than operational service requests.

The challenge is to consistently track every request till closure and ensure that it is met with in the pre-defined Turn Around Time (TAT), with minimal effort. iCare is built specifically for this purpose - handle requests in time so they do not become issues.



The Approach

Our approach was simple - start with setting clear expectations and manage them. We defined four steps:

- Define expected KPI for each type of request
- Capture request at the source clearly
- Notify the departments of their requests in realtime
- Track requests to closure, or escalate to next level managers

iCare is built as a mobile native system as it is to be used by field staff that could be in any corner of the hospital. It also had to be simple to use given that it would be used by workers in F&B and housekeeping who could be uneducated.

When used effectively, iCare has the potential to become a "Central Nervous System" of the hospital as more and more users adopt it. As such, it is built to be a reliable system that is available 24 x 7.

The Solution

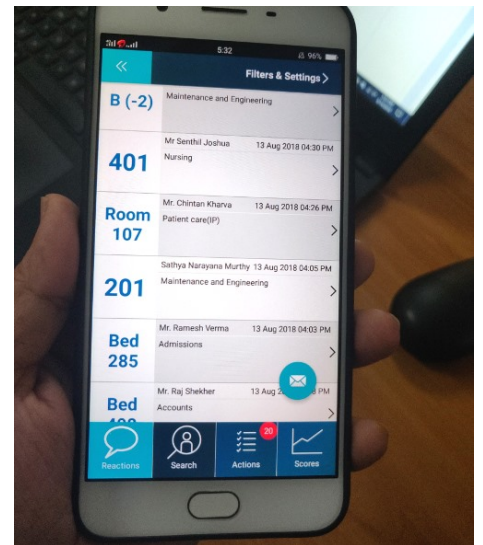
iCare is a mobile app that captures requests, assigns owners and sends them notifications. Owners of requests look up their queued requests, act on them and when complete, mark them as closed.

With an easy to use interface, users can log requests in a few seconds. The request captures the essential elements: What, Where and Who. What has to be done, Where (location) it has to be done and Who needs to address it. Users have ability to take and add photos to their requests making it clear for the owners.

"Implementation and change management was easy compared to other IT systems. This is a self-sustaining system that employees adopt to very well"

Requests are immediately queued for owners to take action, and alerts ensure that the assigned owners are notified of pending requests. Requests in queue are evaluated against objective KPIs and escalated to the next level manager for follow up. Requests escalate all the way to the top management based on predefined organisation hierarchy.

Management dashboards allow for easy analysis of the request-response cycle. Graphical and visual representations of the performance of departments with respect to their TAT make it easy and clear for the management to monitor processes effectively.



The Results

With in 2 months of implementing iCare, employees are a happier lot. They know their requests will be delivered for sure, and most likely with in the specified TAT. Support departments are also happy when their requests are neatly queued for processing, one after the other. When compared to the earlier days of handling constant support request calls, follow ups, delays and resulting incidents, their work day has become more predictable. It takes less time and effort as there are fewer exceptions.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) of patients has improved by 4 points in both in-patient and post-discharge surveys. 80% of support requests are closed with in TAT. Given the reduced efforts of followup, Aster CMI has been able to reduce the staff strength required for such activity by almost 50% resulting in immediate savings on operational costs associated with inpatient coordination. The management team feels much more in control of the internal processes and is able to make data driven decisions.

About Forum Business Research

We are experts in patient experience management. We believe managing patient experience is the only sustainable initiative that a hospital can take up to ensure long term growth. We work with hospitals that have a patient centric purpose and the courage to act on it.

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