

## Clinical strategy guide.

3 steps to a smooth smartphone integration.



## Overview

Businesses across every industry understand that employees need to communicate clearly and effectively for their companies to succeed. When your business involves caring for people who are ill or injured, the consequences of inefficient communication are even more significant.

In a recent report, the Joint Commission cited poor communication in hospitals as the third most frequent root cause of sentinel events.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, mobile technologies have become ubiquitous in our personal lives. With hospital clinicians accustomed to simple, touch-based communication anywhere, any time, it can be frustrating to search for the staff, patient data and equipment they need to perform their jobs efficiently.



Smart hospitals are responding by integrating mobile technologies for clinicians. To be successful, it's vital to assess your clinical communication, evaluate your current workflow and identify metrics for success.

### Step 1: Assess your clinical communication.

At Voalte, we've worked closely with clinical teams from leading hospitals to identify the critical components of a smooth smartphone integration. First, you need to assess the way your staff currently communicates with others, both inside and outside the hospital. Start by interviewing those who will use the new technologies to improve patient care, asking questions such as:

- How do caregivers within the same unit reach one another?
- How does one hospital department contact another?
- What patient safety and/or satisfaction concerns exist with regard to alarms?
- How can we leverage clinical technology to improve care delivery?

### Step 2: Evaluate your current workflow.

Before you can streamline your workflow, improve response times and increase collaboration among departments, you need to map your current procedures. Consider questions including:

- What communication problems and alarm issues are you looking to resolve?
- What communication or alarming devices do you want to eliminate?

Choosing which nurses receive alarms and sending lower priority alarms to a nursing assistant, for example, is an important workflow consideration. Clinical staff can grow desensitized to alarm overload, which can cause negative patient outcomes. As part of a mobility strategy, hospital staff can use smartphones to triage patients by sending alarms where they need to go, at the right time.

### Step 3: Identify metrics for success.

Integrating smartphones in your hospital can have far-reaching benefits, including increased job satisfaction among your nurses, lower staff turnover and better patient outcomes. Before you can realize the benefits, however, you need clear expectations that can translate your strategic vision into measurable results. For example:

- Improve call light response time by 10 seconds.
- Reduce falls by 25 percent in the first year.
- Acknowledge critical lab results within 5 minutes.
- Improve nurse response time to patients reporting pain by 3 percent.

As part of any mobility strategy, you need a method to gather feedback from those who use the tools on a day-to-day basis, and make adequate provisions for training and support. You also may need to implement new policies that dictate smartphones be locked when not in use, for example, or that nurses ensure their communications avoid violating patients' Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rights.

In the graphic on the following page, you'll see how the next step extends beyond clinical communication to integrate with electronic medical records, barcode medication administration, physician communication and context-aware alarms.

### Conclusion

As hospitals work to improve how physicians, nurses and ancillary staff communicate, the stakes are high for everyone: patients, their families, the clinicians and our healthcare institutions. With a smart mobile strategy, the potential benefits are even greater.



**“Studies show each disruption is associated with a 12 to 13 percent increase in procedural failure and clinical error.”<sup>2</sup>**



\* Smartphone integrations impact multiple Meaningful Use Stage 2 objectives. Reference 42 CFR 495.6(j)-(m).



## About Voalte

Voalte develops smartphone alternatives that simplify caregiver communication. As the only company to offer a comprehensive Mobile Communication Strategy, Voalte enables care teams inside and outside the hospital to access and exchange information securely. Voalte customers benefit from a solid smartphone infrastructure that supports their existing systems and expands to accommodate future technologies. Founded in 2008, Voalte is a privately held company based in Sarasota, Florida. Over 35,000 caregivers use Voalte products every day. For more information, visit [voalte.com](http://voalte.com) or follow @Voalte on Twitter.

### Sources

1. The Joint Commission, Sentinel Event Data, Root Causes by Event Type, 2004-2Q2012, June 30, 2012.
2. Westbrook, et al., Arch Intern Med. 2012; 170(8):683-690.