Even Patients Benefit from Streamlined IT

Spectrum
Healthcare Partners

Building an IT department's managed services from the ground up with SysAid.

About Spectrum Healthcare Partners

Spectrum Healthcare Partners ("Spectrum") is Maine's largest multispecialty, physician-owned and directed professional organization. It is comprised of over 200 physicians providing high-quality medical services in the areas of anesthesiology, orthopedics, pain management, pathology, radiology, and radiation oncology. Spectrum's nine divisions include three orthopedic clinics and six units supporting its specialists in hospitals, or at partner sites working with hospitals, throughout the state of Maine and eastern New Hampshire. The organization is dedicated to meeting the needs of patients, employers, insurers, physicians, managed care organizations, and healthcare systems.

Spectrum is supported by an IT department of 32 people, providing troubleshooting, asset management, electronic medical records (EMR) management, and HR processes support across the organization. IT team members are located at four Spectrum locations in Maine.

Haphazard and hit-or-miss

Spectrum has grown significantly in size and complexity in recent years. This expansion has changed the organization, requiring a period of adjustment to a new structural model.

Initially, service management was handled disparately (some internally and some outsourced to different MSPs) depending on the division. In 2016, Spectrum determined it would like to bring IT support in-house. Yet, there were no coherent procedural policies and no structure to support the new services at Spectrum. As a result, the IT division was mainly focused on putting out fires in terms of support, as the department was being built from the ground up.

The tools IT was using were haphazard, without any of the ITSM features that would help move the service desk forward. There was no classification or prioritization of tickets, nor was there any effective asset management. The only indication of SSL certificates expiring, for example, was when software stopped working, because the certificates were completely untracked.

In 2017, Spectrum identified the need to consolidate the multiple IT help desks and create structure that allowed efficient, effective processing of of incidents and requests, as well as start to mature the IT operations using ITIL as a framework. That's when they hired Sam Miller to assist with this transition.

As Sam, IT Operations Manager for Spectrum, so eloquently put it, "If you don't know what your team is working on and can't prioritize, then you're not working on what's most important to your organization."

Sam Miller
IT Operations Manager, Spectrum

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Systematizing service and information

Spectrum turned to SysAid to bring order, information, transparency and speed to their service desk as the new IT department was developing.

One of the many challenges the organization faced was integrating three different orthopedic units, each of which was using a different EMR system. Patient medical data for the examination of possible trends and long-term changes had to be preserved, on the one hand, while coherence, operational efficiency, and cost-effectiveness needed to be introduced. So, with SysAid, Spectrum had access to a single platform to integrate and uniformly manage IT services from all its divisions.
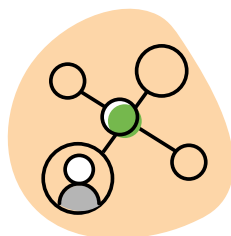
Another area in which Spectrum leveraged SysAid was to build custom hardware purchasing workflows, with automated managerial approvals. This became part of the new general asset management of all workstations, printers, PCs, laptops, servers, switches, routers, and firewalls across the organization. In this context, Spectrum's IT team set up SysAid to automatically open an IT ticket requesting an SSL certificate's renewal 1.5 months before its expiry date.

Additional SysAid automations adopted by Spectrum include email routing and ticket escalation. This includes automatically flagging and forwarding designated emails directly to developers, for example, with in-depth expertise in specific systems.

The knowledge base has also contributed to Spectrum's improved service, empowering employees to self-resolve their tier 1 issues. This has, in turn, allowed the IT department to pivot tier 2 and tier 3 folks to project work.

As Spectrum grows and roles are changing, the most common requests are related to staffing – onboarding and staff adjustments – while troubleshooting tickets tend to focus on systems remaining updated and operational. IT also plays a proactive role in multiple projects to reduce operating costs, such as workload balancing and other methods geared toward providing better treatment for patients.
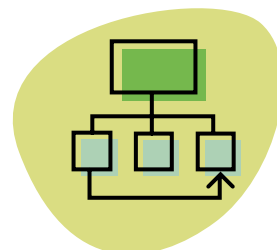
Accurate analytics is the key

SysAid's built-in business intelligence and analytics have allowed Spectrum to regularly shine an illuminating spotlight on asset management and ticket resolution metrics. This includes:

1 Daily updates
Every morning, automated reports show Sam the updated ticket inventory and its breakout. These daily reports are shared with the IT managerial team.

3 Focusing attention
Reports highlighting which tickets are, or will be, overdue the same day indicates where the IT team should be focusing their immediate attention, as well as providing some insight into how and why they got to be overdue.

2 "Close same day" metric
Reports indicate what tickets were closed on the same day they were opened, how many closed overdue, and how many closed within internally defined service level objectives.

4 Personal inventory
Managers can see the state of every ticket assigned to each service desk agent, indicating if the agent is inundated with tickets and providing the data needed to better balance the load. In addition, Spectrum generates reports showing each agent's activity (how many hours spent per ticket, etc.).

The IT department provides support to each Spectrum division on a charge-back basis. As a result, the question frequently arises: What exactly is IT doing for us? To address this question, Sam meets with each division head once a month to present the active, closed, recent, and trending ticket data, including the top five requests and incidents per division. They also review the state of the assets in the division, including software licensing timelines and more. This process helps identify where cost-savings can be made through asset upgrades, employee training, asset replacements, or improvements to service desk performance.

Results

Prioritization and speed

Before SysAid, it took many months to resolve service records. Today, the process is streamlined by orders of magnitude.
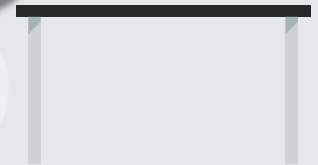
Some numbers to consider:

Went from **500** outstanding and unresolved tickets at any one time (many for over a year)

to just **70** open tickets, which are also clearly delineated (60 requests and 10 incidents).

Automation of just a few workflows has produced a projected **savings of 50 hours per week.**

Went from **hours spent each day** by IT staff tracking down managers for hardware purchase approvals
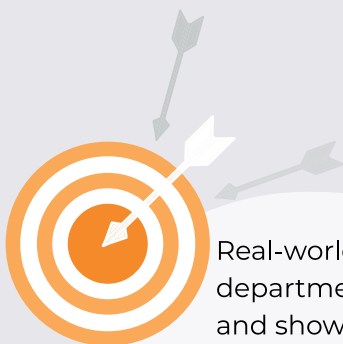
to automated and virtually **immediate approvals**. This success has inspired the company to expand approval automation to its licensing and contract workflows, saving time and effort across the board.

The mean time to resolve (MTTR) for incidents has been reduced by

20%

A major driver behind Spectrum's improved performance is the capability to prioritize, standardize, and set benchmarks within SysAid.

Went from **70%** of IT support focused on lower priority tier 2 or tier 3 tickets

to **50-60%** focused on tier 1, and single-digit percentages on tier 3.

Real-world, detailed data allowed the IT department to set up service level objectives and show employees how meeting them impacts the business – resulting in growing success at meeting those goals.

Clear, detailed, and regularly updated data from SysAid's asset management has provided Spectrum the necessary information to confidently reduce, upgrade, or replace its hardware and software inventory, saving money and avoiding potential service disruptions.

More of the same – on a larger scale

As Spectrum continues to expand, the IT team plans to use SysAid to create new trend reports indicating which applications are generating what type of tickets, and how frequently. In addition, in the near term, the IT department intends to implement the self-service portal for all employees, as well as problem management, as new IT team members settle in.

Sam noted that his team is looking to use SysAid to automate more work processes, as well as to examine systems currently in place and identify where improvements could be made. This would include incorporating relevant departments in certain workflows, such as human resources (HR), facilities, and quality assurance.

Spectrum is an early adopter of Automate Joe, SysAid's built-in service orchestration engine, and Sam believes that this will save his team **50 hours per week**.

Sam Miller
IT Operations Manager, Spectrum

"Other departments are clamoring for their own SysAid, after seeing the success and value we've achieved."

In light of the success and value seen in the IT department thus far, several other Spectrum departments – HR, Finance, QA – have already expressed their desire for using SysAid for many of their workflows, especially those that spread across multiple departments like the new hire process.

As Spectrum's managed services expand and become more efficient with SysAid, the benefits are being felt across its organizational divisions, among medical personnel, and among their patients. And that is surely a healthy improvement the IT team can take credit for.

SysAid®