



## **Community Adoption of PACS**

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Developing and pursuing a strategy for giving access to referring physicians in the community is sometimes overlooked by organizations deploying a picture archiving and communication system (PACS) for radiology. It's important to develop relationships in a manner which promotes adoption and referrals within the community.

Most best-of-breed PACS systems such as McKesson Horizon Medical Imaging® (HMI), when paired with a robust Virtual Private Network (VPN) network can support secure web-based viewing of radiology images and reports by physicians in the field. This provides a great opportunity to share images between referring physicians and radiology in almost real time. Doctors can make care decisions for their patients much faster than the old and often unreliable process of waiting for images to be delivered by courier or brought in by the patient after imaging has been done at a hospital. Successful adoption of this product feature is a great driver of satisfaction from all sides, as both physicians and patients get their results quicker than ever before, and you can effectively eliminate printing film, faxing and printing reports for outside physicians!

The challenges associated with supporting outside doctors can be wide ranging for an organization and daunting in their scope. They will need to be provided software in the form of clients which allow the PACS remote viewing software to integrate with their PC, with a robust, capable network infrastructure to support the additional bandwidth. They will also require set-up and training services, as well as ongoing support.

Faced with these realities, many facilities do not place focus on this product feature due to the man-power needed to support the outside connections. In a world where we have already stretched our IT staff to the near-breaking point in terms of their workload, it is difficult to conceive adding outside systems, not under your direct control, to your help desk workload.

Visiting each physician office (often more than once), setting up the VPN and web client, and instructing staff on its use is not often something your internal staff will be able to do in a short timeframe. After you have integrated a good portion of your outside physician community and have become comfortable with the day to day support of your internal PACS deployment, super users in the radiology department can answer the majority of the questions outside users may have.

You can overcome most, if not all of these challenges and provide a greater level of care to all your radiology customers by developing a realistic rollout strategy. Your strategy should contain plans for advertising, training your internal support staff, and creating a Service Level Agreement, which states what the hospital will and will not support. Additionally your strategy may include a plan for temporary staff augmentation, in the form of at least one consultant who is well-versed with the product and

networked systems, and can take the burden of supporting the outside user community and delivering high-quality service and training directly to their offices.

The value of providing "that personal touch" cannot be overstated when it comes to integrating many different outside systems successfully into your PACS network, and providing the level of personal support that each clinician may need to get comfortable using the new system is critical to a successful adoption plan. For more information about PACS or our McKesson services and solutions, please contact us at 610.444.1233 or [yves@getvitalized.com](mailto:yves@getvitalized.com). You can also find more information about VCS at [www.getvitalized.com](http://www.getvitalized.com).