

Treating patients as consumers to offer a more consistent, personalized experience.



Use case

Digital transformation

Industry

Healthcare
& Life Sciences

Integrations

Epic EHR

Key metric

- ↓ Abandonment rate
- ↑ Service level
- ↓ Average speed to answer
- ↓ Average handle time

Healthcare doesn't look like what it did 20 years ago—and it shouldn't. Patient care is much more nuanced now, and our one-size-fits-all approaches have transformed into personalized journeys customized to any age or state of health. But I want this healthcare experience to hit even closer to home. I'm on a five-year goal to build a digital front door, an experience that opens and simplifies the healthcare experience for all consumers.

Yes, I said “consumers” rather than “patients.” Most of the time, the people who reach out to healthcare providers aren't seeking immediate care: they want to make appointments, get advice, or receive recommendations. When someone is at home, doing research or otherwise not actively getting care, they're consumers. When someone

is in the hospital or a physician's office getting direct care, they're a patient. This sentiment is a significant shift in perspective for many healthcare professionals, but it's an important change. We've always expected consumers and patients to come to us, but we need to operate more like other industries. We need to get out to the consumer and engage with them in any way they want to engage with us.

Healthcare's one-size-fits-all approaches have transformed into personalized journeys customized to any age or state of health. Modern consumers expect a certain level of service, regardless of the industry. They deserve the same experience while navigating the healthcare process as they do when online shopping.



“It's time we start eschewing dated practices and offering a healthcare environment with modern, simple-to-navigate, easy-to-understand methods of communication. At Memorial Healthcare System (MHS), we get there through the digital front door.”

— JEFF STURMAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER AT MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The great communication shift.

MHS is one of the largest healthcare organizations in Florida. We were established in 1953 to serve the people of South Florida and beyond, offering cancer research, pediatric facilities, heart surgery, cardiac imaging, neuroscience care, and more for thousands of people. We've embraced digital changes to move healthcare forward for quite a while, and we've onboarded new technologies to streamline our existing touchpoints. But we're always looking for new ways to improve our structure and enhance consumer interactions. And as our electronic health records (EHR) portal, Epic, started to mature and offer more two-way communications options, we wanted to revamp our disparate call center environment to provide the ultimate caller experience.

In February 2021, MHS operated 12 separate on-premises contact centers, a central one for scheduling and billing, and 11 others for different physician practices. Each contact center had separate owners and processes. Our legacy call center solution didn't easily integrate with other critical applications, particularly our billing, EHR, and marketing platforms. This approach was not scalable nor flexible enough to meet consumer needs.

It took a lot of work for agents to access vital information during a call, increasing handle and wait times. They had to repeatedly ask the same questions, creating a frustrating experience for callers—sometimes enough for them to drop the call.

The breaking point was when we started receiving complaints from consumers about wait times and frustrating experiences. Dissatisfaction with long wait times, disparate information, and repetitive questions affected both sides of the caller/agent coin. Callers couldn't accomplish multiple tasks at once without being transferred around or waiting for hours on the phone, and it was equally challenging for agents who'd get reprimanded for inefficiencies outside of their control. In addition to its limited functionality, our legacy call center software wasn't cloud-based and didn't offer any performance metrics. Rather than our platform helping us meet our five-year goal for a digital front door, it was holding us back.



When we started to look more closely at our entire contact ecosystem, we had to acknowledge that technology was only partially to blame for our problems. We needed to readjust how we organized information and secure a tech stack to align better with these consistency goals. We decided to eat the elephant one bite at a time. Once we'd operationalized the simple stuff with a better platform in each call center, we could start creating consistencies and integrations that would take the customer experience above and beyond caller expectations.



"By December 2021, MHS decided to fix our stickiest call center points with a unified contact center solution: Talkdesk."

— JEFF STURMAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER AT MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The missing piece of our puzzle.

Talkdesk felt like a natural solution from the start. They had a deep knowledge of the call center environment and highly technical systems, and they weren't a healthcare-centric organization. Healthcare is probably a decade behind many other industries from a technical standpoint. Using Talkdesk allowed us to marry the tech maturities of these other industries and organizations and apply those lessons to MHS.

We went live within a month, and Talkdesk immediately made a massive improvement for our agents and consumers alike.



“The plug-and-play connection between the Talkdesk UI and Epic EHR was the missing piece.”

— **JEFF STURMAN**, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER AT MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Now we can automatically identify callers and display their records and other relevant information, including billing and payments, clinical history, and workflows.

These details offer our agents a more comprehensive view of callers, giving agents a head start on an issue when they answer a call. And because agents don't have to ask callers for the same questions or information they've already given through the interactive voice response (IVR), callers can enjoy a less frustrating and more personalized call experience.

When healthcare organizations work with cross-industry partners, it's a great opportunity to exchange information and make a measurable impact on the future. Talkdesk also enables personalized voice recognition flows, making it easier for consumers to self-serve. They can do things like make and manage appointments on their own without needing to wait on hold for hours to talk to multiple agents. Apart from these benefits, working with a like-minded partner has benefits that reverberate deep into the business. MHS has learned a lot from the Talkdesk team about best practices they've seen in other areas and what we can bring into the healthcare space. On the flip side, MHS has helped inform Talkdesk about healthcare operations and what matters most to us. They've invested a lot in healthcare, and this partnership is a great opportunity to exchange information and make a measurable impact on the future.

On the right path to a more consistent experience.

In less than a year, Talkdesk has changed our outdated call center to a modern cloud experience that identifies actionable insights. We have consolidated 12 call centers into one Patient Access Center, and since February 2021, we've seen huge gains in key metrics: we've cut our initial abandonment rate by 3X; increased our service level by 30%; and seen improvements in other areas, including average speed to answer, average handle time, and IVR optimization (time to queue). Historically, we couldn't measure anything, and now we're measuring everything.

I don't attribute all of these improvements to new technology, but Talkdesk creates more consistency in how we deliver services. We will continue to see progress because we plan to leverage the [Talkdesk Healthcare Experience Cloud](#) and omnichannel

capabilities within Talkdesk. We're still primarily a voice solution in the call center, but by the end of 2022, we expect to launch a voice virtual agent and the ability to text consumers if that's their preferred contact method.

Of course, we still have a long way to go—I'm not going to pretend that we've fixed everything. We have implemented Talkdesk in some call centers, but not all. We are working to onboard those remaining call centers with Talkdesk and bring them all under the single umbrella of our Patient Access Center. It's not an overnight process, but our results with Talkdesk are encouraging, and I have no doubt we're on the right path.

Opening the digital front door.

The call center is the first area of access for MHS, and it's a core component of the digital front door experience. With Talkdesk by our side, we have the data and reporting capabilities we need to learn and improve in real time. We have a birds-eye view of our CX efforts across teams, which we were missing in our prior system. Agents don't have to put patients on hold while they hunt for information in different places. Instead, they can get right to problem-solving when they connect with a caller. Agents feel more satisfied, and because they're more efficient, they can help more callers.

These days, we're saving our consumers time rather than wasting it.



"Being able to resolve issues quickly, efficiently, and correctly the first time is crucial to consumer satisfaction, and with the unified Talkdesk system, we're able to do it consistently."

— **JEFF STURMAN**, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER AT MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

My passion is taking care of people and healthcare, and by adopting modern cloud technology, we're seeing that come together to help more patients get through that digital front door than we ever could before.



About Talkdesk

Talkdesk® is a global AI-powered cloud contact center leader for enterprises of all sizes. Talkdesk CX Cloud and Industry Experience Clouds help enterprises deliver modern customer service their way. Our trusted, flexible, and innovative contact center platform leverages AI and automation to drive exceptional outcomes for their customers and improve the bottom line.

[Learn more](#) and take a [self-guided demo](#) at www.talkdesk.com.

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Customer stories:
Memorial Healthcare System

