



PowerScribe®

For Transcriptionists at **Moore Regional Hospital**, Dictaphone PowerScribe® Boosts Productivity and Efficiency, Significantly Reducing Report Turnaround Time

Like many hospitals in North America, Moore Regional Hospital was feeling the pinch of a major problem – there were not enough professional medical transcriptionists to handle the hospital's growing volume of imaging reports. For years, radiologists at Moore Regional, FirstHealth's flagship institution in Pinehurst, NC, dictated their observations into an antiquated digital dictation machine. The dictated recordings were then distributed to a team of internal radiology transcriptionists and typed into reports, before being returned to the radiologist for review and signature.

By the mid-1990's, the national shortage of available medical transcriptionists had hit Moore Regional hard. Their transcription department was down to three full time equivalents from their normal staff size of twice that amount. To make matters worse, increasing levels of radiology reporting was exacerbating the pain, and report turnaround times had risen to more than 24 hours from initial dictation to final approval by the physician. Longer turnaround times caused frustration among referring physicians anxious to receive results for their patients.

Combining Speech Recognition with Traditional Transcription

Many hospitals in Moore's position abandoned their traditional systems and completely outsourced their transcription to one of the many service firms in the industry or implemented next generation voice recognition software. But Moore refused to be limited to this path. "Although our radiologists were very comfortable with our staff of transcriptionists, they recognized that the current system was failing. To abandon our internal team in favor of an expensive, slow outsourcing firm wasn't an option," said Drusi Smith, Senior Clinical Analyst for Information Systems. "Instead, the radiologists wanted a solution that combined the speed of speech recognition technology with the comfort and familiarity of our transcription department."

Highlights

- Eight radiologists utilize PowerScribe to dictate on 110,000 exams per year
- Radiologists are able to maintain the familiar dictation styles and workflow they are so accustomed to
- A rapidly growing dictation volume is handled by only two transcriptionists
- Average report turnaround times have decreased from 24 hours to about 4 hours per report



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Only Dictaphone Health Solutions offered a solution that could meet these qualifications. Unlike competing products, Dictaphone's PowerScribe® from Nuance® offers a completely integrated dictation and transcription solution that avoids significant up-front training time for physicians. Radiologists can continue to dictate reports with natural, free form speech, using a hand-held microphone. They can dictate several reports at a time before reviewing them, or dictate and review each report individually. Most importantly, physicians wishing to avoid editing their own reports can simply route them to a transcriptionist for review and correction, ensuring a seamless migration to the new system without disruption in the traditional workflow they have grown so accustomed to.

Among Moore's transcriptionists, the decision to implement PowerScribe initially caused some concern. The transcriptionists viewed the coming of speech recognition software with some trepidation. “It took a leap of faith for the group to believe that PowerScribe would actually complement our existing workflow and improve productivity,” said Rhonda McNeil, Transcription Coordinator in Moore's Imaging Department.

PowerScribe Delivers Desired Performance Improvements

In March 1999, Moore's Radiology Department went live with the system, installing PowerScribe on twelve dictation workstations and three transcription stations. Careful attention was paid to training both the radiologists and the transcriptionists on the new system to ensure that the

productivity gains and reduction in report turnaround time would be attained in relatively short order.

Today, eight radiologists utilize the system to dictate on 110,000 exams per year. For the radiologists, moving to the new system was essentially ‘seamless.’ There were no major disruptions in established reporting practices, and no significant changes in the business of documenting patient care. The radiologists continue to dictate their observations in the same manner as before. PowerScribe processes their recorded speech on a dedicated server and then efficiently routes draft documents to the transcription department for final review and editing. To their amazement, radiologists get their finalized reports with the same familiar touch from the transcription department – only 80% faster.

At Moore, PowerScribe interfaces to their McKessonHBOC RIS, enabling radiologists to upload completed reports to a central data repository. Through a link to the hospital's HIS, they are instantly available to all relevant parties in the healthcare delivery process. “The interface was key to the implementation,” says Smith. “The ability to integrate with our RIS was an attractive feature of PowerScribe. Dictaphone's service and support organization ensured that, through this interface, we would benefit from new technology without sacrificing prior IT investments.”

As for the transcriptionists that feared the arrival of PowerScribe... So far, their comments have been extremely positive. Growing accustomed to editing draft documents

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came with ease. Within two weeks, the transcription team was comfortable with the new system. Since installation, report turnaround times have dropped from an average of more than 24 hours to about 4 hours per report. The transcription department uses the time saved by PowerScribe to perform tasks that they could not otherwise have tackled in their earlier high-pressure environment. Transcriptionists now run batches of radiology reports and

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get information back to referring physicians faster than before. More significantly, the Radiology Department no longer lives in fear of a sudden change in transcription resources. “Under the old system, we absolutely needed a minimum of three FTEs in order to keep up with the workload,” says McNeil. “Since implementing PowerScribe, we’ve worked with only two comfortably. Our staff values the product’s built-in reference dictionary and swear by the productivity increases they’ve experienced.”

Challenge: Reduce report turnaround time by making in-house radiology transcriptionists more productive and efficient.

Strategy: Implement a solution that combines the speed and efficiency of speech recognition technology with the comfort and familiarity of traditional transcription services.

Results: Without having to significantly change the way they document patient care, radiologists at Moore Regional Hospital now receive their reports back from the transcription department in one-fifth of the time it used to take.

Conclusion

For Moore Regional Hospital, PowerScribe provided a better alternative to the stark defaults of expensive transcription services or no transcription at all. Because PowerScribe is the only network-based speech recognition system that was designed from the outset to fully support traditional transcription, it can easily integrate into an existing dictation and transcription process. To Moore Regional, the benefits of this architecture were immediate – minimal disruption for the radiologists, faster report turnaround times and happier, more productive transcriptionists. The option of physician self-edit is always open if Moore Regional chooses to develop this method of document creation in the future.

For product information please visit Dictaphone Healthcare Solutions at www.nuance.com/dictaphone or call 888-350-4836.

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