

Top 10 Reasons to Select an Integrated RIS/PACS/Speech Solution from a Single Vendor

Imaging Center Solutions

There are many benefits an imaging center practice can experience by implementing an integrated RIS/PACS/Speech single desktop solution provided by a single vendor. The increased efficiencies, timesavings, cost savings and improved productivity can be significant.

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1. Single Vendor Convenience, Accountability and Value

- The benefits of a single vendor solution include those gained from leveraging economies of scale. These include a more streamlined selection process, faster overall implementation and service cost savings.
- The system selection and contract negotiation process can proceed much faster when you purchase all your key systems from a single vendor. This will also save your staff's time as well as potential legal contract review fees.
- A decision to select a single source for your entire RIS, PACS, Speech, document management, mammography tracking, billing and practice analysis workflow needs will provide you with a higher level of convenience, accountability and value. And because your vendor is responsible for developing all of these functions and the supporting integration, you can be assured your solution components are cohesive with each other.
- The project management, system staging, configuration, installation and user training that is typically spread out over several months and includes multiple calls with multiple vendors, is now handled through a single vendor who is accountable for the successful implementation and support of all your integrated workflow solutions.

2. Elimination of Interface Complexity and Cost

- With native integration standards such as DICOM and HL7 built into the system, you can avoid the need for a separate, external “broker” and can also save thousands of dollars in interface fees typically charged by individual vendors to connect their systems to each other.
- To an administrator, it means not worrying about an interface failure for a connection between your RIS, PACS and Speech, or being forced to initiate a new deployment and testing process due to a system upgrade.
- Interfaces just like images move through your network and the less interface traffic you have, the more efficient your network will be. Data between the RIS, PACS, and Speech solutions is exchanged real time, therefore eliminating the need for interfaces between these systems, however, you still may have to interface to other pre-existing systems.
- Simplify the interface deployment process. Typically, this process can often take several days to several months and includes: managing multiple vendor communications, developing interface specification documents, interface testing and coordinating vendor work schedules. By implementing an integrated RIS/PACS/Speech single vendor solution, this process can be streamlined and simplified, enabling your staff to focus on other responsibilities, and reduces the possibility of being involved in potential vendor conflicts.

DICOM® is the registered trademark of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

3. Single Desktop Efficiencies

- Improves radiologist efficiency by providing a single desktop to quickly access RIS, PACS and Speech workflow. A single log on, user name and password and integrated worklist can now be utilized.
- The administrator, scheduler, mammography tech and biller no longer have to utilize up to five separate systems and worklists for functionality such as scheduling, pre-certification, registration, mammography tracking, document management, coding/billing, film tracking and practice analysis because these are embedded within the RIS application and supported by the same vendor.
- The time savings and ease of use in working in a single desktop solution and getting to know a unified user interface results in a shorter learning curve.

4. RIS/PACS Interoperability

- Improves productivity by allowing the radiologist to automatically access an integrated worklist to view current exam information or prior clinical reports and the associated current or prior images through the native, bi-directional integration built into the RIS/PACS.
- Provides the radiologist and technologist with greater flexibility by offering interface options based on preferred work style. Separate systems may force the user into a PACS or RIS driven worklist environment.
- Image distribution is more efficient because it utilizes processes that exist in both RIS and PACS solutions. For instance, because the RIS knows the appointment schedule in advance, it can do predictive routing of prior studies the night before the scheduled exam—when the network is less active. It can also retrieve them from the archive when the patient's arrival has been registered at the front desk making images available for comparison when the radiologist is ready to report. For real-time distribution of images or prior studies the PACS can utilize image streaming or DICOM routing capabilities.

5. Data Accuracy Improvements

- Decreases the chance of errors and saves time by eliminating the need for redundant data entry. All data is entered or updated once and flows through real time across RIS/PACS/Speech systems, thus saving time from having to enter or update patient data (such as demographics) on multiple systems.
- Through automatic reconciliation of orders and studies, the chance of mismatching a patient to a study is minimized and manual reconciliation process by the technologist is reduced.

6. Increased Productivity, Profitability and Referring Practice Satisfaction

- Reduces or eliminates repetitive, manual, paper, and film-based tasks by streamlining and integrating all RIS/PACS/Speech workflow to ensure nothing falls through the cracks, resulting in increased throughput and productivity.
- Experience faster insurance payment cycles by quickly generating and electronically submitting accurate claims as a result of patient data that automatically flows through RIS into integrated coding and billing workflow.
- Improves report turnaround time, and thus enhances referring physician satisfaction and your competitive advantage.
- Reduces costs related to multiple vendor interface services and brokers, and by optimizing network bandwidth and image distribution processes.

7. Efficient Implementation

- Realizes economies of scale related to implementation, training, service and travel fees.
- Reduces installation and training time by several weeks if not months. For example, one workflow analysis is conducted for your operation that covers multiple solutions.
- Increases efficiencies through a single vendor project manager. RIS/PACS/Speech implementation stages can be overlapped because the same vendor is in charge of scheduling all the necessary actions and people involved in the process.
- Reduces travel and expense costs because fewer vendors are involved.

8. Faster Support Resolution

- Experience more convenience with a single phone number and source for support.
- Speeds issue resolution and troubleshooting because a single provider understands all of your systems.

9. Reduction in System Administration

- Your systems work consistently with each other and hardware requirements for each solution are specified at the same time.
- Reduces or eliminates the need for multiple, separate workstations and supporting hardware to use and maintain.
- Facilitates communications and reduces the chance of multiple vendor finger pointing.
- User profile and security access changes only need to be set up or updated once.

10. Experience a Better Relationship with Your Vendor

- Your relationship will naturally grow because your vendor is engrained in your core workflow and business processes, and their goal will be to help you achieve your business growth goals.

About Agfa

Agfa provides integrated RIS, PACS, Speech Recognition, CR, connectivity tools, printers, film media and consumables and the implementation and support services for these radiology workflow solutions to increase the productivity, profitability and delivery of patient care of imaging centers, clinics and hospitals world wide. Agfa was one of the pioneers in synchronized RIS/PACS integration, and at RSNA 2004, launched a North American RIS version specifically designed for the outpatient imaging center market including single-desktop integration to IMPAX PACS and TalkStation Speech Recognition solutions.

The Agfa-Gevaert Group is one of the world's leading imaging companies. Agfa develops, manufactures and markets analogue and digital systems, intended mainly for the healthcare and graphics industries. Agfa's headquarters are in Mortsel, Belgium. The company is active in 40 countries and has 120 agents throughout the world. Together they achieved sales of 3,762 million Euros in 2004. Information about Agfa's healthcare solutions can be found at: www.agfa.com/healthcare.

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