

**Name of Organization**

Providence Hospitals

**Healthcare Organization Type**

Hospital

**Client Since**

2001

**Products**

Feedback

**Key Challenges**

- Low patient satisfaction scores
- Front-line Complaint Management Systems not integrated with Feedback Management Software
- Patient advocates lacked accurate data

**Key Benefits**

- Patient satisfaction scores now in the 90+ percentile
- Proactive feedback management
- Comprehensive reports help quickly determine problem areas

**Client Website**

[www.providencehospitals.com](http://www.providencehospitals.com)



PROVIDENCE HOSPITALS

**CLIENT CASE STUDY**

## Providence Hospitals

How Providence Hospitals tripled its patient satisfaction scores – in just 4 months

**The Challenge**

In spite of the patient advocates' efforts, Providence's patient satisfaction scores remained low. Providence Hospitals hired Dusty Deringer in November 2007 as the Director of Service Excellence and charged him with improving the hospitals' scores. Dusty had successfully implemented Feedback Management Software (FMS) at his previous job and was eager to bring it to Providence. To his surprise, he found that Providence Hospitals already had FMS, Feedback from RL Solutions. However, it was an outdated version and it was not integrated with the hospitals' other Complaint Management Systems (CMS). In February 2008, Providence Hospitals upgraded to a current version of Feedback and set out to integrate this updated software with its front-line Complaint Management Systems, including Press Ganey surveys, comment cards, focus group feedback and other feedback mechanisms.

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### **Organizational Snapshot**

Providence Hospitals is a two-hospital system with 250+ beds, owned by Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. Based in Columbia, South Carolina, Providence is the state's heart leader and it has a smaller community hospital in northeast Columbia. Providence established a Service Excellence Department in 2005, made up of 4 patient advocates who spent most of their time talking to patients in the ER.

### Improving Patient Satisfaction Scores

In November 2007, before upgrading to the current version of Feedback, Providence Hospitals' Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores were in the 26th percentile. By February 2008, Providence was up-and-running with Feedback. By July 2008 – only 4 months after upgrading the hospitals' FMS – Providence's scores were in the 90+ percentile, where they remain today.

How did Providence improve its hospitals' scores so quickly? By listening to its patients and customers.

### Integrating Patient Feedback with Feedback

Providence has several 'listening posts' it uses to capture patient feedback, including:

- Press Ganey surveys (see below)
- Comment cards
- Focus groups
- Website
- Patient/Family Advisory Council
- Risk Management
- Complaint/Grievance procedures
- Feedback from executives & managers who sit on external boards/committees
- "We Miss You" surveys (sent to patients who haven't been to Providence for 36 months)

With the introduction of Feedback, patient advocates now have a centralized system where they can enter data from all of these listening posts. Feedback tracks every stage of the feedback management process, from the initial complaint to its resolution. Even traditional CMS, like Press Ganey surveys, are tracked in Feedback.

### Importing From Press Ganey

Providence imports all of its Press Ganey survey data into Feedback. The Hot Comments section of the Press Ganey survey data has proved the most useful to the patient advocates at Providence. The hospital customized a list of over 200 trigger words to flag negative feedback, including "angry", "mad" and "killed". If a patient writes a trigger word on a Press Ganey survey, it is sent to the patient advocate who manually documents it in Feedback. Then the advocate follows-up with the patient within 24 hours to investigate and resolve the issue; this speedy follow-up has helped dramatically improved Providence's patient satisfaction scores.

### Tracking Complaints & Compliments

Patient advocates follow-up on all complaints within 24 hours – but what about positive feedback? The

**"If you resolve a complaint within 24 hours, that patient is 93% likely to come back. If you do it within 5 days, it's 75%. Past 5 days, that likelihood drops to about 30%."**

**Dusty Deringer, Service Excellence Director**  
Providence Hospitals

Service Excellence Department emails "The Happy People Report" to everyone at Providence Hospitals every Friday morning, detailing the week's compliments. The team easily generates this report using the aggregated patient feedback stored in Feedback.

The team also distributes complaint reports weekly with information broken out by site, department and category (e.g., communication, billing). However, they don't just email this data to employees; it's also posted in the hospitals' cafeterias. This transparency has fostered healthy competition between departments at Providence and created baselines & benchmarks for complaint data. For example, in 2007 more than 60% of complaints were related to quality of care. Feedback's accurate, timely reports have helped the Service Excellence department drill-down to quickly find and address problems. Presently, less than 30% of complaints at Providence are related to quality of care.

Says Dusty, "What we're doing is very simple: we're listening to our patients. Feedback is just the tool we use to collect the data."

### Feedback Leads to Better Decision Making

Along with decreasing the number of complaints related to quality of care, Providence has increased its staff and patient satisfaction scores. Integrating its front-line Complaint Management Systems with Feedback has given the Providence Hospitals a better understanding of what is really happening throughout the organization.

As Dusty explains it, "Feedback has helped us get better information to the 'decision makers'. It's hard to get money to fix a problem when you don't know what the problem is. Now that we have the data, we can solve our patients' problems – and make sure that they keep coming back."

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