

# HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CHECKLIST

## Offer a comprehensive solution to healthcare industry clients

### HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

Healthcare customers come in all shapes and sizes. They can include a wide variety of location types including corporate headquarters, data centers, pharmacies, hospitals and clinics. Ready access to large medical files (charts, X-rays, etc.) is a must to maximize productivity in an environment where professionals' time is expensive, and stakes are high. At the same time, data and network security keeps IT professionals up at night, both to maintain HIPAA compliance and to keep their employer out of the newspapers. In fact, complying with government requirements and mandates was cited as the number one challenge healthcare executives are facing this year, according to a recent study.

By asking the questions below, you can better understand the needs and challenges of your healthcare customers, and guide them through the process of designing a networking solution that best fits their needs.

#### HOW MANY LOCATIONS DO YOU HAVE? DO THEY INCLUDE A CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS AND/OR DATA CENTER?

Among the most basic information to know about any opportunity is an overview of the sites that make up the network. Basic data points like the number of sites and where they are physically located provide instant clues to the scope and potential complexity of any deal. In the case of a healthcare organization, the location types can vary considerably in size, complexity and requirements. The needs of a large hospital in a metro area, for instance, are vastly different from that of a rural MRI clinic or a data center that serves an entire network of healthcare facilities. Get this information up-front and dive into the profile of each to give your team the best chance to deliver a great solution.

#### ARE YOU USING A SINGLE VOICE PROVIDER ACROSS LOCATIONS?

Depending on how many locations the customer has and the types of locations they are, calling between locations can account for some heavy voice traffic. Specialists relaying test results, doctors calling in prescriptions, or even corporate staff corresponding with individual facilities all keep phone lines tied up. Without a well thought plan for voice services, the customer can quickly run up their bill. Identify where customers might be using a patchwork of voice providers. You might find a significant cost savings opportunity as well as a way to streamline administration of billing.

#### HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY MANAGING NETWORK SECURITY TO MAINTAIN HIPAA COMPLIANCE?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) sets the standard for the electronic exchange, privacy and security of health information for all business associates or covered entities that handle sensitive health information. Because HIPAA compliance applies to physical safeguards, technical safeguards, technical policies and network security, securely transmitting data – whether over the Internet or a private network – is one factor in ensuring compliance.

#### DO YOU QUALIFY FOR RURAL HEALTHCARE FUNDING?

The FCC makes funding available to rural healthcare facilities to keep local telephone rates and telecommunications services affordable. Your customer will know if they qualify, but like every government program, this one is riddled with rules and processes. A little knowledge of how the process works can go a long way to building credibility and avoiding stumbling blocks.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR WIFI NEEDS? HOW COULD WIFI HELP IMPROVE YOUR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE?

These days, any business that serves the public needs to understand the cost/benefit of providing complimentary WiFi. Hospitals tend to be very large concrete buildings where 4G connectivity can be a challenge. Enabling access to the Internet for patients and their families through free WiFi is a service people will likely expect. The situation at outpatient centers or clinics may be different. Either way, healthcare organizations need to evaluate customer WiFi and plan for how to keep it separate from more sensitive traffic.

#### HOW ARE YOU MANAGING POS TRANSACTIONS AND INVENTORY SYSTEMS?

Understanding how your customers use and access these systems will lead to valuable conversations about bandwidth utilization, performance requirements and network security. For example, an application accessed via public cloud vs. one that's housed locally or even at a data center could have different implications for the network design you ultimately recommend. Also understanding how they communicate with their drug suppliers, food suppliers and other vendors can help identify other areas that need coordinating.

#### ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING WITH A CLOUD COMPANY FOR YOUR HIPAA STORAGE COMPLIANCE?

We've seen more and more customers in healthcare working with cloud companies for their HIPAA storage compliance. Nitel's Cloud Connection service is a great option for those customers. Establishing a private connection between the customer and their cloud provider of choice increases the security of that connection and improves performance. Understand how they plan to leverage cloud applications, platforms and environments and how they're connecting to those services to enable your engineer to design a more comprehensive solution.