

MEDICAL CALL CENTER NEWS

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Industry Trend: Smartphones in Healthcare
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Rebuilding After Difficult Times

By Tim Ursiny, PhD

Like most people today, many individuals in the medical call center industry have had finances devastated, watched real estate values drop, encountered job challenges, and even experienced damaging effects from the weather in recent months. That said, the economy is showing many hopeful signs, and many owners and managers must now turn their attention to rebuilding companies, lives, and finances. While rebuilding may be difficult, it is doable if you follow two main steps in the process:

Let Go of the Past: Many businesspeople have difficulties rebuilding because they refuse to accept the losses. It is like someone who has lost a loved one that refuses to grieve at the funeral. What keeps you stuck is focusing on the past and blaming someone or something else for your difficulties. One very effective way to release the past is to write a venting letter. Let all your emotions out, reread the letter aloud with passion, and then tear it up as a symbolic act of letting go.

Develop a Captivating Plan: Letting go of the past is not enough – you must also create the future. When it is time to begin again, many people are hesitant due to two fears that can keep them stuck:

- Fear of failure – It is normal to be concerned about failing as you try to rebuild. However, fear of failure is self-limiting and must be overcome in order to create a successful and prosperous new life.
- Fear of success – While fear of failure is often obvious, fear of success can be subconscious and less apparent. Many people fear success because they perceive it will include greater responsibility, less life balance, and even the fear that once they get it they may lose it.

There are two main ways to deal with fear: to dip or to dive. Imagine getting into a cold swimming pool. Some people are divers; they get on the diving board, jump up and down a few times, and then dive into the water. They experience a rush of pain, but then they get used to the water quickly. Others are dippers. They stick a toe in, then a foot, and then slowly ease into the water. Neither approach is right or wrong, because both swimmers get into the water. If you are a diver, acknowledge your fear and just “do it.” If, by contrast, you are a dipper, break down your rebuilding task into ten steps. One by one (starting with what you fear the least), tackle your rebuilding tasks until you build the confidence to take on the next task.

Rebuilding is difficult. It takes letting go of the things that you have known and taking the risk of

failing or succeeding. However, rebuilding builds our insights, confidence, and tenacity – and these are things that will aid us for the rest of our life.

Read other articles and learn more about [Tim Ursiny, PhD](#)



The Beginning Steps By Peter DeHaan

The Twelve Step program, developed by Alcoholics Anonymous to help people struggling with alcoholic addiction, has been extended to address a wide range of destructive, compulsive behaviors. Key applications include drugs, food, sex, gambling, and smoking. Many individuals struggling with health issues prevalent today could benefit from practicing the Twelve Steps. The Steps can also be aptly applied in dealing with spiritual issues, too.

Whatever the situation, be it a compulsion, a habit, a temptation, a struggle, a worry, or a distraction, the underlying premise of the Twelve Steps provides the right focus. Essentially, it is realizing that we can't deal with the issue on our own and that we need God's help to see long-term victory.

Whatever we want to change about ourselves, there is a limit to how much we can accomplish by our own will and strength. And even with the assistance of a higher power, issues and struggles in our lives are usually not removed instantaneously. It can be a slow process, one that takes time – day by day.

Maybe the main point is the journey. Perhaps we are meant to learn something and mature as we move down our path to freedom. If we realized instant success, we might miss whatever lesson is waiting for us.

Regardless if the resolution is immediate or a process, the first step is realizing that we need a power beyond ourselves. And that's a great beginning!

Webinar: Managing the Evolving Hospital Call Center

The modern hospital call center is undergoing a major transformation due to expanded call center tasks and the adoption of new, innovative technologies. In addition to traditional call handling, operators often must handle answering services, physicians consult requests, time-sensitive code calls and emergency notifications, and other duties while monitoring which communications devices are being used by an increasingly mobile staff.

Join *AnswerStat* magazine publisher Peter DeHaan and Amcom Software president Chris Heim to explore which critical items are top of mind for hospital call center managers today. They will investigate the biggest challenges currently facing the call center. Additional insight will be shared from Inova Health System IT manager of voice services Kathy Kuhar and call center manager Kim Williams about how hospitals are answering these challenges with new technology and better business practices.

Date: April 20, 2011; **Time:** 1:00 pm Eastern, 12:00 pm Central, 11:00 am Mountain, 10:00 am Pacific

[Register today](#) for this important Webinar.

Medical Call Center News Named a Constant Contact 2010 All-Star

Peter DeHaan Publishing Inc, publisher of *Medical Call Center News* and *AnswerStat* magazine, has received the 2010 All-Star Award from Constant Contact®, Inc., the trusted marketing advisor to more than 400,000 small organizations worldwide. Peter DeHaan Publishing Inc is one of Constant Contact's 2010 top performers and most prolific users of its email marketing product.

"We are ecstatic to have been recognized as an email marketing all-star," stated Peter DeHaan, president of Peter DeHaan Publishing and publisher of *AnswerStat* magazine. "We diligently strive to follow industry best practices and to ensure that our email messages are relevant, valuable, and appreciated. We also work hard to reduce our bounce rate and increase our open and click rates. Constant Contact has seen those efforts and rewarded us as a result."

"According to Constant Contact statistics, our bounce rate is about half that of other publications," noted DeHaan. "Plus, our open rate is 50 percent higher, and our click through rate is 32 percent better." Peter DeHaan Publishing, an information provider that also publishes *Connections Magazine* and *TAS Trader*, makes extensive use of email to connect with readers and disseminate information.

AMA Introduces Billing Code App

The American Medical Association (AMA) introduced an app that allows medical staff to quickly find CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) billing codes. The app is now available for free through the iTunes store. "The AMA's new CPT quick reference app helps physicians determine the appropriate E/M code for billing quickly, easily, and accurately," said AMA Board secretary Steven J. Stack, MD. "To find the next great medical app idea, we are going right to the source by inviting physicians, residents, and medical students to participate in the first-ever AMA App Challenge."

Developed by the AMA for physicians, the CPT evaluation and management quick reference app is an on-the-go reference guide that helps physicians determine the appropriate CPT code to use for billing. Compatible with Apple iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad, the app features both decision-tree logic and quick search options, allowing physicians to digitally track CPT codes and email them anywhere. Physicians can also save their most frequently used codes by location or type of service to allow for even more ease of use. "Quick access to accurate information physicians use daily was the goal behind creating the CPT app," said Dr. Stack.

Kung Fu Colitis: A Kick to the Gut Ends in the ER

A kick in the stomach at jujitsu class led to bloody diarrhea, a visit to the emergency department, and a diagnosis of colitis for an otherwise healthy young man, as reported online today in a case study published in *Annals of Emergency Medicine* ("Jujitsu Kick to the Abdomen: A Case of Blunt Abdominal Trauma Resulting in Hematochezia and Transient Ischemic Colitis").

"Blunt abdominal trauma is a common medical emergency, but it is rare to see a case resulting from martial arts," said lead study author Hans Rosenberg, MD, of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. "The patient actually finished the jujitsu class after he was kicked and went home. It wasn't until after he had spent an entire night at home in misery that he came to the emergency department for help."

The twenty-one-year-old patient began to have cramping and bloody diarrhea an hour after he was kicked, which continued until the next morning. After testing at the hospital revealed transient ischemic colitis, he was observed for twelve hours in the emergency department and sent home on a diet of clear fluids. The colitis resolved itself without further treatment.

"Given the popularity of martial arts, this case serves as a lesson to both the jujitsu practitioner and the emergency physician," said Dr. Rosenberg. "Ischemic colitis is a rare complication of blunt abdominal trauma, but... it's something emergency physicians should be alert to."

Patients Want Online Access to Doctors

By Nicole Lewis, [InformationWeek](#)

A study shows that nearly three-quarters of those polled want an online connection to their doctor's office. These findings come from Intuit Health's second-annual Health Care Check-Up Survey, which found that 73 percent of Americans surveyed would use a secure online communication solution to make it easier to get lab results, request appointments, pay medical bills, and communicate with their doctor's office. The survey also found that almost half of the respondents would consider switching doctors to a practice that offered the ability to communicate and complete important healthcare tasks online.

The survey, which was conducted in January by Decipher Research for Intuit Health, confirmed what other studies have shown, that Americans are increasingly turning to the Internet to help them manage various aspects of their healthcare. Among the findings:

- One-fifth (20 percent) of Americans feel they cannot easily reach their doctor's office to ask questions, make appointments, or obtain lab results.
 - Eighty-one percent would schedule their own appointment via a secure Web service and fill out medical/registration forms online prior to their appointment.
 - A secure online method to access medical histories and share information with their doctor would be used by 78 percent of respondents.
 - Among Gen Y respondents (born 1965 to 1983), 59 percent said they would switch doctors for one with better online access, compared to only 29 percent of Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964).
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Healthcare Reform Must Include Insurance Training

Changing medical student and resident education to include instruction in how healthcare systems function is critical, especially with the implementation of national healthcare reforms, University of Michigan physicians say. In an article published February 24, 2011, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the authors argue for a national curriculum in health policy for medical students and residents.

"Without education in health policy and the healthcare system, physicians are missing critical tools in their professional toolbox," says Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, associate professor at U-M in Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Internal Medicine, and Public Policy and a coauthor of the article. In previous research, Davis found that less than half of graduating medical students in the US say they received adequate training in understanding healthcare systems and the economics of practicing medicine. "As a resident, I routinely care for patients who cannot afford their medications or don't have access to regular medical care," says Mitesh S. Patel, MD, MBA, a 2009 U-M Medical School graduate and lead author of the article. "These issues have a major impact on the delivery and cost of healthcare. However, they are rarely discussed in educational lectures or during teaching rounds," says Patel.

“Physicians who don’t understand the healthcare system or health insurance policies do a real disservice to their patients,” says Monica Lypson, MD, MHPE, assistant dean of Graduate Medical Education at U-M and article coauthor.

Cheers to Your Heart (in Moderation)

In honor of Alcohol Awareness Month, Dr. Geraldo A Ramos, MD, cardiologist at Bradenton Cardiology Center, looks at the relationship between alcohol and your heart’s health.

When it comes to alcohol and heart health, the information can be a bit overwhelming. On one hand, you hear that alcohol can offer some heart-healthy benefits. On the other, drinking could cause damage to your heart. If you do decide to drink to improve heart health, do so in very small doses. The kind of alcohol you drink matters, too.

Here’s to Your Heart: “The possible heart benefits of alcohol primarily have to do with its effect on atherosclerosis,” says Dr. Ramos. “This condition occurs when cholesterol deposits build up in the arteries, potentially leading to a heart attack.” Moderate alcohol consumption may reduce the risk.

Red Wine has been shown to offer the same benefits as other forms of alcohol, but it does have one additional ingredient that may make it slightly more heart-healthy: resveratrol, an antioxidant (also available from fresh grapes and grape juice).

White wine fans also can get in on the heart-healing benefits. New research suggests that the pulp of the grapes used can be just as heart-healthy as the skin. As for beer and hard liquor, some studies suggest that the folate in beer may help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Moderation Is Key: According to the American Heart Association, moderate drinking for healthy men means no more than two glasses per day – and for healthy women, no more than one. One approved glass of alcohol consists of 12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor, or 1 ounce of 100-proof liquor.

Not for Everyone: For those who are not in good health or do not already occasionally consume alcohol, it is not recommended that you consider even moderate alcohol consumption for heart health. As always, check with your doctor first.