

## **A DocRoster Case Study at William Osler Health Centre**

### **Situation**

Incorporated in 1998, William Osler Health Centre (Osler) has three acute care sites - the Etobicoke Facility located in the northwest corner of Metropolitan Toronto, the Brampton Memorial Facility located in Brampton and the Georgetown Facility located Georgetown, Ontario.

William Osler Health Centre is the 6th largest hospital corporation in Ontario, serving a geographic area of over 2400 square kilometres. With a health care team of more than 700 physicians, 4,000 caring staff and 1,400 dedicated volunteers, they provide programs and services to over 900,000 area residents.

A couple of years ago, Dr. Naveed Mohammed, Site Chief of Emergency at the Etobicoke Facility, and a number of his colleagues decided that it was time to automate the process of changing shifts. It was a time consuming process to change shifts, and sometimes the chiefs of the departments would be stuck if there was no coverage. Unfortunately, every time that Dr. Naveed Mohammed got called, he had personal commitments to his family. Osler considered developing a system from scratch, but that would take more than a year. They then did some research and found 2 existing programs. They chose DocRoster because of a recommendation by one of their colleagues at North York General Hospital, and because it offered 1) a more practical and easy method of trading shifts, 2) it was secure and reliable; 3) it had a good audit trail.

### **Solution**

Rosterware Inc, the developer of DocRoster (<http://www.DocRoster.com>), was founded by physicians in 2001. DocRoster provides an internet-enabled system for staff scheduling and time management. DocRoster is available through an Application Service Provider (ASP) running its software system over the Internet. With an ASP, you rent the product rather than buy it. You only need a browser on your computer which is connected to the ASP's server where all the processing occurs and the data is stored.

### **Challenges and Resolutions**

Some of the doctors at Osler did not have an email account and were neophytes at the computer. Fortunately, it was easy to set these doctors up and train them.

Osler was one of the first customers to use DocRoster. They did run into a few minor bugs. However these were fixed promptly by Rosterware.

### **Costs and Benefits**

The software cost about \$6,000 a year for 86 doctors. Osler has not conducted a formal analysis of the benefits of using DocRoster but consider the advantages to be huge:

## A DocRoster Case Study at William Osler Health Centre

1. In the past, just making 1 shift change could take 1 hour. For example, if a doctor needed to make 5 shift changes because of a holiday, it consumed lots of time before the doctor could even book a flight. Now it takes a couple of minutes.
2. In the past, Dr. Naveed Mohammed needed to come in 3-4 times a year to ensure coverage. This is no longer required and his family is happy about it.
3. The chiefs of the department needed to act as policemen in settling disputes between doctors who argued about who was responsible for a particular shift. Now with the audit trail, it's in black and white and there's no argument.
4. Osler also uses DocRoster as a bulletin board to post announcements.
5. In the past, shift changing required the emergency administrators to get involved to resolve scheduling issues. With DocRoster, they have an up to the second schedule at their fingertips without chasing anyone.
6. Many doctors work in multiple emergency departments. With DocRoster, they can get a complete schedule for all the emergency departments as long as all of them are using DocRoster.
7. Osler is a multi site organization and it's a real advantage to have all 3 sites available on the system.

### Bottom Line

Dr. Naveed Mohammed said "DocRoster has been an invaluable tool in our department. It was easy to learn and our physicians just love it. It has certainly saved my administrative assistant and I countless hours in scheduling. Our physicians now have very little trouble in trading shifts or giving shifts to other physicians and most importantly we have reduced the number of missed shifts to zero."

And in the words of Dr. Keith Greenway, Chief of Emergency Services of all the locations at William Osler Health Centre, "We have been using DocRoster for over a year now. It is the easiest way yet to make sure everyone has access to the latest schedule changes anywhere at anytime. It is easy to use, and easy to administer."

*Michael Burns, MBA, CA, is President of 180 Systems (<http://www.180systems.com>), which provides independent consulting services including business process review, business case development and system selection. Michael can be reached at 416-485-2200 or by email at [mburns@180systems.com](mailto:mburns@180systems.com).*