

GREAT Connections

Progress in Motion

*Chris Demuth (Owner PT, DPT) treats a patient
at Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy.*





GREAT Connections is a publication of:
Great Plains Communications, Inc.
1600 Great Plains Centre
PO Box 500
Blair, NE 68008

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, electronic, photocopying, recording, mechanical or otherwise without the prior written permission of Great Plains Communications. All rights are reserved.

Editorial and circulation contact:
Laura Kocher
Lkocher@gpcom.com
402-456-6429

All brand names and product names used in this publication are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Extra copies of this issue are available to our business customers on a limited basis while supplies last. Contact 402-456-6429 to make a request.

Copyright© 2017 by Great Plains Communications and Cornerstone Publishing Group, Inc.

Postmaster send changes to:
Great Plains Communications
1600 Great Plains Centre
PO Box 500
Blair, NE 68008



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

GREAT Connections

Great Plains Communications takes pride in delivering service to healthcare providers. As a communications company, we recognize how vitally important our services are to activities including the secure transmission of electronic health records and the exchange of information between patients and their providers.

This issue of *GREAT Connections* takes a look at healthcare and its relationship to communications technology. We begin on page 3 by **Taking the Pulse of Healthcare Technology**, which Great Plains Communications helps support with our Internet services. On the back cover, you'll find a testimonial from **Methodist Health System**.

A Business Spotlight on Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy is featured on pages 4 and 5. Its locations in Fremont and Elkhorn offer comprehensive physical therapy services for a wide range of diagnoses, injuries and conditions. Great Plains Communications keeps these clinics connected with Internet phone and services.

Even businesses outside of healthcare need to "operate" on their budgets to remove unnecessary expenses; check out page 6 for **Cost-Cutting Strategies**. Then on page 7, we remind you that **Password Policy is Critical to Security**.

Great Plains Communications can help you achieve a healthier bottom line with our cost-efficient products and services. Give us a call to discuss your goals.



Sincerely,

Todd Foje
Chief Executive Officer

Taking the Pulse of Healthcare Technology

How new tools are improving patient health and provider efficiency



As in many industries, professionals in healthcare have found themselves increasingly dependent on technology. Many of the latest methods for maintaining optimal health are dependent upon a fast and reliable Internet connection. Here are just a few examples:

Electronic Health Records

As the healthcare industry shifted from paper to electronic health records, much of this data has been stored on-premise within healthcare facilities. Now another shift is taking place—storing these records offsite on cloud-based platforms, allowing professionals to easily and securely view them from any Internet-enabled device.

Tablets

Many healthcare providers have adopted tablet computers as their go-to tool for a wide variety of uses including recording and reviewing patient data, accessing drug databases, scheduling patient appointments and communicating with patients and other providers.

Remote Patient Monitoring

Patients can wear or use devices that monitor their physical condition and send data to their medical practitioners at primary care clinics, hospitals, nursing units and other healthcare facilities. Health data collected in this manner includes weight,

blood pressure, blood sugar, blood oxygen levels, heart rate and electrocardiograms. Professionals can use this information to ensure their patients' treatment plans are on track or adjust as needed. In addition, patients can use it to monitor themselves and become more proactive in their own care.

Telemedicine

Remote access to healthcare services is on the rise and can be used in a variety of ways. One is to share files, test results and other data via secure email platforms; in this case, the healthcare provider and patient can be interacting with the information at different times. The other is for the provider and patient to communicate in real time using audio and video conferencing. Telemedicine can help patients in isolated areas gain access to medical specialists in larger communities.

Great Plains Communications is dedicated to ensuring that healthcare providers—as well as our customers in other fields—have the technology they need to perform their important jobs within the community.

Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy

Their therapists help patients move better, and we did the same for their voice and data transmission



On the left, a patient uses the arm bike to warm up his shoulder while Amy Hoffman (PT, DPT) stretches a patient's shoulder and works on range of motion.

After completing Doctorate of Physical Therapy degrees at Creighton University, therapists Ross Tessendorf and Chris Demuth gained experience working in both hospital and private clinic settings. In 2006, they opened their own clinic, Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy, in Fremont. A second location in Elkhorn was added in 2016.

Comprehensive Services

Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy offers comprehensive physical therapy services for a wide range of diagnoses, injuries and conditions. Its physical therapists help patients recover from surgeries and injuries, help athletes increase their strength and performance, and help those plagued by chronic pain to restore pain-free motion and activity.

With the two clinic locations, Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy serves patients from Dodge, Saunders, Washington and Douglas counties as well as the cities of Fremont, Arlington, North Bend, Hooper, Blair, Scribner, Schuyler, Wahoo, Cedar Bluffs, Elkhorn and Omaha.

Switching to Great Plains Communications

In addition to having a Doctorate in Physical Therapy, owner Ross Tessendorf is also a Certified Athletic Trainer and a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. While he clearly is an expert on the movement of muscles and joints, Tessendorf leaves the mechanics of voice

and data transmission to Great Plains Communications. Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy has been a Great Plains Communications customer for a year and a half and currently receives Internet and phone services at both the Elkhorn and Fremont locations.

"We were previously working with another communications provider, and the service was initially okay. Over time, however, their service declined. When we experienced an outage, it was taking that provider two to three days to fix things; their technicians came from Lincoln and had to cover the entire state. Imagine not having phone or Internet services for that many days. We were basically closed," Tessendorf notes.

He continues, "Chris Demuth and I decided to switch to Great Plains Communications in 2015 for a few reasons. I live in the Blair community, and my wife and I knew a couple of people who work for the company — Kelli Swanson, Strategic Account Manager; and Chris Wulf, OSP Fiber Design Engineer. When we heard Great Plains

Communications was coming to Fremont, Kelli Swanson put a package of services together for us to review. It was an easy decision, since we were able to save money and get faster Internet speeds by going with Great Plains Communications."

Great Plains Communications installed Internet and phone services at Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy's Fremont location first, then added these services in two phases at the Elkhorn location. Swanson explains, "When the Elkhorn location opened, our company couldn't provide Internet service in that area yet. So we installed phone service only. In February 2017, Great Plains Communications was able to connect the Elkhorn location with our Internet service since our fiber network in the area was complete."

It was an easy decision, since we were able to save money and get faster Internet speeds by going with Great Plains Communications."

— ROSS TESSENDORF, OWNER, NEBRASKA ORTHOPAEDIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

Responsive Local Service and Support

By using Great Plains Communications for both services at both locations, Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy is benefiting from enhanced communications as well as the convenience of working with a single provider.

Tessendorf says, "We love being able to call someone locally and discuss options with our phone and Internet services. Tammy Hovendick at Great Plains Communications has helped with our rollover and forwarding issues with phones as well as the fax line. She's stayed late and communicated with our IT guy to make sure we were satisfied with how everything was working. I appreciate that kind of customer service."

What's ahead for Nebraska Orthopaedic Physical Therapy? Tessendorf replies, "Our goals for 2017 are to continue to provide excellent customer service to the Fremont community and grow our Elkhorn location. In Elkhorn, we want to be the place that provides high-quality care in the area. With Great Plains Communications assisting us with efficiently communicating with patients, doctors and local schools, I believe these goals can be achieved."



Ross Tessendorf (Owner PT, DPT, ATC, CSCS) helps ease neck pain for a patient.



Stand Up for Health and Productivity

"Sit down and get to work." You probably remember teachers saying that during your school years. But was it the best advice? Some research suggests that long periods of constant sitting inhibit circulation and flexibility, decrease attentiveness and slow the body's calorie-burning mechanisms. It's even been dubbed the Sitting Disease.

This information has led more companies to offer employees the option of working at a standing desk. The idea isn't new; history features many prominent standing desk users including Thomas Jefferson, Ernest Hemingway and Winston Churchill.

Even if you don't want to invest in standing desks at your company, there are other ways to incorporate more standing into the workday:

- **Stand up while talking on the phone.** Doing so helps many people stay alert and adds energy to their voices—particularly useful during sales calls.
- **Have stand-up meetings.** It's almost guaranteed that these meetings will take less time.
- **Take regular activity breaks.** It can be as simple as getting up every hour for a five-minute walk around the hallway.

Is it time for your company to stand up and take notice?



Cost-Cutting Strategies for Small Businesses

Reading this article could really pay off in the long run

No matter what type of small business you have, you should be able to find at least a few ideas here to help you cut costs. Every dollar counts, so it's important to save wherever and whenever you can.

Go Paperless

You can lower storage and printing costs as well as improve overall efficiency by running a paperless (or near paperless) office. Try to scan documents and keep electronic records as much as possible.

Go Green

The more energy efficient your space is, the lower utility costs you're going to have. For more information on greening your spaces, check out Energy Star, a program run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Lease Equipment Rather Than Buy It

A lease allows you to avoid the big upfront costs you'd face when purchasing equipment. You not only conserve your company's cash but can also save money in repairs, upgrades and maintenance since many lease agreements cover these expenses.

Ask for the Discount

The suppliers you work with may have quantity discounts. To find out, ask about discounts and what you need to do to earn them. You may be able to get anything from an interest-free loan in the form of vendor credit to a healthy discount for paying early.

Barter With Other Businesses

This is an old-school strategy, but it can definitely still be effective. If you need a good or service and have something of value to offer in return, this could be a money-saving route to take.

Stay on Top of Your Accounting

When money is tight, things like late fees on bills or a client who doesn't pay on time can be a significant problem. Make every effort to ensure your collections are on time and outstanding balances are minimized.

Don't Buy in Bulk

Small business owners often buy things like office supplies in bulk because the per-unit cost is lower. But you have to ask yourself, "Will we ever really use 1,000 pens?" Generally speaking, it's better to buy only what you need today and free up your cash flow for other things.

Another way to cut costs and improve efficiency is with a money-saving business bundle from Great Plains Communications. To learn more, visit www.gpc.com/business/bundles.

Password Policy is Critical to Security

Common employee lapses leave businesses vulnerable



Answer this question: Do any of the employees at your business write down or electronically record their computer passwords? This is the equivalent of leaving the key under the mat and creates significant security risks for businesses. Hackers are a clever bunch and will stop at nothing to get into your network for its resources and data.

Common methods used by hackers are brute force, dictionary attacks and social engineering. Brute force is the most time-consuming method and involves a program that tries every combination of letters, numbers and keyboard characters to guess your password. Dictionary attacks use custom dictionaries filled with words and names, as well as number and letter combinations such as “11111” and “abc123.” Social engineering is the most effective tactic. It refers to the practice of soliciting a password directly from a user. For example, a hacker posing as someone from your company’s Internet service provider could call in and get an unsuspecting employee’s password by “testing the service.” If the hacker sounds authoritative and legitimate enough, your whole network could be compromised.

A comprehensive password policy is your first line of defense against these attacks. To be most valuable, such a policy should include these elements:

Safe Storage

Plan for the unexpected, such as a sudden or unplanned transition within your network administration staff. Consider keeping a copy of all critical passwords in your company’s safe.

Education of Employees

Employees don’t always realize the importance of creating and safeguarding passwords. Instruct your users to never write down passwords and leave them in work areas. Remind them to be particularly careful when entering passwords while strangers are nearby.

Creation of Strong Passwords

Mandate that passwords require certain combinations of letters, numbers, non-alphanumeric characters and case sensitivity. Your policy could also dictate that passwords may not contain personal data (address or date of birth), dictionary terms, organizational terms and user-related words (name or username). Each character added to a password increases the protection; it should be at least eight characters in length but 14 or more characters is better.

Regular Changing of Passwords

Get all operating systems, client-server applications and other resources set to make users change their passwords on a periodic basis such as every 30 to 90 days.

Response to Invalid Login Attempts

Using operating system software, specify the number of times an account can attempt to authenticate before being locked out.

Enforcement Through Software

It’s not enough to simply create a policy and expect users to stick to it consistently. Password requirements need to be enforced by the software that employees utilize throughout a network.

A photograph of a large, modern hospital building with multiple wings and many windows. The word "METHODIST" is visible on the top of one of the wings. There are some trees in front of the building and a clear blue sky.

Thanks to our partnership with Great Plains Communications, Methodist improved the speed, reliability and stability of our data connection. Physicians, nurses and diagnostic specialists are able to provide better care to more patients on a daily basis.”

— KENT SONA, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Methodist Health System has been caring for the Omaha area for 125 years with expertise, innovation and compassion. Its hospitals and clinics bring the full resources of the regional network to patients when—and where—they need it. Great Plains Communications provides an Ethernet over fiber connection from Methodist Women’s Hospital to the Methodist Fremont Health Cardiovascular Clinic, which is just one example of using technology to advance healthcare and create a healthier tomorrow.

Call 402-456-6467 today

to discuss communications solutions for your business.

