

Barnes Healthcare Services Communicates More Efficiently and Effectively with Homecare Customers after Deploying Biscom's Business Continuity Hybrid Fax Platform

“From a feature and functionality standpoint, Biscom is the best we've come across. We are now able to communicate with our customers without problems, and have re-earned their trust.”



Company: Barnes Healthcare Services

Industry: Medical Equipment

Headquarters: Valdosta, GA

Website: www.barneshc.com

Challenges:

- » Unreliable Web-based fax service
- » Delayed fax delivery
- » Lost customer confidence

Solution:

- » Biscom Hybrid Fax Platform

Results:

- » Non-stop business continuity, with the same user interface and no additional hardware or software investment.
- » Ability to access and manage comments on inbound faxes in order to achieve HIPAA compliance.
- » Comprehensive ability to see and manage fax history through advanced tracking, routing, and reporting tools.

Barnes Healthcare Services (BHS) was founded in 1909 by Charles W. Barnes, RPh, in a corner drug store in Valdosta, Georgia. The business has been passed down through three generations to Charles W. Barnes, III, whose vision, dedication to patients, and desire to be the best provider has grown the business to 15 locations in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. Today, BHS is one of the largest privately-owned medical equipment companies in the country. With the buying power of such groups as Medgroup and VGM, all 15 locations are able to perform same-day transfer of inventory from store to store, to make sure their homecare patients are getting the best quality products and highest level of care.

The Challenge

In early 2011, Barnes Healthcare Services was experiencing a crisis of confidence with its Web-based fax service. The service was proving unreliable, causing BHS employees and homecare customers concern that sent or received faxes would not get where they needed to be quickly and without error. Because the home healthcare industry remains largely fax-based, this unreliability was a significant issue BHS needed to fix.

“The Web-based fax service we were using wasn't reliable,” said Ben McLendon, Director, Information Technology at BHS. “We experienced issues, including the system being down frequently, and delayed delivery of faxes to our customers. The end result was a trust issue where customers began to doubt that we could communicate with them efficiently. We had to find a way to restore customer confidence and demonstrate that the faxes critical to their work and business would be delivered rapidly and without mistakes.”

Since new business communications at BHS are often delivered through a faxing service, it was also imperative to find a fax solution that allowed BHS to effectively interact with referral sources, which can be a doctor's office, hospital or clinic – any place where a patient is currently being treated but will eventually depart to receive care within their home. BHS sends and receives medical equipment orders, invoices, and prescriptions from doctors, physical therapists, and hospitals. “We receive some electronic orders but the industry is still predominantly fax-based,” said McLendon. “And since more than half of the faxed pages we receive come from referral sources, we needed a solution that addressed this important aspect of our daily business.” “The requirement for signed documents means a fax must also be

sent for many prescriptions,” said McLendon. “If you have a patient that needs oxygen, that’s actually considered a drug and we have to have a signed prescription for that.”

The Solution

BHS conducted an exploratory program and evaluated several different fax technology systems. This research led them to Biscom and its Enterprise-level fax service hosted over the Internet Cloud.

Biscom’s hosted fax service provides email-to-fax and enterprise-level fax capabilities to all types of businesses, from small offices to Fortune 50 companies. It provides the functionality of a traditional fax server with the convenience and flexibility of a hosted service. Biscom’s hosted fax service offers healthcare organizations many valuable features, including:

- Fax Queue-based centralized administration and integration with Active Directory, enterprise applications, and email
- Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption between the enterprise and Biscom’s hosted fax service
- An architecture that enables organizations to:
 - Facilitate compliance with such data protection regulations as HIPAA, HITECH, SOX, PCI, SAS-70, GLB, and NIST
 - Send and receive faxes from Outlook, Exchange, SharePoint, Microsoft Office, and automated production applications
 - Store faxes and fax data within a company’s enterprise, not archived on cloud-based servers
 - Use Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to integrate with MFPs, Health IT systems, and customized, in-house applications

Going Beyond Hosted

McLendon notes that another valuable part of working with Biscom is not just its hosted fax service, but also its hybrid functionality. “We like that Biscom’s hosted fax service is a hybrid solution where BHS has a virtual server,” said McLendon. “That means our users connect to a local virtual machine and are not connecting over the Internet. All communication between BHS computers and users is within our network and then there is a single, identical interface whether document communications are processed on our in-house fax servers or via the cloud-based hosted fax servers over the Internet. This gives us extra peace of mind regarding security, which is vital in a HIPAA environment.”

Supplementing a premises-based fax server with a hosted fax service provides the best of both worlds, ensuring uninterrupted fax connectivity and business continuity. During normal operations, all fax activity can use the local fax server for transmission. Should the fax server go down, all fax traffic can automatically fail over to the hosted service—all with the same user interface.

The advantage of such an implementation: neither hardware failure, telecom failure, nor Internet failure alone can interrupt fax traffic. Combining both solutions also enables system administrators to focus maximum resources on building, managing, and supporting fax servers at the organization’s largest and busiest geographical locations or departments, while at the same time using the hosted fax service to support smaller remote sites that do not justify a dedicated fax server.

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*- Ben McLendon
Director of IT*

Results

Barnes Healthcare Services has realized the following benefits with Biscom's fax service:

- **Capability to add notes to faxes that helps with achieving HIPAA compliance:** "Our users' workflow requirements include a need to be able to access and manage comments on inbound faxes," says McLendon. "To help achieve HIPAA compliance, our staff must be able to compose comments on these fax documents. The comments feature is incredibly important to us."
- **Accurately recorded status of all fax documents through advanced tracking, routing and reporting tools:** "In many cases our employees fax clinical paperwork to physicians which require a signature," McLendon said. "Biscom gives BHS a comprehensive ability to see and manage our fax history. Other systems we tried weren't able to handle this as well as Biscom does."
- **Time savings** by using "Shared Phonebook" functionality to avoid having to design and manage separate fax address lists: McLendon notes, "Biscom's Shared Phonebook is better than that of other fax service systems. With many of the outbound faxes our employees are sending, the destination address doesn't change. Not having to maintain separate phonebooks is a tremendous time saver for BHS."
- **Non-stop business continuity**, with the same user interface and no additional hardware or software investment, should the on-premises fax server ever go down. The Hybrid fax platform from Biscom also provides additional scalable fax resources, whenever needed, to handle peaks in workflow.

For Ben McLendon and Barnes Healthcare Services, Biscom's Enterprise Hybrid Fax Platform delivers unparalleled results in the most dynamic of industries: "From a feature and functionality standpoint, Biscom is the best we've come across. We are now able to communicate with our customers without problems, and have re-earned their trust."

About Biscom

Biscom is a world leader in secure enterprise document delivery with solutions including the award-winning enterprise FAXCOM® Server and FAXCOM Anywhere cloud fax solutions, Biscom Secure File Transfer, and Verosync, an enterprise-ready file synchronization and sharing solution. Founded in 1986, Biscom is the industry's recognized innovation and customer service leader and has provided many of the world's largest companies with secure communications solutions. Learn more at www.biscom.com or call 1-800-477-2472.