



LIFEFLIGHT

AT A GLANCE

- Industry: Healthcare
- Focus of study: Bringing emergency, lifesaving medical treatment to seriously ill and injured patients around Australia and the world

FEATURED PRODUCT

- Poly Blackwire 5220t

OVERVIEW

LifeFlight is one of Australia's largest aeromedical charities providing rapid response medical care to thousands of people each year. As of the beginning of 2018, LifeFlight operates nine rescue helicopters and three Air Ambulance jets across nine locations, including an international base located in Singapore.

LifeFlight has flown more than 50,000 critical rescue missions over the past 37 years, a huge achievement for an organisation that started with one helicopter in 1981.

The primary focus of LifeFlight is to bring emergency, lifesaving medical treatment to seriously ill and injured patients around Australia and the world. The RACQ LifeFlight Rescue helicopters are positioned around Queensland, ready to provide rapid emergency medical response to Australians in need at no cost. LifeFlight also has a fleet of Air Ambulance jets that are used for longer transportation tasks across Australia and the rest of the world.

Some costs are supported through travel insurance, third party insurance and government funding. However, a large portion of funding comes from fundraising efforts that occur largely through in-house efforts, including the contact centre.

LifeFlight works alongside the emergency service departments and is tasked the same way through Retrieval Services Queensland (RSQ). LifeFlight is considered as its own airline and consequently has its own LifeFlight Coordination Centre (LCC) where all tasking, and negotiations go through.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGES

LifeFlight requires high quality assets and software to ensure that rapid-response times and deliverables are met and remain at a high standard. Communication is paramount in this organisation and system outages or unreliability would be detrimental to their operations.

LifeFlight currently uses CS520 headsets in their control room operations and also have begun rolling out Blackwire 5220 headsets in their call centers. LCC Operations Manager for LifeFlight, Matt O'Rourke, says "reliability is crucial in our life-critical communications control centre and we cannot afford to have any system wide problems. One of the advantages of the Blackwire 5220 is that it can be connected to USB, softphone, computer or mobile. In life or death situations, we need to be able to connect to any device without taking the time to think about which one."

“The hardware, along with the Plantronics Manager Pro solution is by far the best and most cost-effective, and the end users love it as well. The software eliminates a lot of work out of the course of a day. Our contact centre workers’ attitude has changed for the better. I use this deployment as a great example to every government or council, or any other company that asks for our opinion or recommendation.”

- Lucas Karchinsky

Lucas Karchinsky, Business Solutions and Contact Centre Manager says, that LifeFlight had been using different bits of technology that were already established in different parts of the organisation. “When we upgraded our Customer Relationship Management system to more modern technology, it was essential to have a high-quality reliable headsets to compliment this. We did some research and ended up working with Telrex who has many quality contact centre relationships. Telrex recommended both the CS520 and Blackwire 5520 Plantronics products.”

Karchinsky, whose responsibilities include looking at business opportunities utilising the company’s existing infrastructure, says “there are now 22 employees working in the contact centre and many additional volunteers. LifeFlight expects to increase seats by the end of 2018, and currently has more than 400 employees.”

THE SOLUTION

Plantronics Blackwire 5220 headsets were given to managers and the contact centre agents along with Plantronics Manager Pro, a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) subscription service. Karchinsky says, “I really liked the ease of use, and the fact that I could use Bluetooth. For example, if my phone rings, I can answer it and talk while I’m walking through the office.”

The software allows the remote upgrade of firmware saving IT time. The IT team were also able to identify issues such as noise exposure to agents. Karchinsky says, “having this software gives us so much scope, such as whether headsets are dying and other things. I can log in and have a quick look. And, just as fast as I can type, I can make the necessary changes. The reports are really clear and have good description – in under a minute I can see what’s happening. My Telrex representative no longer has to guess which headsets we have, which ones work best for our users, what’s most preferred, what’s been purchased, how long they are lasting, and so on. The Plantronics Manager Pro Asset Analysis suite reports show this in real time.”

TELREX WORKS WITH POLY

Mark Prieditis, Managing Director of Telrex says, “In 2000 we started selling Plantronics headsets. We sell \$4 million per year in headsets, and they are 95 percent Plantronics.

We believe in the products because they work and the failure rate is minimal. This is very important to us because it’s what our customers demand. In an emergency scenario, they are just not going to fail.

Right now, at LifeFlight, approximately 400 Poly headsets are deployed across the organization. The entire contact centre is using Poly and we’re growing the use of them in the control centres of the aircrafts and with the pilots.”

LifeFlight currently uses Plantronics Manager Pro Asset Analysis analytics suite. LifeFlight and Telrex say they will subscribe to the other three suites in the near future. Acoustic Analysis will be adopted next, along with some new Blackwire headsets LifeFlight is buying.