



*VISIONS spoke with Rob de Jong (European Service Director at Canon Medical Systems Europe) and Afshin Hamzei (Senior Service Manager at Canon Medical Systems Europe).*

## Service is in our DNA Aiming for the best service and highest customer satisfaction

Providing cutting edge medical imaging technology goes way beyond selling equipment; it's also about serving customers through thick and thin, in the most diverse and challenging scenarios. Canon Medical Service Management explained how they cope with healthcare budget cuts, cyber threats and obsolescence, and why predictive service may be the most interesting path to explore to pre-empt systems outage.

### **A unique vision of service**

"Maintaining medical equipment is no ball game. It requires special care and highly trained service professionals. We need strong skills to deliver the best possible service," Rob de Jong, European Service Director at Canon Medical Systems Europe, said.

Canon Medical has excelled in this capacity ever since it started its business over a hundred years ago. In Europe, over 700 service professionals now strive to provide the highest customer satisfaction for an installed base of over 55,000 units. Its level of expertise also allows the organization to support service professionals in the Middle East and Africa.

Canon Medical Systems Europe provides its services through a network of 49 companies covering 52 countries. It is a mix of Canon Medical Group companies as well as Canon Medical partners. The relationship with these partners goes way beyond dealership, Rob explained. "It's really a partnership. We work closely together to deliver the best possible customer service experience."

Canon Medical Systems Europe handles approximately 25,000 service parts each year in the 52 countries. Providing cross border service comes with a series of challenges. Export control and custom clearance can potentially slow down parts delivery.

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*Rob de Jong, European Service Director at Canon Medical Systems Europe.*



Although distances and regulations are pretty straightforward within the EU, shipping equipment parts to remote areas on time may prove challenging. Nonetheless, Canon Medical Systems Europe has a fill rate of over 98% in all parts activity, meaning it almost always delivers the parts onsite at expected date.

“We strive to reach 100%. We do everything in our power to keep customers happy,” Rob said.

### **Aging equipment, new tricks**

One of the main challenges in servicing medical imaging devices is that equipment is aging. According to the latest COCIR report on age profile, for example 21% of all CT and MRI scanners installed in Europe are older than ten years. More than 2,000 CT systems in clinical use are obsolete, which raises a number of issues.

“It’s challenging for customers and service organizations to keep equipment in good conditions. For example a ten year-old system potentially is more vulnerable to cyber attacks than a new one,” Rob said.

Because of significant financial pressure on healthcare budgets, hospitals are increasingly forced to work with scanners that are ten, sometimes 15

years old. CMSE monitors its installed base closely, to be able to best predict the aging effects in order to treat them appropriately.

### **Cyber Security impact**

The number of cyber attacks has increased tremendously over the past few years. According to HIPAA Journal, between 2009 and 2018, there have been 2,546 healthcare data breaches, involving more than 500 medical records. Those breaches have resulted in the theft or exposure of 189,945,874 healthcare records, which equates to nearly 60% of the United States’ population. Healthcare data breaches are now being reported at a rate of more than one per day in the US alone.

Among a host of patient-focused solutions, Canon Medical is using whitelist antivirus on its equipment. Whitelist antivirus explicitly marks a file signature as safe where it is part of necessary software structure and stops everything else. “This is way more secure than traditional anti virus. And that’s one of the reasons why back in 2017, when the WannaCry ransomware attack hit the world, we remained almost unharmed. Should our security measures not have been in place, we could have been much more hurt,” Afshin Hamzei, Senior Service Manager at Canon Medical Systems Europe, said.

Everybody is familiar with the concept of a cyber attack. Yet enduring behaviors may put hospital systems unnecessarily at risk; for instance, plugging a USB stick in a computer outside the hospital and then back on hospital equipment again.

It’s important to continuously work with software developers to improve cybersecurity by designing appropriate strategies. But it does take a mutual and global effort to raise awareness and better protect systems, Rob explained. “It’s a shared responsibility. We need hospital’s IT departments, manufacturers and users to collaborate in order to provide best healthcare to patients in the safest possible environment.”

Canon Medical’s dedicated Product Security incident Response Team (PSIRT) in Japan communicates with all relevant global organizations in this field. PSIRT observes, assesses and offers solutions if any threat appears on its radar.

In Europe, the initiative is relayed by Canon Medical’s Cyber Security Incident Response Team (CIRT), which reports potential risks in each country, before they reach international level, to PSIRT.

Having strong security technology is important as equipment pieces are increasingly connected within hospital

networks. “While we like to keep the system isolated for safe keeping, there are necessary connections that can’t be avoided. As soon as you open a connection, whether it’s PACS, printer, hospital HIS/RIS or remote services, you open a door and that door should be secure,” Afshin said.

Canon Medical’s multi-layered Patient data protection plays a critical role in that respect. This is why it is so important to update the equipment’s software with the latest security patches provided by Canon Medical as part of its service contracts.

### **Remote assistance, predictive service**

Remote technology offers new opportunities that push the boundaries of service. Canon Medical Systems Europe manages roughly 50,000 remote connections per year to monitor its equipment throughout Europe, using its remote service system Innervision, which issues automatically created alerts to prevent downtime. Alerts are generated and sent to the engineers in charge, to determine which course of action to take. “We see things happening even before the equipment user is aware,” Afshin said.

Preventing outage at a distance is extremely important, as it enables to resolve problems earlier and reduces

both cost and downtime. “By doing more remote troubleshooting we can bring the cost down and fix problems more quickly than by sending an engineer onsite. We don’t always need to be onsite to provide optimal service. This is true in every industry today. Of course, if there’s a part that needs to be fixed onsite, there’s always someone available,” Rob said.

There is a growing trend towards predictive service in healthcare, as the break and fix model is becoming obsolete, he continued. “Customers prefer to know in advance what is going to happen with their equipment. That can have a positive effect on both cost and downtime. They can plan what they will need to spend to keep their equipment up and running. This is the biggest change we will see in the near future.”

Customer satisfaction is a cornerstone of Service and Canon Medical has developed efficient tools to collect feedback. One of these tools is the customer satisfaction survey which enables clients to share their opinion on the service that was provided. It only takes a few minutes to fill in the survey, which is sent to the customer automatically a few days after repair. Information is instantly forwarded to the relevant department and immediate action is taken if necessary.

Another key condition to keep customers happy is to adapt to their particular needs. Canon Medical offers contracts that can be tailored to each customer. Pressure on the healthcare budgets is factored in. What never changes is quality of the service that is being provided. “We want to give access to the best possible service and never compromise quality. If our customers do not wish to completely outsource financial risk, we can partner with them,” Rob said.

What really pays off, at the end of the day, is the motivation to provide the best performance for both customers and patients. Canon Medical Service professionals are eager to accomplish that mission. “We can’t achieve our high level of customer satisfaction without the enthusiasm of our hard working colleagues from service throughout Europe. Customer focus and care is very high on our agenda. Equipment may need service sometimes, it’s a fact, but it shouldn’t make a difference to patient access to healthcare. It’s our job to let physicians focus on patients, by happily taking away the burden of maintaining the equipment.” //



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*Afshin Hamzei, Senior Service Manager at Canon Medical Systems Europe.*