

On-Site Acquisitions with the Right IT-Services Team
The Ensign Group
Mission Viejo, California

Since 1999, the more than 250 independent operating affiliates of The Ensign Group (ENSG) have provided communities with compassionate, post-acute care. Together, their nearly 28,000 employees handle just under 100,000 calls and incidents per year from their guests.

Offering a broad spectrum of skilled nursing, in-house therapy, and senior living, ENSG operates from several locations across fourteen states—and they aren't finished. In order to meet the demand for their services, ENSG required a larger number of facilities; however, this increased demand placed stress on existing staff and hiring additional full-time staff wasn't an option.

"Ensign needed a solution that would give them the capacity they needed to acquire new facilities without sacrificing their current staff or brining on new hires," said Julianne Gunn, Hexagon IT Services account manager. "Hexagon's On-Site Acquisition Team allowed them to operationalization multiple long-term care facilities in a short amount of time."

Selecting an acquisitions solution

Working with an external company was not new to Ensign—in fact, they had been partnering with Hexagon on IT Solutions for the past six years. However, the company traditionally operated from an internal acquisition process. In the past, ENSG would either leverage existing staff to complete acquisitions, or utilize technicians from a staffing agency who would work under their auspices.

This was not an ideal situation for two reasons: first, if they leveraged their own staff, they would be pulling employees away from their existing responsibilities; second, by using a recruitment agency, they would need to train local techs who were unfamiliar with ENSG's technical environment. Due to these staffing difficulties, there were times when ENSG was unable to provide the level of on-site support needed in the standard timeframe to complete an acquisition.

In selecting a new solution, Ensign had a list of important technical needs:

- The "go-ahead" decision needed to be implemented within a short timeframe.
- The facility's daily operations had to have little-to-no impact through the acquisitions' duration.
- A thorough understanding of CAPLICO culture and facility clustering that Ensign prides itself on.
- Crucially, the staff within each facility would also need to feel positively about becoming a part of the Ensign culture and adapt to the changes that come with acquisitions and divestitures.

"We needed a solution and partner that understood our business model as well as our company culture," said Marcus Gilliam, Ensign's Director of IT Operations. "Hexagon developed its IT Services On-Site Acquisition Team to fit our needs, and we trusted them to complete our on-site acquisitions."

Implementing Hexagon IT Services On-Site Acquisition team

Ensign chose the Hexagon IT Services solution in July 2019, and the first implementation occurred in August 2019. At that time, ENSG provided the IT Services team with their ACQ Playbook: this document provided all the technical details required for completing an ENSG on-site acquisition. Subsequently,

Hexagon has developed its own internal playbook for acquisitions, detailing: how to train additional staff, how to adjust to customer needs, and how to modify best practices for customers in the future.

Since its first implementation, the On-Site Acquisition Team has completed two additional trips—one in November 2019 and another in December 2019. A key milestone in this period was the increase of Hexagon team members from one to five, based on ENSG's feedback from the initial acquisition and need for additional on-site support. Furthermore, the Hexagon team was able to meet the key deliverables ENSG required (e.g., equipment inventory and staging; verification of wi-fi and wired networks; configured and operational timeclocks; desktops installed and operational, etc.), allowing ENSG to complete their project plan milestones on time.

One additional crucial requirement that the Hexagon Team has been able to deliver on is ensuring that the facility being acquired by ENSG remains operational during the process so that staff are able to continue caring for their patients. This means that the On-Site team must keep facility operations running, including: the network, phone system, hardware, and business and clinical applications.

"The Hexagon On-Site team has done everything we've asked to complete each new acquisition," said Gilliam. "Their team has shouldered the demand that would have otherwise fallen on our staff, and by doing so, they have reflected Ensign's culture and allowed our internal team to remain focused."

Moving forward

Ensign anticipates that, in the future, there will be at least one large scale acquisition that will require a large number of Hexagon staff to assist on-site, increasing the team's numbers once again. The On-Site team believes that, with Ensign's as well as their internal playbook, they will be able to leverage their existing resources to meet any new demand.

"Our belief is that, by continuing to utilize the Hexagon On-Site Acquisition Team—a team that will already have close experience with Ensign's project and the work required to complete the job—Ensign is going to continue to see an increase in efficiency," said Gunn.

But this belief doesn't just extend to Ensign. Based on the way the Hexagon Team built its internal process, it should be able to scale to any acquisitions process while accounting for any other company's internal playbook. With these strategies working in tandem, the On-Site team should be able to continue developing clear targets and goals that will be able to be met during on-site support.