



# Communication is Key: Getting Everyone in the Loop

## By ExecutiveBrief

Is inefficient communication plaguing your organisation? Learn how to get everyone on the same page with SharePoint.

Are you finding that the communication among your staff, across different departments, and with your vendors is often inefficient and even quite redundant? How many times have you answered the same question either by e-mail or with a phone call? Do you find that inaccurate information is being passed on to customers because sales or services people are referring to outdated e-mails or an implementation schedule that has changed? Does each one of your teams have its own file system and database and use many interfaces to organise its information?



Many of today's companies are faced with these critical business information problems and are in search of the most effective, proven programs in the marketplace that can be used to solve their growing communication issues. After a thorough consideration of available options for addressing business intelligence, one of SoftServe's clients made the decision to select the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (recently upgraded to MOSS 2007) in their efforts to establish more efficient and accurate communication with vendors and customers.

## Addressing the Need

Nearly six years ago, Misys Healthcare's (now part of new Allscripts) Homecare business unit, a provider of healthcare information systems serving 600 providers of home healthcare, hospice, and private-duty services, installed SharePoint as a platform for improving communication between Allscripts and SoftServe, and between different departments within Allscripts' Homecare Product Development. Because Allscripts Health System Group designs, installs, and supports software for the automatic billing, scheduling, and clinical functions of its healthcare clients in the U.S., it is imperative that their clients-agency directors, finance directors, management information officers, and private duty organisations receive accurate, up-to-date information for their business needs.

"It's important to share information not only across the world, but also with our vendor SoftServe, as well as with the people across the hall," says David Staudenmaier, product development manager, Allscripts Health Systems Group. "It's inefficient to have to repeat information or constantly tell the people you work with where the information is stored," he adds. "It's also important for all of the new employees who are working here to know that vital information is always in SharePoint." SharePoint's hierarchical structure defines the levels of user access across the company and the rules for how to access information and establishes a project management system.

For example, Allscripts Homecare has two major release charters per year and service packs to update releases or accommodate defects. When the division began publishing its release charters in an easy-to-read and easy-to-access manner in SharePoint, it quickly began realising reductions in miscommunications that impacted productivity. Every piece of code is assigned an issue number for a large or small enhancement or a defect needing repair. A release charter summarises the information, which is communicated to all of the people in the organisation who need it, as well as to SoftServe in order to ensure that both companies are working on the same project at the same time. Furthermore, the release charter is important because the data is communicated to Allscripts Homecare customers through the marketing, sales, or services departments, e.g., what software is being enhanced or repaired.

"Marketing needs to know what new software is coming, support needs to know what is being repaired, and the customer needs to know that their issues are being fixed in a timely manner. My office, research and development, must keep track of everything," Staudenmaier says.

In addition, SharePoint can provide any employee who needs it with release charter changes if an item is added to a specific release. SharePoint quickly provides alerts to determine if an employee needs to look at the release charter again. SharePoint's structure also offers major site areas such as research and development, support, and services. Within each grouping are sub-areas that can be organised as needed, allowing employees to drill down for details. Although the research and development site has a sub-area on release charters, there are other areas about design and documentation as well.

## Realising the Benefits

SharePoint has provided Allscripts Homecare with a single collaboration solution for managing day-to-day operations around product releases, customer beta programmes, vendor partnerships, new feature designs, internal and external training, cross-department operationalisation of new products, regulatory compliance, strategic product roadmaps, prioritisation of enhancement requests and defect repair items, and much more. SharePoint also has a section for frequently asked questions. Here employees can find information on a product, feature, or integration point. Employees always have the opportunity to find the information in the question-and-answer section of SharePoint.

Another important element in SharePoint is process publishing allowing Allscripts Homecare to publish its processes on how it runs its business. For example, any employee can visit this section and get information on questions about proper processes for handling a defect or steps that should be taken when dealing with an unhappy customer. The answers are right there, and all that the employee must do is follow the designated steps.

Allscripts Homecare soon realised additional benefits for communication, organisation, and productivity by publishing information from all areas within the company and integrating real-time automated updates from SoftServe. This has resulted in SoftServe updating some of Allscripts Homecare's secure portals because the company has the most current information about when products will be introduced or when defects will be corrected. SoftServe therefore updates dates and product status, freeing Allscripts Homecare from this responsibility.

Prior to implementing SharePoint, business information was exchanged in a less efficient, time-consuming manner, usually involving e-mails, phone calls, or meetings. Using SharePoint to avoid the referencing of outdated or inconsistent data from dated e-mails means that employees no longer have to worry about the integrity of their business intelligence and can feel confident in giving their customers accurate information. "Because we get so much e-mail, it's easy to misplace the information or delete it accidentally, making it difficult to keep track of what information you're seeing. Having a single place to organise this much information was vital," Staudenmaier points out.

According to Staudenmaier, one of the best features about SharePoint is that it requires virtually no training, even for the "technically challenged" employee. Overall, Staudenmaier believes that the benefits that SharePoint has brought to Allscripts Homecare to make it run more efficiently. The Product Development Division was a leader in bringing SharePoint into the company as a business management tool. Now the entire company is using it, and different areas of the company can create their own sites to fit their own business intelligence needs.

## **A Success Story**

SharePoint has improved communication between Allscripts Homecare and SoftServe as well as between different departments within the company. SharePoint has also improved productivity through continuity of business information, which is of significant value to both companies. SharePoint has enhanced Allscripts Homecare's relationship with SoftServe by eliminating redundant tasks, e-mails, and questions between the two companies. Now both companies know where to find the vital information they need when they need it.

SharePoint has made sure that everyone has the latest versions of the product and that no one is working on the wrong software enhancement due to a lack of clear communication. If this had occurred in the past, SoftServe would have been required to stop, go back, and redo part of the software. SharePoint has enabled a working environment where business can be conducted efficiently and timely so that both companies are able to meet their goals. For example, it is no longer necessary for a developer to talk to Staudenmaier or a manager in order to get the information that is needed to work on a project. Everyone is on the same team and collaboration takes place between the two companies according to what the market requires.


In the end, Allscripts Homecare's software allows its clients to run their businesses more efficiently due to the software products created by SoftServe and Allscripts. And employees no longer must remember where critical business information is located or who owns it. Most important, Allscripts Homecare's customers are getting accurate, up-to-date, and consistent information, regardless of who they are speaking with, which ultimately leads to higher satisfaction levels.

SoftServe and Allscripts work together closely to complement each other in three important ways:


- SoftServe is a committed and reliable partner in product development.
- SoftServe has shown the same passion for quality as Allscripts.
- There is a highly skilled team integrated with the Allscripts Homecare's team at a person-to-person level.

Staudenmaier believes that all of this is made possible because SharePoint provides a common platform and online collaboration solution for the communication and organisation of business intelligence between the two organisations, ensuring that the right people are working on the right features at the right time. Staudenmaier concludes, "Together, we deliver great value for our customers on time and within budget."


## **About Allscripts**

Allscripts is a provider of software, services, information and connectivity solutions that empower physicians and other healthcare providers to deliver best-in-class patient safety, clinical outcomes and financial results. [www.allscripts.com](http://www.allscripts.com) 

## **About SoftServe, Inc.**

SoftServe, Inc. is an independent multinational software development and consulting company.  
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