CHI is one of the largest health systems in the nation with over 35 million square feet of real estate
“FM:Interact facilitates a more strategic approach to the way we plan for, and use, space—and it makes it really easy to do.”

Ben Medina - Facilities Space Planner, CHI

Background

CHI’s story began formally in 1996, but the idea of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) is deeply rooted in the faith-based work of those that have gone before them. The mission of Catholic Health Initiatives is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church, supported by education and research. With more than 90,000 employees—including 4,300 employed physicians and advanced practice clinicians—CHI has a significant impact on the communities it serves. They provide care at no or reduced charge to people who don’t have health insurance and can’t afford to pay, or whose insurance doesn’t cover the full cost of their care. Throughout the United States, CHI communities provide a variety of free or discounted services to individuals and groups of people who are poor, disadvantaged, or have special needs. In 2016 alone, CHI provided $2 billion in community benefit, charity care, and financial assistance, including unpaid costs of Medicare.

Challenges

CHI saw the opportunity to leverage new and emerging workplace practices to support and promote a more dynamic, collaborative business environment. Historically, the traditional healthcare work environment has been largely static, with office and conference areas designed for employees who start and end the workday in exactly the same spot. But the new “wireless world” has ushered in a new reality, one where business is often conducted on the go, remotely, in hallways, in ever-moving spaces, in different departments throughout the day, and in ad-hoc areas born of necessity. In short, anywhere that is most productive and conducive to the efficient, collaborative flow of work. This new reality, this constant state of change and movement that is the new workplace standard, presented great opportunities for CHI to utilize space more effectively and creatively. But it also presented them with great challenges. How can you proactively strategize, plan, stay adaptable and one step ahead, when everything is in constant state of motion?

Another pain point for CHI was simply the effective adoption of a new Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS) across its nine regions. In 2013, CHI had no system in place at all, so began at ground zero in researching a solution. They spent the critical intelligence needed for implementing and managing change. Spread throughout the United States, and managed by busy employees who aren’t necessarily CAFM experts, the CHI Real Estate team needed to minimize training time in the field, and maximize the ability for employees to use a new system quickly and easily.
CHI recognized the need to adopt a solution that would provide them with real-time visibility and reporting across their entire portfolio of property—and make it easy to do.

Ben Medina, CHI’s Facility Space Planner, entered the scene at the beginning of CHI’s Real Estate Management initiative, and immediately recognized the need to get a solution in place that would allow him to gather and present essential reports to senior executives. From headcount, vacancy, utilization and individual cost center reporting—the organization was lacking the baseline, critical information it needed to adapt to the ever-changing workplace. But Ben also understood that it wasn’t enough to get the information; the solution also had to be easy and friendly enough for people to want to interact with it.

“Having worked with other solutions in past lives, I can tell you that technical complexity is no friend to the facility management organization. So while many IWMS solutions could bring me reporting, I was looking for one that could bring me results. And that meant I needed a technology solution that people would actually like to use,” said Ben.

CHI chose FM:Interact for its capacity to manage Space, Assets, Move and Strategic Planning—and because its friendly graphical interface made the system easy to use and adopt. Not only could FM:Interact capture and manage the essential reports needed across the portfolio, it could be configured to allow any employee, with any amount of technical experience, to quickly have access to that data.

We estimate a cost savings of $10M in just one region, because we had easy access to real time space occupancy data.

Ben Medina
Improved Decision Making
Prior to the implementation of FM:Interact, CHI had no way to accurately track or manage space. Using FM:Interact, senior executives can now make the kinds of decisions that can have significant, positive impact on cost savings in the organization. In just one example, FM:Interact helped tie employees to space and study real-time occupancy over a period of several months. As a result of this data, a utilization study concluded that in just one single region of the organization, CHI could consolidate space and move from 3 sites to 2, with an estimated potential saving of close to $10M. Understanding how space is used has provided senior executives with new ways of thinking about the work environment. The Facilities team will continue to gather real-time reporting that can be presented to management and used as a driver and indicator of annual costs moving forward.

Faster Service
CHI has seen faster response times to requests for maintenance, furniture, IT, or indeed, any facility request, because the facility team has constant, real-time access to vacancies, occupancies, and employee locations throughout their facilities. Being able to accurately identify where people are—and anticipate when changes are occurring—has helped CHI stay more efficient and productive.

Alternative Work Environments
The information CHI pulls from FM:Interact has implications beyond looking day to day at data. As they identify which spaces are underutilized, CHI senior executives can begin to think more strategically and creatively about how space is used. Whether employees work remotely or more collaboratively, FM:Interact is giving CHI the intelligence they need to be successful in the transition of space to a world that is not only wireless, but constantly changing.

Ease of Use
As CHI rolls out FM:Interact across all of its regions across the United States, employees continue to appreciate how easy it is to use. The graphic interface lets users quickly access the level of data they need without handholding or lengthy training. This is invaluable to CHI in these early days as they ramp-up their facilities management capacities and team.

RESULTS
Today, CHI is using FM:Interact to get easy access to strategic, real-time information that used to be fairly impossible to gather, allowing senior executives to leverage their new found knowledge to use space more strategically.

We’ve progressed in leaps and bounds since implementing FM:Interact, but what’s exciting is there are still so many things to do. We are just scratching the surface.

Ben Medina