



Effective news updates at the AOZ
department of the VU Medical Center

Problem: Delayed and inaccessible news items

The AOZ department at the VU Medical Center employs around 800 people, including around 500 surgeons. The staff is working in the operating rooms, pre- and post-operative care, the sterilisation unit, and at the center for same-day surgery. The management of AOZ faced the challenge of informing the staff well, to keep them engaged with the latest developments within the AOZ department.

It is the responsibility of management to inform staff of changes within the department. This news was traditionally distributed in meetings. This turned out to be not effective enough, because:

- the team works in shifts so that only a part of the staff can be present in a meeting;
- news for the department was also distributed with a paper newsletter and periodical emails. By the time it was read, this news was often already outdated;
- the news was only partially relevant for any given reader: nurses and surgeons have different information needs.

Because of these shortcomings, people didn't read the newsletter and were therefore not well-informed.

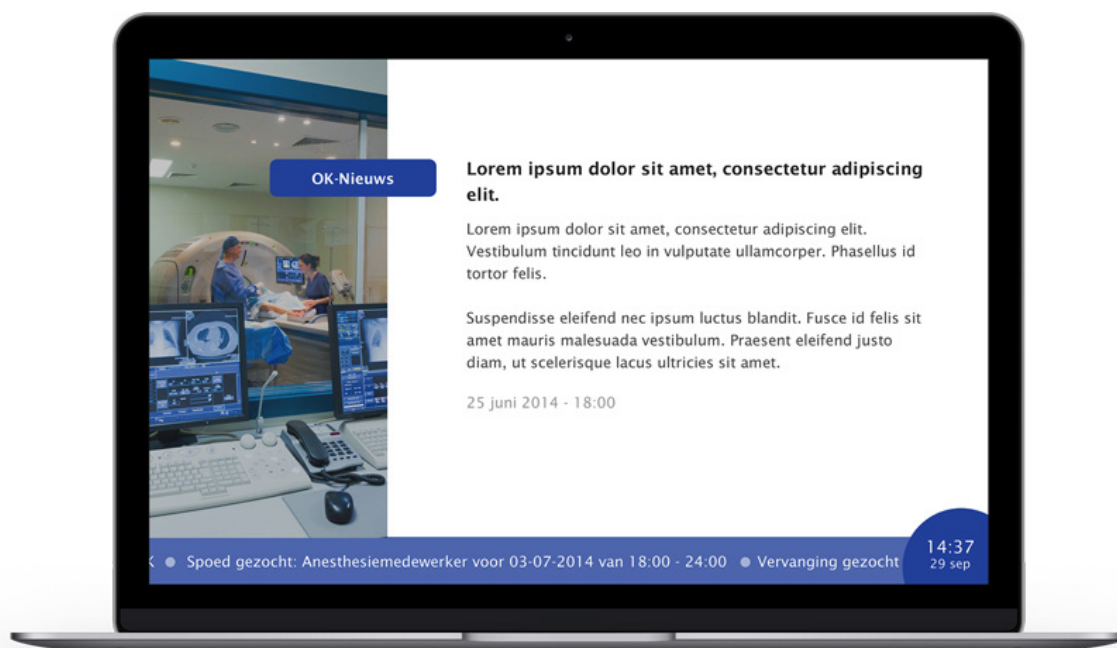
Management asked the question

**How can we inform staff well, independent of
place and time?**

Solution: Relevant and short-cycle news items with narrowcasting

While management was exploring the problem, they set the goal of informing staff by means of combining several ways of communicating news into a single channel. This way of sharing content is called “narrowcasting,” which means that messages are only shared with specific groups. The management considered using a new communication system for the AOZ department, based on narrowcasting. It would distribute news in two ways: through (1) TV screens placed throughout the departments, and (2) an application on the mobile devices of staff members. Every news item is targeted. For example, news for surgeons would only be seen by people in this group, while it would not appear on the screens and mobile devices of nurses.

Scientific research into messaging has shown that people pay more attention to a message that is received with a smartphone. The message makes them feel better too. Furthermore, it appears that when people receive a message on both a TV screen and a smartphone, they process it more and remember it better.



The management expected that a system for sending news would be most effective when it sends news items daily. This can be compared with Twitter or a news website. The messages are frequent and have a short cycle.

Design and implementation by IT partner YTEC Medical

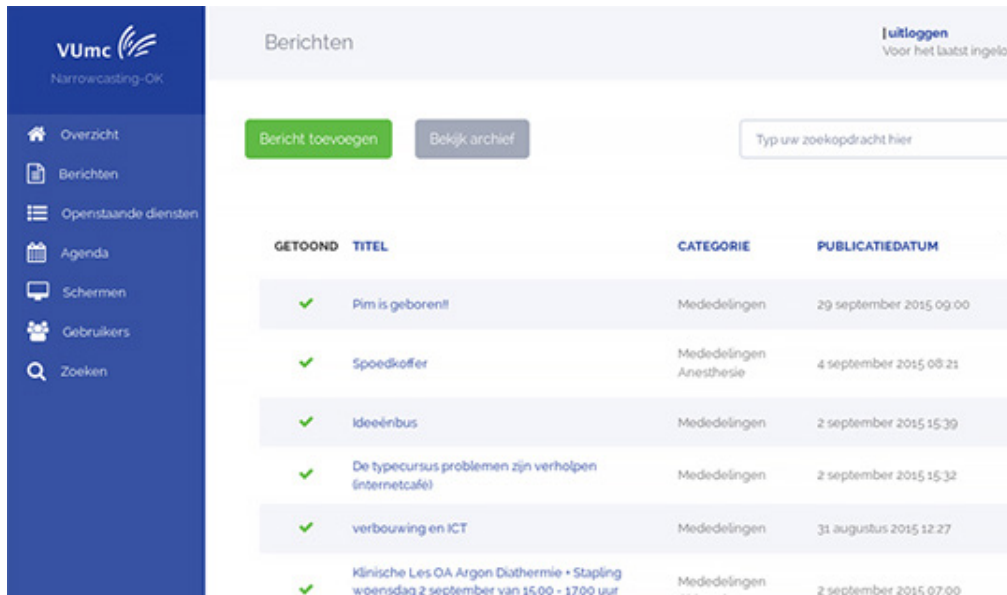
The department had this narrowcasting system designed and built by YTEC Medical. Management did consider two other software companies for the project, but VUmc already had an IT partner relationship with YTEC. Furthermore, the other two candidates cost considerably more.

YTEC Medical develops decision support systems for healthcare. Our experts advise you on how to apply information technology successfully. Then we craft top-grade software that helps your organization continue to perform.

The news items are distributed through the department by the secretarial staff. They are now using the narrowcasting system that was developed by YTEC Medical. The messages are frequent, while the staff doesn't need to use advanced computer skills to use the system. They can create and send news items without ever having to use a manual. The usability designers from YTEC have taken care that the dashboard is easy to use.

The dashboard

The dashboard is custom designed and has no superfluous features. Secretarial staff can enter a news item quickly, and include images. They indicate which groups of professionals get to see that item. They can post the message to both the mobile news applications and the TV screens placed at each department.



The screenshot shows the VUmc Narrowcasting-OK dashboard. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Overzicht, Berichten, Openstaande diensten, Agenda, Schermen, Gebruikers, and Zoeken. The main content area is titled 'Berichten' and includes a 'Bericht toevoegen' button, a 'Bekijk archief' button, and a search bar. Below this is a table of news items with columns for 'GETOOND', 'TITEL', 'CATEGORIE', and 'PUBLICATIEDATUM'.

GETOOND	TITEL	CATEGORIE	PUBLICATIEDATUM
✓	Pim is geboren!	Mededelingen	29 september 2015 09:00
✓	Spoedkoffer	Mededelingen Anesthesie	4 september 2015 08:21
✓	Ideebus	Mededelingen	2 september 2015 15:39
✓	De typecursus problemen zijn verholpen (internetcafé)	Mededelingen	2 september 2015 15:32
✓	verbouwing en ICT	Mededelingen	31 augustus 2015 12:27
✓	Klinische Les OA Argon Diathermie • Stapling woensdag 2 september van 15:00 - 17:00 uur	Mededelingen	2 september 2015 07:00

The dashboard and the content on the TV screens are both web-based. The advantages are that (1) YTEC can manage the narrowcasting system at a distance, and (2) the system is easy to scale up with more servers and TV screens.

Result: Time savings and a better user experience

The narrowcasting screens and the mobile news application have been in use since 2014. De feedback from the secretarial staff is clear:

- preparing news items is fast and easy
- staff members stay informed about relevant changes within their department
- news items of a personal nature, such as birthdays and births, make people feel more connected.
- communication of news is more to the point
- colleagues are well informed



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