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Upscaling Healthcare digital infrastructure through Medical Imaging and Diagnostic Displays

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In Conversation with Rachel Coxon, Vice President Healthcare, Barco APAC to have more insight into the contribution of medical imaging and display industry in the COVID-19 era.



Medical imaging professionals such as radiologists, information technology specialists, and medical physicists routinely use a picture archiving and communication system (PACS) to transfer, process, store, and display medical images. The adequate and repeatable performance of the image display system is a key element of information technology platforms in a modern radiology department. Recently, Biospectrum Asia had a conversation with **Rachel Coxon, Vice President Healthcare, Barco APAC** to have more insight into contribution of medical imaging and display industry in COVID-19 era.

What is the impact of technology on APAC healthcare industry and what should be the adaptation mode to accept the 'new normal' in post COVID world?

Technology has been particularly impactful in bridging access to care by augmenting remote-care capabilities. Primarily, doctors have been able to provide medical care from a distance by treating non-urgent cases via phone or video calls.

On a secondary level, collaborative and management-based tools are allowing medical personnel to diagnose and cooperate on more serious cases, with real-time data from the comfort of their homes.

The 'new normal' is being framed by safe-distancing measures and managing compact spaces to reduce the spread of viruses. To adapt to these measures, the industry should look towards further investments in technology that will facilitate the shift towards a hybrid model. This is where some staff members will work remotely while others will remain stationed at hospitals to tend to cases that require face-to-face interactions. This would reduce the number of onsite patients and staff members, without obstructing patient care capabilities.

How is Barco influencing novel digital healthcare infrastructure in building future healthcare system?

Creating a novel digital healthcare infrastructure requires services that ensure real-time collaboration, with minimal disruption and no downtime. Barco offers a suite of products and services that enable specialists and physicians to collaborate remotely.

For example, in the cases of cancer patients, they are treated by a group of medical professionals together, so they need to share a lot of delicate information and meet up to discuss. With Barco **Synergi**, these professionals can rely on a hybrid software system that enables them to easily organize, share and discuss all the information they need. Whether they're together in the same room, and/or joining remotely.

We also noticed a tendency for radiologists to read medical images at home, especially in the current times. However, the files they process are very large and incredibly detailed, so it's not as simple as opening their laptop at home. For them, too, we offer diagnostic displays that help them see the most subtle clinical details for improved decisions, while accessing their data remotely, and enjoy the same quality and security at home as in the hospital.

This is further enhanced by Barco's Clinical command centre which monitors hospital management by tracking movements, the usage of operating rooms, and even the availability of patient beds, to decide if more resources and manpower have to be deployed or, if physicians can continue working remotely. Barco's products allow healthcare systems to upscale their digital infrastructure to visualise the parameters of critical care to plan, predict, and make critical decisions in an agile manner.

How is Barco participating in framing a resilient health system amidst the pandemic?

A resilient health system must withstand the impact of sudden global shifts, such as the current pandemic that is overworking healthcare systems while simultaneously forcing personnel into remote work.

One of the crucial aspects of the healthcare industry is remote radiology. Here Barco's unique solution brings dependable image quality and consistent workflow to remote healthcare professionals and workers. The solution removes the need to access on-premise devices and, all radiologists need to do is to connect a personal device laptop to an external graphics box (via Thunderbolt™).

Equipped with Barco's MXRT graphics card, it is fully compatible with Barco medical displays and gives access to our entire suite of clinical workflow tools for increased accuracy and productivity. It also allows healthcare IT staff to control every remote workstation for quality assurance and even report on them. In short, Barco's remote radiology reading solution equips radiologists with everything they need, to make confident, diagnostic decisions from anywhere.

Will there be a change in the new normal for the medical imaging industry? How do you foresee industrial growth in APAC region?

The impact of COVID-19 on the medical imaging industry remains to be seen, as hospitals and imaging facilities strive to figure out this "new normal". However, the pandemic had facilities ramping up the availability of mobile and portable imaging systems to increase options for imaging patients, remotely and in healthcare facilities.

With systems being dispersed across numerous locations, the industry may be looking at growth and a shift in focus towards collaboration efforts to boost homogeneity. If working remotely continues to be part of healthcare processes, cross-channel communication is key. Industry players will have to look at how to facilitate better collaboration between clinicians to improve the continuity of care. This would require a compliant, secure video conferencing platform that allows for screen sharing.

Notably, with a large share of the healthcare budget shifted towards consumables like masks, equipment expenditure may be impacted but this cannot be ascertained as research is still underway.