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*Empowering Care Providers: Balancing
Urgency and Optimal Decision-Making*





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Enabling Quick and Effective Decision-Making in Healthcare

In healthcare, every second counts, and efficient communication can make the difference between life and death. Miscommunication or delays in relaying crucial information can have devastating consequences for patients. Imagine a scenario where a patient is experiencing a life-threatening emergency and vital details about their condition or medical history are not conveyed promptly to the attending healthcare team. Precious moments could be lost, leading to potentially irreversible outcomes.

This truth, gained from **Kelly Feist's** early career as a Respiratory Therapist, has guided her to become a transformative leader in healthcare technology. Today, as the **Managing Director of Ascom Americas**, Feist leverages those clinical lessons to drive innovation in crucial communication solutions.

Her journey began in 1989 at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, where Feist worked on the frontlines, providing critical care for patients battling life-threatening conditions. From chronic respiratory diseases to trauma incidents and neonatal cases, she witnessed firsthand how seamless communication and rapid response times are imperative for positive outcomes.

"Those experiences taught me three key lessons that I still apply today," she recounts. "First, every interaction requires laser-focused attention. Second, you have to analyze situations from multiple angles to devise effective solutions. And third, clear communication between team members is pivotal for coordinating an optimal care strategy."

Feist carried those insights into an executive career spanning respected healthcare firms like Philips. Her ability to merge clinical perspectives

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with business acumen soon established her as an authority on optimizing healthcare communication workflows.

It prepared her well for her current role at Ascom Americas. The global technology company specializes in developing mission-critical communications platforms tailored for various industries, including hospitals, ambulatory clinics, senior living facilities, and enterprise environments needing highly mobile, near-real-time solutions.

Under her guidance, Ascom has partnered with major healthcare systems and providers across North America to streamline clinical communication through innovative software, hardware, and integration services. Intelligent nurse call systems, unified mobility platforms, and software for medical device integration utilizing smart alerting and alarming are just a few of the cutting-edge offerings in Ascom's arsenal.

"We're equipping care teams with the tools they need to communicate seamlessly and respond with agility to any situation," she explains. "We're fulfilling that promise daily by empowering better care coordination through vendor-neutral technology solutions that fit within a customer's existing infrastructure."

Whether capturing critical patient data, facilitating consults between multidisciplinary teams, or ensuring rapid response times during codes, Ascom's solutions are forging new frontiers in connected healthcare communication. With Feist's deft leadership, inspired by decades of clinical experience, Ascom is well-positioned to elevate healthcare delivery to new heights of efficiency and patient-centric care.

Let us learn more about her journey:

A Journey from Clinical Care to Business Leadership

Feist embarked on her professional journey in 1989 as a dedicated Respiratory Therapist at Sarasota Memorial Hospital, where she tended to patients facing critical health challenges. Her experience spanned a spectrum of conditions, from chronic respiratory ailments like asthma and emphysema to caring for trauma victims, preterm infants in the NICU, postoperative complications, and acute illnesses such as heart attacks and strokes. Through these clinical encounters, she gleaned invaluable insights that continue to shape her approach in the business realm today.

For example, she applies these three clinical lessons learned to business today:



1. Patient-Centric Decision Making:

Feist emphasizes the importance of always keeping the patient at the forefront of any decision-making process, regardless of the healthcare setting or technological advancements. This patient-centered approach remains a guiding principle in addressing clinical workflows effectively.

2. Empowering Care Providers:

Understanding the critical balance between swift decision-making and optimal outcomes, she stresses the significance of supporting care providers. By enabling clinicians to make timely decisions while prioritizing patient care, the foundation for successful healthcare delivery is established.

3. Collaborative Technology Adoption:

Feist advocates for actively engaging in the design and implementation of technology with the users of Ascom solutions in healthcare. When nurses actively participate in shaping the functionality of the technology they're using, it can enhance their adoption and effectiveness in integrating it into their current workflows.

Feist shares some of the insights she's learned from managing a business after working in the acute care environment:

1. Courage and Initiative:

Encouraging professionals to step out of their comfort zones, Feist underscores the value of being proactive, voicing opinions, and seizing growth opportunities. Embracing challenges and learning through new experiences are essential for personal and professional development.



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2. Focus on Controllable Factors: Amidst challenges like the global pandemic, Feist highlights the importance of focusing on aspects within one's control. Adapting to market dynamics and leveraging growth opportunities, even in adversity, can lead to sustainable business success.

3. Organizational Change Management: Recognizing the significance of organizational transformation, Feist emphasizes the need for thorough planning and communication when implementing new strategies. Building consensus, addressing individual concerns, and allowing for a gradual transition are vital components of successful change management.

In her current capacity, Feist serves as the Managing Director for Ascom Americas and holds a position on Ascom's global extended Executive Committee.

Feist transitioned to Ascom from Philips Healthcare USA, where she held the role of head of customer service in North America. Previously, she served as the region's inaugural business leader for patient care and monitoring solutions. Her tenure at Philips was marked by pivotal transformations, shifting the company from a capital equipment business model to a solutions-oriented approach with a focus on software, hardware, and expanding business services.

She brings a wealth of experience in Healthcare Information Technology (IT) solutions, spanning various functions such as sales, marketing, product management, and customer care. She holds an MBA from Vanderbilt University and an executive certificate from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Feist commenced her journey at Ascom on April 6, 2020, amidst the

challenges of a global pandemic that necessitated remote work due to office closures. The initial months posed a unique set of obstacles as she navigated leading Ascom in the Americas without the opportunity for in-person interactions with her team, business partners, or customers.

Despite these challenges, she swiftly grasped the critical role Ascom played in delivering essential services to hospital-based clients, particularly in supplying nurse call and clinical communications solutions to field hospitals established during the US pandemic response.

"After the pandemic, we faced a supply chain crisis, which presented a new set of challenges to navigate," explains Feist. "We needed to transition the business from traditional capital equipment models to software-driven, solution-focused, and recurring revenue models, and in doing so, we were able to steer Ascom Americas through two years of supply chain constraints while maintaining profitable growth." Feist's strategic leadership and adaptability were pivotal in ensuring the company's flexibility and continued success in the face of adversity.

Leadership Experience in Medical Capital and Healthcare IT

Feist has had the privilege of working directly with patients in healthcare settings and later transitioning to the medical technology sector with two prominent global healthcare companies. This extensive experience has provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges addressed by clinical workflow technology solutions. Drawing from diverse perspectives within her team and across the business, she prioritizes several key principles as she leads the Americas region:

First, she recognized that innovation can emerge from unexpected sources. For instance, she enabled the company's apprenticeship program, tailored to address the industry's demand for experienced professionals. This initiative identifies individuals with the right blend of skills and personality traits, leveraging their previous work experiences to succeed and grow into more senior roles within the company.

Secondly, Feist emphasizes the importance of maintaining a global outlook. By considering the broader perspective of the entire company, she strategically allocates resources to drive overall growth while also meeting regional and national key performance indicators. This approach fosters unity within Ascom, promoting a cohesive organizational culture.

Lastly, she encourages forward-thinking in anticipating market trends. As the healthcare industry undergoes a digital transformation, she recognizes the significance of leveraging technology to support nursing staff amidst challenges such as recruitment, retention, and financial constraints.

By focusing on solutions that enhance nursing workflows without imposing significant changes, such as clinical surveillance and virtual nursing, she ensures higher adoption rates and ultimately improves patient care. Feist emphasizes the concept of "augmented intelligence" rather than artificial intelligence, highlighting the indispensable role of human judgment in healthcare decision-making.

Vision for Ascom Americas

As the Managing Director, Feist shoulders the responsibility of steering the company's evolution from a technology-product-centric entity to a provider of clinical workflow solutions, catering to more than 3,000 hospitals and long-term care facilities

spanning the United States and Canada. Operating within a diverse and competitive market, the company aims for double-digit growth, facilitated by its extensive network of more than 150 channel partners.

To achieve this ambitious goal, she has orchestrated a cohesive strategy consisting of five key points. Through meticulous alignment and clear communication, every member of the team, regardless of their role—be it in the warehouse ensuring timely shipments or in contracting and project management—understands their contribution to realizing this strategy. This unified approach ensures that each individual's efforts synergize towards the overarching objective of sustained growth and market leadership.

Mission-Driven Leadership Decisions

With every passing moment, Ascom's systems generate a staggering 1.3 million data points. The company's primary objective is to help organizations transform this influx of data into valuable, actionable insights for individuals navigating the most challenging operational environments. In an era where healthcare complexities abound, the significance of accurate and readily accessible patient data and seamlessly linking medical devices with healthcare providers cannot be overstated.

At the core of Ascom's healthcare platform lies its medical device integration (MDI) capabilities, which seamlessly integrate with medical devices via various protocols for a true vendor-neutral approach to facilitate the flow of information. This platform empowers customers to extend their traditional nurse call system to do more by incorporating a dedicated alarm management solution. Through intuitive dashboards, this solution visualizes data and events from



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medical devices, delivering timely insights and alerts to caregivers.

Ensuring caregivers have access to pertinent information precisely when they need it remains paramount in Ascom's endeavors, whether it involves integrating feedback from frontline nurses into future product releases or tailoring solutions to address specific challenges faced by individual healthcare facilities.

This mission resonated deeply with Feist, influencing her decision to join Ascom. Recognizing that superior technology represents only one facet of success, she underscores the importance of crafting a forward-thinking strategy as the cornerstone of all business decisions. This strategic clarity not only shapes organizational design and hiring practices but also delineates the skills necessary for both current and future success. Moreover, it contributes to fostering a dynamic, performance-oriented culture that continually drives Ascom forward.

Impact of Collaboration Solutions

Despite advancements in digital transformation and unified communication, the realm of clinical communication and collaboration often remains fragmented. This fragmentation can be attributed to

various factors, including disjointed communication infrastructures, tools, and processes lacking true integration and interoperability. While some level of connectivity may exist, a cohesive communication ecosystem is often absent, resulting in isolated pockets of information.

When these information islands pertain to patient care, the consequences can be dire. According to the 2022 Sentinel Event Data Annual Review by the Joint Commission, there was a significant increase in sentinel events reported, highlighting the potential risks associated with inadequate communication and information sharing in healthcare settings.

Ascom is positioned to lead the charge in revolutionizing healthcare delivery through digital means, recognizing the pressing demand for integrated solutions to overcome these challenges. By aligning with the objectives of customers, which typically revolve around the quadruple aim of healthcare improvement, Ascom endeavors to address these objectives through outcomes-based solutions tailored to meet the specific metrics customers prioritize for success. This approach aims to enhance care quality, reduce costs, improve satisfaction, and, most importantly, elevate patient outcomes.

A recent case study by RiverSpring Living underscores the impactful results achieved through Ascom's solutions in resident care facilities. Within the first year of implementation, RiverSpring Living processed more than 90,000 alerts with its new Ascom solution, consisting of Ascom nurse call, software, and smartphones. The new solution helped the senior care organization boast an impressive clinical response rate of 95% within two minutes. These outcomes demonstrate the tangible benefits of Ascom's solutions in optimizing care delivery and enhancing overall operational efficiency in healthcare environments.

Emerging Trends for the Future

Ascom adopts a vendor-neutral approach to facilitate end-to-end connected care, empowering hospitals to maximize their existing technology investments. Feist notes that, "Serving as an enabling platform, Ascom seamlessly interoperates with a variety of medical devices and communication systems. This augmented intelligence capability, encompassing alerting, alarming, and predictive analytics, has the potential to revolutionize nursing practices, enhancing efficiency and patient care outcomes." In today's healthcare landscape, intelligent workflow technologies have become as indispensable as traditional medical supplies like bandages and medications. As patient volumes increase and acuity levels rise, healthcare systems must evolve to meet these challenges through innovative models and technologies.

Several emerging trends illustrate healthcare's response to these demands:

- Virtual nursing: This model leverages remote support from seasoned nurses to alleviate the administrative burden on bedside nurses, enhancing overall

efficiency and patient care quality.

- Virtual ICU: Here, organizations centralize intensive care management through a single intensivist who oversees multiple patients, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The goal is to improve patient survival rates and reduce hospital stays.
- Remote patient monitoring: In this scenario, facilities use hospital-grade wearable sensors connected to cloud databases with AI capabilities to track various health conditions, offering enhanced access to patient data, better chronic condition management, and reduced healthcare costs.
- Clinical surveillance/patient monitoring in acute care: Technologies once only used in the intensive care unit (ICU) are filtering down to general care areas. In this model, hospitals are implementing centralized telemetry units to triage alert messages and dispatch actionable events to specific caregivers, optimizing workflow efficiency, and allowing nurses to operate at the top of their licensure.

Ascom solutions fit into these developing models, and these trends underscore Ascom's commitment to driving innovation and improving healthcare delivery, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and streamlining clinical workflows.

Complexities of Operating in Diverse Healthcare Environments

To better serve the needs of nurses and IT professionals, Ascom is significantly enhancing its focus on data and analytics across both clinical and technical aspects of its products. This strategic shift aims to provide services that add tangible value, enabling healthcare professionals to concentrate on their core responsibilities rather

than technology management.

Ascom recently added the Ascom RemoteWatch™ service to its portfolio. This innovative offering bolsters clinicians' confidence in the Ascom Healthcare Platform solutions and connected technologies crucial for patient care delivery. By proactively detecting potential interruptions to clinical workflows, Ascom RemoteWatch™ helps prevent patient alarm issues, ensuring seamless operations. Moreover, it assists IT teams in achieving their uptime goals by enhancing system reliability, thereby bolstering overall healthcare service continuity.

Exciting developments are on the horizon as Ascom enhances its capabilities for blending ongoing data analysis with clinical consulting support to empower healthcare organizations to optimize their Ascom technology solutions and other connected tools. By leveraging data-driven insights and process improvements facilitated by technology, customers can strategically align their initiatives with their overarching goals for patient care enhancement, linking their technology and return on investment (ROI).

Through these initiatives, Ascom reaffirms its commitment to delivering innovative solutions that not only address current challenges but also drive continuous improvement in healthcare delivery, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes and operational efficiency.

Upholding the Highest Standards

As Managing Director of Ascom Americas, Feist is the top executive responsible for the company adhering to all of the quality and regulatory requirements that are necessary for a medical device company to operate in



the USA. Ascom Americas operates within a stringent regulatory framework that governs every aspect of its operations. Adhering to key standards such as ISO 13485 and FDA 21 CFR 820s, the company ensures that its design, manufacturing, packaging, labeling, storage, installation, and servicing processes meet the highest industry benchmarks.

The company's commitment to compliance with these medical regulations demonstrates its dedication to delivering top-quality products and services. By adhering to these standards, Ascom Americas upholds the industry's highest benchmarks, offering its customers peace of mind for safety and efficacy.

These regulatory standards are the foundation for Ascom Americas' quality management systems, which guide the company in adopting a systematic approach to meet and exceed customer expectations. By integrating these standards into its operations, the company has established a robust framework that underpins its commitment to delivering excellence across the business. Through its adherence to these regulatory requirements, Ascom Americas has positioned itself as a trusted partner in the medical device industry.

Leadership Principles for Success

Feist emphasizes the importance of maintaining a consistent yet flexible strategy. Upon assuming her role at Ascom, she dedicated significant time to actively listening to the company's customers, partners, and employees. She understands that achieving alignment among all stakeholders regarding the necessary steps for business growth is crucial, recognizing that execution requires time.

Through a focus on key areas, she and her team have cultivated trust among partners and have earned a reputation



for consistently delivering on promises to provide tangible value to stakeholders.

Ascom Americas' Progressive Environment

"I strongly believe in the opportunity for technology to enable evolving health technologies such as virtual nursing concepts, clinical surveillance, clinical decision support, and augmented intelligence (AI)," said Feist. However, she highlights a crucial aspect that has not yet been discussed: remote patient monitoring and the shift toward "hospital at home" models. She observes that healthcare delivery systems are gradually transitioning towards providing care in the most cost-effective setting, often the patient's own home and this evolution will provide different ways for technology to play a key role.

To ensure the success of this transition in the long term, effective communication systems are indispensable. This encompasses role-based communications, and the delivery of actionable alarms and alerts to appropriate care providers (including both paid professionals and unpaid providers like family members), among other functionalities. She further highlights Ascom's expertise in role-based communications, smart alarm and alert filtering, clinical decision support, medical device integration, and the

timely delivery of actionable information to support this growing healthcare industry.

Goals and Aspirations for Ascom Americas

Feist's goals for Ascom are straightforward. She aims to establish the company as a trusted partner for its customers. This involves providing enabling technology that supports and improves nursing and patient outcomes, as well as financial and operational outcomes.

Recognizing that delivering mission-critical solutions alone is insufficient, she stresses the importance of providing a seamless customer experience that fosters long-term relationships. Feist believes that achieving high levels of customer satisfaction is essential for successful growth. She emphasizes the importance of Ascom's solutions offering a measurable and quantifiable ROI, which has become increasingly significant in the customer decision-making process, and positioning Ascom as a long-term strategic technology partner for hospitals. ©

