Buyer's Guide

Upgrading and Future-Proofing the Hospital Operator Console

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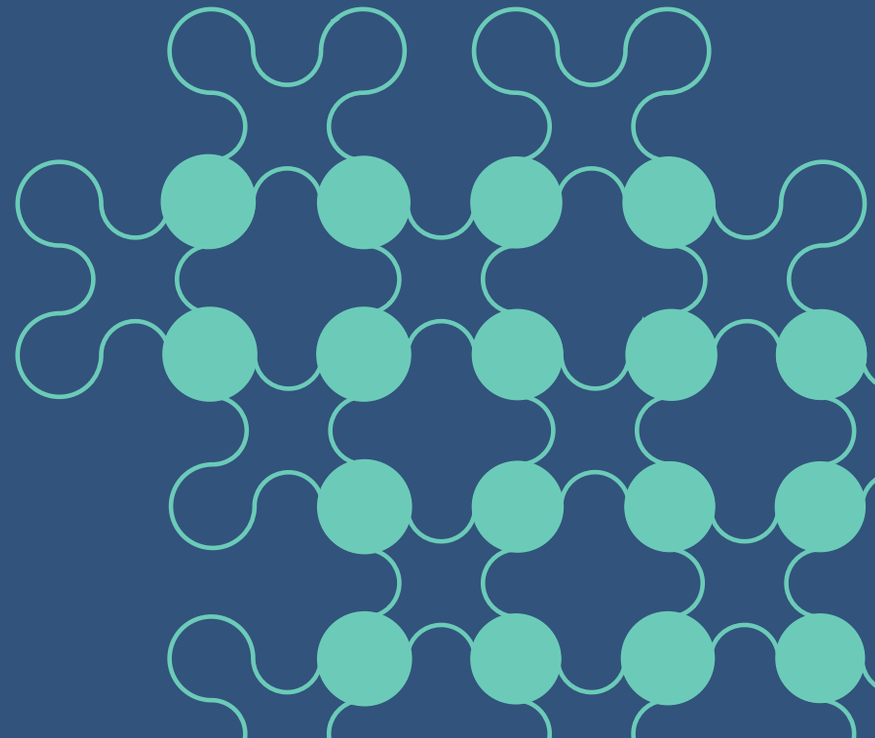


A Strategic Framework for COOs, CIOs, and Digital Transformation Officers

Why the switchboard is no longer “just telephony” and what leaders must evaluate next.

Hospital switchboards sit at the center of connection. They facilitate caller services, activate clinical coordination, and support enterprise-wide communication. Yet many health systems still rely on legacy, on-premise consoles built for a different era, before distributed workforces, integrated care systems, or modern throughput demands.

For today’s operational and technology leaders, the operator console is no longer an isolated telephony tool. It is a core operational system that directly shapes:

- Patient access and experience
- Care team collaboration and responsiveness
- Throughput across ED, inpatient, and ancillary services
- Workforce flexibility
- Technology extensibility

This guide outlines the strategic capabilities that matter most when evaluating a modern operator console and how to choose a platform that will support the next decade of hospital operations.

Key Platform Requirements

1. Cloud-native & built for healthcare operations
2. Integrate with the existing tech stack
3. Support today’s distributed operator workforce
4. Built in analytics that reflect true operational performance
5. A foundation for enterprise communication & AI adoption

Platform Requirement 1

Cloud-native & built for healthcare operations

Reduce Technical Debt & Strengthen Clinical Workflows

Legacy on-premise consoles generate hidden, compounding costs: aging hardware, specialized maintenance, siloed telephony systems, and rigid upgrade cycles. More importantly, they limit flexibility at a time when hospitals require adaptable infrastructure to support evolving clinical practice.

A next-generation console should provide cloud-native architecture, and a platform designed to suit the way hospitals operate. Look for:

- Multitenant SaaS architecture to eliminate on-prem hardware and maintenance
- High availability and autoscaling to withstand call surges and emergency events
- Automatic updates and security enhancements with no downtime
- Healthcare-first design principles aligned to clinical demands and requirements

For COOs and CIOs, moving off legacy systems is not only a modernization effort, it is a strategic shift toward operational stability and long-term cost efficiency.

Questions to ask vendors:

- How does your platform reduce maintenance, hardware spend, and technical complexity?
- What uptime SLAs, redundancy, and failover protections are built in?

Integrate with the existing tech stack

Connect the Systems You Have, Don't Rip and Replace

Operators are often forced to manually bridge gaps between telephony, paging, messaging, scheduling, and EHR data. Navigating multiple screens and interfaces slows down care coordination, increases cognitive load, and creates risk—especially during high-acuity events.

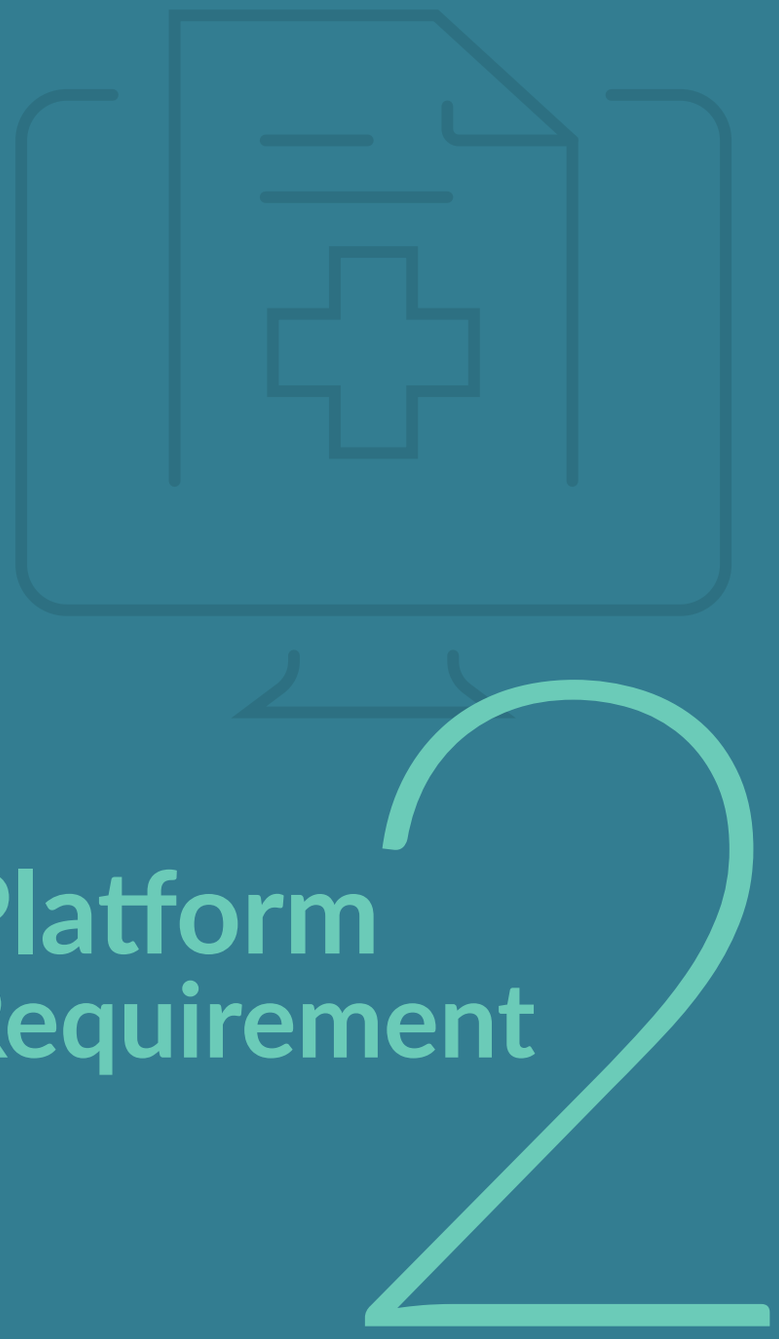
A modern console should:

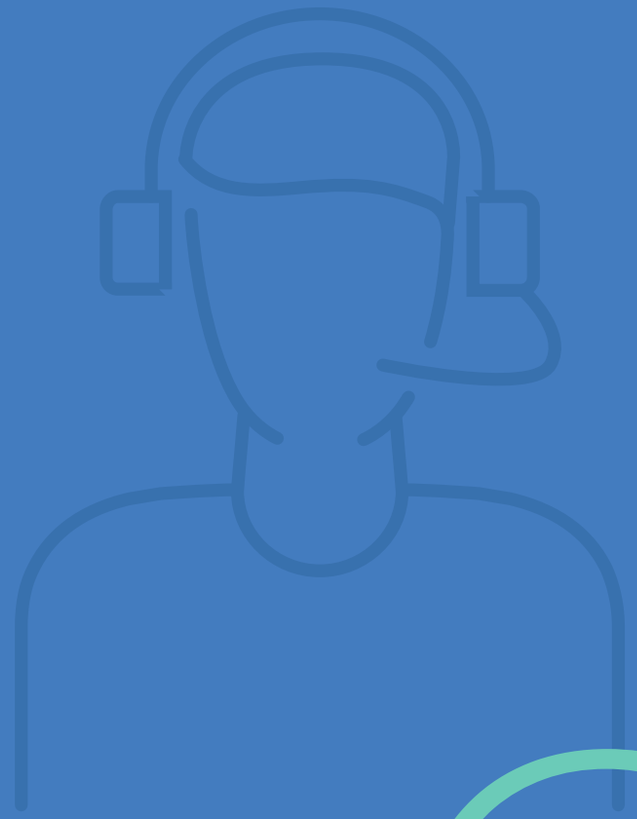
- Integrate seamlessly with existing systems for rapid deployment
- Surface EHR data, on-call schedules, and secure messaging in a single interface
- Trigger emergency notifications and escalation workflows across applications to accelerate response in urgent moments
- Maximize the value of current investments by orchestrating—rather than duplicating—your technology ecosystem

For Digital Transformation Officers and CIOs, integration is foundational: it reduces fragmentation, strengthens interoperability, expands the utility of in-place technology, and supports teams in a shift from manual to automated workflows.

Questions to ask vendors:

- Which EHR, scheduling, secure messaging, and telephony systems do you integrate with natively?
- How do you support custom workflows or multi-system environments?





Platform Requirement 3

Support Today's Distributed Operator Workforce

Enable remote, hybrid, and multi-campus staffing models with a single installation

Hospitals increasingly rely on distributed operator models, either by design or necessity. On-premise hardware makes this difficult, limiting the ability to dynamically staff for atypical call volumes that come with surges, nights and weekends, or weather events.

A modern operator console should enable:

- Browser- and role-based access for secure workforce mobility
- Consistent configuration across all campuses for rapid operator onboarding
- Centralized system management to quickly activate and scale while simplifying maintenance and reducing costs

For COOs, this flexibility is essential to maintaining high-quality service levels without overburdening staff or relying solely on on-site resources.

Questions to ask vendors:

- Can operators work remotely or across campuses with identical access and workflows?
- How is access secured and scaled?

Built-in analytics that reflect true operational performance

Turn the Switchboard into a Measurable, Optimizable Function

Day to day, contact center leaders manage escalations, optimize staffing, and diagnose workflow bottlenecks—yet they are still measured primarily on standard metrics like call wait time, first-call resolution, and average handle time. With legacy consoles and limited integration across paging, messaging, scheduling, and other communication tools, it can be difficult to quantify the switchboard's broader impact on hospital-wide patient experience and clinical responsiveness.

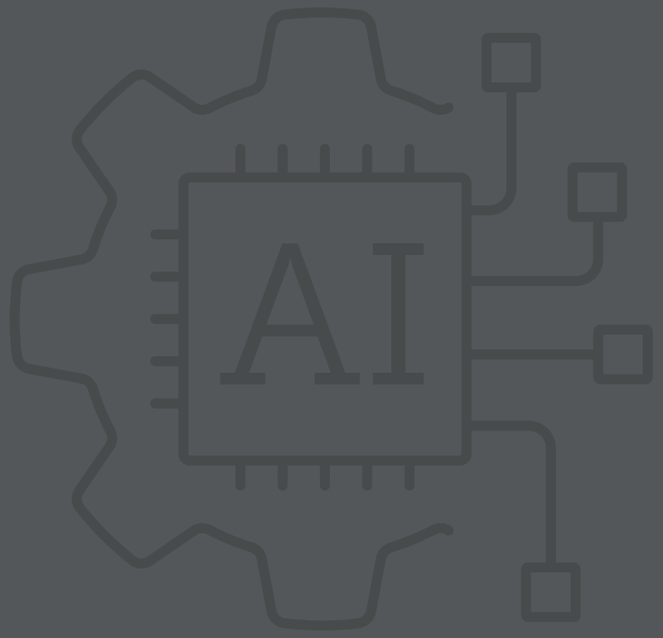
A next-generation platform should include:

- Real-time dashboards showing active call queues and wait times for daily oversight
- Historical analytics on operator- and site-level call handling performance to benchmark and set goals for ongoing improvement
- Unified reporting across systems to consolidate contact center and communication data and eliminate manual reconciliation
- Benchmarking tools for continuous improvement evaluate workflow efficiency

For CIOs, COOs and Digital Transformation Officers alike, analytics transform the switchboard from a black box to a strategic operational lever, turning workflow data into operational decisions.

Questions to ask vendors:

- What performance metrics are available out of the box?
- How can leaders use your analytics to improve throughput and staffing?



Platform Requirement 5

A Foundation for Enterprise Communication & AI Adoption

Prepare for the next wave of automation and orchestration

Legacy switchboards were designed for a narrow mandate: answer calls and transfer them quickly. Today, the operator console is evolving into an enterprise workflow hub supporting digital transformation initiatives that improve care flow, strengthen clinical responsiveness, and enable systemwide communication strategies.

Modern platforms should support:

- Automated call routing and transcription to free operators for more complex scenario handling
- AI-assisted decision support to enhance operator efficiency and accuracy
- Unified communication across departments and roles to enable integration pathways for future tools and digital front-door initiatives

For CIOs, COOs, and Digital Transformation Officers, the operator console is no longer a telephony endpoint—it is an innovation-ready platform that can increasingly apply AI to reduce delays, standardize routing, and guide workflows.

Questions to ask vendors:

- How will your platform support AI, automation, and emerging digital front-door initiatives?
- What's on your product roadmap over the next 2–3 years?

Executive Summary for COOs, CIOs & Digital Transformation Leaders

A modern operator console should:

- Reduce technical debt and strengthen reliability through cloud-native architecture
- Integrate deeply with EHR, scheduling, secure messaging, and telephony systems
- Support distributed teams with consistent experiences across locations
- Provide actionable analytics to drive measurable performance improvement
- Lay the foundation for AI and enterprise-wide communication modernization

For senior leaders, the operator console is no longer a peripheral system—it is a strategic asset influencing patient experience, clinical coordination, operational efficiency, and enterprise resilience.

Explore the latest in operator console technology

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