

Spok



Spok is a big wheel in healthcare communications Hospitals, first responders rely on Springfield firm

It was almost 30 years ago when Vince Kelly, recently graduated from [George Mason University](#), walked through the doors of Metrocall, a paging company that began by repairing two-way radios in taxis and police vehicles in the Washington, D.C., area.

Kelly could not envision the acquisitions, growth and name changes that lay ahead. Today, that company has gone global, and that young comptroller is president and CEO of [Spok Holdings, Inc.](#), a Springfield-based leader in critical communications for healthcare, government, public safety and other industries.

Although pagers have gone the way of the rotary phone in much of America, they remain a facet of the medical care landscape in which Spok is the leader. It's the way Spok -- known as USA Mobility until 2014 -- got its foot in the door with many health institutions. "We're still the largest paging company in the United States," Kelly notes.

Spok is so respected in the healthcare circles that all 20 hospitals named to [U.S. News & World Report's 2016-2017 Best Hospitals Honor Roll](#) and all 11 hospitals named to the [2016-17 Best Children's Hospitals Honor Roll](#) connect with its products.

"We are truly honored that these prestigious hospitals and health systems entrust Spok to support their clinical communication and collaboration needs," Kelly says.

Today, Spok beats the competition by providing one-stop shopping. Its offerings for the healthcare community include call center software, alarm management solutions, scheduling software and the Spok Mobile platform, which is [HIPAA](#) (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliant.

"Healthcare has historically been a focus for us," Kelly says. "Our strength is really that we tie it all together in an integrated package. We do have specific competitors with respect to some solutions. But when you look at our competition, there is really nobody that does the breadth and scope of what we do.

"We're fortunate to have a good, consistent customer base that we can sell solutions and upgrades to. Our software maintenance renews at over 99 percent. Once the software gets into a hospital, it's very 'sticky.' It tends to stay there because it becomes integrated into workflows and how those facilities provide care."

Although close to 80 percent of Spok's business is healthcare-related, its technology is employed in everything from hotel wake-up calls to 911 emergency call centers to military base communications -- everywhere from colleges to casinos.

"The things that a big hospital has to do are very similar to that of a big campus or a casino," Kelly says. "What we're really doing is leveraging our research and development and using it in other verticals. It's not our primary focus, but it's good business when we can get it and we'll take it. It's used in Las Vegas, Macau and major theme parks. When troops want to talk to their families from overseas, they use our call center software."

Location in Fairfax County has also been an integral factor in Spok's growth. Of its 640 worldwide employees, about 50 work at the Springfield corporate headquarters, where accounting, finance, human resources and some IT and system support takes place. Spok also operates in five other U.S. locales, Leeds in the U.K., Dubai, Singapore and Perth, Australia.

"Fairfax County works for Spok because it's a great place to find the kind of people we need to accomplish our mission," Kelly says. "We just have not had a lot of challenges in finding good people to fill those roles. Another good plus for this area is travel -- and I do a lot of it -- with Dulles and Reagan not far away."

Kelly realizes that past performance is no guarantee of future success and he has Spok looking forward.

"[Although] we have good penetration and good market share in healthcare, there is still considerable opportunity for growth," says Kelly, who sees additional opportunity outside the U.S. "Our latest/greatest product ties all of our point solutions together. [SpokCareConnect@](#), with Version 1.7 coming out soon, integrates with other Spok solutions that an organization may have already purchased or will purchase. If they want alarm management, critical test results or on-call scheduling, we can readily provide those solutions.

"Security is, of course, a huge concern for everybody right now. Spok has implemented appropriate safeguards -- physical safeguards to limit and control facility access, technical safeguards for access controls, including user IDs, automatic logoff and encryption, and administrative safeguards including audit reports and tracking logs to identify any potential security breaches. It's something we take very seriously.

"That's why we're investing in the future and increasing our R&D budget. We've got a lot of good things going on. I think we're in a good place."



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