

Pharmaceutical Distributor Solves Communication Breakdown with Bar Codes

The Medicine Center is a pharmaceutical distributor who needed a solution to control the dispersion of medications and provide an 'error free' work place while eliminating the faxing of orders. They discovered Datalogic's cordless PowerScan and Gryphon handheld readers which solved the problems and eliminated the errors.

Innovative Pharmacy System Uses Datalogic's PowerScan™ Handheld Readers to Expedite and Eliminate Errors in the Reordering Process

Overview

The Medicine Centre is a pharmaceutical distributor who provides prescriptions and long-term care pharmacy services to institutionalized healthcare facilities in the United States. To better serve their customers and ensure top quality care, The Medicine Centre investigated methods to reduce errors through automatic pharmaceutical reordering. As a result, the distributor developed a pharmacy ordering software application and selected a member of Datalogic's PowerScan™ family of products to streamline the prescription reordering process for their customers while reducing errors.

The Challenge

Errors in pharmaceutical reordering are documented sources of negligence in the healthcare industry and can lead to patient endangerment and malpractice suits for healthcare facilities, physicians, and pharmaceutical companies. Despite this reality, many healthcare environments still use a traditional reordering system. Traditional reordering occurs when a nurse discovers a patient's medication is below a specific level, pulls off the reorder sticker and then faxes the sticker to a pharmacy. These stickers not only 'gum up' the customer's fax machine, but transmit unclear information to The Medicine Centre's pharmaceutical staff.

The inherent problems of using this traditional method are clear; not only are there substantial opportunities for data capture and transmission errors, but an inefficient use of valuable resources. According to Justin Funk, The Medicine Centre's Vice President of Information Technology, "We wanted a solution to completely eliminate opportunities for error and to save customers time on the ordering process by reducing inefficiencies on both ends that come from a traditional reordering system."

The Solution

Funk determined that a wireless bar code system and a tailored software application in concert would facilitate a quick, error-free reordering process. In order to be successful, The Medicine Centre needed to find a scanner that met the following criteria:

Cordless with long range capabilities

Highly durable and capable of surviving drops to floor surfaces

Reliable and intuitive for any nurse to use

Centralized, 99.9% up time (regardless of power and internet outages)

After experimenting with different long range wireless bar code scanners, Funk selected a product from Datalogic's PowerScan family, a line of premium rugged industrial handheld scanners. The scanner was chosen because of its sufficient wireless range, which was able to communicate with a personal computer more than 200 feet away and around several corners. The PowerScan family of products also features the patented Green Spot technology for good read confirmation, which is ideal in healthcare environments as the PowerScan reader can be silenced when used around sleeping patients. As an industrial family, all PowerScan products are made with enhanced durability.

The Medicine Centre worked with Data Capture Solutions, a Datalogic EASEOFBIZ Quality Partner, to test and purchase the PowerScan scanners. According to Funk, "Data Capture Solutions assisted me in developing my vision of a wireless ordering device that would be durable, reliable, and easy enough for any nurse at any medical facility to use." The St. Joseph Living Center in Windham, CT, USA was selected as the pilot site for testing.

During testing, The Medical Centre adopted a system where each prescription container was labeled with a bar code containing only the prescription number to protect HIPPA laws. When the prescription reached a specified low level, the nurse scanned the bar code and the information was transmitted to the nurse's station and The Medicine Centre instantaneously. After only one month, the testing was deemed a success and The Medicine Centre purchased the PowerScan readers. They even expanded their scanner usage to include Datalogic's Gryphon™ scanners for their smaller customers.

The Results

The new prescription reordering system has created benefits that both The Medicine Centre and its customers enjoy today. The selection of the PowerScan readers has not only eliminated frustrations and problems with faxing reorders, but has streamlined the entire prescription reordering process. The technology has been readily adopted by the nurses in the long term care facility and has been praised as being 'innovative' and 'time saving'.

As a pharmaceutical distributor, The Medicine Centre has been able to use this new system as a unique selling point for potential customers. Funk stated, "It's a great marketing piece for us and a way to differentiate our business." In addition, Funk discussed the fact that their ability to meet the diverse needs of each nursing home through the versatility of the product lines from both of Datalogic's PowerScan and Gryphon product families was key to the project's long term success.

Customer

The Medicine Centre

Industry

Healthcare

Sub-Industry

Pharmaceutical Manufacturing & Distribution

Application

Document Handling

Country

United States

Datalogic Products

PowerScan™ Family

Datalogic Partner

Data Capture Solutions