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Help Us Calculate the ROI for Health-Care Asset Tracking

On Jan. 5, 2011, my mother fell on the ice outside her home and broke her ankle. While in the hospital, she suffered a stroke, so I've spent a lot of time in hospitals and rehabilitation facilities over the past month.

I can report that the care she has been receiving is first-rate, but that signs of inefficiency are evident everywhere. Equipment in my mother's hospital room, for instance, was marked with handwritten signs that said "Return to 14th Floor," and all types of assets were scattered about the hallways. I saw one of the mobile workstations that the nurses use sitting near an elevator, with a piece of paper taped to its screen indicating that the machine was broken and should be picked up by the folks that fix such things. Apparently, it hadn't been.



I'm sure the little things I noticed were just the tip of the iceberg. Hospitals are often big, bustling places that serve food, clean laundry, deliver drugs, monitor patients 24 hours a day, operate on people and so on. Having written and edited so many stories about hospital operations over the past several years, I look at things differently now whenever I am at a medical center, and I can see what an enormously complex undertaking running one must be. While most do an outstanding job, new technology will enable them to do that same job—or better—and at a lower cost.

RFID Journal's goal has always been to help companies, government agencies and other organizations employ radio frequency identification technologies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies, and hospitals have seen significant benefits from utilizing RFID-based real-time location systems (RTLS) to track mobile equipment and assets. Now, we'd like to create an industry benchmark by surveying those using RTLS

solutions in hospitals and clinics, to ask them about the benefits they see, and then use this information to create a return-on-investment (ROI) calculator that other hospitals can employ to forecast their own benefits.

We did this successfully with our RFID Fashion Retail ROI Calculator, which enables apparel retailers to plug in information regarding their stores—the number of items on the sales floor, the amount of goods in the back room, their margin and so forth—and project what their ROI would be.

To do the same for hospitals, we first need to collect baseline data to inform the calculator's assumptions. If you have deployed an RTLS within a hospital setting, please help us by filling out a short survey. If you would like a copy of the calculator and report, we will send it to you if you provide an e-mail address upon completing the survey. (Feel free to use a Gmail or Yahoo address to protect the anonymity of your organization, if you prefer.) All information submitted will be kept confidential, and will only be used in aggregate form, in order to help us forecast the ROI for other hospitals.

To take the survey, please [click here](#). I believe this effort will go a long way toward helping hospitals, like those that treated my mother, do a better job of caring for patients, while also lowering their overall costs.

Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link below. To read more of Mark's opinions, visit the RFID Journal Blog, the Editor's Note archive or RFID Connect.



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