Developing an RFID Strategy for Health Care

Mark Roberti
Founder and Editor
RFID Journal
Infrastructure vs Point Solution

• A point solution solves one problem:
  – Controls access to restricted area, speeds up payment, automates a specific task

• Infrastructure can be used for many applications
  – Think of cell networks (calls, texting, web surfing, etc.)
Think infrastructure

• Each health care provider’s goal should be to build an RFID infrastructure that:
  – Enables collection of data on everything mobile within the facility or campus (equipment, people, etc.)
  – Supports multiple applications and integrates into multiple backend systems
  – Enhances the providers overall goals (reduce costs and boost patient outcomes)
  – Is able to scale and adapt to changing needs
Create a cross functional team

• All stakeholders must be involved to ensure that the RFID infrastructure meets their needs, including:
  – Engineering/Operations
  – Materials handling
  – Supply chain/logistics
  – Doctors and Nurses
  – Finance
  – Information technology
Educate stake holders

• Providing an understanding of the following will help committee members make better decisions:
  – What are other health care providers doing with RFID?
  – What other industries are employing RFID in similar ways and what benefits are they getting?
  – What types of RFID are available and how do they match up with our requirements?
Common Operational Issues

• Nurses spend 30-90 minutes per week searching for equipment
• Biomedical staff spend about 40 hours per week searching for equipment
• Asset utilization rates are often around 50%
• Money is wasted on unneeded rental equipment
• Staff spend time manually tracking the temperature of refrigerators for regulatory compliance
Reduced Search Times

- San Joaquin Community Hospital in San Joaquin, Ca., saw search times for PCA pumps go from an average of 23 minutes to less than 5 minutes
  - rfidjournal.com/article/view/7434

- Union Hospital in Terre Haute, IN, has saved labor hours equivalent to one full-time employee since deploying an RTLS.
  - rfidjournal.com/article/view/7414
Improved Asset Utilization

• At San Joaquin Community Hospital in San Joaquin, Ca., utilization rose from 50% to nearly 80% for PCA pumps, and from 40% to more than 60% for IV pumps

rfidjournal.com/article/view/7434
Improved Asset Utilization

• Wayne Memorial Hospital found, after deploying an RTLS, that it was utilizing only 60% of the oxygen pumps it owned, so it purchased 50 fewer than planned, thereby saving $275,000. rfidjournal.com/article/view/3199

• Mission Hospital in Mission Viejo, Ca., saw asset utilization rates rise 7 percent after deploying an RTLS. rfidjournal.com/article/view/8091
Reduced Capital Spending

• Health First, a Florida hospital network, saved $300,000 because it did not need to purchase 100 replacement infusion pumps
  rfidjournal.com/article/view/7713

• Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston expects to save $300,000 a year from using an RTLS to track 8,000 devices
  rfidjournal.com/article/view/3931
Reduced Rental Spending

• Bon Secours Richmond Health System saves $2 million each year from its RTLS as a result of drastically reducing the amount of rental equipment utilized by the company's four hospitals.

rfidjournal.com/article/view/7259
Reduced Regulatory Labor

- University Hospital in upstate NY installed a temperature-monitoring system in some 100 refrigerators that store pharmaceuticals, vaccines and bone and tissue samples.
- Manually temperature recording eliminated – rfidjournal.com/article/view/5013
Map out common processes

• What are the processes in our facility from receipt of materials to delivery to patients?
• Ask stakeholders to identify problem areas
• Consider whether RFID can help solve those problems or whether other technology is needed or would be more effective or cheaper
Draw up a list of key requirements

- What needs to be tracked and where
- Over what distance do items need to be tracked?
- What location accuracy is required?
Choose the right technology

- Select the right type of RFID that will meet the vast majority of your requirements.
- You will likely need one active system and one passive system
Set Up Working Groups

Each group should focus on 1 of the following:

• IT issues
• Prioritizing pilots/deployments
• Vendor selection (primary and secondary)
• Creating a global RFID policy
• Managing change (including training)
• Tech support
How to prioritize projects

Create criteria for prioritizing, including

• Relative ease of the project
• Potential return on investment
• Importance of project to company’s goals
• Regulatory compliance
• Safety and environmental issues
Begin the rollout in one location

- Make sure the technology works
- Get the integration piece right
- Get the business process change right
- Quantify the benefits
- Document the deployment
- Roll out the application to additional sites
- Repeat until the infrastructure is complete
Questions?

Mark Roberti
Founder and Editor
RFID Journal
Mark.Roberti@rfidjournal.com
THANK YOU