

Case Study

When Minutes Matter Most: Time-saving BlackBerry Solution Helps with Organ Donation Process

LifeSource

Company: LifeSource is a not-for-profit organization that manages all aspects of organ and tissue donation.

Industry: Life Sciences

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small-Medium Enterprise (120 employees)

Size of Deployment: 75 BlackBerry devices

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Business Intelligence, Workflow and Approvals (ERP)

BlackBerry Partner Solution: mDB Enterprise from mBiztech

Business Challenge: LifeSource staff used cell phones, pagers and laptops to keep up with the logistics of organ and tissue donations. But in a business when every minute counts, they needed a simpler, faster process. An approach that would help them update schedules for on-call LifeSource teams and external clinical partners who are essential to the organ donation process.

Solution: The BlackBerry Enterprise Solution™ coupled with mDB Enterprise from mBiztech replaced laptops and cell phones with a wireless solution that pushes back end data to users. Call schedules for on-call LifeSource staff and clinical teams are pushed from the organization's SQL server to BlackBerry® devices so users do not have to look up or request information.

Results:

- Secure, IT-friendly administration
- Streamlined communications
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Time-saving data access
- Converged device

The Challenge: Simplify and Accelerate the Delivery of Logistical Information

LifeSource nurses and administrators are experts in extreme multi-tasking. As the frontline in the organ donation process, they work in scenarios where every minute counts. Coordinating the logistics of life-saving transplants means juggling constantly changing details over a period of 16 to 36 hours, and communicating with numerous people, including donor and recipient families, patients, hospitals, surgeons and federal organizations.

In 2005, LifeSource deployed the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution to reduce their users' dependence on multiple technologies, simplify group communications, and make it easier to access critical back end data. Specifically, they wanted to wirelessly automate their call scheduling system – the roster of on-call staff, in a descending priority list – with a third party data solution for BlackBerry®.

"Once an organ is placed, our staff coordinate the surgical teams, plus everything from arranging a cab across town for a transplant surgeon to flying in recovery teams," says Brian Lunde, Information Systems Manager. "They need to contact federal agencies for organ sharing and can be placing multiple organs with people in a variety of locations. Many organs must be transplanted within four to six hours – and we knew anything we could do to reduce the amount of time they spent looking up information would help."

Why BlackBerry?

Often it's an experience with a failed technology that paves the way for a winning solution. LifeSource had already experimented with Treo, iPAQ and Windows® CE devices. "We learned that hardware was an issue when it came to updating and sending back end data," says Lunde. "The server component we had already built to push down call schedules had its problems because synching our back end system on other devices was cumbersome."

For the most part, nurses and administrators had to access call schedules on the company Intranet through their laptops. This meant printing everything in the morning before they left home, or trying to access the company VPN from a hospital, which was not always easy.

Wireless Push: A key reason LifeSource chose the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution was the way email and data is pushed to users without requiring any interaction on their part. "The ability to wirelessly push data was one of our business requirements," says Lunde. "Of the solutions we tried, the BlackBerry Enterprise Server® gave us the most control. BlackBerry architecture and its push technology gave us more confidence in reaching our technology requirements."

Security: Equally important was the ability to maintain the privacy and security of patient and hospital information by taking advantage of the BlackBerry Solution's advanced security model. "When you look at the security features of BlackBerry – the Triple DES encryption and the ability to lock the device from a centralized server – you know that this level of granular administration is going to be a bonus," says Lunde.

Ease of Administration: A flexible, IT-friendly solution was paramount since Lunde's team had already experienced the pitfalls of troubleshooting hardware and manual, person-to-person deployment. "It was a big factor that we could do wireless provisioning for the devices over-the-air with the BlackBerry Enterprise Server v4.0," says Lunde. "We operate across three states and it would have been impossible to deploy the devices with a wired approach when people are only in the office twice a month."

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~ BRIAN LUNDE, Information Systems Manager, LifeSource

Partner Profile:



Company: mBiztech

ISV Preferred Partner that provides a suite of out-of-the-box solutions for BlackBerry, including:

- mDB Enterprise to enable BlackBerry access to enterprise database systems such as IBM® Lotus® Domino®, Oracle®, SQL Server and DB2
- mForms for developing custom forms and Data Capture applications
- TrackBerry for location based tracking with BlackBerry

Featured Product: mDB Enterprise

Application Type: Business Intelligence, Workflow and Approvals (ERP)

Services:

- Installation and configuration
- Custom forms development
- Problem-solving

Business Value:

"mBiztech was heavily involved with our integration and a lot of our success, and the speed of our deployment, falls back on them for how quickly they responded to us and our needs."

~BRIAN LUNDE, Information Systems Manager, LifeSource

Third-party Data Solution Takes the Legwork Out of Scheduling

LifeSource looked at a variety of companies before choosing mBiztech to wirelessly automate their call schedules. Once again, it was ease of deployment that governed Lunde's choice. "mDB Enterprise seemed easy to install, and with only two IT people on staff and 140 people to support, I am always looking for the simplest administration."

The mDB Enterprise solution means users no longer have to look up who is on call during a donation. Using the mDB Enterprise database monitoring technology, updated call schedules are regularly pushed from the company's SQL server to the BlackBerry devices. Nurses and administrators now receive the most current schedules – for internal LifeSource staff and external parties such as surgeons and hospital teams – without having to login through their laptops or consult a pile of paper.

Because mBiztech and Lunde's team knew that radio signals are not always permitted near equipment in hospitals, they were able to take advantage of the offline component of the mDB Enterprise solution. Users working in hospital ICU units can still check data cached on their BlackBerry devices so the solution always remains useful.

"Before, the information was often out-of-date," says Lunde. "People switched their schedules daily and hourly, but it was rare that this information actually got pushed to the right people. So, with BlackBerry we reduced a lot of the double checking that used to be part of the process."

"Call schedules on the BlackBerry device save our team a lot of grief in the long run," says Diane Johnson, Regional Procurement Manager and someone who has coordinated organ donations for LifeSource over the past eight years. "We used to have to print everything off of a web site and then carry it around with us all day long – and you never knew if the information was right without making a series of phone calls."

Having the most current data at their fingertips means nurses and administrators aren't wasting time calling people to participate in the process when they are not available. This is especially true of transplant surgeons, who may be out-of-town or on vacation. Johnson explains, "It's important that we don't use up valuable time calling the wrong people."

Streamlining Communications

Choosing the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution means that LifeSource can utilize several of the built-in BlackBerry device features – which streamline communications and reduce the number of devices in the field.

Email has made an enormous difference to the way nurses and administrators communicate. Before, when a referral came in they would have to make up to six phone calls to let everyone know the donation process was starting. Now, they send one email to everyone alerting them to the start of the process and about key steps along the way. Johnson estimates that this improvement alone reduces 30 minutes of phone calls to one 30-second email.

“It’s terrific having my email with me,” says Johnson. “With BlackBerry, I use my time so much better as I’m shuttling between facilities. It takes away the hour or two I used to spend at the end of every day catching up on my email.”

The amount of equipment LifeSource staff carry to a hospital has also been reduced. Laptops are used far less, since call schedules are available on the BlackBerry device. They no longer need to carry a separate cell phone because their BlackBerry devices have an integrated phone. Although two-way pagers are still used in some remote areas, they are used less often.

Activity	Before	After: With BlackBerry and mBiztech Solution
Upfront notification to donation team members	Up to 30 minutes required to individually call each person	Approximately 30 seconds to one minute to send a group email
Reviewing call schedules	Frustration of carrying a laptop, finding an Internet connection, and printing off hard copies	Simple, direct access to accurate schedules pushed to devices with no need for paperwork
Managing email	Hours spent at the end of each day catching up on email	Gains of one to two productive hours/day by managing email on the go



Results

Secure, IT-friendly Administration: By taking advantage of simplified administrative features in the BlackBerry Enterprise Server, LifeSource was able to wirelessly provision devices, remotely update software, and manage the security of lost or stolen devices. "The wireless provisioning aspects of BlackBerry was huge for us – we'd be months behind in the deployment if we had to wait for people to bring their devices in," says Lunde.

Time-saving Data Access: The ability to wirelessly update and push call schedules to people working in the field, even offline, saves time and ensures accuracy. "People's lives change all the time," says Johnson. "Knowing that we can get at the most current scheduling information with our BlackBerry devices helps us reach staff more efficiently during the donation process."

Streamlined Communications: Offering users push-based email makes it easier and faster to communicate with the group of people involved with the organ donation. "It's much easier to broadcast information out with an email than it is on a pager or using a cell phone," says Lunde.

Fewer Devices in the Field: The all-in-one BlackBerry device has reduced the need for laptops, pagers and cell phones. LifeSource staff carry less paperwork because information is available digitally. "Instead of being tethered to laptops or buried in paper, they've gained some freedom from all the technology on the BlackBerry device," declares Lunde.

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