

BlackBerry Case Study - Health Care



BlackBerry Solution Helps Hospice Provider Gather Patient Information at Point of Care

Odyssey Health Care

Odyssey HealthCare is one of the largest providers of hospice care in the United States. The team of caregivers provides palliative care to patients in their homes, nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities and in Odyssey's own facilities.

Success On BlackBerry

Industry: Health Care

Region: Americas

Company Size: Large Enterprise – 6,500 employees

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Field Service, CRM & Dispatch Operations

BlackBerry Alliance Member Solution:
AppMobilizer™ by Media Sourcery

Challenge

Odyssey HealthCare needed a way to electronically capture patient visit information to meet Federal reporting regulations and also cut down on the amount of paperwork the company was processing every day.

Solution

Media Sourcery used their AppMobilizer solution on the BlackBerry smartphone to capture clinical information at the point of care. Home caregivers used BlackBerry smartphones with an electronic Home Health Aide Visit Form and Symptom Assessment Survey to enter patient care information; that data is then transferred to a back end database for reporting and billing purposes. After an automatic check for data accuracy, the visit records are automatically entered into Odyssey's McKesson Horizon system for billing.

Odyssey's Results

- Gather patient information at point of care
- Less Paper, reduced administration, faster billing
- Improved working conditions for staff
- Company is better positioned to meet new requirements

The Challenge: Efficiently Capture Patient Information at the Point of Care

Odyssey HealthCare, like all health care organizations in the US, is required to comply with reporting regulations that often change and are updated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This reporting requires very detailed information about the activities carried out.

Faced with this compliance challenge, Odyssey HealthCare needed a quick, highly secure solution to help them manage the volumes of paperwork about to be processed. Home care workers were filling out long forms by hand and then driving them back to Odyssey HealthCare's field offices, where Odyssey staff would key the information into its reporting database.

"Adding to this challenge was the fact that we'd just acquired a new company that did not use the same McKesson system that we used," says Bob Hansen, Director, Information Systems Application Delivery. "Catching them up to our billing and reporting system would have been extremely difficult in the timeframe."

Without a viable workaround, this new division of the business would have been up to three months behind in collecting data and reporting it. "That's three months of home visit notes piling up with no ability to bill and no revenue coming into the company for that division," says Hansen.

Why the BlackBerry Solution?

Odyssey HealthCare carefully looked at its options for automating record keeping in the field. One approach they piloted involved using laptops with software that tied directly into the McKesson database.

"What we needed was a simple solution to capture the details of visit notes in digital form," says Hansen. "For many of the tasks our mobile workforce performs, a solution on a handheld would be more appropriate than putting a full version of the application on a laptop in the field."

Odyssey asked Media Sourcing to build a Visit Note application for use on the BlackBerry smartphone. Odyssey had already standardized mobile email communications on the BlackBerry solution for its executives and senior managers. The combination of the BlackBerry smartphone, with its small, easy to carry size and its multi functional features, and the Media Sourcing AppMobilizer solution, fit Odyssey's mobile healthcare workforce.

The prestige of having a BlackBerry smartphone also appealed to care workers, who were given this tool by the company. The BlackBerry smartphone became a new perk of the job, not only making their work easier, but reflecting their importance to Odyssey.

"It's more like an extension of the field team's communication abilities," says Hansen. "We knew our care workers were more likely to take the BlackBerry smartphone into a patient's home to complete their visit notes, whereas the use of a laptop likely meant the care worker would complete the visit note much later in the day based on handwritten notes."

Hansen also stresses the value of the security features of the BlackBerry solution and the way it accommodates applications like Media Sourcing that can capture data right at the source.

"The data on the BlackBerry smartphone avoids all the paper entry, so we're seeing faster turnaround times for billing. We could never have made our new sites compliant in time without using this BlackBerry solution."

~ Bob Hansen, Director, Information Systems Application Delivery, Odyssey HealthCare

The Solution.

Company:
Media Sourcing

- Simply mobilizes Enterprise, custom and data warehouse applications
- Enables delivery of data that integrates with end user software
- Headquartered in Austin, Texas

Application Type:
Field Service, CRM & Dispatch Operations

“The BlackBerry smartphone has been getting a lot of favorable feedback, from our caregivers to our management teams. They’re all excited about the potential and we’ve just begun to scratch the surface of what we can do.”

~ Bob Hansen, Director, Information Systems Application Delivery, Odyssey HealthCare

A Paper-free Solution

Working with their partner, Media Sourcing, Odyssey HealthCare automated the paper questionnaire that home care workers fill out at patient homes. With the help of the AppMobilizer solution, the long forms became a series of key clicks on the BlackBerry smartphone.

When the data is entered, the AppMobilizer solution is designed to transport it and auto-load it into a custom database at Odyssey HealthCare that captures the information. The information is then almost automatically transferred into the back end database, used for billing and reporting.

“We have that almost immediate data capture step now, which provides reporting on some information that we were not previously capturing digitally,” says Hansen. “The integration of this data that’s being captured by the BlackBerry smartphones directly into our system helps speed up the time from visit to billing data capture.”

The system also sends each mobile care giver a customized list of data about their patients, including patient ID numbers. This not only makes filling out the form faster, but improves data accuracy. “We now have a complete end-to-end solution, from mobile care giver into our billing system and back out to the workers,” says Hansen.

Hansen says it’s been a tremendous advantage to have field data sent directly to their internal database without having any paperwork to manually enter. And it’s also been absolutely essential to getting their newly acquired division up-to-speed, considering they used an entirely different system.

“The data on the BlackBerry smartphone avoids much of the paper entry, so we’re seeing faster turnaround times for billing,” says Hansen. “We could never have made our new sites compliant in time without using this BlackBerry solution.”

Improving Quality of Work for Caregivers

One of the spin off benefits of having an automated process is that it benefits the caregivers. Before, they had to fill out paperwork when they had a chance.

There was also the issue of having to hand deliver completed paperwork to the local office. Since patients can be in rural areas, many caregivers would coordinate meeting each other somewhere along the road to exchange paperwork and cut down the amount of travel both had to do.

“With AppMobilizer and the BlackBerry smartphone, they complete the paperwork, while they’re with the patient,” says Hansen. “They don’t have the added pressure of driving to the home office and being a paper carrier.”

Ultimately, this benefits Odyssey HealthCare as much as the caregivers. “It’s giving them time back,” he says. “From a management perspective that means they are spending more time caring for patients, instead of making time for paperwork.”



“Our home care workers are so excited about having the BlackBerry smartphones. They are not only able to capture their patient visit information electronically, but they also have email and a phone built into one device.”

~ Bob Hansen, Director, Information Systems Application Delivery, Odyssey HealthCare

Odyssey's Results

Gather Patient Information at Point of Care

Odyssey HealthCare was able to efficiently gather patient information at the point of care and, their new division was kept up to speed and ongoing revenue was generated throughout this process.

Less Paper, Reduced Administration, Faster Billing

A paperless form removes the need for data entry, getting information to Odyssey HealthCare's offices faster, which accelerates the billing cycle.

Improved Working Conditions for Staff

Care workers no longer have to complete time consuming paperwork or drive long distances to deliver it, improving the quality of their lives and giving them more time with patients.

Well-positioned to Meet New Requirements

With this solution, Odyssey HealthCare made itself ready to gather a new set of patient information that it believes will help to meet regulations.

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