

Sphere Medical controls spend

Sphere Medical develops and manufactures ground breaking patient monitoring equipment for the critical care environment. Its patented technology has the scope to improve outcomes among critically ill patients by giving clinicians an accurate picture of each patient's status. As the company develops in the healthcare market it needed to ensure effective systems in place to support growth, efficiency and quality compliance. Ellen Irwin, Supply Chain Manager, describes how implementing Science Warehouse's spend management solution has streamlined the purchasing process...

SPHERE

RAISING THE STANDARD
OF CRITICAL CARE

When Ellen Irwin took on the role of Supply Chain Manager at Sphere Medical, one of her first tasks was to find a solution that could automate and consolidate purchasing. "The key drivers were to ensure we had quality-compliant systems and save staff valuable time," says Irwin.

At the time order requests were paper-based and required written authorisation before being manually entered onto a central spreadsheet. As the business grew this process became increasingly time-consuming and provided little visibility of what was being spent.

+ Dedicated industry solution

Sphere Medical was first introduced to Science Warehouse via ERBI – the membership organisation for international life science and healthcare companies. Science Warehouse and ERBI had developed a spend management solution specifically for member companies and Sphere was able to take advantage of this. "Getting access to the contract prices available from all the suppliers in the ERBI Purchasing Scheme via a single system is an important benefit," says Irwin.

“This is an excellent e-procurement tool that meets the needs of both scientists and procurement professionals”



*Elle Irwin, Supply Chain
Manager, Sphere Medical*



+ Time savings

The speed of the process is also important in an environment where getting the right product to the right place at the right time is critical to R&D productivity. Indeed, Irwin estimates that ordering is now 50% faster since the introduction of the Science Warehouse solution. The electronic approval workflow also means users have full sight of their orders and digital authorisation means written signatures are no longer required.



+ Flexibility

With increasingly dynamic working patterns, the 24/7 online availability means management and staff alike can login on the move and browse the catalogue or approve orders at their convenience. The online nature of the solution also meant it was fast to implement with minimal training required for users.

+ Finance system integration

Seamless integration with Sphere Medical's back office finance system was a critical requirement of the project. With direct support from the Science Warehouse Implementation Team the tools are now in place to ensure efficient data transfer to Sage – saving the time that used to be spent manually entering purchase order data onto the system.

+ Quality compliance

As a provider in the healthcare market, quality is at the core of Sphere Medical's operations – extending across the supply chain. Irwin says that, "The solution ensures compliance with Sphere Medical's quality systems. In addition to full control over suppliers and purchase authorisation, a full electronic order trail covers every transaction."

+ Valuable spend management information

In addition to controlling the order process the solution provides valuable spend management information. This allows Sphere to analyse exactly what they are buying and from which suppliers. It provides powerful information when it comes to negotiating deals with suppliers but Irwin also notes that, "Being able to track spend has provided visibility to senior managers and made them more aware of the spend that is going on in their department."

Overall, the view in the company is that the investment in the system has been essential part in supporting the business's development to the next level. Feedback from staff which includes scientists, engineers and management has been very positive.

Irwin says the system is ideal for companies in the healthcare industry, "Using Science Warehouse has enabled us to centralise our purchasing process, and allows our R&D staff to focus on their development work."



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