

It's Not Brain Surgery

HOW INTUITIVE SURGICAL USED CRM TO STREAMLINE OPERATIONS AND INCREASE EFFICIENCY.

Intuitive Surgical was growing rapidly, but its support operations couldn't keep up. Customer service was a highly manual process with lots of paper and a small Access database. Something had to change.

"We could have continued supporting our customers, primarily hospitals, with our old system, but we would have had to hire more administrative staff," says Steve Lucchesi, director of information services for Intuitive, maker of da Vinci, a high-tech surgical robotic device. The other choice was to go with CRM software that would scale as the company continued to grow.

Da Vinci is designed to help surgeons reduce the trauma of very delicate surgery. Because of the life-and-death nature of the end-user application, Intuitive is under a moral and legal mandate to track inventory loop cycles very closely. "The FDA requires us to keep detailed service records," Lucchesi says. So with an increasing number of da Vinci machines going into the field



(the company currently has about 100 deployed), Lucchesi says the case for CRM prevailed.

After looking at Siebel, Vantive, and Amdocs ClarifyCRM, Intuitive selected

mobile application support software, and has a partnership with Clarify.)

Lucchesi says the mobile piece makes it possible for Intuitive sales reps to capture critical data in real time on the use and performance of da Vinci. "Combining this with service and logistics has made us far more efficient," he says. "We have been able to get good quality data on machine parts and performance, while keeping administrative overhead low."

"I can tell you without a doubt that we have saved a lot of money."
—Steve Lucchesi

Clarify, a choice that doesn't surprise analysts. "Clarify has deep roots in field service and support," says Joanie Rufo, an analyst with AMR Research in Boston.

"At first we focused on automating the logging of service calls, dispatch of engineers, and parts logistics," Lucchesi says. Since that initial phase in the spring of 2001, Intuitive has added more features. One of these is a mobile support system for sales reps. "We track number and type of surgical procedures for each machine," Lucchesi says. "Our sales reps are charged with recording this information. They can do that on site using a handheld device and client software from Xora." (Xora makes

He says a modular approach to implementation helped ensure CRM success. "Our immediate need was for service, and we didn't even deploy the entire service piece to begin with." Since then Intuitive has added Clarify's contracts module and sales support, which also includes the mobile functionality from Xora.

Lucchesi says the software earns its keep. "I can't quantify the ROI, since we didn't run cost numbers on service before we put the system in," he says. "I can tell you without a doubt that we have saved a lot of money by keeping our administrative staff low and through increased efficiency."

—Mark Leon

The Payoff

Intuitive Surgical used Amdocs Clarify/CRM to streamline operations and increase efficiency. The three main benefits:

1. Intuitive added more service and sales staff without adding additional administrative staff.
2. The company has achieved greater efficiency in keeping and tracking detailed records on machine parts, service calls, and cycle times.
3. Intuitive sales reps enter data about surgical procedures in real time at the hospital site. With all this information in a central CRM application, Intuitive can produce business intelligence reports that would have been impossible using the old manual system.