

Parity Medical keeping a finger on the digital pulse

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A Wirral MedTech manufacturer is introducing a virtual showroom which will reduce travel time, costs and carbon emissions by 11%.

Parity Medical designs and makes mobile wireless computer carts and specialist clinical computing devices for the NHS and private healthcare sector.

Sales staff collectively travel 150,000 miles per year across the UK and Ireland meeting customers to demonstrate products, sometimes making multiple trips. Additionally a team of engineers travel around 120,000 miles in a year.

Meanwhile, the process of ordering a product for manufacture is manual, time-consuming and open to error.

Working with technology experts from Made Smarter, Parity Medical has identified an off-the-shelf software package which will enable sales staff and customers to have a meeting using an online virtual showroom. The solution also integrates with the company's administrative, sales and production systems.

Parity Medical believes the solution could reduce travel by 30,000 miles and cut its carbon emissions by 11 tonnes per year.

It will also significantly accelerate the initial sales demonstration process from two days to just one hour.

Steve Wood, managing director, said: “The technology will transform our sales process, removing delays and errors, allowing us to get it right the first time – which will make us significantly more efficient. This will increase productivity and accelerate the business's growth.

“The reduced travel translates into lower carbon emissions at a time when sustainability is increasingly important to the industry.

“As a business we have been on a digital journey for a number of years. There has been a fair amount of trial and error. Made Smarter helped us prioritise our needs, focus on the right solution and set us in the right direction.”

The Challenge

Launched by brothers Steve and David Wood from their mum's garage on the Wirral 30 years ago, Parity Medical now operates from a 13,500 square foot premises on the Wirral International Business Park with 50 staff.

The business is on the NHS national framework for procurement of IT hardware, software and services. However, providers and commissioners of NHS services have different workflow patterns, local practices, environmental considerations, decision-making processes and hierarchies, which means every customer has bespoke requirements.

Steve said: “Our first challenge as an organisation is getting hold of the right people and getting a meeting in the diary to discuss potential solutions. This means travelling anywhere in the UK with a van full of kit to demonstrate.

“Once an order is agreed, our sales executive must transcribe the order to sales support, which could take days or weeks, depending on workload. A Bill of Materials is then generated for the production manager who will manually look at

material and workforce to schedule the build. The product is stored, ready to go to the customer.”

With so much manual intervention, errors creep in.

“Sometimes mistakes are spotted after manufacture which means we have to start the process again,” Steve said. “Then there are the occasions when they reach the customer before the error is realised.”

The current process means the sales cycle is long, costly, time-consuming and logistically challenging.

“Our current system works, but it needs to work smarter,” Steve said.

The Solution

At the heart of the solution is DriveWorks software which will enable Parity Medical to create their own virtual showroom.

Here the sales team and customer can login to a shared portal to design, engineer and configure an order based on a catalogue of own-designed and third-party products.

Behind the scenes, as each component is selected it is automatically added to a Bill of Materials, which is imported into the Sage200 MRP system and automatically scheduled for production.



The Benefits

“To be able to schedule a call with a customer and walk them through the options virtually, we can achieve in one hour what might have taken a two day visit anywhere in the UK or Ireland,” Steve said. “That's a significant gain, not just to us, but to the customer whose time is precious. And it is just the tip of the iceberg. The new system means a product can be designed and configured correctly at the first time of asking.”

By automating the order process, sales personnel are then freed up to explore other sales opportunities.

Steve said: “This solution will have a huge impact on our business, increasing productivity, driving efficiencies, driving down costs, improve control and standardise across the entire business, working from the same data set across all departments. This will help us achieve our ambition of £10m turnover this year, which will be a milestone achievement for our team.”

By reducing travel Parity Medical can play its role in reducing carbon emissions across manufacturing.

“It's fantastic that technology can make such a difference to our business while reducing our impact on the environment and play a part in the UK's ambitions to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050,” Steve said.

The Future

Parity Medical is already exploring how other digital technologies can help the business.

It believes the virtual showroom offers the potential for the business to move into export markets beyond Ireland.

It is also aiming to integrate its quoting system into the solution, and is exploring integrating its customers' and suppliers' systems.

