AIR PRODUCTS

EMPOWERING THE FIELD THROUGH BETTER MOBILE DEVICE MANAGEMENT

QUICK FACTS

Industry
Chemicals – industrial gases and performance materials

Revenue
US$10.1 billion (FY 2011)

Employees
18,900

Headquarters
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Web Site
www.airproducts.com

SAP® Solutions and Services
Afaria® mobile device management solution

A leading supplier of gases, chemicals, equipment, and services, Air Products serves a wide range of customers in industry segments including food and beverage, health and personal care, and transportation. To sustain business growth, it needed an integrated, mobile solution to handle field data. The Afaria® mobile device management solution helped the European healthcare division of Air Products boost field productivity and better meet customer and patient needs.

Key Challenges

- Keep up with business growth and volume
- Gain more control over and securely manage mobile assets across the enterprise
- Enable clinical and administrative remote updates using a variety of mobile devices
- Increase productivity of field technicians
- Distribute, update, and synchronize mobile data and applications quickly and securely

Why SAP Was Selected

- Proven and dependable history with SAP as a long-time customer
- Product functionality closely matched organizational requirements
- Stable platform and established market leadership in mobility management
- Solution specifically built for the mobile environment and highly scalable to changing business needs

Implementation Best Practices

- Clarified expectations and gained support of stakeholders early in the process
- Established strong governance structure for prioritizing development and aligning processes across countries
- Involved field and back office early on
- Implemented an initial pilot that became the blueprint for future deployments
- Integrated process and tool training

Low Total Cost of Ownership

- Reduced system maintenance costs as a result of replacing legacy system
- Realized a swift return on investment
- Minimized training costs by using a train-the-trainer approach and a central team
- Established a global template of requirements, agreed to by all countries
- Reduced outsourcing cost of mobile terminal upkeep by efficiently distributing software

Financial and Strategic Benefits

- More productive field technicians
- Better clinical services through more dependable data and a comprehensive view of the patient situation
- Improved logistics distribution and reduced paperwork through process automation
- Fewer errors, resulting in better data quality and less time spent correcting errors
- More control over assets and more efficient tracking of equipment disposal
- Simplified system management
- Increased IT efficiency

Operational Benefits

Key Performance Indicator	Impact
Employee productivity (in product traceability)	Up 5%
Document processing time	Down 50%
Number of lost assets	Down 50%
Time spent fixing data entry errors	Down 17%
Maintenance cost	Down 15%

"Now that technicians have actual information from our central system, we can react to customer requirements more precisely, give technicians nearly real-time information, and integrate PDA information with our portal."

José Antonio Garcia Espinoso, Project Leader, Air Products

www.sap.com/contactsap

Making Field Technicians More Productive

Whether installing equipment, gathering clinical information, or servicing an installation, field technicians at Air Products work tirelessly to provide the best possible service to customers, who include doctors, patients, and insurance agents. To do so, they need dependable data and the ability to communicate with central teams of professionals. Confined by a nonscalable solution that lacked the functionality to cover field requirements, Air Products needed a new solution that could adapt to its evolving mobility needs and help it better manage front-office activities.

The requirements list was extensive. Sensitive clinical data needed to be secure, even when a mobile device was lost or stolen. Administrative and clinical data entered on-site had to be synchronized with central databases without using intermediate servers. The company also needed to keep a running inventory of mobile devices, fully track assets and equipment disposals, and have access to data about clinical equipment.

The Afaria® mobile device management solution was the frontrunner, ahead of Syclo and custom-built offerings. Built specifically for mobile management, it had a stable technology platform and a proven reputation as a market leader. With Afaria, Air Products could manage mobility across the entire enterprise while simplifying its mobile management infrastructure.

Creating a Blueprint for Future Deployments

After defining product specifications, Air Products conducted an initial pilot to ensure that the new solution met stakeholder expectations, thus allowing it to further refine the solution before deploying it on a larger scale. The pilot became the template for the solution rollout, which has been implemented in Spain, Portugal, France, and Germany to more than 800 field technicians.

Air Products established a strong governance structure to define processes and prioritize tasks and development requests. As a result, the company can effectively align processes across countries and evaluate benefit cases upon implementing a requirement.

Involving Power Users Early On

Power users were involved from the start and were instrumental in identifying IT requirements and delivering training. "Training is key to a successful deployment," says José Antonio Garcia Espinoso, the Air Products project leader. Train-the-trainer training is a mix of business process and tool delivered by power users in local languages. The approach reduces travel costs, contributes to a lower cost of ownership, and has helped make employees receptive to the new solution.

Saving Time with Improved PDA Functionality

Nearly all documents are electronic, except if paper documents are required for legal reasons. Installations are completed using PDA checklists, which substantially reduces paperwork and data inconsistencies. During site visits, technicians complete questionnaires on patient use of prescriptions and machines. Data is synchronized with the central system and can be used to inform clinicians on patient use of prescriptions. Air Products can also better control assets and more easily trace equipment disposal.

Gaining Competitive Advantage Through Better Services

Satisfied with initial deployments, Air Products is moving forward with site implementations. The company continues to refine and enhance the solution as it explores remote management of smart phones and integration of SMS communication and GPS routing for services and deliveries. With Afaria, the company has a solution that can be adapted to changing mobility needs, helping to make it more competitive. "By offering better services and increasing our agility," says Garcia Espinoso, "we have increased our competitive advantage."

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