



Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center Reduces Incident Management Turnaround Time with TrackWise®

Company

In business since 1975, the Houston-based Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is the sixth-largest community blood bank in the United States. With more than 700 employees, The Blood Center serves 170 hospitals and healthcare institutions in 26 counties throughout Texas. To meet the needs of these institutions, The Blood Center collected more than 333,000 units of blood in 2010, conducted approximately 20 blood drives per day and processed more than 1,000 donations daily.

Business Challenge

For years, The Blood Center leveraged a homegrown, paper-based system for managing and reporting incidents with its blood and distribution processes. In the event of an incident, a paper file would be created in one department and ushered to various other groups within the organization – a costly and inefficient process. In dealing with these files, which were not conducive to collaboration, The Blood Center's incident management system had virtually no audit trail and led to lost paperwork or multiple sets of the same paperwork for each involved area. Additionally, the average turnaround time required to complete an incident query lagged significantly at times from several weeks to several months.

Solution and Implementation

Unsatisfied with its paper-based processes and homegrown database, The Blood Center embarked on a project to automate its incident management system and seriously evaluated solutions from multiple software vendors. According to Karen Wooten-Miller, The Blood Center's Quality Assurance Compliance Manager, choosing Sparta Systems' TrackWise quality management software was an easy decision for several reasons:

- **It was user-friendly and required little maintenance:** The Blood Center knew that converting a large number of employees from a paper-based system to an automated system would be a challenge. The TrackWise software itself was user-friendly and easy for employees to learn. Furthermore, because the system would be run by the quality assurance group instead of the IT department, The Blood Center needed it to require as little ongoing maintenance as possible.
- **It had excellent reporting and audit-trail capabilities:** The Blood Center needed a solution that had the ability to comply more efficiently with stringent government regulations. It also wanted to better identify tracking and trending capabilities for anyone or any department who had access to the software.
- **It came with excellent vendor support:** The Blood Center wanted to be able to contact the Sparta Systems' team 24/7 when and if it needed assistance or guidance, both in implementation and day-to-day use.

"On a typical day, every department has its own dashboards open – they know how many projects are active, what needs to be scheduled for approval, what is pending completion and what it past due. They can close the loop on things immediately and at a glance. TrackWise is perfect for us," said Wooten-Miller.

Results

With TrackWise, The Blood Center's incident management system is now fully automated – changing the way incidents are queried, investigated and closed throughout the entire organization. Some of the many benefits The Blood Center has experienced include:

- **Increased efficiency:** The average incident turnaround time has been significantly reduced. Incident completion is now an average of 20 days or less, with delinquencies reduced to less than 5 percent of the total incidents generated monthly. Employees, regardless of department, now have quick access to the data and if something is moving slowly there is the ability to quickly notify and escalate activity on to the next recipient.
- **Convenient incident tracking and trending:** Each department can do its own tracking and trending to create customized, detailed queries and reports.
- **Reliable audit compliance:** According to Wooten-Miller, TrackWise provided the best audit trails that her team had ever seen. It allowed The Blood Center to evaluate reportability to regulatory agencies and identify priority levels quickly.
- **Enhanced collaboration:** Multiple viewers have access to reports, which encourages conversation, collaboration and efficiencies between departments.
- **Eco-friendly:** The Blood Center eliminated the use of massive quantities of paper by automating its incident management system, which significantly contributed to its ongoing green initiative.

Founded in 1994, Sparta Systems, Inc. is the industry leader for Enterprise Quality Management Solutions. Its product, TrackWise®, is used by companies around the world to ensure compliance, improve control, reduce risk and lower costs by consolidating issues and actions, automating workflow, and facilitating trending and reporting. Additional information about Sparta Systems and TrackWise can be found at www.spartasystems.com

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