MEDLINE UNITE DRIVES 800% REVENUE GROWTH WITH FIELD INVENTORY TRANSFORMATION

Expanding into the orthopedic medical device product market isn't easy. Success demands specialized salespeople, a focus on relationships, and the right tools. Read on to discover how one division of a leading OEM unlocked cost savings, efficiency, and growth with transformative visibility and automation.

800%	**5X**	**92%**	**50%**
Revenue growth	Increase in daily case coverage	Field rep adoption	Growth in headcount

MEDLINE UNITE®
FOOT & ANKLE

A division of Medline Industries in Northfield, IL

THE SITUATION

Medline Industries is the largest privately-held manufacturer and distributor of medical devices and surgical products. In 2012, the company expanded into orthopedic devices by founding its Medline UNITE® Foot & Ankle division.

From 2013 to 2017, the division sold through Medline's direct salesforce. The strategic decision was made to shift to a distributorship model that could meet the needs of surgeons while working in partnership with Medline's sales team to leverage hospital and surgery center relationships. This channel shift drove a need for reporting and inventory traceability that internal systems could not offer.

At the time, cases were handled via multiple spreadsheets and SAP. The method presented serious challenges. Because of how SAP functions, most sales and inventory activities were tracked based on previous invoice activities, which happen long after surgery is completed. Sales and inventory data and the associated trends could lag by 30, 60, or even 90 days. This meant the team had no comprehensive real-time data. To add to the challenge, operations staff were extremely busy tracking and wrangling inventory daily.

Daily case volume was seven to 10 cases. How could Medline UNITE grow daily cases — and sales — while struggling to compile activity, track inventory, and compensate for limited visibility?

PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

- Lack of visibility into upcoming surgical cases, inventory needs, and timely PO collection from hospitals

- Better management of field inventory across distribution, reps, and product line

- Address inefficient processes, including tracking and shipping

- Reduce average order processing time

- Automate manual processes

- Transform/Eliminate spreadsheet-based processes

- Decrease staff strain and frustration

- Prepare processes for growth in case volume

THE SOLUTION

Faced with ongoing struggles and stagnant growth, Medline UNITE began evaluating field inventory management solutions.

Important considerations included field inventory visibility and the potential to save time and money through automated processes, streamlined workflows, seamless integration, and smooth implementation. A distributor sales representative, who had been using ImplantBase with another OEM, recommended the ImplantBase field inventory management software to Medline UNITE's management team.

ImplantBase's field inventory solution provides OEMs and distributors with real-time visibility and the ability to execute optimal inventory movement through efficient workflows and powerful search and reporting tools. The easy-to-use and easy-to-train Android and iOS native mobile app facilitates high adoption rates among reps, who can access information and communicate in real time in the field. In addition, ImplantBase brought critical orthopedic industry expertise and a proven record of success with implementations for major OEMs and distributors.

Medline UNITE considered ImplantBase against several other solutions. Ultimately, Medline UNITE chose ImplantBase for three reasons:

• SAP integration experience. ImplantBase staff already hadexperience integrating with SAP, along with 100% success in 20+ other ERP/Financial integrations.

• Positive reviews on functionality and adoption. The sales operations functionality of ImplantBase's software had received high reviews from salespeople. As sales reps were to be primary users, their user experience would be a major driver toward high adoption rates.

• Shipping notifications. ImplantBase's shippingnotification technology enabled Medline UNITE's team to easily track inventory with the ability to send information to multiple reps automatically.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation proceeded through several steps, handled seamlessly by the ImplantBase team.

1. Data gathering. ImplantBase and Medline UNITE's project teams worked together to gather and organize the master data for the account. Templates made it simple to capture information about surgeons, products, customers and accounts, and the makeup of the sales organization.

2. Process input and optimization. ImplantBase used their proven Business Process Analysis methodology to document the details of Medline UNITE's specific business processes. The ImplantBase team quickly learned Medline UNITE's key needs and unique workflows. This allowed them to translate software functionality into user processes that everyone could easily understand. This established how ImplantBase would function within the Medline UNITE's business.

3. Deployment and rollout. Based on the industry standard developed by the Project Management Institute (PMI), ImplantBase managed the project from initiation to project closeout.

Once everything was up and running, Medline UNITE took the "train the trainer" approach. Specific team members learned the software well enough to train distributors. This allowed their internal team to develop better relationships with their distributors while ensuring the field reps learned ImplantBase the 'Medline UNITE' way.

Medline UNITE's high adoption rate can be traced to app usability, and also to its approach to distributors. Distributors are given 90 days to incorporate ImplantBase into their processes using a phased approach. The Medline UNITE team learns how distributors manage cases — whether a sales rep does it or if it's sent to a customer support person — and adjusts training to the process.

"We encountered some initial resistance with a few reps, but once they realized they could access what they needed as well as reconcile and have live visibility to PO numbers and handle other processes, they quickly came on board."
— Jake Brush

KEY OUTCOMES

In the four years since implementing ImplantBase's field inventory management solution, Medline UNITE has seen key outcomes including:

800% 800% revenue growth with only a 50% growth in headcount

500% 500% growth in surgical case volume

92% 92% field adoption

2MIN Decrease in average order entry time from 12-20 minutes per case to two minutes.

Medline UNITE has realized these benefits during a period of steady growth. Inventory visibility within the mobile app has driven further adoption because the sales reps don't need to rely on staff to update them on shipments, inventory request status, or returns. This also significantly reduced the burden on Medline's people by eliminating the need to provide updates.

"We thought we knew a lot about field inventory management until we got the ImplantBase solution. Just rolling it out was transformative for visibility and daily operations—but things got even better after we changed our workflows to incorporate some of the best practices in ImplantBase."
— Jake Brush

ABOUT IMPLANTBASE:

ImplantBase helps orthopedic medical device companies drive better performance through visibility and control of inventory, sales ops, and supply chain to increase profitability and accelerate growth.

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