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CASE STUDY

Medbuy, Canada's Largest GPO, Implements *i-Sight Complaints Management Software*

"We needed a way to incorporate the entire process into our website and automate it to provide better tracking and reporting, as well as making it easier for us to use that information at contract decision time."

OTTAWA, Canada – July 14, 2004 – Customer Expressions, a leading provider of complaints management software, case management software and corrective action (CAPA) management solutions, today announced that Canada's largest group purchasing organization, has selected the i-Sight complaints management software package. Once the rollout is complete, the i-Sight complaints management software will enable the initiation, collaboration and resolution of complaints between Medbuy, member hospitals and their suppliers, while providing each party with meaningful statistical information.

THE CHALLENGE

As Canada's largest and most successful medical group purchasing organization (GPO), Medbuy prides itself on listening to, and learning from, its members. The fast-growing, not-for-profit organization works closely with some 30 health-care institutions from coast to coast, representing more than 300 separate hospitals and other medical facilities. On their behalf, Medbuy negotiates group purchasing contracts with a wide range of suppliers -- everything from drug and medical equipment manufacturers to telecommunications providers and travel agencies. The benefits for Medbuy's members include significant cost savings, greater consistency and improved market intelligence, all of which contribute to better and more cost-effective patient care.

Medbuy was limited in its ability to provide those same members with a simple and efficient means of submitting feedback concerning specific products or vendors. If, for example, a hospital wished to report a shipment of mislabeled or broken pill bottles, a hospital staff member would have to download a Microsoft Word document from Medbuy's website, fill in the required information and fax or email it back to Medbuy, which in turn would forward it to the vendor. The vendor would then be expected to look into the problem, come up with an appropriate response and report back to Medbuy so that Medbuy could advise the health-care facility.

"It was a very manual process," explains D.J. Robins, Medbuy's Manager of Information Systems. "We needed a way to incorporate the entire process into our website and automate it to provide better tracking and reporting, as well as making it easier for us to use that information at contract decision time."

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THE SOLUTION

Robins and his colleagues began by evaluating several competing complaints management software packages but rejected all of them as unsuitable. "They weren't flexible enough," he says. "They were designed mainly for help desks, which means that you need quite a lot of training to use them. Also, the information they were collecting wasn't relevant to our needs, and they weren't very customizable."

Disappointed by what he had seen, Robins contemplated developing his own in-house complaints management software, even though doing so would take longer than implementing a ready-made solution. Fortunately, he says, an Internet search one afternoon led him to i-Sight from Customer Expressions, a web based complaints management solution that makes it easy to capture, manage and learn from customer complaints and end-user feedback. Robins contacted Joe Gerard of Customer Expressions, who promptly arranged an online demonstration. It didn't take Robins long to come to a decision: from Medbuy's perspective, i-Sight was just what the doctor had ordered.

"About 15 minutes into the demo," Robins says, "we knew that the i-Sight complaints management software was going to meet our needs. The most important factor is that it is extremely customizable. It also fits into the architecture of our website. That mattered to us because it meant that we could keep the same look and feel, and it wouldn't be a big issue for our users to become familiar with it."

Medbuy is currently rolling out the new complaints management solution to the approximately 400 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy buyers across Canada. He is clearly excited about the benefits for Medbuy, its members and its suppliers. In the past, Robins says, members often neglected to report minor problems because the process was time-consuming and inconvenient. There was also no simple means of identifying common problem areas and patterns of complaints. Analyzing a year's worth of data to determine which vendors were associated with the greatest number of problems would require several days of effort by two staff members. By contrast, the new system will allow Medbuy to generate such reports instantaneously.

"Sometimes you'll get a situation where the supplier says a problem is specific to one shipment and doesn't affect anyone else," Robins says. "But with i-Sight, our members will be able to search by vendor or by product and access the actual problem reports, so they can see for themselves." But it's not just the health-care facilities that are looking forward to the new system. Robins says that vendors like it, too. "It's an easier process for everyone involved and it's going to help them to improve their quality." With the new system, users simply fill in an online form and click to send it to Medbuy. Each complaint is forwarded to an appropriate vendor representative, who can then enter a response. Copies of the response are sent automatically to the member and to Medbuy. Once the problem has been resolved, a report is also sent to the committee of pharmacy professionals that is responsible for choosing suppliers and negotiating contracts. Yet as sophisticated as the system is, it's also extremely easy to use. Rather than an extensive -- and potentially expensive -- face-to-face training program, Medbuy figures that most users will require only a simple 30-minute web seminar, supplemented with online documentation.

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THE SOLUTION

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How satisfied is Robins with i-Sight from Customer Expressions? One indication: he’s already starting to think about deploying i-Sight across the full-range of products and services handled by Medbuy. “In a few years, we could be talking close to 10,000 users across the country,” he says. Adds Robins: “All of the people at Customer Expressions have been dynamite to work with -- highly professional, courteous and quick to respond. We’re very happy with both the company and the product.”

About Medbuy Corporation

Medbuy Corporation is Canada's largest national medical group purchasing organization, owned by 17 of the country's leading health care institutions. Medbuy contracts for the purchase of medical supplies in four categories - operating room, medical imaging, medical surgical and pharmaceuticals. Medbuy has also developed programs to strengthen the qualitative aspects of the GPO, delivering extensive value added benefits in such areas as education, product standardization and information sharing. For more information, visit www.medbuy.ca

About Customer Expressions

Based in Ottawa, Canada, Customer Expressions(www.customerexpressions.com) is a leading provider of web-based case management solutions for regulators and enterprises focused on quality assurance and customer service. Customer Expressions has gained an international reputation for best-in-class software that enables managers to improve customer retention and profitability. The privately held firm provides i-Sight, integrated case management software for complaint management, corrective and preventive action management (CAPA Management), compliance monitoring, and other business processes that require case management.

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