WHEN TIME CRITICAL
IS LIFE CRITICAL

COOK MEDICAL JAPAN
CASE STUDY

AT A GLANCE

Industry
Medical

Canon products used
IRIS

Benefits

- An OCR that recognises Japanese characters and multiple languages

- Automatically scans and processes 1200+ complex PO's daily

- Extracts unstructured data into orderly indices

- Captures multiple document types including hand written faxes and converts to the required format.

- On call software developers to refine the complex solution

Cook Medical has been placing life-saving equipment into the hands of surgeons worldwide since 1963. With more than 16,000 products across 13 lines, hospitals in 135 countries rely on the company's swift, safe delivery of its minimally invasive equipment, which can sometimes literally mean the difference between life and death.

The Challenge

When Cook Medical Japan made a fundamental change in their go-to market strategy, they knew they needed to make a change in the way they processed purchase orders.

"The volume of purchase orders was expected to increase significantly," explains Jithendra Nair, Cook Medical's Director of IT, Asia Pacific. "Purchase orders were received by fax at the rate of around 400 per day. Our new direction meant this figure was about to leap to around 1,200 per day. We knew we would need significantly more operators to cope with the influx or a totally new automated system to deal with it. It was a very complex problem. We looked to Canon to help us find the right technology."

The project was complicated on three levels. Firstly, Cook Medical needed software with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) capabilities to recognise the Kanji character set used in Japan. Secondly, the software also needed to be able to utilise free form technology to extract data from every customer's purchase order, no matter the format or layout, to avoid having to create a template for every single order. Lastly, it was vital to Cook Medical that they could discuss their complex needs directly with the software developers as the project evolved.

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The Solution

With a tight timeframe of just six months to have the new system up and running, it was imperative that not a minute was wasted. Canon's IRIS Xtract, a solution platform which classifies documents, extracts data and transfers it to business process applications, was identified as the only software capable of doing the job.

"The supply of our devices to the surgeons that will use them is exceptionally time-crucial"

Jithendra Nair Cook Medical's Director of IT, Asia Pacific.

The complexity of the project required Canon's software developers to collaborate closely with Cook Medical Japan to customise IRIS Xtract to the company's exact specifications. "Canon Australia sent their project/business analyst from Australia to work directly with their Japanese counterparts. That was tremendously helpful," says Nair.

Since going live in May 2014, IRIS Xtract recognises and processes more than 80 percent of Cook Medical Japan's purchase orders, with the balance immediately

being flagged in red as requiring special attention by the operators, and that's a fantastic result Nair says. "The supply of our devices to the surgeons that will use them is exceptionally time-crucial. So, to have it working this well so soon is fantastic."

The Results

Cook Medical Japan now has a world-class system in place without needing to employ extra staff. Accuracy has also improved as IRIS Xtract captures the maximum amount of correct information first time around.

A further bonus comes by freeing up operators' time to focus more fully on flagged orders, further lowering the error rate and minimising delays in despatching the required device to the hospital that needs it. Continued work with the developers

means that the software can be manipulated constantly to accept purchase orders in any format.

"We will, in the future, look at extending IRIS Xtract to other countries"

Jithendra Nair Cook Medical's Director of IT, Asia Pacific.

"Everyone at Canon Australia was incredibly supportive; they made it as easy as they could for us to manage the project by ensuring we could always talk to their people, despite time differences and so on," sums up Nair. "They were as committed as we were to making the project work. Cook Medical is pleased with the results. We will, in the future, look at extending IRIS Xtract to other countries in the region and look forward to working with Canon Australia".

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