

Overcoming myths around RTLS to achieve successful implementation

While some hospital employees may initially resist the prospect of a real-time locating system (RTLS), hospitals that use them can achieve significant efficiencies and operational improvements. The secret to introducing an RTLS successfully is to effectively communicate with employees regarding the information that will be collected and how it will be used, according to Wavelink.

Alan Stocker, health practice lead, Wavelink, said, “RTLS-enabled staff badges can make some employees feel like they’re being watched and distrusted. However, one of the biggest benefits of this technology is that it can actually improve staff safety. The World Health Organisation estimates that up to 38 per cent of health workers experience physical violence in their career. (1) Reducing this number is essential and RTLS technology is one way to do that.”

With RTLS, staff members can call for help by simply activating the staff duress badge, which lets them get help without drawing attention. Because RTLS lets healthcare organisations see where staff are to a high degree of accuracy, there are no unnecessary delays in providing help when it’s needed.

RTLS can also help improve workplace efficiency by enhancing workflow and communication. Therefore, teams can provide faster response times, deliver a better patient experience, and even locate equipment the moment it’s needed. The time saved could be lifesaving.

Containing infection in healthcare facilities is another area where RTLS can provide benefits, since it provides real-time tracking of medical equipment, staff, and patients. Being able to see which people and equipment have been in contact with each other, and when, makes it easier to control the spread of infections.

However, due to a number of myths regarding RTLS, healthcare employees are reluctant to embrace it. These myths include that RTLS can be used as a punitive monitoring tool, that it requires significant extra work, that implementing it means facilities need to shut down rooms and units, that it interferes with medical equipment, or that it includes bulky badges. None of these are true.

Alan Stocker said, “In fact, RTLS can enhance staff safety and reduce manual work. Infrastructure is installed in minutes. Facilities that choose the right RTLS solution needn’t worry about it interfering with medical equipment. Badges are thin and lightweight, and safe enough for users with a pacemaker or stent, and even pregnant and breastfeeding women. Communicating these benefits to employees could help overcome their fears regarding this technology.”

Wavelink has identified five ways to promote RTLS buy-in among staff:

1. **Communicate.** Discussing the change can help address specific concerns among staff and neutralise any fears.
2. **Educate.** Giving staff lots of information about RTLS will help them understand how it will affect their usual routines and the ways in which it will make their job safer or easier.
3. **Train.** It’s important to provide training so team members know how to use it. This also provides an additional opportunity to dispel myths about RTLS.
4. **Answer.** Team members are bound to have questions and it’s important to answer these honestly and openly. It can also be worthwhile to compile FAQs for the staff intranet or a company-wide email.
5. **Follow up.** Let staff know their opinion is important by following up with surveys and taking action to improve.

Alan Stocker said, “Successfully implementing RTLS technology depends on having each member of the team on board with the technology and why it’s being used. It’s therefore important to communicate openly about the technology and, in particular, to let employees know how it will

improve their work environment.

“Wavelink has partnered with [CenTrak](#) to provide low-impact, high-return RTLS solutions to Australian healthcare organisations. Using RTLS solutions effectively helps healthcare providers streamline workflows, drive higher patient and staff satisfaction, and reduce costs.”

Reference:

(1) http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/workplace/en/