



Astellas Increases Technician Efficiency with Numara® Track-It!®

Background

Astellas Pharma Technologies is the main manufacturing arm of Astellas Pharma Inc, Japan's second largest pharmaceutical company, ranked within the top 25 in the global market. The Astellas group is dedicated to improving the health of people around the world through the provision of innovative and reliable pharmaceuticals. The company is currently seeking to develop breakthrough products in immunology, infectious disease, urology, cardiovascular disease and dermatology.

The Challenge

Creating new, potentially life-saving drugs and supplying them to patients takes many years and involves many different stages and processes. Once a drug has been approved for use, Astellas takes great pride in delivering the products wherever they are needed, whenever they are needed. Employees at Astellas' manufacturing facility in Norman, Oklahoma are working around the clock, seven days a week to ensure uninterrupted supply of safe drugs to people who need them. For this reason, it is imperative that the computer systems work at full capacity, making IT operations a critical factor in delivering Astellas' high-quality drugs to the front line of medical treatment.

Like all pharmaceutical companies selling and manufacturing drugs in the United States, Astellas Pharma Technologies is required to follow rigorous federal rules and good manufacturing practices to make sure the final product delivered to the marketplace is safe. If a system goes down on the production floor in the manufacturing plant and they do not fulfill those requirements, the company could be subject to intense scrutiny or even an audit by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). With that in mind, IT managers at Astellas looked to find an all inclusive, integrated help desk software system that would help meet the company's various compliance needs.

The Astellas Pharma Technologies' help desk team consists of just four staff supporting about 200 users and more than 400 devices. Astellas needed a system that was efficient, easy to configure, simple to use, and provided fast service ticket logging for the dozens of tickets it generates each day. One of the biggest challenges for the help desk team is prioritization. Requests are wide and varied, covering anything from issues with maintaining the company's water filtration systems, all the way down to the fix and patch level for PCs.

IN BRIEF

Company Name

Astellas Pharma Technologies

Industry Sector

Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

The Challenge

- Needed an intuitive system that did not require a lot of training for end-users or technicians
- Simpler, more enhanced work flow process for the help desk team, something that could be quickly modified and customized to their needs
- Provide a faster and more efficient response to customer problems

Why Numara Software

- Flexibility, cost effectiveness, and ease of use
- A simple all inclusive, integrated web-based solution that can be quickly installed and implemented into existing infrastructure
- Automatic email alerts to notify technicians of new issues and keep employees informed of progress

Business Benefits

- Automates many IT processes, which allows IT staff to spend less time on recurring maintenance and more time on other strategic initiatives
- Improved communication between technicians, employees and managers
- Advanced reporting capabilities to help meet various compliance needs

"We are a very small team; we have to be very quick and very mobile in order to get things done. Track-It! has allowed us to do that."

In addition, the group supports manufacturing systems that operate in unique environments, such as chemistry labs and clean rooms where the pharmaceuticals are actually manufactured. Astellas' Applications Support Manager, Stephen Clark knew of a solution that would help the company meet all its help desk goals and more: Numara Track-It!

The History

Clark had a history with Track-It!. He actually rolled out the product at two other companies he had worked for in the past. As Clark explains, one of those companies was the New Orleans Hornets NBA Basketball team.

"After Hurricane Katrina hit, the NBA team that I worked with at that time was temporarily relocated. As you can imagine, we needed uninterrupted access to our help desk solution and we needed it fast. Because Track-It! is a simple to use web-based utility, I was able to set up my VPN and immediately access Track-It! It came through in our time of need: it was quick, fast and easy to use."

Clark says he chose Track-It! at prior companies for the same reasons he chose it for Astellas. Complexity was the big issue. When Clark joined Astellas, the company was already using FrontRange's Heat help desk software. But Clark says he found that Heat required a lot of IT resources, just in terms of maintenance and trouble resolution. He felt it had a bad fix patch QA process and that licensing was a nightmare. It was also, in his opinion, cost prohibitive and complicated on the end-user side.

"I felt like we had to teach our employees a whole different system," said Clark. *"I wanted to change to something quick and easy to use. The two key reasons I chose Track-It! were cost and ease of use."*

Clark deployed Numara Track-It! for Astellas in May 2011. The roll out was simple. The software was literally installed, designed, tested, and pushed out without a glitch. Clark said he had only one question for professional services before going live and ended up finding the answer on Numara's website in the "Professional Services" section. In terms of migrating, Clark explained that he simply sent out an email to the staff and that was that. No training was required.

"While the other enterprise class help desk solutions offer great packages, they are big and complicated to use. Track-It! fulfills the same roles and responsibilities, but with less complexities."

Immediate Benefits

Clark already knew the benefits of using Numara's Track-It! from his experience with the software at the previous employers. When he switched from FrontRange's Heat help desk software to Track-It! at Astellas in spring 2011, the software met his expectations yet again. Clark continues:

"Because we are a very small team, we have to be very quick and very mobile in order to get things done. Track-It! has allowed us to do that. Once the system was up and running, we were able to design our own templates and quickly establish a workflow that met the needs of not only our help desk team, but also the facilities management teams, back office staff and others that use the system"

He also talked about how the Numara system is much more user-friendly from the end user perspective. If a customer puts a ticket in, they know which technician the job has been assigned to, what work has been done and what the expected completion date will be.

"The biggest positive feedback we've received is that there is much more transparency. The customer is aware of everything that we are doing. I don't have to call them. They don't have to call us. They don't even have to log into the system necessarily because they receive their updates via email. Communication is the most important thing to the end users, especially in a company like ours that operates 24-hours a day, seven days a week."

Another immediate benefit of Track-It! is that Clark regularly runs customized reports. Prior to deploying Track-It! Clark and his team spent a lot of time building reports. With Track-It!, he is now able to take advantage of the product's reporting capabilities. For example, if Clark has an auditor call, he can run a change control report right from the help desk software. Conversely, if someone asks for a help desk ticket report for the water control filtration system, he can share it in minutes. This simple procedure was unheard of before.

As soon as Astellas deployed Track-It!, the company also realized an immediate cost benefit in terms of recurring maintenance and day to day operational cost. According to Clark:

"We basically spend zero time maintaining Track-It!. It operates on a SQL server back end, so once we spent the upfront licensing costs we haven't spent any additional time or money maintaining Track-It!. Instead, we're focused on the important production issues as well as back-office and accounting. We just let Track-It! run in the background taking care of the issues we have designated. It is that simple and dependable. Track-It! has saved me a lot of time and headaches. It is hard to beat because it does the work for you!"

Who are we?

Numara® Software Inc. is a leading provider of integrated IT management solutions for Desktop Management, PC Lifecycle Management, Security & Compliance, Help Desk and Service Desk. Designed to optimize IT management, Numara® FootPrints® and Numara® Track-It!® collectively support more than 50,000 customer sites and nearly 20 million IT assets worldwide.



freedom
to simply choose
the right solution for you