

Mercy St. Charles shares cashless technology with partners

Taking the First Step

More and more healthcare organizations are leveraging their technology and sharing databases between facilities. This can be a very efficient way to manage data and operate systems, allowing multiple organizations to benefit. It usually starts with a "champion" who brings in new technology and makes it a success. The next step is to share the success among partners.



At Mercy St. Charles Hospital, Robert Snoad, Operations Manager for Food and Nutrition Services, has been just such a champion. Snoad has been at Mercy St. Charles for 15

years. Five years ago he decided to speed up the lines in the cafeteria and make dining in the hospital more convenient for the staff. Mercy St. Charles chose the CBORD® Odyssey PCS™ system, which had the functionality he initially needed plus the ability to handle unlimited future expansion throughout the entire facility. Soon after installation, the cafeteria experienced an increase in average check amount from \$2.90 to \$3.50, resulting in a meaningful increase in total sales.

The use of the Employee ID Badge for purchases in the cafeteria has increased dramatically and now represents around 65% of the transactions. With that type of participation, Snoad has significantly reduced the amount of cash, which further reduces time and resources needed to count and handle cash each day.

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Said Snoad, "Our customers love using their badge and not having to carry cash. They have welcomed this change with open arms." Because it was a success on many levels, the Mercy health system decided to share a database and expand use.

Sharing a Good Idea

Mercy is affiliated with Catholic Health Partners, and encompasses seven hospitals in Northwest Ohio. Mercy St. Ann, Mercy St. Vincent, and Mercy Healthcare share one CBORD Odyssey database with St. Charles, and have the CBORD Odyssey system with MICROS® hardware in their cafeterias. Employees can move between hospitals and use their badges to make purchases at any of the four locations. Since each transaction is processed at a single server location, the employees always know the balance of their accounts no matter when or where they use their badge for payment.



Sharing a database can be a smart, cost-effective way to expand a system. One area can manage the database for many users ensuring that the system is updated, reports are set to run, and all is working across the organizations. By centralizing, the four hospitals are saving time and money.

It takes a strong team effort for such sharing to work well. A committee was formed that included the Regional IS Manager, the Regional Operations Manager, and the support staff who operated the system every day. Together they worked to roll out the CBORD cashless system in each organization. The Mercy St. Charles staff shared their knowledge and expertise with the whole team. The others were able to access a working database and get up and running quickly.



All new hires are automatically set up with payroll deduction. The Mercy team has chosen a cap of \$25 per purchase to limit any kind of misuse. Employees at the four facilities are very happy with the program, since they can spend more time enjoying their food and less time waiting in lines.

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