



February 1, 2006

Sections

[E-mail News](#)

[Article Archive](#)

[How to Advertise](#)

[Subscribe Now](#)

[Meet the Staff](#)

[BFL&S Who's Who](#)

A New Prescription for Saving Lives

Manufacturers of health-care business solutions discuss a changing market and what distributors can do to tap into it

HEALTH-CARE ADVANCES are reaching sci-fi proportions. In 2003, the human genome was unlocked. Today, patients can swallow a pill-sized camera delivering thousands of internal images directly to a physician's computer. And soon on the horizon, pharmaceuticals dubbed "super drugs" will be customized to target an individual's specific genetic makeup, thus enhancing drug efficacy. The health-care industry is arguably the most technologically competitive and innovative market worldwide. But for an industry so quick in the application of patient care technology, it has been life-threateningly slow in adopting essential business and information systems.

In a groundbreaking report titled, "To Err is Human," the Institute of Medicine reported, an estimated 98,000 people die in the United States annually as a result of medical errors. This number is staggering when compared with deaths caused by high profile antecedents, such as motor vehicle accidents (43,458) and breast cancer (42,297). A vast number of these medical errors are being attributed to poor business systems and failures in the flow of information.

In light of the above findings, a new checks-and-balances system is coming into play with automation, privacy and security at its core. The inevitable move toward a safer and more efficient centralized system of Electronic Medical Records is giving health-care providers the push to find out what cost-effective, high efficiency solutions distributors can make available to them. While making the inevitable move toward high-tech digital solutions, this is one industry that will continue to rely heavily on printed paper products far into the future.

For manufacturers and distributors in the business systems and printed products industry, deep

in the throes of an industry-wide metamorphosis of their own, the solutions-hungry health-care market could prove to be the king's ransom.

How do distributors find and unlock this niche industry's treasure chest? In a roundtable discussion, *BFL&S* spoke to a panel of health-care manufacturing heavy hitters to find out. Contributors included:

* Mike Martin, president & Rick Vullo, customer service manager of Hospital Forms & Systems, Dallas, www.Hforms.com.

* Lisa Butler, sales representative, Ward/Kraft, Fredericktown, Ohio, www.wardkraft.com.

Communities

[Bar Codes](#)

[Business Forms](#)

[Commercial Printing](#)

[Digital Printing](#)

[Direct Mail](#)

[E-Commerce](#)

[Electronic Forms](#)

[Industry News](#)

[Labels](#)

[Plastic Cards](#)

[Promotional Products](#)

[Security Documents](#)

FREE Subscription

Sign-up for BFL&S News, a free e-mail newsletter from the editors of BFL&S, by entering your e-mail address.

* Bruce Ross, CEO, Cardlogix, Irvine, Ca., www.cardlogix.com.

* Becky Keegan, product marketing manager, Wilmer, Dayton, Ohio.
www.4wilmer.com.

* Rob Jones, plant manager, Highland Computer Forms, Hillsboro, Ohio, www.hcf.com.

BFL&S: What trends are occurring in the health-care industry that are changing the face of the traditional health-care printed products market?

Martin: Automation is definitely the big one. It has been changing the health-care market for a couple of years now. Security is also a big issue, especially with prescription pads. Lastly, the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations, and the whole privacy issue itself. Hospital Forms & Systems has gotten involved in a couple of these areas, particularly with confidential sign-in logs.

Vullo: Hospital Forms & Systems PSL-20 and CSL-20 forms were created specifically to satisfy HIPAA requirements for patient confidentiality.

Ross: We are definitely seeing a move from a paper base to digital forms. Worldwide, more health-care industries are adopting smart card technology. In compliance with HSPD12 (Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12), the United States government is rolling out national identity smart cards for all federal employees. They are also being implemented at VA hospitals. Use at the federal level is always a sign of things to come.

Keegan: Security in prescriptions and, of course, the HIPAA regulations are major issues. Secure prescription pads help protect against fraudulent misuse. Wilmer has implemented standard operating procedures for the prescription pad program to service mandatory state requirements. Some of the multiple security features included with each prescription blank are thermochromic ink, void pantograph, color background, microprinting and a security watermark on the back.

Butler: HIPAA regulations have very much changed the industry. Ward/Kraft is reacting by developing products to help distributors meet client needs. We expect the industry to be constantly changing and want to help distributors by embracing change rather than being afraid of it.

Jones: The health-care industry is changing from centralized, continuous printers to de-centralized laser printers found in each department of the hospital or medical office. This shift away from continuous fan-fold has opened new opportunities for laser cut sheet products with carbonless coatings.

BFL&S: What kind of impact is the push for electronic medical records/automation having on the forms industry?

Butler: We are seeing a big increase in products that utilize bar code technology. Aside from this, there is not too much change on the forms side yet. The main fact is there is a much better way to gather and send information. What we are doing at Ward/Kraft to stay at the forefront of this changing industry is creating partnerships with software developers,

distributors and other manufacturers. There will always be a need for paper products, but staying on top of new technology is essential.

Ross: Yes, with automation there is change, but distributors of paper products should not despair. Of course, there will be a shift and using reams and reams of paper will no longer be the norm. But automation tools, such as smart cards, will always be used in conjunction with paper products.

Jones: The shift to electronic medical records has eroded traditional claim form business, such as CMS1500's. However, the new generation of laser-compatible carbonless forms available can be scanned into electronic files.

BFL&S: What can distributors do to break into this niche market?

Ross: Look carefully at the market [and the] function of the forms currently in use. Then develop an analogous software solution that is either smart card-based or wireless to manage the data. The world is moving to digital data management.

Butler: It used to be large hospitals were set up with national accounts; this is changing. Smaller distributors can now sit down with all of the new products that are available and provide hospitals with access to new products and business solutions. The real key is listening to client needs and being able to meet them.

Jones: Distributors can become involved with health-care buying organizations, which influence millions of dollars of spending annually in the health-care marketplace.

Keegan: United States spending for prescription drugs is projected to increase by 10.7 percent annually between 2004 and 2013. Medicare is also likely to increase aggregate drug spending by improving the financial access of Medicare beneficiaries to prescription drugs. While visiting health-care accounts, ask about prescription pads.

Martin: There is a gold mine in the health-care industry, but distributors do have to speak the language. Many accounts are contract based, but there are still some independent hospitals out there with a lot of doors to go into. Showing interest and knowledge while bringing a product to them that will address their concerns is the best way in.

By Nichole Stella

If you find this article valuable, [click here](#) to receive BFL&S E-mail News, our FREE e-mail newsletter. Hundreds of other articles on this topic can be found in the BFL&S Article Archive. [Click here](#) to become a FREE Article Archive member or to search the Archive if you already are a member.

[Top of the page](#) | [Back](#) | [Print this Story](#)

Copyright 2006. North American Publishing Company