

LifeLabs Provides Better Patient Care with a Mobile Pick-up and Delivery Solution for Medical Specimens from Apacheta

LifeLabs, a Canadian company operating as a division of Borealis Infrastructure, an OMERS company, is the largest clinical diagnostic laboratory in Canada. For nearly 50 years, LifeLabs has been serving British Columbia and Ontario through 360 collection centers and 21 laboratories. Each year, its 5,400 professionally trained staff members perform over 100 million laboratory tests, supporting over 19 million patient visits. The company provides same-day pickup and delivery of 7,500 specimen transport containers to its laboratories daily through an extensive network of 350 couriers operating a fleet of 220 vehicles. Altogether the LifeLabs' fleet drives over 12 million kilometers annually. With such vast distances to cover, short turn-around time requirements, and fragile specimens in its custody, LifeLabs sought to streamline its pick-up and delivery operations to provide exceptional customer service and patient care.



The Challenge: Improving the Quality of Service for Patients and Health Care Providers

In order to provide better quality of service to patients and healthcare providers, LifeLabs needed to outfit couriers with the ability to track pickups and deliveries using handheld devices with mobile scanners. Previously, LifeLabs' couriers, who collect specimens from their Patient Service Centres and other healthcare providers, were manually tracking all specimen transport containers (STCs) on handwritten manifests. These paper manifests could not be updated in real-time and did not allow for reconciliation at transfer points or lab deliveries. These manual processes would sometimes result in misplaced STCs, which led to compromised specimen integrity, forcing patients to be recalled for re-collection – an undesirable outcome for all.

To address this issue, LifeLabs undertook the Shipment Management Project to:

- provide end of day reconciliation to confirm that all STCs were delivered to a testing lab;
- proactively recover from any missing pickups or misplaced STCs to minimize patient impact;
- track pickup and delivery times to ensure client commitments were consistently met;
- continually improve and optimize routing and route sequencing;
- capture timely and accurate data to ensure a scalable and effective operation

LifeLabs conducted an RFP process to find a solution that supported these goals. Specifically the company was looking for a software solution that could be customized to reflect LifeLabs' unique requirements and that offered an intuitive, prompt-driven user interface that limited data entry. For future requirements the company was also looking for a solution with the capability to track the contents of the transport container at the specimen level. Specifically, a specimen could be scanned to the transport container and, by tracking the container; the individual specimen is also tracked. LifeLabs needed a cost effective solution and a partner they could rely on to deliver solutions and work collaboratively.

The Solution: Apacheta TransportACE for Medical Labs

Based on its flexibility and robust features, LifeLabs selected Apacheta TransportACE running on the Intermec CS40 mobile computer and connecting with Roadnet for route optimization. Working with Apacheta, LifeLabs developed a solution that tracks STCs from the point of pickup through transfers, all the way to the point of delivery at the laboratory – in real-time. Together with Apacheta, LifeLabs utilized the flexible mobile workflows and toolkit to tailor TransportACE to meet specific requirements. After piloting the solution with a highly engaged group of couriers, this solution was rolled out to its 350 couriers across two provinces and 40 different operational sites over a six-month period.



“Apacheta’s level of flexibility and helpful design feedback was outstanding, making this the most collaborative relationship we have had,” said Paul Holland, Director of Logistics for LifeLabs. “Their project management structure and commitment to delivery dates was exceptional. They helped us work through unforeseen issues and in the rare instance where dates were missed, notice and mitigation plans were well communicated.”

The mobile solution offers workflows for three core transactions: pickup from a Patient Service Centre or other healthcare provider; transfer, when required, at a LifeLabs Hub; and unloading at the testing lab. To prevent mistakes along the pickup and delivery path, Apacheta TransportACE supports real-time reconciliations and delivers alerts when transferred or unloaded inventory did not match the collected inventory. STCs are tracked using unique barcode tags that can recover any misplaced STC within hours, instead of days, preventing any impact to patients. Location-specific barcode tags have been installed at each location so that STC pickup time and status can be easily tracked. Mobile workflows specifically designate locations where STCs are transferred and unloaded to ensure that STCs cannot accidentally be left at a pickup location.

“The intuitive design of the solution allowed our courier team to quickly grasp the new workflow,” stated Holland. “A few months after deployment our team barely remembered operating any other way.”

The Results: Better Service, Happy Customers

The company’s client base has embraced the solution and lauded LifeLabs for taking this important step to improve the quality of service provided. LifeLabs is effectively taking the information gathered on pickup and delivery times and using this data to improve operations. In fact, LifeLabs has recovered from a number of potential issues that otherwise would have resulted in patient recalls.

In addition, now that LifeLabs can accurately state the time that a courier was at a facility, the number of client calls requesting clarity of pickup times has dropped substantially. Couriers have found the new solution to be intuitive and easy-to-use, and are achieving a 99.83 percent compliance rate using the Apacheta solution.

“Apacheta’s project management and development teams were fully committed to the success of the project and continue to provide an exceptional level of support now that we are operational.”

- Paul Holland, Director, Logistics

About Apacheta TransportACE

Apacheta offers mobile workforce management solutions for companies in the medical logistics, consumer goods and transportation markets. Apacheta’s SaaS-based applications combine best practice workflows and a flexible mobile architecture to help companies streamline delivery, sales and service operations. Apacheta TransportACE is a mobile proof of delivery application, which offers a set of mobile workflows for medical logistics companies, including pathology labs. Using TransportACE, companies are able to track pickups and deliveries in real-time, increase productivity with prompt-driven mobile workflows, accelerate payments with electronic invoices and proof of delivery, and increase customer satisfaction.

To learn more visit apacheta.com or call 1-610-558-5852 for a demo!