# Three Rivers Orthopaedic and Spine Products: Integrating Enterprise Mobility into Everyday Operations

Partner

mobitor

**Company**
Three Rivers Orthopaedic and
Spine Products Inc.

**Headquarters**
Latrobe, Pennsylvania

**Industry, products, and services**
Healthcare – distribution of
medical devices, such as spinal
implants

**Revenue**
US$100 million

**Web site**
www.3riv.com

**SAP® solutions**
SAP® mobile platform, SAP
Sybase® SQL Anywhere®
solutions

**Partner**
Mobitor
www.mobitor.com

# Putting the needs of surgeons and their patients first

A bright light focuses its beam on a young boy on an operating table. All eyes are on the surgeon as she prepares for an operation that will make the difference in the life of this child – born with a rare spinal disorder. Confidently, the doctor does a last-minute survey of her tools and the spinal implant she'll be using to correct the deformity. Everything is in place – thanks in part to Three Rivers Orthopaedic and Spine Products Inc.

"Our motto is 'never say no,' even on weekends," explains Dan Huggins, senior director of operations at Three Rivers, an independent distributor of technology-based medical devices. "We'll deliver what's needed when it is needed, and generally have an employee on-site during the operations."

The company uses the SAP® mobile platform and an SAP partner product – Mobitor's SOPIC Field Automation and Inventory Management software – to drive field sales automation, supply chain workflow, fulfillment, inventory management, and billing. SAP Sybase® SQL Anywhere® solutions for smartphone data management and session-based synchronization enable employees to use iPhones and iPads to place orders, coordinate deliveries, and more.

Because of the transparency, efficiency, and collaboration enabled by SOPIC, doctors always have the devices they need. And hospitals can fulfill their mission of providing quality care.

Read more ▶

# Harnessing mobile technology

With three offices, warehouses in three states, and approximately 160 employees, Three Rivers has grown successfully for over 30 years. "Since 1998 we've also been an exclusive sales agent in three states for Stryker Inc., one of the world's leading manufacturers of medical technology," states Ralph Liberatore, executive agency advisor at Three Rivers.

But rapid growth was straining the company's outdated manual processes and systems. "We consign inventory to surgical centers in hospitals and charge hospitals only for what they use," explains Liberatore. "So we have to track stock both internally and at many off-site locations. We also need to have someone physically present for surgeries to pull stock and

record SKU numbers used for replenishment and billing." Adding to the complexity, Three Rivers has to track loaner kits given to hospitals to handle special needs and spikes in demand. These kits, which constantly move in and out of warehouses and between hospital locations, are hard to track.

"We wanted to deploy a single, integrated solution to centrally manage field sales automation, supply chain workflows, resource fulfillment, consigned inventory management, and billing," Liberatore comments. "The right solution would also empower people in the field to wirelessly transact, collaborate, and send data in real time."

"Many processes – such as consigned inventory tracking –
were handled manually and resulted in data errors. With SOPIC,
our inventory records are usually 100% accurate."

Ralph Liberatore, Executive Agency Advisor, Three Rivers Orthopaedic and Spine Products Inc.

# Tapping the expertise of a trusted SAP partner

Three Rivers explored a variety of solutions and ultimately chose to deploy Mobitor SOPIC Field Automation and Inventory Management software for centralized case management, inventory management, and order processing. "SOPIC could streamline and simplify the complex job of managing the medical device logistics process and give us a single view of all customers, transactions, inventory, and other data," explains Huggins. "It could also provide real-time visibility into case scheduling, resource loads, order status, inventory levels, and more."

Equally important, SOPIC leverages mobile devices and a modern, intuitive application interface to connect sales reps to back-office processes and data wherever they are. Mobitor chose SAP Sybase® SQL Anywhere® solutions to enable data management for smartphones and session-based synchronization for mobile interactions. "This enterprise-class technology enables cross-platform compatibility, efficient synchronization of large volumes of data, and easy integration with our SOPIC application and databases," adds Liberatore. "It also works in environments where there is limited or no connectivity, which is often the case in hospitals." As a result, sales reps can use it to perform complex offline transactions using mobile devices, and as soon as they regain connectivity, transaction data is wirelessly transferred to SOPIC for back-office use. Data synchronization takes just seconds.

"SOPIC could provide the visibility, support, structured workflows, and wireless interactions we needed to provide a high level of service to our customers and sales reps."

Dan Huggins, Senior Director of Operations, Three Rivers Orthopaedic and Spine Products Inc.

# Investing in innovation

Three Rivers worked with Mobitor to deploy SOPIC on iPhones and iPads. Using functionality provided by SAP Sybase SQL Anywhere, Mobitor helped Three Rivers create synchronization rules for mobile devices that prevent conflicts and support rapid wireless transactions.

Mobitor also used SOPIC's Adaptive Business Connector integration layer to quickly integrate the solution with Stryker's enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. "This enabled fully automated, end-to-end business processes where transactional data is received wirelessly – for example, about new orders – and would immediately be reflected in both our systems and theirs," comments Huggins. "It would help us operate more efficiently as their agent by accelerating inventory replenishment."

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Employees using the software

# Transforming how work gets done – anytime, anywhere

Using SOPIC and the underlying SAP Sybase SQL Anywhere solutions, Three Rivers has transformed its core customer-facing and back-office processes in ways that increase accuracy, transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness. Huggins remarks, "The solution's mobile front-office field-support processes streamline how salespeople take orders, schedule surgeries, and validate and send data. And the centralized order management functionality gives all back-office departments a way to manage the full lifecycle of case loads – from initial surgery scheduling to inventory fulfillment and replenishment, invoicing, and payment."

For example, data validation now occurs at the point of sale. "Before, people had to manually enter SKU numbers of devices sold into spreadsheets, and we'd spend hours reconciling data, which is required to comply with FDA regulations and process credits to vendors," explains Liberatore. "Now, salespeople use mobile devices to scan bar codes as they pull devices from inventory, eliminating data errors." As soon as a mobile device has connectivity, SKU numbers and other data are captured and wirelessly sent to the company's SOPIC system. Once received, data triggers instant inventory updates and invoicing. And through direct integration with Stryker's ERP software, data initiates automated inventory replenishment. As a result, Three Rivers can optimize inventories across all locations – and never has to say "no" to a device request.

Using mobile devices, sales reps can also collaborate in real time to deliver exceptional service. For example, they can compare calendars and schedule colleagues to cover last-minute surgeries.

# Running faster, leaner, and more efficiently

Three Rivers has realized significant benefits. "SOPIC integrates core processes into one system and makes everything electronic so we can see what's happening in real time and work efficiently as a team to meet customer needs," explains Huggins.

Manual work has been vastly reduced via wireless data capture and validation and automated processes. This, in turn, has lowered operational costs (by eliminating manual labor) and improved data accuracy. "For example, we've reduced the time required to process sales orders by over 70%," states Huggins.

Equally important, because order data is validated at the point of sale, inventory records are much more accurate. "We used to spend hours –even days – trying to reconcile lost loaners, and hospital inventories were typically 85% accurate," states Huggins. "Now inventory records are pretty much 100% accurate all the time, so we can instantly find stock to meet demand."

Invoices are also more accurate, saving the finance department approximately 20 minutes per error in handling time and accelerating the order-to-cash cycle. For example, finance used to manage US$500,000 in open, unpaid purchase orders each month; this has been reduced to $225,000, greatly improving cash flow.

"Once we receive sales data captured via wireless devices, order processing that used to take 15 minutes now takes 2 minutes. These efficiencies save us $185,000 annually."

Dan Huggins, Senior Director of Operations, Three Rivers Orthopaedic and Spine Products Inc.