Case Study: *Acuitas*™ in practice

Ocuco proves benefits of paperless clinical records in optical retailing

Angela Arthurs,
Store Manager:

### ...on the financial benefits
"Because the system is in place we can take more customers, and the capacity of the store is increased: simple record scanning systems could never achieve this benefit. For example the optometrist can take the first customer through much quicker, because there is no form-filling or delay at pre-testing"

...on quality of service
"We felt the perceived quality of service went up – most people don't like form-filling. The system helps communication between all parties – all staff are responsible for good service. It allows us to deliver service with an extra 'bow on the box' for customers"

...on staff acceptance
"Staff are very positive [about the system] and their perception is that they have advanced to a new level of patient services"
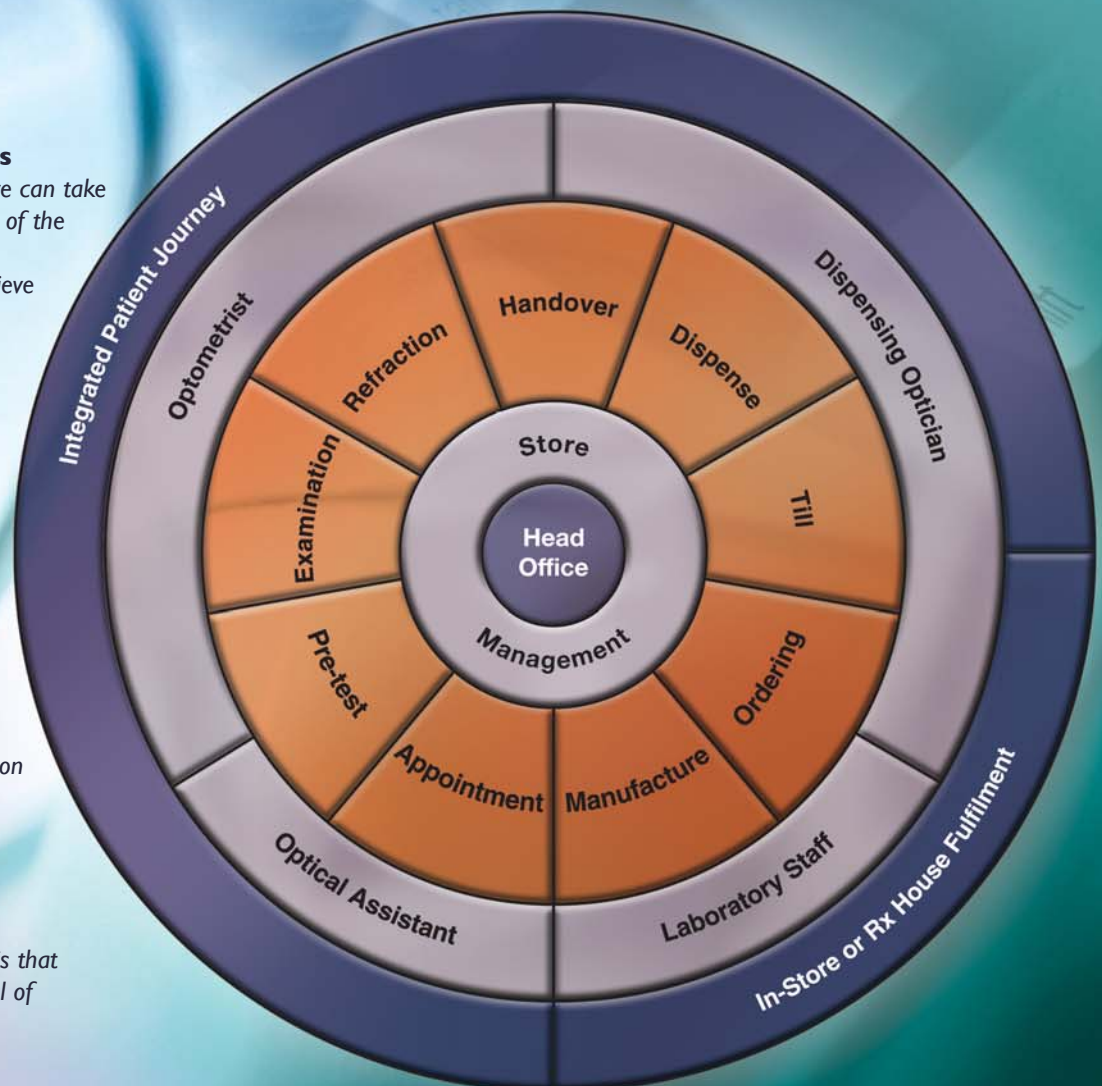
Acuitas™, by Ocuco, was implemented in a store near Bristol.
A paper scanning system had been used in the past, which saved space, but still did not unlock the information in the records nor did it improve the patient experience. With Acuitas™, space was returned to more productive retailing and optometry activities; however, unlike a scanning system, patient journey time was reduced, and management control improved. A detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of the system was conducted, key findings of which are presented here.

OCUCO

About this Case

The study was conducted in a large, busy, multi-consulting room optical store, located near Bristol. One of the main challenges was to eliminate the burden of paper-based clinical recordkeeping while providing a reliable backup of clinical records, and integration with the rest of the practice administration and retail functions.

Large practices aim to benefit from dramatically increased efficiency, while smaller practices also see valuable retail space recovered by disposing of paper files.

Scanning Systems

A third-party scanning system had been in use for a few years. Examinations were written onto paper, scanned into a database, indexed, and then shredded. On a patient's return visit, the scanned images were printed for the optometrist to review and thereafter shredded.

This worked quite well, and was successful in releasing space back to productive activities. However, because the data was not in an electronic format, there were no radical changes to the patient experience, quality of service or operational efficiency of the practice, and information was being handled multiple times.

Management felt that if patient data was entered by the optometrists directly into a computer available on a network, there would be no need for printing and shredding. Another problem not addressed by the scanning system was NHS form-filling, which was still being done manually.

The Paperless Approach

Building on the scanning system experience, a new set of requirements was drawn up.

A paperless practice management system would have to:

- Remove the need for filing and retrieving forms by hand, eliminate the resulting lost records
- Remove the need for printing and shredding, as required by some document management systems
- Be able to read data from ophthalmic equipment and cameras to reduce re-keying and allow the sharing of equipment throughout the practice
- Keep clinical records in searchable electronic data format
- Link with an electronic appointment book
- Integrate easily with retail systems for smooth handover from OO to DO and completion of patient journey
- Provide metrics for management

Acuitas™ from Ocuco - the Key is Integration

As a leading supplier of integrated clinical and optical retail systems, Ocuco was contacted to discuss these requirements. Ocuco is a specialist software solutions provider, offering a market-leading integrated clinical and EPoS system to independent opticians, small chains and large enterprises. Ocuco has a twelve-year history of expertise in storing electronic clinical records and images, and integrated dispense and retail transactions, including the fulfilment of orders.

Ocuco products are well proven in the marketplace.

Key features of the Acuitas™ system:

- Paperless Patient Record from Appointment to Till to order fulfilment
- Electronic NHS form filling
- Integration with ophthalmic testing equipment
- Secure clinical data and an audit trail
- Optimised 'hand-over' to dispensing agent enabling higher average transaction values
- Visibility of in-store metrics across optometry and retail
- Optional fully integrated basic dispensing and payments, with upgrade to validated dispensing, stock, catalogues, EPoS till and cash management modules

The Results

The paperless clinical record (appointment, pre-screening, examination, referral letters, NHS form printing and handover) was successfully implemented in the store in one week. Detailed analysis was performed on all key performance data for the store, and pre- and post-installation performance compared.

- Patient journey and waiting times were shortened
- Capacity of the store in peak periods was increased
- Average transaction values increased due to better handover
- The implementation of the system caused little or no negative disruption to sales trends. After an initial short settling period, sales rose by 18% despite a 15% drop in footfall in the shopping centre.
- The store began to outperform other stores in its region. In a like-for-like nine month comparison across years, sales increased by 7% more than in the rest of the geographical region.
- Interviews showed that staff were highly supportive of the Acuitas™ system which is key to success.

Epilogue – April 2005

The solution has now been in place for 18 months. The store had a record year, and recently added a new consulting room. Store management are advocates for the system, and readily recognise its significant contribution to sales growth and to the customer's perception of service.

Update – December 2005

Their existing retail system has been replaced by Acuitas Retail™, which is fully integrated with the paperless clinical record. Management are now reaping the benefits of a paperless patient journey, from appointment to order fulfilment, and of the availability of reliable metrics and performance indicators across all aspects of a clinical-retail practice.

About Ocuco

Ocuco is a specialist ophthalmic software solutions company, providing a market-leading integrated clinical and EPoS system (The Acuitas™ Software Suite) to independent opticians and chains since 1993.

Contact Ocuco for further information on (UK) **0800 912 1004**, (IRL) **1800 927 191**