ity. Maintenance groups were spending too much time and money troubleshooting equipment problems like maintaining the DC motors and obsolete DC drives. Potential upgrades were complicated, required operational interruptions, and only limited vendors had the ability to perform them.

New hardware and software including end-of-aisle units and wireless tablet PCs supplemented new motors, drives and laser positioning systems. The supplier offered current, off-the-shelf technology that is non-proprietary, proven and reliable, making future modifications and upgrade requirements easier and less costly to implement.

Maintenance costs were reduced, while improving Dole's ability to maintain the AS/RS independently. The system reliability increased and uptime improved due to the elimination of positioning errors that were occurring in the old control system, the removal of the obsolete components, and the ability to monitor the system on-line in real time. Improved flexibility and positioning accuracy gave Dole the ability to fine-tune individual storage locations. In addition, the serviceable life of the equipment, components and overall system was extended.

Retrotech
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New DC technology stops the bleeding

In-hospital DC improves efficiency and speed with minimal interruption.

Recently, an Ottawa, Ontario, healthcare facility recognized potential efficiencies in its supply chain. With a mix of warehousing automation, integration and streamlined material flow, the facility increased the speed and accuracy of material deliveries to medical staff. The changes allowed staff to remain focused on helping patients instead of chasing supplies, while savings went toward improving patient health.

In late 2010, the facility commissioned a complete update of its paper-based picking and putaway system. Rebuilt horizontal carousel systems were used as the materials handling backbone for the in-hospital DC. Project planning in advance of physical implementation included systematic material slotting, optimized floor plan layouts and software integration.

The installation created minimal material flow disruption to the hospital floors. For instance, the installation of racking replacement and carousel were scheduled for a single weekend. Temporary material staging was designed using mobile cart systems, ensuring all product was tracked during the move.

When the system went live, any doubt or anxiety quickly diminished as associates realized the ease and simplicity of the carousel operation. The facility now enjoys faster order fulfillment, improved material accuracy and reduced costs.

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