



Increasing Efficiency and Eliminating Errors in Pharmaceutical Distribution

Cogepha Achieves Cost Savings and Increases Speed and Transparency of Operations in Nine Months

SUMMARY



Customer

Cogepha

Partner

Technocode, Zebra Premier Solution Partner

Industry

Pharma / Healthcare

Challenge

Eliminate errors in deliveries, provisioning and distribution of pharmaceutical products.

Benefits/Outcomes

- Optimized resources dedicated to order fulfillment by 28%
- Reduced order return rate by almost 70%, from 14% to a mere 4%
- Reduced printing costs and paper usage by 71%
- Reduced duration of order picking process from nearly two minutes to just 23 seconds
- Improved on-time delivery from 78% to 94%
- Increased customer satisfaction

Solution

- Zebra Workforce Connect
- Zebra TC26 Mobile Computer
- Zebra RS6000 Bluetooth™ Wearable Ring Scanner
- Zebra ZT411 Industrial Printer
- Zebra ZQ600 Series Mobile Printer

Pharmaceutical distribution is a dynamic and demanding sector to operate in as orders must be flawlessly delivered with no delays, and drugs transported in line with compliance expectations. As with other areas of logistics, order volumes have increased too, while costs are rising, particularly for transportation. Alongside these issues, companies operating in the sector in Tunisia face intense competition. There are more than 70 distributors in the country vying to supply over 2,500 pharmacies and clinics with access to medicines controlled by a strict import regime.

As an entrepreneurial business, Cogepha, founded in 1986 in Tunisia, has always sought to use technology to improve its service to customers, reduce costs and optimize efficiencies. It purchases around 15,000 products from over 250 suppliers and ships these to pharmacies and clinics across the country. To further enhance its services, it recently invested in a new order fulfillment system to streamline delivery processes.

Enhancing Order Processes

Cogepha's existing fulfillment system was initially working well. However, growth in its business saw the solution, run by a local IT partner, start to encounter difficulties.

Order fulfilment comprised seven stages from receiving the order via Cogepha's call center or via the B2B platform cogephaLIVE, sending it to the distribution site, to finally dispatching the order to the pharmacy or clinic.

While the workflow for each stage was clear, as order volumes increased, Cogepha was experiencing difficulties in several key areas.

The first involves knowing when deliveries were going to be made. Tracking the delivery of items was based around a manual, paper-based task. The process was error-prone, everything had to be confirmed manually and much information was inaccessible. Similarly tracking returns was difficult and counting the annual inventory lasted two days, including stopping the production.

Second, when it came to goods coming into its distribution centers, there were many instances where orders on the system included items that were not delivered and, in other cases, items that hadn't been ordered were received.

The third area where Cogepha needed help was with dispatch. While each site had good insight over its orders, there was no real-time solution to connect these with the head office.

While Cogepha always ensured that customers received their goods, the processes meant that teams needed to spend extra time on orders. And there was no real-time centralized view over its inventory, which made purchasing the correct amount of stock a more difficult task.

To keep pace with the growth in its business, Cogepha was determined to invest in a solution that would guarantee an exceptional experience for its customers.



The Ideal Solution to Tackle Every Issue

Cogepha approached several solution partners, amongst them Technocode.

Technocode is an expert in identification and traceability with over 14 years of experience. As a Zebra Premier Solution Partner, it was the first company to be an Advanced Zebra Printer Repair Specialist in Tunisia.

Technocode spent time in Cogepha's warehouses and spoke to end users about what they needed from their technology. It ultimately proposed a range of materials and solutions to address each area of the logistics flow. And a thorough mapping of the solutions to business goals especially impressed Cogepha.

These included using the TC26 mobile computer in warehouses to review orders, pick items and print pick lists. To help teams work with their hands free, the RS6000 Bluetooth™ wearable scanner, wirelessly connected to the TC26 mobile computer, was also recommended to allow teams to quickly scan items. For shipping labels, Technocode specified the Zebra ZT411 industrial label printer, to print shipment labels. The printer was chosen for its quality printing, high reliability and ease of maintenance. Zebra ZQ600 Series mobile printers were also deployed. Easy to use and with battery life that lasts a full shift and beyond, plus a large, bright color display and 'instant wake up' to start work as soon as they're needed, the printers are important partners for warehouse staff. Tasked with maintaining the organization of inventory, the team use the mobile printers to reclassify products and create new location labels.

Aside from the products, Technocode also advised that Cogepha deploy Zebra Workforce Connect. This allows users to access all their apps on one device, including the ability to make push-to-talk (PTT) calls over Wi-Fi, easily create documents for customers and communicate in groups, or individually, with presence capabilities. This has allowed for substantial savings in call plans with telephone operators.

"Technocode is a knowledgeable and responsive partner. It worked closely with us to understand our workflows and design a highly efficient solution. It has great knowledge of Zebra's devices, and our teams piloted these along with options from other vendors. The ease of use, reliability and ergonomic design of Zebra's devices stood out. They are built for long-term use and to thrive in a busy logistics environment with a rugged build, impressive battery life and a host of features to ease the working lives of our teams," said Rami Miliani, Supply Chain Manager, Cogepha.

Efficiency, Customer Satisfaction and Continued Innovation

Within nine months of implementing the solution, Cogepha had already achieved impressive results.

The company was able to prevent and fix errors in the order fulfillment process. The purchasing department is now connected to warehouse managers across the country. And the fulfillment process is simplified into four steps. The mix of technology has reduced the order picking process, which used to take nearly two minutes, to just 23 seconds. Cogepha also knows exactly when items ordered by Cogepha's customers will be delivered to each of its six distribution sites.

Each item is scanned, verified and since systems are connected centrally across all sites, any discrepancy is immediately detected in real time and errors can be solved quickly. This has dramatically reduced order return rates from 14% to 4%, with added savings in time.

Further efficiencies are generated by the ZQ600 Series printers connected via Bluetooth to the TC26. The setup enables users to run the application for reclassifying products and print new location labels without the need for a separate device. This helps them to get more done in less time. Also, the high quality printing and durability of the ZQ600 Series ensures that labels are clear and long lasting, reducing the risk of errors and enhancing customer service.

Workforce Connect has been transformational for teams. Sites and teams are connected to each other, stocks and changes are controlled and all aspects of order fulfillment are trackable across the whole country from a single application. What's more, inventory counting lasts five hours and does not require production operations to stop. This had been unthinkable before.

"Our staff love the technology, and this project is in keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit of our business. It has already achieved some dramatic business improvements and benefits for our customers. Technocode and Zebra have been excellent advisors to us. With the platform we have in place, we can roll out new applications as we need them and drive continual business performance."

Rami Miliani,
Supply Chain Manager,
Cogepha

SUCCESS STORY
COGEPHA

The immediate communications, including both video and data, means teams can collaborate in highly intuitive ways – much as they are used to with consumer-style applications. Any issues raised by customers can be handled in real time and solved quickly. Huddles have been replaced by quick PTT calls and real-time alerts highlight any issues.

Fleet managers are also connected to drivers through Workforce Connect. They can receive updates from every driver to handle any issues. Tracking the location of drivers has also allowed Cogepha to optimize delivery journeys. The number of orders delivered on time, a key area for Cogepha to excel in, increased rapidly from 78% to 94%, leading to increased customer satisfaction.

Cogepha's partners and suppliers have visited the company's sites to learn from the project and see how they can implement the solution themselves.

Looking ahead, Technocode's deep understanding of Zebra's portfolio and product roadmap, together with its insights into the needs of Cogepha, means that it can work with the company on recommending new solutions.



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