

Customer Snapshot

InCyte Pathology



Collective accountability defines the culture at InCyte Pathology (InCyte). Everyone from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to the lab staff understands that accurate, timely results are the responsibility of all employees, and they are passionate about delivering the highest quality diagnosis for every patient. As a result, every investment and process refinement is rigorously evaluated for its impact on patient care and laboratory operations.

InCyte's management team recently took a big step to minimize errors and improve quality and efficiency by implementing the solution from Ventana Medical Systems, Inc. (Ventana).

Background

InCyte is a privately held anatomic pathology reference lab in Spokane Valley, Washington, serving hospitals and physician clinics in Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah and Oregon. In late

2009, Lab Manager Matt Brooks began to research solutions to reduce labeling errors. Although InCyte's error rate was below the national average and staff consistently identified and corrected errors before they left the lab, a culture of accountability prevailed. "All it takes is one to get out," said Gary Gemar, Chief Operating Officer. InCyte's management team was willing to make an investment to ensure that didn't happen.

InCyte evaluated a number of solutions but quickly discounted those that didn't provide a comprehensive offering. The team selected the VENTANA solution, an integrated offering that includes the VENTANA VANTAGE workflow solution, the market's only full lab process management suite, with staining platforms designed to remove variability and deliver high quality slides for every patient.



Spokane Valley, WA

- Multi-specialty reference lab
- Serves 23 hospitals in 6 states
- 15% annual growth

Histology Volume

- 40,000+ surgical pathology cases/year
- 25,000 IHC slides/year
- 100,000 PAPs

AP Staff

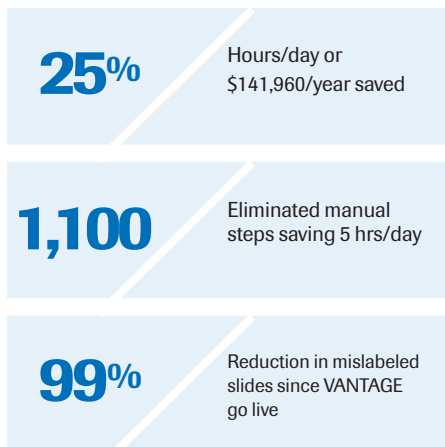
- 22 pathologists
- 12 histology technicians
- 5 pathology assistants

VENTANA solution

- 2 SYMPHONY H&E stainers
- 1 VANTAGE workflow solution
- 2 BenchMark ULTRA stainers
- 1 BenchMark XT stainer
- 2 NexES Special Stainers

“Our histotechs really warmed up to this. VANTAGE gave them the confidence they need so they don’t wake up in the middle of the night and worry, ‘Did I really label that specimen right?’”

—Brenda Smith, Risk Manager



“To me, the biggest benefit of the VANTAGE system is that now I absolutely know I have the right diagnosis with the right patient.”

—David Hoak, MD, Chief Medical Director

Workflow improvement streamlines processes

Before installing any new equipment or software, InCyte invited the VENTANA Workflow Consulting team to perform an overall assessment of the laboratory. Each step in the diagnostic process was evaluated through a Lean lens to identify opportunities to reduce waste, streamline workflow, and minimize risk. This was a critical first step in meeting InCyte’s goals.

Incremental implementation eases transition

Next, InCyte implemented the VENTANA SYMPHONY staining platform, H&E staining platform, the VENTANA BenchMark ULTRA IHC/ISH staining platform, and the VENTANA BenchMark XT IHC/ISH staining platform. These fully automated staining instruments reduced the risk of cross contamination, enhanced consistency and improved turnaround times. Management implemented the VANTAGE workflow solution in “baby steps” to see how the staff would adapt to changes. “We decided to push 10 specimens and track them all the way through,” said Matt Brooks, Histology Supervisor. As staff members became comfortable with the system, and realized VANTAGE saved them time and reduced the risk for error, they began to manage every patient case through the VANTAGE system.

VANTAGE workflow solution reduces risk for errors

Gemar, Chief Operating Officer, immediately noticed that the VANTAGE system requires specimens, blocks, and slides to be barcode labeled before proceeding with any work. This critical change led to a huge improvement at microtomy, where the VANTAGE system produces slide labels only

as a block is scanned and cut, to provide assurance that the right tissue goes on the right slide: “It is really important to get the slides labeled at microtomy with a barcoded label that is the final label. That’s the key to me for identifying patients correctly through the rest of the system,” explained Gemar.

Prior to bringing in the VANTAGE workflow solution, InCyte labeled slides after staining. Chief Medical Director, David Hoak, MD, referred to this post-staining labeling process as a “matching game,” pointing out the risk it introduces for mislabeled slides.

Real-time tracking provides competitive advantage

Referring physicians have also reaped the benefits of the end-to-end automation and integration of the VENTANA solution, providing InCyte with a competitive advantage. “Our ability to answer the phone and tell a physician exactly where their specimen is in the process builds confidence,” said Brooks, noting that no other lab in the area can match that level of responsiveness. “Our referring physicians are quite impressed.”

Results

Since the VANTAGE system has gone live, InCyte has:

- Reduced mislabeled slides by 99.7%
- Reduced the number of duplicate slides resulting from rework by 25%
- Improved the quality and consistency of staining
- Eliminated 1,100 manual steps/day, saving 5 hours/day

The VENTANA solution has helped InCyte achieve their primary goal of improved patient safety, while also enhancing overall laboratory operations.

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