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Quality Assurance in Radiology

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Note:

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Interview with Thomas Schönbeck, Vice President of Global Sales & Marketing at RTI Electronics, Sweden

One of the major challenges faced by today's healthcare is quality assurance, and radiology is no exception. *HealthManagement* spoke with Thomas Schönbeck, Vice President of Global Sales, Marketing and Service at RTI Electronics, who gave us an insight into how x-ray quality assurance can be made faster and repeatable.

What does RTI do?

RTI is a leading provider of Quality Assurance solutions for x-ray. The company was established in 1981 and has its headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden and its U.S. office in Towaco, New Jersey.

The founders of the company invented a device and method that use semiconductors instead of ion chambers. RTI has continued the development of this kind of equipment since the beginning of the 1980s.

Current RTI products include the Black Piranha QA multimeter for any X-ray modality and the single modality easy to use Cobia and Cobia Flex meters. RTI also features Ocean 2014 database software for collection, real-time analysis and reporting of standard and customized QA measurements.

What is the key to effective x-ray Quality Assurance?

RTI is all about making the work process more efficient. What we usually hear from our customers is that they want to work faster, due to time and budget constraints. Yet they need to make sure they do the job right. They also want to make sure the same procedure is applied each time. What we do is offer a system for their measurements that makes sure that when they leave the x-ray room, they are done. They are ready with their analysis and report – no need for time-consuming back office work.

In this way you make x-ray Quality Assurance faster as well.

Exactly, I attended a demonstration at a hospital recently, and they observed that the whole process took half the time it would have done otherwise.

Built-in Bluetooth in the Black Piranha and connectivity to Ocean 2014 software provide the foundation. With our wireless solutions the user is up and running instantly.

How does Ocean work?

Everything is stored in our devices; you don't need cables or anything. All the data that are measured pop into the Ocean software, then Ocean gives you a real-time analysis of the measurements. All measurement data is saved in the database, so if you need to look at these measurements again, and compare them with previous data to see trends, everything is easily retrievable. For every measurement an automatically generated report is also generated and saved in the database. With a couple of clicks in the Ocean software this report is sent to the customer. For efficiency reasons we see more and more customers abandoning the old way of working and looking for a more efficient option. We think the Black Piranha with Ocean provides this.

Do your solutions bring other advantages?

Yes, quite a few, actually. Repeatability is very important to our customers. Following the test templates in our Ocean application you are able to use the same procedure every time. We want to make sure you can trust the measurements you are doing. We offer a longer lifecycle compared to our competitors: after the second year we offer an extended warranty of up to 10 years on our equipment. We recommend a 2 year calibration cycle instead of the more common 1 year. The Piranha is also upgradable: a customer only needs to buy looking at current need, but can upgrade later on if a need for more functionality occurs.

Are demonstrations available?

Yes, that's one of the most important things that we do. We like to meet the customers, show them the equipment before the purchase, to get a feel for how it works. It is also possible in some cases for the customers to borrow the equipment for a short period of time to do their own tests at their own pace.

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