

## **Scriptswitch has the write stuff to help NHS**

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Coventry-based software firm ScriptSwitch is looking forward to making a big impression in both the medical and business worlds this year.

Scriptswitch is the UK's leading supplier of real-time support software for prescribers, already supplying more than a quarter of all Primary Care Organisations (PCOs) across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

New business wins allowed ScriptSwitch to double its customer base last year.

And with the NHS spending dominating both the headlines and the health service agenda, the company looks set to enjoy further success in 2007, according to managing director Mike Washburn.

“Last year was fantastic for all of us here at ScriptSwitch with the company really starting to build up momentum,” he says, pointing to the 100 percent-plus growth in 2006.

“We've put ourselves in a great position to really accelerate growth in 2007.”

“ScriptSwitch has already saved the NHS over £3 million and this figure will continue to increase as we expand our customer base.

“Using the average figures from our existing customers, we estimate the potential savings to the NHS to be a staggering £300 million per year.

“That could contribute greatly towards the Secretary of State for Health's goal of returning the NHS to surplus within two years, while also helping to significantly improve the quality of care to patients through the reinvestment of savings.”

The ScriptSwitch system works by offering clear and unbiased advice to prescribers, such as GPs and nurses, based on input from their PCO.

The system is designed to help them make the best possible prescribing decision using the most relevant and accurate information that is available.

According to Mr Washburn, the system is especially effective at highlighting PCO recommendations regarding drug switches.

An example of this is statin prescribing, an area which has grown in recent years due to huge differentials in costs between drugs.

In the first ever statin prescribing indicator revealed by the Government in December, 78 per cent of PCOs using ScriptSwitch performed better than the national average – with one third performing in the top 25 percent in the country.

Mr Washburn says: “Statin prescribing is just one example of how ScriptSwitch is helping healthcare professionals deliver on a wide range of objectives, whether linked

to information management or the reduction of costs on both a local and national level.

“We have worked hard to produce a product that not only provides prescribers with an effective tool for medicines management but also has the facility to deliver those savings.

“I believe it’s a real breakthrough for the NHS and shows how successfully public and private partnerships can work together in the health service.”

The growth of ScriptSwitch has been phenomenal since its inception following a chance conversation, between a community pharmacist and a university IT undergraduate, about how technology could be used to improve the quality and consistency of prescribing in primary care.

An extensive period of research and development followed, during which time the core commercial proposition of the product changed significantly in light of major restructuring within the NHS.

The product was developed over a three-year period by working alongside GPs in a number of trial sites, helping to identify important changes to the way in which the product should work before the product was finally installed for the first paying customer.

In the initial stages all of the development was carried out by a small team of newly-qualified graduates but, as the business started to grow, more experienced professionals were required to provide specialised commercial and operational guidance to the organisation.

It was in 2002 and Mr Washburn was appointed as the company’s MD with responsibility for growing and developing the company.

Since his appointment, the company has enjoyed exponential growth and now employs 18 people including dedicated heads of medicines management, product development and sales.