

# UNIFIED APPROACH TO LABORATORY SUPPORT SERVICES PRODUCES DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS IN COST AND EFFICIENCY

The Measure of Confidence

Food Safety

Many companies today don't have just one test lab – they have many, with a central facility responsible for operations at satellite labs distributed nationally or even globally. But letting labs operate independently, without common standards or a cohesive service plan, can lead to operating inefficiencies, administrative stress, and escalating costs. A unified approach to lab services helped alleviate these issues for a global leader of products and services for cleaning, sanitizing, food safety, and infection control.

Agilent now manages all of the repair, preventive maintenance, and operational qualification for the laboratories' equipment. Agilent support services also set the stage for standardizing hardware and software, methods, and training across the facilities. As a result, the company has experienced dramatic reductions in cost and increases in efficiency. In fact, the program has proven so valuable that lab personnel would like to expand the contract to include sales, software, and enhanced lifecycle management.

This global leader in cleaning, sanitizing, food safety, and infection control products and services is headquartered in the Midwest. The company has partnered with customers for more than 80 years. Agilent provides service for:

- ◆ Eleven labs
  - ▶ 9 are production labs
  - ▶ 1 is a research and development lab
  - ▶ 1 is a pilot plant
- ◆ Approximately 50 chromatography systems

*"Initially this was a tough sell, especially because it is an up-front expenditure. But the value has been proven. The Agilent team understands how we work and the challenges in our plants. We now have the right people, the right tools, and the right offering."*

**Quality GMP Manager**, Engineering Center



## The Challenge

The company's Research and Development facility develops products and methods, which the Engineering Center transfers to Quality Assurance labs at plants across North America. The central facility also provides expertise on instrumentation, methodology, and good laboratory practices, and serves as the escalation point for problems. But with a disjointed approach to service, the central group struggled to control costs and productivity.

Until 2006, the company's eight plant laboratories operated independently. Standardization was lacking on equipment configuration, methods, software, and training. Service maintenance was handled differently across all the laboratories and response times varied widely. The Engineering Center received calls almost daily on service events and maintenance issues that caused unacceptable downtime.

## The Solution

As part of a Lean Six Sigma initiative, the Engineering Center implemented a program to standardize operating procedures, equipment, maintenance, and training. The effort evolved organically as the need to improve quality for R&D and the supply chain converged. The team chose Agilent to meet their needs for coordinated services:

- Unified support delivery for the central facility and distributed labs
- Single point of contact for service
- Guaranteed turnaround time
- Coverage for hardware, consumables, service and support, training and consulting

## The Results

Implementing a single unified support services approach and incorporating lab productivity elements produced the following key benefits:

- **Created cost savings of more than 200%** over a time-and-materials approach to service
- **Increased test efficiencies up to 75%** for HPLC, with both time and cost savings, plus less reagent use and hazardous waste disposal
- **Set the stage to standardize** plant hardware, software, and training
- **Introduced regular presentations of service metrics** to help stakeholders understand service events and trends, and equipment lifecycles



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