

How Pristine Surgical Used **AcuityMD** to Develop Their First ASC Product Rollout

Ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) are rapidly increasing the number of procedures they perform annually, but they still face distinct physical, financial, and medical challenges.

Physical challenges

85% of ASCs have 4 operating rooms or fewer, and these rooms are often smaller than hospital-based operating rooms.

Financial challenges

ASCs often have limited cash flow available for capital investments and the surgeons based at an ASC often have a financial stake in the facility, making them extremely cost-conscious.

Medical challenges

ASCs have limited staff and high turnover, which can lead to recurring issues with sterilization and infection.

Pristine Surgical is a medical device company with a mission to simplify endoscopy, and was building a strategic plan to introduce a new product to market, one that specifically targeted ASCs. They had developed Summit, the world's first single-use arthroscope, which doesn't require any additional equipment like lighting, cords, or an arthroscopy tower that take up valuable space in the OR.

When used for a procedure, surgical staff scan the QR code on the Summit's box, which triggers a number of automated features. First, the arthroscope's timer is set for 24 hours so it can't be re-used, guaranteeing single-use sterility. Second, the inventory is tallied to track usage. Finally, the scan associates that particular device with a singular patient and automatically uploads labeled surgical footage to Pristine's cloud-based servers before then sending to the surgeon's office and patient via encrypted messaging.

After completing a limited market run for Summit, the Pristine team was confident that their new product provides a significant impact on the physical, financial, and medical challenges ASCs face. Additionally, because using Summit saves surgeons 12 minutes per case in setup and tear down time while automating several administrative tasks, the efficiency the device provides is a large boost for lean ASC staffs.

The only potential bump in the road was that despite decades of experience launching products to various markets, the ASC-only approach was a first for Chief Commercial Officer Dave Carey.

Finding the right market

Carey knew from Summit's limited market test run that two main groups of customers wanted Summit: those who had equipment challenges like repairs or failures that affected the surgical schedule, and those focused on maximizing efficiency so their facility could achieve a high throughput.

But with the exclusive focus on ASCs, Carey and his team weren't able to rely on the historical insights they gained from selling to hospitals and health systems. With a lean sales and marketing team in a company of just 30, Carey had to weigh the opportunity costs facing his team. Every tactic they focused on and every pitch they made was another one they wouldn't be able to pursue. It was critical to get the approach right the first time and not have any missteps that delayed revenue or incurred extra costs.

Pristine had been using another data system previously, but not only was the provided data outdated, his team had to manually collate, analyze, and build a strategy around that data, spending critical time that could've been better used on sales activities.

Carey knew that deeper insights would be required to properly plan a winning launch strategy.



“You learn more about your product with the first 20 users than you do in 2 years of planning.”

Partnering with AcuityMD

Pristine partnered with AcuityMD to access best-in-class data and a user-friendly platform that would enable them to easily identify target markets and surface top opportunities.

Knowing how critical volume is to an ASC's overall financial health, they used AcuityMD to determine which surgeons had the most arthroscopic volume at ASCs. That gave Carey and his team a starting point to develop a robust understanding of the new market that would serve as a foundation for their tactical approach to the Summit product launch.

One critical tactic would be partnering with local distributors, who control key inroads to ASCs. Using AcuityMD Territories, Carey was able to create local and regional heat maps in the areas with the most market opportunity and reach out to distributors in those areas first. He also had the ability to vet those distributors by checking their claims about the best surgeons and facilities to target against AcuityMD's procedure volume data. This data was leveraged to focus direct hiring in key markets with the available opportunities to support their launch efforts.

Carey had noted early on that AcuityMD's intuitive user interface made data more accessible and actionable than anything he had worked with previously, so with priority

territories identified, he dived into the data to further enhance Pristine's tactical approach.

With the medical challenges ASC inherently face in mind, Carey developed a targeting list of ASCs with recurring surgical site infection issues. These facilities would logically be the most receptive to a sterile, single-use product and became another building block for Summit's product rollout.

Yet another key factor in launching a product in a new market is finding surgeons who are not only early adopters, but willing champions. Using AcuityMD's physician profiles, Carey built a roster of clinicians he could target as key opinion leaders in the arthroscopy space. AcuityMD gave him a broad understanding of these clinicians, from their education to residency to published research, enabling Pristine's reps to prepare personalized pitches for each.

As Carey noted, "It's not about knowing. It's really about respecting the conversation that you're about to have. And so rather than showing up and asking, 'Where did you do your fellowship? Where did you study? Have you written any interesting papers?' It's not just about having an interesting conversation, it's about getting past some chit-chat because you showed the respect of the surgeon that you know a lot about them before you ever step foot in the building."

In preparing for physician meetings, Carey wanted to ensure his team wasn't just informed on physicians personally, but knew how they built their practices as well. "Interestingly, we also know where all the surgeon's referrals are coming from thanks to AcuityMD. So as you're doing market development...we want to help the surgeon let their network know that we've got a new product."

Thanks to careful tactical planning and execution, Carey and team were able to successfully introduce Summit to many satisfied customers. But during their ramp up, they noticed a usage trend that they didn't initially anticipate. Summit was quickly becoming the arthroscope of choice for providers performing meniscectomies, a procedure to fully or partially remove a torn meniscus.

Historically, a lean team like Carey's might not have been able to pivot and capitalize on this unexpected growth area

due to the level of effort required to find and analyze useful data. But with AcuityMD, Pristine was able to quickly take advantage of the opportunity presented to them. Carey examined meniscectomy procedure volume to identify the providers and ASCs with the highest volume and either shift his existing distributors and sales reps towards them, or spin up new ones in a different territory.

As Carey notes, when presented with surprising information from the market, “What you do with that information separates the good from the great.”

Expanding the product roster

Following the successful launch of Summit, Pristine Surgical planned to expand their single-use product roster into laparoscopy and flexible endoscopy. But this presented new challenges. Although Carey knew from AcuityMD's data that the laparoscope market was twice as large as the arthroscope market, and the flexible endoscopy market was ten times larger, his sales team had mostly an arthroscopy background.

Carey didn't have the resources available to build out a new laparoscopy team with veteran marketers and dedicated sales reps. He needed his existing team - including himself - to figure out how to become domain experts in this new market, fast.

Carey, however, was confident they would have similar success thanks to AcuityMD. “AcuityMD has worked out a method of aggregating an unbelievable amount of data in order to inform us about what's going on in any discipline that we want to know about.”

This is where the workflows and full functionality of AcuityMD versus simple data platforms made a significant difference for Carey and his team. After developing executable block-and-tackle tactics for the launch of Summit, they would need to create an entirely new launch strategy from the ground up, using the platform in a completely different way.

Once again examining procedure volume as a starting point, Carey realized that the laparoscopy market was split between ASCs and hospitals for sites of care, favoring hospitals. They also had access to data on laparoscopy reimbursements, which helped them determine price points for the new product, key opinion leaders for this procedure, and which of their existing Summit customers

also performed laparoscopies, making them ideal early adopter and influencer prospects.

With the organization aligned to the new strategy, Carey then repeated tactics from the Summit launch that would be applicable to the new market, most significantly using heat maps to again determine where to focus his limited resources. This was critical as the laparoscopy market in hospitals is generally not served by distributors and would require direct sales in the field.

Conclusion

The next step for Pristine Surgical and AcuityMD will be developing two-way integration between the AcuityMD platform and Pristine Connect, the cloud-based platform they created to manage the imagery, procedure data, workflows, and inventory management for Summit customers. This integration will provide Pristine Surgical with an ongoing, continuously-updated source of physician preferences and market and expansion opportunities based on total volume against Summit usage, further accelerating their marketing and penetration efforts.

For Carey, the value of AcuityMD's platform for Pristine Surgical all comes down to the best-in-class data offering, which combines insights and clear action for building out sales and marketing strategy in an intuitive, easy-to-use platform. “All of this is really easy to use. It's about getting great data. It's about being able to sort that data and have it be actionable and putting startups in the driver's seat in terms of understanding their business and their customers. It's been an invaluable resource for us.”



Dave Carey
Chief Commercial Officer
Pristine Surgical