

## SCIENTIFIC SAMPLE MANAGEMENT: BIOPROCESSING FREEZER FARM SUCCESS STORY

### FREEZER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DELIVERS COST AVOIDANCE, RECOVERS LAB SPACE AND SCIENTIFIC TIME

#### Challenge

A major pharmaceutical R&D facility's freezer management programme had become a burden for researchers. Facing exhausted freezer capacity and limited space, the facility had limited options for expanding without making unwanted trade-offs, such as taking over prime real estate in labs to add more freezers or outsourcing to external freezer programmes.

Project teams were responsible for maintaining their own freezers and sample collections, but they had reached the limits of their sample storage capacity. The rising concern of routine freezer maintenance only grew as teams no longer had extra freezer space to store samples in the event of equipment failure.

Scientists were also bogged down with the frustrating and time-consuming manual process of sample tracking. Without consistent procedures for maintaining freezer sample inventories, samples were routinely misplaced or lost. And when a needed sample could not be located, the facility knew it would have serious regulatory compliance concerns in the event of an investigation or audit.

#### Solution

VWRCATALYST was called on to establish a freezer management programme for the facility. With experience in the critical nature of maintaining scientific samples, VWRCATALYST developed a solution that deployed an experienced staff with logistics and scientific lab experience to optimise the freezer programme.

After carefully analysing the current state, VWRCATALYST initiated comprehensive process controls for freezer inventory. The team developed a user friendly, but controlled drop-off and pick-up process with guaranteed turnaround times for both incoming and outgoing samples. A comprehensive inventory of the samples was also completed. An inventory review, with the assistance of the R&D team, allowed expired materials to be marked for disposal.

With an accurate database of the stored samples, attention turned to developing a preventative maintenance programme to mitigate against catastrophic freezer failure.

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#### Challenge

A large pharmaceutical R&D facility was facing increasing freezer programme costs.

#### Solution

VWRCATALYST developed controls and processes to reclaim freezer space, refocused scientists' time, and ensured effective preventative maintenance planning.

#### Result

The customer has reclaimed **five freezers** worth of space, refocused **432 hours for scientists**, and captured **\$440 000** in process savings.

**"We would never go back to the way it was. VWRCATALYST has become a critical and integral part of what we do here!"**  
– Associate Director of Sourcing

## Result

- **Five freezers worth of open space regained** from inventory clean-up and reorganisation
- **\$70 000 in cost avoidance** from avoiding purchase of additional freezers
- **432 hours per year recovered** for scientists after redirecting sample management activities
- **\$440 000 in savings realised through process improvements**

The company was able to:

- Refocus end-user time from sample inventorying and searching back to science
- Avoid the purchase of additional freezers
- Preserve laboratory space for science vs. freezer storage
- Harmonise a labelling system across departments
- Focus on creating SOPs and controls to ensure process sustainability
- Drive process efficiencies in areas including processing of new sample deliveries

The success of this freezer management programme has resulted in adoption of the programme by additional groups within the organisation.

### Output of VWR CATALYST freezer management programme

Samples processed per week (incoming and outgoing)	2000 - 2100
Sample requests per week	25 - 30
Freezers maintained	52

Current at time of publication.

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## We Enable Science Through Services

From research to production, VWR CATALYST can help you refocus scientific time on initiatives that directly support the strategic mission of your company.

### We Enable Science by:

- Powering productivity
- Improving quality, safety and regulatory compliance
- Reducing total operating costs

### Our services include:

- Procurement and supply management
- Laboratory and production support
- Science as a service
- Equipment and instrument services
- Lean Six Sigma process consulting