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Reeves-Sain offers alternative to traditional pill bottle

Nashville Business Journal - by [Jim Wojciechowski](#) Contributing Writer**Reeves-Sain Drug Store** in Murfreesboro is a throwback.

It features a soda shop with checkered tablecloths and decades-old senior class photos from the shuttered Central High School.

“When my dad decided to put ... a soda shop and a gift shop and a post office in that store in the late '80s, he really was trying to give our pharmacy a certain charm that you just were not going to be able to find in the major chains,” says co-owner Shane Reeves, who partnered with Rick Sain to buy the company in 1995 from Richard Reeves and Ron Powell. Today, the company has five locations, including two drug stores and a medical store and an extended-care pharmacy.

“We decided a long time ago if we were going to survive as a company we were going to have to fill a lot of prescriptions, be extremely diversified into a lot of different product areas,” he says.

The pharmacy's MediPACK product is a big part of the company's future. The system dispenses doses of medication in sealed, individual plastic packets — different from the common bulk container. Each packet has the patient's name, the name of the medication and the quantity, the scheduled time for ingestion and the expiration date. For a \$15 monthly fee, MediPACK can manage an unlimited number of prescriptions.

Reeves says it is designed to ensure “you are taking the right med on the right day at the right time, every time. And whether your mom lives in Nashville or Honolulu, you can rest somewhat assured that they're taking the right med at the right time.”

Sain credits MediPACK for keeping his father healthier following a heart procedure.

“He doesn't miss a dose,” Sain says. “... I know that's kept him out of the doctor's office more.”

Reeves-Sain began supplying drugs to nursing homes and assisted-living centers in similar packages in the mid-1990s and decided to market a retail application in 2005.

“We kept hearing it enough that, hey, we're missing an opportunity here,” Sain says.

Still, getting customers used to a new way of doing something can be difficult.

“It's really a challenge to package for people in a retail environment who are so accustomed to getting things in bottles,” Reeves says. “Changing that paradigm, it took a couple of years.”

Today's Caregiver magazine selected MediPACK for its 2009 Caregiver Friendly Award.

“It's one of the few things we do that I have people stop me in the community ... and say, ‘You have absolutely changed our lives,’” Reeves says.

Reeves-Sain

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2009 REVENUE: \$35 million (projected)

EMPLOYEES: 160

WEB: [reevessain.com](#)

Martin B. Cherry

Rick Sain, left, and Shane Reeves, co-owners of Reeves-Sain pharmacy, use an automated system to dispense customers' medications in dosage packets.

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Lessons Learned

MOST DEFINING BUSINESS DECISION? The day that I started getting serious about what I was good at it made a world of difference for the business.

GREATEST BUSINESS CHALLENGE? National health care reform. If we decide to move toward a public option or a government-run health care program in this country, then I'm really concerned about how that affects our business and our patients and the staff that works for us.

GREATEST CLIENT CHALLENGE? If people are looking for pharmacists or pharmacies, they start looking for three things: They want to know how close are you to my house, how fast are you and how cheap are you? One of the greatest hidden secrets in health care today is not enough people have a relationship with their pharmacist.

BIGGEST SURPRISE OF YOUR CAREER? That I would end up spending my time as a businessperson and not as a pharmacist.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST FRUSTRATION? Shrinking margins in pharmaceutical reimbursement. We're getting paid less and asked to do more.

WHAT IS YOUR FIVE-YEAR VISION? We are going to take our profit centers that have the highest gross margin and continue to push forward with a real focus on the MediPACK product. We believe it's got scalability and can be a significant brand outside our local market.