



## How to Purchase Mobile Computer Carts Your Hospital Staff Won't Complain About

# Workbook Guide

The right mobile computer cart can make a huge positive impact on the day-to-day experience for your staff—and your patients.

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The right mobile computer cart can make a huge positive impact on the day-to-day experience of your staff—and your patients. On the other hand, having the wrong cart can cause headaches and hassles that ultimately result in inefficiency and complaints from your healthcare team.

But with so many ever-evolving options out there, it can be difficult for even the most seasoned healthcare IT specialists to select the right mobile computer cart for their team. The good news is that with a little research, thought and planning, it is possible to purchase mobile computer carts that meet the operational needs of your staff and satisfy your IT concerns.

**This Workbook Guide aims to help you ask the right questions and get the answers and information you need to select the perfect ergonomic mobile computer carts.**



## ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Before you get started on your search, it is a good idea to ask for feedback from your healthcare team. If you're already using mobile computer carts, find out what the staff like and dislike about your current model. Depending on the size of your team, this can be done through a formal email survey or simply by asking around. In any case, you should at least ask for some feedback from your nurse manager and/or lead physician.

If you're not yet using mobile computer carts, your staff won't be able to provide you with pros and cons of your current model. However, they may be able to give you a few "wish list" items that can help you narrow your search. You also should work with your healthcare team to determine how many mobile computer carts they need.





## SHOP AROUND

With any IT-related upgrade, your challenge is to [balance your facility's current and future technology needs with the scope and budget for the initiative](#). If you know how many carts you are looking to buy/replace and how much money is earmarked for the project, you can work on developing an ideal price range that will narrow your choices.

**After you determine your price range, here are four key areas of consideration that will guide your purchasing decisions:**





# 1. Technology Considerations

Getting a mobile computer cart that is not compatible with your existing IT infrastructure is a costly mistake that you want to avoid. To determine whether a mobile computer cart fits with your current technology (and your future IT plans), you should ask questions including:

- Will the cart support the type of computer that will be used?
- Will the cart support the LCD display size that will be used (typically 22-24")?
- Does the cart allow for data access and capture at the point of care?
- Is the system powered or non-powered?
- If it is powered, how long is the runtime?
- Is the cart compatible with EHR/EMR or BMV software?
- Is the cart compatible with your wireless network?
- Does the cart get good wireless reception?
- Does the cart have appropriate medical certifications and required standards?

# Technology Considerations cont'd

- Does the cart have medication drawer options that meet your needs (if required)?
- Can other devices be integrated into the cart  
(barcode scanner, patient monitoring devices, webcam, RFID, etc.)?
- Is the cart easy to upgrade?
- Can the cart be configured to comply with your org's privacy and security policies?
- Is information shielded from everyone's view except the user to protect privacy?
- Does the cart include biometric security?

Because mobile computer carts are long-term investments, it also is a good idea to make sure it is compatible with any planned IT upgrades that will occur shortly after you purchase the carts. Ideally, the mobile computer carts you purchase should allow for change, growth and expansion as EHR/EMR and other types of technology continue to evolve.





## 2. User Considerations

Your healthcare team will be using these carts day in and day out, so it is important to consider their needs. Failure to incorporate their feedback will increase the likelihood of complaints and, at worst, may have a negative impact on efficiency and patient care. Questions you should ask include:

- Is the work surface large enough?
- Is it easy to push?
- Is it too heavy or so light that it could tip?
- Is the cart well-balanced?
- Is the screen easy to see and large enough to read?
- Is the cart easy to plug in, if required?
- Do the batteries have sufficient runtime?
- Is the battery charge level easy to see?







## User Considerations Cont'd

- How long does it take to charge the battery?
- Are the batteries easy to change?
- Is the cart ergonomically friendly (with foot rest, keyboard tray, adjustable height)?
- Is the cart designed to eliminate the risk of workplace injuries?
- If the cart will be used at night, does it have a back-lit keyboard/lighted surface?
- Is the keyboard covered to prevent the spread of germs?
- How long does it take to sanitize the device, and who can perform that job  
(clinicians, housekeeping, etc.)?
- Is the medication drawer (if required) easy to operate?
- Does the cart have options such as holders, baskets and rails?



### 3. Environment and Application Considerations

- Does the cart move well on the flooring surface where it will be used  
  
(carpet, hard floors, etc.)?
- Does the cart comfortably fit through doorways?
- Does the cart turn well?
- Can it be maneuvered in small spaces?
- Is there adequate space to store and charge the carts?
- Does the cart contain a medication drawer, if needed?
- Does the cart contain adequate storage for other items  
  
(to eliminate multiple trips for commonly used supplies?)
- If the cart will be used at night, does it have adequate lighting?



## 4. Quality and Durability Considerations

Mobile computer carts are a significant investment for your facility and will be heavily used by your healthcare team. You should be sure to choose a sturdy, reliable cart from a vendor that offers ongoing support and service. Questions you should ask include:

- Is the cart popular and widely used by other healthcare organizations?
- What type of warranty does the cart have?
- How long does warranty coverage last?
- Is ongoing support available from the manufacturer/retailer?
- How much does ongoing support cost?
- What type of maintenance, if any, is required?
- Is the cart easy to replace if it breaks or needs to be sent for repair?
- Does the vendor offer convenient customer service hours?
- Does the vendor offer loaner carts?



## *What's Next?*

After you answer these questions and zero in on the right cart for you, it is a good idea to develop a plan to test the technology within your organization.

## *Still need assistance or don't have the time to work through this process?*

Our experienced consultants can help you find the perfect solutions for your facility.

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