

# AMAG Pharmaceuticals Discovers the Cure for Password Woes



## INTRODUCTION

Today, AMAG Pharmaceuticals and its Feraheme® treatment, introduced in 2009, has significantly improved the wellbeing of a growing number of patients with iron deficiency anemia. The Lexington, Massachusetts-based biopharmaceutical company develops and commercializes a therapeutic iron compound used in Feraheme and other treatments, as well as novel imaging agents that aid in the diagnosis of cancer and cardiovascular disease. The success of Feraheme has driven new growth at AMAG as the company scales up to meet high demands. Its workforce has more than tripled to approximately 300 people, including a nationwide mobile sales force, and operations have expanded to two Greater Boston facilities.

## THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

“AMAG is an organization that prefers to devote most of its resources to research, development and sales rather than IT infrastructure and operating expenses.” When Nathan McBride, executive director of IT joined AMAG, he made the decision to leverage Web-based hosted environments and software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions, wherever possible, to satisfy the company’s growing IT needs.

Today, AMAG uses a total of 12 hosted environments for applications such as workgroup collaboration, sales force automation, travel and expense management and payroll information. McBride discovered that not all of his enterprise-class hosted environments support LDAP authentication. As a result, AMAG employees found themselves having to manage a growing number of application passwords. While some managers can have up to 15 passwords, staff only average nine. For example, one of the hosted solutions particularly troubled users because it required them to re-login whenever they had been inactive on the system for more than five minutes.

“As we got to our sixth or seventh system, we started to see an increase in the number of password incidents and password resets in IT support,” said McBride. “Though this was not unexpected, it began to get out of control quickly.” At the same time, employee password complaints were growing, and more passwords were appearing on “sticky notes” around the office, leaving them susceptible to a security breach and non-compliance with regulations.

McBride also knew that data security was critical to AMAG for several reasons. First, as a public company, AMAG is required to meet the IT security control requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. However, as a biopharmaceutical company, AMAG also must consider a growing list of regulatory compliance needs. These include Title 21 CFR Part 11, which requires FDA-regulated industries to implement controls, that include audits, system validations, audit trails, electronic signatures, and documentation for software and systems involved in processing FDA-related electronic data, the Massachusetts 201 CMR 17 Data Privacy Act and the Physician Payment Sunshine Act, which requires yearly reporting of payments made by drug manufacturers to physicians.

With these thoughts in mind, McBride began exploring possible solutions to the password management and compliance challenges.

## COMPANY

- 300 employees
- Two locations and remote sales force

## INDUSTRY

- Biopharmaceuticals

## APPLICATIONS

- EMC Documentum eRoom, ADP iPAY, Concur travel/expense management, Spectrum HRIS, StayinFront CRM

## CHALLENGES

- User frustration with password proliferation and system lockouts
- High volume of helpdesk password resets
- Growing regulatory compliance requirements

## RESULTS

- Eliminated password management problems for users
- Password reset calls to helpdesk reduced by 97%
- Achieved compliance with Mass. 201 data privacy act

BEFORE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN	AFTER IMPRIVATA ONESIGN
Multiple passwords with different complexity rules caused frustration and decreased productivity for users	Users have fast single sign-on access to all hosted applications
A limited ability to enforce strong password policy put data security and regulatory compliance at risk	The monthly volume of password reset calls to the AMAG IT helpdesk has been reduced by 97%
IT helpdesk was burdened by up to 100 password reset calls per month	Encryption of usernames and passwords during login to hosted applications assures compliance with Massachusetts 201 CMR 17 data privacy act

## THE IMPRIVATA ONESIGN SOLUTION

After consulting with his peers at other companies, McBride began looking for an enterprise-class single sign-on solution. His search led him to 11 prospective solutions, which he and his team quickly narrowed down to three: Hitachi ID, Courion and Imprivata OneSign. Of the three solutions, Imprivata OneSign stood out immediately.

“I didn’t want to have to buy a dedicated server that we’d have to manage and maintain,” he said. While Hitachi ID, Courion, and Imprivata were all appliance-based solutions, there was a significant difference in the solutions offered. “The implementation process offered by the other two vendors was longer and more complicated,” said McBride. “When I saw the Imprivata demo, it was a done deal.” McBride and his team deployed Imprivata OneSign in their Lexington and Cambridge facilities in the fall of 2009. According to McBride, “It was one of the most painless rollouts we’ve ever had.”

## THE RESULTS

To AMAG’s staff, the impact of Imprivata OneSign was immediate. “From a helpdesk perspective, we’ve seen a 97% reduction in password resets,” said McBride. “We’re down to about two per month.” This has freed up the AMAG IT team to work on more business-critical tasks. Employees were equally effusive. “I had people coming up to me in the hall and shaking my hand,” said McBride.

Imprivata OneSign has also alleviated AMAG’s compliance burden, particularly with the Massachusetts 201 CMR 17 Data Privacy Act. “Because our HRIS system is hosted, all of our employee data is sitting elsewhere on somebody else’s server,” said McBride. “Although the vendor had passed its SAS 70 audit, we still had users and HR staff typing in usernames and passwords to login, making that information vulnerable.” Imprivata OneSign has eliminated that problem. “SSO instantly guaranteed that we’d be able to meet the requirements of Mass. 201 by effectively encrypting that sign-in.”

Looking back, McBride highly esteems Imprivata for the support it provided. “The feedback from my team was that the training was astounding, as was the onsite support,” said McBride. “It was a great project.”

In recommending Imprivata OneSign to other biopharmaceutical companies, McBride summed up its benefits by saying, “It’s simple to install, works flawlessly, and requires no additional resources to administer.”

*“For biopharmaceutical companies who use hosted environments to cut down on infrastructure costs, single sign-on is the obvious, simple solution to achieving access security.”*

—Nathan McBride  
Executive Director of IT  
AMAG Pharmaceuticals, Inc.