

# Q & A



**Linda Pinney**  
 Founder/Chief  
 Business Officer



Asteres Inc.  
 Founded: April 2003  
 Product: ScriptCenter®

**Management Team**

Founder/Chief Business Officer:  
 Linda Pinney  
 President/CEO: Al Waterhouse  
 Vice President of Sales: Julie Brewer  
 Vice President of Pharmacy Services:  
 Robert Hansen, Pharm.D.  
 Vice President of Research and  
 Development: Laird Broadfield  
 Vice President of Strategic Product  
 Development: John Beane  
 Vice President of Customer Operations:  
 Ellen Haviland

**Q: What is Asteres Inc.?**

**A:** Asteres Inc. is a San Diego-based company focused on developing secure self-service technologies. Asteres' premier product is ScriptCenter — the first prescription self-checkout kiosk in retail pharmacy that provides consumers a convenient way to pick up and pay for their finished prescriptions even if the pharmacy is closed.

Where did the idea for ScriptCenter come from? While waiting in line at a Del Mar, CA, chain drug store, Linda Pinney had an epiphany. With her deep experience in pharmacy automation at Pyxis Corp., owned by Cardinal Health Inc., she thought there had to be a better way than waiting in line or using mail order to obtain prescriptions. With that thought, Linda went to work validating and quantifying the need for such a technology and set off to develop ScriptCenter.

**Q: What are the benefits to consumers and pharmacists?**

**A:** Let's start with the consumer benefits. The trend in usage of self-service technology is growing in many areas. It started with ATMs and then shifted to airlines and retail, with more new applications being developed every year. The evidence continues to grow that customers want the convenience, privacy and control of self-service and will choose retailers that offer self-service options over those who don't.

ScriptCenter allows the pharmacy customer to pick up and pay for routine medications with the option to seek assistance as needed. The consumer can avoid waiting in line and can enjoy increased hours of pickup, since ScriptCenter is open during store hours.

The pharmacist also benefits because ScriptCenter — unlike home delivery, mail order and drive-through — brings the customer into the store. This not only creates the opportunity for front-end sales and patient intervention, but also allows pharmacists to shorten their lines with the goal of focusing on new prescription counseling and patient care.

Unlike standard alphabetized will-call systems, ScriptCenter allows items to be loaded in any order, maintains status communication with the retail pharmacy system and automatically delivers back to the pharmacy prescriptions to be returned to stock. ScriptCenter can also manage O-T-C and other items that need to be placed behind the pharmacy counter for security reasons.

**Q: Is ScriptCenter "live," and if so, what has been the consumer response?**

**A:** ScriptCenter went live in December 2004. Consumers truly appreciate being able to quickly, securely and privately pick up their routine refill prescriptions without having to wait. Of particular note has been the halo effect of "after hours." Consumers note that besides avoiding the line, being able to come in when the store is open but the pharmacy is closed is the most important reason they appreciate ScriptCenter. Even if they don't come in when the pharmacy is closed, they like knowing that their prescriptions are available in ScriptCenter after hours.

As expected, ScriptCenter users have had many good ideas for enhancing their experience. Asteres has responded with new features and functionality and will continue to use customer feedback as the primary driver for product improvements.

**Q: Where is ScriptCenter being installed next?**

**A:** Longs Drug Stores and Safeway Inc. stores are currently installing ScriptCenter in northern

and southern California, with other major retailers completing systems integration to ScriptCenter in preparation for upcoming installations. Bob Hansen, Vice President of Pharmacy Services at Asteres, is working with retailers and their boards of pharmacy to obtain board approval. Currently, the California Board of Pharmacy has granted waivers to use ScriptCenter for prescription refills not requiring consultation to Longs; Safeway; University of California, San Diego Medical Center; and Walgreen Co.

The Virginia board has approved a pilot project for prescription refills at an Ahold store in Reston, VA. Both the California and Virginia boards approved after-hours usage of ScriptCenter.

Lastly, the Hawaii Board of Pharmacy has informed Longs that ScriptCenter may be used in Hawaii without board approval for any prescription that does not require consultation. ScriptCenter may not be used for controlled substances, however, and may be used during store hours only, according to the board.

Asteres is actively working with these and other retailers to obtain necessary Board approvals. In fact, we have gotten positive feedback from other State Boards and in New York and Ohio we are waiting for final terms and conditions under which ScriptCenter can operate.

**Q: Does ScriptCenter handle anything other than prescriptions, and are there any new features that have emerged?**

**A:** New initiatives for ScriptCenter revolve around increasing capability and capacity. Asteres has introduced a new integrated software platform to manage such additional store products as O-T-Cs, essential medical supplies and personal care items. ScriptCenter can manage restricted items that are subject to age, quantity, time and other constraints such as Sudafed. ScriptCenter can also manage such high-shrink items as razor blades and nonaspirin pain-relief products.

ScriptLocker, the company's second hardware offering, is a solenoid-activated, custom-configurable locker system that is accessed from ScriptCenter. ScriptLocker is being introduced as part of the ScriptCenter System to manage and deliver oversize items.

Asteres also is introducing a new ScriptCenter Container for loading 90-day fills into ScriptCenter. ScriptCenter currently carries two sizes of prescription bags, and the ScriptCenter Container provides a new solution for prescriptions that require multiple packages.

Asteres is working on a line of self-service technologies that offer the optimum levels of control and convenience and can be highly integrated into the retailer's supply chain and point-of-sale systems.

**Q: Tell me about the Asteres management team and the Asteres employee roster today?**

**A:** The Asteres management team has vast experience in health care automation, hospital and health care systems, and retail pharmacy. Many members of the team have worked together before and are experienced in scaling technology companies from a single product installation to hundreds of thousands of units manufactured, installed and serviced.

Asteres has about 40 employees today, with more than 80% of the company focused on product development and customer operations. We are building Asteres — just as we did at Pyxis — to surround our customers with the best people, products and services in the market.

We strongly believe that products are only as good as the people behind them. We are deeply committed to earning the same reputation for intense customer focus in retail that we achieved in the health care systems market.