

Summary

"Let's face it, nobody likes to spend money," says Felix Szymkowiak. "We know we have to update our business, but it hurts – especially since we are getting squeezed more every year." Mr. Szymkowiak, RPh, freely admits to his frugal streak as Roadway Pharmacy's owner. But frugality has a price, and for him, it was daily worry that somehow, a dispensing error could get past his pharmacy's visual-only processes in both retail and bingo card filling. He doesn't see the purchase of two Kirby Lester KL1Plus devices as an indulgence; rather, it was a necessary investment. "A high school kid with a tray and spatula is *not* peace of mind. The KL1Plus backing up my techs on every fill – now *that* is real peace of mind," he says.



Setting

Seward, PA is an hour east of Pittsburgh in former coal mining and steel mill country. Mr. Szymkowiak and his wife started Roadway Pharmacy in 1979; they expanded to dispense for nursing homes and hospice as well as retail. A high portion of the staff's efforts focus on hypertension screening and LTC/hospice consulting.

- Daily Rx volume: High
- Staff: Typical shift is 4 employees for retail filling, 2 for nursing home

Challenges

A busy day is tiring. And when you get tired, you are more vulnerable to mistakes. That was Mr. Szymkowiak's main concern in 2013 when he started looking for technology to back up to his generally trusted workflow. "No matter how good you are, if you think your techs are superstars, it happens to all of us on those really hectic days," he says. "A tech counting by 5's is very repetitive. So you can be lax after a while." Mr. Szymkowiak investigated robotics, but the cost was prohibitive. "I started looking for a good counting machine that could also verify the meds. I figured a machine like that along with good workflow would be something we could trust," he says.

Solution

For years Roadway Pharmacy had used a Kirby Lester tablet counter. When Mr. Szymkowiak learned of the KL1Plus, he knew he found the perfect combination product. He uses two KL1Plus devices: for retail filling, and for verifying the LTC fills in bingo cards. His KL1Plus devices are non-interfaced, and the staff learned how to use them in about 30 minutes. "The devices are portable, so we can move a KL1Plus over to the LTC or the retail side as we need to," he says.

Results

- 1. Customers Can't Complain:** Since installing the KL1Plus, Mr. Szymkowiak rarely is questioned by customers. "There's no doubt they got the right med, right quantity. That alone is worth the investment," he says.
- 2. Infinitely Cheaper Than A Mistake:** With the KL1Plus, Mr. Szymkowiak gets affordable security. "The cost was a heck of a lot less than a lawsuit. When someone from the state comes in, they tell me, 'You better have something backing you up, because it's not humanly possible to be 100% perfect,'" he says.
- 3. Not Every Tech Is Equal:** "For techs who are new, or maybe aren't as savvy, you teach them your process, you make them use the technology, and they follow it. You know they're going to be OK," he says.
- 4. Bingo Card Filling:** Filling bingo cards for their LTC business posed a higher potential for error than retail filling. By using a KL1Plus to scan-verify and count orders before the techs fill the bingo cards, Mr. Szymkowiak shored up potential problems and trimmed filling times.

Below, a retail pharmacy technician checks for accuracy with the KL1Plus.



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Felix Szymkowiak, RPh
Roadway Pharmacy

3.6 Errors/Week Avoided

In a study of pharmacies using a Kirby Lester counting-and-verification device like the KL1Plus, the device flagged an average of **3.6 potential errors per week** before they were committed. Errors were either:

- Wrong medication
- Wrong strength
- Wrong final quantity

In each case, the technician adjusted the order before final pharmacist check.