

Making a Difference with Kirby Lester

Bartell Drugs is a family-owned, 65-pharmacy chain in Washington state's Puget Sound region. Hand-counting prescriptions was the norm until 2015, when the company began installing Kirby Lester KL1Plus count-plus-verification devices. Chris Simard, pharmacy district manager, explains how Bartell standardized on this bench-level technology.

ComputerTalk: Was Bartell using any technology before 2015?

Chris Simard: We had some robots at our very high-volume stores, but it was all tray-and-spatula for the rest. I couldn't squeeze a robot into half my locations, even if we could justify the investment. The Kirby Lester devices fit into every single store. There were several benefits to the KL1Plus project, but the small footprint turned out to be one of the nicest parts. And then there's the ROI [return on investment]. When you have a multicell device, you have to strongly justify the investment with a headcount adjustment. It's so much easier to drop a KL1Plus into each location.

CT: What originally was the intent of bringing in new technology?

Simard: We had two goals: increase accuracy and add inventory management resources. Pharmacy is predicated on safety, so we always look at new technology that can boost safety. Our technicians were already barcode-scanning during filling with EnterpriseRx. But the software didn't cover all gaps. The KL1Plus filled it all in: who was filling the order and counting, what was scanned, what exact quantity was counted.

CT: Was there a specific ROI figure to hit for the KL1Plus to be deemed a success?

Simard: Actually, the project wasn't measured in cost-justification terms, which might sound unusual. We first outfitted 20 locations with the KL1Plus, then measured results in terms of safety, efficiency, and improved inventory control. And judging by those successful results, in early 2017 we outfitted 25 more locations. We got



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— Chris Simard

great customer service and training, which is hard to measure but nevertheless was important to the project's success. There wasn't a specific ROI hurdle to clear before we advanced. That's one of the great things about the price point of the KL1Plus. It's not such a large investment that it can only be measured in cold, hard numbers.

CT: How does Bartell use this technology for C-II control?

Simard: The amount of time we spent on narcs was very high. The KL1Plus has us counting, then double-counting, then doing a stock bottle count, plus we have a confirmation of what was counted, and by whom. So we have these extra safeguards now, and essentially triple-count in about the same time as a single-count script. We do narcotics inventory monthly, and there are a lot of moving parts. With the KL1Plus, we improved our inventory accuracy, and we improved our turns. It made my job

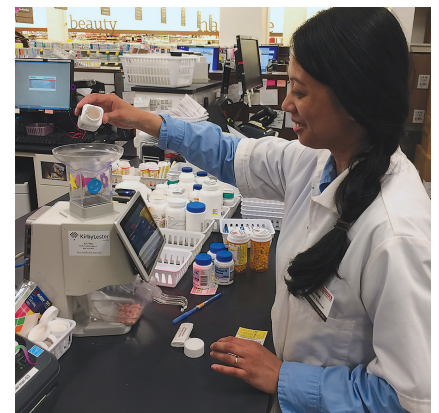
easier as an inventory supervisor, because I can see our accuracy rate improve.

CT: What's the number-one benefit to using the KL1Plus?

Simard: Increased accuracy, which goes hand in hand with transparency. Before, we could have been filling a script for three bottles of insulin. There was nothing to catch if one of the bottles was incorrect; no proof of who actually did the count; no proof of exactly how many capsules were counted out. That all became crystal clear with the KL1Plus. We're even fingerprint-scanning every order on the new devices.

CT: Do you still have customer disputes about wrong drug or quantity received?

Simard: We used to have one about once a week. Now, they've largely gone away — they sure don't make it to my level anymore. The store manager has the power to put it to bed, because there's no more "he said/she said." We have evidence; we have transparency on every fill. **CT**



The KL1Plus gives Bartell staff extra safeguards for C-II control. Learn more at www.computertalk.com/bartell-kirbylester.