Humans Make Errors; KL60/KL30 Don't

Tuminaro Pharmacy, Hopewell Junction, NY

Summary

If you ask Jeff Papo, RPh, which dispensing technology in his mid-state New York pharmacy is his MVP – the Kirby Lester KL60 robot or the KL30 dispensing and verification device – he has a hard time deciding. The KL60 robot (aka "The Count") saves a ton of time, manpower and OT expenses – especially on days when they're short-handed. But the KL30 catches errors before they get past the dispensing station. "I'm thankful every single day that my partner Dominick and I made the investment in this technology," says Mr. Papo. "I hear pharmacists say they don't make mistakes, or their staff is excellent. That's baloney. I consider myself very careful, and every once in a while it catches me. We're all human; the Kirby machines are not."

Setting

Tuminaro Pharmacy is 90 minutes north of New York City. Mr. Papo and partner Dominick Tuminaro opened the retail pharmacy in 2004, focusing on fast, friendly service. Tuminaro is space-constrained at just 400 square feet.

- Daily Rx volume: Average 250, with peaks up to 350
- Staff: Typical shift is 1-2 pharmacists and 2 techs

Challenges

While Hopewell Junction is a small community, four competitors are within sight. Mr. Papo and Mr. Tuminaro knew that building their business meant investing in technology. "You have to ask yourself, 'Do I plan on surviving?' If yes, then automation should be part of your options. You have to outdo the guy across the street," he says. "I needed to get customers in and out in 10 minutes, treat them well, and fill their prescriptions without any errors. That's what makes people leave their old pharmacy and bring their business to us." Mr. Papo had worked at a chain pharmacy before opening Tuminaro Pharmacy, and he was familiar with ScriptPro robots. "The ScriptPro was too big and expensive, and it had way too many cells. I needed something different," he says. Plus, the small building posed a challenge. "We crank out 350 scripts in this space. Adding more staff would just cause congestion."

Solution

The staff was using an older Kirby Lester KL16df device, so upgrading to the KL30 with its scan-verification process and 30 automated cassettes was simple. The partners chose to install the KL30 first (non-interfaced), followed by the KL60 five months later (interfaced with Rx30). "After about a week, we all agreed we wouldn't ever want to get rid of the KL30 for preventing errors. And the KL60 makes Mondays and busy times so much easier."

Results

1. **Fast ROI:** Mr. Papo calculated that the KL30's ROI was 3-4 months; the KL60's ROI was 8 months.

2. **Fast Counting:** Every minute is precious in retail pharmacy. "Would you rather fill a script in 2 minutes, or 5 minutes? The KL60 is faster than a person," Mr. Papo says. "Busy days just feel easier with the robot."

3. **No More Customer Disputes:** Before installing the Kirby Lester technology, the Tuminaro staff had weekly encounters with customers who accused them of short-filling narcotics. Not anymore. "Those customers get told nicely but firmly that our technology tracks everything we do, and it doesn't make mistakes," Mr. Papo says. "Problem solved."

4. **Never Misses A Detail:** Scan-verification is essential to Tuminaro Pharmacy. Especially at the end of a busy day, people are more prone to error. The KL30 and KL60 catch mistakes. "You hear one of us saying out loud, 'Thank you Kirby' when they realize they had the wrong Synthroid strength in their hand," Mr. Papo says.

Jeff Papo pulls completed orders of high-moving medications from the KL60 (top) and verifies and dispenses everything else with the KL30 (bottom)

"I timed it: In 10 minutes, I filled 19 scripts start to finish on a Monday morning with just me, no tech. That's when I really felt the value of the KL60."

Jeff Papo, RPh/owner
Tuminaro Pharmacy

Kirby Lester
exactly.