

# HI - TECH LOOK FOR PHARMACY...

A FLAGSHIP pharmacy, which boasts the latest technology and a large customer-friendly shop, is banishing the old adage of the faceless pharmacist.

State-of-the-art German storage and dispensing technology has increased efficiency at Peter Buckley's new King Street Pharmacy allowing its three pharmacists, Mrs Heather Rawson, Ms Imogen Griffin and Mrs Lorna Harwood, more time to spend with their customers.

"Although this is a new and really modern pharmacy, the staff are all the same and our ethos has not changed," Mrs Rawson explained. "We will always put our customers first."

"This modernisation allows us to spend more time with our customers which helps to make us stand out from the competition. We know our customers well and strive to give them a personal service tailored to their individual needs."

The introduction of this labour saving technology, one of the first in the UK, is a huge investment in the pharmacy's future.

With 80% of medicines stored and dispensed by a fully computerised semi-automated robot, staff at Peter Buckley's can utilise the time they used to spend selecting the relevant drugs on other tasks.

"In our old premises, my dispensers wore pedometers and we calculated that they were actually walking up to two miles a day, fetching the medicines from shelving units which spanned two rooms," said company director Peter Buckley. "With this new system, all they need to do is type in the name of the medicine they require into one of our five networked computers and our robot does the rest!"

He added: "When I started out as a pharmacist 40 years ago, we made all the medicines and mixtures up in the back. Nowadays most medicines are pre-packaged but treatment regimes can be quite complex and there is a real need for the pharmacist to come out to talk to their customers. This new technology gives my pharmacists the time to do just that."

With the increase in life expectancy, the number of prescriptions the pharmacy has to deal with has increased by five per cent on an annual basis meaning more efficient ways of meeting this demand had to be found.

Mr Buckley discovered the new dispensing technology on business trips to Holland five years ago, but was just waiting for the software side to catch up, which was eventually developed by a firm near Chorley.

While in some instances new technology can lead to a reduction in workforce, at Peter Buckley's Pharmacy, the knock-on effect of relocating the pharmacy has been an increase in trade forcing a recruitment drive.

"Now we're on the high street, the pharmacy is a lot busier and we now employ two pharmacists full-time," Mr Buckley explained. "I'm also looking to increase the number of dispensing technicians trained to NVQ level 3."

Mr Buckley, who is a great believer in staff training, enjoys high employee retention meaning that members of staff can build up a lasting rapport and relationship with their customers.

Located in a prime position next door to Clitheroe Health Centre, the smart new pharmacy, which was the vision of award-winning designer Keith Anderson, operates a prescription collection and delivery service. This allows customers to opt for their prescriptions to be collected from the health centre, and then either be picked up from the pharmacy or delivered to the customer's home address.

"This service is particularly useful to the elderly or more infirm customers who are less mobile and struggle to make it into town," explained Mr Buckley.

So why not pop into Peter Buckley's, your local independent community pharmacy, where you will find that the latest dispensing technology can go hand in hand with friendly and personal customer service.



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