



## Interview with **Ken Kniffen** of Bashas' Supermarkets

*WonderBar Merchandiser works wonders at Bashas'*

### VIEWPOINT • Q & A



**B**ashas', the Arizona-based chain of more than 150 supermarkets, has served customers for more than 70 years, but while tradition is important, so is innovation when it can lead to increased efficiency and better customer service.

So Bashas' has embraced the WonderBar Merchandiser system from Trion Industries, Inc., first for bagged candy sales and then for cough drops, gum and bagged deli products.

"This has been a real value to us," said Ken Kniffen, Bashas' Director of Merchandising. "It is providing a more customer-friendly system, reducing shrink and labor, and improving the appearance of our stores."

Kniffen said Bashas' tested WonderBar and its Shelf Works and Expandable Wire Tray (EWT) system in the candy aisle, then installed it in all of its stores. "We tested it in our wall deli and with cough drops, so now we are moving them into every new store and major remodel for both of those categories, too."

Important benefits, he said, include ease of installation, ability to increase SKUs within the same space, elimination of shrink due to bag tears, and a reduction of restocking labor, all made possible by a flexible system that uses spring-fed pusher trays instead of peg hooks.

To learn more, *Progressive Grocer* interviewed Kniffen:

**Q.** By installing the systems, were you able to increase your candy offerings?

**A.** We gained 13 facings. With the trays, we have 68 items; before we had 55. The tray system fits on a square bar and can be tightened left to right, up and down. We think sales increased by an average of 15%, although in some stores, maybe as much as 20%. We increased variety by adding new facings in the same space.

**Q.** Did this success lead to enhancements elsewhere?

**A.** Yes. We asked Trion for a version of the tray in a taller system to accommodate the longer multi-packs of gum, which never looked

good. Trion created a more vertical unit, and they work great. We have them in all of our Bashas' stores.

**Q.** Have you seen gains in sales due to improved presentation?

**A.** The pusher bar system keeps the product available in the front, and it's easier for the consumer to shop. With the pegged system, it's difficult for many shoppers, unless they are tall, to reach the product after the first couple of units have been sold. But this system moves the product to the front so it is always available, reachable, and looks good. It gives a constant billboard presentation and always looks great.

**Q.** Can the right system reduce shrink and eliminate ripped packaging?

**A.** Yes, and that is significant because we don't have bags ripped at the prepunched hole, which is common in the pegged bag candy section. We have 800 to 1,000 units and none of them are torn. Previously, those torn bags became shrink, often resulting in a mess on the floor.

**Q.** What was the effect on labor required to manage the department?

**A.** WonderBar is faster and more efficient. You can rotate the product quickly and properly without things getting ripped. Staff can lift the tray out and rotate every single SKU individually. They just put the tray on the cart, push the spring bar back and drop in the new product. It is far more efficient in terms of labor.

**Q.** What were the benefits in deli meat and cough drops?

**A.** In cough drops, we added eight new SKUs because of space gained. It is night and day compared to pegged cough drops. It holds them upright and looks perfect all the time. In the wall deli section, we were able to add 10 SKUs, and may expand into the perishable area as well.

**Q.** Does this help with resets?

**A.** Any chain going through remodels or resets can benefit. Just take the tray out, set it on the floor and fill it to reset the section. You save a tremendous amount of pain, headaches, and shrink.

To learn more about Bashas' Supermarkets, visit [www.bashas.com](http://www.bashas.com). To learn about Trion visit [www.triononline.com](http://www.triononline.com) or call 800-444-4665.