

The Making of a Lab

Understanding the key priorities and needs when working with cannabis in a laboratory setting

To properly conduct cannabis analysis, one must have the right tools, staff, and support. Larry Beardsley, CEO of Nature Safe Labs, dives into his experience of building a cannabis lab and what it has been like working with PerkinElmer.

CST: What has been your experience working with the PerkinElmer Cannabis Team?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: It has been an excellent experience, one that exudes professionalism. I previously started with other instrument manufacturers that I ended up not going forward with in the long term. PerkinElmer stood out to me because aside from having a robust cannabis solutions offering, they are so much more of a complete package for me and my work.

CST: If you had to narrow it down to 1 or 2 things, what have you learned in building your cannabis lab? What are some of the most important things to consider?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: Building a cannabis lab was a lot more complex than I would have ever imagined. My background is in naturopathic medicine so I'm not an analytical chemist as one might be when beginning a lab. I interviewed PhDs from various backgrounds—analytical, toxicology, pharmacology, food science, environmental—to get a better grasp on who understood cannabis and what to do with all these different matrices.

CST: What do you feel is the most important thing to consider when moving from validation to production?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: One thing we have done is provide a lot of cross-training to our scientists, analysts, and so forth. Having gone through COVID-19, it is important to make sure if somebody is sick or something out of our control happens, that our team is not stuck.

Being based out of California, you cannot outsource everything like you might elsewhere. You have to do everything 100% from the inside. So, you must have redundancy in instruments and have scientists that are versatile, in order to get samples turned around in that 48-to-72-hour period that the industry wants and demands.

CST: Coming into this, what was the biggest surprise when setting up your lab that you didn't know or anticipate?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: PerkinElmer was a great help with any surprises I ran into when setting up my lab. Charlie Schmidt and Tony Rhoden both have 40 years of experience in analytical chemistry so when they offered advice like "rip those benches off the walls" or "put those in other rooms" or "move this," I did exactly that.

I am thrilled with the results after listening to them. Our teams, from service engineers to scientists, mention how functional and put together the lab is. It all comes down to taking the right advice from the right people.



Larry Beardsley
CEO of Nature Safe Labs
PerkinElmer

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CST: Would you recommend people working with many vendors or a few?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: I personally like to have great relationships with the vendors I work with as I consider them partnerships. For example, I have a great collaboration with PerkinElmer because without instruments, my lab cannot function. The same logic applies to consumables: I can't do anything without them either.

Those two things are priority number one and two, alongside scientists and personnel. I prefer to have a personal relationship with vendors because if you are just buying things on the internet, with no reps or no number to call, the vendor doesn't know who you are. When there are shortages or problems, you are just another number.

CST: How much support do you feel you needed from the vendors you selected? How important was working with app scientists that knew cannabis analysis?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: It is extremely important and something I will relay to anybody with interest in a cannabis lab. Like PerkinElmer has, you need a dedicated cannabis team and scientists that know cannabis. I interviewed scientists across various organizations who did not have the expertise on how to run this kind of lab. There needs to be a broad understanding of cannabis and all its different matrices. Actual cannabis scientists are crucial to the success of the lab.

CST: Overall, what is your experience with your service and support team?

LARRY BEARDSLEY: The service has been excellent. When the lab began, we had ordered our instruments and were awaiting their arrival when everything shut down because of COVID-19. PerkinElmer still got us what we needed and that is the mentality they brought into any issue we had going forward. All this to say, I am very happy with the service I've received.



PerkinElmer The cannabis industry is evolving at an exponential rate. Whether your lab is well established or just starting up, PerkinElmer is a single-source vendor on hand to help enhance your testing capacity and get ahead of the competition.