

How Lonza's Cambridge site solves scheduling pain and makes smart equipment decisions

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SPECIALITY

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CUSTOMER

Bishoy Habib, Lab Manager,
Lonza Cambridge

CUSTOMER SINCE

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SWITCHED FROM

Spreadsheets

From spreadsheet sprawl to lab sanity

Before switching to Calira, Lonza's Cambridge lab was managing equipment bookings through a patchwork of free apps and shared spreadsheets. According to Lab Manager Bishoy Habib, this created several issues listed to the right.

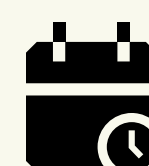
For equipment utilisation, Bishoy described the situation bluntly: "When someone just colours in a box on a spreadsheet, I'm not going to go back at the end of the year and count them all. It's just painful at that point. We have 20 incubators and trying to keep track of what's being used – when, and for what type of settings, and what type of plates and tubes – was a nightmare on the spreadsheets."

"We had three applications that were monitoring equipment, or were on spreadsheets, which meant that people ended up having to jump between systems and sheets to book anything," Bishoy explained. "There was no reliable way of locking bookings down."

No central booking system, multiple spreadsheets



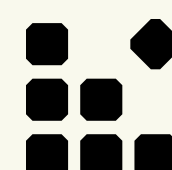
Booking conflicts because spreadsheets don't have access-based control



No reliable way to track equipment usage or generate reports



Fragmented visibility across different categories of equipment



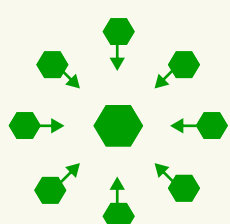
Making the switch to a mature lab scheduling system

Lonza's team started using Calira in late 2024 after hearing about it from academic colleagues who had used it at King's College London. After a short trial and discussion with the Calira team, they rolled it out across the Cambridge site for all lab equipment.

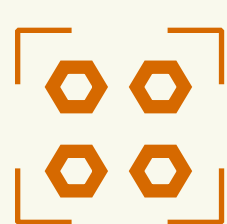


"Calira gives me a report, and I can just select the equipment. So it makes my life easier."
Bishoy Habib

All equipment bookings centralised in Calira



QR code stickers help track the usage of smaller instruments



Utilisation data reviewed to inform purchasing decisions



Equipment gets blocked off in advance for maintenance



What changed on the ground

1. Smooth scheduling and lab planning

"I haven't needed to log in in the last two weeks to sort anything out. Scheduling runs quite a lot smoother now."

- Recurring bookings now enable scientists to plan their work better
- Reduced confusion and missed slots from dual systems or spreadsheet errors
- Fair booking: people now own their time slots

2. Better equipment decisions

Bishoy now uses Calira's utilisation data at the end of the year to:

- Flag underused equipment for possible sale
- Prioritise CapEx requests, backed by utilisation data
- Identify redundant functionalities

"If the team suggests that we want to buy something new, first, I sit with them and ask if we need it or if it's a nice-to-have. But now I can check if we are actually using what we already have or not."

3. Increased visibility on smaller equipment

QR code stickers on equipment, combined with the lightweight web app for users, lets Bishoy track usage even for tools that are used on-demand at the bench.

"I can at least identify usage on smaller bits of kit where people just jump on them. That's also good for utilisation tracking."

4. Operational efficiency, not extra work

Implementation wasn't without its bumps. "People don't like change," Bishoy noted; during the transition, there was a short period of overlap between systems. To speed things up and avoid confusion, he set a clear deadline for when Calira would become the single source of truth for bookings.

Why it matters

The Cambridge site is smaller, with limited bench space, so every piece of equipment counts. Calira now gives Bishoy the data he needed to make confident decisions about which tools stay, which go, and what to invest in next.

"It's helped me justify new equipment or flag things to get rid of. I can actually back it up."

It also freed him up from having to manage the day-to-day friction of booking conflicts or oversight.

Could Calira help your lab?

If your team is juggling spreadsheets, struggling with equipment visibility, or simply tired of scheduling headaches, Calira might be the quiet fix you've been looking for. Let's talk about how we can help your lab run more smoothly, with less admin and more clarity.

"Scheduling just isn't an issue for me anymore."
Bishoy Habib

Book a demo today
calira.co/demo