

STOCKUP

OUR INVENTORY. YOUR LOCATION.



Doing What You Do Best (opinion)

Find ways to use your core competencies, or someone else's, to improve your business.

By Robin Siktberg, November 7, 2012

Last month, in this column, I proposed taking one thing you are doing in your business and changing it. I talked about thinking out of the box and not doing things the same way “because we’ve always done it that way.” In this issue, we are proud to feature two businesses who did exactly that (not in relation at all to my column).

Young’s Plant Farm and nearby Auburn University collaborated on finding a sustainable alternative to peat moss that resulted in a renewable product that also saved money. It is a great example of working together for the good of the individual business and ultimately, of our industry, if the effort spawns similar projects.

And just 30 minutes down the road from Greenhouse Grower’s offices, BFG Supply was quietly launching another out-of-the-box initiative. Its Stock-Up program for retailers is a natural extension of the same program for growers. Both growers and retailers seem to like the program, and BFG is happy with it as well, since it brings the company not only consistent business but also new customers. It’s rare when something is such a win-win, and it’s a perfect example of the kind of thinking the green industry needs to pull itself out of the doldrums of the last few years.

Greenhouse Grower’s GROW program seeks to highlight forward thinkers such as these. Innovative ideas that bring success also serve as an inspiration to others. BFG’s President and CEO Rob Glockner said his company looked to its core competencies — purchasing and information technology — to develop its program. The team at Young’s Plant Farm looked to resources they already owned (land, trees) and to outside resources (the experts at Auburn University). Sometimes the solution really is in your own backyard.

The National Plant Trials Database came about as a result of a perceived need for a comprehensive repository for trials information. A couple of chance conversations brought together three key leaders who used their core competencies in partnership to bring it to life.

What are your core competencies? What is your business known for? Is there a way you can use that skill set in other areas of your business? What resources are in your backyard — not necessarily raw materials but other businesses and experts with whom you can partner to create new opportunities or spread your marketing message?

At Greenhouse Grower, our core competency is our ability to use print and electronic media platforms to link all aspects of the floriculture industry together. By letting you know about successful projects and highlighting the people who make them happen, we hope to provide a spark for other ideas. Anyone who has ever participated in a brainstorming session knows that one suggestion, sometimes seemingly irrelevant, can lead to another and another and eventually to something that works.

Despite challenging times, there are some great things happening in our industry. If you know about an innovative idea that worked, tell us. And we’ll tell others. Because that’s what we do best.

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