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Clear Vision

Jennifer Polanz



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Fun fact about me: I enjoy cross stitch (it's a type of needlepoint—this will be relevant, stick with me). This winter, I decided to pick up a cross stitch kit since I hadn't done one in quite a while. Upon opening it, it seemed like the holes in the fabric (through which you stitch) got smaller since the last project I did. It also seemed like the needle was harder to thread (do you “see” where I'm going with this?).

I put the project on pause and hopped in the car to my nearest Walgreens. Twenty minutes and \$20 later, I had a brand new pair of cheaters. It was eye-opening, to say the least. Everything was so much clearer—those tiny holes were now normal sized again and I threaded that needle on the first try.

I hadn't noticed the change because it happened over years and I didn't realize how blurry things had become until the glasses put them back in focus. It taught me two things: one, I'm officially an old lady because I'm

cross-stitching with my cheaters on and my cat, Benny, next to me; and two, sometimes you don't see the things around you clearly until something changes.

How long have you been looking at the same store or putting on the same seminars or ordering the same products? Would a change spark a different way forward that might improve the business? Is a change in vision just what you need to move the needle this year? Perhaps it's a different perspective from younger employees to find out how to attract a younger crowd?

I've also been thinking about packages, thanks to my handy cross stitch kit that included everything from the floss (thread), needle, fabric and pattern. Sometimes the best way to make something clearer is to change the way it's presented. For example, instead of just having several benches of shade gardens, could you create a section that looks like a front flower bed shade garden? Layer larger plants in the back on risers, with shorter ones in front and create a sell sheet of great shade perennials that could work in those positions. Bonus points for creating garden design sheets. Dinner kits are all the rage—why can't we repackage some of our products to make “kits,” too?

In this issue, we've tried to help further clarify the retail vision for you. For example, in the third article in our Human Resources series on building a stronger workforce, Katie Elzer-Peters talks about onboarding new employees and training to create the ideal team. Go to www.greenprofit.com to see the first two articles in the series from January and February.

Columnist Bill McCurry illuminates the concept of bringing in products for the consumer, not the employees (it's trickier than it sounds). Then read how time and perspective changed Amanda Thomsen's mind about the color coral.

The editors detail just a few of the new products we saw this winter at various trade shows. Perhaps one or a few of these could help a customer view you in a different light? To see more products, visit our [Green Profit Facebook page](#).

This year, I challenge you to look at your business through new lenses. I'll help you, just as soon as I put on my spectacles. **GP**