

Front Lines

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That's a Lot of Jack's!

Jennifer Polanz



Employee contests are a great way to move good product and encourage friendly competition among workers, especially if you have multiple stores. Just ask Billy Wiles, sponsor of the annual Jack's contest between Blooms Greenhouse Grower outlet and their two sister stores Alsip Home & Nursery. Between the three stores, they sold over 1,000 units of 1.5 lb. Jack's Classic Petunia Feed ... in FOUR days. I talked to Sandi Hux at Blooms Greenhouse, the retail attached to Kingsbury Acres Greenhouse—the wholesale grower for Alsip Nursery—in LaPorte, Indiana, whose store won the contest by selling 468 units. In a typical four days, they sell about 30 units, just for comparison.

"The sale actually started on Tuesday the 9th (of May)," she said, which was the week before Mother's Day Weekend. "It was supposed to go through the 15th, however, at closing Friday it was clear we would be out again for the third time very soon with no way to get more."



All the stores had the Jack's Classic Petunia Feed on discount for that week, and Sandi reached out to Jack's manufacturer JR Peters, Inc., to get hats, T-shirts and aprons for employees to wear. They had signs promoting the sale throughout the store and one big display of Jack's along with smaller displays at the registers that were replenished frequently. The message went out on all the socials and much of the messaging highlighted how they use Jack's in growing the beautiful plants customers came to buy. Cashiers and employees on the sales floor reminded customers

to purchase their fertilizer as they came through with their hanging baskets, containers and other plants.

“We believe in the product, so it was an easy sell for us,” Sandi said. “Last year was the first year we did the contest. We did not win, and I’m not one to back down to a challenge, so I told my team, ‘Let’s do this!’”

The stores blew through last year’s sales of just under 500 units (between all three stores) and Sandi’s store alone received three shipments this year before selling out. The contest not only energized employees, but it conquered one of the bigger challenges this industry faces: encouraging customers to feed their plants to maintain those big, beautiful blooms. That’s a win all around. **GP**