

Kiss My Aster

9/1/2023

Phoning It In

Amanda Thomsen



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I run my business on an old Dell laptop that my husband was given as a company issue and it wasn't even nice enough for them to ask for it back when he quit. It's OK. I barely touch it.

I run this place on my iPhone.

1. First thing in the morning I crank up the Spotify playlist.
2. I send the tunes to a dozen Google speakers hidden around the shop; I can change volume from my phone from anywhere. Some of the speakers are on battery bases so I can pop one outside or by the front door to lure people in.
3. I have a Square register, but I can ring people up on my phone as well. They look

at me like that's not a thing and I'm just scamming their credit cards, but I haven't scammed one yet!

4. My favorite Square feature is watching the transactions in real time when I'm not in the shop. It's less invasive than spying on them with cameras. Also, they know I'm watching and tend to do things to impress me, like interiorscaping whole offices.
5. Square also runs my payroll and pays my taxes for me, which probably keeps me out of jail.
6. From Square I can invoice customers faster than I could any other way. Invoicing is my favorite!
7. I have Ring security so I know if I really have to go check out a disturbance in the middle of the night or not. It also helps everyone in the neighborhood be up in my business.
8. I can easily edit and add to my Squarespace website from my phone anytime. It's not 100%, but it's 75% of its capabilities.
9. I've tried to send an e-newsletter via Mailchimp on my phone before and I would say, solidly, that it is a desktop to-do, but I check stats and add people to my list right there in the shop with them standing in front of me.
10. I order everything on Faire (soil, pots, plants and more) and pay them right there within the app.
11. I make all my signage, calendars and social media posts on GoDaddy Studio. I always liked it better than Canva; I know I'm in the minority on that one, but it just suits me. My logo is plain old clip art and a font I liked—it takes me seconds to put it on something new.

12. I use the WGN Weather app so that when troublesome weather is headed this way, Tom Skilling* starts just YELLING from my phone and sometimes I've forgotten that I installed it and there's just AN INVISIBLE MAN yelling somewhere in my store. I do need that sort of service in order to have time to batten down the hatches in the outdoor area, though.
13. I use Trello to map out new workshops we'll host in the shop. I can easily map out what the craft looks like, the materials needed and the steps to making it so that someone else could host the class if I were to be hit by a train or whatever.
14. All my classes and workshops go through Acuity, which is hooked up to my Google Calendar, so I always know how many people are registered even when I'm out buying materials.
15. Obviously, social media: I Instagram daily, Facebook when I feel like it and TikTok when I'm in a good mood. Boosting posts has been magic for me lately, but I'm not counting on it.
16. Do we take Apple Pay? Of course we do. In fact, it's my favorite way to gain invisible funds! I, falsely, feel like people who pay with Apple Pay are going to understand the basics of photosynthesis. The people who pay with Apple Pay on their watches could probably teach me a thing or two. **GP**

**Hoping this isn't just a uniquely Chicago thing, but maybe it is.*

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author now with her own store, Aster Gardens in Lemont, Illinois. Her blog is planted at [KissMyAster.com](https://www.kissmyaster.com) and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.