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A New E-Commerce Option for IGCs

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Garden of Words owner and *Green Profit* regular Katie Elzer-Peters has teamed up with garden center consultant Clint Albin to create A24 Consulting and launch The Certified Shopify Online Garden Center. It's a fully managed direct-to-consumer selling and marketing platform for all local garden center businesses. And when I say "fully managed" I mean A24 manages the whole online entity for your business. Adding an e-commerce revenue stream to your brick-and-mortar store has just become a hassle-free possibility. And what's best about this is it's an e-commerce tool created by industry veterans, so they know exactly the tools you need to sell plants and peripherals online.

The Certified Shopify Online Garden Center system includes:

- A fully developed and branded ShopifyPlus store.
- A 52-week assortment of high-quality gardening products fulfilled from best-in-class vendors.
- Managed email marketing to the retailer's email list.
- Personalized customer service tailored to each individual store.

Each Certified Shopify Online Garden Center is fully merchandised by top-of-the-line growers, fulfillers and manufacturers. Like who? Cavano's Perennials, CobraHead Tools, Costa Farms, Easy to Grow Bulbs, Gardener's Supply Company, Hoffman Nursery, Live Good Logistics, Oasis Forage, Organic Plant Magic, The Holland Group and The Sill. This network spans the country and gives you access to an endless array of products. Pair this bounty with managed marketing via Bloomreach and A24-managed customer care handled by A24 via customer service platform Gorgias, and you've got yourself a year-round, weatherproof revenue stream. Ring up the price tag of all these services and it would be well over \$150,000. With A24 it's just \$3,500 per year.

"During the pandemic, the industry realized that local retail garden centers are designed to be effective as a cash-n-carry model," Clint said in a press release on the topic. "IGCs are not designed to be co-mingled with a pick-n-pack model. Now they can have the revenue from e-commerce without the internal operational conflicts needed to put a plant in a box."

On the digital side of the equation, Katie explained that while MailChimp and Constant Contact are good for one-way conversations with mailing lists, "the type of marketing tool that retailers need now is one that is designed to send personalized recommendations based on a two-way flow of data between the customer and the e-commerce site. The Bloomreach tool can convert an email list of 5,000 into \$260,000 in top line sales with a 1% conversion rate."

Katie and Clint invite you to explore via a demo of their demo store, Laurel & Bee Garden and Goods, at laurelandbeegardengoods.com. **GP**