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Every Ticket Counts

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Despite the fact that I had my doubts about spring ever arriving, it's finally here. At least in its technical form—on Wednesday, March 20 we officially trudged into spring. You may not be able to tell yet, depending on your location, but here's my pep talk in advance of that flurry of activity certain to arrive any day now.

Let's talk about tickets and improving those averages. It's got to be difficult in the heat of spring with products flying off the shelves to think about how to sell more—in reality, you're probably just trying to keep up! It can help to have a plan before the rush, so you can refer back to it often.

In the past, we've talked to consultants about sales goals, and setting them either on a daily or weekly basis. They encourage posting them where all employees can see them and talking about them during staff meetings. Also, celebrate them. If someone completes a big sale, make it a thing in the

breakroom. If the team achieves its goal for the day or week, make sure that gets rewarded (and plan those rewards in advance).

To help with hitting those goals, we have a story in this issue focusing on add-on sales. It's awesome to sell a cart full of plants, but that customer needs a lot more to be successful with those purchases. Your employees aren't imposing on them by suggesting additional products; they're ensuring their success. There's a difference and it's important for those on the sales floor to understand that. Oftentimes, sales staff aren't trained to help a customer feel more confident about their purchases. The language used has to make the customer feel empowered—otherwise that plant food is just a bottle on the shelf that doesn't have anything to do with that customer's purchase.

To that end, we asked long-time retail garden-center-manager-turned-freelance-writer Diana Stoll to write about curating a "plant pharmacy." Whatever you want to call your pest and disease control department, Diana has strategies for making it more profitable.

Sometimes it's the experience in the store that helps promote more sales for a higher ticket. Bill McCurry has some examples of creating a better experience in his column. Inspiration helps, too, and John Friel found some at this year's Philadelphia Flower Show.

Another pathway to a bigger ticket is offering customers more products in ways they want to shop. This can be difficult for smaller retailers, but the doors are starting to open wider when it comes to e-commerce. Gardener's

Supply Co., a Vermont-based in-store and online garden retailer, has been able to successfully navigate how to make it all happen. Plus, they have a pretty interesting story.

Of course, new products and exciting displays are always enticing ways to get customers to spend more in the store or online. Bossman Beytes made his annual trek to IPM Essen in Germany to scope out what's trending across Europe and to find new products that will make their way here in short order.

Whatever way you find to increase your average ticket this spring, celebrate it. And as you get right into the thick of spring, don't forget to take care of yourself. It's a rough couple of months and we want you be around for a long time.

Here's to it finally being spring. **GP**