

Front Lines

11/1/2022

Meeting In the Heart of America

Jennifer Polanz

The Heart of America—otherwise known as Kansas City—is home to Hallmark Global and was host for this year's The Garden Center Group Fall Event. Always a great event full of education, networking and tours, it also allows me to listen in to the independent garden center members and hear their successes and concerns.

This year, the weather factored heavily into sales, and some of the bigger concerns now are related to inventory control and management, and labor (or lack thereof). Because of lack of availability of products in 2020 and early 2021, as well as delays in shipments and supply chain bottlenecks, product is now flowing in.

Throughout discussions I heard some pieces of advice that may seem random but could be helpful as you look into 2023, so I will include them here:

- Make sure all purchases include freight in the total cost so you know exactly what you're paying to get the margin you want. If you absolutely can't get a freight cost, estimate on the higher side.
- Identify those older products and move them out. If livegoods are looking rough, dump 'em—it's impacting the sales of your other, more beautiful product.
- If you set a sales goal, make sure you have enough product to actually hit that goal. It's a simple thing, but one that may get lost in the day-to-day shuffle.
- Take a look at departmental sales reports through your point-of-sale system. What's selling, and what's not turning? Take action on the bottom dwellers of those reports—find out why it's not selling and/or cut it.
- Make sure you actually receive what you bought. It's another simple thing that can get lost in the day-to-day. Sometimes the product that gets delivered isn't what you ordered, or products are missing and/or broken. Taking the time to receive product properly gives a more accurate inventory and helps your bottom line.
- How does product leave? Through your cashiers. Proper training and making sure they are ringing out/scanning product correctly helps to keep inventory accurate and revenue coming in. That can mean scanning every item instead of counting three of this, two of that (what if the two of that are two different plants with different prices? You may have lost money).

During the event we also got to tour three really different garden centers in two Family Tree Nursery locations (turn to page 38 for more on those), two Suburban Lawn & Garden locations and Colonial Gardens. You'll see more ideas from these in upcoming issues of *Green Profit* and in *buZZ!* **GP**

Pictured: The annual tradition of The Garden Center Group Fall Event group photo, taken at Suburban Lawn &

Garden in Kansas City.

