

## GARDEN CENTER REVAMPS POS TO HANDLE MASSIVE SALES VOLUME



In 2016, revenue of the 14,000 nursery and garden stores in the U.S. was valued at around \$41 billion. Competition from home centers, hardware stores, mass merchandisers is forcing individually owned retail sites to become more efficient and flexible. This is exactly what Stein's Garden & Home has successfully achieved with a new point-of-sale system.

Stein's is a 16-store garden center chain based in north, central, and southeast Wisconsin. Boasting an overall volume of about \$60 million, Stein's stocks annuals, perennials, and barbecue equipment, meaning half of the business is seasonal, peaking in the summer, fall, and holiday seasons.

The 70-year-old company had relied upon an older point-of-sale (POS) system, but that system could not handle the volume of business that Stein's completes during its peak seasons. "We have 120 POS units across our 16 stores," says Bob Young, CEO of Stein's. "That is three times the amount one would need, but to handle the volume that comes through in our peak seasons, we need that many registers. Our old system was at 'end of life' and struggling to keep up with the volume."

### CHALLENGES

- Completing daily sales volume
- Single store modifications to pricing, promos & coupons
- Limited inventory visibility
- Overstocking of products
- Batch processing for generation of reports

### SOLUTION: CELERANT STRATUS RETAIL

- Real-time in-store & online retail management solution
- Single platform that manages POS, E-Commerce & back office
- Cross-channel pricing, promotions, gift cards, inventory and fulfillment

### OUTCOME

- Seamless completion of sales (over \$60 million)
- Single store adjustments to pricing, promos & coupons
- Complete inventory visibility & control
- Automated purchase orders based on min/max levels
- Advanced real-time reporting

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**Bob Young, CEO,  
Stein's Garden & Home**

## POS IS INTUITIVE AND FLEXIBLE

In the fall of 2015, Stein's went through an RFP with several providers and implemented Celerant's Stratus Retail in March 2016 based on its flexibility, adaptability, and ability to change with the business. "For example, now if a store isn't selling product as quickly as another location, the Celerant solution provides the flexibility to do individual store pricing, which has high appeal for us. We can pinpoint a single store to make changes at any time as opposed to having to make changes across all the stores at the same time."

Stein's can do something similar now with its promotional offerings. Young explains that as an outdoor shopping destination, customers won't shop if the weather is nasty. "We can change our sales promotions on the spot to entice customers into the store. For example, we can send e-blasts to our Family Perk members to entice footsteps into the store."

Additionally, Celerant modified the system based on Stein's unique needs. For coupons, the retailer wanted to offer more than one coupon at a time, but that required a modification. Celerant worked with Stein's to write code that allows unique promotions to be offered.

Young says Stratus Retail is intuitive to use. "We tend to use a lot of seasonal help, and these people tend to be millennials," he says. "They are familiar with iPads and smartphones, so when they use this POS system, they require minimal training, and lets them jump right into work."

Being able to get right to work is essential for Stein's, considering their transaction volumes. On an average day, Stein's stores will handle 2,500 transactions across its 16 stores. During peak seasons, an average day could see up to 110,000 transactions. "When

you have 12 registers working at once in a single location and lines are filling up, you need a system that can handle that stress," says Young. "I can't describe how important it is for us to have that ease of handling to get through a transaction during those busy times. That ultimately leads to a pleasant shopping experience for the customer."

## INTEGRATED E-COMMERCE IMPROVES ITEM VISIBILITY

In an effort to continually improve the shopping experience, Stein's is in the early phases of an E-commerce integration that ties into the POS. Young says: "This integration will give us immediate visibility into inventory rather than them relying on batch processing, so we'll know if we have the right products for customers when they want it."

Stein's fills online orders from a warehouse that currently stocks a limited product line of patio and barbecue items that ship primarily to local destinations. However, Stein's newly launched Christmas tree line can be shipped anywhere in the United States. The Celerant retail system helps Stein's determine LTL freight costs, which Young appreciates.

Still in its infancy stage, the online sales currently accounts for less than 1% of Stein's business. "The next phase will allow consumers to buy online and pick up their orders in the store," he says.

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## **BROAD-BASED FUNCTIONALITY**

Stratus Retail offers Data warehousing reporting as part of its business intelligent tools. “With the amount of volume that we do, and the speed and timeframe that we do it, Data warehousing allows us to create reports that allow us to monitor sales activity and inventory levels, and it allows us to make real-time informed decisions about replenishment and pricing on the spot instead of relying on batch processing,” says Young.

He states this feature allows Stein’s to generate reports based on sales transaction by store, department, and item to help understand SKU rationalization, and shopping patterns by time and stores. “This has allowed us to improve our productivity not only inside the store on year-round product, but outside on our lots where we sell the majority of our seasonal product.”

“In the past, with limited visibility to inventory, we had to maintain excessive amounts of products to avoid an out-of-stock situation,” he continues. “With Celerant’s Datawarehousing reporting, we can be more automated so we replenish when necessary,

making us more nimble and flexible.”

Young describes Stratus Retail as “broad-based,” and that there are functions he isn’t taking advantage of now, but plans to use down the road, such as an automated warehouse management system.

Additionally, Young explains that because the POS operates in real time, a store now has the ability to check customer transactions in that store immediately after the transaction is made. And, if a customer returns that same product on the same day at a different store, the new store will create a record of it.

For system features currently being utilized or functions yet to be deployed, Young says Celerant accommodates all of Stein’s needs. “Celerant works through any situation with us, and resolves our issues quickly. That is how I define a full-service partner.”

