



Epicor Success Story

Bountiful Acres

Robust Functionality of Epicor Solutions to Drive Successful Garden Center Business

Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Holicong, Pennsylvania
- ▶ Industry: Lawn and Garden
- ▶ Number of Locations: 1
- ▶ Number of Employees: 30 peak/ 10 off-peak
- ▶ Website: www.bountifulacres.com
- ▶ Co-op: The Garden Center Group, Master Nursery



Success Highlights

Challenges

- ▶ Difficult to manage the business without a system that could provide transaction history, inventory management, or business intelligence

Solutions

- ▶ Epicor® Eagle N Series®
- ▶ Epicor Compass™

Benefits

- ▶ Strong industry experience, high-quality support, and robust functionality
- ▶ Turn old inventory quicker, easily identify items with low margins
- ▶ Seamless tracking of product sales, leading to 40 percent increase in pottery sales
- ▶ Negotiate better prices and select the best products for the business

A Bucks County landmark since 1955, Bountiful Acres started as a roadside produce market that gradually transitioned into a premier garden center and nursery retail business that spans six stunning acres. The business stocks quality nursery and garden plants, garden supplies, tropical and indoor foliage plants, aquatic plants, statues, furniture, fountains, bulk and bagged soils, and mulches. Additionally, the company harvests locally grown trees and offers custom arrangements, landscape design, installation, and maintenance.

Bountiful Acres' mission is to provide the community with the best selection and highest-quality products supported by a knowledgeable staff. It takes great strides to keep up with growing trends and business improvements each year. A key tool the business uses to maintain peak operational performance is the Epicor Eagle N Series retail business management solution.

Solution to improve business efficiency

Sales have been strong for many lawn and garden retailers over the last few years, including Bountiful Acres. "The economy has been pretty solid and we are profiting nicely," said Andy Eckhoff, general manager, Bountiful Acres. "However, during times of economic downturn, it was difficult to manage the business without a point of sale (POS) system to show us where our money was going, what products made the most profits, and what did not."

"We have a lot of competition around us—six garden centers within a seven-mile radius. Of those six garden centers, we were one of the last to adopt a retail business management solution. This was the case for many reasons, but primarily the tradition of running things as they had always been run," said Eckhoff. "We discovered Epicor Software through word of mouth via The Garden Center Group. It seemed like the majority of similar businesses either had Epicor or CounterPoint, and so those were the two software companies we explored. A few other garden centers in our area also had Epicor and were flourishing. We selected Epicor because of the strong industry experience, high-quality support, and robust inventory functionality."

"Before selecting the Epicor Eagle N Series solution, we had no control, no transaction history, and orders and deliveries were all managed by moving paper—we were entirely manual. Our cash register rung up orders based on department keys; special orders were handwritten and passed to purchasing; delivery orders were handwritten and passed to a delivery manager; pricing was all manual with pricing stickers. Our goals for the Epicor solutions are abundant, but we are focused on improving efficiency, profits, inventory control, and customer loyalty. We are just at the tip of the iceberg, but are beginning to uncover the benefits," said Eckhoff.

Access to key analytics

Bountiful Acres recently invested in the Epicor Compass analytics solution, and has found tremendous value in the information the tool provides—managing margins more effectively, evaluating vendor performance, analyzing sales performance, and more. "We are a retail garden center, and Epicor Eagle solutions work wonderfully for inventory management and sales forecasting," said Eckhoff. "With the Epicor Compass application, we have been able to turn old inventory, identify items with low margins, and figure out what we should be selling."

"We have also created vendor report cards that show which vendor products sell best and attained margins. Having key information is beneficial when negotiating discounts and terms

with vendors. We are able to show them exactly why we are asking for a discount. Someone famous once said 'the price of darkness is more expensive than the price of light.' I feel like the Epicor Compass solution takes you out of darkness and puts your business into the light," said Eckhoff.

"Now that we have accurate inventory, we have started running some interesting reports with the Compass tool. The problems that were hidden before are now at the forefront and we are able to take action," said Eckhoff. "For example, we have an extensive gift and housewares department. With the Eagle N Series and Compass solutions, we are able to see which products haven't moved for a period of time and can put classifications on each product so that we can accurately determine discount levels that should be placed to turn the inventory and buy fresh, new products that will turn faster with better margins."

"The margin report within Compass gives us insight into all low-margin items that we have. Every aspect of the Eagle N Series system tracks sales, but I have the margin report set to generate automatically. On Monday morning, there is a report sitting in my inbox that compares the past weekend to different weekends in previous years. It takes our temperature to let us know how we are doing and enables us to ask the right questions—are we up or are we down? If we are down, are we coming towards the end of the season so we need to stop buying inventory? It keeps the pulse on where we are compared to previous years, which is really important in a seasonal business like ours," said Eckhoff.

Tools for growth

Another aspect that has seen significant improvements because of the Epicor system is product sales. "One area that we really started looking at with the Epicor solution was sales in our pottery department. The sales kept increasing—it was crazy how much they would increase every month. Because of the data we were able to pull with Eagle N Series, we decided to double the size of our pottery department and the sales kept increasing exponentially. That department was up 40 percent in the last

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year alone. We are able to clearly track these increases in sales with the Eagle N Series solution, zooming in by department and the classes in that department to know which areas are really flourishing. We never had this insight before deploying the Epicor system.”

Improving inventory levels

Bountiful Acres recognized that they would have a huge opportunity to reduce overstocking through the use of a business management system. “In the past, we would pull invoices from previous years and decide if we wanted to reorder the same quantity or something different. All the ordering was done on ‘feelings’ and not actual results,” said Eckhoff. “Without a purchase history, we would end up with too much leftover stock and a lot of wasted dollars. The Eagle N Series system has specifically made my job easier by being able to track the inventory that we actually sell and, in turn, saving dollars from being spent on unnecessary products.”

“When you are a buyer, you frequently buy on emotion. The Epicor system has turned our buyers into merchants. They are no longer buying with emotion, but what actually sells. We use the Vendor Report Card function to sort product bought from vendors. We run the report and bring it to them and say ‘I buy these products from you and from another vendor. The other vendor has margins that are much better, so I am going to start moving business over to the other guy unless you are able to do something different.’ With this data, we’ve been able negotiate

better prices and select the best products for our business,” said Eckhoff.

A fluid customer experience

“We want to provide the best shopping experience for our customers,” said Eckhoff. “Epicor helps us make that happen more efficiently now. The transaction and checkout process is smooth and much more fluid. Before we had the system, the customer would basically get a small receipt that didn’t have any insight into what they actually purchased—it only included a list of prices. Before, when we had a return all we had to go off of was a small receipt we couldn’t really decipher. Now, the customer is able to see exactly what they purchased. For us, it makes the return process much easier. There is a certain level of accuracy needed when products are returned and we now have that with the Epicor system.”

Boosting competitive edge

Competition is always a hot topic for local garden centers. “We have always been competitive to other garden centers. But now that we are running on the robust Eagle N Series solution, we will be able to boost our competitive edge. We are a six-acre location and only efficiently use half of it, so we have plenty of room to grow. Implementing the Epicor system has really brought to light the deficiencies in the business and will provide us with the tools to remain competitive and grow,” said Eckhoff.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software that is designed around the needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 40 years of experience with our customers’ unique business processes and operational requirements is built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With a deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions spur growth while managing complexity. The result is powerful solutions that free your resources so you can grow your business. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.



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