



## Epicor Success Story

# Hillermann Nursery and Florist

## Company Facts

- ▶ Location: Washington, Missouri
- ▶ Industry: Lawn and garden
- ▶ Number of Employees: 70
- ▶ Web site: [www.hillermannflorist.com](http://www.hillermannflorist.com)

## Success Highlights

### Challenges

- ▶ Needed an easy-to-learn system for seasonal employees
- ▶ Required an efficient system to compensate for lost revenue during bad seasons

### Solution

- ▶ Epicor® Eagle®

### Benefits

- ▶ Seasonal employees can learn the basic Eagle system functions in less than one day
- ▶ Eagle allows for better staffing and purchasing decisions that lower costs



Hillermann Nursery and Florist relies on Epicor Eagle to manage its successful garden center. It's faster and easier at point of sale (POS). Inventory is current and accurate. Accessible information identifies problems and helps Hillermann's owners keep the business on track. From end-to-end, the business runs well on Eagle.

### Seasonal business requires robust technology solution

About one hour west of St. Louis, you'll find a 15-acre gardening destination called Hillermann Nursery and Florist. Run by second generation family members, today Hillermann is a diversified company including a garden center, nursery, florist and gift shop, landscape and irrigation design and installation, and lawn and garden equipment sales and service. The company grows its own annuals, perennials and roses in four greenhouses. For the past 11 years, Hillermann has trusted its business to Epicor.

Like many garden centers, Hillermann is a very seasonal business earning 60 percent of its revenue during a ten-week period in the spring. This causes two distinct needs for technology. First, is to have a powerful, yet easy-to-use point of sale system that seasonal employees can quickly learn. "We add 30 to 40 employees during the busy season and with Epicor Eagle, they learn the basic system functions in less than one day. It lowers costs and increases productivity to have our new employees quickly proficient," says Sandi McDonald, President, Hillermann Nursery and Florist. The second technology

need is especially critical if the busy season under performs due to weather or other uncontrollable factors. A garden center has to be lean and efficient to compensate for revenue lost during a bad spring. "Spring of 2008 set a 130 year record for high rainfall with rain nearly every weekend and by summer, it was too late to plant. Unable to recover the revenue, we were running 'lean and mean' so that profit would be on track for the year. Data from our Eagle system helps us make better staffing and purchasing decisions that lower our costs," continues Sandi.

## **Automated quotes saves time**

Landscaping is Hillermann's highest performing profit center. Historically, the quote process had been very manual with landscapers hand writing quotes for a secretary to type. About three years ago, that process was automated with great results. "We now do all of our landscaping quotes using Eagle. It's much more accurate and very easy to update quotes and turn them into orders. I know that we've gained at least a 25 percent productivity improvement since we automated. Our profits have also improved," explains Sandi.

## **Eagle helps improve inventory accuracy**

In addition to basic inventory management, Hillermann uses other Eagle features to improve its performance. In August 2007, Hillermann moved to a perpetual cycle count inventory instead of annual or semi-annual physical inventories. "Every class in every department is counted every six months. This is a better process for us and it's more accurate. We also rely on zero quantity reports to identify items that were rung incorrectly," describes Sandi. "In our retail garden center, our buyer runs Suggested Order reports to help him identify what we need to buy. With our accurate inventory, he trusts those figures which saves time and helps keep fast-sellers in stock."

## **Loyalty card program keeps customers loyal**

An impressive 80 percent of Hillermann retail customers are enrolled in its Epicor-managed garden reward program. "Customers love our rewards program. We can look up any of their purchases without the original receipt. We can easily find a purchased item so they can buy more, or refund the correct amount. We offer reward customers specials that change every two weeks. They receive a five percent rebate, paid as a gift certificate, every quarter. And we send them a ten dollar gift certificate on their birthday," says Sandi. "It's great that we can offer all of these customer benefits, and it's extremely easy for us to manage the program with our Eagle system."

## **Running the business with information**

Every day Sandi looks at sales by department, gross profit percentages, customer counts and sales by the hour, and compares sales to the same period last year. "I'm looking for discrepancies so I can quickly make corrections. I use the transaction volume data to help better manage our labor costs and ensure we have enough staff during the busy times," explains Sandi. "Our buyers rely on Epicor Business Advisor™. With just a few clicks they have an instant picture of our sales and inventory and use that knowledge to ensure we have stock when we need it."

Hillermann's has more than 50 percent of its sales on account due to the sizeable landscape division. Therefore managing receivables is critical to the company's financial health. By using Eagle aging reports, the accounts receivable manager keeps accounts current and minimizes Hillermann's losses.

"We face competition from a nearby Walmart Supercenter, Lowe's®, and Home Depot, and with our knowledgeable staff, high-quality products, outstanding service, and our Eagle system, we are not only competitive, but thriving," concludes Sandi.

## About Epicor

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