

NCR COUNTERPOINT CASE STUDY

Altum's
Specialty Retail – Lawn and Garden



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Karen Thacker, VP, Operations, Altum's

Run Your Business

Altum's, a family-run horticulture business based in Zionsville, Carmel, and Indianapolis, Indiana, is in a growth industry. For more than 60 years, the Altum family and their staff have been bringing beautiful things to life, as witnessed by the delicate floral imagery on their website and extensive plant photography on their Facebook page. So it's no surprise that managers saw green—by generating cost savings from streamlined processes—when they had the opportunity to implement NCR systems into front- and back-office operations. According to Karen Thacker, VP, Operations, Altum's adopted NCR's Counterpoint retail management solution and payment capabilities in 2007, adding email marketing when it debuted in 2010.

Ms. Thacker says that the technological advances have been groundbreaking: “NCR tied our back office into our POS system, which meant no more punching numbers twice or making errors. In addition, our accounting has been streamlined. It's so much easier to capture customer information, close out the day, and reconcile accounts,” she states.



Altum's uses two of NCR's POS systems most of the year, but switches to five terminals during spring, its busy season. "It's nice to have five checkout stations running, so that our customers don't have to stand in long lines," Ms. Thacker says.

Connect with Customers

NCR Customer Connect has helped Altum's keep its products and services top-of-mind with customers year-round. That's important because the spring sales season currently accounts for 70% of Altum's business, which is typical in this industry. The company advertises new products, workshops, special promotions, holiday ideas and gift cards. It also sends a welcome new customer email with a coupon good for use on a subsequent visit. In addition, Ms. Thacker says that Altum's is marketing unique garden items that could serve as hostess or birthday gifts. "NCR Customer Connect is our sole email marketing platform," says Ms. Thacker. "I love that the system ties everything together. I don't have to import and manage email lists. That has been a huge help." While Altum's has done a good job of staying in touch with its customers, it has recently formalized its email marketing approach. "We're moving to a new model where we'll send two emails a week: a knowledge email and a product email," says Ms. Thacker. Altum's offers useful information, such as how to maintain gardens and lawns during a drought restriction and care for new plants. "Some of our customers are brand new gardeners: We give them information so they don't have to call us or search for it elsewhere," she says.



Sell Anywhere

Altum's views its email marketing and website as an extension of its brand. As a lawn and garden store, it's in the unique position of selling highly perishable inventory to a local customer base. "Most of our customers live within a 10-mile radius," explains Ms. Thacker. The company has plans to expand its ecommerce capabilities to sell services and classes online. "We want to increase the workshops and classes that we offer so we are seen as the leading horticulture experts in our area," she says.

Solution Features

NCR Counterpoint Retail Management Systems

- Offer customer loyalty programs
- Analyze vendor performance
- Validate returns to ensure items are returned at the purchase price
- Provide integrated email marketing
- View inventory across locations
- Offer gift cards
- Maintain detailed customer information
- Reduce fraud by monitoring item images at checkout
- Track sales commissions
- Up-sell merchandise
- Track items with multiple units of measure
- See which items sell together
- Pre-plan promotions



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