

AWARD WINNING GROWS

NICHOLSON-HARDIE NURSERY AND GARDEN CENTER WITH ACTIVANT EAGLE



PROFILE

Headquarters: Dallas, Texas

Annual Sales: \$6 million

Sales Breakdown: 100% retail

Number of Employees: 40

Locations: 2

Founded: 1974

Affiliation: True Value

“Since we switched to high-speed, our credit card transaction time decreased from 35 seconds to three seconds and our lines are 50 percent shorter on busy days.”

MICHAEL BRACKEN
CO-PRESIDENT
NICHOLSON-HARDIE

Executive Summary

Nicholson-Hardie Nursery and Garden Center has relied on Activant Eagle® for the past 12 years. During that time, sales have grown, and the Eagle™ has delivered innovations that make managing a growing business easier. High-Speed Credit Card Authorization delivers the transaction speed that customers expect.

Inventory management, once onerous and manual, is now streamlined and automated. Best of all, the management team now has the business information it needs to help keep Nicholson-Hardie ahead of the pack.

Demanding Business Needs Robust Business Management Solution

Nicholson-Hardie Nursery and Garden Center made a name for itself in an affluent part of Dallas with its friendly, knowledgeable staff and unique selection of traditional nursery products and home décor items. Whether customers are looking to plant a garden, refresh colorful annuals, or decorate an outdoor room, Nicholson-Hardie takes pride in being able to meet their needs. In fact, the company was awarded the 2006 Dick Morey Retailer of the Year Award by Nursery Retailer magazine.

Selecting a computer system for this business was no small task. It was critical that the system have real-time inventory, cost and pricing data available throughout the day. The system needed to handle multiple locations for inventory management. And most of all, the system needed to handle a fast-paced retail business and empower employees to deliver superior customer service. 12 years ago, Nicholson-Hardie selected Activant Eagle and continues to upgrade and enhance the Eagle system to meet ever escalating business demands.

High-Speed Credit Card Authorization Delivers Immediate Value

In a retail business with 80 percent of sales via credit cards, every second matters. Nicholson-Hardie found that customers have become increasingly impatient with slow transactions as they are accustomed to instant processing at grocery stores and major retailers. “Our customers demand speed. We could no longer have 35 second processing when it’s instant everywhere else our customers shop,” explains Michael Bracken, co-president.

In 2006, the company added High-Speed Credit Card Authorization for Activant Eagle and watched its transaction speed increase by 300 percent while watching its bank fees decrease significantly. “Since we switched to high-speed, our credit transaction time decreased from 35 seconds to three seconds, and our lines are 50 percent shorter on busy days. One of our stores only has 18 parking spaces, and on busy weekends, we need to turn over those spaces. I believe our revenue has increased because customers can find a parking space on busy days,” continues Michael. “We also save money. We used to pay a percentage on every credit and debit

transaction, and now we pay a percentage on credit transactions and a flat fee on every debit transaction. The flat transaction fee costs less on every debit transaction greater than \$20, which most of ours are. Moving to High-Speed Credit Card Authorization has been the single biggest improvement we've made in point-of-sale."

Another benefit for Michael is that credit card transactions are processed via a high-speed connection at the end of the day. "The back-end is much faster now. Before, when we had a large number of transactions that had to be transmitted via a dial-up connection, there were often dropped calls or other problems, which led to incomplete batches. We'd have to go through a number of problem-solving steps to correct the transmission. It's not even an issue now," asserts Michael.

Managing Complex Inventory the Easy Way

With seasonal gift items, live plants, two locations and consumer tastes that frequently change, profitably managing inventory could be an impossible task. Not so with the Eagle system. Nicholson-Hardie relies on the Eagle system to help transfer product between its two locations, tell customers with confidence if an item is in-stock at the other location, and track and order products to generate profit. "Before Activant Eagle, we ran the business based on how much cash we generated, which can be very different than managing for profit. Now we know exactly how much every item costs, how many we have, how many we sold during the previous season, and we use all of that knowledge to make profitable buying and selling decisions," notes Michael.

Nicholson-Hardie uses the kit inventory feature to account for all the individual SKUs contained in a product. "We sell a lot of pre-built color pots which contain a number of plants, soil and the pot. When a color pot is sold and entered at point-of-sale, all the components are taken out of inventory and properly accounted for. It's easy for us to set up and replicate these kits. And we know at all times exactly what we have in stock," explains Michael.

Monitoring the Business From Wherever You Are

Nicholson-Hardie appreciates how easy it is for managers to keep a finger on the pulse of the business with the Activant Business Advisor module. "I use it throughout the day to get a quick snapshot on how we're doing in overall sales, departmental sales, return on investment, inventory levels, cash position and so much more," describes Michael. "With twin babies at home and a full travel schedule with the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, I use Business Advisor with Remote Connect so that I'm never far from the business. I log in, and everything I want to know is right there. It makes my life much easier."

"Our Eagle system makes us faster, more nimble and more efficient. Eagle enables us to deliver the level of service our customers have grown to expect," asserts Michael. "It's really been a great solution for our business."



With Activant Eagle, Nicholson-Hardie is able to profitably manage an extensive inventory of seasonal gift items, live plants, goods at two locations and ever-changing consumer tastes.

ABOUT ACTIVANT

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant's systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

To learn more about this or other Activant products and services, please call 888.463.4700.



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