

concession

NEWS

UPDATE

AN UPDATE



In this week's edition of Concession News, we investigate how garden centres are incorporating more concessions into their offer, to improve footfalls and establish themselves as the UK's preferred retail destination.

Garden centres have experienced an interesting year. Once again, the weather has played a part in the fortunes of the trade. Following an early season blighted by rain, the end of the season proved exceptional thanks to the summer heat wave.

Although plant sales have not been as expected, restaurants performed excellently during the early season, when it rained, and there has been an unprecedented demand for outdoor living ranges as a result of the exceptional summer.

This shows that garden centres are not as reliant as they once were on the sales from their core lines thanks to the diversity of their offer and introduction of additional retail. Understanding the importance of enhancing and refreshing their offer, garden centres are increasingly looking to introduce more concessions to their sites.

Concessions provide an additional reason for customers to visit when it's raining and they also offer additional attractions when the weather is good, which helps customers stay on site for longer. The sales from clothing retailers such as Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Klass Clothing, Roman Originals and Cotton Traders have all been excellent within their garden centre sites, as each of these leading retailers continues to expand and look for more garden centre locations.

Maidenhead Aquatics and Pets Corner, the leading Aquatics and Pets retailers within the sector are also reporting good trade and continue to provide a regular stream of customers, day to day, as a result of their exceptional customer service and unique ranges.

In addition, specialist retailers such as Mountain Warehouse (camping), Pavers (footwear), The Works (books and crafts), Regatta (outdoor clothing), Shuropody (specialist footwear) and Hammonds Furniture (specialist bedroom design and furniture)



have all continued to open garden centre stores in 2013 and provide their garden centre hosts with different ranges that ideally complement their own.

Massarella Catering, one of the UK's largest retail, restaurant providers are also continuing to expand within garden centres, as they enable site owners to work with them, to create new catering propositions, which can save the host the ongoing financial burden often associated with improving the offer.

Garden centres are also working with local operators to enhance the services they provide their customers and have started to incorporate typical high street operations such as hairdressers, farm shops and even dog groomers to drive footfalls.

The demand for utilising external space for conservatory operators and garden buildings has also increased and it is essential that garden centres secure the right terms, to create a long term partnership for the mutual benefit of the relationship.



Short Term Concessions have also increased in popularity during 2013, with approximately 900 promotions being organised within garden centres across nearly 200 locations. Dobbies, The Garden Centre Group, Garden & Leisure, Klondyke/Strikes. Squires, Hilliers, Notcutts, Longacres, and Woodcote Green are just some of the garden centres that have hosted promotions this year, showing that short term concessions are relevant to any site, anywhere in the UK.

Thanks also to the variety in promotions, garden centres have the opportunity to work with third party service providers that their customers would not usually have access to, thus enhancing their onsite experience.

Home improvements, landscaping, garden design, flat roofing, driveways, solar, bathrooms, photography, hearing centres, car dealerships, car maintenance have all promoted within garden centres this year in addition to food sampling events which really engage the customer and provide an excellent 'feel good factor.'

Retailers have also started to introduce sales events to garden centres as they look to capitalise on the excellent footfall that these sites attract. Camping and clothing events have provided garden centres with the opportunity to utilise external areas to host sales events which are well marketed in local areas to drive footfall to the sites.

With these new and interesting initiatives taking place in garden centres all over the country,



concessions can provide site owners with added revenue, new attractions and the opportunity to incorporate some of the leading brands and complementary, beneficial services to the garden centre experience.

Richard Lewis, of First Franchise Ltd & Promotional Space Ltd comments: *“Garden Centre footfalls are up this year as a result of an increased demand for garden furniture and BBQ’s during the exceptional weather. The demand for garden centres has never been stronger and we are pleased to be integral to a developing sector as we continue to assist garden centres develop their income and attractions on site.”*

For more information on concession activity within garden centres and the opportunity to incorporate concessions in to your business please contact us now, **01737 735041**, richard.lewis@firstfranchise.com.

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