

# concession

## NEWS

### UPDATE



## CONCESSION NEWS!



In this week's edition, we celebrate the 7th Anniversary of 'Concession News,' and explore how it has become the "voice" of the garden centre concession industry and the role it plays in attracting new retailers to the sector.

2004 represented a changing time for garden centres. Gardening and home improvements were quietly becoming less prominent on the TV and the 'Ground Force generation' had completed their projects. As a result, garden centres were looking for something new to engage their customers and increase the interest in their sites.

**Richard Lewis, Business Development & Marketing Manager of First Franchise Ltd** noted *"Garden Centres had become very popular with the public as a result of their expertise in horticulture and through the creation of fantastic retail venues. The quality of the catering offer kept people on site and the peak seasons were always busy. As a result, garden centre owners were looking for new elements to introduce as a result of the demand created by the customers who were visiting. Our peers within the sector were regularly contacting us for information about possible tenants and how the process works and in the end, our company was started to service this demand."*

First Franchise Ltd was promoting the benefit of trading in partnership with garden centres and the company began to forge relationships with some of the largest retailers in the UK. To name a few, Maidenhead Aquatics, Pets Corner, Cotton Traders, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, The Works all joined the portfolio with brands such as Roman Originals, Mountain Warehouse, Hammonds Furniture and Pavers shoes followed as the company developed.

With the start of this new era for the industry, garden centre owners started to recognise how working in partnership with tenants could benefit their business and consequently they were very interested to hear how First Franchise Ltd could help them develop the model within their own site.

In autumn 2006, First Franchise Ltd launched 'Concession News.' Originally a 4 page leaflet highlighting concession activity and the brands considering garden centres, the publication quickly grew to a quarterly newsletter with features and interviews highlighting market trends, retail developments and new initiatives.

The early editions concentrated on promoting how specific garden centres were developing concession portfolios and each edition carried features on success stories from around the industry.



*“We were developing our concession portfolio in 2007 when First Franchise offered us the chance to promote our concession village within Concession News. The article had a very positive effect on our business because it put us at the forefront of concession retailing and a number of new retailers came on to the site because of the article”*. **Graham Pugh**, Owner at **Pugh's Garden Centre**.

The publication quickly gained a strong following and 'Concession News' features always generated significant responses. The readership at that time amounted to garden centre personnel of around 3000, and this increased to 8000 by 2008 as the demand for more information grew and 'Concession News' became a magazine that was read regularly during the year.

First Franchise Ltd continued to identify new niches within the market and they persuaded Yankee Candles to introduce their Unmanned Concession model within the sector, as well as recruiting other brands to operate a similar model.

In 2009, Promotional Space Ltd was formed to provide a much needed management service for third party promotions within the sector.

Promotions within garden centres had existed for a while, although they had previously been managed with a handshake and cash payments. Promotional Space Ltd wanted to formalise the process and introduce new brands, ideas and revenues to garden centres whilst guaranteeing paperwork and insurances for garden centre owners ensuring their business was totally protected.

**Ian Silverton, Managing Director of Promotional Space Ltd** explains how this new model developed *“We were aware that garden centres worked with short term promotions within their site but knew that the process and operations often left the garden centres exposed.”*



*“As a result of our position within the industry, as the voice of Concessions within the sector, we felt that we needed to provide a service to protect garden centres from the pitfalls of these operations and to generate more income for the sites we work with. Our service introduces new ideas and initiatives to garden centre customers every day and*

*our team are constantly raising awareness of the benefits of working with garden centre owners.”*

‘Concession News’ diversified with special editions targeted to specific promoters, complementary to the garden centre sector. This direct means of promoting garden centres generated fresh interest in the sector and established garden centres at the fore of retail venues, ideal to raise awareness of a brands service.

In 2011 ‘Concession News’ launched an edition aimed specifically at long-term retailers and this edition moved the ‘title’ squarely into the retail sector. Promoting the benefits of both long-term partnerships in garden centres, the edition generated new interest from retailers and proved that the title was recognised across the different sectors.

Switching to an e-edition, ‘Concession News’ in 2012 meant that the ‘title’ could provide more regular updates, for both garden centre owners and retailers.

Now, with a readership of over 20,000, ‘Concession News’ has shown that it can cross different mediums and markets increasing awareness of the benefits for retailers and garden centres. ‘Concession News’ is able to reach all garden centre personnel in the UK and appeals to retailers and promoters looking to find out more about concession operation within garden centres.

As a result of its success, industry press such as DIY Week, Gardenforum and other trade publications carry its stories and national press, showcase garden centres as the emerging retail destination for new investment.

The emergence of Concessions within the garden centre sector has resulted in a change to modern garden centre retail as customers now require more reasons to visit than just core gardening. With national retailers investing within the sector and new initiatives being sourced regularly, the future of garden centre retail offers an exciting time ahead.



Exclusive to the garden centre sector, First Franchise Ltd and Promotional Space Ltd are the market leaders and have changed the face of garden centre retail.

**Richard Lewis** adds “We have been involved in an amazing time of transformation within garden centres. Having listened to key personnel within the sector we have been able to develop a service that adds new revenues to garden centres as well as new opportunities for the brands we represent. The development of concessions within the retail sector is gathering momentum and it is a very exciting revolution to be part of.”

For more information on working with First Franchise Ltd or Promotional Space Ltd feel free to contact us on 01737 735041 or [info@firstfranchise.com](mailto:info@firstfranchise.com). As 'Concession News' is free, tell your friends and colleagues to subscribe now.

Concession News is published by First Franchise Limited and Promotional Space Limited.

Head Office: Castle Court, 41 London Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9RJ.

Telephone: 01737 735041 | Email: [info@firstfranchise.com](mailto:info@firstfranchise.com) | [www.firstfranchise.com](http://www.firstfranchise.com) | [www.promotionalspace.com](http://www.promotionalspace.com)

