

The Customer

Atlantic Avenue Orchid & Garden Center
Atlantic Avenue
Raleigh, N.C.

Orchids By Millie
The Shops at the Lassiter
Raleigh, N.C.

A Brief History

Atlantic Avenue Orchid & Garden Center, with annual revenues of \$1.5 million, is located on Atlantic Avenue in Raleigh, N.C., and contains 5.8 acres of trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and garden supplies. The company is staffed by 12 horticultural specialists. Atlantic Avenue Orchid & Garden Center enjoys serving its customers with all their plant needs both indoors and out and continues to grow, recently adding a 5,000 sq. ft. greenhouse. The retailer has a gift shop called Orchids By Millie at The Shops at the Lassiter in Raleigh. The shop specializes in tropical and orchid arrangements and other unique gifts.

The Challenge

A specialty retail greenhouse in Raleigh, N.C., Orchids By Millie, opened in the mid-1990s. It began to expand significantly when Barbara McGuire became founder Millie Lee's business partner in 2000. McGuire and Lee purchased Atlantic Avenue Lawn & Garden Center in November 2002 - renaming it to Atlantic Avenue Orchid and Garden Center. A staff of nine orchid arrangers grew to the current group of 45 employees at two locations that serve landscapers, real estate developers, and homeowners. Lawn and garden supplies sold alongside the orchids, tropical plants, and unusual flower arrangements, making the retailer a full-service outdoor center.

A year after McGuire and Lee paired up, traditional cash registers at the four garden center checkouts and single gift shop counter could no longer manage sales efficiently. "Cash registers don't tell you anything but what you sold today," says Randy Reynolds, sales system programmer for the retailer. They needed a package that would give them better reporting, the ability to have their entire inventory in one place, and the ability to have pricing automatically updated in the system.

"Cash registers don't tell you anything but what you sold today ... Point of Sale Professional offers a lot of functionality."

Randy Reynolds
Sales System Programmer, Orchids By Millie

The Solution

In November 2001, Orchids By Millie adopted Point of Sale for MAS 90®, and later upgraded to Point of Sale Professional. "We were in a growth spurt at that point," says Reynolds.

McGuire's accountant recommended that the business owners consult with their MAS 90 reseller, Business Technology Solutions, about sales transaction software. "We were already considering Best Software's MAS 90 accounting solution, and the integrated Point of Sale software was a good fit," says Reynolds. All of the financial data, from transactions created in Point of Sale Professional, is applied to the accounting modules of the MAS 90 system. Atlantic Avenue Lawn & Garden Center uses MAS 90's General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Sales Order, Inventory Management, Bank Reconciliation, and Purchase Order modules.

The retailer tested the product, duplicating its transaction systems, using the cash register and Point of Sale in parallel, "until we came in one day and the cash register was broken," says Reynolds, "So we decided to go live with Point of Sale. We had all of the inventory in the system, so it was ready to launch." That was in April 2002, just in time for the acquisition of the 5.8-acre garden center on Atlantic Avenue. Atlantic Avenue Orchid & Garden Center, under the ownership of McGuire and Lee, upgraded from Point of Sale to Point of Sale Professional, a subsequent version of the software that drastically reduced the intensive data entry requirement and replaced it with greater scanning capabilities.

The software's support of hardware, including cash drawers, receipt printers, magnetic-stripe readers, and barcode scanners, has Atlantic Avenue Orchid & Garden Center considering expanding its cash drawers from one per transaction terminal to one per employee. Five employees work regularly with Point of Sale Professional at store payment counters. "Point of Sale Professional offers a lot of functionality," Reynolds says. She predicts assigning a cash drawer to each employee working at a checkout in a day will make employees more accountable.

Point of Sale Professional automatically integrates with MAS 90's Accounts Receivable, Inventory Management, Sales Order, Bank Reconciliation, General Ledger, and the garden center makes the most of inventory management and sales order integration. Orchids By Millie also uses custom reports enabled by Point of Sale Professional - current sales, discounted sales, and profit margins by product and category.

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