



Photo credit: SATO Labeling Solutions

# Off The Truck, On The Shelf

By offering a pre-pricing option to your ordering process, growers are helping retailers get product out on the sales floor faster and in to consumers' hands.

By **Pete Mihalek**

At the height of spring, time and available staff can be pretty difficult to come by at your local independent garden center.

And if that garden center isn't lucky enough to have a loading dock, a busy spring afternoon can quickly turn into a headache when delivery trucks start showing up, which means staff members are pulled off the sales floor to unload, price and stock. Now it's time for them to play catch up.

For growers like Willoway Nurseries and Overdeest Nurseries, this was a serious flaw in the selling process, which prompted them to do something about it.

## Skipping Steps

1. Print tags, check.
2. Round up staff and unload truck, check.
3. Price the new stock, check.
4. Get the new stock out on

the sales floor, check.

According to Scott Thompson, VP sales and marketing at Willoway Nurseries, Avon, Ohio, this checklist was in dire need of a rewrite.

"We developed our pre-pricing program because our customers didn't have enough time," Thompson says. "They wanted to get their orders earlier and earlier in the week so they had enough time to price new shipments before the weekend — and we can only ship out so much per day. Pre-pricing helps fix that."

This pre-delivery pricing option is available to Willoway customers whose spring orders reach a predetermined spending minimum by this grower. Other growers may charge anywhere from 10 to 20 cents per plant to cover printing and labor costs on their end.

Chris Murray, manager and green goods buyer at Gali's



*The new tear-off tag feature at Overdeest Nurseries is especially convenient for heavier plant items. Customers can easily take the bottom portion of the tag to the register to get scanned or rung in.*

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Garden Center, Beachwood, Ohio, is a customer of Willoway and says the company supplies him with a spreadsheet of the available plants in its catalog and the costs, and then he enters the retail prices for each item.

Murray prefers this system to another pre-pricing method, which simply asks the retailer for an overarching formula to markup plants.

As for the benefits of pre-pricing: "It saves us time and labor in that everything is ready to sell as soon as it comes off the truck," Murray says. "This is especially important when we are busy and don't have the staff to dedicate to pricing everything once it is unloaded."

The Gali's manager adds, "I don't refuse to work with a grower if they don't offer pre-pricing, but I do mention it



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There is no doubt that growers can gain an advantage over their competition and increase sales by offering this pre-pricing service. If a garden center buyer has a choice between two similar growers, but one of those growers offers this kind of program, the decision is easy.

-Shane Johnson, Regional Accounts Manager, SATO Labeling Solutions

whenever they ask me what they could do to improve."

### Pre-Pricing Gone Virtual

The team at Overdevest Nurseries in Bridgeton, N.J., has made things a little easier for its customers through the operation's online pre-pricing program.

"There are still those customers who like to get the plant in and price it themselves — looking to charge a premium if they can, depending on what their local market bears," says Gail Overdevest, vice president of Overdevest Nurseries. "But our program is catching on nicely and it gives our customers a better handle on their pricing." Overdevest customers login to the database with a customer ID, which grants them access to the plant material they ordered for the upcoming season.

Gail adds that a pre-pricing service saves retailers from having to set aside time to produce their own tag and then have staff place the tags correctly on the new stock. "When they come off the truck, they're ready to go," she adds.

Overdevest's online program provides customers with a variety of flexible pricing options that include a cost calculator, standard blanket price adjustments, individual item edits, freight expenses and discounts, to name a few.

"We've been trying to make this program easy for our customers, so they can price what they need without having to price a whole catalog," Overdevest says. ☒

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