

A Univex Case Study Featuring **Four Seasons In Bloom**

Univex integrates all their sites into one platform and helps them grow!

BACKGROUND

Four Seasons In Bloom is a small garden centre located in Brookvale, a suburb in Sydney's Northern Beaches district. This is the third garden centre of **Four Seasons Group**, following their flagship garden centre in nearby Belrose (which also acts as the head office), and another small garden centre in Mount Colah. **Four Seasons** prides itself on having an extensive range of plants, pots, water features and landscaping supplies. Customers range from casual to keen gardeners, landscapers and builders, garden designers, and institutions such as schools.

Four Seasons acquired the **Balcony In Bloom** garden centre in November 2016 with the aim of turning it around, and extending their catchment area for customers. Following the ownership change, **Four Seasons** promptly renamed the garden centre to signal new ownership.

Matt Macri is the IT manager for **Four Seasons Group** and was initially responsible for the success of the new acquisition, which lacked a full-time retail manager.

THE CLIENT NEED

There were a number of factors that challenged the operational efficiency, integration, reporting and growth of this growing retail chain.

The retail software in place in the newly acquired store was not built to cope with the demands of even a moderately busy garden centre.

The IT system that came with the newly acquired store consisted of just two old computers running MYOB retail manager. There was strong desire to replace the MYOB system at **Four Seasons In Bloom**. Matt was already familiar with MYOB and its shortcomings. The software wasn't handling the large inventory very well, was lacking security and control, as well as basic functionality such as loyalty management, promotional pricing, EFTPOS pin



pad integration, and more. Customer support for MYOB Retail Manager was neither fast nor accessible.

Univex retail software was already in use at Four Seasons' other two garden centres.

It made sense to also install it at **Four Seasons In Bloom**. Staff from the other garden centres were being deployed to the new one and were already familiar and happy with Univex. The Univex software had been proven for many years in demanding garden centre environments, from very small to very large multi-store deployments.

Significant efficiency gains could be realised by integrating all three stores.

By moving to a Univex system, all three garden centres would be connected in real-time over the internet, in a secure manner. This would enable some significant efficiency gains such as:

- Ability to monitor sales and purchasing activity remotely at head office, avoiding many on-site visits
- Automatic and immediate stock transfers, without paperwork or re-labelling of plants
- Shared customer databases for both loyalty and trade



THE JOURNEY

Whilst the garden centre was acquired in November 2016, Matt Macri decided to hold off installation of Univex until the new year, when a new full-time retail manager for the new store was expected to be hired. This also gave time for the new store to undergo naming and branding changes.

Paul Filmer at Univex was assigned to be the project manager and primary point of contact for all issues surrounding the installation of Univex including pricing, hardware, delivery, set up and training. Whilst other Univex staff were involved throughout the installation process, having one person represent Univex made it easy for Matt to communicate with and deliver a consistent result.

Over the Christmas period, Univex retrieved a copy of

the MYOB retail manager data and began work to import it in to Univex. Whilst Univex has performed a number of MYOB conversions in the past, each one is treated carefully and considered unique. The aim was to convert 100% of the data, including all historical sales and purchasing data, loyalty members, barcodes, and pricing.

Frequent communication between Paul and Matt took place to clarify unique aspects of the data conversion. Because an existing Univex database existed at **Four Seasons**, care was needed to merge suppliers, customers, and product data such as barcodes to avoid creating duplicates or affecting the integrity of the master database. Paul worked closely with Matt over a period to ensure the best possible data conversion would be achieved, eliminating the need for manual data re-entry.

THE SOLUTION

In February 2017 the installation of Univex proceeded. The following key milestones were part of the integrated solution that was provided:

- The new retail manager was unable to commence work at that time, but the lack of a Univex system was causing efficiency problems that needed to be rectified.
- A mixture of existing and new computer hardware was chosen to minimise expense and increase overall reliability and performance.
- Hardware was tested by Univex and delivered to Sydney ahead of onsite preparation.
- Installation was completed in just a few days.
- Final data conversion and hardware setup was completed at the end of one weekday, and Univex went live the following morning. The shop maintained regular operating hours without any downtime.
- Training occurred on site and fine-tuning of program settings and procedures were made over two days. Univex staff were able to assist remotely to speed up the installation and make sure everything went smoothly, such as deploying a monitoring system to observe system performance, and remote backups as part of a disaster recovery plan.
- A few months later, once a retail manager was secured for **Four Seasons In Bloom**, a return trip was made by the original installer, Paul Filmer, to help train him and other staff.
- Operational consulting advice was given to existing staff where they were also shown new processes for improving their efficiency and effectiveness within the Univex system.
- Inspections were made to hardware to ensure it was running at peak efficiency.
- Some additional scanning equipment was installed to assist with stocktaking.



RESULTS

- ✓ **Four Seasons In Bloom** had a successful installation of Univex Point of Sale and retail software. The system was installed at a time that suited **Four Seasons** management, at a price agreed to with no hidden costs.
- ✓ 100% of the required data was converted.
- ✓ System is now handling 86,000 sales each year (from 3 stores) rather than 69,000 (from two).
- ✓ 5 new staff have been trained and are proficient in the system.
- ✓ Efficiencies have been realised in banking, stock transfers, and reporting by connecting the three locations.
- ✓ Sales reporting is used to make better decisions about staffing and merchandising.
- ✓ **Four Seasons In Bloom** had immediate access to support and programming requests. For example when a problem with MYOB barcode formats were found at installation, a workaround was created straight away to reduce any negative impact to staff and customers alike.
- ✓ Staff at **Four Seasons** have ongoing access to support, including further training of staff remotely, and modifying the Univex system to adapt to changing requirements in the enterprise.



Matt Macri is so pleased with Univex's professionalism he wrote a public review on Google:

★★★★★ *A fantastic company that can help your business grow! We have been using Univex for over 10 years in our retail garden centres. With 3 stores Univex has helped us integrate all our sites into one platform for simple stock management and bookkeeping.*

The team is great, can always get them on the phone when you call and they will follow up with any issues that may arise. Have helped us grow our business in a number of ways, but their main feature, their POS system. It is easy to use, meaning staff training is simple and we can focus on selling.

I would highly recommend Univex for all your business IT needs.

“UNIVEX is a fantastic company that can help your business grow!”