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## Knowing Your Value

*Jennifer Polanz*



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Our family, like many families, went through a Marvel phase. Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, Black Widow ... you know, the Avengers and such. Until the multiverse happened, then it all went to hell in a handbasket.

Anyway, during that time, my daughter was a big fan of “Agent Carter,” a little-watched TV show that included Marvel-adjacent characters. I even bought her an Agent Carter T-shirt with the quote “I know my value,” something she said on the show.

That quote has stuck with me. The boldness of the statement and to say it out loud: I know my value. As in, you don’t get to dictate that—I know what I am and what I bring to the table.

It’s something independent retailers can and should embrace. Each of you, as our industry’s garden centers, offers immense value to your community. Often, the amount of knowledge that exists at a local garden center outshines any other way to learn about plants, whether you offer workshops, classes, videos, social media posts, blogs or any other way to communicate. I see great examples of it all the time and I think it’s really working to help customers find their own gardening style. And many of your customers crave that knowledge.

Why is it important? We’ve got a couple of stories that show why. First off, I talked to a number of people about pest and disease issues that are present now or could be important to know about soon for large swaths of the country. Understanding these issues and communicating them and possible solutions to your end consumer will keep them coming back to you for the knowledge they need to be successful.

This month, we also have a contributed article from Jeff O’Brien, who works as the director of sales at Van Belle Nursery in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, and who went back to school for his MBA. He shared some of his research conducted for his thesis with us, highlighting how retailers can reach younger generations—specifically Millennials. As a Millennial himself, he noted that education, experience and communication are big factors in attracting and keeping that generation’s interest (as an Xer, I appreciate the insight!).

Of course, we’re always looking to other resources for information and insight, and Bossman Beytes will even jump the pond now and again for it. This time he brought back tips and highlights from IPM Essen in Germany and garden centers in the Netherlands.

Speaking of the ultimate in inspo—John Friel made the trek to the city for this year’s Philadelphia Flower Show and

he was not disappointed. It's a show I've heard about many times and I've decided to make a point to add it to my calendar next year. For now, though, we can all view it through John's eyes and read his thoughts.

The last piece I want to point out is Amanda Thomsen's column, written poolside on a quick jaunt to Florida before the season takes off. She has an actionable suggestion, deep thoughts and a bit of inspo to kick off the spring season. In other words, she's got it all.

Oh, and here's a bonus for you: Somewhere in these pages is a pic of yours truly at age 1 to help illustrate a story about the iconic Radio Flyer brand opening its first ever brick-and-mortar store. See if you can find it, and forgive us for the fashion—it was 1977, after all.

Here's to spring! **GP**