



GROWER OF THE YEAR — ORNAMENTAL WINNER MAJESTIC TREES

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In just four years, Majestic Trees has gone from start-up to a £2m-plus turnover company with profits outstripping the industry average. That it has achieved this in one of the toughest sectors of production horticulture only adds to the strength of the message that with the right leadership, strategy and quality approach, even the most challenging of markets can be cracked by a new entrant to UK commercial horticulture.

Among the factors key to Majestic Trees' achievement has been a particularly strong focus on customer service, which has included a rigorous approach to soliciting detailed feedback from all of its customers — even the smallest — and a commitment to using that feedback to make amendments where necessary. Communication with those customers, both existing and potential, through a website launched in 2007 and other materials focuses on educating them about what is possible, backed up by investment of some £500,000 in the kind of kit necessary to overcome the biggest objection to selling big trees — that of their delivery and planting.

Staff motivation and retention, meanwhile, have been placed at the heart of the company's business

strategy, with the challenge of uncompetitive rates of pay in the industry met head on with a policy of paying, on average, 15 per cent more than the industry norm. In addition, in 2007, a profit-sharing scheme was launched, which sees 25 per cent of the company's profits shared among the team.

Staff are highly motivated and willing to go the extra mile to support the company's rapid growth. The team is backed up by a product range that is extensive and includes many rare and unusual trees. Innovations here include growing containerised trees in airpots up to 5,000 litres.

With the exception of drought-hit 2006, the business has seen rapid growth year on year, with profits projected to continue at or above eight per cent in future years. In the words of one of the Grower of the Year Awards judges, Majestic Trees has made "an excellent start as a new business in the UK".



Source: *Grower of the Year Awards 2008 programme, published as a Horticulture Week special supplement, 6 March 2008.*

