



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.*





NURSERY STOCK GROWER OF THE YEAR WINNER MAJESTIC TREES

"Quality, service and professionalism are the stated aims of Majestic Trees... and as customer feedback shows, that is exactly what the company has achieved."

Quality, service and professionalism are the stated aims of Majestic Trees, launched six years ago by managing director Steve McCurdy. And as customer feedback acquired through an extensive programme of surveys shows, that is exactly what the company has achieved.

Since its launch the company has pursued excellence in every area, whether it be the staff it hires, the quality of the tree stock it buys to grow on – hand-picked by McCurdy – its methods of production, the services it offers, the training and the equipment it uses. And all to ensure the company, its branding, marketing and positioning in the market are second to none.

The "passion for excellence" that has seen the company not only grow exceptional trees, but also provide outstanding service to its core clientele of architects, landscape contractors, developers, estate managers and arboriculture officers, led to 35 per cent growth in 2007. Even in its early years Majestic Trees made reasonable profits – a remarkable achievement in a particularly tough part of the market – and today the company far exceeds the industry average. Profits are projected to continue at or above eight per cent for future years.

Highlights include the company's customer satisfaction surveys, first sent out in 2005, by which Majestic Trees judges its performance.

Innovations include the use of airtots for the company's containerised trees. The company has also put its money where its mouth is by investing more than £500,000 in trucks and heavy equipment to ensure it has the capability to overcome the biggest objection to selling big trees – that of their delivery and planting – with more specialist equipment on order that will allow it to move and plant its largest specimen trees all over the UK.

The company's turnover figures speak for themselves: apart from the drought-hit 2006, Majestic Trees has seen rapid growth year on year with good profitability. And that profitability is shared with staff through an innovative staff reward scheme, which sees employees who are paid 15 per cent above the market norm share 25 per cent of the net profits of the company each year.



Highly commended
Coblands Nurseries
Hillier Nurseries

Finalists
St Bridget Nurseries
Tamar Nurseries
Wyevale Nurseries

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