# K3 makes it a bed of roses at dobbies

UK garden centre retailer, Dobbies, has deployed Navision-based software solutions from K3, leading provider of IT solutions to mid-tier manufacturers, distributors, retailers and wholesalers, as the engine for ambitious growth. PROBLEMBefore choosing K3, Dobbies had no electronic point of sale systems and relied entirely on cash registers. While this solution was adequate for the size of the business as it was, Sharon Brown, Dobbies' FD, said, " We had expansion plans for not only Scotland, but elsewhere in the UK and Ireland. We needed a suitable EPOS system to support our plans for growth. Dobbies had big plans to grow and acknowledged that cash registers could not provide it with the information it needed to improve its profits through efficient sales, margin and stock reporting.

Brown explains, " The old systems were holding us back. We could not obtain accurate sales analysis details as the old system didn't give us the level of reporting that we required." They also needed a solution that could manage 60, 000 SKUs over a year across a broad range of products that include everything from plants and fish to food! SOLUTIONDobbies consulted a variety of sources including magazines and trade shows in its search for new systems. Brown added, " This is a very open industry and we do talk amongst ourselves." In the end, the company had a shortlist of four companies and chose K3.

Brown explains, " The key factor that we liked was the flexibility that the system offered." Brown added, " K3 was also able to help with adapting existing functions such as our loyalty card, which was previously manual, but through the use of the system we can now analyse member spending." Brown was the project sponsor who worked with the IT manager and six front

line staff. She decided to take a phased approach in order to avoid too much disruption to the business and to iron out any early implementation issues. She also added, " We believe the project would have failed if we had not done it in phases.

" Tills went in first running basic functions such as sales and the PLU file. A year later, stock management was added. The next phase of the system will include automated stock replenishment, enabling Dobbies to replenish stores from the centre as well as at the stores. Brown says, " This means we can place an order with suppliers for the whole estate and get economies of scale." More recently, K3 implemented its OLAP solution onto Dobbies' system, enabling the company to query the Navision database for reporting.

Dobbies is now able to look at sales by store, time period, item and range, enabling it to make better decisions about merchandising, ranging and replenishment. BENEFITSBrown says that the main benefit of the new system is visibility. " We know what net profit we are making on a line by line basis. We can also identify sales trends and introduce discounting on slow-moving lines and analyse store and item performance. Brown adds, " We are now using the system for stock management and we will move more in the direction of centralisation to get even greater benefits.

" FUTUREDobbies is now working with K3 to develop its system even further. They are investigating using Navision's electronic data interchange (EDI), invoice matching and data analysis capabilities, and in upgrading its merchandising system.