

News release

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For Immediate Release



GIMA Day Conference – full report

The Garden Industry Manufacturers' Association's AGM and Day Conference took place on 12th April at Ettington Chase Hotel, Stratford-Upon-Avon, with over 65 members in attendance. With a packed agenda, the day tackled everything from the Bank of England's current economic forecast, foreign exchange rates, GDPR and two industry stalwarts sharing an insight into their careers and hopes for the future. An overview of GIMA's current activities completed the day-long conference.

GIMA Director Vicky Nuttall opened proceedings by thanking all attendees, and the wider industry, for their continued support of GIMA. In a year that saw positive net growth of GIMA's member base – including new members such as **Atlas, Stihl, Primeur, Greenkey, Rainwater Terrace, Vitavia, Block Blitz, Dalefoot Compost, and Festive** – the association also boosted its member benefits portfolio. From Day Conferences to Knowledge Exchange Workshops, the annual GIMA Awards, networking events such as the Golf and Activity Day, and a wide range of business building advice and access to market data including the GIMA Pulse report, Barometer of Trade, GCA Historical Trend reports, and the newly introduced Euomonitor data which can be accessed via the GIMA office, there has never been more reason to become part of GIMA. Vicky said: "GIMA is here for five simple reasons – Saving, Connecting, Promoting, Representing, and Supporting. We believe that our current roster of member benefits works to achieve all these goals, and we encourage members, both existing and potential – to make the most of them all."

Vicky also revealed more details about the forthcoming joint-HTA 'Cultivating Retail' event that will be taking place on 13th November at the De Vere Orchard Hotel in Nottingham. Aimed at retailers, suppliers and growers, this one-day conference and evening dinner will address business resilience, business promotion, supply chain, and will feature a special head-to-head debate. Designed to provide strong takeaway such as strategic advice and practical business solutions, the event will no doubt become a mainstay of the annual garden retail calendar. See more at

<http://gima.org.uk/cultivating-retail/>

Following Vicky's address was **Glynn Jones, Deputy Agent for The Bank of England Midlands Agency Bank of England**. Glynn's session focused on the Bank of England's economic outlook, including expectations regarding interest rates and how Brexit is affecting current growth opportunities. Whilst demand growth may be slower than the period 2014-16, there is a strong case for global growth. UK exports are also benefitting from robust global demand but import penetration continues to rise. Output growth ticked up slightly, whilst manufacturing continued to support output growth in Q4. There is also no doubt that the weather is also impacting the economy, but largely the picture remains positive, though steps need to be taken to ensure the gaps in commodity price rises, productivity growth and supply capacity are kept low.

Further details can also be found in the monthly GIMA Pulse reports, which offer a macro-economic overview.

Next up was **Matthew Crate of Moneycorp**, GIMA's FX partner agency. With 75% of UK companies still using their bank to make international payments, Matthew explained the benefits of using a company such as Moneycorp. Fee-free for GIMA members, the rate of exchange is offered at a much more competitive rate, with Moneycorp helping to cut through much of the confusion that comes from a market that is made up of 97% speculators. Matthew also explained the different ways businesses can safeguard themselves against volatile exchange rates – outlining the spot contract, 'forward', market orders and optional systems that enable businesses who deal with large quantities of foreign currency to make the right choices for their business and financial future. Further information about Moneycorp and how GIMA members can benefit can be found at <http://gima.org.uk/foreign-exchange-service/>

Rebecca Hardy of Kidwell Solicitors led a special session on GDPR and the many ways that businesses need to be GDPR compliant by the May 25th 2018 deadline. From addressing privacy statements, to online and data security, and how database management needs to change, this special session provided much food for thought for attendees.

Closing the morning session was Tony Blake, owner of **St Peters Garden Centre, Worcester & founder of Choice Marketing**. His presentation entitled "A horticultural story with a twist: from inner London to the countryside of Worcestershire" gave attendees an insight into Tony's journey from a young boy in inner city London to creating one of the industry's most influential buying groups. He also challenged suppliers to consider a shop within a shop concept, where suppliers

manage franchised product specific sectors instore, as well as mentioning that in his view fewer garden centres will be put up for sale in the future thanks to successful succession planning by garden centre owners. Food for thought no doubt!

A full update from the industry's leading annual trade exhibition, Glee (10th – 12th September, NEC Birmingham) was provided by **Glee's Marketing Manager, Luke Murphy**. The show is currently in great shape, with 85% of the exhibition now sold. A move to new halls within the NEC is also set to provide a refreshed and revitalised 2018 event, content-rich with the likes of the Retail Lab, GIMA Business Village, New Product Showcase all set to make their return in September. A special updated Pets at Glee section has also been introduced to maximise this thriving part of garden retailing. Luke also urged Glee exhibitors to maximise their online profile on gleebirmingham.com, which saw over 139,000 views of the Exhibitor Zone in the last 12 months alone.

The final speaker of the day was **Martin Breddy of Squires Garden Centre**. Previously the 'other side of the fence' at The Scotts Miracle Gro Company, Martin's session entitled "Gamekeeper turned poacher" provided a rare insight into the similarities and differences between suppliers and retailers. Martin noted that there are some similarities, such as the need to understand the many different brands, channels and products that make up this diverse industry. However, it was the difference where he focussed much of his attention. He summarised these as nine succinct and thought-provoking differences, best described as:

- (1) Speed – retail is so much quicker than the supply side. As a result, retail often has to go with its gut and make snap decisions.
- (2) Price & Value – don't let retailers bully suppliers into reducing prices, instead suppliers need to help retailers to see the value, not just the price.
- (3) Breadth – Squires currently has over 100,000 skus on the system. As a result, retailers cannot look that deeply at any one category, and this will be reflected in the way they interact with suppliers.
- (4) Human Service – all those people working in your business – from those on the shop floor, café, plant area etc, are the face of your business. It's so important to value this, and work with them to listen, learn and educate.
- (5) Environment – garden retailing is much more than just a building – it's a nice place to visit, and the right environment encourages customers to come back time and time again.

- (6) Property – this is your asset, so you need to get it right. So, invest when required as the return on investment will be notable.
- (7) Marketing – Squires may be a £50m turnover business but its marketing team can be counted on one hand. In retail, teams are much smaller, and this means that decisions are made quicker and more impulsively – a significant difference when compared to the supplier side.
- (8) External Focus – in retail you have the chance to talk to end consumers, and there is significantly less internal hassle, meaning you can get on with the job at hand and get involved at the coalface as well as top-level executive thinking.
- (9) Culture – retail is deeply rooted in communities/ localities. In the case of Squires, it is a family-business, which is reflected in the way the business operates. In an ever more frantic world, garden retailers are here to help people relax and live happier lives – not just a merchant but more an experience.

Vicky Nuttall, concluded: “On behalf of the GIMA Council I’d like to extend our thanks to all of those attended the GIMA Conference, as well as those that kindly joined us as a speaker. The content was varied, thought-provoking, unique and endlessly fascinating.”

Membership of GIMA is open to all manufacturers and suppliers of products to the garden retail sector, with a UK or EU base.

For further information about GIMA and the benefits membership brings visit www.gima.org.uk or contact the GIMA office on 01959 564947 or email info@gima.org.uk

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