

With New Ideas Come Great Rewards

There is security in doing things by the book, but sometimes you need to take a risk in order to achieve an important goal—such as growing your business. At United Hardware, we've tried weave the two together by developing a stable operational strategy that supports our willingness to try new ideas.

A recent example of our seeking new avenues of growth is the development of our United Garden & Home division. When Central Garden & Pet closed its operations in Minnesota last year, we saw it as an opportunity to add a number of independent nurseries and garden centers to our customer base and derive more sales from our lawn and garden inventory investment.

So we sought out and hired three former employees of Central Garden & Pet to help us capitalize on these opportunities. I am pleased to report that our new employees have already signed up over 100 new accounts, and there are more to come.

They have also provided introductions for our development personnel that have led to additional hardware business. The best examples of that are the two Lyndale Garden Center stores in Richfield and New Hope, Minn. Together, the two stores are adding over 20,000 square feet of hardware merchandise, and we're proud that before selecting United Hardware, the Lyndale management fully evaluated the programs offered by all three of the big co-ops.

Why did they choose United Hardware? We're told the chords that struck true were our ability to respond quickly to their needs and our willingness to let them maintain their own identity without having to adapt to a set of rigid rules and restrictions prescribed by their wholesaler. Pursuing new business opportunities is just one way we try to better serve our member-dealers. Increased sales spread overhead costs over a larger base, resulting in higher profits and enhanced patronage rebates. In fact, the rebates paid last year were the largest in the company's history.

By sometimes taking the road less traveled, we have positioned United Hardware as an acknowledged innovator in the marketplace.

Dave Heider, President

