

Spotlight on Success

Teamwork Thrives at Klehm Ornamentals

“It all started with a greenhouse.” That’s how Kit Klehm, one of four owners of the newly formed Klehm Ornamentals, describes the beginning of the business that is expected to top \$4 million in revenue in its second year. “I ran across a 60,000-square-foot greenhouse that was for sale, and I saw an opportunity,” he grins, “an opportunity to build a business and a team.”

Building teams in order to accomplish a goal is what drives Kit Klehm: “I believe successful teams build successful businesses,” Kit explains. So in early 1997, Kit gathered his partners and his accountant, Jeff Mowery of Mowery & Schoenfeld LLC, and laid out the business plan for Klehm Ornamentals. The business, which provides nursery

stock production and distribution of ornamental plants, would focus primarily on high-volume mass merchandisers, home centers and large independent garden centers in the Chicago area.

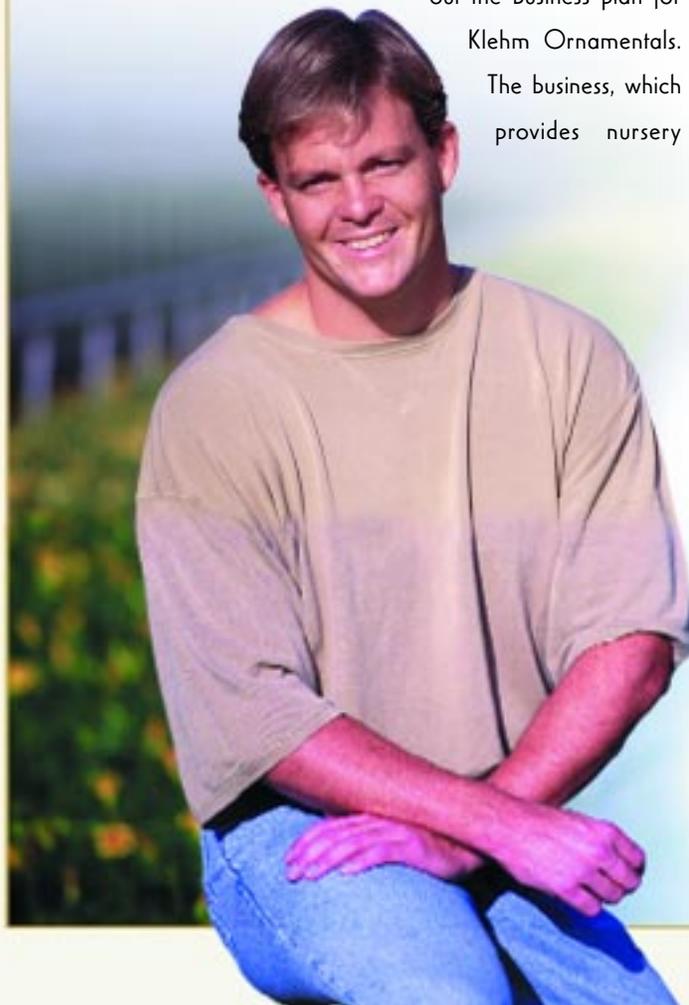


That Kit didn’t have any relationships with the K-marts and Home Depots of the world didn’t deter him. Through honesty and hard work, Klehm Ornamentals is filling a gap that exists in the Midwest ornamental plant market, a market that is under-served by national nursery producers and poorly served by small local growers.

“The difference is, I will not rest until it’s done right,” Kit says of his quality control. “And we do it faster than anyone else. We don’t sacrifice response time,” he adds. As a result, companies like Home Depot are eager to sign on the dotted line and have Klehm Ornamentals supply their perennials, annuals and shrubbery.

The company’s rapid growth is credited to his team, Klehm insists, which includes his accountant Jeff Mowery. “I consider Jeff to be a member of my board of directors. I value his opinion as much as I value the opinions of the other owners. The thing is, not many people bring the arsenal Jeff does—he’s good at business, he’s an accountant *and* he’s an attorney,” Kit explains. “Someone like that, I want on my team.”

If successful teams do indeed build successful businesses, then Kit Klehm just may build the most successful one of all.



Kit Klehm
Klehm Ornamentals, LLC
Client since 1997

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