

# Branding to Sell More

*How can you elevate your brand and ultimately provide added value for your customers?*

BY JENNIFER KERNS

Being an influential resource for your customers is a necessity of selling products and services nowadays. Everyone wants more information and needs more hand-holding. Most independent garden centers and landscapers just don't have the time and money to develop all the resources that their customers deserve. That's where your greenhouse can help.

I've had the pleasure of working with Millcreek Gardens, a wholesale nursery specializing in perennials, herbs, ferns, ornamental grasses, succulents, annuals and more grown in containers. Millcreek sells to independent garden centers, landscape contractors, farm markets and municipalities within a 250-mile radius of Columbus, Ohio.

Since 2013, my goal of working with Millcreek is to elevate their brand and ultimately help them sell more plants. Millcreek already had a nice brand and great reputation to begin with, but my job is to help them provide extra value to their customers so that they always reach out to Millcreek first.

Ever noticed the elaborate displays and signage in grocery stores? Those are there to grab your attention and help sell more of that product. Greenhouse growers need to be thinking in the same frame of mind. You want to be a resource your customers turn to first when solving the problem — and selling more product.

## ANALYZING THE NEED

Sure, you might grow the finest plants ever, but how can you help your customers sell those plants? Talk to your customers, ask them how you can help.

Visit their stores and view how your products are being showcased. Can you find them? If you didn't know anything about plants, is the information adequate? If you were a consumer with no plant knowledge, would you feel compelled to buy?

Many of your IGC customers may not have the budget to hire a marketing agency. This is your opportunity to provide education and be a resource for them and their customers.

**Kitchen Essentials**  
The Culinary Herb 6-Pack

Makes a Great End-Cap Display!

MAKE the Herb buying PROCESS Easier for Your Customers!

Are your customers feeling overwhelmed about the herb selection process?

Let's make it easy with our Kitchen Essentials 6-Pack Tray and Information Package.

**Kitchen Essentials Starter Package #1**  
• Large 22" x 28" Coraplast Sign  
• 50 herb brochures  
• 12 trays  
• 12 handles  
No recommended ordering. 12 trays of Millcreek quality herbs with this package. **Only \$49 each!**

**Kitchen Essentials Starter Package #2**  
• Large 22" x 28" Coraplast Sign  
• 100 herb brochures  
• 25 trays  
• 25 handles  
No recommended ordering. 25 trays of Millcreek quality herbs with this package. **Only \$69 each!**

Our brochure contains information about the top culinary herbs as well as tips, recipes and flavor suggestions. It's perfect for those shoppers who are new to herbs or even those who want to learn more.

Our large signage will help you promote the ease of the Kitchen Essentials 6-Pack and includes a space for you to put your pricing or other information.

Our 6-pack trays fit our 3" herb pots with an easy-to-carry handle making it easy for customers to pick their six favorite herbs and just grab 'n go!

Ordering is easy!  
Contact us at [sales@millcreekplants.com](mailto:sales@millcreekplants.com) or (800)948-1234 or simply select the package you would like to purchase on our weekly Availability Email.

HERE ARE SOME TOP CULINARY HERBS WE RECOMMEND TO STOCK  
WITH OUR KITCHEN ESSENTIALS 6-PACK PROGRAM: Basil, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Parsley, Mint, Oregano, Thyme, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon

Millcreek

Survey your customers. Their goal is to ultimately sell more plants, so what can you do to help with that? Your customers can provide you with invaluable feedback on where they need help.

## BE A RESOURCE

Education in our industry is key. Consumers love beautiful flowers and landscapes, but many are scared to do it themselves. They are afraid of

failure. But if we provide them with a little extra education, that will give them the confidence they need to make the purchase.

For example, I am not an adventurous grocery store shopper. I generally don't pick up new stuff if I don't know anything about it. However, I am always looking through the produce department hoping to be inspired by a fruit or vegetable I can get my kids to eat. On one occasion, there was a large pomegranate display. Normally I

would have walked right on by, but the display and signage caught my attention. Now, I am not a “whiz” in the kitchen. I somehow did not inherit that gene from my mother, so I have no idea what you do with pomegranates to get the seeds out.

However, sitting right next to the display of pomegranates was a brochure about how you extract the poms. It was a simple fold-out piece with easy-to-follow steps and pictures. Voila! I now felt comfortable purchasing a pomegranate to take home to my family. The bonus was I had discovered a new fruit my kids would devour and I no longer walk on by the pomegranates without purchasing.

### POP SIGNAGE

One of the top things you can provide is POP signage. About 68 percent of consumers believe that a business’ signage reflects the quality of its products or services. Since many of your customers are independent garden centers, they don’t have the budget to hire a marketing agency to help them. That’s where you come in to save the day.

At Millcreek Gardens, we developed a POP signage system that could be customized with each customer’s logo. This way, the signs would feel more cohesive with their other business signage along with offering them something they probably would not have the time or money to develop themselves. Millcreek started out small, with flyer-sized signs (8½ x 11 inches) that gave lists of the top plants to use in various settings such as butterfly gardens, native gardens, plants for birds and bees, deer resistant plants and more.

After offering this program the first season, Millcreek soon got requests for larger signs and additional gardening plant lists. We expanded the program to still include the flyer-sized signs as well as large 22 x 28 inch format signs for customers to mount over plant benches. The number of signs we offered went from 10 to 12.

Millcreek could offer a competitive price for their customers for these signs, as they were ordering a large quantity at once from the printer.

About 67 percent of consumers surveyed said they had purchased

a product or service because a sign caught their eye. Think of in-store signage as your silent salespeople. Although it can’t verbally interact with customers, it has the ability to communicate

messages and make a sale. Garden centers are very busy during the spring rush. They can’t help everyone who stops in, so let your signage help sell your products for you!

**We’re delivering you more conveniences with a single site that allows you to view the industry’s most comprehensive online database for availabilities, ordering and tracking.**

## DELIVERING MORE *availabilities*

**No other company delivers more availabilities online.**



- Instant, online availability for hundreds of vendors.
- The industry’s broadest vendor list for unrooted cuttings, plugs and liners.
- Order management system allows you to enter, edit, track and reorder with ease.
- Order online from multiple vendors at one time and have orders automatically broken up into multiple purchase orders.
- Get instant order confirmations, order changes and freight options.
- Better prepare your labor for arriving shipments by following your open orders with tracking numbers on all major carriers and details on all grower deliveries and alternative shipping methods.

## DELIVERING MORE *opportunities*

As a completely independent brokerage company from breeders or production sites, our sales representatives offer the best choices and opportunities for our customers.

## DELIVERING MORE *selection*

Access the industry’s largest product lineup from a reliable network of domestic and international suppliers.

Call to request our DELIVERING MORE brochure

From start to finish, the collaborative effort of our Vaughan’s team has the know-how to assist customers into making each and every program a success.

## DELIVERING MORE *expertise*

## DELIVERING MORE *quality*

Our vendor partners are the best in the business having sophisticated operations and employing some of the most skilled growers in the industry.



LEARN MORE about what we can deliver for you at [vaughans.com](http://vaughans.com) or call 855.864.3300

**MARKETING PROGRAMS AND BUNDLING**

Why is Costco so successful? Because they have figured out a way to bundle large quantities so consumers get a better deal and, in turn, more products are sold.

At Millcreek, we saw a need to get more consumers excited about growing herb gardens. Edible gardening continues to be a popular trend, but there is still not a lot of information out there to help consumers feel confident about doing it.

We developed the six-pack culinary herb garden program to solve this problem. Garden center customers could purchase a package of six-pack trays with handles, a large POP sign and more importantly informational brochures to handout. The culinary herb package along with trays of beautiful herb varieties make it a great end cap display. The trays with handles also make it a great 'grab n go' process. The herb brochure contains information about the top culinary herbs as well as tips, recipes and flavor suggestions.

The brochures and POP signage act as another level of support to those buyers who wanted fresh herbs but were too afraid to take the plunge. It



Millcreek Gardens developed a POP signage system that could be customized with each customer's logo.

also gave the nudge to those buyers who bought their same two to three herbs every year to expand their gardens and buy six plants at once.

Millcreek also offers brochure bundles to customers who don't want to do the entire 6-pack culinary herb program. These herb brochures have received high marks from the customers who have used them in their stores and we hope they have educated and influenced consumers to become avid herb garden lovers.

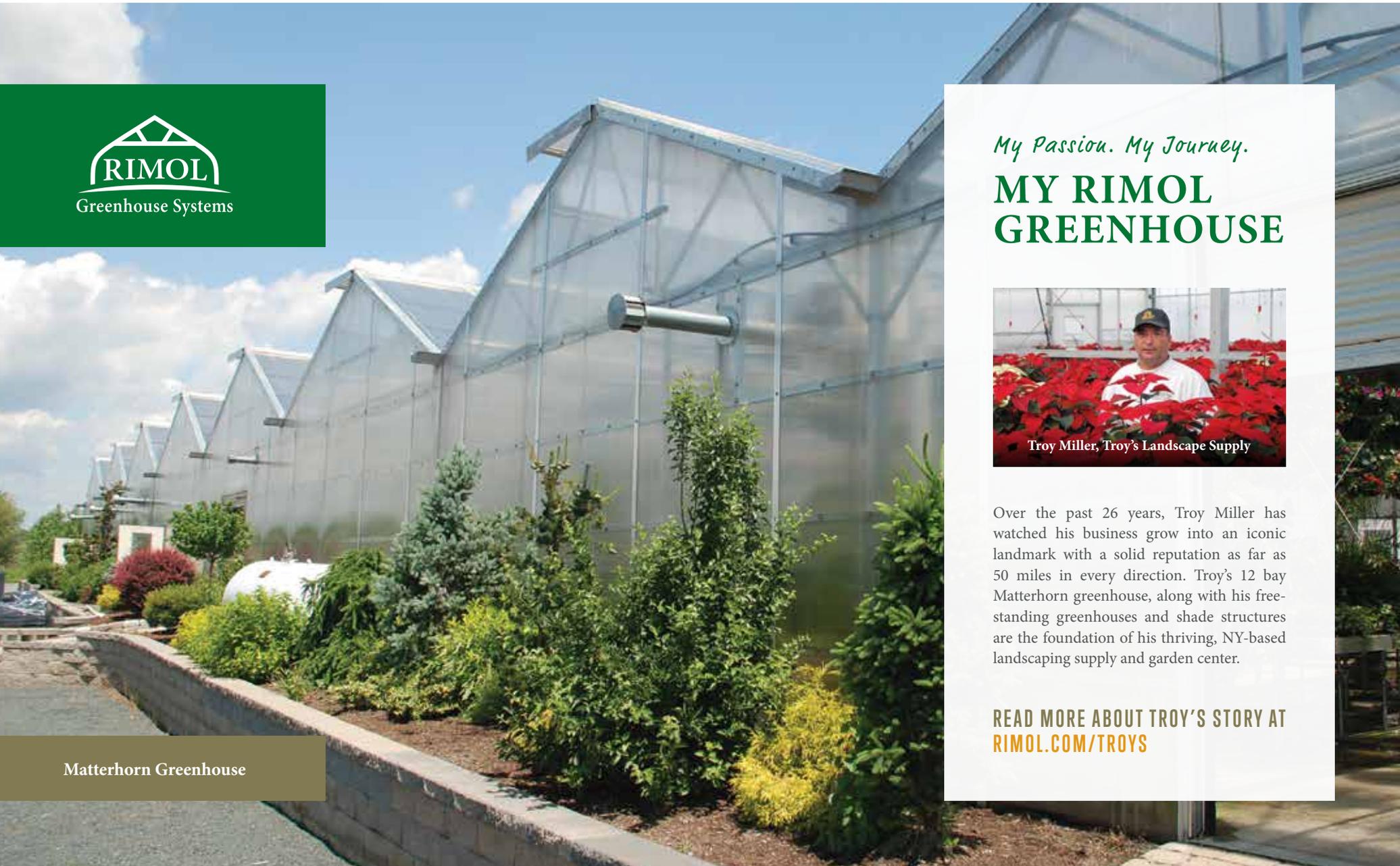
**NEVER STOP**

Never grow complacent in your branding and marketing. Take time at the end of each busy season to analyze how your marketing programs helped your customers, as well as discuss fresh solutions for them.

Continually look for ways to improve and offer your customers not only the best plants, but the best framework to help them sell your plants.

Offer to go the extra mile for your customers. It's worth it. *gpn*

*Jennifer Kerns is a marketing consultant and owner of JK Communications LLC, founded in 2009. She works with companies to create and implement marketing strategies. For more information, go to [www.jenkcommunications.com](http://www.jenkcommunications.com).*



*My Passion. My Journey.*

**MY RIMOL GREENHOUSE**



Troy Miller, Troy's Landscape Supply

Over the past 26 years, Troy Miller has watched his business grow into an iconic landmark with a solid reputation as far as 50 miles in every direction. Troy's 12 bay Matterhorn greenhouse, along with his free-standing greenhouses and shade structures are the foundation of his thriving, NY-based landscaping supply and garden center.

READ MORE ABOUT TROY'S STORY AT [RIMOL.COM/TROYS](http://RIMOL.COM/TROYS)