

# GARDENS ALIVE! STREAMLINES THEIR MAIL-IN ORDER HANDLING PROCESS

Automated order and check processing from CPT and OPEX® provides nearly a \$500K annual savings

## OPEX®

## // THE BACKGROUND

Originally founded in 1984 in Sunman, Indiana, Gardens Alive! is currently one of the most successful mail-order companies in America with over 30 years of experience providing natural home gardening solutions and products directly to the consumer through a family of mailed catalogs and online brands. Niles Kinerk, the owner of Gardens Alive!, founded the company to provide consumers with alternatives to harmful and unsafe pesticides and chemicals, such as natural fertilizers, seeds, pest traps, and gardening tools. Gardens Alive! typically receives over 400,000 orders by mail through print advertising each year at their headquarters in Lawrenceburg, Indiana with peak order volumes during the spring and holiday seasons.

## // THE CHALLENGE

Gardens Alive! has a 72-hour internal standard to receive and process mail orders. Their volume of orders creates many challenges in getting orders accurately entered and shipped to their customers on time without delays. Depending on the time of year, they can receive as many as 6,000 mail orders in a day that need to be processed within 72-hours. Their mail opening process was labor-intensive and time consuming, requiring each envelope to be opened by hand, items batched, and checks to be processed and entered in the system by the accounting department. Their customer service agents were also facing the daunting task of having to manually search for order forms while operating from multiple locations, impacting their ability to deliver outstanding service.

## // KEY CHALLENGES



TIME CONSUMPTION OF MANUALLY PROCESSING MAIL ORDER FORMS AND CHECK PAYMENTS



CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVELS



POSTAGE PRICES THAT CONTINUE TO RISE DRIVING UP EXPENSES

## // KEY RESULTS

3.5X

INCREASE IN EFFICIENCY OF  
MAIL OPENING AND ORDER  
BATCHING

50%

INCREASE IN SPEED OF DATA ENTRY  
OPERATORS PROCESSING ORDERS

500K

ANNUAL SAVINGS FROM CO-  
MAILING AS A RESULT OF  
AUTOMATED SOLUTION

## // THE SOLUTION

Gardens Alive! turned to software provider CPT Intelligent Technologies and OPEX® to automate their mail-in order and payment processing operations, solving their operational and customer service challenges. Gardens Alive! has two OPEX® One-Touch mail opening, extracting, scanning, and check-processing systems that eliminate additional steps in their process, freeing up their accounting department from data entry. Before automating, Gardens Alive! could open and batch 175 orders per operator per hour. After automating they can open and scan 600 orders per scanner per hour. Gardens Alive! was also able to improve their customer service. Representatives can now easily access customer order information, payment history, and the image of the orders now that they are automatically updated into their system.

## // THE FUTURE

Gardens Alive! is better equipped to handle physical mail-in order forms and any increases in volume during peak seasons. They also are able to accommodate more of their workforce to work remotely. As mailing costs continue to rise rapidly, the unique solution from CPT and OPEX allowed Gardens Alive! to engineer and implement the most cost-effective co-mailing solution available, saving Gardens Alive! more than \$500,000 yearly.

**"THE SOLUTION FROM CPT AND OPEX  
ALLOWS US TO SAVE NEARLY \$500K  
ANNUALLY IN PRINTING AND POSTAGE  
COSTS DUE TO OUR ABILITY TO  
CO-MAIL OUR CATALOGS."**

**-Ellen Pullman**

Brand Marketing Specialist, Gardens Alive!

**"HAVING THE SCANNER WAS DEFINITELY  
A PLUS. IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR US  
TO HAVE AS MANY PEOPLE OUT OF  
THE OFFICE DURING THE PANDEMIC  
AS POSSIBLE. BY AUTOMATING THE  
PROCESS, WE COULD HAVE EMPLOYEES  
IN THE OFFICE AND WORKING FROM  
HOME WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT."**

**-Jami Pope**

Coordinator of Order Entry, Gardens Alive!

**OPEX®**

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