

National Garden Gift Card: the flexible solution

Dougal Philip, of New Hopetoun Gardens, Edinburgh, likes the National Garden Gift Card, now that the cards can accept variable amounts and some early EPOS set-up problems have been resolved. “We were the first customer our EPOS company had set up the Gift Card with, and the teething problems were very annoying. Moving onto the variable amount card was a doddle in comparison, so hopefully everyone will now find the process painless!”

“The new Card has several advantages and benefits over the Gift Vouchers. They have a modern look and feel and, as just about all other gift vouchers are on plastic cards, they fit in with people’s expectations – and they fit in their wallets and purses, so are carried around more frequently.”

“We really like having cards that offer variable amounts and it’s great that the customer doesn’t have to spend the full value all at once, encouraging re-visits, and more spend.”

“And, very importantly, it means we don’t have to debate with customers at the till about giving change! They can also be sold in non-gardening outlets to Non-gardeners wanting a gift for the gardeners in their lives, so bringing more money into our sector.”

Dougal believes the card will increase sales – both of the cards over the vouchers and improve sales overall in his centre. “I think it may increase sales where the Gift Card has been bought in a non-gardening outlet and given to a gardener who is in the habit of using us. But I feel that the move towards the cards from paper is more about the modern image of our trade, and the flexibility of not having to spend it all at once. Changing to gift cards is the way of the modern world, just as contactless debit and credit card payments are increasing.”



As for the future, Dougal would like to see a comprehensive uptake of the Gift Cards: “From our point of view we would be more than happy to move completely to the Gift Cards, as they are very convenient for our customers and for us, as long as most garden centres redeem them, and we can demonstrate this to our customers. But anyone reluctant to move over would appreciate the cashflow benefits of not having to buy stocks of Gift Vouchers up front and not having to make regular returns to HTA – this happens automatically with the Gift Cards.”

Boyd Douglas-Davies, CEO of Hillview Garden Centres, also likes them and is much in favour of the cards over the paper vouchers.

“What we particularly like is the fact that they are never out of stock, so we can always complete the sale. This is a great benefit to both the business and my staff. We have been caught out from time to time in the past, when someone made a large purchase of Vouchers, resulting in us running low before the next delivery. This must have resulted in lots of missed sales.”

“But they also confer other advantages and benefits to our business, including better cash flow, and increased sales – as customers can load any value they like.”

“Personally, I love the modern look and images. Customers now expect to be able to buy gift cards, as in other industries, rather than the old fashioned paper vouchers.”

And, as you can imagine, Boyd was very pleased with the simplicity of changing from paper to the cards: “Installation was straightforward and we had no problems nor concerns.”

Boyd also wants to see the cards replacing Paper vouchers: “As long as the cards are as widely redeemed as the vouchers, let’s get with it as an industry and replace paper with cards – as pretty much all other retailing industries have done!”