



GROWING TOGETHER

GIMA IS HELPING MEMBERS ACHIEVE GROWTH BY BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RETAILERS AND SUPPLIERS

After a tough season, there is nothing more reassuring than having the support of a network to act as a sounding board and provide further opportunities for growth.

From facilitating valuable connections and hosting exclusive events, to providing a suite of services and advice — or sometimes just lending a sympathetic ear — GIMA is continually developing new ways to support and assist suppliers.

Vicky Nuttall, GIMA director, says: “We aim to make the most of our connections and experience by bringing people together, whether that’s formally or informally and helping to promote their brands. Growing people’s business — and doing it profitably — is what we’re about.

As an organisation, we’re in a privileged position, being able to advise and support our members. We know the personalities and people and sometimes have invaluable commercial knowledge that can help give them a guide and steer on how to navigate the nuances within our industry.”



Vicky Nuttall
GIMA

Seizing opportunities

Speaking to a handful of companies, it’s clear that

the benefits GIMA brings to their business don’t go unnoticed, as the organisation seeks to drive growth in the industry.

One example is AutoPot, winner of multiple GIMA Awards for its automated, power-free watering system. The irrigation specialist has been a GIMA member since just 2023 and credits a lot of its success to being part of the GIMA family. “Our partnership with GIMA has been instrumental in our continued growth and success in the garden industry,” says Laurence Ritchie, UK & international sales manager.

A kick-start in the industry

With a programme of targeted events and initiatives every year, GIMA does everything in its power to give members a leg-up in the gardening sector. But it’s important to note that success can’t be handed to suppliers on a plate. “People have to do the legwork, we can’t do it for them,” explains Nuttall. “We can present the opportunities and create environments ideal for networking but they have to then do the hard work themselves. You’ve got to have the product and that initial willingness to take an opportunity.”

She adds: “Primeur is a great example — they took every opportunity and saw growth. The reason Primeur MD, Jenny Douthwaite joined the council was because she benefitted from all that GIMA had to offer and she wanted to give back.”

Eric Baudouin, founder of Germie — the seed germination kit that scooped the GIMA Innovators Seed Corn Fund at Glee last year — echoes Nuttall’s sentiment. “There’s still lots of work that needs to be done,” he says. “You have to be prepared to put the work in, but the opportunities created from being part of GIMA and winning the Seed Corn Fund definitely helped. You discover the market, and the advice you get from GIMA helps you determine whether you are headed in the right direction.”

Sharing expertise

GIMA’s new buddy scheme was introduced by Jenny Douthwaite in her GIMA presidency last year. The opportunity is open to all newly-joined companies, pairing them with a non-competing Council member as a mentor.

Baudouin has found this scheme crucial in his development of Germie: “There is no conflict of interest with my ‘buddy’. We discuss so many things: pricing, strategy, opportunities or challenges, and he helps me find a solution. He has been in the industry for 30 years and that expertise is invaluable.”



Eric Baudouin
Germie

Growing through connections

The networking opportunities and chances for collaboration available through GIMA are unrivalled. Organic peat-free compost manufacturer, RocketGro joined GIMA three years ago, and felt an instant boost from being welcomed into the fold. “We were new to the industry, so being invited into a family and that sense of belonging was so important,” says co-founder and MD Toby Thomas. “It made us feel like we were part of and achieving something.”

RocketGro regularly attends GIMA events and is well versed on the rewards they can bring. “In my opinion, the Golf Day is probably the best networking event we’ve been involved in because it’s so nice to be with your industry peers in a relaxed environment. It’s a great way to have conversations,” he says. “It’s nice to be with people that do the same thing as you and not have to talk about it. It’s subtle relationship building and can lead to business down the road.”

And it’s not just about supplier-retailer exchanges, as the GIMA community works together to facilitate growth. Nuttall adds: “Naturally, relationships develop between members, which enables cross-business opportunities.”



Toby Thomas
RocketGro

Increasing brand awareness

GIMA boasts member companies of all sizes, from one-man bands to major household names, all of which still find huge advantages from being



Judges assessing products for the GIMA Awards

part of GIMA, capitalising on opportunities that deliver the right results for them.

These include the New Product Digest and GIMA Awards, to name but a few. Thomas from RocketGro says: “We’ve entered the GIMA Awards and the judges on the panel are really influential, so even just to get your product in front of them for a moment is incredibly valuable.”

Edwin Allingham, MD of leading pest control brand, STV, says: “As a leading supplier, we have done a lot to invest in and develop new product. GIMA, through its events, networking and marketing activities, offers us an opportunity to communicate that to the industry. If we consider a product to be valuable and need additional airplay, it’s great to take advantage of opportunities presented by GIMA. I’m hoping to be in Which? magazine because I met representatives from the magazine at the Garden Press Event, they love the product and want to test it. And, there are other opportunities with other influencers and journalists off the back of that event too.”

“Relative to other forums, what GIMA

provides is a low-risk, low-cost option, which makes it accessible to all. It’s yours to get out there and put across your message.”

And, the great news is that GIMA’s pro-active approach is mutually beneficial for both retailers and suppliers, as Nuttall explains: “From time to time, we run Buyer Connect events and hosted

meetings at Glee for exhibitors. These are direct selling opportunities and the chance to get right in front of the people you want to see. But we’ve also had retailers tell us that our Buyer Connect event helped them find one of their best suppliers ever.”

Coming together

Allingham is a big advocate for GIMA and the opportunities it creates to bring the industry together. He asserts: “If the industry is going to congregate anywhere, at any time, it’s likely to be under a GIMA banner.

“In all honesty, I’m not a great joiner, but that’s where GIMA is great because it gives people like me a kick in the pants and says ‘come on, you’re part of it, get involved!’. Vicky Nuttall is great in that respect. She energises the whole situation. There are always excuses not to do something, but it’s worth it and enjoyable when you do.”

Autopot’s Laurence Ritchie concludes: “We are excited to continue our journey with GIMA. Their resources and support promise to provide us with the means to maintain and develop our position in the garden industry.”



Glee's Matt Mein, Germie's Eric Baudouin and Primeur's Jenny Douthwaite

About GIMA

GIMA is a membership organisation of around 170 companies representing the majority share of suppliers and manufacturers in the UK gardening industry. Its goal is to promote the commercial, trading and industrial interests of its UK and EU-based members. Run by a team of professionals, and governed by a council of members, GIMA is funded by membership subscriptions and services. Its extensive range of services and support caters to all members.
gima.org.uk

