

# A Picture-Perfect View of the Retail Landscape



## GARDENING CENTRES ADOPT DVRS FOR POS INTEGRATION CAPABILITIES

Talk to any gardening or outdoor landscaping enthusiast in New South Wales, Australia, and most will be able to instantly offer directions to the nearest Flower Power gardening centre complex.

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**John Bassett**  
IT Manager, Flower Power

**R**ENOWNED for its spectacular walkways, lush greenhouses and creative store spaces, Flower Power has been in business for more than 30 years and currently operates eight retail locations in and around Sydney.

The company is focused on providing customers with a truly enjoyable shopping experience. Each location is thoughtfully designed, well stocked and complemented with cafés, children's playgrounds and other rest areas.

To help protect these retail complexes from theft and vandalism, and to enhance customer and staff safety, Flower Power trialed two digital video surveillance and monitoring systems between 2001 and 2004.

Neither system provided the performance and search capabilities the company was looking for, according to Flower Power IT manager John Bassett.

"It actually took us quite a while to find a suitable solution," he says. "The first video

system we tested was extremely basic. It simply captured video and stored it to a PC.

"The next system, which put a register's receipt roll onto the video, was closer to the way we wanted to go, but once again it didn't have the search capabilities we needed. In addition, having receipt information on top of the video reduced the quality of the video, because it took up at least a third of the screen.

"That's when our supplier, Crimewatch Video, introduced us to the March Networks™ DVR system, which has proven to be fantastic."

### **POS integration**

Bassett says Flower Power selected the March Networks system because of its transaction monitoring software. The software not only integrates recorded digital video with Point-of-Sale transaction data from each Flower Power register, it also centralizes that information so it can be remotely accessed from any location.

“We have a centralized loss prevention department,” explains Bassett, “and we wanted to be able to look at a report from our main server, and then look at the associated video and receipt data to learn more about suspect numbers. The March Networks system allows us to do that.”

Since installing its first March Networks 4000 Series DVR at its Enfield store in mid-2004, Flower Power has been impressed with the reliability and performance of the system.

“I can’t rave enough about it,” says Bassett. “It’s incredibly stable and the software has obviously been extremely well written. And as far as our search requirements go, it gives us far more flexibility than we ever expected to get when we first started researching the market.”

#### **Efficient**

The March Networks POS Investigator software allows authorized Flower Power users to search for synchronized video and receipt data by store location, register or transaction number. According to Francesca Mastroieni, who is responsible for loss prevention investigations company-wide, the DVR system saves her considerable time each day.

“Prior to the installation of the March Networks system, I would spend at least 30 minutes viewing paperwork for each investigation and would have to get additional information over the telephone.

Now it takes me five minutes at the most to get what I need.”

Flower Power now has the DVRs installed at two gardening centres and plans to extend that coverage to all eight locations in time. The systems are set to record activities continuously during business hours and on motion detection after hours. They are currently connected to 16 cameras each and are providing the retailer with about 30 days of expandable storage.

Eventually, store managers will have access to live and archived video captured from their specific locations to help them monitor activities and resolve customer disputes quickly and effectively. Two store supervisors will also be equipped with the viewing software.

“The managers will be able to use the systems in-store with the viewing software,” says Bassett. “If they’re concerned that a customer is stealing, they will be able to go to the back room and take a look at the video. Or, if a customer says ‘Look, I gave you \$50 but you gave me change from a \$20’, they can quickly look at the video and verify the information because the quality of the video is such that they can tell what the note was.”

The company also intends to give its security monitoring company access to the DVRs through a virtual private network connection, he adds, so they can immediately see

what’s happening at a location if an alarm is triggered.

#### **Knowledge**

To date, Flower Power has only had to pull archived video on a few occasions. In one incident, recalls Bassett, they discovered that someone had entered a store before it had opened in the morning and had taken a few items. The video evidence allowed them to see exactly how the person had slipped in unobserved and enabled them to introduce measures to prevent a repeat incident in the future.

As a deterrent and an investigative tool, the DVR systems are already helping Flower Power decrease its operating expenses. Bassett considers it a wise investment.

“There is no question that the DVRs will pay for themselves,” he says. 🌸

#### **Flower Power**

**Flower Power Garden Centres Pte. Ltd.** ([www.flowerpower.com.au](http://www.flowerpower.com.au)) is a privately-owned, family business operating in and around Sydney, Australia, under the brandnames Flower Power and Bond’s Nursery. The business consists of eight retail garden centre complexes that offer gardening enthusiasts a complete range of plants and merchandise, as well as design and landscaping services.

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