Established into 1842 as seed merchants, Armitage's are a family run garden centre with 2 sites in Huddersfield. As members of the Garden Centre Association, service excellence, quality and customer care remain as important as the extensive range of plants, bulbs and seeds available.

The award winning centres also boast gardening and outdoor lifestyle accessories, furniture and BBQs plus gift and home ware. Both centres also offer welcoming cafés open every day, offering delicious, seasonal food, light bites and sweet treats.

The challenge

In 2011 Armitage's Garden Centres began developing a customer loyalty programme designed to reward their customers with a range of unique benefits and offers through the 'Your Armitage's' loyalty card.

Initially the company's goals were to develop a database of loyal customers and create a system that allowed them to analyse and mine data in order to create clever, behavioural based marketing campaigns.

In devising the customer loyalty strategy Armitage's were advised that they would need to integrate a customer relationship management (CRM) system into their existing electronic point of sale (EPOS) database. Given the business has an annual turnover of around £6 million the system would need to be capable of dealing with a significant amount of transactions.

There were a range of different systems available on the market from the lower-end off-the-shelf packages to the highly bespoke CRM systems which would require heavy investment. Armitage's opted for the **datacpr** CRM system which offered a bespoke yet affordable solution.

The datacpr solution

The team at **datacpr** took time to understand the needs of the business, looking at the data requirements in four main areas: member details; campaigns; rewards and sales transactions. The process was kept as simple and straight forward as possible and the solution highly tailored to the Armitage's garden centre business.

Free to join, new members simply complete a sign up form at the garden centre which is passed to admin staff to be entered into the CRM system. Once entered, a welcome pack is created as the first campaign the new member will receive. With a single view now created for the member, which holds personal data and relevant preferences, the CRM system will upload daily from the EPOS all transactions made by the member whenever their card is used. It will also record all the campaigns sent, rewards issued and redeemed.

A data mining tool was also developed which allows the marketing team to filter the customer database using a range of parameters and export it into a workable CSV file. From there, reports and analysis can be carried out to create well-informed marketing and reward campaigns.

Drawing on **datacpr**'s extensive experience in CRM and data management Armitage's business requirements have changed and the initial brief to develop a system that allows the capture and mining of customer data has evolved to include future goals for customer segmentation and ranking.

Core benefits

- The ability to hold data in one place and mine it in a user-friendly way has been invaluable to the marketing team at Armitage's. However the data is not just a marketing tool; the potential to support other areas of the business is significant.

- Armitage's has found that the CRM system has the potential to group and segment customers according to how much they spend, when they spend and what they buy. Moving forward the data can be used to identify certain types of customer and develop tailored, data driven reward programmes.

- Armitage's can quickly and effectively analyse the successes and failures of marketing initiatives, educating themselves and ensuring informed decision making going forward.

- On a wider level, the CRM system and its data intelligence effectively supports the Armitage's customer journey and loyalty building programme, so essential when attracting higher footfall and encouraging a wider spend from target segments.

- The **datacpr** team helped Armitage's to use their data in a more sophisticated way. Armitage's can now analyse data and create campaigns that meet specified and agreed criteria for example drive footfall, increase spend, generate sales in a particular area of the business etc. The system can also allow the team to segment the database and tailor rewards to relevant groups of customers, making the programme more personal and rewarding for its members.

- The system is user-friendly and uncomplicated allowing the team at Armitage's to train up new personnel quickly.

> *'datacpr advised us from the outset that the benefits of data would become more evident once we were using the CRM system. They were right!*
>
> *We now know we can be smarter in our use of data – we want to analyse customer buying patterns, consider ranking customers according to different variants – be more sophisticated with the wealth of data we now hold.*
>
> *We also want to see how this data could benefit other areas of the business such as buying. The possibilities are far reaching.'*
>
> **Jo Dales, Marketing Manager at Armitage's Garden Centres**

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Success factors

- Initially Armitage's set itself a target of generating 5,000 sign ups within the first 12 months. Less than 10 months into the 'Your Armitage's' loyalty scheme there have been over 19,000 new customers added to the CRM database. This equates to thousands of transactions and is a great testament to how robust the system is.
- 45-55 % of Armitage's Garden Centre turnover can be attributed to 'Your Armitage's' members. Through the integration of the CRM and EPOS systems, the marketing team can quickly access this type of transactional data and communicate the programme's successes to the management team and staff.

Moving forward

In the future the scope for data driven reward initiatives is vast. Using the market insights and behavioural data, Armitage's Garden Centres continue to develop a loyal database of customers that choose to shop with them over and above other garden centres in what is a highly competitive and seasonal market. The business is also looking at the potential for introducing Information Touchpoints in their garden centres to enhance the customer experience further.