



## Kalehurst Garden Machinery Ltd.

A Growing Dealer that Looks to Gold for Security and Reassurance

Kalehurst Garden Machinery is a family-owned business based in Hermitage, near Newbury in Berkshire. A one-stop dealership for domestic garden machinery with a full service, repair and parts shop, Kalehurst also has one of the largest showrooms in the South East. In almost four decades of operation, Kalehurst has gained a reputation for supplying and servicing only the highest quality garden machinery with efficiency and integrity, whilst at the same time managing to maintain surprisingly affordable rates.

Kalehurst stock the leading brands such as John Deere, Honda, Stihl and Husqvarna, and they sell everything from lawn mowers, chainsaws and hedge cutters, to shredders, stump grinders and chippers. In recent years, Kalehurst has experienced remarkable growth as a result of effective cash flow management and a dynamic, forward-looking business ethos. Implementing Ibcos Gold in 2007 has been instrumental in its growth.

### How Gold Helps Kalehurst Hang on to their Customers

When Kalehurst was first established in the late 1970s, the business landscape was very, very different. One of the main changes has been the massive rise in the number of business rivals. Only as little as twenty years ago, for example, there was no competition at all from the internet. Business may have been slower in general, but it was also a lot easier to manage.

Consequently, there was much more customer loyalty in the past because people didn't feel they had a choice - they went to the dealer they always went to, even if sometimes they weren't totally satisfied. Today, however, unless customers receive optimum service, they're off.



### Customer Profile:

- Domestic garden and estate machinery dealer
- Stock garden equipment from leading brands, such as John Deere, Honda, Stihl, etc.
- 37 years in business
- 8 employees
- Ibcos customer since 2007
- Runs Ibcos Gold Lite 6.4; classic system.

"Gold has given me the security in knowing exactly where we are. It's very reassuring."

**Neil Taylor**  
Company Director

All any dissatisfied customers have to do now is go online, find new local dealers, check their reviews and ratings, and then take their business elsewhere. Companies are therefore more strongly advised than ever not to scrimp on service, and managing a business efficiently and serving customers effectively are - more than ever - absolutely paramount.

Indeed, it is for this reason that Kalehurst Director Neil Taylor gets so much out of Ibcos Gold. "What I like is that as well as being really simple to use," he says, "Gold also gives me all of the information I need, right when I need it." And like most of us, when Neil needs information, he tends to need it NOW, or at the very least as soon as is physically possible. "I want information quickly - as quickly as my customers do - and I don't want to do too much work to get it. So whether it's at the point of sale or in the workshop, I Gold allows me to pull up whatever information I need, fast."

This is absolutely crucial in keeping customers happy, and a happy customer is one that keeps coming back. And that's the kind of customer Kalehurst really like.

## An Opportunity He Couldn't Refuse: An Interview with Neil Taylor

Kalehurst was originally established by Robert Taylor 37 years ago. Eventually, however, after a good run and a lot of success, Robert reached a point where he was either going to have to effectively close down the business, or sell it off. At which point, his son Neil Taylor stepped into the picture. "I just thought it was an opportunity I couldn't refuse," he says, "so I bought it off him."



The other side of the showroom



Kalehurst's showroom

Neil's approach to business was very different to that of his father. His father was more of an old-school, hands-on fixer of things, whereas Neil, at heart, was a salesman. "My dad was not really sales-oriented," Neil explains. "He was much more into the mechanical side of the business, so a lot of his focus had been on managing the workshop."

While Neil had great respect for his father and for his father's methods of getting things done, he knew that in terms of business administration, things were in need of a fairly radical update.

"Everything was done on paper and kept in huge files," he says. "We used a triplicate invoicing system for the workshop and sales, which was just about manageable when we were a much smaller business. After 25 years in operation, however, we had a 65% increase in turnover and demand for parts increased dramatically, making it much more difficult to run the business on a paper-based system."

It wasn't until his father retired, however, that Neil set about figuring out how to run the business on his own terms, in a much more sales-focused

way. Which is one of the reasons that Ibcos Gold was such a perfect fit for Neil, as sales is also one of the areas in which Gold can shed huge amounts of light.

Kalehurst installed Gold in 2007 and immediately Neil began to notice huge differences. Most impressive of all was the overall clarity he now had, throughout the year.

"Since turnover is every three months," he explains, "it's critical for cash flow purposes that you know where you are at certain times of the year, and Gold helps me do that. In fact, I wouldn't be able to do that at all without Gold. Whenever I need to, I can just get on Gold and interrogate the figures. Knowing where you are gives you the ability to plan ahead, so if you know you're 20% behind on sales, for example, you know something needs to be done."

Together with Gold, Neil has found the perfect way to run Kalehurst, and with a faster growth than ever before, the results speak for themselves.

## Taking On the Internet with Ibcos Gold and the Personal Touch

Having the largest showroom in the area - and indeed one of the largest showrooms in the entire country - makes a huge difference in Gold's constant fight against their biggest competitor these days: the Internet.

Of course, they have their own presence on the internet, and some great offers for online customers, but just the sheer amount of competition online, with potential customers being offered super-low cost items and often cheap or free shipping from anywhere in the world, competing can be very tough.



Outside of Kalehurst's workshop.

"The problem with buying online, however," explains Neil Taylor, owner and MD of Kalehurst, "is that you really don't know exactly what you're getting and you can't really tell anything about a company just by looking at their website. You certainly can't tell if they've got what you need in stock."

This is where Kalehurst's spectacular showroom comes into its own. The question Kalehurst's staff are asked more than any other is "Do you have this in stock?", and precisely because their showroom is so large and well-stocked, the answer is invariably yes. At which point, many customers will choose to come into the showroom so they can see whatever it is that they're considering buying with their own eyes.

"Not only can they see the item they need," Neil clarifies, "they can also ask questions about it, compare it to different models and machines and of course, try it out, all before they decide to buy."

This is one area in which the internet cannot compete with good, old-fashioned, face-to-face reality. "It's about educating the customer in a language they can understand," says Neil, "and it's about providing a personal touch. And we wouldn't be able to give customers such a confident response if our inventory wasn't updated in real-time on Gold."

This is also where being a family business comes into play. Neil feels very strongly that working so closely with his wife brings a lot more warmth into the business. It helps that his wife Jill is such a people person. "The minute you walk into our showroom," he says, proudly, "Jill greets you with a big, beaming and genuine smile. She has a fantastic memory and never forgets a customer's name or what they've purchased in the past. It's paying attention to the small details and the human element that turns one-off customers into regular customers."

## When Kalehurst Met Ibcos

Before Kalehurst installed Ibcos, things were, it's fair to say, a lot less organised. By Neil Taylor's own admission, the staff were not very good at finding the time to actually sit down and go through the figures, so as he puts it, "we went on instinct". While their instincts may have been excellent, Neil knew it was really no way to run a business. He was also very much aware that he needed help managing the company, especially with the end of year accounts. It just wasn't his forte. What he felt he needed was some type of business-oriented Mary Poppins figure to come in and sort everything out - "I just wanted to press a button at the end of each month and see exactly where we were." Enter Ibcos Gold.

Although the meeting almost didn't happen, as Neil was looking into Sage accountancy software. Then, at the last minute, a recent hire stepped in and saved the day. "It was our new accountant, Lee, who recommended Gold," Neil explains. "She'd used it in a previous job at a John Deere dealer, and had been very impressed. We also asked other dealers what they were using and it seemed that Ibcos was the default software in the UK agriculture industry."



So the decision was made and the Ibcos team were called in to Kalehurst to complete the installation, a process Neil describes as "flawless and fast". And it proved an excellent decision, further proof for Neil Taylor that Kalehurst had to be forward-looking and had to embrace technology.



"Gold does exactly whatever needs doing. At the end of the year, you can pretty much have all the results you need at the push of a button."

**Neil Taylor**  
Company Director  
Kalehurst Garden Machinery

Neil Taylor, Company Director at Kalehurst, with Jon Fulcher, Sales Director of Ibcos Computers.

ibcoscomputers

## About Ibcos Computers

For the past 38 years, Ibcos has helped agricultural, groundcare, and construction dealers manage their businesses successfully with Gold, a powerful platform based on industry best practices and standards. Gold has earned its reputation as the number one recommended dealership management software, providing single and multi-depot dealers with a consolidated business overview. With Gold, dealers can make better decisions and predict future outcomes based on real-time data.



**Ring us today** to find out how **Ibcos Gold** can help you better manage your machinery dealership!