

MEET THE LEADER

The voices of Oregon's nursery industry



PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

Worked on the family grass seed farm growing up. Graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in agriculture. Interned at Bailey Nursery in Yamhill, Oregon, in the summer of 1996. After graduating from OSU, went to work at Marion Ag Service as a crop adviser for 4 years. Then, went to work at Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas for three-and-a-half years. Started Pohlschneider Nursery in 2000 while working at Marion Ag. In 2005, I went back to the family farm full time to work for my parents and continue to grow my nursery operation. Today, the nursery covers 60 acres, and the farm continues to produce grass, squash, and clover seed.

WHAT'S YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

I want to be fair, firm and honest while running a manageable and profitable business.

WHAT'S A GOAL YET TO BE ACHIEVED?

We have been expanding and growing

in the past few years and we've hit the size that we want to be. Now we need to focus more on capacity, dialing in the number of plants with our current space and the desirable number of employees.

WHAT WAS YOUR BEST BUSINESS DECISION?

To stay in business. Our first crop came in 2008 during the recession, and it was a challenging time. We paid an excavator to come in and burn some of our crop. We did not have the knowledge and had not been established in the market. Through discussions with peers, third parties, and another gut check, we put more effort into the business and more focus.

WHAT WAS YOUR HARDEST DECISION?

Deciding how much risk to take on. We expanded a lot and that created a lot of financial and personal pressure. I think we have found the size and capacities we are com- >>

Sam Pohlschneider

Owner/president

Pohlschneider Nursery, St. Paul, Oregon

OAN Member

Since 1998

2024-present
Board of Directors

2006-2012
Marketing Committee

2012
Marketing Committee chair

2011
Marketing Committee vice chair

1998-2002
Willamette Chapter Board of Directors

2001
Willamette Chapter President

Meet the Leader

fortable with. Sometimes it is more knowing what we are not, more so than what we are.

WHAT WAS YOUR GREATEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

Nothing stands out. Just focus on how we can continue to improve and grow within our risk capacity.

WHO WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR?

I have had many mentors over the years through the startup and established phases who gave me the confidence that what we were going through is normal. They told me that everyone goes through this, and gave me encouragement to keep going on.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST BUSINESS ADVICE?

When trying to make a decision, write down on the top of a piece of paper pros/cons with a line down the middle and list all of the pros and cons to the deci-

sion. By the time I am done filling it out, and all the scatter-brain ideas are written down, the decision is usually pretty clear. Then ask the question: What is the worst possible outcome? And if we can live with that, then proceed and implement.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE INDUSTRY?

The people. I am grateful to be surrounded by great people. Vendors, peers, customers; it is a blessing. I also enjoy the diversity of work, from propagation to growing, selling, building infrastructure, and equipment.

WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES FACING THE INDUSTRY TODAY?

Labor. The new heat and overtime laws have resulted in decreased take-home pay. We give our employees raises every year, but these two issues result in reduced hours worked and take home pay.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE?

Keeping good people. We do our best to treat and pay our employees well, and then one day they can just be gone.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

To continue to become better, more efficient, and more simplified. As a business owner I have the responsibility to create a positive experience and supportive environment for our employees, customers, and suppliers.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

My wife and kids. Laura and I celebrated 25 years of marriage this year and are raising three fine boys. They have good heads on their shoulders and will be a positive influence in their career field, families, and communities. I am proud of their accomplishments and the men they are growing into and look forward to what is next. ©



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