

GROWERTALKS

Features

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Fast Five with Ken Fisher

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Meet Ken Fisher, the newly hired President and CEO of AmericanHort. Ken doesn't have an association background; he's a businessman, with management stints at the Coleman Company (famous for camping gear) and Elmer's Products Inc. (where he was most recently CEO). Ken started his new job in June, and he'll get his first serious introduction to the industry at AmericanHort's trade show, Cultivate'16, July 9-12 in Columbus, Ohio.

We thought we'd give you a quick introduction to Ken ahead of that, with five fast questions:

Why take the job?

"I believe that there's a mission here at AmericanHort that's important. And I believe my business experience can be leveraged in a very positive way for both the organization and the members, as an opportunity to truly expand AmericanHort's leadership position. We want to be seen as that organization that's leading and unifying the horticulture industry."

Were you specifically seeking an association position or was this a unique opportunity for you to put your business skills to work?

"It was a blend of both. I wasn't looking specifically at associations. But I was, at a certain level, looking for an opportunity that was more of a blend of mission-driven and business-driven."

Coleman lanterns and Elmer's Glue—how does that experience fit with your new position?

"[Coleman and Elmer's] are iconic companies and iconic branded products. Everybody who uses Coleman products or Elmer's Glue knows the values that are embedded in those brands. Coleman, for instance, is about family, the outdoors, fresh air, back to nature ... the products are relatively simple in design, effective, they last a long time. And these companies have stood the test of time. Elmer's Glue hasn't changed a lot over the years because it just works. AmericanHort has a combined 200 years in the two organizations that were put together, it's widely known, it's widely respected I think that being able to lead an iconic organization is the same with AmericanHort as it was with those iconic consumer-branded companies."

What intrigues you the most about the horticulture industry?

“Two things jump out very quickly, just in my short tenure. One is, everybody I’ve met have been really good people. The people and their values embody all that’s good in our world, all that’s good in our communities. It’s very refreshing. I look forward to meeting a lot of our membership at Cultivate in July. The second is, I’m intrigued by the breadth and depth of the horticulture industry. As I try to understand better the supply chain and markets ... it’s robust, and I think it should provide really interesting opportunities for the thriving professional industry. And I choose to believe that there are desirable careers for future generations, which I believe is one of the potential issues in this industry.”

How’s your own garden?

“I’m pretty good with the lawn, and my wife does a great job with planters and a few garden patches in our yard. By industry standards, people would probably show up at my house and say, ‘Oh my gosh, what’s this guy doing?’ I’m sure there are opportunities to improve, and I’m looking forward to getting some good advice and guidance from my new colleagues. I see great opportunity in the future!” **GT**