



A DIVERSIFIED MIX

Tates Resets Store to Target Consumers

Tate's

Bob Tate has seen the ups and downs of business through a long career in retail, going back to his days as a kid following around his father in the store he opened in Madisonville, Tenn., in 1952.

The Tate family has been with House-Hasson Hardware the whole time, a business arrangement marked by trust, loyalty and familiarity. "I remember going to the old downtown warehouse when I was 12 years old. That was a special thing to see," Tate recalls.

The Madisonville store has always catered to professional customers, but in 1999 Tate decided to open a second store seven miles away in Vonore, Tenn., that would attract both pro and consumer business.

The linchpin to that strategy was adopting House-Hasson's Priced Right Everyday!® program, an important retail tool to ensure the store had a favorable price image with customers as big boxes expanded into the

had House-Hasson reset his store, Tates Priced Right Everyday!® in Vonore, Tenn., in order to go after more consumer business.

Tates has relied on House-Hasson since this branch store opened in Vonore, Tenn., in 1999.





Left: Adopting the Priced Right Everyday!® enables Tates to stay competitive with the big boxes.

Right: Prominent departmental signage lets customers know immediately where they can find the right product.

area. “Customers want to know upfront that they are getting the best price,” Tate explains.

As the economy entered a prolonged recession and the housing market stalled, Tate was forced to hunker down and switch from growth mode to survival mode. Although he is finally starting to see his pro sales start to pick up, Tate wanted to be proactive in getting his consumer business back on track.

“We put in this store in 1999 and did one reset after that. They came in and talked to us about making some changes and doing a reset. The time seemed to be right,” he says.

He enlisted the aid of House-Hasson to reset the entire store. “Those commodity lines are still our bread and butter, but we added a lot of new SKUs and new lines to generate more walk-in business,” he says.

One of the additions was pool chemicals, which was brought in to draw in more female customers. “We will be testing pool water, which will save them a 25-mile trip. When customers come in they will see laminate flooring and ceramic tile and our other categories,” Tate says.

Tate is trying to take advantage of several retirement communities that dot the area, which has

brought in many new seasonal and year-round residents. “The bulk of our business is contractor grade, so we’re still not DIY-oriented, but we’re moving more in that direction.”

Being Priced Right Everyday really helps the store’s price image with customers, according to Tate. “It helps the store appeal to consumers without scaring off contractors, who are just as price-conscious.”

He likes the fact that House-Hasson has a variety of product to offer and finds their buyers are easy to work with. “All of their staff is terrific. You can talk to Don Hasson about anything. Joan and Jerry are great when you call customer service—they know you and your business,” he adds.

The trust factor is demonstrated every week. As Tate explains, “My truck driver delivers my order before I even get to the store. He has a key and just drops everything off for us and locks it back up.”

Tate has similar faith in his House-Hasson sales rep. “Art Jackson is an excellent salesman and so

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Tates has always placed a lot of emphasis on endcap merchandising, taking advantage of the Priced Right Everyday!® signage to reinforce the store’s competitive price image.

House-Hasson's store set crew came in and reset the entire store.



was Roy Seymour before that. Art is here every week and he'll pick up merchandise for us if we need it," he says. "House-Hasson is a valued partner in our business, who is always looking out for our best interests."

Tate likes attending the markets, saying they help him keep his inventory up to date. He ordered dock supplies from Boat Hoist USA at the January market and has been pleased with early returns. "Dock builders are real happy with the line, since it features everyday replacement items that are needed," he says.

He holds regular special events for contractors to encourage loyalty. "The economy is improving, so we're hoping to see more of a turnaround in the housing market. New construction will be kicking in here soon and remodeling activity has picked up," Tate says. He adds, "The salvation for us during the downturn was having access to specialty items. House-Hasson has been great for our business for a lot of years, but a key area has been helping us keep our product mix broad so we can meet more of our customers' needs."

As business shifts and consumer trends change, the one constant for Tate's business has been having a reliable supplier in House-Hasson. "We're an electronic-driven world and that's here to stay, so we need their help to stay current. House-Hasson has been constantly helping us keep up to date." ■

Top Right: Although contractors and builders still generate the majority of business, Tate's future growth is tied to its ability to attract d-i-y project sales.

Lower Right: Bob Tate (left) has weathered the storm from the recession and is looking forward to growing the business in new ways.

