

"Everyone we've had contact with at Heritage makes us feel like we really matter." - Maidee Watson,
CEO of Watson's Greenhouse and Nursery

CUSTOMER

Maidee Watson

Chemical engineer

Green thumb

Dog grandma

SUMMARY

When Maidee Watson graduated college, most jobs in chemical engineering were in southern California and Texas. Plus, it was the tail-end of the 1980s recession. Exploring her options locally, Maidee widened her scope by embracing her love of art, travel and gardening.

Watson's Greenhouse and Nursery started out as a hobby in the mid-1970s by Maidee's dad, Dan, with a small u-pick vegetable setup out of their 14x14-foot greenhouse. "My mom, sister Terri and I would run the u-pick and that's how we started," said Maidee.

By 1984, the family opened up a retail business staffed by Maidee and her mother Fran. Committing to a large remodel in 1999, the family took another big step and added a retail center for an extended gift line, garden art and other gardening products and plants. Since then, they have continued to grow, increasing retail and growing space to keep up with demand.

With a lot of nurseries disappearing today, Watson's has been very thoughtful about their growth strategy. "My parents were very progressive, taking necessary risks, paying attention and being relevant," said Maidee. "We can't sit on our laurels; we need to be better and be deliberate in our changes."

The business weathered the big recession in the late 2000s and the family learned a lot. And if it ever happens again, they will survive. "We have always been part of the community no matter the size of



Maidee Watson, CEO of Watson's Greenhouse and Nursery



our business," said Maidee. "We create an environment where our community can feel good and that's important to our family and our customers."

It's just as important for their banking partnership too. When the family business expanded back in 1999, they were working with a large bank that put a lot of stipulations on the loan. It would have affected Maidee's parents' personally, so they shopped around. They started a relationship with a lender at a regional bank and when the lender moved to Heritage Bank, so did Watson's.

"It seemed like a natural transition," said Maidee. "Our business is based on relationships and it made sense to keep our relationship for our banking needs as well. We've always been able to rely on our communication and they know our business so well." Once Watson's moved to Heritage Bank, the relationship continued to improve. They were able to receive better line-of-credit terms, important for running a successful business.

"Everyone we've had contact with at Heritage makes us feel like we really matter. Whenever we need any kind of assistance, they are quick to respond."