

# floral management

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THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY | SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2017 | VOLUME 34 | NUMBER 7

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# floral management

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A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS  
[WWW.SAFNOW.ORG](http://WWW.SAFNOW.ORG)

floral  
management

THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2017 | VOLUME 34 | NUMBER 7

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## Viewpoint BY SHIRLEY LYONS AAF, PFCI

## ON FAREWELLS AND FRIENDSHIP

> The first time I attended a Society of American Florists convention, I walked into a room full of strangers. Before the reception, I'd reviewed the roster, trying to find someone else from Oregon. No luck. I had a moment of panic but pressed on. I soon met two people: Tom Butler, AAF, PFCI, the longtime head of Teleflora, who, sadly, passed away in 2014, and Kate Delaney, AAF, of Matlack Florist in West Chester, Pennsylvania, who has become a dear, trusted industry friend.

Fear could have kept me out of that room. Fear of meeting new people. Fear of talking about my business with strangers. Fear of leaving my business alone for several days. But I'm so glad I walked into that reception. Metaphorically and literally, walking through that door, and becoming more involved with SAF, represented a new stage in my career, and a deeper commitment to the industry as a whole.

This fall, after many years serving on SAF's board of directors and committees, I stepped down as the organization's chairman. It was a bittersweet moment.

The past few decades have brought tumult for our entire industry, including the growth of the Internet. Social media and online buying have become powerful disruptors of consumer behavior and distribution channels, particularly at the retail level. They create opportunity but also — here's that word again — fear. What does the future of the floral industry look like?

Because of my involvement with SAF, though, I have never had to think through or face those questions alone.

Through my roles at SAF, first as president and then as chairman, it's been my great honor to travel across this entire nation, visiting florists, wholesalers and growers. I never tire of seeing the hands and hearts that make this industry bloom, or of hearing your stories and sharing your concerns. I feel privileged to learn from people who have been at this work for generations and be inspired by the new talent and next generation entering the industry, young people who are fluent in Internet tech and social media lingo, and full of ideas and enthusiasm.

I've also been invigorated by ideas that help all of us. A very few years ago, for instance, I was at an SAF committee meeting when the idea of Petal It Forward

was first mentioned. Today, it's a nationwide effort spearheaded by SAF with events in all 50 states plus Canada and Washington, D.C.

Talk about being able to see an idea bloom before your eyes ... exciting!

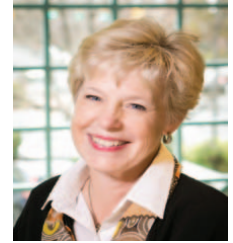
As an SAF leader, I've contributed ideas for conventions and Floral Management magazine, and I've seen countless members have "lightbulb moments" at SAF educational events, including its 1-Day Profit Blast series. I've had those moments myself. It's a great feeling to be surrounded by friends and experts and to see that you are part of a group, that SAF is our association — ours to turn to for help and lean on, but also ours to support.

In business, your end result often depends on how much work you put in, the team you build. It's the same with SAF. It's a vital, important organization that requires a shared commitment from all of us to succeed.

Occasionally, when I stepped up to the podium as SAF president or chairman, I would think back on my first convention. The truth is, long before I was an SAF leader, I was a first-generation florist. That's still who I am today. But the experience of helping to lead SAF has certainly helped shape me, too. When I walk into an industry event now, I see far more friends than strangers. (And when I do see a new face, I channel my friend Kate, who chatted with me over wine all those years ago.)

I am humbled by the men and women who touch lives every day across America with the power of flowers. This industry is made of hard work, tireless hours, dirty hands and caring hearts and smiles. (Always smiles!) I've shed tears of joy during my tenure, and I've learned alongside you, cheered you on and been cheered on by you. What an honor. I am forever enriched, energized and inspired. The future of this industry is in good hands. Thank you for the honor to serve you. Thank you for your friendship. 🌻

**Shirley Lyons, AAF, PFCI**, is the owner of Dandelions Flowers & Gifts in Eugene, Oregon.



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## What Inspires Us

➤ Almost 15 years ago, as a recent college grad, I applied for a job as writer with the Society of American Florists based on one word in the job description: flowers. I had a degree in journalism and no background in the floral industry, but I liked flowers. How complicated could the job be?

I realized fast just how wrong I was. Within hours of starting that job, I learned that while the floral industry may grow, sell and design some of the world's most beautiful products, the industry is complex, layered, highly technical and constantly changing. I quickly grew to love the challenges of writing about growers, wholesalers, retailers, suppliers, transportation companies — and all of the other key players within this one dynamic industry. I came to recognize the enormous trust people placed in me, as they shared stories of their families and businesses, and the responsibility I had to get a story right.

From my earliest assignments, and on every story since, Kate Penn, now CEO of SAF, was a patient mentor and a relentless editor. That's the ideal combination. As editor in chief, Kate gave me more opportunities than I ever dreamed

of, but she also asked questions, and lots of them. ("Do we need to talk to more people?" "Can you explain this more clearly?" "Have you thought about..." "Why does this matter to our readers?") These are questions that can drive a writer on deadline a little nutty, but they also made Kate's editorial values clear: She wanted to tell thoughtful, compelling, complicated and accurate stories that inform, delight, inspire and — most of all help — our readers. That's a lesson I've taken to heart.

While the masthead of Floral Management may have changed, you can expect the same in-depth coverage of industry and business issues and the same focus on the most important person: you, our reader. (And — thank goodness — we still have our longtime production director and now director of publishing extraordinaire, Sheila Santiago, who, with little fanfare and a big smile, keeps our magazine and newsletter editorial team on track issue after issue.) So, it's a beginning of sorts, but mostly a continuation of something really good.

Speaking of beginnings, though, this month marks the final installment of Mark Anderson's The Right Price (p. 14) and

Brad Denham's Growth (p. 18) columns. For the past year, these industry pros have delivered information on thorny issues for retailers, providing tips and firsthand experience in entertaining and artful ways — all while attending to their demanding day jobs. If you missed any of their columns, you can catch up by visiting [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline). This issue also includes the expert work of another longtime SAF writer and editor. For our cover story (p. 22), Katie Hendrick talked to breeders from around the globe to present more than 50 new cut flower varieties and trends for florists to feast their eyes on, and share with customers.

Learning and writing about the floral industry is a tremendous privilege. It's one I take seriously. I hope you'll let me know how we're doing. And, please do send in your story ideas. We want to hear from you. 🌸

**Mary Westbrook**  
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## More Online ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON [WWW.SAFNOW.ORG](http://WWW.SAFNOW.ORG)



### NOTES ON PROFIT BLAST

This fall, industry members traveled to Boston and Louisville, Kentucky, for SAF's popular 1-Day Profit Blast series. If you missed these events, sponsored by Jacobson Floral Supply and the Bill Doran Company, you can read up on the sessions and topics covered at [safnow.org/PB/Handouts](http://safnow.org/PB/Handouts).

### FIELD TO VASE HONORS

Hurricane Irma delayed the presentation of a \$5,000 award to the 2017 Floral Management Marketer of the Year winner, but on Oct. 8 this year's prize-winning campaign finally got its turn in the spotlight. Hope Flower Farm in Waterford, Virginia, hosted SAF for a special presentation of the coveted award to the American Grown Flowers Field to Vase Dinner Tour, during one of this year's final Field to Vase dinners. Check out the video of that presentation at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).

### NEW MARKETING MATERIALS

Spruce up your showroom with the new posters from the Society of American Florists' 2017 Local Marketing Kit. "Flower Power" and "Happiness Delivered" promote the research-proven health benefits of floral gifts with arrangements designed in on-trend colors. Members have exclusive access at [safnow.org/kits](http://safnow.org/kits) to customizable print ads, fliers, web ads and Facebook sharable graphics complementing the poster designs. Matching statement stuffers, postcards and posters are available to order.

### GEAR UP FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

The world may be talking Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, but we know you're already planning for Valentine's Day. SAF can help you pitch the media (and master tricky interview questions) with our PR Bootcamp, and we have loads of resources to get your shop and social media ready for the mega holiday at [safnow.org/pr-bootcamp](http://safnow.org/pr-bootcamp).



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Ryan O'Neil owns the award-winning wedding and event floral design boutique Twisted Willow Design in St. Louis with his wife Rachel, and developed [StemCounter.com](http://StemCounter.com), a floral studio management software designed to help florists save time and book more brides.

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- Is Your Workplace Drug-Free?



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# inspire

a cherished holiday



When a few extra red roses are found needing a purpose in my shop, I find them a home in a holiday wreath. The rich velvet texture of the roses compliments the variegated ivy vine freshly picked from my garden. With careful thinking, you can always repurpose materials to create arrangements customers will love and cherish for the holidays.

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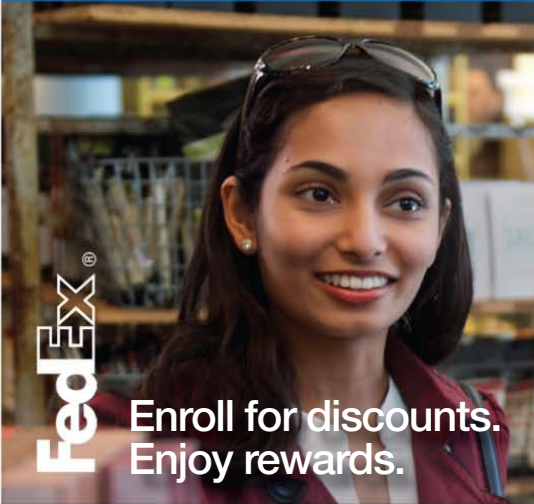
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## Feedback from SAF's 1-Day Profit Blast in Boston

- > Learning is always essential in this business. We need more seminars like these for the local mom-and-pop shops.  
**Elaina Gudet**, Newton Wellesley Hospital Flower, Newton, Massachusetts
- > I gained some very valuable ideas, and immediately put some into practice. It's not getting easier to be a florist; getting together as a group to learn, relax and enjoy your time doing it is great.  
**David Gordon**, Gordon Florist, Ipswich, Massachusetts
- > Dollar for dollar, this was the best bargain. The speakers were energetic, knowledgeable and responded to any topics. The one-day format fits our busy schedules and energizes us to keep making improvements in all areas of our businesses.  
**Charlie Hardy**, Hillside Florist, Woburn, Massachusetts
- > Profit Blast exceeded my expectations. A day very well spent for my business future. I have taken away very useful ideas that I will implement this week to grow and change.  
**June Alexandra**, Blooms & Greens, Roslindale, Massachusetts
- > Great ideas through the speakers, visuals and designs. We will return.  
**Darla Denton**, Devin Designs Florist, Grapevine, Texas
- > I learned a new technique for designing a hand-tied bridal bouquet. Tim Huckabee's approach to selling is so helpful and I needed a refresher. Great job explaining the best ways to utilize Facebook and Instagram.  
**Helen Halloran**, Concord Flower Shop, Concord, Massachusetts
- > Each topic was presented by an expert in the field and it really gives us the insight that we need to make positive changes in our business.  
**Judy Pyszka**, Chalifour's Flowers, Manchester, New Hampshire
- > My head was spinning with all the knowledge. From trends to sales calls to delivery pricing and social media, it truly was an informative day.  
**Stephanie Navas**, Flowers on Broadway, Rocky Point, New York 

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For more business service discounts, visit [safnow.org/business-discounts](http://safnow.org/business-discounts).



# Think nobody's listening in Washington? *Think again.*



## During the last Congressional Action Days, SAF members successfully:

- Put floriculture research funding back in the budget — with a \$250,000 increase!
- Stopped the Border Adjustment Tax in its tracks.
- Renewed the call for comprehensive immigration reform.



*"It was so exciting to learn about the issues and then make our 'ask' directly to the people on Capitol Hill."*

Lisa Ambrosio, Wenke Greenhouses, Kalamazoo, Michigan

*"I thought I couldn't make a difference... now I know I can."*

Jeremy Lohman, Scotts House of Flowers, Lawton, Oklahoma



*"It was an amazing experience! I am hooked and already planning my trip next year!"*

Scott Isensee, Frank Adams Wholesale Florist, Portland, Oregon

*"I talked with lawmakers who, when they get to the floor, can stand up and vote for our business."*

Lisa Roeser Atwood, Fifty Flowers, Boise, Idaho



## Experience the POWER of Personal Involvement!

Join fellow SAF members to learn about the industry's issues and put your personal power to work on Capitol Hill.

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**SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS**

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## SAF in Action

### WHAT HAVE WE DONE FOR YOU LATELY? SAF'S TOP 10 FOR 2017

> The Society of American Florists provides industry advocacy, business discounts, marketing materials, education and networking, and much, much more to its 6,000 members. Here are 10 of SAF's most exciting achievements and offerings from the year, along with details on how to make the most of your membership:

#### 1. Tamed the Vermont Teddy Bear Company



**PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF** The Vermont Teddy Bear Company, which has relied on disparaging flowers in ads since the '90s, told SAF in February, "Let's bury the hatchet."

SAF has contacted the Vermont Teddy Bear Company dozens of times over the past 20 years, urging them to reconsider disparaging flowers in promotions, only to be ignored or rebuffed—until now. After hearing from SAF about concerns with its Valentine's Day commercial showing dead flowers in a vase, CEO Bill Shouldice replied: "I hear you loud and clear." In a phone conversation with Jenny Scala, SAF's director of marketing and communications, Shouldice said, "If I could pull the ads now, I would. They're already scheduled and paid for, but you can bet you won't hear those ads again next Valentine's Day." Report negative publicity to [jscala@safnow.org](mailto:jscala@safnow.org).

#### 2. Got Millions of Consumers Thinking About Flowers

SAF led Petal It Forward, and the industry answered the charge, surprising people with flowers through 573 local events in 467 cities in 50 states, plus Washington, D.C., and Canada. The effort generated 81.9 million consumer impressions through the social media and news media coverage, showing people's reactions to giving and receiving flowers. SAF gave

members guidance, templates, talking points and more. > [safnow.org/pif](http://safnow.org/pif)



**RAISING AWARENESS** The Bucks County Courier Times documented Ye Olde Yardley Florist's Petal It Forward efforts with a news story and video. Noreen Gorka's team of Happiness Ambassadors included staff, volunteers and the local police. "It makes everyone smile," Rick Gilchrist Jr. of Rick Gilchrist Flooring told the reporter. "No one is upset when you hand them flowers."

#### 3. Gave You Tools To Inspire Flower-Buying



**MARKETING MOJO** "I love the colors," said Sally Danciu, owner of Sally's Flowers in Philadelphia. She hung the new posters in her showroom and uses the matching statement stuffers in thank-you cards to new customers. "We've been in business for 40 years and have used every marketing piece SAF has created."

Members received additional fuel for their promotional efforts: SAF's 2017 Local Marketing Kit. "Flower Power" and "Happiness Delivered" headline the materials, referring to the Rutgers University research proving the health benefits of floral gifts. Members have exclusive access to customizable print ads, flyers, web ads and Facebook shar-

able graphics complementing the two new poster designs. Matching statement stuffers, postcards and posters are available to order. > [safnow.org/kits](http://safnow.org/kits)

#### 4. Trained Your Staff — for Free



**EASY ACCESS** SAF WebBlasts come in digestible bites: 20 minutes of intense online learning with 10 minutes of Q&A.

"Three Ways to Find New Customers Using Facebook & Instagram Ads." "Pricing for a Bigger Piece of the Pie." "Five Steps to Profitable Weddings and Events." These are just a few of the titles added to SAF's library of educational WebBlasts—making it easier for members and their staff to learn from experts whenever they can, for free. > [safnow.org/webinars](http://safnow.org/webinars)

#### 5. Doubled Funds for Research



**FNRI FANS** Nearly 120 floral industry members lobbied for floriculture research funding during SAF's 2017 Congressional Action Days in March, including North Carolinians Emma and Dana Cook, AAF, of Julia's Florist in Wilmington, and Mark Yelanich of Metrolina Greenhouses in Huntersville shown here, who met with a congressional aide in the office of Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.).

The House Appropriations Committee recommended allotting \$500,000 to the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative (FNRI)—doubling the amount SAF members lobbied for during

## SAF in Action

Congressional Action Days. “The Committee values the importance of the floral and horticulture industry as floral and nursery crops are the third-largest domestic crop in value,” reads the committee’s recommendation. “We have it in writing that Congress values the industry,” said Drew Gruenburg, SAF’s chief operating officer. “It shows the power of constituent involvement.” Learn about the industry’s issues and put your personal power to work during SAF’s 38th Annual Congressional Action Days, March 12-13, 2018. > [safnow.org/cad](http://safnow.org/cad)

## 6. Stopped a Proposed Tax on Imported Flowers



**BAT BLOCKER** Liza Roeser-Atwood, CEO and founder of Fifty Flowers in Boise, was among the participants who lobbied against BAT during SAF’s 2017 Congressional Action Days. Roeser-Atwood also spoke out against BAT at a Small Business Administration regional roundtable on behalf of SAF.

About 80 percent of the flowers sold in the United States are grown overseas, making floral imports important to the health of the industry. During Congressional Action Days, participants asked lawmakers to exclude imported floral agricultural products from a proposed border adjustment tax (BAT). Six months later, the White House and congressional Republican leadership issued a joint statement on tax reform—and they agreed not to pursue BAT. > [safnow.org/cad](http://safnow.org/cad)

## 7. Brought Education and Networking to Four Cities

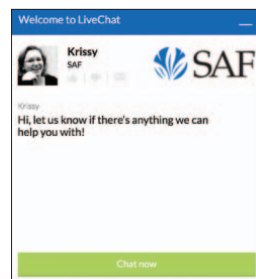
Thanks to partnerships with wholesalers, SAF held 1-Day Profit Blast events in four cities—Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, sponsored

by DVFlora in March; St. Louis with Baisch & Skinner and DWF Wholesale in July; Boston with Jacobson Floral Supply in September; and Louisville, Kentucky, with the Bill Doran Company in November—exposing hundreds of retailers to strategies on design, social media advertising, customer service and money management along with a Supplier Showcase. “Dollar for dollar, this [event] was the best bargain,” said Charlie Hardy of Hillside Florist in Woburn, Massachusetts, about the Boston event. > [safnow.org/1-day-profit-blast](http://safnow.org/1-day-profit-blast)



**TIMELY TOPICS** Derek Woodruff, AIFD, CF, PFCI, showed St. Louis participants how to set up a terrarium bar.

## 8. Made Getting Answers MUCH Easier



**SWIFT SOLUTIONS** Member and Data Services Manager Krissey Doyle is among SAF staff serving members, fielding questions via mail, fax, phone, email—and now Live Chat.

“Where can I find online floral design schools?” “Are there any recent studies on retail rose sales?” “Can I still register for Profit Blast?” SAF knows members are busy, and when they’re looking for something online, they needed it yesterday. To make it easier and faster for members to get questions answered, SAF added Live Chat to its website. > [safnow.org](http://safnow.org)

## 9. Pushed Women’s Day and Prom Flowers



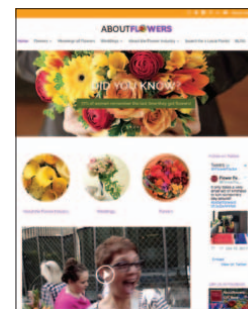
**TOP HONORS** “Celebrate Her” is one of three SAF Women’s Day sharable graphics that won Gold in the Hermes Creative Awards, a competition administered by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals that judged 6,000 entries.

SAF makes promoting International Women’s Day (annually March 8) and prom a snap with strategic advice, social media graphics and more—all free for members. In addition, SAF’s social media campaigns raised awareness for the flower-buying occasions. A Women’s Day video racked up 47,000 views in the week leading up to the occasion, and SAF’s prom campaign generated 1.9 million impressions and more than 840,000 social media engagements (likes, shares, comments).

> [safnow.org/WomensDay](http://safnow.org/WomensDay)

> [safnow.org/prom](http://safnow.org/prom)

## 10. Gave Consumers, Media a New Reason to Visit Aboutflowers.com



**HEY GOOD-LOOKIN’** Consumers and the media turn to [aboutflowers.com](http://aboutflowers.com) for floral gift-giving advice and statistics.

If we don’t look good, you don’t look good. SAF’s consumer website underwent a complete redesign, resulting in an updated, cleaner look to reinvigorate its visibility and relevance with the media, consumers and the industry. > [aboutflowers.com](http://aboutflowers.com)

# snapshot

Nielsen's Florist & Garden Shop DARIEN, CONNECTICUT



BY MARY WESTBROOK **Snapshot**

## A MATHEMATICAL EYE FOR DISPLAYS

> When it comes to visual merchandising at Nielsen's Florist & Garden Shop in Darien, Connecticut, Viviane Herde-Gershberg has a clear point of view and some definite rules. For one thing, merchandising a store is nothing like decorating a home. In your house, you're creating comfort and history — a place to live. In a store, you're getting customers to buy. Some retailers forget that, says Herde-Gershberg, a longtime member of the team at Nielsen's, a shop that won Floral Management magazine's 2016 Marketer of the Year award. Around the shop's expansive retail showroom and greenhouse space, Herde-Gershberg takes a "mathematical approach" to displays, looking for and creating shapes (curves, triangles, etc.) and above all crafting "continuity and strong lines" to direct the eye. A final rule: abundance. "I believe in massive displays," she said. "We put our inventory on the floor — we never want a customer to ask, 'Is there more of this in the back somewhere?'" 🌿

### THOUGHTFUL COMBINATIONS

"Metallics really appeal to our demographic [affluent professionals and homemakers], especially when paired with an organic material," Herde-Gershberg said. "The juxtaposition highlights textures. It's minimalistic, but it has a lot of details — there's more to see than you initially realize."



### RAMPING UP

As in many retail shops, early fall can be "fairly quiet" at Nielsen's, but Herde-Gershberg thinks ahead about how to transition visual merchandising spaces from slow to busy times. Transitioning from everyday merchandising to Christmas, "I always start with the perimeter, and then I go step by step, area by area, until I reach the middle," she said.



### EUROPEAN UNION

"I'm Swiss, and I tend to gravitate toward a European look: clean lines, neutral colors," Herde-Gershberg said. "For the holidays, I'm not afraid to go outside of 'traditional' colors (reds and greens). In fact, our customers look to us for that kind of decor and design. They see this look in their own travels and want to recreate it, but they don't know how. We help them."

## The Right Price BY MARK ANDERSON

### FIVE VALENTINE'S DAY PRICING TECHNIQUES

> Valentine's Day is such an important holiday for local florists — the last thing you want to do is leave money on the table through poor pricing. Here are five pricing tricks and tactics to help florists of all sizes increase sales and profits over Valentine's Day.

#### 1 Charge More.

**WHAT:** Whenever possible, charge more. In the flower business, that usually means selling larger fill-to-value orders. Around Valentine's Day, when demand is high, you also should charge more for your standard holiday products.

**WHY:** Price is your most powerful profit lever. If a shop usually makes \$20,000 over Valentine's Day but this year aggressively marketed and increased sales by 10 percent, the owner would see an extra \$2,000 in revenue and \$200 in profit (assuming industry norms).

If, on the other hand, you raised your prices by just 5 percent — that arrangement your cost-plus formula says you should sell for \$75? Sell it for \$78.75 instead— and you'll see a much greater return. This relatively small change would generate an extra \$1,000 in profit. (If you normally sell \$20,000 worth of \$75 arrangements, that means you sell about 267 of them. If you charged an extra 5 percent, \$3.75, for each:  $266.667 \times 3.75 = \$1,000$ .)

**HOW:** Don't be a slave to your cost-plus formula. If you multiply your costs by three, try 3.15. If your formula says \$74,

take advantage of charm pricing — more on that next — and charge \$79.

#### 2 Understand Charm vs. Round Pricing.

**WHAT:** Charm prices end with the number nine (\$79). Consumers see these prices most often. High-end retailers tend to use round prices (\$75 or \$80).

**WHY:** Charm prices increase spending. If the same item is priced at \$74 and \$79, more people will buy at \$79. Unfortunately, charm prices improve perceived value but can also diminish perceived quality. Meanwhile, round prices don't convey value but increase perceived value.

**HOW:** For Valentine's Day specials, use charm pricing. More people will see the special as a deal.

For premium product, use round pricing.

For products in between, pricing is tougher. If you are "the" high-end aspirational flower brand in your market, use round pricing. If you're worried about competition from other local florists, grocery stores or online vendors, lean on charm pricing (while still offering a few higher-margin premium items with round pricing).

#### 3 Talk Price More Effectively.

**WHAT:** You and your staff will quote prices over the phone many times for Valentine's Day. There are a lot of ways to do it. Some are better than others.

**WHY:** Studies show that people react to prices the same way they react to pain. Expressing prices in a way that minimizes pain increases spending between 12 percent and 18 percent.

**HOW:** Use the fewest number of syllables. "Sev-en-ty nine doll-ars and nine-ty nine cents" is 11 syllables and prolonged pain. At four syllables, "sev-en-ty nine" is better. You give up about 1.2 percent in revenue by dropping the \$0.99, but remember that 12- to 18-percent potential gain.

#### 4 Embrace Weight-Out.

**WHAT:** "Weight-out" is the term for that empty space at the top of a box of cereal. As a pricing strategy, it has application in the floral industry, too.



#### DIG DEEPER

For more information on other smart pricing techniques, including advice on how to sell single roses profitably, ways to introduce premium product, tips on upselling and discounting, and perspective on why you should give bundling a try, visit [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).

**WHY:** Sell a little less at the same price and you stealthily increase sales and profits.

**HOW:** Don't be constrained to increments of 12. Your Valentine's Day spectacular might contain 20 roses instead of two dozen. The buyer for this design isn't focused on value. Leather seats and a nicer stereo can disproportionately increase the price of a new vehicle. Extra roses can do the same thing for a design.

#### 5 Offer What You Want to Sell.

**WHAT:** Florists often lament low order values, even though they're selling exactly what they offer. Web orders reflect the products listed on their site, and phone orders reflect what employees suggest to the customer.

**WHY:** If you don't offer higher-end products, nobody is going to purchase them.

**HOW:** Employees are sometimes reluctant to offer higher-end products. They're worried about rejection.

Offering expensive products, however, increases sales down the line, even if the high-end item itself doesn't sell. Let's say you offer two products when asked about Valentine's Day: a low-end choice and a middle-range selection. Research shows that if you introduce a new premium option, spending increases, primarily because more people move up from the low-end product to the middle. 🌸

**Mark Anderson** is founder and president of FloristWare. When he's not developing and servicing POS software, he's pursuing his other passion, pricing strategy, as a contributor to [Business.com](http://Business.com) as well as through programming at SAF and other industry events. [mark@floristware.com](mailto:mark@floristware.com)







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## Talent BY MARY WESTBROOK



### EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**TEGAN DAVIDSON**  
Quality Assurance Coordinator  
Sequoia Floral International  
Santa Rosa, California

➤ For Tegan Davidson, the Society of American Florists' Petal It Forward program in October took on added meaning this year. The Sunday before the event, the Sequoia Floral team was busy prepping flower donations from growers and importers, enough for about 1,200 bouquets. The next morning, they woke to news of the devastating wildfires in California — and they weren't sure what to do. In the end, they went ahead with plans to give out flowers. "We moved forward with the event in hopes to bring some comfort," Davidson explained. Fortunately, no one on Sequoia's staff suffered directly, but "we all have family or friends that were evacuated or lost their homes," Davidson added. "Most businesses in town have been hit hard." The poignant act may have been unusual, but the team's fast reaction

and flexibility are part of the job, Davidson said. Every day is different, she explained. That's one reason she loves the work.

#### How I got my start.

"Sequoia Floral has been in business for 40-plus years. Most of the staff has been with them for 18-plus years. That made me feel like the company would make a long-term investment in my career. And they have. I started in the processing department in 2015, filling flower orders for local florists. My position evolved as I gained experience. I've also been taking floral design classes on the weekends and assisting in wedding set-up."

#### The best part of my day.

"Working with the farms to find exactly what the customer is looking for is like

a treasure hunt. The other day a customer called with a flower emergency: her flowers had frozen. She needed the ever-so-hard-to-find burgundy and café au lait dahlias. I called a local grower. We worked together to save the day."

#### My biggest challenge.

"Everyone sees colors differently. I cringe when customers ask for a flower that's 'peachy-pink-coral, with no orange.' I study colors as much as I study flowers."

#### On my reading list.

"*The Secret Life of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird is about plants having emotions and responding to their environment. Most people talk to their pets. Sometimes, I talk to my plants. They make me happy." 🌿

### 1 out of 3

That's the number of employees who report that educational assistance from their company is "very important" to their job satisfaction. This is particularly true for women, younger people, and those who have attained some degree of higher education. Tuition reimbursement programs and paid job training are the education benefits associated with the highest degrees of employee satisfaction.

Source: Society for Human Resource Management, 2015 Job Satisfaction and Engagement Report

### Fight Brain Drain

By 2029, all baby boomers will be 65 years or older — and that aging workforce could create serious challenges for your business if you haven't started identifying new leaders and encouraging the transfer of ideas. "As baby boomers retire

over the next two decades, organizations face a growing shortage of experienced workers and a significant talent gap," according to researchers at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School. "By engaging senior leaders and creating knowledge transfer

opportunities, companies can gain a competitive advantage and turn the brain drain into a brain trust." Business owners looking ahead to a changing of the generational guard can take steps now to prep their workforce and their business, according to the researchers:

- **Conduct a strategic workforce analysis.** Talk to older employees about their retirement plans. Ask younger workers about career goals.
- **Refine your retention strategy.** What are you doing to attract and keep young talent?
- **Prepare senior and emerging leaders.** UNC researchers found that 75 percent of millennial workers are looking for a mentor. Consider mentoring and job shadow opportunities to facilitate the sharing of important information.

# 4 Easy steps to happier customers



Follow these 4 easy steps which will help you to reduce waste, increase quality and most importantly: to grow your business!

- 1 Hygiene



Better hygiene helps to keep flowers fresh, to maintain the quality of your stock and to increase the vase life. That's exactly what customers want: flowers lasting longer.
- 2 Conditioning



The right conditioning guarantees a longer sales period, by reducing waste and increasing the quality of the flowers.
- 3 Optimizing designs



Your floral designs deserve to be enjoyed as long as possible. Use the best products to keep the flowers fresh and hydrated at all times.
- 4 Cut flower food



Always add flower food and give your customers extra days (up to 60% longer compared to the use of water alone) of flower enjoyment. They will love you for it!

*NOW you can remind the customer that you appreciate their business with our full color Customized Flower Food!*

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## Growth

 BY BRAD DENHAM

### ADVERTISING AS A GROWTH STRATEGY

➤ Advertising can be a pain. It's expensive and time-consuming. If you want your floral business to grow, however, advertising is a vital part of your marketing mix.

Expert marketers agree businesses should view advertising as an investment, not an expenditure. Many florists, though, still get caught up in how much they spend. That's a problem. If you see advertising only as a cost, you'll always feel disappointed in the return. If you look at advertising as an investment in short-term sales and long-term growth, you're more likely to see the money as well spent.

Understanding the differences between short- and long-term goals can help you determine the true return of your advertising investments and help you make better decisions.

#### Short-Term Takes

Most businesses that see advertising as an expense are primarily focused on short-term investments — advertising designed to return a fixed amount of visibility for a fixed amount of money (think: pay-per-click or radio ads). While these investments can reinforce your long-term strategy, generally you aren't building lasting results through them. When you're looking at ROI for these investments, that's an important distinction to consider.

At my business, for instance, we concentrate most of our short-term marketing investments around the traditional floral holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Administrative Professionals Week and Mother's Day). By doing so, we get the best ROI for our marketing dollars. Because customers are predisposed to buy flowers at these holidays, our marketing dollars are more effective. We also get exposure to prospective customers who buy flowers only, or primarily, during these holidays. The exposure and momentum we get from concentrating our short-term marketing during these holidays helps carry our sales volume in slower times. By saving short-term dollars throughout the year we can make a bigger buy at the holidays. For example, we buy electronic billboards to use as a call to action in the run-up to

Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. We promote "free" delivery for website orders or low-price cash-and-carry specials (e.g., 10 tulips for \$5 at Mother's Day).

This strategy has significantly increased our walk-in business, and we see many new customers. Last year we had more than 1,700 walk-in customers on Valentine's Day, an increase of 22 percent compared to past Valentine's Days that have fallen on the same day of the week.

By saving  
short-term dollars  
throughout the  
year we can make  
a bigger buy at  
the holidays.

#### Long-Term Strategies

You can't apply the same short-term methodology to tracking ROI on long-term marketing investments, such as search engine optimization, signage, delivery vehicle wraps, etc. These marketing strategies can create permanent or semipermanent results for your business by providing value long after your original investment.

One long-term investment we have made is high-quality vehicle wraps for all of our delivery vehicles. Many florists use a personal vehicle for delivery with vinyl lettering or magnets on the sides.

By investing in vehicle wraps, we have a mobile billboard driving around town to promote our brand. In addition, when not in use, these vehicle are prominently parked outside the flower shop, advertising our shop to customers who drive by. We also use the wraps to prominently display our website and phone number.

With these wraps, it's hard to measure ROI, but customers do tell us that

they have seen our delivery vans all around town, and customers placing orders have referenced the vehicles. That's pretty surprising when you consider we only have five company vehicles driving around Phoenix, the country's fifth-largest metro area.

#### Craft the Right Mix

Instead of choosing between short-term and long-term marketing investments, strive to find the right balance. Invest in the strategies that are best for your situation. If you need to build quick momentum, a PPC campaign might deliver results, especially if you've already invested in good signage for your store and vehicles.

As a rule, in the flower business, business owners should try to budget 7 to 9 percent of their inventory sales to invest in marketing. (At Arizona Family Florist we've maintained a double-digit growth rate by averaging 8 percent marketing costs.) This benchmark is especially true in times of a strong economy and includes traditional floral holidays.

Flower shops that invest little money in marketing during the good times find it harder to get a good ROI from advertising spent during the down times. There is no compounding effect from prior investment. Conversely, flower shops that invest in marketing in good times or at key floral holidays enjoy the benefit of the momentum their marketing generated, and results can carry forward. 🌿



**Brad Denham** is a founding partner in Arizona Family Florist, the parent company of Arizona Florist, Arizona Flower Market and

LUX Wedding Florist and winner of Floral Management's 2012 Marketer of the Year Award. He oversees the strategic business development, including branding, web development and e-commerce strategy, of all of the brands. Arizona Republic and BizAZ Magazine have named Denham one of Arizona's top entrepreneurs. [brad@azfamilyflorist.com](mailto:brad@azfamilyflorist.com)



# Fresh Choices TREND-SETTING TIPS FOR BUYING FRESH CUT FLOWERS AND GREENS

## ARRESTING ACCENTS

> Want consumers to appreciate your artistry? Watch your language.

“Don’t use the ‘F’ word,” said Tim Lawing, AIFD, owner of Tim’s Touch Flowers & Gifts in Lexington, South Carolina. “Filler,” he said, “sounds cheap. It’s no wonder brides think baby’s breath and the like should be free.”

Lawing is in good company with florists who say this common term diminishes their craft.

“Back in the day of nuts-and-bolts floristry, that was what these petite flowers did — fill in spaces in the vase,” said Lori Kunian, AIFD. “Now, they’re better described as ‘accents,’ because that’s how we use them. They accessorize designs to increase their perceived value.” The owner of Affairs to Remember in Melrose, Massachusetts, loves products like

aster, waxflower and caspia: “They provide height, width and movement, yet are still airy and light.”

Hearing designers gush about accent flowers and seeing them experiment with different types heartens international floral educator René van Rems, AIFD. “Not too long ago, even people in the industry viewed fillers as weeds,” he said. “Now, even mass market bouquets feature unusual textures, creating a country or heirloom look. We’re seeing more elevated designs, which is great.”

Available in myriad colors, shapes and textures, accent flowers can completely change the look of any design. Here are just a few to try in the new year. 🌿

**Katie Hendrick**  
[khendrick@safnow.org](mailto:khendrick@safnow.org)



**EUPHORBIA**  
Danziger



**‘PAGODA LAGOON’ CARYOPTERIS**  
Danziger



**‘PAINTBALL GLOBE’ CRASPEDIA**  
Danziger



**‘PRINCE STAR’ ORNITHOGALUM**  
Danziger



**‘RED VELVET SCOOP’ SCABIOSA**  
Danziger



**‘SKYLER PINK’ VERONICA**  
Danziger



**‘WARM ORANGE MEADOW’ KALANCHOE**  
Danziger



**‘AZTEC BLUE’ ASTER**  
Dümmen Orange



**‘CORNEILLE’ SCABIOSA**  
Hilverda Kooij

# Fresh Choices



**'MAGNIFICENT BELLS' HELLEBORUS**  
Hilverda Kooij



**'PIPPA WINGS' LIMONIUM**  
Hilverda Kooij



**'OPEN' SOLIDAGO**  
Montecarlo Gardens



**STAR OF BETHLEHEM**  
Montecarlo Gardens



**PURPLE ASTER**  
Montecarlo Gardens



**ANISE**  
Ocean View Flowers



**ORANGE SAFFLOWER**  
Ocean View Flowers



**ORLAYA**  
Ocean View Flowers



**SEEDED EUCALYPTUS**  
Ocean View Flowers



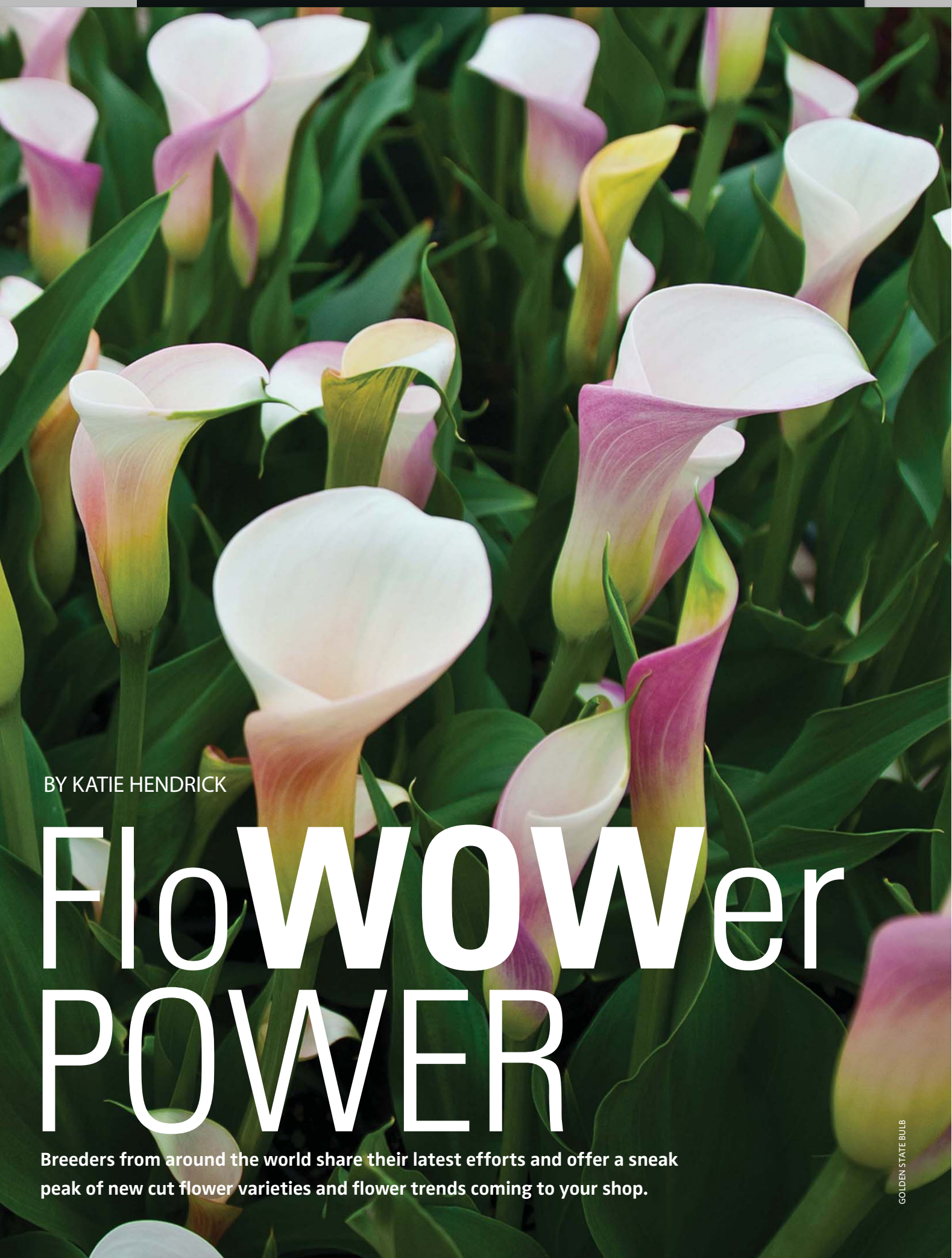
**QUEEN ANNE'S LACE**  
Ocean View Flowers



**RED ASTER**  
Sun Valley Farms



**'WHITE BUTTON' MATRICARIA**  
Sun Valley Farms



BY KATIE HENDRICK

# Flower POWER

Breeders from around the world share their latest efforts and offer a sneak peak of new cut flower varieties and flower trends coming to your shop.

GOLDEN STATE BULB



## &lt; 'STRAWBERRY BLUSH'



## 10 FRESH IDEAS TO WATCH

Florists, wholesalers and growers spoke up about challenges with existing products and customers' most frequent requests — and breeders listened. Here are some of their latest innovations:

- 1 **Strong, sturdy asters**  
sure to hold up in designs
- 2 **Odorless limonium**  
(cat urine comparisons be gone!)
- 3 **Speckle-free alstroemeria**, the better for blending
- 4 **"Alstrangeas":** look a bit like hydrangeas, last like alstroemeria
- 5 **Subtly scented lilies**, for the bride who loves OTs' aesthetic but not their heavy scent
- 6 **Double tulips** galore: more texture and vibrant shades
- 7 **Dynamite dianthus** in novel shapes, sizes and colors
- 8 **Textur-iffic chrysanthemums** with petal counts for days
- 9 **"Unruly" roses** bred to perform while looking freshly plucked from a garden
- 10 **Broader palettes** among hybrid tea roses with **"bridge" colors** that appeal to millennial brides

-K.H.

In early October, BJ Dyer, AAF, AIFD, packed his bags and hopped a flight bound 3,000 miles south.

The owner of Bouquets in Denver, Colorado, wasn't off on a tropical vacay, but rather an intensive scouting mission in and around Bogotá, Colombia. For a full week, he woke before dawn and endured long, motion-sickness-inducing bus rides to visit nearly a dozen farms and navigate Proflora, a massive trade show spanning several city blocks that included more than 1,400 varieties of flowers and 321 floral companies.

He's made similar trips to California, Hawaii, Ecuador and The Netherlands and has spent countless hours studying entries in the Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition.

"These trips are a lot of work," Dyer said. "But they're also fabulous opportunities to discover what distinguishes one flower from another, to understand what goes into creating, growing and handling the products we use and to find varieties that are on the cutting edge."

Staying abreast of trends and hunting for new, exclusive flowers is essential to impress the high-end, sophisticated clientele Dyer has courted for the past 32 years.

"Our customers want the newest phone, car, clothing and hairstyle," he said. "There's a certain expectation when someone receives a Bouquets arrangement that they'll see something exciting and original. Consequently, I have to keep reinventing myself, showing them something that's new and cool — whether that's design techniques, containers or fresh product."

For instance, at last year's Agriflor show in Quito, he spotted 'Explorer', a red rose that captured his heart. He brought a half-box home as luggage, and the shop used the variety in almost all its designs for Valentine's Day 2017. He found a new favorite rose at Proflora but declined to name it.

"We had to fight to get the supply we wanted of 'Explorer', and I don't want other florists to usurp this one," he explained.

**Long Stems, Fresh Blooms**

Like Dyer, Floral Management editors aim to stay in the know with fresh product news. (And, because our goal is to spread information rather than run a successful retail shop, we can share all the news we gather.)

Traditionally, we devote one of our fall issues to the winners of SAF's Outstanding Varieties Competition,

held in conjunction with the Society of American Florists' annual convention. This year, even though Hurricane Irma cancelled the event, we remained determined to highlight new varieties. So, we reached out to breeders to identify emerging trends and exciting specimens and to offer florists talking points about fresh product — the kind of insight Dyer said all florists can put to good use.

"It's good to share information with customers because it cements their impression of you as an expert," Dyer said.

Consumers crave education, agreed Liat Kaplan, global marketing manager for Danziger, one of the world's leading breeders of cut flowers, which grew from a small family farm in Israel in 1953.

"The floral industry is following the same pattern that we saw earlier with food," she said. "People are much more discerning about what they buy. They want to know variety names, where the flower was grown and how, how it feels in their hand and how to make it look its best for as long as possible. They don't perceive flowers as commodities anymore — they're complex living things with interesting backstories."

> FloWOWer POWER

## ACCENT FLOWERS

### LONG-LASTING BRIDAL KEEPSAKES

Flower crowns, one of the hottest trends the past few years, call for durable blossoms. Their popularity led Joey Azout, president of Alexandra Farms, to start offering freeze-dried garden roses that don't get damaged when woven into a halo or tossed to a crowd of single ladies. "They hold their color for six months and their shape for 10 years," he said. In Japan, some brides opt to exclusively use preserved roses. "It lets them hold on to a keepsake from the wedding for a long time," he said. Azout hasn't yet sold these roses to clients in the U.S., but he anticipates they'll be the next big thing American brides crave. **-K.H.**



'QUEEN' KALANCHOE (D)



'SCOOP' SCABIOSA (D)



'SKYLER PINK' VERONICA (D)

> "Designers don't use the term 'filler' anymore," Kaplan said. "They want 'accents' — the more interesting the texture, the better."

To satisfy their requests, Danziger has bred its **veronica** to have extra-tall spikes. "It provides a very 'wild' look," Kaplan said. The company has also devoted a lot of time to **kalanchoe**, which sport small clusters of flowers that feel thick and fleshy to the touch. "They'd work really well in floral jewelry, the same way miniature succulents have," she said. Breeders at Danziger also think **scabiosa** could become an alternative to pompon chrysanthemums. "They have the same productivity level, so we know they have potential," Kaplan said. "Our goal is to develop more colors and applications."

Ball SB has had much advancement in the accent category. "**Matsumoto aster** has a tendency to bend over, so we've bred it to face straight up," said Marketing Director Lourdes Reyes. The latest varieties are also more resistant to viruses, she said. With limonium, the company has bred out the odor, which some had likened to (ahem) cat urine. "That was a pretty significant shortcoming for the flower," she said, laughing. Ball's **delphinium** line has grown more robust too. "We fixed the shattering problem and now we're working on new shapes and colors," Reyes said. Ball's current selection includes shades like midnight blue, cerulean, sky blue, amethyst, lavender, mauve and butter yellow. "We're really excited for '**Sunshine Blue**,' a spray variety."

➤ Alstroemeria might not come to mind as a wedding staple in the same ranks as spray roses or hydrangeas, but Rafael Arteaga believes that attitude will change with the recent introduction of **'Charmelia'**, a pink and green variety from Royal Van Zanten with a dainty, draping petal shape. "It has very feminine coloring," said Arteaga, director of bud development at Jardines de Los Andes. "The flowers have a lot of gradation from dark pink all the way to white, which fits a lot of brides' color palettes." Furthermore, its long laterals and many branches make 'Charmelia' a natural choice for corsages and boutonnieres, he added. "So far, the market has shown a lot of excitement for this variety," he said. "We're currently testing a lavender version and hope to have that soon."

Offering florists a wide selection is the goal for Cristina Hoyos Marquardt, commercial director at Bicco Farms.

"Alstroemeria is our specialty, so it's important to us to invest in the most innovative options," she said. Her company sources from three breeders and tests out three or four new varieties a year. Bicco Farms offers a current catalog of about 40 alstroemeria.

Among some of her farm's newest products: varieties that lack the flower's signature speckled centers, including **'Aramintha'**, **'Revolution'** and **'Marshmallow'**. Absent this characteristic, the flowers resemble orchids or cherry blossoms from afar. "We'd heard that designers find the spots, which often include a yellow stripe, make alstroemeria difficult to blend into designs," she said. "These varieties are more versatile. They should work in more color palettes and design styles."

Additionally, Marquardt has sought out varieties that have deeper, more satu-

rated hues, like **'Secret'** and **'Ariel'**, and flowers that sit higher than the foliage. "These traits make alstroemeria more of a focal flower," she explained.

Joaquin de la Torre, managing partner of Ball SB, and Anna Maria Quiñones, R&D director of Esmeralda Breeding, echoed these points. "We're breeding for big flowers with our alstroemeria — approximately 25 percent larger than older varieties," de la Torre said. "We're focusing on bold colors that open well," Quiñones said.

Coming down the pipeline are alstroemeria that grow in a ball-like shape, like hydrangeas. "We describe them as **'alstrangeas'**," Marquardt said. "It's a distinctive look that's very striking in bouquets. We hope to have them available by mid- to late 2018." She's also excited about new **alstroemeria sprays**. "They have 40 to 50 blooms per stem," she gushed. "They're going to provide incredible value for florists."



**'REVOLUTION'**  
(HK)



**'SECRET'**  
(HK)



**'MARSHMALLOW'**  
(HK)



**'ARIEL'**  
(RVZ)



**'ARAMINTHA'**  
(RVZ)



**'CHARMELIA'**  
(RVZ)



**'VOGUE SPRAY'**  
(HK)

ALSTROEMERIA

PHOTO CREDIT KEY: ROYAL VAN ZANTEN (RVZ) HILVERDA KOOIJ (HK) DANZIGER (D)



**'CROSSFIRE'**  
(H)



**'DESIRELLE'**  
(H)



**'FREDO'**  
(VDH)



**'SUPERMAC'**  
(GSB)

**BULBS**

> With callas, the latest advancements might not be obvious to retailers — but growers and wholesalers will appreciate the changes.

"Flower productivity is our number one goal," said Robert Melendez, sales manager for Golden State Bulb. "We want callas that are easy to grow."

Golden State's latest series, **Callaifornia**, have been bred to be compact and require fewer chemicals. "These characteristics make them less expensive to grow — and ship," Melendez said. Additionally, breeders have worked to increase postharvest longevity. "These callas should last for four to six weeks," he said.

Recent years have brought a drastic change in the way tulips are grown. "Ten to 15 years ago, it was all about peat," said Arie Peterse, a breeder with Vletter and den Haan. "Now there are a number of varieties that have adapted to get nutrients hydroponically." Managing soil can be expensive and time-consuming, he explained, "so this has done wonders to bring down the cost of tulip production."

The current focus is producing varieties with strong disease resistance, most notably to Fusarium, a fungus that produces deformed bulbs with dark brown spots. "As breeders, we're more concerned with how a tulip performs in the postharvest process than aesthetic details, like fringe or particular colors," Peterse said. "That said, we need to impress clients." Going forward, he sees the trend shifting from single to more **double tulips**. "They have big, fat heads and more color," he said. "They have a very showy presentation consumers love."

At the beginning of the decade, LA hybrids ruled the lily world, but now **Oriental Trumpets** have taken over. "They're really ideal plants," Peterse said. "They're resistant to disease and have good rooting, so they grow well in warmer climates. There's even one variety, **'Regala'**, that was found growing on rooftops in China, baking in the sun!"

The only detriment of Oriental Trumpets — and it's a matter of opinion — would be their strong fragrance, Peterse said: "In Asia, they love the smell, but in a small house in the States or The Netherlands, it can be really overpowering." The **Roselily** group, a collection of pollen-less double lilies, masks the scent somewhat by containing it in the center of the flower. "They're not available as OTs yet — but that's coming soon."

Vletter and den Haan is also currently testing a **cross between a Longiflorum and Oriental Trumpet** at Oregon Flowers in Aurora, Oregon, which the company believes will be even sturdier than the current batch of Oriental Trumpets. "It will be one or two years before that's commercially available," he said. "But we're very confident it's going to be a success."

Tyler Meskers, operations manager at Oregon Flowers, concurred that the trial varieties show a lot of promise. "They seem to have stronger stems, better foliage and new colors," he said, adding that these hybrids involve very tricky crosses. "Hobbyists could not do it. Dutch breeders are essentially performing embryo rescue in a lab."

PHOTO CREDIT KEY: HOBAHO (H) VLETTER & DEN HAAN (VDH) GOLDEN STATE BULB (GSB) DÜMMEN ORANGE (OO)

## GERBERAS



**'BUBBLICIOUS'**  
(DO)



**'TERRA ICY'**  
(DO)



**'TERRA MAGA'**  
(DO)

> The team at Dümme Orange considers the gerbera one of the cheeriest flowers in the marketplace and has worked to ensure “she turns her radiating ‘face’ always towards the sun,” said Marketing Director Roy van Kester.

To give gerberas optimal presentation, breeders have focused on traits such as stem length and strength, said Christa

Boerlage, one of the company’s gerbera product managers. Some of the newest standard varieties, including ‘**Bubblicious**’ and ‘**Terra icy**’, stand 65 to 70 cm tall and are more resistant to bending. Other goals have been obtaining a vase life of 18 to 22 days and creating varieties less susceptible to white powdery mildew and pests, such as thrips and white fly.

Additionally, Dümme Orange has seen increased requests for **blush-colored gerberas** and **Gerrondo** varieties, which have a ball-like shape and especially full and compact petal structure, akin to dahlias. “These are very popular for wedding bouquets and arrangements,” Boerlage explained.



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## &gt; FloWOWer POWER

> “The message we’ve heard over and over from designers is that they want texture,” said Veronica Herrera Mario, manager of Progeny Breeding. “We’re trying to give them more options.”

For instance, Progeny has several varieties with petals that mimic the honeycomb structure of a dahlia, including **‘Bumble Bee’**, **‘Africa’** and **‘Tornado’**. Others, such as **‘Flamma’** and **‘Kampala’**, have a twisted center. “Chrysanthemum genetics allow for a lot of experimentation,” she said.

With more traditional chrysanthemums, the company has worked to increase its petal count. “We want there to be at least two rows with our daisies,” she said. A particular point of pride is **‘Meraki’**, which came out in 2016. “It’s productive, so growers like it. It tints well, so it’s versatile for wholesalers and florists. And it has a great vase life (usually around 15 to 18 days), so consumers love it,” she said. “It also has a green center, which is very on trend.”

In recent years, Dümme Orange has produced more chrysanthemums in pinks, purples and whites — “wedding colors,” said Bas Pellenars, Dümme Orange’s commercial director for Latin America. “People aren’t just thinking of chrysanthemums for fall arrangements anymore.” One of his company’s newest inventions, **‘Veronica’**, a cross between pink and lavender, has multiple blooms per stem. “Its presentation gives it a high perceived value,” he said. “It would fit in well for special occasions.”

Having heard that North American consumers are “fatigued with spider mums,” Dümme breeders are concentrating on cremon varieties, such as **‘Pina Colada’** and **‘Maisy’**, which work well as disbuds or as sprays, Pellenars said. Originally available only in white, **‘Maisy’** also comes in green. “You used to have to tint it, but now you can grow it as a natural green. It looks amazing and fits right in with the eco look that’s popular with a lot of consumers,” he said.

## CHRYSANTHEMUMS



**‘PINA COLADA’**  
(DO)



**‘AFRICA’**  
(PB)



**‘BUMBLE BEE’**  
(PB)



**‘MAISY’**  
(DO)



**‘KAMPALA’**  
(PB)



**‘MERAKI’**  
(PB)



'CARALINDA'  
(DO)



'VICTORIAN PEACH'  
(DO)



'CARALINDA'  
(DO)



'WASABI'  
(SRB)



'GOLDEN MUSTARD'  
(AF)



'TIARA'  
(AF)



'PLAYA BLANCA'  
(RF)

> Quarterbacks aspire for a perfect spiral — but that's no longer the goal with roses.

"It's all about the 'organic' look now," said Lina Restrepo of Schreurs Rose Breeders. That is: plump, ruffled roses in intriguing shapes. "Before, people wanted a tighter form and more uniformity." One of the company's recent creations, 'Wasabi', a pale green variety with reflexed petals and an accordion-like center, won best rose in Proflora's Outstanding Varieties Competition.

Public affection for big, dramatic roses is vindication for Philippe Veys, global product manager in roses for Dümmen Orange. "When we started showing products that looked like this five or six years ago, people told us they were ugly! Can you believe that?" he said. "Now, everyone's crazy about the garden style."

Veys credits weddings and events with driving the demand for roses like 'Carabelle', 'Caralinda' and 'Victorian Peach'. "Put these in a bouquet and

you instantly have a high-end, romantic look," he said. "Young people, in particular, are after that. They want flowers that feel special."

Like Veys, Quiñones met criticism when she debuted 'Playa Blanca', a lush, bright white rose, a few years ago. "I was so excited because I knew this variety was a real winner," she said. "It has high productivity, long stems, no issues with botrytis, and lasts many moons — up to 20 days." But growers couldn't get past its unruly center. "They told me it looked deformed! I was crushed," she said. "Fortunately, trends changed, garden style roses became popular and people recognized what a good rose this is."

In addition to structural changes, roses now represent more of the rainbow. "Previously, farms didn't want to plant roses that weren't well defined colors," Restrepo said. "Now, we get requests for multi-colors and 'in between' shades like lavender, butterscotch and toffee."

That was exactly what motivated Jose Azout, president of Alexandra Farms, when picking two of his latest varieties: 'Tiara' and 'Golden Mustard'. "We're known for our garden roses and I'm usually obsessed with fragrance, but I just couldn't resist these hybrid tea varieties because of their colors," he said. "They're unique and bridge a lot of different palettes for weddings, which is our primary market."

Sprays, too, are taking on more garden rose qualities. "The blooms are bigger and looser than they used to be," Veys said.

"We want volume — a minimum of seven flowers per stem," said Quiñones. Esmeralda is also working on a reverse version of 'Brilliant Stars', a blush-colored variety with green edges that won Best in Show at the 2015 SAF Outstanding Varieties Competition, as well as a novelty version that's red and yellow.

PHOTO CREDIT KEY: PROGENY BREEDING (PB) | DÜMMEN ORANGE (DO) | ROYAL FLOWERS (RF) | ALEXANDRA FARMS (AF) | SCHREURS ROSE BREEDERS (SRB)

ROSES

## &gt; FloWOWer POWER

'CHERRY TESSINO STAR'  
(HK)'NOVIA'  
(DO)'COWBOY'  
(DO)'GREEN WICKY'  
(HK)'BLACK JACK'  
(HK)

> Carnations have come a long way from the baby pink boutonnières popular at proms in the 1950s. Today, they come in a vast array of colors, shapes, sizes, textures and styles, ranging from demure to downright wild.

Arthur Koekkoek, a breeder with Hilverda Kooij, recalled some harsh customer feedback back in the early 2000s.

"They told us carnations had been going downhill for many years — that people just didn't like them anymore," he said. "Clearly, we needed some innovation."

That admonition led to Sparkz, a special series with eight distinct styles. 'Green' varieties have a feathery texture and a grass-like aesthetic. 'Raffine' features tiny, ruffled petals in varying shades of pink and purple. 'Solomio' has horizontal, flat petals akin to hydrangeas. 'Breanthus' resembles Sweet William with fanned petals that bloom in spheres.

'Cornet', also known as 'Mini Tiara', shines with spindly petals that curl outward. The aptly termed 'Star' opens fully like its namesake. 'Parzival' combines the qualities of Green and Breanthus with abundant visual interest. 'Black Jack' sports petite aubergine petals with white trim.

The initial reaction to Hilverda Kooij's huge marketing effort was resistance.

"Many growers were reluctant to try them," Koekkoek

said. "They told us they'd never had a customer ask for these kind of products. Well, of course they hadn't! How can people ask for something they don't know exists?"

Sparkz has since found a few supporters at the grower level, but the flowers have yet to gain a foothold in the U.S. retail market. Dyer intends to be one of the pioneers. "I'm mesmerized. I've never seen dianthus that looks like this," he said. "I can't wait to get these varieties in my shop. They all have such captivating textures, which my clients will adore."

PanAmerican Seed had a similar experience with its **Sweet** and **Amazon** series, which came out about a decade ago. "It takes years for new products to get traction," said global product manager Reid Snyder. "Each segment of the industry has to get on board before they ever reach consumers. It's part of the challenge — but also the fun — of working in the cut flower industry. You have to think about long-term trends, not the immediate future."

Now, Snyder sees great demand for Sweet, particularly for Christmas and Valentine's Day. Available in reds, pinks, purples and white, "these varieties blend seamlessly with most holiday décor," he said. Meanwhile, Amazon, a cross of two species of dianthus, has proven a hit with growers for its heat tolerance. "Most carnations prefer colder tem-





**'ELMO BREANTHUS'**  
(HK)



**'FAYE PETITE RAFFINE'**  
(HK)



**'IMRE SOLOMIO'**  
(HK)



**'CORAL PINK CORNET'**  
(HK)



**'DAMASCUS'**  
(DO)



**'GALAHAD PARZIVAL'**  
(HK)



**'PINK MAGIC SWEET'**  
(PS)



## RED HOT LOVERS

'Freedom' has long reigned as the go-to red rose for florists worldwide, but two breeders are confident their latest inventions will shoot to the top of customers' wish lists in the near future.

Rosen Tantau's '**Game Over**' boasts strong stems, shiny foliage and blemish-free petals that open consistently and uniformly. "It's brand-new and only has a few stems available at moment, but we believe in this rose," said sales representative Amanda Vargas Fuquene, beaming with pride. "This will be a red rose everyone wants."

For the past two years, growers in Ecuador have been testing '**Finally**' by United Selections. CEO Jelle Posthumus visited their farms in late October and said "it was clear" the rose had major potential. **-K.H.**

peratures, so this has an expanded window of time farms in Central and South America can grow it," he said.

Flores Colon is one of the farms that embrace these non-traditional varieties from Hilverda Kooij and PanAmerican Seed. "We believe people want to see something new, so we seek out unusual colors and novelties," said account manager Daniel Burbano. "Imagine if you saw an Amazon or Solomio dianthus in a bouquet at the grocery store. You'd want to stop for a second look because it's so unfamiliar." Additionally, Burbano has found that the newer dianthus options have exceptional vase life. "Carnations traditionally last a long time," he said. "But these are really amazing. In my home, I can display them for five or more weeks."

Dümmen Orange, too, has focused on distinguishing color treatment with its carnations. "There seems to more acceptance of — and requests for — shades beyond the traditional powder pink," said Pellenaars. A few new varieties, '**Cowboy**' and '**Damascus**', have pale petals with dark edges. Dümmen is also proud of '**Novia**', a peachy-pink that matches many brides' color requests. 🌸

**Katie Hendrick** is senior editor of Floral Management. [khendrick@safnow.org](mailto:khendrick@safnow.org)

PHOTO CREDIT KEY: PANAMERICAN SEED (PS) | HILVERDA KOOIJ (HK) | DÜMMEN ORANGE (DO)



# C'mon, Get Happy!

The Society of American Florists' Petal It Forward campaign delivered a jolt of happiness and kindness when people needed it most.

BY MARY WESTBROOK

**SKATE AND SMILE** A skateboarder in Encinitas, California, did a double take when the Dramm & Echter team offered him flowers. "He loved the fact that it was just a random act of kindness," said Lani Conklin, the company's marketing manager. He said, "With all the hate in the world today, finally people are doing some good."

Tears of joy. Messages of thanks. Communities filled with flowers. These are just some of the sentiments and stories shared after the Society of American Florists' Petal It Forward campaign on Oct. 11.

This year, floral industry members in 467 cities in 50 states plus Washington, D.C., and Canada led 573 local Petal It Forward events. Through SAF-generated and local member public relations and social media efforts, the 2017 campaign generated almost 82 million impressions. Throughout the country, industry segments worked together and drew in community groups to make the effort a success — boosting spirits and raising awareness about the powerful effect of giving and receiving flowers. The message was especially resonant after a summer and fall punctuated by natural disasters and the heartbreaking mass shooting in Las Vegas.

"I can't tell you how many people immediately reached out to hug me after I handed them their bouquets," said Nicole Palazzo of **City Line Florist** in Trumbull, Connecticut. "I had a lady tell me she just got diagnosed with cancer that day and just came from the hospital, and we were the first people she saw. She broke down in tears."

A lasting image of the day for Palazzo: flowers everywhere.

"It really made me smile and feel warm and fuzzy to walk down the street and see each person who passed me with an armful of flowers," she said. "It's not

something you see every day. I loved how Petal It Forward not only promoted acts of kindness and happiness but also flowers."

That's exactly the kind of message Jennifer Sparks said SAF designed Petal It Forward to convey.

"It's the surprise element — when people unexpectedly receive flowers and get the chance to make someone else's day brighter — that gives Petal It Forward its charm," said Sparks, SAF's vice president of marketing.

## A Joyful Day

In Portland, Oregon, Michelle O'Brien of **Goose Hollow Flowers** enlisted the help of her 10-year-old son. When the girls' cross-country team from a local high school passed by, he charged after the runners and, to their surprise, gave them flowers. Later, when O'Brien and her staff were locking up, they saw a group of girls running nearby.

"Sure enough, one of the girls was running in the middle of the pack with a bouquet still held high," she said. "It was such a sight."

In Indianapolis, **Bokay Florist** was able to leverage its location in a "vibrant, artsy" village to reach a "diverse group of people," said Colleen Sanders. The shop was featured in a glowing segment on WISH-TV.

"We saw a lot of our regular customers, and met some new people," Sanders said. "My favorite moment was when a member of my team said, 'This is energizing and gives me hope.'"

Michelle Jones of **Flowers by Michelle**

in Las Vegas said her shop moved through 200 bouquets fast after setting up in a downtown area where they were able to surprise mostly local residents who were still dealing with the aftermath of the tragic mass shooting in that city.

"The recipients loved it, and we have had great feedback on social media [and through] email and phone calls," Jones said. "They were so appreciative."

In Waldorf, Maryland, Lorrie Anderson of **Country Florist** teamed up with a non-profit that helps adults with special needs and a hair salon to distribute bouquets around the county. "It is truly a great idea to impress upon people how much people love getting flowers," she said.

**J. Miller Flowers** snagged the front page of the *Piedmont Post* in California, among other great coverage. The story also credited the area growers and wholesalers who supported the feel-good effort and shared stories of recipients' surprise and gratitude. "You have no idea how much this means to me," one recipient said.

## Segments Working Together

Many of the year's most successful efforts relied on collaboration (and generosity) among industry segments:

- **Bill Doran Company**, headquartered in Rockford, Illinois, encouraged participation from nearly 270 of its retail customers in Petal It Forward, a powerful team effort that ended up distributing 32,500 bouquets and single-stem roses.



**COMMUTE BOOST** In the suburbs of Chicago, FTD teamed up with Phillip’s Flowers to hand out 3,000 bouquets at two metro stations. “It’s awesome,” one happy recipient said to reporters with the Daily Herald, which chronicled the giveaway. “I’m a huge flower person.”



**TEAM EFFORT** Taylor Farms and Sakata Seed America passed out 400 bouquets on the streets in downtown Salinas, California. Kitayama Brothers and Green Valley Floral donated flowers for the effort.



**SENIOR SALUTE** Abbey Shelton and the team from Rose Garden Florist in Paducah, Kentucky, spread their Petal It Forward joy to consumers around town and even visited several nursing homes.

- **Frank Adams Wholesale Florist** in Portland, Oregon, helped 20 florists do Petal It Forward events — and then had their own employees join the fun, too. With the support of more than a dozen farms, the company donated 100 boxes of flowers, totaling 10,000-plus stems, to florists in Oregon and southwest Washington. Tyler Meskers of **Oregon Flowers** in Aurora, Oregon, said the buildup to the event actually represented a highlight of his experience: Prepping his family’s flowers for Frank Adams felt akin to “wrapping Christmas presents.” Oregon Flowers donated 1,880 lilies to Frank Adams and created a few dozen bunches for

Petal It Forward in its local community.

- **Delware Valley Floral Group** worked closely with **Holland America Flowers** and **Sun Valley Floral Farms** to provide more than 60 customers in New England, the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic with more than 5,500 discounted bouquets. The company’s own employees also participated in the event. Bill Prescott, marketing and communications specialist for Sun Valley Floral Farms, said the company donated 3,000 bouquets across four states; many customers also bought discounted royal lilies for the event.
- **Taylor Farms** and **Sakata Seed America** passed out 400 bouquets

on the streets in downtown Salinas. **Kitayama Brothers** and **Green Valley Floral** donated flowers for the effort. “I loved being part of this program. Seeing the look on people’s faces when we handed them bouquets was priceless,” said Katrina Gargiulo of Taylor Farms.

- **Dramm & Echter** in Encinitas, California, organized more than a dozen industry companies to help with Petal It Forward. The grower did extensive pre-event promotion and provided product, handing out more than 6,000 stems. Their use of social media showed firsthand the fun reactions to getting flowers, including a Facebook Live video. 🌸

## PR FOR THE WIN

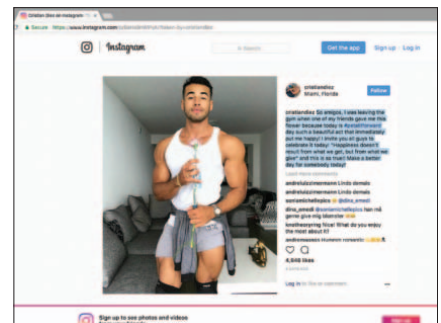
Through SAF-generated and local member public relations and social media efforts, this year’s Petal It Forward campaign generated almost 82 million impressions. The impressive reach is the result of careful planning, months of collaboration and a coordinated public outreach that sent specific, powerful messages on the positive effects of flowers and flower giving in consumers’ everyday lives, said Jennifer Sparks, SAF’s vice president of marketing.

“This doesn’t just happen. Impressions numbers like these are a result of blood, sweat, tears and strategy,” said Sparks.

SAF’s Petal It Forward is supported by the **SAF Fund for Nationwide Public**

**Relations**, which funds nationwide PR efforts that promote flowers and florists to consumers through groundbreaking research and media outreach as well as **AboutFlowers.com**, **AboutFlowersBlog.com** and **NationalFloristDirectory.com**.

For a full breakdown of how those tens of millions of impressions were generated and more stories from the day visit **safnow.org/moreonline**. -M.W.



**STAR POWER REACH** One happy recipient, Cristian Diez, took to Instagram, where he has more than 50,000 followers, to share his delight. “Today is #petalitforward day, such a beautiful act that immediately put me happy!” Diez also posted the message to Facebook, where he has 11,000 followers. Consumers’ happy social media posts are a sign of the campaign’s success, said SAF Vice President of Marketing Jennifer Sparks. “That is the sweet spot — when the flowers do their scientifically proven work to make someone happy, and those people are moved to tell that story to their friends, families and followers.”

SPONSORED CONTENT

## WINTER IS COMING

### Is Your Business Ready?

The days are getting colder and darker as we head into the final stretch of 2017. The approaching holidays will invariably add a lot to your to-do list, and it's important that prepping your shop for the season is on it.

Brent Bates, director of loss control and safety services at Hortica, points out common winter dangers for floral businesses and how to prevent them.



### 1. Hazardous Highways

Frost, sleet, ice, snow — winter teems with elements that make roads treacherous to navigate.

"Actually, it begins in the autumn, when there's more rain and falling leaves. The combination creates a slick surface," Bates said. "Plus, the sun is setting earlier, so you may be making deliveries in the dark, when visibility is diminished."

Mitigate the danger by making sure your tires have good tread on them or, even better, switching to winter tires, which have special rubber compounds that remain pliable in the cold, providing better grip and improved braking capabilities in extreme conditions. Also, scrutinize your lights, electrical system and battery to ensure everything's working properly. And make sure your vehicles are stocked with first aid kits, in case a driver gets stranded in a snow bank, as well as plenty of antifreeze.

"Drivers need to practice caution driving in the winter, even if they don't see any hazards in the road," he said. "Black ice is undetectable but can be deadly."

Careful driving means slowing down earlier, not following vehicles too closely and eliminating all distractions. In normal conditions, drivers should keep a three-second distance in front of them. "In inclement weather, you should triple that," Bates said. He recommends reviewing driving basics with your delivery team before the season hits. Being in a hurry and being distracted lead to auto accidents, and this is magnified with winter conditions! Slow down and be prepared to stop!

### 2. Electric Overloads

December without twinkle lights would be awfully dreary — but a lot safer.

"Every year, we respond to a serious fire loss due to overuse of extension cords with holiday lights," Bates said. "I've seen [one cord] burn down a large commercial building, and I've seen the loss of life in a residential fire due to overloading of extension cords."

It's always best to plug lights directly into a wall with an adequate power source that's been professionally installed. The next best option is to use a high-end power strip with a surge protector. "Just don't overburden it," he said. That means no more than four 100-bulb strands of lights. Read the instructions that come with the power strips, as they will tell you how much each strip is designed to handle.

"If you must use extension cords, keep them away from high-traffic areas," Bates said. "The more people step on them or drive equipment over them, the more damaged they get, and there's a greater chance they'll catch fire."

Also ensure they've been certified by Underwriters Laboratories, the world leader in product safety testing and certification, and don't use them as a permanent solution. Those situations call for you to hire a licensed electrician.

Use space heaters? They, too, should be UL certified. Never plug them into an extension cord or leave them unattended. "The best heaters have a trip switch that automatically shuts them off if they get knocked over," he said. He also emphasized that heaters should be far away from any combustible materials.

### 3. Boilers

Boiler fires are often catastrophic losses," Bates said. "Have a professional inspect yours before winter comes and check out your backup generator while you're at it."

### 4. Parking Lots and Entryways

If your community gets snow, your customers (and employees) will track it into your shop on their shoes.

"All commercial establishments should have moisture barrier rugs at entry points for people to knock snow off their shoes," Bates said. Nonetheless, he added, you should assign an employee to monitor the shop for any wet spots throughout the day.

If you hire someone to shovel your parking lot, make sure he or she has insurance, Bates said. If you maintain it yourself, be sure to shovel and lay salt or sand as soon as you arrive to work and right before you leave. "Also be sure to shovel toward the low point of your parking lot," he added. "If you shovel toward a high point, when the snow starts to melt, the water will trickle down and freeze overnight, creating a dangerous path."

Keep a bag of salt or sand near your entrance, so if someone notices an area in your lot or front door getting slippery, he or she can address it immediately, he said.

**Hortica offers commercial auto coverage that includes hiring guidelines, training material and other hallmarks for developing a safety fleet program. Visit [hortica.com](http://hortica.com) for more information.**

This document is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. No one should act on the information contained in this document without advice from a local professional with relevant expertise.

Hortica property and casualty coverages are underwritten, and loss control services are provided, by Florists' Mutual Insurance Company and Florists' Insurance Company, members of the Sentry Insurance Group. For more information, visit [hortica.com](http://hortica.com). Policies, coverages, benefits and discounts are not available in all states. See policy for complete coverage details.

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## FLOWERS SHOULD SAY, "I LOVE YOU." NOT "OOPS, MY FLOWERS FROZE."

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# The Magic of Tidying (Files) Up



EDITORS' NOTE *Paul Goodman, CPA, PFCI, and Derrick Myers, CPA, CFP, love a good financial management challenge, however big or small. Send your questions to [fmeditor@safnow.org](mailto:fmeditor@safnow.org), and we'll challenge the experts to tackle them in an upcoming article.*

BY DERRICK MYERS, CPA, CFP

**A clear strategy — and an understanding of rules and regulations — can help you clear out files you don't need and pinpoint documents you should safeguard.**

> "How long do I need to keep my business records?"

This is one of those questions I'm asked all the time. But as with so many questions, there never seems to be a simple answer. If you ask an accountant, you get one answer. Ask a lawyer or insurance agent and you'll get different answers.

So, how do you sort this out? You'll need to look at the different types of records and their purposes. From there, you get to ask yourself more questions. The following are key points to consider.

## How long must I keep tax records?

Usually when a client asks me about record retention, they are referring to records that are necessary to support the income, expenses and deductions on their tax returns. Let's start there. Here is an excerpt from the record retention guidelines from the IRS: *Period of Limitations that apply to income tax returns*

1. *Keep records for 3 years if situations (4), (5), and (6) below do not apply to you.*

2. *Keep records for 3 years from the date you filed your original return or 2 years from the date you paid the tax, whichever is later, if you file a claim for credit or refund after you file your return.*
3. *Keep records for 7 years if you file a claim for a loss from worthless securities or bad debt deduction.*
4. *Keep records for 6 years if you do not report income that you should report, and it is more than 25% of the gross income shown on your return.*

5. *Keep records indefinitely if you do not file a return.*
6. *Keep records indefinitely if you file a fraudulent return.*
7. *Keep employment tax records for at least 4 years after the date that the tax becomes due or is paid, whichever is later.*

Confused yet? Don't worry. It gets worse before it gets better!

To simplify the tax retention record requirements, I recommend that you keep all records relating to income, expenses, deductions and credits for seven years.

### Can I save files electronically?

Most florists bring up the issue of record retention when they are dealing with the boxes and boxes of records that they have in storage.

One of the best ways to reduce the amount of records in physical storage is to store information electronically. The IRS will accept electronically saved copies. Most POS systems can reproduce sales receipts at any time, so as long as you have access to those systems for seven years, you don't have to keep paper copies.

By scanning expense receipts, bank and credit statements, etc., you can greatly reduce the number of paper records you keep and boxes you have to store.

### What's the best way to organize my accounts payable (or vendor) receipts?

Two kinds of receipts must be maintained for accounts payable: unpaid and paid bills.

The most efficient way to organize unpaid vendor receipts (or bills) is to keep an unpaid bill file, or files. In this folder, keep the unpaid bills from each vendor, grouped alphabetically and by date for each vendor.

Once the bill has been paid, move it to the corresponding paid bill file for that vendor, where they should be filed by date and boxed by year. Label the outside of the boxes "Accounts Payable box 1 of \_\_," "Accounts Payable box 2 of \_\_," etc., and mark the year prominently on the box. When the seven years have passed, dispose of all boxes labeled with that year.

If you still process sales receipts and accounts receivable without a POS system, you will need to make similar files for keeping accounts receivable records.

### Are there other records I should keep for seven years?

In a word, yes. These documents should also be kept for that seven-year period:

- Bank records
- Credit card statements
- Payroll records
- Purchase and sale records
- Travel and entertainment records
- Vendor invoices
- Settled accident claims
- Mortgages / deeds / leases on sold property
- Records on sold stocks and bonds

It's rare that anyone is going to want to see an electric bill or credit card statement dating back more than a year, but you may choose to keep the following non-tax-related items for up to three years for internal use:

- Monthly financial statements
- Utility records
- Employment applications (for businesses)
- Medical bills (in case of insurance disputes)

The amount of time you keep other miscellaneous records varies. You should retain these records according to the following guidelines:

- Car records (keep until car is sold or traded)
- Personnel files (keep at least three years after employee termination)
- Credit card receipts (keep until reconciled on your credit card statement)
- ATM and deposit slips (keep until reconciled on your bank statement)
- Insurance policies (keep for life of policy)
- Pay stubs (keep until reconciled with your W-2)
- Property records / builder contracts / improvement receipts (keep until property is sold)
- Sales receipts (keep for life of warranty or life of the item on large purchases)
- Warranties and instructions (keep for life of product)
- Other bills (keep until the payment is verified on the next bill)

### Do some records need to be kept forever?

Some personal items, in addition to business items, should be kept permanently

because these items would be hard to replace and you may be asked to provide them later in life. Usually these items are kept in a filing system or box, but preferably in a fireproof safe or safe deposit box:

Some examples of the personal items are:

- Vital records and certificates (birth / death / marriage / divorce / adoption / etc.)
- Retirement and pension records
- Investment trade confirmations and statements that indicate buying and selling
- Trust documents
- Important correspondence
- Legal documents

Store these business items in permanent files:

- Annual financial statements
- Corporate documents (incorporation, charter, constitution, bylaws, minutes)
- Stock records
- Licenses, patents, trademarks and registration applications
- Documents substantiating fixed asset additions
- Purchase receipts

### What record-keeping processes should I implement at the end of each year?

You may remove records from your active filing system once the current year has passed. Taking the time to organize them using a filing system with dates and even color-coded file folders can help make storage easier and disposal simple. Store archived files by year in banker's boxes, with one label for the year and another showing the destruct date. Then, each year, simply shred those items that have come due. With these record retention guidelines, file purging isn't actually as scary as it seems. 🗑️

**Derrick P. Myers, CPA, CFP, PFCI**, is president of **Crockett, Myers & Associates**, a financial management and accounting firm that has been working with florists for more than 30 years. [derrick@crockettmyers.com](mailto:derrick@crockettmyers.com)

## Industry News

### WHOLESALE TO RETAILERS: PLAN AHEAD AND ORDER EARLY

> A late summer and early fall that read like something out of a science fiction movie — hurricanes, volcanoes, grounded planes, backlogged ports — created new challenges for the floral industry supply chain and exposed some long-standing weaknesses.

“The best advice I can provide [florists] is straight from my youth and being an Eagle Scout,” said Steve Catando, purchasing manager for DV Flora. “Be prepared.”

Catando noted that many industry members are still dealing with the effects of Hurricane Irma, which forced the temporary closure of major seaports and airports.

“Inbound freight from South America remains challenging, but the situation has improved somewhat,” he said. “Many importers are shipping earlier to allow for more time to offset any potential delays. Costs remain a real issue, and all of the capacity that is being flown over normal space allotments is being flown at significantly higher costs.”

Catando also said there are “major limitations in greens, leatherleaf and some key Florida plant crops.” Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam

Putnam has said preliminary agricultural damages caused by Hurricane Irma in Florida total more than \$2.5 billion.

Pam Uranga, supply chain manager for Mayesh Wholesale Florist, noted the major storm wasn't the only challenge growers, importers and wholesalers faced: A volcanic eruption also delayed flights in Quito, Ecuador, before and after Irma.

As several wholesalers noted, some air carriers continue to struggle financially due to an imbalance between north- and southbound freight volume, a situation that can lead to backlogs and delays as carriers wait for cargo before returning to Miami — and one that the recent round of weather-related challenges exacerbated. (Flights leave South America with product but return empty or only partially filled, in part because of slowdown in local economies and demand.) Another challenge that predates the hurricane: The floral industry often competes with more profitable cargo for space on flights — some produce crops from Peru and Chile pay three-times more per kilogram than flowers, according to Catando. In addition, high-priority rescue and relief efforts in Puerto Rico,



**SUPPLY CHAIN HEADACHES** “The best advice I can provide is straight from my youth and being an Eagle Scout,” said Steve Catando, purchasing manager for DV Flora. “Be prepared.”

after Hurricane Maria, also pulled away charter planes.

Kennicott Brothers Company/Nordlie advised customers earlier this fall that they were seeing a two- to three-day delay in product coming from South America to Miami.

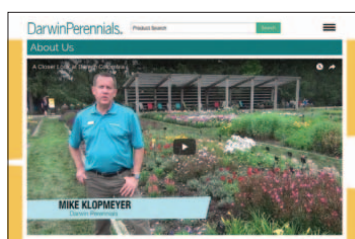
“The logistics situation is real and will continue to be a challenge moving forward,” said Lenny Walker, regional director for Kennicott Brothers. “We don't believe this will [improve] before Christmas.”

### OFFSHORE GREENHOUSE CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM BEGINS

> A six-month pilot program that launched Oct. 1 could streamline the importation of plant cuttings produced in offshore facilities, speeding their entry into the U.S. while making inspections for pests and diseases more efficient.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service currently inspects roughly 1 billion imported plant cuttings each year at two stations, in Miami and Atlanta. Through the new program, five participating companies will instead certify their offshore sites under strict standards for facility construction, security, production and sanitation, pest management, training, and record keeping.

AmericanHort and the Society of American Florists collaborated with APHIS to establish this pilot program.



#### PROACTIVE PROCESS

The new six-month pilot program to certify offshore plant-cutting facilities “makes more sense” than the existing system, said Mike Klopmeier, Ph.D., general manager of Darwin Perennials in West Chicago, Illinois.

### ASOCOLFLORES UNVEILS NEW BRAND AT PROFLORA 2017

> Asocolflores, the association of Colombia flower exporters, welcomed more than 2,000 international buyers to Proflora, its biannual trade show, in Bogotá, Colombia, Oct. 4 to 6.

With 15,000 square meters of exhibition space, 321 booths and more than 1,400 varieties of flowers on display, Asocolflores used the occasion to unveil its new brand, “Flowers of Colombia.”

A new logo features four colorful, abstract shapes arranged like flowers in a bouquet. Asocolflores studied the wine and cotton industries and looked to the fashion world



**FLOWERS OF COLOMBIA**

diversity that inspires

**NEW LOOK** Asocolflores' new brand logo features four colorful, abstract shapes arranged like flowers in a bouquet. CEO Augusto Solano said the revamp was part of a broader effort to reach younger generations.

(particularly Finnish textile and clothing company Marimekko) for design inspiration, explained marketing director Eliana Alzate.



## Industry News

## FLORISTS CREATE MEMORIAL FOR MASS SHOOTING VICTIMS

> For floral designers attending a wedding conference in Las Vegas in October, shock over the country's deadliest mass shooting quickly gave way to action.

Marisa Guerrero, AIFD, of Debbie's Bloomers in El Paso, Texas, was among an estimated 5,000 wedding vendors in Las Vegas for Wedding MBA, and she was one of dozens of floral designers who volunteered to create a memorial for the victims in front of the Las Vegas Convention Center. Mayesh Wholesale donated the flowers and foliage.

"It was so touching to see so many in our industry lend their talents to comfort the families of the deceased," said Guerrero.

Sharon Hearne, manager of Mayesh's Las Vegas branch, said she had one reaction to the designers when they arrived asking for help: "Take anything and everything from the cooler that you need."

"A lot of people think about Las Vegas, and they think we live on the strip and party and gamble. But that's not the reality," she explained. "We're a



### TIME TO GRIEVE

"Florists know how important flowers are to the healing process," said Marisa Guerrero, AIFD, of Debbie's Bloomers in El Paso, Texas.

really strong community and people are coming together."

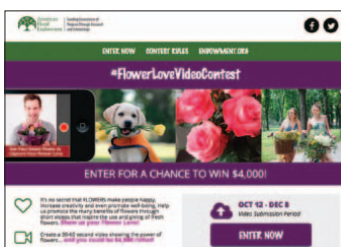
The outreach was organized by several florists, including Sarah Campbell-Angers of Intrigue Design & Decor in Annapolis, Maryland, and Susan Davis and Lisa Mantegna of Fresh Designs Florist in Chester Heights, Pennsylvania. Pam Hayle designed the memorial's "wings."

"We completed the memorial in about an hour," Davis said. "When it was done, a man asked if he could mourn with his daughter, who lost her friend in the massacre. We left them in peace." 🌿

## A FE VIDEO CONTEST PROMOTES FLOWER LOVE

> Psst... Your love of flowers could land you a couple thousand bucks.

The American Floral Endowment launched a contest Oct. 12 that encourages people to showcase their love of flowers in 30- to 60-second videos. The contest includes a grand prize of \$4,000. The contest is open to floral industry members and the general public. The submission deadline is Dec. 8. Find out more at [contest.endowment.org](http://contest.endowment.org). 🌿



**FEEL THE LOVE** A New AFE video contest encourages industry members and consumers to highlight their love of flowers.

## AIFD FOUNDATION LAUNCHES HURRICANE MARIA FLORIST FUND

> The AIFD Foundation has launched a third fund to support industry members affected by the year's hurricanes. The Hurricane Maria Florist Fund, modeled after the group's Harvey and Irma funds, was organized in concert with the American Institute of Floral Designers' Southern Chapter.

The AIFD Foundation worked with the Texas State Florists' Association to establish the Hurricane Harvey Florist Fund and with the Florida State Florists' Association for the Hurricane Irma Florist Fund.

After Hurricane Harvey, BloomNet/Napco established a matching funds program — an effort that the company has since extended to the Irma and Maria funds. The company will continue to match dollar-for-dollar donations made by BloomNet network members through Dec. 31. Lynn Lary McLean, AIFD, AIFD Foundation CEO, also noted

## WF&FSA CONFERENCE DRAWS HUNDREDS

> More than 770 floral industry members traveled to Miami in October for The Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association's 2017 Floral Distribution Conference.

During the event, Santiago Cock-Rada of Uniflor Colombia passed the gavel to the group's new president, Marla O'Dell of Berwick Offray.

"If there's one way to describe Marla's executive ability, it's that she gets things done," Cock-Rada promised from the podium "I'm very proud to introduce our next president and to have a woman at the helm."

Molly Alton Mullins, executive vice president of WF&FSA, said the event was one of the group's largest conferences. 🌿

### POWER PARTNERS

At the annual WF&FSA conference, Santiago Cock-Rada of Uniflor Colombia passed the gavel to the group's new president Marla O'Dell of Berwick Offray.



"generous" financial contributions from FTD, the California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers and the Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association as well as "individuals across the country who have so generously supported these efforts."

Find out more: [aifdfoundation.org/index.php/donations](http://aifdfoundation.org/index.php/donations). 🌿



### HELPING HANDS

One hundred percent of funds collected for the AIFD Foundation's hurricane relief funds will go to floral industry members hard hit by the storms.

# Your Digital Brand

BY CRYSTAL VILKAITIS

## BENCHMARKING SOCIAL

> The beauty of social media marketing: it provides you with lots of data. The challenge of evaluating social media marketing: knowing what to do with all that data—and how to determine which information is most valuable to your business.

This holiday season, I challenge you to pencil in time to reflect on your social media efforts and evaluate their return on investment (ROI). For a business owner, it's tough to find time to evaluate where your business is and decide where you want it to go. If you ignore these tasks, however, you risk repeating the same mistakes and missing new opportunities.

### Best Tracking Practices in Place

When tracking social ROI, keep in mind the many variables that go into any campaign. Determining ROI is therefore subjective—it depends on your goals. Some factors you might consider for organic and advertised posts:

- Number of in-store or online sales
- Followers gained
- Number of interactions (comments, post likes, reactions, etc.) or clicks
- E-mail addresses acquired
- Number of live views or overall video views
- Advertising reach
- Number of event attendees

Remember, for any given effort, you may be interested in more than one variable.

To properly evaluate your social efforts, you need to gather good data. Consider these tactics:

- Give customers a word or phrase on social media to present at checkout for a discount (in-store or online). Remember to create codes for your Facebook Live videos, too.
- Ask customers to show that they follow you on Facebook for a discount.
- Ask customers, "What made you come in/visit our site today?"
- Run an Offer Ad and track redemptions.

If you aren't using these approaches, add them to your to-do list for 2018. You'll have better data to rely on this time next year.

### Evaluating Specific Efforts

Now, let's take a quick look at how you can use tools already available on social media platforms to better evaluate specific efforts.

#### Facebook Insights

Year-end is a perfect time to go into your Insights and to see how you are performing section by section:

The **Followers** tab shows you which days you earned the most followers, which can help you figure out which ads or emails brought in those likes.

The **Posts** tab shows you when the bulk of your fans are online so that you can focus on putting out posts at the right time.

The **People** tab shows you demographics of the people who like your page, as well as the demographics of the people who engaged with your page, giving you a better idea of who you should be marketing and talking to on social media.



**DATA GALORE** Facebook's People tab provides a wealth of info on the demographics of your followers.

Track relevant metrics in an Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheet. Do this monthly to get a better understanding of when engagement and reach rise and fall. Once you can see the big picture, take a look at why certain posts perform well and others don't.

Remember, you can get Facebook Ad Insights from the **Facebook Ads Manager**. Here, you want the lowest cost per action (click, like, etc.) possible, to make the most of your budget and reach more people.

#### Facebook Live

Look at how many views you're getting, how many people engage with your video and how long people stay on for your broadcast. Find this information by clicking "Publishing Tools" and then "Video Library" on your page. From the same page, you'll see all of your videos, live and pre-recorded, as well as their views. Click on one of your live videos, and you'll get an in-depth breakdown, including peak live viewers, average video watch time and the percentage of people who watched for at least 10 seconds.

#### Look to the Future

By identifying trends in your social media posts, you can understand what works and what doesn't. You may also want to break down posts by which performed best organically and which performed best when advertised.

From all of your posts, pick out your top and bottom 10, based on your high-priority factor (likes, shares, comments, organic reach, etc.). What do these posts have in common? Maybe they follow the same format (they ask a question, explicitly ask followers to comment or include a photo). Work those common denominators into your 2018 marketing.

You may also find that your top posts are videos, which typically get better organic reach than posts with just text or text and images. If so, focus more attention on video in 2018. 📺

**Crystal Vilkaitis** is a social media teacher, owner of **Crystal Media** [heycrystalmedia.com](http://heycrystalmedia.com), and founder of **Social Edge**, a membership website for retailers on social media trends and changes, [socialedge.co](http://socialedge.co).



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## Business of Design

### HAUTE DESIGNS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

> Gone are the days of strict design rules, whether that's segregating flower categories or decorating exclusively with red and green in December.

"Customers appreciate new and fresh looks," said Michael Derouin, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, PFCI. The director of floral design at McArdle's Florist & Garden Center in Greenwich, Connecticut, finds that embellishing soft, luxurious blossoms such as roses and hydrangeas with unexpected accent flowers satisfies clients' hunger for something traditional, yet esoteric.

"Mixing textures creates movement, which instantly raises a design's perceived value," he said. "A lot of times, filler takes a backseat to focal flowers, but it shouldn't. There's a wide world to choose from, allowing us to create countless looks — and consumers like seeing variety."

Here are two of McArdle's specials for this holiday season. 🌿

**Katie Hendrick** [khendrick@safnow.org](mailto:khendrick@safnow.org)

Find complete recipes at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).



**LOVELY LACE** "Petite designs are so popular during the holidays," Derouin said. "It's a great hostess gift because it's understated. You don't have to worry about it competing with the recipient's existing decor." The trendy chocolate Queen Anne's lace and hypericum berries juxtapose with the softness of the garden and spray roses for visual interest. Design time: 5 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$8.50. Suggested retail price: \$35.



**CHOCOLATE DREAMS** Derouin filled this 22-inch birch box with intriguing textures, including bupleurum, artichokes, millet and scabiosa pods. "This is geared for a more 'organic clientele' who likes a little whimsy and the farm-to-table look," he said. The design's natural coloring would suit most households' decor. Design time: 15 to 20 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$80. Suggested retail price: \$250.



M

— MAGNUM —

# MAGNUM

**XXL FLOWER****HUNDREDS OF PETALS****STRONG STEM****LONG LASTING BEAUTY**

The word 'magnum' means 'big', and this is exactly why we called this disbudded chrysanthemum Magnum.

Its flower is huge: to call Magnum a size XXL is no exaggeration! Not only does its flower get even bigger in the vase as the weeks go by, but it also becomes more spherical. This large eye-catching white flower with bright green at its centre is simply packed with petals. In fact, Magnum has so many ray petals that the flower never opens completely to reveal any disc petals in its centre, even after weeks in the vase. Magnum is an ultra-strong variety that has passed every transport and post-harvest shelf life test with ease – and without any sign of petal damage or loss. These chrysanthemums are delivered in a net – not to prevent any damage but simply to get enough of these large flowers into their box. This unique flower with its high petal count, sturdy stems and beautiful green leaves has already reaped rave reviews. With the introduction of Magnum, Deliflor is taking a new step in chrysanthemums. Magnum will become available in quantities of around 40,000 stems a week early in April.

**More information**

[www.deliflor.com](http://www.deliflor.com), [info@deliflor.com](mailto:info@deliflor.com), [www.facebook.com/deliflor](https://www.facebook.com/deliflor)

**DELIFLOR**

**New Products** BY SHEILA SANTIAGO / [SSANTIAGO@SAFNOW.ORG](mailto:ssantiago@safnow.org)

**GIFT GIVING GUIDE**



**MAN CAVE ESSENTIALS**

Shopping for guys is notoriously tough, but Pavilion Gift Company makes it fun with its “Man Made” line, which includes items like mugs, plaques, caps, glasses, bottle openers and coasters — each with fresh style and savvy purpose. Embellished with sentiments like “Love You Dad” and “You’re My Hero,” these gifts are sure to make any man enjoy the special moments in life. > [PavilionGift.com](http://PavilionGift.com)



**TOUGH GUY TOOLS**

Get the party started with these fun “Beerd” bottle openers! These stainless steel contraptions come presented on a smart cardboard sleeve, decorated with a hand-knit wool hat and beard. Consider this the perfect stocking stuffer. > [BinkDavies.com](http://BinkDavies.com)



**SWEET SELECTIONS**

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Wine-A-Rita has the goods to throw one heckuva fiesta! Choose from five powdered drink mixes: Wine Glacé, Peach Bellini, Cosmo Rita, Senorita and Berry Pom-a-Rita (which includes blueberry and pomegranate — rich sources of antioxidants). Blend with a favorite red wine or serve alcohol free. > [WineGlace.com](http://WineGlace.com)



**SEA SOAK**

Help customers upgrade their bubble bath game with this powdered formula from Salacia Salts. Free of chemicals or additives, it produces luxurious foam that will melt stresses away. It's available in five irresistible scents: Citrus, Coconut, Shoreline, Peach and Seersucker. Pitch this as a romantic upgrade for Valentine's Day arrangements. > [SalaciaSalts.com](http://SalaciaSalts.com)

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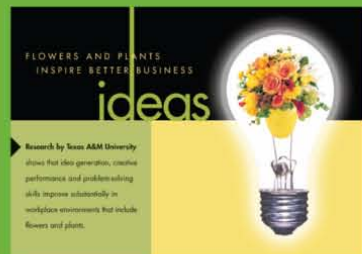
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# Quality BY TERRIL A. NELL, PH.D., AAF

## LONG-LASTING ACCENTS

➤ Designers rely on cut foliage and so-called filler flowers to enhance the beauty of arrangements and bouquets. To meet or exceed customers' expectations, these flowers need to last as long or longer than all of the other flowers in the arrangement.

Specialty cut flowers often have special needs, and they require careful handling from the time they arrive in your store. The table below provides information on the care of some of the main filler flowers. First, let's review key care and handling factors:

**Stage of Development:** Cut flowers' performance depends on the stage of openness of the flowers. If harvested when they are too tight, flowers' colors may fade — or they may not open at all.

**Flower Food:** Flower foods provide the sugar (energy) for flowers to open, along with other materials that acceler-

ate water uptake and control microbial activity, thus keeping stems clean for maximum water uptake. With some specialty flowers, full-strength flower food may accelerate leaf yellowing. In the table below, flower food refers to full-strength products, such as Floralife 300 series or Chrysal No. 3. Low-sugar flower food refers to storage and transport products, such as Floralife 200 series and Chrysal No. 2 products.

**Temperature:** Most flowers need cold temperatures (33 F-36 F) for optimum flower life. Some flowers, however, are cold-sensitive and must be maintained between 50 F and 60 F. The ideal temperature varies by flower type.

**Ethylene:** Ethylene is an odorless, naturally occurring gas that kills many flower types. Dead and decaying fruits, vegetables and flowers produce ethylene, but it's also produced internally by old

flowers or flowers that have been damaged by high temperatures, wilting or vibration. Ethylene-sensitive flowers can be treated to prevent damage from ethylene.

**Sanitation:** All flowers require cleanliness. Dirty buckets and clippers can contaminate solutions and block the flow of water up flower stems. Likewise, dirty cooler walls, benches and design tables can result in the spread of diseases, such as Botrytis. 🌿

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### Cheat Sheet for Long-Lasting Accent Flowers

Filler Flower	Stage of Development	Flower Food	Temperature	Ethylene Sensitivity
<b>Aster</b>	3-4 open flowers and other flowers showing color	Yes	33 F-35 F	No
<b>Eucalyptus</b>	Hardened leaves	Yes, at retail and consumer stages	35 F-38 F	Yes, depends on species. Will produce ethylene if damaged
<b>Hellebore</b>	Fully colored flowers	Yes	33 F-35 F	No
<b>Stalice</b>	40% of flowers open	Yes	33 F-35 F	Yes
<b>Solidago</b>	25-50% of flowers open	Yes	35 F-40 F	Yes, slightly
<b>Poinsettia</b>	Bracts colored and 2-3 cyathia open	Yes, low-sugar formulation	55 F-60 F	Yes, slightly
<b>Queen Anne's Lace</b>	80% of flowers open	Yes	33 F-36 F	Yes
<b>Safflower</b>	Buds have begun to open and flowers show color	Yes	35 F-40 F	No
<b>Veronica</b>	33-50% of flowers open	Yes, low-sugar formulation	35 F-40 F	Yes
<b>Star of Bethlehem</b>	Well-colored flowers	Yes	35 F-40 F	Yes, slightly

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