

floral management

THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY

JANUARY 2018 | VOLUME 34 | NUMBER 8

FACE THE FUTURE

Industry leaders get real
about challenges and
opportunities in 2018.





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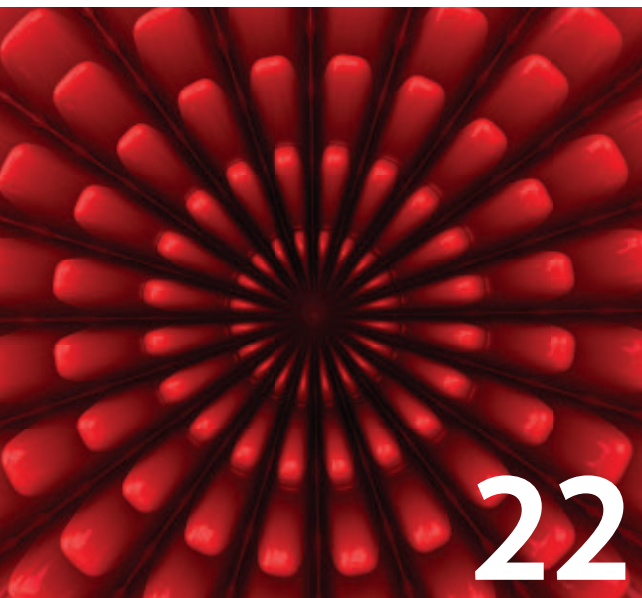
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THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY JANUARY 2018 | VOLUME 34 | NUMBER 8



22

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Floral Management asked industry leaders to share their key challenges and opportunities for 2018, and beyond. Here's what they had to say.

30

AN INSIDE JOB

SAF arms interior designers with Mother Nature's original accent piece: FLOWERS.

34

GOAL KEEPING FOR THE FINANCIAL WIN

The new year is the perfect time to make plans, and set goals, for the short- and long-term.



- | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 2 | VIEWPOINT | 18 | GROWTH |
| 4 | WHAT INSPIRES US | 20 | FRESH CHOICES |
| 4 | MORE ONLINE | 36 | INDUSTRY NEWS |
| 6 | AD INDEX | 38 | FIELD TRIP |
| 8 | MEMBER FORUM | 40 | YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY |
| 10 | SAF IN ACTION | 42 | BUSINESS OF DESIGN |
| 12 | SNAPSHOT | 44 | NEW PRODUCTS |
| 14 | SMART SELLING | 46 | CLASSIFIEDS |
| 16 | TALENT | 48 | QUALITY |



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BUILDING AN EVEN BETTER SAF

> During my first board meeting as CEO, SAF President Bill LaFever asked the board, "If you were Kate's best friend, what advice would you give her?" The question elicited all kinds of much appreciated wisdom from a board that represents some of the most progressive businesses in our industry. One piece of advice in particular stood out, from Dr. Marvin Miller, of Ball Horticultural: "When you look in the mirror, know who you are, as well as who you are not." In other words, know my strengths, and be sure I surround myself with people who possess skills I lack.

A longtime believer in the management adage "hire people who are smarter than you," I immediately appreciated Dr. Miller's advice, but even more so as I lead SAF into the future. While I bring to the position a journalist's curiosity, an editor's nose-to-the-grindstone work ethic and a level of compassion for our members that's a result of spending 30 years working for our industry, it's the collective and diverse talent and smarts on our SAF staff, combined with the immense braintrust within the SAF board and councils, that will enable me to lead SAF in the work we have ahead.

And we have some work to do. A major priority on my to-do list is to make sure SAF is serving the needs of our members — you — to the very best of our ability. From member surveys and lots of direct interaction — and thanks to the longtime leadership of former CEO Peter Moran — I know we do many things well. I also know that there's always room for improvement. For every SAF member who can tell you in no uncertain terms why they are an SAF member, there are probably two others who couldn't even begin to articulate it.

That's a problem we need to address. An engaged member is someone who's using our marketing tools and business education to drive sales — and grow their business. They're attending our events so they can stay up on industry trends and meet new suppliers, customers and peers — and grow their business. They're taking part in our lobbying efforts so that we have a healthier, more productive industry. The more engaged retailers, wholesalers, growers and suppliers SAF has in its membership, the healthier the industry. So increasing not only member numbers but

also member engagement is a big priority moving forward. Because it makes for a stronger industry.

We know that each segment faces some pretty fierce competitive forces. Retailers must work harder than ever to protect their online brand with organic and paid SEO and social strategy. That challenge just got tougher as we've seen some non-local marketers get into the Google Local listings space. Wholesalers must work harder than ever to retain their retail customer base and develop new markets — all while operating in an environment where last-minute buying has become the MO for many retailers. Growers must work harder than ever to compete with imported product, stay ahead of regulations and retain a labor force amidst increasing minimum wages and lack of immigration reform. The slew of storms and fires through the fall and early winter have created challenges for growers in certain markets, as has the legalization of cannabis in several states around the country.

All segments must work harder than ever to attract and retain a talented workforce, and deal with the peaks and valleys of sales. The good news is that demand for locally grown product, specialty flowers as well as foliage and greens in weddings, has increased significantly. That's a great opportunity for our growers and our industry as a whole.

Despite these challenges, I'm optimistic about this new role that I've been entrusted with. I'm excited to build on the successful programs and services our members rely on — our publications, SAF's annual convention and Profit Blast, marketing materials, government relations outreach and PR initiatives, including Petal It Forward, which saw record participation rates last fall. Likewise, I'm eager to work with our team, board and councils to develop new ones, so that all of our members can not only navigate but thrive in today's competitive business environment. 🌱



Kate F. Penn is the CEO of the Society of American Florists.

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What Inspires Us

> Late last year, we reached out to industry leaders with a series of questions: What challenges are you facing? Where do you see opportunity? What about the floral industry as a whole — what are the big hurdles? Where's the space to grow?

The answers we received were wide ranging. People shared their viewpoint on Amazon and millennials. Supply chain slowdowns, workforce development and rising costs. The requirements of digital marketing and new technology. They talked about a need to increase floral consumption year-round, not just around established flower holidays. And they brought up the reality that consumers' expectations are shifting — and the fact that those expectations vary, sometimes greatly, by generation.

The answers were not, unfortunately, silver bullets. We didn't expect them to be. Many of the issues broached in our cover story on **p. 22** have been topics of conversation for years, even decades. For many of the challenges, there really are no easy answers.

But here's what we did find: Good discussions. Thoughtful and thought-provoking perspectives. That was our goal in this story. It's a goal we intend to return to throughout the year, as we cover the industry, the people who make

it great and the issues — including many featured in this month's story — that we all care about.

As we mapped out this issue, we also wanted to give readers some inspiration and practical ideas to kick off the new year. We're thrilled to welcome Tim Huckabee back to the pages of *Floral Management*. Through his new column, **Smart Selling (p. 14)**, Tim makes the case that florists need to radically rethink how they sell flowers, and how they communicate, train and empower staff. Each issue, you'll find Tim's outlook in his column, but you'll also find additional material to complement his advice online. It's an interactive, info-packed endeavor, and we want to hear how you like it.

We're also really excited to have Manny Gonzales of Tiger Lily in Charleston, South Carolina, as a contributing writer for our popular **Growth column (p. 18)**. This month, Manny lays out four principles he and his wife, Clara, have embraced to push Tiger Lily from a shop on the point of bankruptcy to a thriving business with a dedicated, growing customer base.

Finally, we're introducing a new column, **Field Trip (p. 38)**. In this space, we want to tell you more about some of the cutting edge — and oc-



casionally pretty wild — innovations happening at the breeder and grower level — new techniques, inventions and ideas that help to improve flowers and plants, making them stronger and even more beautiful.

Most important, this year, we want to continue to hear from you. If you have a comment, a compliment, a correction or criticism, please let us know. Every interaction with our readers makes us better. In fact, those interactions are our most important conversations. We look forward to hearing from you this year and helping your business grow. 🌿

Mary Westbrook
mwestbrook@safnow.org

More Online ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON WWW.SAFNOW.ORG



FOUR MORE 1-DAY PROFIT BLASTS

SAF's popular 1-Day Profit Blast is gearing up for four dates in 2018. The first stop on the educational roadshow is Omaha on Jan. 14. Check safnow.org/1-day-profit-blast to see if the can't-miss event — packed with design, sales, technology and management education along with a Supplier Showcase — is coming to a city near you!



FALL HOLIDAY RESULTS

How did your shop compare to other retailers for the fall holidays — Halloween, Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday? Check out the results of SAF's recent post-holiday survey by searching "Fall Survey" at safnow.org.



MORE RESPONSIVE READING

Love to read *Floral Management* on the go? Now it's even easier. *Floral Management* now has a fully responsive digital edition. Members can access new issues at floralmanagement-digital.com/floralmanagement.



VALENTINE'S DAY PREP

Valentine's Day resources — you know you want them. SAF has free tools and advice that can help you stand out this holiday. Check out safnow.org/ValentinesDay for web and social media graphics and banners, tips on handling negative floral references, best practices on getting reporters' attention and so much more.

Holly Heider Chapple *exclusively for* SYNDICATE

Syndicate has partnered with Holly Chapple to create an exclusive collection of design mechanics and compotes to complement and celebrate Holly's signature, decadent look.



The line features two new design mechanics, affectionately known as the 'egg' and the 'pillow', as well as beautifully-designed, luxe quality glass and plastic compotes.



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- [Youtube.com/SAFVision](https://www.youtube.com/SAFVision)
- [Flickr.com/SocietyofAmericanFlorists](https://www.flickr.com/SocietyofAmericanFlorists)



Industry Members Weigh In on SAF's 1-Day Profit Blast in Louisville



> When an educational event is within even 100 miles of you, mark your calendar and attend. It will be worth the travel time and minimal expenses incurred. You'll learn something, meet new flower friends and share ideas, and leave ready to take back new tools to improve yourself and your shop. Make the time. You owe it to yourself, your staff and your clients.

Carolyn Minutillo, AIFD, EMC, Lavender Hill
Jeffersonville, Indiana

> I gained knowledge about how to better market ourselves through Facebook. I also appreciate knowing how we fall short in selling and [how to improve] our phone presentation as florists.

Natalie Combs, Green Thumb
Landscaping & Garden Center,
St. Anthony and Jasper, Indiana

> I can't think of a good reason for any florist not to attend a Profit Blast event in their area. The education is always top-notch, the events are well-run, and the networking is incredibly valuable.

Ryan Freeman, Strider
Woodbridge, Ontario

> Everyone should attend and learn about all aspects of our ever-changing business in the floral industry.

Mark Vahrmeyer, Rosaflora
Dunnville, Ontario

> Profit Blast is a good place to meet people from the industry, learn what others are doing, and how to become more profitable.

Carlos Espinosa, Flowers2give
Ecuador

CORRECTION: In the October issue of Floral Management, we misidentified the location of Seville, Florida, in relation to Daytona Beach ("Summer of Storms," p. 30). We regret the error — and thank Chaim Casper of Surf Florist Inc. in Miami for pointing out the mistake.



As Seen on
uBloom.com

A large, close-up photograph of a bouquet of pink and white roses. A wide, vibrant red ribbon is artfully draped and tied around the stems of the bouquet, which is resting on a dark, textured surface.

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PERSONAL STORIES PAY OFF ON CAPITOL HILL

> Every voice counts when it comes to persuading legislators to consider the industry's concerns. That's why the Society of American Florists invites you to lobby with us during the 38th Annual Congressional Action Days, March 12-13, in Washington, D.C.

Legislative victories last year prove that sharing your stories with Congress makes a difference: Soon after florists asked their representatives to allot \$250,000 to the Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative, the House Appropriations Committee wrote a recommendation doubling that amount. Members' warnings that a proposed border adjustment tax would cause the price of flowers to spike and devastate Main Street retailers brought it to a halt. And florists' efforts renewed the call for comprehensive immigration reform.

To register, visit safnow.org/congressional-action-days.



EASY-PEASY Molly Meulenbroek of Studley Flower Gardens in Rochester, New Hampshire, who attended CAD for the first time last year, said, "It turned out to be a truly empowering experience to know my voice was heard."

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE



MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018

7:30-9 a.m.

KICK - OFF BREAKFAST



JIM RICHARDS

Speakers: Jim Richards and Todd Webster, Cornerstone Government Affairs

Two strategists on opposite ends of the political spectrum share "point/counterpoint" insights into how Washington works and the issues facing the nation.



TODD WEBSTER

9:30 a.m. - Noon

ISSUES AND ADVOCACY TRAINING

Find out how to talk about key industry issues. SAF lobbyists explain the issues we're taking to Capitol Hill, and you get a hands-on lesson in effective Hill communications from professional lobbyist trainer Stephanie Vance.

Noon - 12:45 p.m.

LUNCH

Network and strategize with participants from your state or region over lunch.

1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

NEWSEUM

During this unique networking event, we return to the Newseum for a conversation-inspiring experience. The Newseum's interactive exhibits deal with some of the most vital incidents in history, using the incredible work of the free press as its guide.

6:00 - 9:30 p.m.

SAFPAC RECEPTION AND DINNER*



JAMES ROSEN

Speaker: James Rosen, Chief Washington Correspondent for the FOX News Channel

With deep historical knowledge and a smart, honest perspective, James

Rosen explores Washington politics from the inside out. Learn and laugh through the lens of this veteran TV personality, journalist and author.

**There is an additional fee to attend this event celebrating SAF's Political Action Committee. SAFPAC supports SAF's lobbying efforts and brings visibility to the floral industry by contributing to the campaigns of federal candidates. To learn more, contact Drew Gruenberg at (703) 838-5229; dgruenberg@safnow.org.*

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018

7:30 - 9 a.m.

GRASSROOTS BREAKFAST

It's your big day! Start with a pep talk from a member of Congress who explains why it's important for lawmakers to hear from you.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

CONGRESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Tell lawmakers about how laws and regulations affect your business, employees and community. Wear comfy dress shoes, and we'll give you a wearable flower and take you to Capitol Hill to visit congressional offices.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Hospitality Suite at the Capitol Hill Club
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5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

DAY'S END RECEPTION*

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SAF'S PETAL IT FORWARD WINS DISTINGUISHED ASSOCIATION AWARD

> The Society of American Florists was named a 2017 Power of A Gold Award winner for Petal It Forward.

The Power of A awards, presented by the American Society of Association Executives, recognize organizations that distinguish themselves with "innovative, effective and broad-reaching programs and activities that positively impact America and the world."

Jennifer Sparks, SAF's vice president of marketing, said the award application was based on SAF's 2016 Petal It Forward effort, which included 264 events in 232 cities in all 50 states. "Who knew at the time that our 2017 Petal It Forward participation would more than double?" she said of the October 11 event, which included 573 local efforts in 467 cities nationwide plus Canada.

Petal It Forward is supported by the SAF Fund for Nationwide Public Relations, which supports nationwide PR efforts that promote flowers and florists to consumers through groundbreaking research and media outreach, as well as AboutFlowers.com and AboutFlowersBlog.com.



HONORED "It was important to us to show the association community a prime example of the strength, generosity and dedication of the floral industry to make the world a better place," said SAF's Jennifer Sparks.

DETAILS FLOWERS PARTNERSHIP DELIVERS MEMBER SAVINGS

> To help members build stronger, more profitable weddings and events, the Society of American Florists has teamed up with Details Flowers Software.

The Details platform streamlines proposals, simplifies the payment process, and ensures clients are profitable down to each arrangement. Through a new partnership, SAF members who have never signed up for Details can receive a 14-day free trial and a 15 percent discount on the full-price monthly or annual subscription rate for the software.

"We want to help SAF retailers compete — profitably — in the expanding and highly competitive weddings and event arena," said SAF CEO Kate Penn.

Growers and wholesalers also benefit with business from florists using Details. Wedding flower orders are generated and communicated easily to suppliers in the Details platform.

"Details is your silent but financially savvy business partner," says CEO and Founder Corrine Heck. "We're helping to make sure that our florists are profitable on every event. Our team is looking forward to helping more members of the SAF community."

Use invitation code **SAF Rewards** at detailsflowers.com. For information about SAF's business partners, discount programs and services available through membership, go to safnow.org/business-discounts.



NEW BENEFIT Mary McCarthy, AIFD, of The Blooming Idea in The Woodlands, Texas, noted that the conversion rate from bridal and corporate proposals has increased dramatically since she became a Details subscriber.

COUNTDOWN TO CUPID

> Journalists report the good, the bad and the ugly of Valentine's Day. Right now, they're in research mode, posing as consumers ordering flowers. If your shop's looking great and your service is impeccable, you're sure to make the grade on test orders (and look good in news stories). For interview tips and more, visit safnow.org/vday.

Additionally, gift competitors love to hype "forget flowers" in their Valentine's Day advertisements. As the voice of the industry, SAF sets the record straight with the advertiser. See an example of negative publicity? Report it to SAF's Jenny Scala at jscala@safnow.org.



BE NICE As the voice of the floral industry, the Society of American Florists contacts companies that disparage flowers and asks them to reconsider their marketing approach, such as we did with the Buca di Beppo restaurant chain last year.

SAF DUES ANNOUNCEMENT

The SAF Board of Directors approved a 3 percent dues increase for 2018 so the association can continue to provide the quality content and practical products and services members value and expect. Dues are not tax-deductible as a charitable contribution but may be reported as an ordinary and necessary business expense (except 16 percent, since it constitutes SAF's direct expense for lobbying activities). Questions? Contact Krissy Doyle at kdoyle@safnow.org.

snapshot

Blumz by...JRDesigns HOLLY MILL, ILL. 1

NICE AND BALANCED The sage green color on the building's exterior was pre-existing. Yelverton and Raska liked the soothing shade. The rest of the outside required a bit of TLC. "A little power washing of the cedar shingles on the awning, a little cosmetic redesigning of the doors and windows to make them more balanced and a brand-new sign put us in shape," Yelverton said. They plan to add window boxes soon. In the back of the store, they replaced the original door with a glass version, to allow for more light and create a second entrance. "That change also allowed us to add a ramp to the sales floor for clients who may have difficulty with steps," he said.



A NEW SPACE THAT ALREADY FEELS LIKE HOME

➤ Not long ago, Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, CF, MCF, PFCI, and Jerome Raska, AIFD, AAF, PFCI, CF, realized they were ready for a change — namely, moving from their 4,000-square-foot home to new digs about a quarter of that size. That required serious downsizing — “purging,” as Yelverton put it — yet some of their most treasured possessions (dining room table, china cabinet, coffee table, dresser) found a home almost immediately in their newest store. The shop in Holly, Michigan, is the third location of Blumz by...JRDesigns, a business that also has shops in nearby Ferndale and Detroit. The building dates to the 1800s and was used to service horse-drawn funeral hearses before becoming a hardware store, a restaurant and, most recently, an antique shop. “It was only right that we kept the eclectic historic feeling,” said Yelverton. “Jerome and I are from small towns. Coming to Holly was like going back home.” 🌿



HISTORIC FEEL The Holly store has approximately 2,300 square feet of showroom and design area and an open floor plan. “Our merchandise is similar in all three stores, but the way it is displayed is different,” Yelverton said. “Each community, from the urban lofts of downtown Detroit to the funky vibe of Ferndale and the small-town historic nature of Holly, plays to a different audience.”

DETAILS MATTER Yelverton and Raska have purposefully retained the integrity of the older building. “I love the feeling of heritage, history and village life that the store still maintains even after our changes,” Yelverton said. “From the original tin ceiling in the front entrance, the chandelier, the repurposed doors and windows used throughout the store to the hand-carved wooden beam that we found behind the drop ceiling tiles that support the floor above.” A side door connects to the store’s neighbor, Holly Antiques; customers can go back and forth between the businesses. “We’re told that the antique store is haunted,” Yelverton added with a laugh, “but we have yet to meet the ‘occupant.’”





No. 1

This is the first in a 10-part series aimed at empowering Floral Management readers to build a foundation month by month, sale by sale, for higher sales, more confident employees and happier customers.

LET YOUR CUSTOMERS SPEND MORE!

> Nearly every florist I've ever worked with has heard this complaint: "I was so disappointed. The arrangement wasn't at all what I thought it would be. If I had just been told that I needed to spend more, I would have!"

That feedback cuts me like a knife, because the customer is saying the flowers were pretty, fresh, fragrant and well-designed, and that they arrived on time and lasted, but the customer is also saying that the florist didn't meet their expectations on size. (Subtext from the customer: "I was undersold.")

Ironically, customers do want to spend more — we just don't let them! (The one call I've never heard of is the customer who says, "This arrangement is TOO big and TOO beautiful. Please come and pick it up!")

Why are we SO afraid to offer customers the chance to spend? We hate talking money. We're afraid to hear "no." But selling is our business. "Sales" is NOT a dirty word.

To survive, we have to do better. If you really want to improve sales, you can't start with the final transaction. You need to break bad habits that are ingrained in every department — sales, design, delivery and management — throughout the year.

That's where this column and its online complement at floralstrategies.com/SAF come in. This year, I want to challenge you and your staff to do a better job selling and to let customers spend at 2018, not 1998, levels! Each month, I'll present a topic in this space, but there will also be more — lots more — online to augment and expand the topic, giving you tools, coaching, inspiration and Tim-style tough love!

First up: Let's talk staff meetings.

WHAT'S HAPPENING: When I ask most owners about how often they hold store meetings, I get a glazed, fuzzy stare, or they tell me about an impromptu session they organized right before Valentine's Day. No agenda. Five minutes max. Certainly no follow-through.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN: By my definition, a quick pep talk two weeks before a holiday

doesn't qualify as a productive meeting.

Floral industry owners and managers are often reluctant to hold meetings. They worry that the meetings will turn into a complaint-fest or that staff won't participate, and the meetings will be a waste of time. But let's leave those worries in the past. Conducting regularly scheduled, productive meetings is relatively easy with a little advance planning and some strategy. Here are some tips:

Timing. Choose your dates now for the rest of the year and post them on a shared calendar. You may meet once a month or on any schedule you like; however, I suggest four quarterly dates as the bare minimum. After hours is the optimal time to hold your meetings so you're not interrupted by customers or vendors. (Yes, you have to pay your staff for their time, and make sure they know it!) I recommend aiming for an hour. You can always let them go early.

Topics. Tell your team ahead of time why you have all-staff meetings: to gather as a group and discuss running the store more efficiently, covering everything from sales and service to upcoming holidays, customer feedback, new designs and trends, and more. Explain that you want, need and look forward to their feedback and participation.

Follow Up. The day after the meeting, provide written minutes (a bullet-point recap is fine) so there is accountability and an action plan for topics covered.

STILL SKEPTICAL? That first meeting will run more smoothly and be more fruitful than you think, I promise. If not, call me, and I will set up a webinar session and hold the next store meeting with your staff myself! 🌱

Tim Huckabee, FSC, is the president of FloralStrategies, which provides customer service, sales and POS system training to retail and wholesale florists. tim@floralstrategies.com



"Ironically, customers do want to spend more — we just don't let them!"



You're Not Done Reading!

Head online to floralstrategies.com/SAF for downloadable tools, including handouts for staff. This month, you'll discover additional information on meeting topics and ensuring staff attendance, along with a sample meeting agenda. Plus, visit safnow.org/moreonline for a video primer on this topic.

Leave **RECIPIENTS**
in 'AWE'
with your shop...

When they
see how long
their flowers
last!!



Provide an 'AWE'some customer experience
from processing to delivery!

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.

Conditioning



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

Optimizing designs

Use the best products to keep the flowers fresh and hydrated at all times. **MAKE IT A ZERO BROKEN GLASS HOLIDAY!**



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!

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

CHARITY REEL
Sales Associate
Mayesh Wholesale Florist
Houston

➤ Twenty years ago, Charity Reel joined Mayesh Wholesale as a “young, impressionable person who knew nothing about the floral industry.” At the time, she was working for Airborne Express, a competitor of FedEx and UPS. She pitched Mayesh on the cargo air company’s services — and was turned down — but the national sales manager called her later: Any chance Mayesh could hire her? Reel has spent her entire floral career based in Los Angeles, where a big part of her job started in sales, scouting, developing and sustaining new customers. She worked her way to sales manager and applied those same skills to help build the sales staff of the company’s L.A. shipping division. She heads to the company’s Houston branch this month, to bring her skills to a new market and a local, versus national, sales floor.

How I find great salespeople:

“I beat the streets. I go to places with a stressful, multi-tasking environment — the Starbucks drive-thru. I watch and observe. I understand that world: I was a 15-year-old once, working at Wienerschnitzel, running the fry machine. It’s not a rewarding job. You don’t make much money. You have to be happy and enthusiastic. You’re dealing with a computer system, perishable product and customers — and you’re following an organi-

zation’s brand guidelines. Anybody who can do that well is someone I’m interested in.”

The qualities I look for in potential employees:

“Passion. One of my most rewarding hires worked at a local sandwich shop. She kept trying to get me to try their pastrami sandwich. I’d turn her down, and she’d persist — ‘Oh, but you’ve never tried our pastrami! It’s the best!’ Finally, I explained to her that I’m a vegetarian. By that point, I’d seen her enthusiasm and work ethic. I never poach employees directly, but I gave her my business card and said, ‘I’m looking for people who have your work ethic. Do you have friends or family looking for a job?’ Usually, when I do that, the person calls me soon after.”

The reason I don’t look for quick fixes:

“I’ll observe a potential hire several times before handing out a business card, and once we have a new team member, I give that person my heart and soul for a year, training them, helping them understand the industry, teaching them about our company and what we stand for. I think that time commitment is part of the reason we have such low turnover. It’s a little like raising kids. Set regular benchmarks. Be clear on expectations. There aren’t any shortcuts.”

Read more from Reel at safnow.org/moreonline.



PRACTICAL HR

#MeToo at Work?

Sexual harassment has been in the headlines a lot recently. Unfortunately, it’s nothing new. There are two types of sexual harassment, as defined by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act:

Quid Pro Quo

Unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors in exchange for something else from a supervisor to a subordinate.

Hostile Work Environment

Harassment that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. This can include jokes, text messages, posters, etc.

How can owners and managers prevent sexual harassment at work? Create an atmosphere where it doesn’t happen:

- Address harassment in your employee handbook. Define acceptable and unacceptable behavior and detail how and to whom employees should report the harassment.
- Model and communicate the behavior you want to see from employees.
- If you see inappropriate behavior — from employees or customers — take action. Stop the behavior. Don’t wait for a complaint.

Glenna Hecht, SPHR, is a speaker, trainer, consultant and author. Follow her HR blog at glennahecht.com. Glenna@glennahecht.com

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



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FOUR LASTING PRINCIPLES FOR GROWTH

> Twenty-two years ago, my wife, Clara, and I started our flower shop, Tiger Lily, mostly because we were looking for jobs.

At the time, the hotel where I'd worked for 12 years had just been sold. Clara was losing interest in her banking career. We were married, but no kids yet. We were at a crossroads. The one thing we knew was that we wanted to stay in our beloved Charleston, South Carolina. Maybe we should pursue the American Dream of owning a small business? Really, how hard could it be? Looking back, we were just smart enough, and just naive enough, to make it work.

We looked at a couple businesses to purchase and soon narrowed our choices down to a gift shop and a florist. Our selections were based on price: the lower the better. We decided on the florist because Clara had recently finished a six-session flower design class at our local community college. A couple months later, we were the proud owners of a failing flower shop: Tiger Lily.

The store had one employee, a part-time, know-it-all college student who came in late every day with wet hair. The previous year's sales were \$150,000. The delivery van wouldn't shift past third gear. The store was filled with beautiful poinsettias — in January. Let's just say we overpaid for the shop. It was the first of many mistakes.

That first month, I would stand in front of the cooler and try to remember the names of the flowers. I didn't know a gerbera from a glad. Clara threw herself into design and thankfully became pretty good quickly. Still, we systematically made every mistake we could possibly make. But we did learn from those mistakes and tried not to make them twice.

As we learned, things started turning around and sales increased. We still weren't making money though, and we were working more than we could have imagined. Our friends thought we were nuts. We almost went out of business. Twice. We persevered. When the dust settled after a few years, we knew we'd made it.

By then we had a couple kids, a great reputation, and a profitable business.

We've met so many great floral folks in our career — people who know a lot more than we do about the industry, from growers to distributors to wholesalers and retailers. We've also learned that it's easy to get overwhelmed. In many ways, the industry and retail have changed dramatically in the last two decades. On the other hand, owning a small business is still about value, quality and relationships, just as it was 2,000 years ago, when people traded food and fabrics under tents.

“Maybe we should pursue the American Dream of owning a small business? Really, how hard could it be? Looking back, we were just smart enough, and just naive enough, to make it work.”

Over the years, we've boiled down the critical elements of our success to the “4Ps,” a set of principles that guide all of our interactions and decisions. If our employees follow the 4Ps every day,

they thrive. If we as owners and managers follow the 4Ps daily, we do, too.

We believe the clear distillation of these principles has been central to our growth. Before we hire someone, and periodically thereafter, we talk about the importance of the 4Ps, and we remind each other about them, too. In no particular order, our 4Ps are:

Productive. Always be productive. Have fun, chit-chat, but stay productive. We all have a lot to do, and we all want to be home for supper. Our staff almost always leaves on time or earlier. Even during the busiest holidays, it's rare for us to work past seven.

Punctual. When you're supposed to be at work, be at work. It doesn't matter how good you are; if you're not here, you're not helping.

Positive. Always be positive, especially when things aren't going well. It's easy to be happy when it's payday, but being positive is critical when the flowers are wrong, deliveries are late, and the phone keeps ringing. Positivity breeds positivity. Negativity works the same way.

Professional. Our goal is to be the best florist in our town, period. Not only the best place to buy flowers but also the best place to work. We tell employees to be nice. Pay attention. Look good. Don't swear. Smile. Learn. Teach. Be honest. These are the traits of a professional. If you're not a pro, you're a hack. Hacks can work somewhere else. We want a team of pros.

As we enter the New Year, Clara and I have big plans. Some will go well, some won't. We'll have to adjust, adapt and overcome, but we'll still follow the 4Ps, no matter what, and that commitment will help us face any new challenge. 🌿



Manny Gonzales owns Tiger Lily Florist in Charleston, S.C., with his wife, Clara. Among other honors, Tiger Lily has been voted “Charleston's Best Florist” for 18 consecutive years. Manny and Clara live in Mount Pleasant with their kids, Luke and Ruby.

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&
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RAVISHING RUFFLES

> During the last decade, ranunculus has become a popular motif in fashion and design, thanks largely to Rifle Paper Co., which has grown from a boutique stationer in Winter Park, Florida, to a lifestyle brand that's collaborated with numerous national companies, including Paperless Post, J.Crew, Anthropologie, L'Occitane en Provence and Keds. As a result, consumers across the U.S. have come across calendars, journals, phone cases, pillows, tote bags, candles, coasters, wallpaper, sneakers and even temporary tattoos that sport a distinctive floral pattern with a certain ruffled bloom.

"It's the new fave with my clients," said Parie Donaldson, president of Parie Designs in Amarillo, Texas. "It has a devoted fan group, that's for sure," echoed Ami Harbig, CFD, a designer at The Flower Garden in Saugerties, New York. "We have a few customers who only want ranunculus." Fortunately, she added, they understand they've fallen for a premium flower that the shop does not always keep in stock, "so they give us a good heads-up before they need the order."

Susan McLeary, owner of Passionflower, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, whose floral jewelry pervades Pinterest, adores small varieties with a tight petal structure, which pair nicely with succulents, orchids, muscari and waxflower. "It's easy to glue to a cuff, ring or necklace, and it instantly increases the piece's perceived value," she said.

However, many florists, including Sharon McGukin, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, author of "Flowers of the Heart," harbor mixed feelings about ranunculus. "I love the concentric circles, which provide a demure and luxurious aesthetic, perfect for weddings," she said. But historically, the flower has been a bit of a gamble for designers. "I've received some that were strong and luscious and others so weak-stemmed, they were a lost cause," she said. "There was no rhyme or reason."

Breeders have taken this criticism under consideration and come up with a new technique to tackle the problem of inconsistency. "The biggest breakthrough in the world of ranunculus has been the way we propagate bulbs," said Henk Onings, owner of Onings Holland. Previously, this was done exclusively through seeds, "an inexpensive method," he said, "but it did not result in a homogenous lot of flowers." In the past few years, Biancheri Creations in Italy developed a system for cloning bulbs. "Now, the perfect variety — one that's not just pretty, but strong and productive — can simply be copied," Onings said. At the same time, Biancheri has focused on maintaining a strong mother plant stock to improve ranunculus varieties still produced by seed. 🌹

Katie Hendrick
khendrick@safnow.org



'CLONI FIRENZE'
El Milagro



'CLONI SUCCESS COMMEDIA'
El Milagro



'CLONI VENERE'
El Milagro



'THESEUS BUTTERFLY'
Florabundance



'HADES BUTTERFLY'
Florabundance



'PHYTALOS BUTTERFLY'
Florabundance



'CLONI SUCCESS GRAND PASTEL'
La Marca Flowers



'CLONI SUCCESS LAMBADA DETTAGLIO'
La Marca Flowers



'CLONI SUCCESS ROSADO'
La Marca Flowers



'ELEGANCE CAPPUCCINO'
Mayesh Wholesale



'CLONI PON-PON SILENTE'
Mayesh Wholesale



'PINK PERFECTION'
Mayesh Wholesale



'ELEGANCE BIANCO'
Onings Holland/Biancheri Creations



'CLONI PON-PON LUNA'
Onings Holland/Biancheri Creations



'CLONI SUCCESS FRAGOLINO'
Onings Holland/Biancheri Creations



Staying Updated
on Tech



Finding
Talent



NAVIGATING
UNCERTAINTY

WHAT COMES NEXT?



Selling More
Flowers

Floral Management asked industry
leaders to share their key challenges
and opportunities for 2018 and
beyond. Here's what they had to say.

BY MARY WESTBROOK



Attracting
Millennials



COMPETING
WITH
DISRUPTORS

The economy is good. The geopolitical scene is less certain. Consumers are confident. They also have more choices than ever, and they still spend far differently on flowers by generation. Social media and the internet give small business owners tools they never dreamed of — those same tools, though, often require high, sometimes overwhelming, levels of time and energy to maintain. Certain costs are higher, some supply chain standbys and standard processes are changing, and employees — reliable, dedicated workers — are still tough to find and keep, a tough predicament as some longtime floral industry members get a little grayer and look to pass the torch to the next generation.

Welcome to 2018, a new year with plenty for the floral industry to be excited about and also no shortage of challenges (new and long-standing) to work through.

Floral Management recently reached out to heads of national companies and groups and some of our longtime volunteer leaders to find out what they are worrying about, strategizing over and feeling good about in this new year. What we found: full to-do lists and measures of both optimism and caution. What we didn't find: easy answers or quick fixes. 🌸



HELPING THE INDUSTRY STAY COMPETITIVE

KATE PENN CEO, SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS



I'm excited about: "Consumer confidence is at its highest level in 17 years, while unemployment is also at its lowest in the same time frame. This recent consumer confidence, coupled with a strong labor market survey, suggests that 2018 could be a strong year for the industry."



A challenge for the industry: "The impact of hurricanes and fires through the last quarter of the year will linger well into 2018 for industry members in and served by suppliers in those markets. Industrywide, health care and labor costs are rising for all segments. Finding talent is a challenge all segments can relate to — some say it is the industry's biggest issue."



I think a lot about: "The quality of our industry's product has never been better, thanks to research that's led to better breeding, growing and post-harvest practices. But businesses are plagued by peaks and valleys. We have to level those out, but that's not going to happen until we get consumers thinking about flowers year-round, with a national promotion order."



One more thing: "We know that increased mobile purchasing creates opportunity for our industry — it's where retailers are seeing the biggest gains. We've been preaching mobile for five years now, and it's great to see so many retailers seeing growth here. Driving in-store traffic has been more challenging, but there's lots of evidence that millennials appreciate a unique in-store experience — and the fact that Amazon is buying brick and mortar suggests it's not dead."

"Baby boomers now have other priorities that may limit floral spending. We need to look toward the next big generation of floral purchasers — millennials."

RENATO CRUZ SOGUECO



EVANGELIZING DIGITAL MARKETING

RENATO CRUZ SOGUECO

VICE PRESIDENT, DIGITAL STRATEGY AND EDUCATION, BLOOMNET

I'm excited about: "Floriology recently launched a new program to help florists drive more website sales by assisting them with search engine optimization, blogs, social media posts, search marketing, and ratings and reviews. It's a culmination of the best digital marketing practices I've explored and developed over my career, including two decades at the Society of American Florists."

A challenge for the industry: "More intense online competition, not only from other online floral businesses but from other gift categories and, of course, Amazon, along with the need to market to mobile customers. The danger in this noisy marketplace is that flowers as a gift choice will become less top-of-mind."

I think a lot about: "When florists don't invest in online ads in their local markets, it's even more cost-effective for national marketers to advertise in almost every market, since online advertising is a bidding system. National company ads appear at the top of the search page, where customers are most likely to click. Even more dubious: These advertisers know the top florists in every market, and they use their business names as keywords. Consumers click on a competitor's ad, thinking it's their florist. Florists lose that order or fill it at a discount, which funds the advertiser's business."

One more thing: "Florists for the past two decades have relied on baby boomers as reliable floral customers, but these customers now have other priorities that may limit floral spending. We need to look toward the next big generation of floral purchasers — millennials. That requires education, in business practices and design style, but florists who can cater to the tastes and tailor their services to the needs of different generations will be the most successful."



ADJUSTING TO REDUCED AIR CARGO CAPACITY

MARLA O'DELL

**PRESIDENT, WHOLESALE FLORIST & FLORIST SUPPLIER ASSOCIATION
VICE PRESIDENT, SALES AND MARKETING,
CSS INDUSTRIES — BERWICK OFFRAY**

I'm excited about: "I see wholesalers embracing technology like never before. They're using it to manage inventory and inventory turns, communicate and conduct business transactions with suppliers and customers, and stay engaged and relevant with their customer base."

A challenge for the industry: "The biggest concern I hear about is the uncertainty with South American air cargo capacity and subsequent rates. This challenge will cause a ripple effect through the industry in both product availability and pricing."

I think a lot about: "The floral industry is uniquely positioned to differentiate from the mass market with both their fresh and their hard goods offerings. Consumers are hungry for that uniqueness, but we have to keep one eye on the 'Amazon ball.' We know Amazon's distribution capabilities are phenomenal and its pockets are deep. We can't become complacent."

One more thing: "I'm amazed at the willingness of all wholesalers to share information. I hear some smaller wholesalers comment, 'WF&FSA is just for the big guys.' The 'big guys' are right there sharing information as well. A rising tide lifts all ships."



FIGHTING FOR DRIVERS

DAVID ARMELLINI

SAF WHOLESALERS COUNCIL

PRESIDENT, ARMELLINI EXPRESS LINES



I'm excited about: "As of Dec. 18, 2017, all truck carriers had to start using electronic logging devices, which track when you start driving, when you stop, your route; and a lot more — all to ensure you are following federal hours of service regulations. We've been using them since 2009, but that put us in the minority — only about 40 percent of trucks on the road were using them before the Dec. 18 deadline. If you are tracking with paper, it's easy to stretch the truth. This will level the playing field."



A challenge for the industry: "Airlines have reviewed their overall business plans, and they've found that other industries pay [carriers] more, so they've raised rates, and they're providing less service. Our industry was spoiled in the past with next-day service from South America from three different points, six days a week. We won't see that again anytime soon. In addition, if our industry could come up with a standardized box size, we'd see so much more efficiency."



I think a lot about: "Finding qualified drivers. It can be a very good living, but people don't raise their kids to be truck drivers. Meanwhile, the population of drivers is getting older. Carrier costs continue to rise, and labor is certainly one of those costs: If we don't pay our drivers a competitive wage, another industry will."



One more thing: "We see driver-less and driver-assisted trucks as a major change coming into the floral industry. That technology will affect the industry; it could affect it in a positive way. I think we'll see driver-assisted technology within five years."



TAKING ON DROP SHIPPING

JEFF BENNETT

PRESIDENT, TELEFLORA



I'm excited about: "In 2018, we'll complete the roll-out of our new web hosting platform for florists — leveraging the Oracle e-commerce platform, which offers enhanced performance and greater capabilities, all while maintaining flexibility for florists to be as hands-on or as hands-off as they choose."



A challenge for the industry: "The rising costs of customer acquisition, and intense competition online, particularly in search engine marketing. It's difficult for most shops to navigate this effectively. Another significant challenge longer term will be same-day fresh flower delivery, as more florists go out of business. Over 5 percent of florists close their doors every year. We expect that will continue in 2018. It pains us to see long-standing local businesses close."



I think a lot about: "The sheer magnitude of drop-ship flowers. Shop owners don't seem to realize that hundreds of millions of dollars are bypassing local florists today. Consumers aren't typically aware these brands are sending 'flowers in a box,' which requires the recipient to assemble them themselves. It's important for us to maintain a positive message about flowers to the consumer. It's risky to directly advertise 'boxed flowers are bad'; many consumers only retain part of an ad message, and they might misconstrue it as 'flowers are bad.' We would rather speak positively about the flower-buying experience as a benefit to the industry."



One more thing: "Consumers are being taught on a daily basis that flowers cost \$19.99 or less, and that they come with 40 percent discounts. It's not good for the industry, or for providing the ultimate consumer experience."

"Consumers are being taught on a daily basis that flowers cost \$19.99 or less, and that they come with 40 percent discounts." **JEFF BENNETT**



IMPROVING SATISFACTION — AMONG FLORISTS AND CONSUMERS

TOM MOELLER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
FLORIST SEGMENT, FTD



I'm excited about: "The opportunity for our company to 'think fresh': test and learn, and take action that can move the needle in all facets of our business — marketing, merchandising, supply chain and doing a better job at supporting and caring for our florist members."



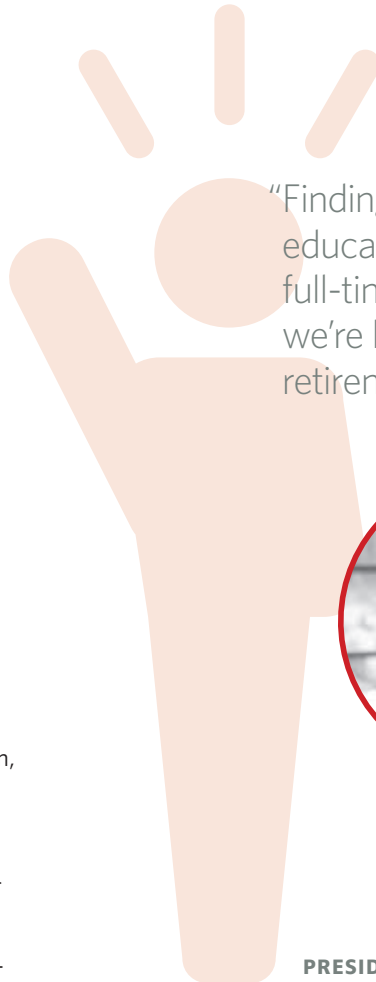
A challenge for the industry: "Rising consumer expectations about transparency, product value and delivery status, coupled with a very competitive sales environment. I think we all need to spend some time understanding how Amazon is changing consumer expectations, which will transfer to purchasing floral gifts too."



I think a lot about: "Issues around improving satisfaction for both consumers and florists. Too frequently, we have complaints that the consumer doesn't see the value for the money spent or doesn't receive the product on time. We also hear from florists that they aren't receiving enough orders or can't make any money. Inherent in our future strategy will be ways to improve both. We want to be better at driving consumer and florist satisfaction by delivering an incredible experience and clear value for all. We want to be a company that consumers and florists trust and want to be part of."



If I had a magic wand... "We would all focus on the end consumer, regardless of the nuances and challenges of the industry. If we all just take care of the consumer, the industry would be healthier."



"Finding qualified, energetic, educated employees. That's a full-time focus. As an industry, we're looking at a wave of retirements." **BILL LAFEVER**



DEVELOPING NEW LEADERS

BILL LAFEVER, PFCI
SAF PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT, BILL DORAN COMPANY



I'm excited about: "Product. 'Pink Porcelain' and 'White Porcelain' roses, for example, have a big head size relative to stem length — great for weddings. Light pink and white roses often get bruised in shipping, but in our tests, these varieties had very little damage. Our customers' 2018 outlook for events and corporate accounts is overall very good. The stronger economy probably plays a role, but retailers have been smart about marketing to those customers."



A challenge for the industry: "Logistics. There are fewer flights out of South America, and flowers get bumped because other industries — produce, for example — pay more per kilogram. That slowdown makes last-minute orders even harder."



I think a lot about: "Finding qualified, energetic, educated employees. That's a full-time focus. As an industry, we're looking at a wave of retirements. A lot of wholesalers stopped hiring during the recession — we all had to get very lean. Now, we're backfilling, but it's like when you plant a tree: You don't get shade right away. We now have five managers under 30. We need these young people to connect with younger customers and become our next generation."



One more thing: "I wish we'd all focus less on Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. We're so reliant on those holidays; yet because demand is so high, we end up giving customers less and charging more during those times. I want to see people buying more everyday flowers."



MAKING ONLINE PURCHASING EASIER AND SAFER

MICHAEL DELGORIO
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE
DEVELOPMENT, LOVINGLY



I'm excited about: "Real, local florists are at a turning point. Shop owners who've embraced technological change and have fun with online selling will come out on top."



A challenge for the industry: "Florists who do not have a fully and regularly optimized online sales funnel will pay the price of not driving growth for their shops. That doesn't mean florists need to be technologists. They just need to place their confidence in the tech resources that put their interests first."



I think a lot about: "Our data shows only 9 percent of florists' websites are secure per Google standards. The other 91 percent of floral retail websites will alert shoppers on a Google browser that they are not on a secure site. Our Security With a Capital 'S' campaign is aimed at securing a florist's entire website, not simply their product checkout page."



One more thing: "In 2017, technology is said to make us more lonely rather than offer bridges to new relationships. So, building relations as a core mission is a huge challenge in an age of technological insulation from live, real-time, human connections. People, in both the short and long term, need optimistic bypasses from the 'bottomless pit' of online content, which places barriers between relationships."



NAVIGATING RISING COSTS

LAURA SHINALL
SAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT, SYNDICATE SALES



I'm excited about: "Thanks to technology, the end users of floral products are becoming more and more aware of the endless options on the hard goods side. This transparency plays into the hands of those who have chosen to invest heavily in technology, all done in the spirit of helping partners provide products and information when and where needed."



A challenge for the industry: "Transportation costs continue to rise. Fuel may be the most visible cost, but by no means is it the only cost where we are seeing significant increases."



I think a lot about: "Our employees. We have a real opportunity to learn from the next generation's ideas and their technology practices, and at the same time mentor them in the intangibles that come from years of experience and hard work."



One more thing: "We care deeply about and are committed to keeping jobs in Indiana and the U.S. Not only do we believe the quality of domestically produced products is better, we believe we are better able to manage inventories, thus allowing us to better serve our customer base. The influx of inexpensive, lower-quality product produced in other countries threatens our workforce and the ability to maintain our quality standards."

"Thanks to technology, the end users of floral products are becoming more and more aware of the endless options on the hard goods side."

LAURA SHINALL



SPEAKING UP FOR THE INDUSTRY IN WASHINGTON

Throughout the year, the Society of American Florists lobbies for the industry on Capitol Hill — helping to keep members' needs high on lawmakers' radars. A great deal of strategy goes into refining those messages, said Shawn McBurney, SAF's senior director of government relations.

"In 2018, we anticipate that we'll be focused on the continued funding of the **Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative**, building on our success last year, and the **STARS Act**, which has gained even greater importance with the federal government beginning to impose fines on employers for not properly complying with the Affordable Care Act," he said.

Make plans to be part of that conversation and to share your story firsthand with lawmakers. SAF's Congressional Action Days are March 12-13. Find out more and register at safnow.org.

-M.W.



RAISING THE PROFILE OF AMERICAN GROWN FLOWERS

KASEY CRONQUIST, PFCI
CEO, CALIFORNIA CUT
FLOWER COMMISSION



I'm excited about: "The momentum we have for the origin-based trend. We've seen it for years with food in farm-to-table. We'll be bringing even more people to beautiful flower farms in 2018 with our Field to Vase dinners — some farms we've been to before and some that are new to us."



A challenge for the industry: "Regulatory issues and the cost of doing business are struggles everywhere, but it's especially true in California. Our challenge is to communicate what it takes to grow flowers sustainably in California, compared to the other places in the world."



I think a lot about: "We need to do a better job communicating with members of Congress to address our labor issues in the U.S."



If I had a magic wand... "I'd erase the connection between cannabis and cut-flower production in people's heads. The subject has caused a lot of confusion. There's not going to be a significant change to the floral industry."



ADAPTING TO THE 'AMAZON EFFECT'

JO BUTTRAM, AAF, AMF
SAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OWNER, SHIRLEY'S FLOWERS INC.



I'm excited about: "My staff. We really searched and interviewed lots of people, and we waited until we had the right fit. It paid off. They are all excited about coming to work and sharing their ideas. We listen to them and try new things, and it gives the whole shop a new energy."



A challenge for the industry: "The Amazon effect. Customers want and expect free, fast delivery. We're tinkering with delivery options and pricing, and streamlining our online ordering process."



I think a lot about: "Our customers want our flowers to be convenient. We have a partnership with a big-box store, which helps us meet that need. We get an extra piece of the pie by being in the stores — and it is a growing piece that we hope to expand."



One more thing: "People are looking for experiences, not just shopping opportunities. We're finding new ways to do that. For instance, we now use a traveling vintage camper to sell flowers outside of the physical store. People love it."



COMMUNICATING MORE EFFECTIVELY

AUGUSTO SOLANO
PRESIDENT, ASOCOLFLORES



I'm excited about: "The great [progress] we made in 2017 in social media. We want to strengthen that effort next year, promoting 'Flowers of Colombia' as an inspirational brand based on diversity, which is one of our country's greatest assets and [something] that is present in our geography, people, flora and fauna, and, of course, in the 1,400 flower varieties we commercialize each year."



A challenge for the industry: "To strengthen and promote the culture of sustainability by which our flowers become a product of a permanent social and environmental commitment: Do things right — this is the anchor of our culture. Forty-two percent of Colombian flower exports are certified through Florverde Sustainable Flowers (FSF), an independent social and environmental certification standard."



I think a lot about: "How to sell flowers to the consumers of the future, including millennials. We need to communicate in a different way to consumers and the supply chain, in a way that is understandable, so that we can fill consumers' needs and increase flower sales."



One more thing: "This year, we created a project called 'Proudly Growing,' which is part of our talent attraction and employment brand strategy. We are looking to enhance and make our sector one of the best places to work. We want to attract the best talent of the new generations."



"A lot of florists are still so price-driven, while the retail landscape has changed dramatically." **SARAH BAGLE**

PUSHING STORIES, NOT PRICES

SARAH BAGLE CREATIVE DIRECTOR, ACCENT DÉCOR



I'm excited about: "Getting consumers to understand the value of floral-design services. Consumers don't always understand the talent that goes into creating a flower arrangement, or the origin of the flowers and what it took to make the arrangement a reality."



A challenge for the industry: "A lot of florists are still so price-driven, while the retail landscape has changed dramatically. People are looking for that story or cause to put their money behind."



I think a lot about: "Educating people about the fact that there are hands making each of our products, and communities that are built around our industry around the globe. I want each person who contributes to the making of our products to be respected as an artisan."



One more thing: "Florists make so little for the work that they do. I believe if that changed, the industry could attract a lot younger talent."



DIG DEEPER

Check out extended interviews from some of the industry members featured in this month's story, along with insight on developing next-generation florists from the **Texas State Florists' Association** and the **American Institute of Floral Designers** at safnow.org/moreonline. You'll also find perspective on how government regulations around the world affect the industry, from **Ball Seed's** Joaquin del Torre; thoughts on working with and serving multiple generations, from boomers to millennials, from Rod Crittenden, executive director of the **Michigan Floral Association**; and thoughts on why specialty growers around the country deserve to be taken more seriously, from Judy Laushman, executive director of the **Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers**.

Mary Westbrook is editor in chief of Floral Management.
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40 DISARMING STYLES FROM 2½-7" TALL

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**PICTURE
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Floral designs by
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AIFD, PFCI. Find
additional program
photos and videos at
[aboutflowers.com/
twominutetrends](http://aboutflowers.com/twominutetrends).



AN INSIDE JOB

BY KATIE HENDRICK

*SAF arms interior designers with
Mother Nature's original accent piece:*
FLOWERS

In its first initiative to connect directly with the residential and commercial design communities, the Society of American Florists, in partnership with Asocolflores, recently launched “The Architectural Design of Flowers,” a promotional program developed to inform design influencers of the scientifically proven benefits of flowers and to educate them about more effective and innovative ways to integrate blooms into their work, creating more meaningful, welcoming and productive spaces for their clients.

“This program targets commercial and residential interior designers and architects, sharing guidance and research on the use and impact of flowers in their respective environments, and encouraging them to educate others about the importance of flowers in their work,” said Jennifer Sparks, SAF’s vice president of marketing.

Asocolflores President Augusto Solano said he was glad to contribute to a program “that creates new ways to connect with consumption influencers,” noting the natural connection between the floral and design communities. “Flowers reflect emotions, change spaces, connect people and brighten up moments,” he said.



To help spread the message, the organizations tapped two heavy-hitters in the design world: interior designers Kelli Ellis (of HGTV, Modernism Week and Maison et Objet) and Mark Woodman (a longtime board member of the Color Marketing Group).

In a series of seven eye-catching videos titled “Two-Minute Trends,” Ellis and Woodman demonstrate the art and science of flowers as a design tool to inspire positive emotions and behaviors within public and private spaces, as well as in work environments.

SAF is reaching out to editors at some of the nation’s most popular magazines with content ideas for their readers, launched by deskside briefings with Ellis in New York City last November. Additionally, SAF, Ellis and Woodman are promoting the videos and key flower messages on their respective social media channels, including through boosted posts designed to carry the good news beyond their own page followers to reach new audiences.

Taking a break from their busy schedules, Ellis and Woodman sat down with Floral Management to reveal what “The Architectural Design of Flowers” has taught them about the florist-designer relationship and how SAF members can capitalize on this exciting program.

Floral Management: What surprised you most about “The Architectural Design of Flowers”?

Mark Woodman: I’ve been surprised by its depth, the far-reaching possibilities for designers to work with florists. The give and take was even more than I expected. I sense how we can better establish a partnership, rather than just giving direction while placing an order. Florists and designers match up very well.

FM: What do you see as the program’s biggest takeaways?

Kelli Ellis: Aside from gorgeous arrangements showcasing the latest trends, I think the research is the most interesting aspect of the videos. Showing the data behind our trends and designs is an important selling point that many people don’t consider.

“This program has opened up the lines of communication between designers and florists. Being able to speak with one another – and learn from one another – helps everyone deliver the right design and product.”

- MARK WOODMAN -



FAST TAKE SAF’s “Two-Minute Trends” video series is available at safnow.org/twominutetrends.

Woodman: This has opened up the lines of communication between designers and florists. Being able to speak with one another — and learn from one another — helps everyone deliver the right design and product. I hope we will all get a better sense of each other’s abilities so we can work together. Designers can learn how to better communicate their ideas and florists can help set expectations, sharing how long something will last

CAPITALIZE ON TOOLS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

To keep your customers in the know about how flowers can enhance interior spaces, share the “Two-Minute Trends” videos and photos on your shop’s website and social media pages. Visit SAF’s Two-Minute Trends Resource Center, which includes messages and advice for posting, at safnow.org/twominutetrends.

“The Architectural Design of Flowers” is possible thanks to funding by longtime SAF PR Fund supporter Asocolflores, the association of Colombian flower exporters. “Once again, Asocolflores has provided significant support to ensuring that the nationwide promotion of flowers remains a top priority,” said SAF Vice President of Marketing Jennifer Sparks. “The entire floral industry benefits from a program like this.”

All of SAF’s consumer marketing programs are created from the SAF Fund for Nationwide Public Relations. For more info on who supports the fund, visit safnow.org/prfund. **-K.H.**



MEET THE PRESS SAF’s Jennifer Sparks (second from left) and interior designer and spokesperson Kelli Ellis (center) meet with editors of ELLE Decor, Veranda, and House Beautiful magazines.

and how much certain flowers cost, for instance. Working together, we can make the best choices for our clients.

FM: When you've approached editors at major publications, how did you introduce this program?

Ellis: They were delighted to see the flowers we brought them, of course — we all know how wonderful it is to receive flowers! But when we started talking data, that's when the eyebrows raised and they started taking notes. We spoke specifically about the Harvard research regarding the feelings of wellness and calmness that come when flowers were visible in the home. And they loved the Texas A&M study that found flowers in the workplace help people generate creative solutions and ideas. We also showed the editors a sample of our Two-Minute Trend videos, which received an overwhelming "I loved that!" response from all.

FM: Do you have any tips for florists about how to communicate most effectively with their local design community — or while talking about design with their customers?

Woodman: Get to know a designer's personal style — it is often linked to their clients' aesthetic selections. Florists need a portfolio that shows their own distinct style too.

Ellis: As a layperson, when I buy flowers, I love to have the florist explain each of the flowers' names and where they came from. I recently ordered an arrangement for my daughter, giving just a little direction as to color and her interests. When I picked it up, I learned that decorative kale is beautiful and so cool!

In the design community, it's important to know the story when we sell items to our clients. Informing the design community about flowers would make a florist stand out as someone who cares and appreciates their craft.

FM: What are some examples of ways florists and designers could work together?

Woodman: Collaborating with realtors on staging homes is one example. I think it's helpful to approach agents as a team rather than as individuals. As a united front, your pitch carries more weight. Together, florists and designers have the expertise to make a home as presentable

as possible. Florists have the skills to make any flowers look traditional or architectural, and designers know where to place them to have the most impact.

FM: What are some design trends florists should check out?

Woodman: There are a number of macro trends gaining momentum. One I call "Quietude." It involves soft, flowing shapes and the barest whisper of color to provide a respite from tech. Another big trend, "Rainbow Maximalism," features vibrant colors and multiple patterns. Mixed bouquets — with lots of shape and texture — would be ideal for this. There's also a lot of interest in "discord" these days. Now is a great time to celebrate the exotic, unfamiliar flowers and unusual vessels.

Katie Hendrick is the senior contributing writer and editor of *Floral Management*.
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GENERATING FLORAL NEWS



The Society of American Florists' effort to promote "The Architectural Design of Flowers" with the press generated almost immediate coverage this fall.

American Spa, whose website reaches more than 56,000 spa owners, touted the research findings with a story titled "Six Reasons to Incorporate Real Flowers Into Your Spa." American Spa also posted a video about the program to its Facebook page, which has 35,709 page likes.

Luxe Daily, the digital counterpart to *Luxe Interiors + Design* — the largest network of regional shelter magazines across the country — also featured an engaging Q&A with program spokespeople (and design gurus) Kelli Ellis and Mark Woodman. That website attracts more than 145,000 monthly visitors. Editors also posted the story to Facebook, where *Luxe* has almost 992,000 followers.

Look for more information on exciting media hits in upcoming issues of *Floral Management* and at safnow.org. **-K.H.**

GOAL KEEPING FOR THE FINANCIAL WIN

BY DERRICK P. MYERS, CPA, CFP, PFCI

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



➤ New Year's resolutions can get a bad rap. Too often, they fall into the category of "impossible to achieve" (e.g., "I'll lose 100 pounds in three months"). And even when a goal is technically attainable, human nature frequently steps in and strips people of steam and motivation long before they've achieved their objective.

But that doesn't have to be the case, particularly when it comes to your business goals for the New Year. (And yes, you *should* be making business goals for the new year. They're just as important as those personal resolutions — and maybe even more so.)

Each year, it's important to look into the future and plan the direction you want to take your business in the next one, three and five years. Now is the perfect time to focus on you and your business. Look at where you want to go, and make the plans that will get you there. For any journey with a desired destination and arrival time, you need a map and a schedule — so make yours now. Here are some frequent questions I field that might help you get started.

I've never set formal goals for my business. Where should I start?

Ask yourself and your staff these three questions every year:

- What new products or services should we offer?
- What are we already doing that is working well, and that we should do more of in the future?
- What should we do less of, or even eliminate completely, in the coming year?

When evaluating these three questions, work with your frontline staff and listen to their thoughts. Their insights will not only help you make and then fine-tune your initial list of resolutions, but can guide future conversations about where your business is today, and where you want it to go.

Do sales projections really matter?

As an accountant, I say, "of course."
As a business owner myself, I say, "Absolutely!"

Taking the time to project sales by the week, month and year is a must. Doing so gets you focused on the future. Too often, business owners get bogged down in the day-to-day operation of the business and fail to look at their business from a 10,000-foot view. This lack of overview can lead you to move in directions that you did not intend or want — places that lead to lost profit and stagnation.

Tracking your business' achievements and comparing these regularly to projections and targets can provide you with the information necessary to make strategic decisions that will lead your business in the direction you actually want it to go. Without this information, your business is essentially a ship in the ocean without a rudder — out of control and lost.

Take the time to project what you want your sales to be for the year. What do you want your profit and salary to be? Set targets for major expenses, and track them all. This will help you move your business toward your vision.

I set goals all the time but I never follow through. How can I do a better job?

When setting goals for yourself and your business, try to follow these three rules:

1. Set goals you believe you can achieve.

Don't make your goals so grand that, in your heart, you don't believe they can happen. If you're currently earning a salary of \$30,000, for example, don't set a goal of earning \$1,000,000 next year. Unless you have something extraordinary coming up that can justify such an enormous change, your subconscious will likely (and rightly) regard such a goal as unattainable, and you will make little or no progress toward achieving it.

2. Write down your goals — and write them as if you have already achieved them.

If you don't write down your goals (resolutions), then they are just wishes. Writing down what we want and intend to accomplish for ourselves opens up our subconscious minds to opportunities that can help us progress in the direction of achieving our goals.

Write your goals in the present tense, but as if they have occurred and are established fact. For example, write "I sign two new clients by March 1." Writing, reading and voicing goals in this manner helps us to believe they are possible.

3. Set deadlines.

A deadline focuses your mind and creates a sense of urgency as you work toward your goals. For example:

- I earn \$100,000 as of Dec. 31.
- Company sales are \$1,000,000 as of June 30.
- I weigh 198 lbs. as of April 30.

Setting deadlines for your goals is important, because in the absence of a deadline, goals are likely to get put off again and again. Continually postponed goals are rarely achieved.

What else should I consider?

Following are business relationships, assets, and services you should take the

time to review every couple of years. If you haven't looked at them recently, then now may be the time.

Employees

You probably already perform employee evaluations every year. But if you don't, this is a great year to start.

Formal employee evaluations give you the opportunity to take a fresh look at each of your employees, consider their strengths and weakness, and evaluate how (and whether) they fit into your organization going forward. As part of this process, you should ask your employees about their own goals, and consider what you can do to help them achieve them.

Quite often, you will find that your employees' goals align with those you have for your business, and together, you can move the business forward. On the other hand, if an employee's goals are not in alignment with the company's, you may realize that both your business and the employee would benefit from a parting of the ways.

Wholesalers

It is also a good idea, at least once a year, to review your relationships with your wholesalers and make sure that you are supporting the ones who support you. Good relationships with your wholesalers can come in very handy when you find yourself in a pinch for some much-needed product.

Vehicles

Evaluate the condition of your delivery vehicles. Be aware of ongoing or increasing maintenance costs and how these compare to the cost of purchasing a new vehicle — and purchase new vehicles when the dollars make sense. Make sure that you have the proper number, and types, of vehicles to handle any deliveries you have planned for in the New Year.

Insurance

With all of the talk about health insurance, most of us are very aware of how much we spend and how good — or not so good — our benefits are. But there are many other types of insurance that we tend to let run from year to year with hardly a glance — including liability, property, vehicle, workers' compensation, business continuation, and on and

on. This year, as your insurance policies renew, be sure to review the coverage, and take the time to shop around and see if your existing policies still offer the best combination of benefits and costs for your business.

Telephone and Internet Services

If it's been a while, it's similarly a good idea to compare your existing internet and phone coverage with those offered by other providers, just to make sure that you are getting what you need for the best price.

Dues and Memberships

Review your memberships to ensure that organizations and clubs are providing you value for your dollars.

Accountant

Make sure that your accountant is part of your team and has the necessary industry knowledge to help you evaluate your business and work with you to make it more profitable. Tax help is just a small part of what your accountant should be able to offer.

Banker

Make sure your bank is one that will work with you and provide the finances you need to run your business effectively. If you aren't sure you're getting what your business needs, shop around. If you are lucky enough to work with a local banker who actually knows your name, consider yourself lucky.

Attorney

Although we hope we never need one, sometimes, we have to find an attorney to help us handle business problems. Have attorneys lined up to help you in the different areas of your business (e.g., corporate issues, legal complaints, or liability for injury). The peace of mind that comes from having this type of support lined up ahead of needing it is wonderful. 🌿

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

THANKSGIVING SALES ‘STEADY’ FOR 40 PERCENT OF FLORISTS

➤ Thanksgiving didn't deliver major surprises to retail florists. Holiday sales this year were steady for about 40 percent of respondents, according to a Society of American Florists survey.

About 35 percent saw an increase, and 24 percent saw a drop. A number of respondents noted that cash-and-carry bouquets and pre-made designs sold particularly well — with customers ducking in quickly to pick up hostess gifts or last-minute centerpieces.

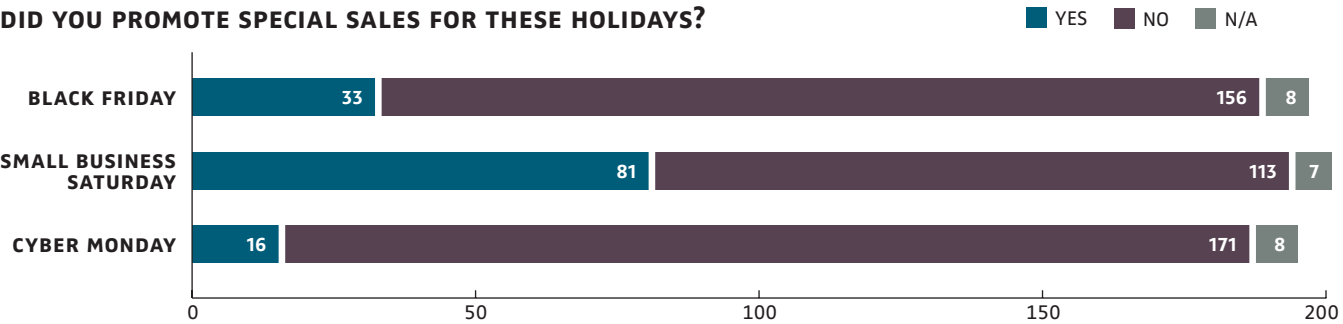
The shopping days that follow Thanksgiving were not floral holiday powerhouses, a trend that's consistent with the recent past. Overall, 79 percent of respondents did not promote special sales for Black Friday, and 88 percent said they

didn't promote them for Cyber Monday. About 56 percent of respondents did not promote Small Business Saturday sales. Other findings from the survey:

- Roughly 47 percent of respondents said Black Friday sales were about the same as in 2016. About 21 percent said those sales dropped, and about 10 percent said they increased — and the remaining respondents said the event isn't applicable to their shops or they don't know returns.
- About 38 percent of respondents said Small Business Saturday was about the same as last year, in terms of sales. About 21 percent said they experienced an increase, and almost 18 percent saw a drop-off.

- Less than 4 percent of respondents said online sales increased on Cyber Monday. About 12 percent said those sales decreased compared to last year, and 46 percent said they were the same.
- According to the National Retail Federation, more than 174 million Americans shopped in stores and online during the holiday weekend. Average spending per person over the five-day period was \$335.47, with \$250.78 — 75 percent — specifically going toward gifts.
- Get additional survey results, including information on Halloween sales, at safnow.org/moreonline. 🌿

DID YOU PROMOTE SPECIAL SALES FOR THESE HOLIDAYS?



Source: SAF Fall Holidays and Pre-Holiday Gut Check Survey. Emailed Nov. 28. 11.4 percent response rate.

TELEFLORA CONSTRUCTS ‘WALL OF LOVE’ IN NATION’S CAPITAL

➤ Teleflora peddled a message of unity in Washington, D.C., in December with a massive wall of flowers on the National Mall. The company's 8- by 50-foot “Wall of Love” consisted of 1,000 floral bouquets placed in pegs for easy removal.

“We wanted to send a positive message by building a wall meant for tearing down, as people come together and make a purposeful decision to show off their feelings for one another,” said Teleflora Vice President of Consumer and Florist Marketing Kelly McKeone.

Ten employees from Conklyn's Florist in Alexandria, Virginia, spent two days arranging the flowers and then arrived on the National Mall at 4 a.m. to help Teleflora representatives assemble the display. Throughout the day, the volunteers greeted passersby, inviting them to take a bouquet and give it away to brighten someone's day. Gradually, the wall began to disappear, revealing the message of the company's latest campaign, “Love Out Loud!”

Teleflora later launched a series of sharable videos on social media documenting people's experiences as the wall. Additionally, the company encouraged consumers to share their special moments with the hashtag #LoveOutLoud. 🌿



SHARE THE LOVE In December, Teleflora created an 8- by 50-foot “Wall of Love” in Washington, D.C., which consisted of 1,000 floral bouquets placed in pegs for easy removal.

MISSISSIPPI FLORIST HELPS DECK THE WHITE HOUSE HALLS

➤ Scott Reed of Petal Pushers was one of dozens of volunteers chosen to help decorate the White House this year. Reed first applied for the honor in 2008, but was told the team had already been assembled. He tried again in subsequent years without luck, but felt determined to get to Washington this year. At the end of October, he received notification that he was in.

"It's obviously a very busy time of year for florists, but this was an opportunity I couldn't turn down," said Reed, who rearranged several jobs back home to accommodate the White House volunteer work. "The White House is so well documented at Christmas. I saw this as a chance to be part of American history."

While advance teams worked with the first lady for months on theme and design ideas, Reed got to work at 5 a.m. on Black Friday with a group of fellow volunteers. He was assigned to the Blue Room, the site of the official White House Christmas tree, but he also helped with the Red Room and the famed East Corridor, which was lined this year with glittering white branches. 🌿



DÉCOR DREAMS "I feel like, while I was there, I got to take a little bit of people back home with me," said Scott Reed of Petal Pushers, who was a member this year of the volunteer design team chosen to help decorate the White House. "And that made the experience even better."

FLORAL INDUSTRY RALLIES TO HELP WILDFIRE VICTIMS

➤ Days before Thanksgiving, a group of floral industry members came together in California to support wildfire recovery efforts in the state's wine country.

Hosted by Visit California, The Grateful Table was a farm-to-fork style feast for more than 500 guests. The California Cut Flower Commission, with its experience managing the award-winning American Grown Field to Vase Dinner Tour, assisted with the design and execution of the floral elements of the event.

"This was a wonderful way for our farms to support the recovery effort of the communities that have been impacted by these fires," said CCFC CEO Kasey Cronquist, PFCI.

One hundred percent of proceeds raised from sales tickets for the feast support nonprofits helping those affected by the wildfires, Cronquist said. At press time, some of the same industry members who contributed to the event were facing threats of their own with new wildfires in the state. Look for updated information at safnow.org/moreonline. 🌿



FEAST FOR MANY The Grateful table event needed 63 tables, which were set up end to end to run along the Napa and Sonoma county line.

DWIGHT LARIMER AAF, PFCI, NAMED TO HALL OF FAME

➤ A visionary who helped transform the way florists and wholesalers think about, use and merchandise color was recently named to the prestigious Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame.

Dwight Larimer, AAF, PFCI, president of DESIGN MASTER color tool, inc. in Boulder, Colorado, received the honor during a dinner event in late October at Michigan State University's University Club in East Lansing, Michigan.

"For over 40 years, Larimer has contributed to the success of many floral organizations, including the Society of American Florists, the Wholesale Florist and Florist Supplier Association, the American Floral Endowment and the Floral Marketing Research Fund," according to a press release announcing the award.

Larimer, the current chairman of the American Floral Endowment, was inducted into the Society of American Florists Floriculture Hall of Fame last year. 🌿



MAN OF THE HOUR Dawn Larimer; Dwight Larimer AAF, PFCI; and Bob Patterson, Michigan Floral Foundation chairman. Dwight Larimer was inducted into the prestigious Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame in October.

**WATER WORLD**

A wireless-based irrigation system helps Mellano & Co. save water, reduce costs and experience stronger plant growth and yield.

HIGH TECH AT THE RANCH

➤ Water is a precious — and expensive — resource in California. Figuring out how to manage that water, while growing first-rate flowers, has been a decades-long pursuit at Mellano & Co.

That's why the company has invested in a new irrigation system that provides real-time data from Wi-Fi-enabled moisture sensors in the field, allowing Mellano & Co. to quickly adjust its water usage remotely — even from the comfort of an office. The system has the potential to create “significant savings” for the company while improving plant health and quality, said Michael A. Mellano.

“With this technology, we’ve gone to a more scientific approach of watering plants,” Mellano said. “We’re saving water, reducing our costs and we’re seeing better growth and better yield.”

A Technology Years in the Making

Mellano & Co. first explored this kind of monitoring technology 20 years ago, when a local inventor created a prototype of an irrigation system that relied on wires laid throughout the fields. That approach was too cumbersome and expensive for Mellano & Co., which has 300 acres on its San Luis Rey Ranch in Oceanside, and eventually the project fell by the wayside.

Over the years, Mellano followed other developments in the technology and trialed several other products, but he knew that any system that relied on hard wires would be virtually impossible to deploy on a large scale.

Then in 2014, he attended Cornell University’s annual Seeley Conference

in Chicago. There, during a presentation by Dr. John Lea-Cox, Mellano learned about a wireless-based system through which moisture sensors in the field transmit data via a Wi-Fi or 3G platform to a central computer. The system was developed as part of a USDA specialty crop block grant that partnered Lea-Cox and other horticultural researchers around the country together with software specialists at Carnegie Mellon University and the sensor developer, Decagon. The result: a very robust sensor system that gives growers the ability to analyze and manage irrigation needs from their desktop computer using a software suite developed for the system. The system was simple to deploy, and developed domestically (making tech support easy), and had already shown good results at test sites in Maryland. Bingo.

“The connection was immediate,” Mellano said. “We began working with Dr. Lea-Cox and started rolling out the technology here on a trial basis.”

The Future is Here

The company now has the Wi-Fi-enabled sensors placed strategically throughout its San Luis Rey Ranch and the company’s Carlsbad Flower Fields.

“We can see in real time whether a field is lacking water or has plenty of water, if it’s being irrigated and how it’s being irrigated,” Mellano explained. “Because the data is all in one place and presented in an easy-to-analyze fashion, we’re learning every day.”

The approach is more precise and more efficient than lower-tech, more

labor-intensive systems that rely on tensiometers and spreadsheets. Since implementing the Wi-Fi-enabled system, Mellano & Co. has seen water savings of 20, 30 or even 40 percent in certain crop situations. That’s a big deal for the company, which regularly counts water as its second or third greatest expense.

There are some limitations: Wi-Fi is available on only about 75 percent of the San Luis Rey Ranch and 90 percent of the Carlsbad Flower Fields, so Mellano places sensors in representative fields to track moisture. And, while the system has the ability to open and close irrigation valves remotely, in practice, Mellano & Co. is still in “semi-automatic mode”: The sensors provide the data and then an employee quickly checks the area to make sure the plastic irrigation lines are intact and haven’t suffered damage from the elements (or uninvited guests such as coyotes or squirrels).

For his part, Mellano says he’s excited about the potential as the technology and the ranch continue to evolve.

“This is just a much more precise method of monitoring and fine-tuning the irrigation of our crops,” he said. “I really see these Wi-Fi-enabled systems as the future in growing — not only for irrigation, but for so many other applications.” 🌱

GO DEEPER

Check out additional photos from Mellano & Co. at safnow.org/moreonline.



Enhancing Public Spaces



Enhancing Wellness



Welcoming Entryways



Inspiring Conversation

TWO-MINUTE TRENDS

New Program Promotes the Power of Flowers in Interiors:
MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

SAF's newest program, The Architectural Design of Flowers — created in partnership with Asocolflores — educates the media, interior design community, and

consumers about the scientific benefits of living and working among flowers, as well as color trends for residential and commercial spaces. The program includes a series of seven “Two-Minute Trends” videos, featuring interior design experts Kelli Ellis and Mark Woodman, as well as accompanying floral photography.

Consumers crave knowledge and show loyalty to businesses that educate them. As SAF members, you can capitalize on Two-Minute Trends to promote your business and educate consumers about how flowers inspire positive emotions and enhance interior spaces.

Visit safnow.org/twominutetrends for advice and resources.



What You'll Find at
[SAFNOW.ORG/TWOMINUTETRENDS](https://safnow.org/twominutetrends)

- Professional videos to share
- High-quality floral photography
- Suggested social media posts
- Suggested emails to interior designers and commercial clients



The SAF PR Fund thanks Asocolflores for funding this program.

6 DIGITAL AREAS TO DEVELOP IN 2018

> Consumers of all ages, and all over the country, are going digital to shop — and retailers have to follow. Consumers spent more than \$5 billion online during Black Friday 2017 alone. More than \$2 billion of that money was spent using mobile devices.

Keeping ahead of this trend can be intimidating for small local businesses. Fortunately, you can tackle the goal in stages. Here are six recommended resolutions for 2018, each of which will help you catch more electronic business this year and in the future.

1. Take Photos of EVERYTHING.

Consumers expect accurate photos of what they purchase (and send to loved ones). You also need to capture your creations to post them on your website and/or social media.

Resolution: Set up a photo studio in your shop. You'll need a light cube for a pop-up studio (about \$40-60); three utility light fixtures with stands (\$30); and three 100w equivalent LED lightbulbs (\$30). You won't need a fancy camera. A smartphone is the way to go, especially if you open a Google Photos account, which is free, has unlimited storage and lets you access photos from any device quickly. To set up Google Photos, create a gmail account using your shop name, such as RenatosFlowers@gmail.com. Then, download the Google Photos App on your smartphone.

2. Build Your Brand Through Video.

More than 8 billion videos are watched on Facebook every day. Five billion videos are viewed each day on YouTube.

Resolution: Capture more video. Use the same Gmail address you created for Google Photos to start your YouTube channel. Again, your smartphone is a great option. Practice taking single take, one-and-done videos of 30 seconds to a minute. The only edits you'll need to perform are at the beginning and end. Give a tour of your shop, talk about your daily specials, share care and handling information, or broadcast a design demonstration.

Upload every video to YouTube and Facebook. When you feel more confident, try a live video on either site.

3. Start a Google AdWords Account.

If you aren't advertising on Google, competitors are siphoning your business. Ads appear above organic listings and, unfortunately, competitors may legally use your business name as a keyword. How many of your customers have clicked on one of those ads, believing it to be your business? The few you heard from probably weren't happy. Think about those who didn't call.

Resolution: Start advertising! Begin with a budget of \$150 a month using your business name as a keyword. You'll get that \$150 back three times within two months. Expand your AdWords investment to capture searches for general terms such as "florist, flowers, your city, state."

4. Advertise on Facebook.

The largest social media outlet could be considered its own Internet, with more than 2 billion users you can market to by gender, age, interests and a lot of other determining factors.

Resolution: Start Facebook Ads advertising to grow segments of your business, specifically weddings and events. When you dive into the geography, demographics and interests, you'll want to target potential brides in your area with interest in "weddings," "wedding flowers," etc.

5. Explore Voice Technologies.

Consumers already relay commands to iPhone's Siri, Samsung's Bixby and Android devices' Google Assistant. Now, with Google Home and Amazon's Echo devices, they can make purchases in the comfort of their home or business, using just their voice.

Resolution: Use Siri, Bixby and Google Assistant on your phone and buy an Alexa or Google Home device for the home. Discover how you can ask questions, control the house lights remotely, create lists or ask for directions. The experience is already changing the way consumers live and purchase. You need to understand what's happening.



SOMETHING NEW Augmented reality is a trend more retailers are exploring in 2018.

6. Discover Augmented Reality.

You've seen those funky photos of people with dog or cat noses or switched faces. Or you may have heard of last year's Pokémon Go craze. These all rely on augmented reality, which allows you to use your smartphone camera and screen to add virtual elements to the display.

Resolution: Play around. Even if you're not in the market to buy furniture, download mobile apps such as those from IKEA and Wayfair, which allow customers to virtually place furniture within a room space. Dive into the augmented reality features of Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts or Instagram. 🌿

Renato Cruz Sogueco is BloomNet's vice president of digital strategy and education. renato@floriologyinstitute.com



DIG DEEPER

Find out more about how to create a cost-effective photo studio at floriologyinstitute.com/cost-effective-photo-studio. Get more tips on Facebook Live and videos on social media at safnow.org/moreonline.

1.95 BILLION AND COUNTING

That's how many consumer impressions have been generated by SAF's public relations and social media programs, such as the award-winning Petal It Forward program (safnow.org/petalitforward). These forward-thinking companies are the leaders in industry promotion. SAF's consumer programs would not happen without them.



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We thank these companies who voluntarily contribute to the **SAF Fund for Nationwide Public Relations**, which promotes flowers to consumers through groundbreaking research and media outreach, as well as **Aboutflowers.com** and **Aboutflowersblog.com**. A special thanks to Asocolflores for contributing \$75,000 to fund the new Architectural Design of Flowers program and Two-Minute Trends campaign.



**Want to help sell more flowers
(and see your name on this list)?
Support the SAF PR Fund!
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ALLURING ARRANGEMENTS

> Given ranunculus' breadth of colors, Stephanie Herron finds many opportunities to incorporate one of her clients' favorite flowers in daily designs.

"It comes in so many beautiful hues — from vivid reds and oranges to soft-as-a-cloud-at-sunrise pinks and creams — so it plays well with many palettes," said the creative director of Scotts Flowers in New York City.

Herron likes to pair ranunculus with larger, more robust blooms, such as hydrangeas and orchids, and she stresses that an arrangement "should be nearly complete and already beautiful" before inserting the high-end "status" flower.

She adheres to this rule for many reasons: It keeps costs low, it prevents ranunculus' tissue-paper-thin petals from getting damaged during the design process and it ensures secure placement in a prominent position before the arrangement goes out the door.

"You don't need many stems to make a huge impact," she said.

Here, she shares two of the shop's most popular designs, perfect for a certain upcoming holiday. 🌸

Find complete recipes at safnow.org/moreonline.

Katie Hendrick
khendrick@safnow.org



BLUSH ELEGANCE

Romantics will swoon for this ladylike centerpiece's pillowy texture and heavenly scent. Design time: 10-15 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$33. Suggested retail price: \$135.



STRAWBERRY FIELDS

A trio of luxury blossoms (ranunculus, vanda orchids and anemones) in a vibrant palette of red, pink and purple will melt hearts for Valentine's Day. Design time: 10-15 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$36. Suggested retail price: \$145.



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

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CUPID'S CALLING

Offer the ideal complement to any arrangement this Valentine's day with a romantic balloon add-on. Choose from several designs with hearts and messages of love and adoration. ➤ AllAmericanBalloons.net



THE PERFECT POUR

For the masses burdened with too much work and too little sleep, nothing says "love" like a nice cup of joe. The perfect add-on to a V-Day gift? "The Perfect Blend" balloon. With an impressive 26-inch stature, it offers an instant pick-me-up for recipients. ➤ Betallic.com



PRETTY PROP

To bring the "wow" factor to a bridal shower, engagement photo shoot or anniversary party, try some balloons. These large (37-inch) balloons come in various shapes and designs, adding a little bling to any occasion. They look positively precious next to a sweetheart table or in a garden setting. ➤ PioneerBalloon.com



MOONSTRUCK

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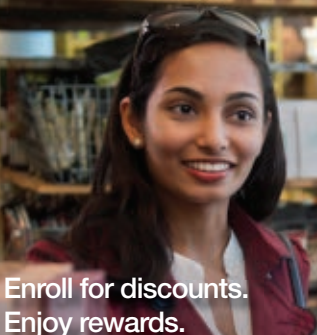
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Two hurricanes in eleven months have been challenging to us all. We remain committed to the cut foliage industry and, thanks to your support, have made progress in rebuilding our operations. Recovery is in sight but Valentine's Day supplies will be very tight. As always, we are here for you & will work tirelessly to ensure this holiday is a success!

Together we will be Floral Strong!

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A ‘FROG’ WORTH PAMPERING

➤ Successful marketers use certain “trigger” words to capture attention and drive sales. Descriptors such as “new,” “limited” and “free” flip a switch in consumers’ brains, urging us to take another look at a product (or flower). The vocabulary we use to introduce flowers typically encompasses more detail than traditional marketing words. For instance, we mention the positive attributes of color, stem length, bloom performance, disease resistance and vase longevity.

Just as it’s smart to inject new life into your marketing vocab, it’s wise to update your cooler from time to time with unfamiliar varieties. The New Year is a great time to do that. After all, new (and new-to-you) flower hybrids breathe interest and enthusiasm into traditional product lines, as witnessed in the soaring popularity of garden roses, bloom size variations of gerbera daisies, branching alstroemeria (‘Charmelia’ series), double-blooming Rose lilies and the ‘Butterfly’ series of peloric — or symmetrical — snapdragons.

Raves for Ranunculus

Which brings us to ranunculus! San Remo, Italy, has a rich tradition of ranunculus, both in breeding and production. The flower’s name is actually derived from the Latin word *rana* (frog) because ranunculus thrives in boggy, Mediterranean climates — a fun fact you may want to share with customers.

New ranunculus introductions look far different from the flowers available 20 years ago. These new beauties have twisted, intriguing bloom formations and a color spectrum ranging from rich, saturated hues to blush tones with airbrushed patterns. They’ve been hybridized to boast tall, strong stems — a far cry from the short, round blooms with twisting, hollow stems of yesteryear. Among the new series are ‘Sfumato’, ‘Cloni Pon Pon’ and ‘Elegance’. Now considered “couture” flowers, our little frog has transformed into a prince. (Unfortunately, some of the newest varieties don’t yet have widespread availability.)

In recent years, the general public has had a growing appreciation for ranunculus, which frequently appear in wedding magazines and in Pinterest inspiration boards. Designers can easily sell brides on the sophistication and intrigue these ruffled blooms add to bouquets and arrangements. Additionally, limited availability gives any product a sense of exclusiveness and prestige.

Handling Hacks

What’s the best way to prep ranunculus? Take time to inspect stems on arrival. Check the ends to make sure they are not mushy or foul smelling.

Choose the right height buckets to support flowers so stems don’t conk over before they have completely hydrated but not so deep that flowers barely peek over the edge. Prepare buckets with cold water

and slow-release chlorine pills (available from both Chrysal and Floralife). Follow manufacturers’ instructions when prepping buckets. Gerbera pills are easy to use and safer than liquid bleach (no problems with concentrate splashing on skin or clothes!). Furthermore, liquid bleach loses its efficacy within eight to 10 hours, while slow-release gerbera pills remain active for one to three days. And because Cl molecules are neutralized as they attack germs, the presence of chlorine diminishes fast. Spent solutions can be safely disposed down the drain.

As with gerberas, the hairy stems of ranunculus act as magnets that attract germs, soil splash, dead stem cells and organic juices — all of which block water and nutrient flow into stems. Leave sleeves or wraps in place for the first few hours to protect against mechanical damage as stems fill with solution. A super-clean drink for at least four hours (overnight is even better) ensures stems will stand tall in the vase.

After stems have hydrated, transfer them into a holding solution such as Chrysal Clear Professional 2 or Floralife Crystal Clear 200. Holding solutions contain sugars as part of their nutrient formula. Glucose provides energy for buds to open and hold in the vase. Simple sugars stabilize petal color, too. 🌸

Gay Smith is the technical consulting manager for Chrysal USA in Miami. gaysmith@earthlink.net

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