

SNAPSHOT

# Streamline Valentine's Day Options with Fresh Displays



**STREAMLINING SALES** Victoria's Garden floral studio in Rapid City, South Dakota, displays its named selection of Valentine's Day arrangements on the shop floor so customers can experience them in person, enabling them to more easily make a selection.

➤ During major holidays, the display cooler at Victoria's Garden floral studio in downtown Rapid City, South Dakota, fills up with so much product it's no longer accessible to customers. But this potential merchandising challenge doesn't bother owner Vicki Bierman, who pivots with a different tactic for her holiday displays: numbering, naming, and displaying a curated collection of featured arrangements on the shop floor.

"Our approach for any major holiday is that we want customers to experience our fresh flowers in person versus seeing them through glass," says Bierman. On Valentine's Day last year, for example, her team developed 15 designs, including "I'm a Sucker for You" (No. 1) with cheerful daisies, baby's breath, and ranunculus and "Truly Madly Deeply" (No. 2) with a central 'Free Spirit' rose and bear grass shaped into a heart.

"We have a lot of fun naming them — we'll sit down with a glass of wine and come up with some cheeky names, which in turn lead to conversations with curious customers," says the store owner.

Sometimes, the team's arrangements tell a more personal story. For Mother's Day, Bierman developed a "Darlene" arrangement named after her own mom. "It was all red in honor of her favorite color, with a ladybug accent, and included a picture of the two of us together," she recalls. Likewise, her staff follows suit, celebrating their moms, dads, and significant others with flowers when thematically appropriate for the time of year.

## SOCIAL SAVVY

# The New 'Help Wanted' Post

Each featured arrangement fits right into the lush, multilayered holiday displays at Victoria's Garden, situated inside a circa 1920 historic building in the center of town. Inside, fresh flowers and plants mingle with home décor and gift items on tables, shelves, and display cases while airy lights and lanterns counteract the interior's dark wood tones.

For Bierman, the numbered system has an additional benefit: It enhances accuracy during high-volume periods. In addition, each named arrangement is mirrored on her website for online sales. To date, customers have enjoyed the ease of ordering an arrangement that speaks to their taste and budget.

Says Bierman, "We'll display a half dozen and a dozen roses to show off how statuesque and full they are, so customers can see the value, but we'll also have designs that range down to \$24.99 or even \$19.99, because that's what some people can afford. We believe that everyone should be able to send flowers to loved ones no matter their budget," adds the floral design veteran. 🌿



➤ When Nielsen's Florist & Garden Shop, a luxury florist based in the coveted coastal town of Darien, Connecticut, posted a video of employees enjoying a company party, they were surprised at the buzz it created.

"It was a food truck party, and the video showed staff dancing and having fun in the car park," says General Manager Raya Ward. "Quite a few people commented that our company seemed like a great place to work."

Nielsen's celebrates its employees' hard work at least three times a year with similar parties and dinners out. However, no one would know about these perks if they didn't make the social media cut.



"We're a high-end florist in a high-end town and in the past, we might not have considered it appropriate to share employees dancing at a party," admits Ward. "But these days, technology and the spontaneity of social media have made everything feel more casual. Our customers want us to text them instead of call. We're sharing more behind-the-scenes video, more back-end operations. And we're getting positive responses."

Miami-based Jet Fresh Flower Distributors, which won SAF's 2022 Marketer of the Year award in part for how it spotlights its employees, has also seen how their fun, original social media posts have drawn interest from potential job candidates. After a posting a video in which staff was engaged in a Nerf gun battle, the company received several messages from followers inquiring about job openings, says Marketing and Media Director Ryan Black.

"Using social media as a window into our company culture has definitely helped us attract the right types of employees," Black says.

Parties, contests, performance rewards, bringing dogs to work, pajama days — showcasing these perks with algorithm-friendly video can set you apart and help lure the skilled workers you desire. 🌿

## TEAM BUILDER

# Kick-Start Your Meetings

> There are lots of benefits to regular meetings: encouraging communication, gathering new ideas, fostering creativity, and confronting challenges. Whether your meeting is about sales or fulfillment or just a weekly catchup among staff, make sure attendees are engaged from the get-go.

What's the best way to start meetings so that people feel connected and ready to contribute? Here's what a sampling of floral industry business owners and consultants had to say:

"We start our weekly all-company meeting with a one-minute meditation. I begin with deep, cleansing breaths and then guide the team to experience a new intention, to exhale their challenges and inhale knowing that the solution will present itself. We change it each week to expose them to a wide variety of techniques. The hope is to ground everyone for a positive meeting as well as encourage self-care across our work family."

**Lisa Roeser, AAF, CEO and Founder, Fifty Flowers**

"My favorite conversation builder that I learned from a rabbi counselor works in any situation to get the conversation started. Start with three questions: What was the best thing that happened to you today? What was the worst? If you could change anything about today, what would it be? Applying this same technique to our industry, the questions could be: What was the best thing that happened to you out on delivery? What was the worst? What is your personal and team goal to achieve this week?"

**Robbyn Repp, AAF, Owner, Petal to the Metal Flowers**

"I believe that every meeting should have the following: a start time (in my company, if you were late you had to sing a song); an end time (stick to it); and an agenda so that people come prepared. Always start by requesting positive feedback — either personal or professional — before tackling challenges. Another great way to begin is with a brain teaser, riddle or thoughtful question, like, 'Who is your number-one customer?'"

**Barry Gottlieb, Motivational Coach, Author and Consultant**

"We all remember that boss who called meetings so the attendees could 'rubber stamp' or validate what leadership has already decided. This stifles creativity. Open meetings with objective data and questions, not conclusions and solutions."

**Chris Drummond, AAF, PFCI, President, Penny's by Plaza Flowers** 🌸

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