

On Trends...

"As far as the number one focal point that continues to be important – service. Our customers have to be number one – it will set us apart from the mass markets. Service, quality and uniqueness."

*Kim Herbers,
Saginaw Valley Exchange, Inc.*

Here are some of the benefits of capitalizing on this untapped market segment:

- Consumers can purchase them all year long, they don't need a holiday or special event like an anniversary to buy them.
- When people start using flowers for themselves, they generally purchase them more frequently because they get hooked on having them around. And the more customers are in your shop, the more opportunities they have to think about (and have you sell them) flowers for those occasional and personal gifting as I alluded to earlier.
- Studies have shown that when people feel comfortable about using flowers for themselves, they are more prone to using flowers for gifting.

Generating new business opportunities doesn't happen without planning, commitment and investment. You need to strike a balance between investing your resources to protect and maintain your core business and investing to develop new ones.

So, is self-consumption a trend? Not yet, but the potential in developing this new revenue stream and capturing new customers can make it a worthwhile goal! ✿

The author is executive director of the Flower Promotion Organization in Minnesota.



©2005 Teleflora

Make Your Customers Happy Keep Their Flowers Alive

BY WAYNE CASTLEBERRY

The largest complaint from consumers is "flowers do not last long enough." The second complaint is value for the purchase price. These two complaints go hand in hand.

Lasting impressions are those that begin with the first time consumers receive your product. Improving the performance and quality of cut flowers is in direct relation to customer satisfaction. There has been no evidence that hydration is not required in florists' over-the-counter sales given the variables at consumer level. There is evidence that hydration has affected the quality and performance of flowers to the consumer, and consumer reactions to the flowers are favorable in both over-the-counter and overnight shipping.

When hydration is used at point of sale, consumer satisfaction is high. There is evidence that hydration used at farm level on an estimated 80 percent of the cut flower market will enhance performance and quality of the flowers throughout the chain to the consumer. Excerpts from studies conducted on consumer reaction to florists' over-the-counter sales and overnight shipments has shown the following:

Florists and Mass Marketers Over-the-Counter Bouquet Sales

- Studies showed that the majority of consumers did not know about the proper care and handling of cut flowers. The counter clerk did not give instructions to the consumer for processing the flowers other than instructions about mixing the package of preservatives to the water.
- Consumers receiving cut flowers hydrated responded with more favorable satisfaction than those receiving cut flowers dry packaged for carry out.
- Some 80 percent of the recipients of flowers dry packaged for carry out showed that some of the cut flowers died within the first few days. Consumers who purchased cut flowers that were hydrated for carry out had less than five percent of the flowers die in the first four days.
- Arrive Alive Packaging™ aids in resolving the consumers' complaints at a fraction of the cost. ✿

The author is President of MAC Technologies, L.L.C.



©2005 Teleflora