

I DO!

How can we turn more consultations into paid weddings?

SAL GRECO | OWNER | WALLINGFORD FLOWER SHOPPE | WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

Ah yes, the runaway bride. Many florists lament the time and energy spent sitting with brides, only to never hear back from them. Frustrating? Yes. Fixable? Definitely! The first step is to eat some humble pie and get over the idea that your designs, ideas and prices dazzle every bride. It just doesn't work that way. But you do have more control over the conversion process than you realize.

Follow Up (Duh)

At an SAF conference a few years ago, a florist in my workshop said she was only converting 50 percent of her bridal appointments. I asked what I thought was the obvious question: "How and when do you follow up with them?" She looked at me doe-eyed and shrugged, explaining that she never followed up. I bit my lip and explained that she was letting business slip through her fingers. Brides often meet with more than one florist and are planning many other aspects of their big day. In other words, they're busy.

It's your job to follow up and ask for the business. Whether you communicate through email, by phone or both, you must reach out and be prepared to answer questions, discuss prices or amend the proposal.

Make sure you lay down a strong foundation for your follow up by closing your appointment on a confident note: "Kate, we're so excited about the idea of creating your unicorn-themed wedding, your guests will be talking about the flowers for years to come! I'll follow up next week after I send the proposal to see if you have any questions or additions and we'll go from there."

One week later, make that call. Don't be sheepish; be professional and direct, "Hello Kate, this is Tim calling from Tim's Flowers. It was a pleasure meeting with you last week. I'm following up to answer any questions and continue our conversation about your big day on September 8!" Then let the conversation run its course. If she does not want

to book with you, don't be afraid to ask why, so you can learn what to change in future consultations. I like the direct approach: "What could we have done differently to have you choose us as your florist?" Let her talk, and just listen and take notes, so you and your team can do better moving forward.

Don't Give It Away

I'm astonished to see florists give detailed proposals listing the names of flowers and stem counts for the entire wedding and then wonder why the brides aren't booking. When you give away the details, you make it too easy for the bride to take your paperwork down the street to another shop or studio only to have them beat your price and steal your business.

What's the alternative? Colonel Sanders talks about his secret 11 herbs and spices without divulging them. Follow his lead. Talk about color schemes and palettes but not specific flowers. Discuss shapes and styles without naming containers or sharing dimensions. Less is more, really. Simply explain to your brides that you will "make her unicorn/vineyard/backyard chic wedding a reality" and will furnish her with a more detailed document, outlining the

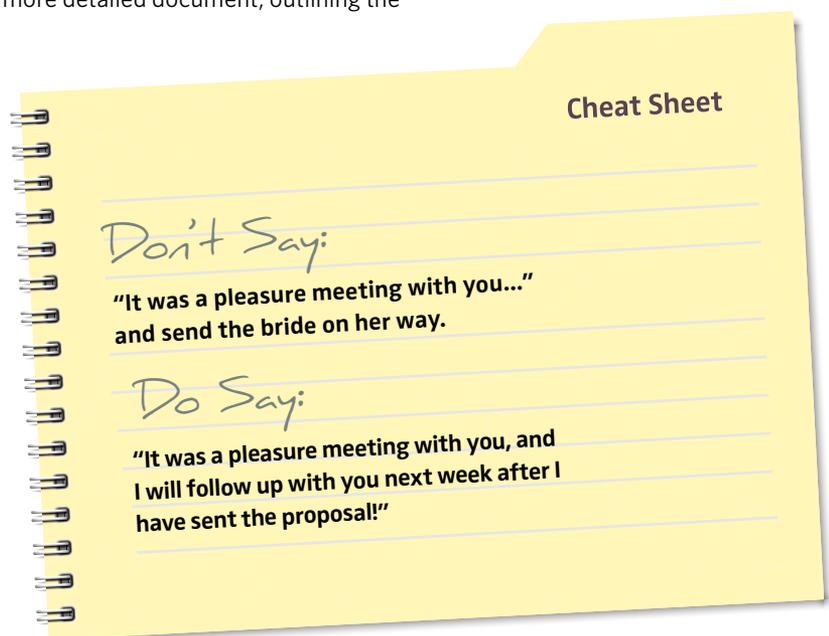
specifics of the designs, once she has signed a contract.

Work smarter and you will turn more proposals into signed contracts! 🌿



Tim Huckabee is the president of FloralStrategies, which provides sales, service and POS system training. Tim has spent the last 17 years traveling the globe and educating florists of all sizes to engage customers in bold new ways while learning how these successful shops operate on all levels. tim@floralstrategies.com

Got a sales or service challenge? Tell Tim about it, and he'll tackle it in an upcoming column. Email tim@floralstrategies.com, or call him, (800) 983-6184.



Flora Funza
Full Page Ad
7.25"x10"
p.17