

# The Profitable Florist

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## The 7 Deadly Retail Floral Sins

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Welcome to The Profitable Florist, a regular installment of new ideas, tools and techniques covering every aspect of running a successful flower shop from management to merchandising, delivery to design and more.



It's astonishing to see the same bad habits in flower shops as I travel the globe visiting urban and suburban florists, new shops and old ones, those staffed by few or many. Here are the seven most common 'sins' I see so you can nip them in the bud (pun intended) in your shop and start to earn more money every day.

### 1. Asking, "How much do you want to spend?"

We make customers uncomfortable by talking about money before product, after all, this is an emotional sale. No other industry in the world engages customers by focusing on their budget instead of their needs. Instead, offer an appropriate, professional suggestion and then let the customer respond, thus determining the price and/or the need to go lower or higher.

### 2. Offering, "Our arrangements start at..."

Do customers really ask for the lowest price or are you using that statement as a crutch? Customers trust you as the expert and follow your lead so if you start them low, they will buy low. LISTEN better and only offer the lowest price when asked. Start more sales in the mid-range price and they'll buy more there.

### 3. Worrying about the competition.

Why waste valuable time uselessly stressing about the competitors' pricing and products? Doing so quells your sense of creativity and is not good for morale. Spend that energy EXPANDING your customer base through email, public relations, and SEO. Use this lingo with customers who mention a competitor, "I'm not sure what they're offering at XYZ shop but this is what we'd love to create for you!" You can follow up with, "And we're glad that you're trusting us with your important order!"

### 4. Underutilizing your POS system

Stop using your powerful, expensive shop-management software as just an electronic order pad and never allow staff to write orders on paper first and then type them in. That's as silly as pushing your car to work! Contact your technology supplier and get their most up-to-date training so all know and use critical functionality: average sale info, shopping history, avoiding duplicate accounts, for example.

## 5. Fearing customer rejection

Florists are overly sensitive to “NO”. It doesn’t mean that customers won’t buy from you, they just need another option. We hear “NO” and immediately drop to the lowest price. WHY? No other industry in the world is afraid of rejection from their customers, fearing they will hang up or storm out of the store. Only florists do that. Stop it.

## 6. Filling too many incoming wire orders

Start to view the wire services as your business partner. You are their customer not the other way around. As a safe guideline you should not fill more than 15% in incoming business (according to Derrick Myers of Crockett Myers Accountants). Make sure customers see YOUR designs on your website, in your cooler, on posters in your store and for holiday features and every day orders, Focus on building local business at 100% value instead of filling heavily discounted orders in expensive containers.

## 7. Not selling at 2018 prices

Stop predetermining what customers will and won’t spend! I am tired of hearing, “I can’t place that in our cooler or offer that to someone in our market because...” Meanwhile, customers spend roughly 20% higher on your website because the website lets them! Offer designs on the phone, in store and online at 25% higher than your current maximum prices. Have a candid discussion with staff reminding them that they can’t sell from their own pocket, they must LISTEN to customers’ needs and sell accordingly. Since you get proportionally more complaints on lower priced items and no longer fear hearing “No”, start at higher prices more often!

**The Bottom Line:** Break free of widespread bad business habits lurking in the floral industry to run a more profitable shop!

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