

Make more money this Spring!



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My name is Tim Huckabee and I have been teaching florists how to earn more since 1997. I am so pleased to have been asked to continue this piece in Mercury, sharing my sales and service methodology with Interflora members to boost sales and increase profits.

The very first step that any business-minded florist must do is to call a formal meeting with staff, no matter how small your team is. The best time to do this is either before or after hours thereby avoiding interruptions from customers, suppliers etc. This does not have to be like the meeting of parliament, simply explain to staff that you want to start to upgrade your sales and service policy and the best way to do that is to have all of them hear the message at the same time so you're working toward a common goal and using the same approach. In each installment of my column this year I will give you a different topic or concept to discuss in that meeting. **Let's start out on a grand note...**

The biggest and best change that you can bring to your shop is to rework the way you take the details

on a delivery order. More specifically, the smartest move you can make is to take the card message **BEFORE** talking about flowers. Yes, you read that right. Although some shops are doing this already, many I visit aren't and they think I am out of my mind for even suggesting it. Guess what, it's the smartest, most customer-friendly thing you can do! I have taken over half a million orders this way all over the world and know that it's the more intelligent, conversational approach that customers expect, appreciate and respond to. Think about how often you awkwardly ask customers, "What would you like to send?" and they fumble. Just as often they respond by either saying, "I don't know, what do you recommend?" or ever worse, they simply state the obvious, "I haven't even thought about it yet!"

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Sounds simple, right? Well it is, you can be adding 10% value or better to your average sale by following my simple, easy and proven advice.



You may ask, "What's the point of getting the card message before talking about flowers?"

Let's face it, most customers are not that communicative about their needs (especially men!) BUT the card message gives you incredible insight into what the customer is celebrating, the relationship to the recipient and how many people this gift represents. In short, you need to take the card message, READ it and sell to it. For example; *"For your Gran's 60th birthday (and coming from all her grandchildren) I would suggest one of*

our LARGE spring hand-tieds, perhaps in her favourite colour. They are priced from..."

Trust me, even if this feels weird to you at first, customers will respond well and you will be able to sell more appropriately (*and often, much bigger!*).

Here's my 'trick' for getting the card message sooner. Integrate the recipient's name (*or the relationship*) into your question: *"What would you like to tell your Gran on the card message?" "What would you like to say to Steven on the message?"*

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