

Sales Sins: Part 2 Get With the Times!

By: Tim Huckabee AIFSE



In my last column, we began to explore what I call the “deadly sins” of the flower industry. These “sins” are the costly mistakes my team and I see repeated in shops of all sizes around the world. Don’t feel bad; these mistakes are not your fault! You’re simply doing what the flower industry mistakenly accepts as viable business behavior. I choose to disagree and hope you will too! I know you work very hard for your money, but are you working smart? With a few simple tweaks to your shop culture, you’ll see big gains in your sales numbers. Here are two sins to tackle this summer.

Sin no. 1: *Not pricing products and service correctly*

When was the last time you increased your delivery charges? Or rose prices? The rest of the business world doesn’t apologize for what they charge but florists do. We’ve all uttered something like, “Sorry, but that arrangement will cost \$75 to include roses, is that OK?” Hair stylists and restaurateurs charge 2015 prices for their products and services, and so should you. Bottom line, you’re entitled to earn a profit and customers WILL pay for great products and attentive service at your shop just like they do at restaurants, boutiques and other vendors.

Additionally, make sure you’re getting paid for all the little extras. I see too many shops add baby’s breath or greens to a loose bouquet for free. I don’t know about your province, but where I come from, you gotta pay for those items. So why not charge your customers? Likewise, when a customer needs flowers delivered within two hours, too many shops just do it — without charging a rush fee. That’s not price gouging; that’s called making a profit on services rendered. Again,

other businesses are doing this. For instance, go to the post office with a package that must be delivered to Montreal by tomorrow. You will get one price for afternoon delivery and a HIGHER price for AM delivery, depending on the level of service you need and how anxious you are to get the package there on time. And the postal employees definitely don’t apologize for the extra cost!

Sin no. 2: *Not keeping up with trends*

I’m not claiming your cooler is filled with blue carnation poodles ... but are you stocked with flowers customers really want? When I go to visit my

Mom, I don’t buy flowers for her at the florist; I make my purchase at the grocery store. Yes, I admit it, the grocery store. It’s not because of location — there are two florists closer to her than the grocery store. It’s not because of price — have you seen the prices climbing up at Loblaws? I shop at the grocery store because of the variety; they simply offer more choices than many florists. And I’m not even that picky. I’m not talking about 17 shades of pink roses; I buy purple carnations!

Also scrutinize the types of designs you’re offering customers. If I were to walk into your shop, would I see low, compact and modern cube arrangements? Would I find monobotanic and monochromatic designs? Remember: not every customer is an old lady! Take a LONG look at your designs to make sure you’re catering to your entire market!

Stay tuned as Tim covers more ‘sins of the floral industry’ in upcoming columns.

We encourage you to reach out to him with any questions or comments by calling 800.983.6184 or emailing tim@floralstrategies.com

Tim Huckabee AIFSE was born, raised and educated in Connecticut and moved to New York City in 1993 to start working at a high-end flower shop called Surroundings, where he learned every aspect of the flower business such as handling telephone sales and customer service issues and dealing with walk-in customers. In his frequent conversations with florists, he realized there was a dire lack of sales and service education in the industry. That motivated him, in 1997, to launch, FloralStrategies, a company that trains florists in sales, customer service, and how to get the most out of their POS system. He visits 250 shops annually, hosts a monthly webinar series, speaks at floral conventions, and writes a monthly column for the Society of American Florists.