



This is the first in a 10-part series aimed at empowering Floral Management readers to build a foundation month by month, sale by sale, for higher sales, more confident employees and happier customers.

SPRING TUNEUP

> Four months into this new column, let's review the foundation we've been building and map out your plan for the spring. I've spent the past 20 years teaching and preaching about selling bigger every day; however, I know the typical flower shop owner/manager needs more than a list of sales tips. You need to change your thinking, language and approach to engaging customers. Starting in January, we discussed the importance of holding regular meetings with your staff and then moved into how you can teach your team new sales strategies for floor and phone sales. You can read those back issues and download the accompanying tools at floralstrategies.com/SAF. Catch up with us, because the spring holidays ahead hold ample opportunity to earn considerably more!

Look at the Numbers

Are you running reports on a regular basis and using that data to manage your staff? I find florists to be generally "number-phobic," but your sales statistics are proof-positive of how well your efforts to change the sales culture in your shop are working.

Shop owners may disagree on how much information to divulge to their employees, but whether you share actual sales figures or just percentages, your staff needs to hear how their actions are impacting the health of the business. It's the only way for them to start taking ownership of their job.

You should share these numbers at your next staff meeting. Let your employees know how well, or poorly, they're doing and share your goals for the coming months and holidays.

Have a Plan for Mother's Day

Don't just let the holiday happen; plan for it, starting with a meeting with your staff to discuss your strategy. Many flower shops have a

quick "tactical huddle" a few days before a holiday, but that's not planning. Meet early to talk about what you're going to be selling online, in the store and on the phone. Make sure to have a range of choices, with at least a few designs 25 percent above your typical top-end price.

Remember, you have to manage your staff so they can sell at those higher prices. Have samples of your Mother's Day collection at your next sales meeting and challenge your team to sell them to you like you're a customer on the phone. Coach them on how to best describe the container, the palette and the size. This is your optimal chance to start changing the thinking in your store, moving away from the old concept of merely offering choices to holiday shoppers to enticing them with new, different, higher-priced options. As I always say, "The worst that a customer can say is no. Just offer them another option. You won't lose the sale!"

Customer Service 101

I consider customer service and sales to be continuations of each other. Unfortunately, we tend to be melodramatic when problems arise. I regularly see 20-year floral industry veterans juggling the phone like a hot potato while telling an upset caller, "Hold on, I have to get my manager!" Why? If you can make a \$100 sale, why can't you handle a customer upset about how a \$100 arrangement looks?

Here's my final pearl of wisdom: Your store no longer has complaints — you only have incomplete orders. In other words, you can immediately change your staff's perspective if they are empowered to handle these calls themselves and settle the situation rather than passing them off. An "incomplete order" simply means that you did not meet the customer's expectations the first time and are being given a second chance to correct and complete it. 🙌

Tim Huckabee, FSC, is the president of FloralStrategies, which provides customer service, sales and POS system training to retail and wholesale florists. tim@floralstrategies.com



COMING NEXT ISSUE:

Summer sales activities, including launching follow-up and reminder calls



"Many flower shops have a quick 'tactical huddle' a few days before a holiday, but that's not planning. Meet early to talk about what you're going to be selling online, in the store and on the phone."



Now Head Online!

Visit floralstrategies.com to find more motivation and tools to turn you into a sales manager!

