

Best Practices of Successful Flower Shops

By: Tim Huckabee AIFSE

T

The flower industry is a tough business. Think about it for a minute: we're essentially doing light manufacturing with a perishable product. We work through every holiday, while the rest of the world relaxes. And we're facing competition from new sources all the time. Sounds bleak? Nope, it's just challenging, and meant only for those who have a passion for flowers.

BUT are you and your staff unknowingly making some of these common mistakes that make your job harder, erode your profits, decrease efficiency and send the wrong message to customers?

Being so terrified of hearing NO from customers that you shortchange yourself

NO is not a bad word, but it's kryptonite to most florists. Ever have one of these thoughts? "I don't want to offer that high price. What is she says NO?" or "I can't recommend that to him, he might say NO." Get over it! NO just means to the customer doesn't want that item or price, it does not mean he or she won't do business with you today or ever again! Count out loud how many times you have offered a customer a choice and he or she simply slammed down the phone or stormed out of the store never to return again. I have been selling flowers since 1993 and can only think of one or two customers, at most. So, do you get my point? We have to offer what we feel is best suited to a customer's needs and be prepared to hear (and not be emotionally wounded by) the word NO. It simply means, "I'll pass on that, give me some other options."



Not selling at 2015 prices

Take a look in your cooler, on your website and listen to your staff. Would a customer visiting your shop to celebrate his wife's birthday ever have the chance to spend \$100 (short of him offering you that price point)? Probably not. And that has to change. This is 2015 – when YOUR customers drop \$100 (easily!) on a sweater at Roots and spend \$6+ on a fancy coffee drink at Second Cup. So, dear readers, WHY can't they spend more at your store? I'm not saying that you can't still offer a \$49.99 basket BUT every customer should also see what

you're team is really capable of creating. Find some space in your cooler for a "featured design" at \$100, \$125 or more. Review your prices and options online too.

And PLEASE talk to your staff about taking a phone order the right way—which means asking for the card message BEFORE the desired product and then leveraging that information to sell better. Saying, "To celebrate your wife's birthday, I recommend one of our beautiful LARGE designs filled with gorgeous summer flowers, priced at \$100 to \$125" will get you much better results than, "What would you like to send?"

Remember, the worst thing that he can say is "NO"!

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.