

# Two Simple Habits That Reap Big Sales

By: Tim Huckabee AIFSE

**H**ere we are again at the holiday season. I know, for many people in retail, this doesn't really feel like the most wonderful time of the year. But don't look it at as a 6-week stream of long hours (and relentless Christmas music); view the holidays as a chance to boost sales and prepare for a banner 2016!

I want to close out the year by sharing two elements of the **FloralStrategies** sales/service process that I have been teaching to successful florists across Canada for years.

## Have a store meeting, NOW!

One common trait that the best flower shops worldwide share is great staff communication. You can have this too, by simply starting a series of regular scheduled meetings.

While the mere thought of being centre stage for a store meeting gives many owners/managers a facial tick, meetings can be quite easy, productive and fun. Trust me! They even have regular staff meetings at Tim Horton's, so why not at your store?

### *Here's your plan:*

Tell employees immediately that there will be a staff meeting next Tuesday, for example, when the store closes. Don't even try to pull it off during business hours. It will never work — there are simply too many interruptions. Next, post an agenda listing what you want to cover and encourage your team to share their ideas too. Then, when you have the meeting, simply address the issues and ideas you have and then solicit feedback and participation from your team. You will be amazed at how productive these meetings can be and how they will even impact morale, since you're all literally getting onto the same page!

This first meeting will be a great platform for you to tell the team about holiday specials BEFORE they go on your website and customers begin calling with questions. You can review holiday hours, remind staff of sales expectations and revisit holiday policies (tag those poinsettias!).

After the meeting make sure to follow up with the minutes. All it takes is a bullet point recording of the topics discussed. This is a critical step since it will virtually eliminate the, "I forgot about that" or "I didn't hear that" comments you might otherwise encounter.



Finally, set up a schedule of meetings for all of 2016. There is no right or wrong schedule — you can meet every 3 weeks or 6 weeks or even quarterly, but get those dates on a calendar that is in a public space. This will minimize any of the last-minute excuses about dental appointments or the inability to get a baby sitter.

## Encourage Bigger Sales!

Every florist wants to earn more, but are you taking proactive steps to make bigger sales happen in your business? Start by taking a look at your website and make sure you are featuring holiday choices at and above \$100. Remember: For many customers, what they are sending Mom is her Christmas gift, so take advantage of the guilt they feel about being away and let

them spend well!

What are the choices for walk-in customers? Can they choose a fancy, dressed up poinsettia at \$75, \$100 or more? Who cares what Rhonda across town is selling hers for? Make your poinsettias look special and customers will spend the money. What's happening in the cooler? Is it just a sea of "safe choices" — \$45 and \$65 baskets — or is there a "wow" factor design priced at \$125?

What is your staff offering callers? Please break out of the nasty habit (and deadly sin) of offering, "Our Christmas arrangements start at...." My golden rule is to sell to the card message, not the occasion. Simply put, ALWAYS take the card message before talking about product so you will learn the relationship between the customer and recipient and how many people the gift represents. With proper background information, you can comfortably say, "Since this is coming from all her children and grandchildren, I recommend sending our LARGE holiday design (and describe it well) priced at \$XX to \$YY," and easily make a bigger sale than you'd planned.

Talk about ALL of these points at your upcoming holiday store meeting and you'll be on track to have a better Christmas and a more profitable 2016!

## A CHRISTMAS GIFT

Go to [www.floralstrategies.com/CF](http://www.floralstrategies.com/CF) for **FREE** access to our Holiday Boot Camp webinar with further training, tips and ideas to implement right away. This is a \$100 value **FREE** for Canadian Florist readers!

**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.