



Volume IV 2012

**Merchandising
the Christmas
Holiday**

Deck the Halls

**Capturing
Commercial
Accounts**

**Bridal
Consultations
101**

**FloraCraft
Still Going
Strong**

the professional florist



DIAMOND AWARD
WINNING PUBLICATION

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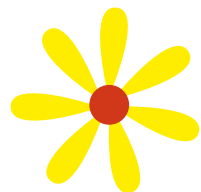
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Volume IV 2012

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LEADERSHIPREPORT

An Opportunity

BY ALICE WATEROUS AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI, PRESIDENT, MICHIGAN FLORAL ASSOCIATION



Whether change is good or bad, it is simply the order of things. We each have the opportunity to mold our reaction to life's surprise package. It makes me impatient to hear people grieve about the "good old days". Whether things were better or not, the only time we have to enjoy and utilize is now.

The Michigan Floral Association and its members flex with new influences, business modes and marketing challenges every day. At our core, we are in the business of affecting lives

with beautiful floral products, presented in an artistic fashion. Lucky us!

A recent opportunity to interact with the Michigan Funeral Directors at their conference held in Mt. Pleasant was a win, win situation. Through the efforts of our Executive Director, Rod Crittenden, and MFA Vice President, Bob Patterson, a connection was made and a plan implemented for the MFA to have a booth at the MFDA conference trade show. We created floral designs with flowers donated by Nordlie Inc. and Vans Floral Products to represent a sampling of what our members create for various types of services.

How interesting, to see the variety of goods and services offered to funeral homes. We were able to display a casket spray on a hand-crafted wooden casket that is completely biodegradable. It was lovely to see, a natural finish with no

The various services provided by Michigan florists were featured in a booth at the Michigan Funeral Directors conference.



LEADERSHIPREPORT

Taken

metal components used in its construction. Obviously this company has identified a need and filled it by producing a product that is eco-friendly, and at the same time satisfies the family with something lovely to inter their loved one in. In addition to items appropriate for cremations, state of the art memorial stones and pre-planning services, there were all sorts of personalized styles of caskets, from a John Deere style model to one with homage to quilters. So like the florist, funeral directors are aware of the need to respond to changing times, needs and attitudes.

Of course, our main purpose in participating was to encourage funeral directors to move people away from the term: "in lieu of flowers". By handing out a sheet that suggested other phrases, and engaging in conversations, we hoped to give funeral

directors the tools and encouragement to omit the "please omit" type phrases in obituaries.

It would be nice to be able to say this problem is forever solved; it most likely will persist at some level. However, representing our members and keeping the lines of communication open to the members of the Michigan Funeral Directors Assn., was worth the effort. The better the relationship between our professions, the less likely we will see negative phrases related to funeral and memorial services.

Death is of course, inevitable and since earliest times, humans have expressed sympathy and eased their grief with flowers. The MFA is dedicated to helping our members serve their communities with appropriate and beautiful floral tributes for a long time to come. ✿

INDUSTRYNEWS

Tim Timinski Joins MFA Board



The Michigan Floral Association is pleased to announce that Tim Timinski, business development manager at FloraCraft Corp. in Ludington, MI, has joined the MFA Board of Directors. Timinski will be serving as the region 6 director.

"I am very pleased to be joining the MFA board, and I hope that my 27 years in the industry will allow me to make some valuable contributions that will benefit the entire association," said Timinski.

"When I hear the numerous (with emphasis on numerous) MFA trade fair attendees make

statements such as, 'This is by far the best state association and trade fair around', I think it warrants everyone's best effort to ensure that MFA continues to be the quality "benchmark" in all of its endeavors. I look forward to giving the membership my best effort." ✿

Shinall Promoted at Syndicate Sales

Laura Shinall has been promoted to vice president at Syndicate Sales, Kokomo, IN. The announcement was made by company chairman, Del Demaree.

Shinall has been involved in the floral industry for over 30 years in both wholesale and retail operations. She began with Syndicate Sales as an account executive and most recently served as director of marketing.

In addition she has sat on the company board of directors for 15 years and is a member of the American Floral Endowment board of trustees and the Society of American Florists consumer marketing committee. ✿



HOLIDAYFEATURE

Merchandising the Christmas Holiday

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

Even though it is only July, every florist knows that Christmas is just around the corner.

According to the Society of American Florists, it is the number one flower buying holiday just ahead of Mother's Day. Statistics on www.aboutflowers.com show that 50 percent of consumer transactions of flowers and plants occur for the December holiday. While 54 percent of these purchases are fresh flowers, red poinsettias come in a close second at 53 percent. Seventy-80 million poinsettias are sold at Christmas.

Other popular flowering plants are cyclamen, kalanchoe, Christmas cactus, and holly. In addition, there are the traditional wreaths, roping, swags and holiday arrangements that will boost your seasonal sales.

So how can you get the most out of your holiday displays and make sure they provide an added sales tool?

One way is to make sure that you have an eye-catching array of poinsettias. Schaefer's Greenhouses, in Montgomery, IL, creates a display of 35,000 pots of vibrant, multiple bloom poinsettias in red, burgundy, white and pink.

Even if your space is small, like the window of your flower

shop, or large like a 200,000 sq. ft. greenhouse, an array of brightly color poinsettias will definitely put your customers in the holiday mood.

Another way to boost sales is the holiday open house. An open house is guaranteed to bring customers into your establishment. Here you can showcase ornaments, containers, fresh flowers, holiday greens, Christmas trees, supplies, and gifts.

For years Kennicott Brothers in Chicago hosted "Christmas in July" which drew 500 florists who enjoyed refreshments and arranging tips from top designers. They now host this event in September.

According to Mary Ann Kutnick at Schaefer's, "We have found that the single biggest draw at a Christmas open house is the appearance of Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus. Their appearance draws families into our business. Have a photographer there. Take free photos, print, and display them for pickup the following week. This will bring the customer back into your store for a second look. An open house is a great way to connect with the community."

Most flower shops will have their open houses beginning in September and running through early November. But decorating can begin even earlier. In Frankenmuth, MI, where "it is Christmas

Copper and gold are featured in this holiday vignette at Frankenmuth Florist. Copper and gold ornaments have been combined with ivory/gold bows and silver glittered sprays.



A "snow" hill with sledding snowmen is the centerpiece of this Frankenmuth Florist tableau featuring custom silk arrangements, including trees, wreaths and holiday giftware.



This Country Lane Flower Shop tree has peacock feathers at the top along with a copper and gold ribbon treatment. Teal silk eucalyptus, berries and ferns are woven in, along with large cream magnolia blossoms peppered throughout.





Country Lane Flower Shop's whimsical window treatment highlights top hats in red, green and black. The hats, made of a stiff, mesh-like fabric, are decorated with holly while the coordinated Christmas tree is topped with sprays of glittered berries.

all year long", Vita Hopp at Frankenmuth Florist, begins decorating at the end of August. She noted, "We begin at the back of the store and work our way up to the front by November. Eight to 15 trees are decorated and coordinated with vignettes. For example, a wine ornament decorated tree is next to a vignette featuring wine glasses and giftware."

Themed trees are a popular way of showing off the many holiday items available in your shop. Designer Libbie Deering, Country Lane Flower Shop, Howell, MI, pointed out they have done quite a few themed trees featuring among others a pink princess look, woodland ornaments, all white decorations, and peacock colors in addition to the traditional red and green.

Kevin Adamo at Country Lane and Mark Forsberg, Forsberg Flowers, Marquette, MI, have incorporated a "Ladies Night" into their Christmas merchandising. At Forsberg ladies receive roses and can partake of wine, cheese, and crackers while shopping, while at Country Lane the services of a nail tech and a massage therapist are available.

Using the social network has become an integral part of



Benches of poinsettias, combined in a quilt of vibrant colors, greet visitors to Schaefer Greenhouses.



Wine is the theme of this scene at Frankenmuth Florist which combines Christmas decorations and wine related gifts. Tree decorations include bottles, ornaments and bunches of grapes. The tree is complemented with wine caddies, bottles, and candles.



Santa & Mrs. Claus pose for pictures among the poinsettias at Schaefer Greenhouses.

promoting floral holidays. Facebook, LinkedIn, and tweeting are all being used to make consumers aware of what your business can offer.

In order to promote commercial business, send wreaths to local companies suggesting that they send a Christmas token to favored customers, employees, and suppliers. It is a small effort on your part that can pay large dividends. ❁



An ice crystal themed tree is the focal point in this snowy skating scene display at Schaefer's.

HOLIDAYFEATURE

Deck the Halls...

BY KIM TOZIER, HIAWATHA EVERGREENS, SHELTON, WA

The greening of Christmas is an ancient tradition that goes back to Roman times when houses were decorated with evergreen plants. Early Christians combined berries with greens to decorate their homes. In 16th century England houses were decked with seasonal greens like ivy and bay laurel. Wreaths, swags, and evergreen garlands have been used to “deck the halls” for centuries.

Much of the ancient decorations were seen as religious symbols. For example, holly symbolized the crown-of-thorns and its red berries the blood of Jesus. The heart-shaped leaves of ivy were said to represent Jesus’ arrival on earth. Thus, the traditional colors of red

Oregonia, Port Orford cedar, and noble fir are used in this decorative hanging basket. The 10” black metal scroll basket with a red liner also showcases red berry clusters and painted pine cones. It comes with three chains and a hook for hanging.



This mixed greens wreath contains fresh noble fir, incense cedar, and blue berried juniper accented with ponderosa pine cones.



and green: red for the blood of Jesus and green, represented by evergreens, symbolizing eternal life.

Mistletoe was a part of ancient Druid ceremonies hundreds of years before Christ. They believed it had special powers since it remained green during the cold winter. The practice of kissing under the mistletoe is lost in time but the plant was seen as a symbol of peace by the ancient Romans.

Over the years, holiday decorating has become more elaborate. Decorations have gone from inside the house to over the front door, around lampposts, and on fences. Inside the house evergreens continue to represent new life with centerpieces, mantelpieces and hanging baskets.

The variety of holiday greens available to wholesalers and retailers is unending.

Among the most popular are salal, huckleberry, bear grass, noble fir, blue berried juniper, red cedar, incense cedar, white pine, and Douglas fir to name just a few. These are all harvested from the temperate forests of the Pacific Northwest.

During peak production, which begins in October and runs through the first part of December, Hiawatha produces 45,000–50,000 decorator items per day which are kept fresh until delivery within 100,000 square feet of cold storage. There are 800–900 temporary piece workers hired each season to produce all the fresh items and 45 full time year around employees.

Also, truckloads of fresh cut bough material (evergreen tree limb tips) are shipped to wholesale florists who either resell it or produce their own finished products, such as wreaths, swags, centerpieces, urns or garlands.

Creating distinctive designs for customers requesting more elaborate wreaths and centerpieces can be a challenge. The Holiday Petals Wreath is part of the Season of Elegance category. It features a pair of red velvet poinsettias, and a cluster of ponderosa pine cones on a noble fir and Port Orford cedar wreath.

Hiawatha has also created a new eco-friendly product group entitled the Go Greener category. The incentive to create this was prompted by customers who are also focusing on social and environmental sustainability. The group included a hanging basket and two centerpieces. The containers are made from a bamboo composite which is 100 percent biodegradable. The coloring for the containers derives from natural vegetable dyes and the decorations are natural dried canella berries, German statice and pine cones. A white taper candle in the centerpiece contains no paraffin wax and is made with 100 percent palm wax from a non-GMO rapidly renewable resource.

The greening of America has become important in producing evergreens. Becoming even greener has been and will continue



Wreaths and garlands can be combined to decorate the doorway. Here, a handcrafted log basket is filled with Christmas greens, red and blue berries, pine cones, curly willow and variegated holly.



to be an important focus for Hiawatha. All the evergreens are harvested in ways that encourage regeneration to insure there will continue to be ample supply for years to come.

Bough (evergreen tree limb tips) plots are harvested on a bi-annual basis to maintain product availability year after year. Harvesters cut an average of fifty pounds per tree, which is the amount necessary for five standard sized wreaths. During production all waste is thrown onto conveyor belts, which are then processed through a chipper and made into mulch used for landscaping.

Hiawatha continues to seek ways to increase production without impacting the environment. By exercising efficient methods of recycling and incessant monitoring of water and power usages, we continue to look for ways to improve our 'Green Power'.

The care and handling of fresh cut Christmas greens is important for both wholesaler and retailer to insure that the customer is satisfied with the end product. Wholesalers should unpack the greens from the shipping box as soon as possible. Branches should be stored at 32 to 36 degrees Fahrenheit, relative humidity 80-90 percent.

Retailers can provide their customers with a list of basic instructions such as keeping the greens away from heat and sunlight, misting, and adding water each day. Some even advocate putting them away in the refrigerator at night. More likely, putting them in a cool place will do the trick and keep them fresh the entire Christmas season. ❁



The Holiday Petals Centerpiece features fragrant noble fir and Port Orford cedar in a four and a half inch luster red tin. The arrangement is decorated with a red velvet poinsettia.

MARKETINGFEATURE

Capturing Commercial Accounts

BY CAROLYNN VAN NAMEN, MBA, INTEGRA GLOBAL CONSULTING



You've heard it before: begin with the end in mind. That's a great principle to use in setting new goals for increasing revenues and building more business. Decide on your target and work backwards to figure out how you will reach it. This process works for anyone

in a retail floral or any other business looking for new and different ways to achieve greater revenues.

There are some basic rules of marketing that you may want to keep in mind as you develop your commercial account business. You can either sell more products and services to your existing customers or find new customers in a different market segment. Admittedly, experts will tell you that it's easier and more cost-effective to sell more goods and services to people who already buy from you than to acquire new customers. There is an incremental cost to gaining each new customer. But in this economy, you have to be inventive and seek customers in places and ways that you haven't tried before. Diversification is a key element in survival for small businesses.

So, how do you go about finding and acquiring those lucrative commercial accounts? If you've never considered developing relationships with other businesses and professional firms, we can walk you through the process right here. Hint: It takes some research and legwork but yields profitable results – and who doesn't want that?

TIP #1: Build Trust

You probably know that commercial accounts, unlike individual clients, can provide you with a consistent order frequency over time, which should even out the peaks and valleys that typically affect a retail flower business. Like gaining any new customers and retaining existing ones, you have to build a relationship based on trust and the ability to deliver on your promises. People and companies want to do business with

others they already know and trust. Gain their trust and you've got a customer for the long-term.

Trust is a huge factor in the relationship arena, whether it's between friends, lovers or customers. Who you are as a retail florist (or wholesaler or supplier) is tied directly to how good you are at keeping your promises to your customers. Those promises may not be stated outright, but every time you accept an order and agree to deliver it on a specified day and time, you've done more than enter into a contractual agreement; you've made a promise. You develop trust by doing what you say you will do, charging a reasonable price for your products and services that creates perceived value for the purchaser, and delivering on your promise, on time, every time.

TIP #2: Convert Customers Into Evangelists

Let's apply the concept of relationship marketing to establishing relationships with other businesses and professional firms. Your goal will be to convert these casual acquaintances into "friends," turn friends into "believers" and transform believers into "evangelists" for your retail business and your brand. The "acquaintances" are the businesses or individuals that may have contacted you in the past to deliver a floral piece for an employee's birthday or retirement party; the "friends" are those managers or administrators who are pleased with your work and call you back to provide a floral arrangement for other occasions. From there it's a quick leap from friend to "believer" if you have delivered quality, beauty and perceived value on a consistent basis. That's when believers become your brand "evangelists": they tell others about you and refer you to their colleagues and associates.

Sounds obvious, right? If a business account places an order with you to fulfill by 10 am. but your flower piece arrives at 10:15, you've just lost credibility and damaged the trust between you. It really doesn't matter why the delivery was late – being stuck in traffic, getting lost, needing to buy gas, getting the order out the door late – none of that matters to the customer who wanted to surprise someone on a particular day and time. The trust has been broken and the potential for repeat

MARKETINGFEATURE

business seriously compromised. You run the risk of turning someone who was a “friend” into an “unbeliever” instead of moving the client through the conversion pipeline to becoming an evangelist.

Now that you have an idea of what it takes to convert customers into evangelists, let’s examine what steps you may want to follow to increase your revenues and market share by expanding your commercial business.

TIP #3: Determine the Size of Your Potential Market

An important step in building your base of commercial clients is to identify the scope of the market. Take a look at the demographics of the metropolitan area that you serve, and identify the number and location of possible targets for your products and services. Consider professional services such as law firms, banks, financial services brokers, accounting firms, insurance companies and real estate offices. And let’s not forget the obvious targets: hotels, restaurants, banquet halls and other venues. Determine the market potential for businesses located within a 25-50 mile radius of your store, including the number of businesses and the universe of employees who work there who could become individual clients, then get to know them and what they need.

TIP #4: Define Your Offer

Once you’ve got a good sense of the market potential for your floral services, then you need to define your offer. Ask yourself some essential questions such as: What can I provide that customers can’t get anywhere else? What do I do better than other florists in the area? What value-added services do I offer to my customers? What problem do I solve? What products or services do I highlight that set my business apart? What are the personal qualities or brand distinctives that customers desire? What experience or expertise do I possess that clients would be willing to pay for? Do I deliver what I promise?

Next, take a look around your shop as if you were seeing it for the first time. What catches your eye? Do you have a variety of containers, paper products, gift items and gourmet food items that would enhance your appeal to commercial accounts? To be distinctive and memorable, you need to elicit a positive emotional response to your offerings beyond the artistry of your design skills. Dare to be distinctive! Develop a unique signature that accompanies your floral designs to make them memorable.

Now that you’ve taken a personal inventory and a physical assessment of your services and products, you’re ready to create your “unique selling proposition,” or pitch. How you present yourself and your offer is just as important as the offer itself.

Decorated Fresh Holiday Basics

Holiday Petals Wreath and Centerpiece

Deluxe Diamond Door Swag

Basket Centerpiece

Western Greens

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Think about ways to convey your message – can you do it with a well-crafted letter of introduction, an eye-catching promotional piece or brochure, a hand-written note, a personal visit, a complimentary gift showcasing your design artistry and quality, or some combination of these? What works best for your customers and how do you know?

TIP #5: Do The Research

If your business is located in a metropolitan area surrounded by offices, corporate headquarters and other retail establishments, it should be fairly easy to do market research by just walking around. Get out of your shop and check out the businesses in your immediate vicinity. Look at their storefronts and their customers – are you selling to the same type of clients?

Or is your shop in a strip mall or stand-alone spot with little walk-in traffic? Will you have to expand the circle of your target market to several miles beyond your location? If so, you can easily go online and check listings and search results for the kinds of businesses you want to attract. Look at their websites or directory ads, if any – do they seem like a good fit for your services? If you are a small shop and you are the chief designer/salesperson/custodian, you have to gauge the extent to which you can provide excellent service to large corporate accounts versus single-office small businesses or professional firms. It's vital to be honest with yourself and know what you can and cannot accomplish; your brand integrity depends on it.

TIP #6: Do The Math

You've gone through the process to identify the number and size (market potential) of the commercial businesses you want to attract. Now you will need to figure out the potential revenues to be earned from these customers.

If your market potential consists of a few thousand businesses and firms in your total marketing area, you may be thinking this will be as easy as shooting fish in a pail. But let's be realistic: How many commercial accounts can you effectively service on a weekly basis? An important factor in developing commercial business is to project a positive image and deliver consistent quality. If your end product falters or fails to meet the expectations of your target audience, you will risk losing those revenues. In order for you to increase commercial business by word-of-mouth and referral, your design work has to remain true to your brand promise.

Consider the impact on your daily operations of gaining 25 new commercial accounts that will require weekly servicing throughout the year. That's 25 designs X 52 weeks at an average retail price of \$150 each, depending on the size and type of client. The outcome could contribute gross revenues of \$3750/week X 52 – \$195,000 (not including COGS). But if you have insufficient design staff, delivery vehicles or drivers to meet the increased demand, the cost-benefit can end up having a negative effect on your business overall.

Make the most of the opportunity to design weekly arrangements for single-office firms or small businesses by realizing economies of scale from producing similar designs for businesses of a similar size and type (real estate offices, medical offices, small manufacturers, family-style restaurants). This approach allows you to leverage your purchasing power with your wholesale floral supplier by buying fresh flowers from the same source in set quantities every week – an arrangement that gives you the advantage of more favorable pricing for standing orders and enables you to increase your profit margin per retail order.

For more upscale business clients, like professional services firms, you may be able to create a design menu based on the most available or seasonal flowers and then replicate those designs, with some variations, for clients at the higher end of the price spectrum. You will still achieve time- and cost-savings by creating similar designs for this customer segment and possibly using fewer, but more expensive, flowers per arrangement. By streamlining your production for both customer segments, you can realize greater profits.

Tip 7: Do The Marketing

Ok, you've identified your target audience, you've defined your offer, you've calculated your costs and potential revenues. Now – how will you get your message in front of the decision-makers? You will need to create brand awareness and generate leads through targeted advertising and public relations campaigns, on and offline; through co-marketing efforts with select venues; and by using traditional direct mail/e-mail and special events.

It's a truism that, whether you plan to do the marketing or not, you're still marketing. It may not be intentional or part of your annual budget, but marketing happens with or without you. Of course, it's better to direct your marketing activities than to let your lack of marketing focus do more harm than good.

Would you patronize a hair stylist who always looked like she just rolled out of bed or didn't sterilize her brushes? Probably not. Would a business client continue to patronize your

While the industry has been adversely affected by the recent economic downturn, the fundamental basis for giving flowers remains intact. We sell emotion and promote well-being. We function within a business environment that values and upholds beauty, both natural and created.

MARKETINGFEATURE

floral shop if the flowers in his last order drooped and the leaves turned yellow? Definitely not. Here is a basic truth of marketing: you are your brand. Everything you say and do, from the appearance of your shop to the quality of your flowers, bears your imprint and reflects who you are. If the person who answers the phone at your business (you?) is friendly and helpful, the caller immediately gains a sense of confidence in your ability to deliver her order. Conversely, if the phone is answered abruptly and the caller is either put on hold or treated rudely, it's very likely that he won't be calling back.

TIP #8: Pull, Don't Push

Kudos to you if you are including promotions in your monthly statements to your customers – great start! But how else are you drawing potential customers in to your shop or your website? Do customers routinely check your website to see the “special of the week” (SOW) or download a coupon for a free balloon with their next order?

Don't overlook social media as a way to draw new customers who can become avid fans on Facebook and share their enthusiasm for your work with their network of friends. Facebook is a powerful vehicle for building web traffic as well as establishing yourself as a forward-thinking retailer. You'll be surprised at how effective Facebook is when people start to “like” you and your business – many consumers read

customer product reviews before they make a purchase decision.

You should also spend some time developing a “tweet” schedule for your Twitter account so you can add comments automatically at pre-determined times. Check out the useful tool at <http://www.tweetadder.com/> and start tweeting on a regular basis to develop tons of followers.

Another great site that is ideal for floral retailers is Pinterest, where you can upload photos and videos of your best work and get others to “pin” your photos to their site. Because of the visual nature of Pinterest, you may want to invest the time to become fully acquainted with its capabilities.

When you engage your customers with pull tactics, you empower them to choose the offer or promotion that they want or need. It may seem counterintuitive – after all, you bought way too many roses last week and you need to clear out your cooler! Or you overestimated the appeal of those cute baby containers and you don't have room to stock them, so of course you want to push those items along and reduce your inventory. But that approach is not customer-focused and will not encourage clients to engage with your brand. So what's a florist to do?

TIP #9: Twelve Tactics to Engage Your Customers (Individual and Commercial)

1. Borrow a technique from the big box stores: offer a BOGO – buy one, get one.



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MARKETING FEATURE

2. Provide a bonus to customers who refer you to clients who place an order with you within a specific timeframe.
3. Develop a loyalty program – let customers earn points for rewards.
4. Partner with a complementary business to trade/ reciprocate services. Entice customers with incentives at each partner business.
5. Have weekly drawings for a free arrangement. If conducted online, customers will have to provide their contact information, which then goes right into your database to generate future offers.
6. Do surveys and contests onsite or online and provide winners with a discount on their next purchase. Publish their photo on your website or in-store display.
7. Invite business clients to a special evening after-hours with refreshments at your shop to introduce a new product or service.
8. Support a local charity or sponsor an area event – get your name in front of people who value community participation.
9. Mail out scratch-off discount cards that can only be redeemed when the customer comes into your store.
10. Make a donation of a portion of every order received on a given day to a client's favorite organization or local

shelter. Raising your social-conscience profile demonstrates your commitment to more than just making money and extends your brand.

11. Explore opportunities for short-term excitement and quick sales through local mobile marketing offers with services such as Groupon.
12. Offer to do an onsite evaluation and create a complimentary custom plan for weekly deliveries based on the client's office layout, lighting and space.

The flower business is a high-touch, highly relational industry where the level of personal interaction involves trust to encourage repeat business. While the industry has been adversely affected by the recent economic downturn, the fundamental basis for giving flowers remains intact. We sell emotion and promote well-being. We function within a business environment that values and upholds beauty, both natural and created. And there will always be a market for that. ✿

Carolynn Van Namen, MBA, is an independent marketing and communications consultant with Integra Global Consulting, based in the Chicago area. She is dedicated to helping small businesses refine, refresh and renew their on- and offline marketing and messaging. Check out her profile at [LinkedIn.com/in/carolynnvannamen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolynnvannamen), follow her on Twitter@cvannamen or contact her directly at Carolynn@integra-gc.com.



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One in 17 Million!

How to stand out in a crowd

BY LAURA L. PARKER, AIFD, CFD, CF

Copyright 2010, Imagine Studios



When the word sympathy is entered into Google, it brings up 17,000,000 results... Yes, that's 17 million!

The vast number of results include everything from research and articles to an excess of retailers from stationery and booksellers, to poetry and giftware...and, oh yeah, let's not forget the plethora of floral retailers!

Consumers seeking a way to express their condolences have so many options. It's no wonder the floral industry has experienced significant changes in the volume of sympathy work. There are any number of theories on how flower shops can increase their sympathy sales. The vast majority of these ideas are good, some are even great; however there is one very simple and inexpensive way to earn more business. Relationships!

What is the most important factor in most buying decisions? Trust. Think about it, when was the last time you made a purchase of any importance from a business or individual that you did not trust? There are many ways to build trust with current customers and potential customers.

The first is the most personal; you need to get to know your customers! Make sure every customer is the most important person in the store. Can a store owner personally greet and know every single customer? Probably not, and that is where your staff becomes crucial. Each staff member must take responsibility for developing relationships with the customers they serve. This applies not only to salespeople but to designers as well.

Floral designers often develop a signature style that is their passion and will acquire a following of customers who are drawn to that designer's creations. When these customers then need sympathy flowers, they will go to the professional that they trust to provide them with quality. This trust is tied closely to comfort level.

Death makes nearly all of us feel vulnerable and we are then drawn to people and places that are comfortable. When Mrs. Smith's aunt dies she's going to come to you because of the relationship and comfort level that has developed. Providing personal service is about more than merely being solicitous, it must be authentic.

Of course, we cannot forget the most obvious relationship important to sympathy business, the funeral director. If the local funeral directors trust you and respect your design work, you will be referred to their clients. Designers have a lot to do with this relationship even if they rarely meet the funeral director face to face. The designs sent to the funeral home speak for the designers. Are they structurally sound and attractive? Do they leave a trail of debris, like moss or loose foliage? Are there stray wires or pins that can scratch someone's hand or tear clothing? All of these seemingly small details can affect the relationship your shop has with the funeral director.

The public image of a flower shop is an important business relationship also. This connection generates positive word of mouth advertising. The values and ethics that are associated with a business will ultimately determine their relationship with the local market. Flower shops can increase public awareness and grow their relationship with the community through involvement in networking organizations, civic groups, business associations, churches, schools, and municipal events.

Don't make the mistake of hiding floral designers in the workroom. Look for opportunities to show case their design abilities along with the flowers. This is how a public image of trust is developed; people generally are less likely to trust someone they don't know anything about.

This is not something you can do in a simple advertising campaign. There are no stamps to stick or envelopes to stuff. All you need is a friendly smile and a quality business. Reach out to anyone who affects or is affected by your business and build a relationship. You will be amazed at the difference it will make. ✿



MEMBERPROFILE

Picket Fence, a Family Affair

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

Life is full of what ifs. For example, if Sarah Boetsma's mother hadn't decorated the family's business with Sarah's arrangements, her daughter's floral career would not have begun at the tender age of 18.

While in high school, Sarah attended Career Line Tech Center for half the day. She took the Greenhouse Floral Class, learned to make a variety of arrangements, and found she loved wedding work.

"My mom would buy everything I made at school and put the arrangements all around their canvas shop. Laurie, the

cooler for me and I worked in a 20' x 20' room. It was hard, at first, being a 'Basement Betty' competing with bigger companies. But, I did bridal shows, and a lot of networking with people in the industry."

She worked out of the canvas shop for six years. During that time she did about 100 weddings and then realized she really wanted to get into retail in addition to her wedding work. "I was scared to death and didn't know if I would make it but I really wanted a retail shop." So, six years ago she opened her shop at 897-20 S. Washington in Holland.

Her mother Karen DeJonge has been her partner from the beginning. "Mom does the bookkeeping and helps around the shop and dad is the silent partner."

The shop has expanded to space next door to set up a Do-It-Yourself area. Brides can rent the room for four hours to make their own bouquets and boutonnieres. Sarah provides flowers and supplies and will conduct an arrangement class if need be. In some cases, during dahlia season, brides can go pick their flowers at the Dahlia Farm in Hamilton run by Jan Brondyke, and bring them back to create their wedding bouquets.

During wedding season there are two full time designers, two delivery drivers, her mom and sometimes a part-timer to handle the orders. Weddings are kind of a love/hate relationship, she noted, "I hate the stress but love when we deliver the bridal flowers and see how happy the bride is to get them."

Picket Fence has been named the winner of The Knot's Best of Weddings for West Michigan two years in a row. The shop also was cited in Wedding Wire, an online wedding site.

In the shop, best sellers are mixed bouquets. Sarah explained, "We bring our customers back to the cooler, they pick out their favorites and we make the bouquets. Gerbera daisies are our most popular flower and, of course, in the spring, tulip bunches. As for hard goods, glassware is the best seller."

Holiday promotions are important because they are an opportunity for a shop to gain new customers. For Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, Picket Fence has partnered with Thunder 94.5, the country music station. For Mother's Day, listeners write in saying why their mother is special. Five winners are picked, and Flounder, the morning dj, dressed in white tights, a tutu, and wings, delivers them.

"I provide the flowers and in return we get lots of free chatter during the morning and great name recognition. Radio definitely gets results." She also advertises in the New Bride Magazine put out by the local newspaper and is on The Knot.



Picket Fence owners Karen DeJonge, left, and daughter Sarah Boetsma.

owner of Zeeland Floral, came in to have a horse blanket repaired, saw my work, and that's how I got my first job at 18. Who knows where I would have been if she hadn't walked in. In fact, now her daughter is getting married and I am doing the flowers."

After working at Zeeland Floral for four years, Sarah opened a wedding flower business in the canvas shop. "My dad got a

MEMBERPROFILE



Picket Fence has been named the winner of The Knot's Best of Weddings for West Michigan two years in a row. The shop also was cited in Wedding Wire, an online wedding site.

The shop has special areas for both sympathy and bridal consultations.

Sarah feels that networking is one of her most valuable marketing tools. Connections with venues, photographers, and rental companies have brought proven results and more business.

In 2012 Sarah attended her first Great Lakes Floral Expo and was so impressed she wants to volunteer next year. "It was great fun. I found new sources and the design seminars were great. I picked up tips and techniques. Watching the designers create was inspiring and made me want to go back to the shop and do new things."

She is in the process of updating her website, www.picketfence.com, to include an interactive flower catalog with a special section on weddings. She is also on Facebook and believes that the use of social media is a boon to her business.

She thinks that the website will take Picket Fence to the next level and help provide outstanding customer service. "I believe customer service is the most important element. We try to go



above and beyond in making sure our customer is happy and satisfied. I could not do any of this without my staff, they are the best."

In summing up her career to date, Sarah gave the most credit to her parents. "Without my mother and father, I would not be where I am today. I come from a long line of entrepreneurs. Now mom and dad say I am their retirement plan." ✿

BRIDALUPDATE

Bridal Consultations 101

BY LOANN BURKE, AIFD,CFD,PFCI
EVENT SPECIALIST, FURST FLORIST, DAYTON,OH

Today, a bride may visit three to five florists before choosing one for her wedding day. So how do you stand out in the crowd? How do you make yourself memorable? It's one thing to get a bride to walk through your door. It's another thing entirely to earn her trust and land the sale. A few simple strategies can help turn a cautious bride into a long term buying relationship.

Ask to See Her Bridal Gown

Want to see a bride light up? Ask about her dress. So many times we focus solely on the flowers, forgetting that the flowers are simply one of a multitude of details she's been planning. She's excited to show you everything from her inspiration photos to her engagement ring.

Show the bride you're interested in her and all the details by asking about the dress. The dress can speak volumes about the bride and her personal taste. Is she vintage and simple? Ruffles and lace? Whipped cream and tulle? Seeing the dress often gives insight into flower selections that will best complement the gown's overall look and feel.

Show Her Actual Flowers

Photos are good. Real flowers are better. When possible, raid the cooler for some choice blooms that will give the overall look and feel the bride is trying to create. While you may not have the exact flowers at the ready in your cooler, an approximation of texture and color is often enough give the bride a glimpse of the possibilities.

Remember, until the bride comes to you, most of her flower dreams have been two dimensional: on a computer, iPad or iPhone. Bring those flowers to life by giving the bride a three dimensional look at some possible options. Put them in her hands. Let the bride touch and smell the possibilities.

Listen More Than You Speak

As basic as this sounds, the bride wants to tell you a story. Her story. Let the bride talk. It's your job to listen. She's been planning and dreaming about this day since she was six years old. The bride needs to trust you with her dream. All too often,



The clean lines of both container and flower give these centerpieces a more contemporary feel. Bright colors, combined with the visual movement of the midollino and callas create a modern Biedermeier for a modern bride.

brides tell me, "The other florist just didn't listen to me!"

For example, my earthy bohemian wildflower bride who wanted that just-picked, super casual look told me about a florist who insisted on showing her gigantic bouquets full of callas, orchids, and hydrangeas. Or my vintage Victorian bride, planning her wedding at the Art Institute, who received a suggestion of brightly colored gerbera daisies and babies breath.

Don't inflict your personal taste on the bride. She has her own style, personality, and wants. She has her own vision for her wedding day. Listen. Then show your expertise by making appropriate suggestions to fulfill that vision in flowers. Tell the bride's story. Not yours.

Remember, a bridal consultation is more than simply taking an order. We're selling more than flowers. We're selling dreams. It's our job to reinterpret those dreams in flowers. ✨



3999CLR
Van's #292088
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PLAIN
Opening: 3.375"
12/Case



3950AST
Van's #292298
7.28" PETITE VASE TRIO
PLAIN
Opening: 3.75", 2.375", 2.5"
12/Case



3907CLR
Van's #292087
8.5" GARDEN URN
PLAIN
Opening: 4"
12/Case



3104CLR
Van's #292294
8.5" GATHERING VASE
PLAIN
Opening: 4"
12/Case



3007CLR
Van's #295787
8.5" MARILYN VASE
PLAIN
Opening: 3"
12/Case



3005SCLR
Van's #292216
9" RIO BUNCH VASE
OPTIC
Opening: 2.75"
12/Case



3002SCLR
Van's #292192
9" RIO VASE
OPTIC
Opening: 5.375"
6/Case



3003SCLR
Van's #292194
9.25" RIO CACHE VASE
OPTIC
Opening: 7.25"
6/Case



3020AST
Van's #292230
10" BOKAY VASE TRIO
PLAIN
Opening: 3.75", 4.625", 3.875"
12/Case



3905CLR
Van's #292086
10.25" GARDEN URN
PLAIN
Opening: 4.75"
6/Case



3008CLR
Van's #292217
10.5" RIO VASE
PLAIN
Opening: 5.5"
6/Case



3929SCLR
Van's #292297
12" CONICO VASE
OPTIC
Opening: 6.5"
6/Case



3004CLR
Van's #292202
13.25" MING VASE
PLAIN
Opening: 5.5"
4/Case



3605CLR
Van's #292089
14" GRECIAN URN
PLAIN
Opening: 6.5"
6/Case



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Chicago, IL
773-254-0700
Doraville, GA
770-449-0100



3914CLR
Van's #295760
5" BUBBLE BOWL
PLAIN
Opening: 3.25"
12/Case



3967CLR
Van's #291722
6" BUBBLE BOWL
PLAIN
Opening: 4.25"
12/Case



3553CLR
Van's #293002
8" BUBBLE BOWL
PLAIN
Opening: 5.25"
4/Case



Save the Date for the 2012 Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame Awards Dinner

HONORING BOBBI ECKER-BLATCHFORD, AAF, AIFD, CFD, PFCI,
OWNER OF THE FLORA PROS IN CHICAGO

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2012

Be sure to save the date, 10-11-12, for an evening of fun and fellowship as the Michigan Floral Foundation (MFF) presents its Hall of Fame, to be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, 187 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI, 49505. Tickets for the event are available by calling the MFA office at (517) 575-0110. For more information on the Hall of Fame, visit www.michiganfloral.org/mff.html. Don't miss this exciting event from your MFA!

About the Michigan Floral Foundation – Founded 2007

The Michigan Floral Foundation has been established to support and advance the floral industry, its members and the communities they serve. The Foundation meets this responsibility through educational opportunities and community enrichment activities.

The MFF will periodically honor outstanding members of the floral industry who have mentored and inspired their fellow industry members. The Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame has been established to record the contributions of those so honored.

The Foundation will support and encourage educational opportunities between the public and design professionals approved by the MFF board of directors. These programs



*Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford,
AAE, AIFD, CFD, PFCI*

will be available at a reasonable charge to non-profit community organizations.

The Foundation also will make available financial assistance to those seeking to become a Certified Florist, such as providing matching funds when candidates purchase their study materials. The board of directors will furnish applications upon request. Grants will be awarded on a one-by-one basis in accordance with funds available for distribution.



MichiganFloral
FOUNDATION

How can I support the Michigan Floral Foundation?

The Michigan Floral Foundation (MFF) is a 501(c) 3 organization. Every contribution is tax deductible and there are many ways that an individual can contribute to the MFF. They can give a living memorial by contributing a monetary amount in honor of a person's birthday or anniversary or at holiday time. A donation to the MFF can be given in loving memory of a loved one at their passing. One might request the funeral director include the Michigan Floral Foundation as a possible organization to contribute to. A contribution can be given in honor of someone as a way of saying thank you, or make a professional gesture to let them know they are special by acknowledging them in this extraordinary manner.

The intentions have been outlined; our mission statement completed and donations are now being accepted. Every donation is a tax deductible contribution and stays within the State of Michigan and is used within the State of Michigan to help Michigan florists. So when that person you know has everything they could possibly want, think of contributing a living memorial in their honor. Make them feel good while giving to this cause and keep our State's florists educated and successful and keep our floral industry professional. To donate, contact the MFA office at (517) 575-0110, or visit www.michiganfloral.org and click on the MFF logo!

DESIGNERSPOTLIGHT

Here Comes Christmas!

BY DOUG BATES, CF, FROM DESIGN'S BY VOGT'S, STURGIS, MI — 2012 MFA DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Ah, Christmas. That marvelous time of year when we snuggle in front of the fireplace with our special someone while sipping eggnog and enjoying the dulcet sounds of Bing, Frank, Eartha, and Perry...Wait a minute! We're FLORISTS! We don't have time for that nonsense! We've got halls to deck, centerpieces to deliver, and poinsettias to water! With so much going on, we rarely have time to enjoy the Christmas Season until Christmas Day! Wouldn't it be great if we could make more time for ourselves during the most wonderful time of the year?

WE CAN!!

At Christmas, it's vital to plan ahead. Look for things that can be prepped up, and then just need one or two finishing touches to complete when needed. Containers can be greened, millimeter balls and pine cones wired and picked, and plenty of permanent arrangements can be prepared.

Something else that can be done ahead...door décor like this! This is an item that moves VERY quickly at our shop at Christmas, so I make up quite a few pre-season, and then have plenty to replenish displays as they sell. Customers love these because they grab attention and are a break from the traditional evergreen wreath at Christmas. Also, with the large assortment of Deco Mesh available, this doorpiece can be customized to any décor.

An added bonus? It's fast and easy to assemble. I started with a wired garland and used it to hold the mesh into place. Then I added a couple of fun glittered sprays, a bit of pine (It is, after all, Christmas!), a length of crinkled ribbon, a few large glittered poinsettias, and several lengths of Oasis Flat Wire to suspend the ornaments... and we're done! Like I was saying, much of this can be assembled ahead (like July!), and ornaments or permanents added when your Christmas merchandise arrives later. With just a little planning, you can be sure to get that eggnog by the fire!

P.S. If you've never played with the Deco Mesh, I suggest you pick up a couple bolts and have fun getting to know this product! ✿

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COMPANYPROFILE

FloraCraft Still Going Strong

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

Michigan based FloraCraft® is one of the floral industries best known companies.

The company was founded in Ludington more than 65 years ago in 1946 by Len Schoenherr. The company is still family-owned today and Lee Schoenherr is the owner and chairman of the board. Originally named the Foliage Company of America, its first products were dyed, painted, and preserved Michigan foliages.

At the same time, in 1946, another Michigan Company, Dow Chemical, perfected STYROFOAM™ Brand Foam. Along with FloraCraft, they realized that this product could be an essential aid to floral designers. Today FloraCraft Corporation is the world's largest fabricator of STYROFOAM™ Brand Foam for the floral and craft industry.

Current president and CEO is Jim Scatena. Scatena, has been at FloraCraft for 14 years. He was named the 2010 recipient of the Craft & Hobby Association Meritorious Award of Honor

The company has tried to foster a family atmosphere in Ludington. Scatena pointed out that among the 200 plus employees many have been with the company for a long period of time and some are even second and third generation.

As a Michigan company, FloraCraft has a continuing relationship with MFA. They are participants at the Great Lakes Floral Expo and have also supported the annual golf outing.

FloraCraft was founded in Ludington, MI more than 65 years ago in 1946 by Len Schoenherr. The company is still family-owned today and Lee Schoenherr is the owner and chairman of the board.



The Fold 'n Go Wire Easel has a patented Fold 'n Lock mechanism that locks the easel in the open position.

At the corporate headquarters, the company maintains a display and design department which supports the firm's education programs and evaluates new products. A full time designer is also on hand.

Several new products have debuted recently. The submersible LED Light Strand produces a "touch of sparkle" for special events and home décor. They can be shaped to fit a vase or added to an arrangement to highlight the many various colors provided by the flowers. Also, the submersible globe LED lights are an attractive addition to any arrangement and have seven static color settings to provide sparkle to containers filled with glass marbles or water beads.

The new Fold 'n Go Wire Easel folds up completely. It can be stored and transported easily. Its patented locking mechanism puts the easel in an open position to display wreaths, sprays, etc.

Products that are most popular with Michigan florists are Styrofoam® shapes, containers, Artesia® wet foam bricks and shapes, Gala® wedding bouquet holders, and kissing ball arrangements.

In order to facilitate a smooth chain of supply, FloraCraft has manufacturing and distribution centers in California, Arkansas, and Mexico. Its commitment to state of the art technology has made FloraCraft a major global trading partner.

Scatena's advice to florists in these difficult economic times is to be creative and broaden their business profile to include other opportunities such as party and event planners.

He also provided an insight into the company's ideology by summarizing the mission statement. "We want to continue to be an innovative industry leader, meeting our customers' needs with quality products produced in a safe and secure working environment. We take pride in our long history and our dedication to the community and our employees." ✿

The Submersible LED Light Strand can be added to any arrangement. Both the lights and battery pack are submersible.

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The 2013 Floral Olympics

Floral aficionados, save the date! Mark your calendar now for the **2013 Great Lakes Floral Expo, March 1-3, 2013.**

The conference, "Reaching for Excellence, Aiming Higher, Achieving More, The Floral Olympics," promises to be a fun-filled weekend full of inspiring and empowering learning opportunities. The conference will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel/DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, MI. For more information on attending or exhibiting, please visit www.michiganfloral.org

or call the MFA office at **(517) 575-0110.**

— Dick Gleason, CF, 2013 Expo Chairman

CFREPORT

Chairman's Report Achieving Certification



BY TIM LATIMER, CF, CF CHAIRMAN



The CF committee is continuing to develop ways to help you achieve the goal of certification. We are offering basic and intermediate classes through the MFA Professional Education Center which are designed to guide you through the information in the CF manual and give you hands-on experience. The next classes will begin on September 12th, 2012, and run through

December 6th, 2012. Contact the MFA office for more information.

The next testing is scheduled on October 14th at Michigan State University.

If you need some help studying we will be offering a "Steps to Certification" class on September 19th, 2012.

We are developing a set of full color product identification flash cards that will be a great study aid for the written portion of the exam. These will be available soon from the MFA office.

How's Your Image?

The CF program was developed with one question in mind. What does the consumer expect a professional florist to know? What the customer expects you to know directly affects their image of your business.

Of course the first thing that comes to mind is design. The CF manual covers design very extensively and great design is definitely important in creating a positive image, but there is so much more!

Care and Handling

What is the thing that the consumer remembers most about floral purchases? They remember that the flowers were beautiful; they remember that they were unique or well designed, they may even remember the cost but the lasting memory is how long the flowers last! Proper care and handling of your flowers goes a long way to establishing your professional image.

Product Identification

As a professional you should be able to identify the flowers that the consumer sees. How many times has a future bride

brought in a picture torn out of a magazine and said "I want the flowers to look like this"? Can you identify the flowers? Do you know if they are available at the time she needs them? She expects that you can.

Customer Relations/Sales

What are you in business for? Not just to sell roses or do the occasional wedding. You're there to help people enjoy the end result benefit of flowers. In other words, you're in business to help people express their emotions through floral purchases.

The CF Manual will also guide you through the other areas of your business that affect your image: marketing, accounting, display, lighting, delivery.

Your Image is everything to the success of your business, and CF is here to help. ✿

Tim Latimer, CF, teaches floral design at Michigan State University and has been on the CF committee since its inception. He was involved in developing the CF Manual and writing the written exam.

Tim has been designing and teaching for 25 years.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW CERTIFIED FLORISTS!

Rebecca Geary, CF – McNamara Florist at Sandpoint, Fort Wayne, IN
Nancy Mertz, CF – Dexter, MI

CF FLOWER of the Month **POINSETTIA (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)**

Poinsettias are available November through December. This traditional holiday favorite is native to Mexico. New varieties are introduced each year expanding the color ranges to include deep red, pink, white, peach, and an array of bi-colors.

Poinsettias are long-lasting plants and will continue to bloom for 2-3 months.

Do not believe the old myth that poinsettias are toxic. According to the POISINDEX information source – the primary resource used by the majority of poison control centers nationwide – a child who

weighed 50 lbs. would have to eat over 500 poinsettia leaves to reach an even potentially toxic dose of compounds in the poinsettia plant.

Inform your customers that they are safe and see your sales increase.



FLORAL TIP: Customer first! *From the CF manual, page 130*

You should recognize that every customer contact is an opportunity to build the relationship. This includes when you bill, make deliveries, and even when there is a problem to be resolved.

Any time you "touch" a customer, turn it into a positive experience that builds your brand and keeps your customer coming back.

Your CF manual is full of information that will help you build this customer loyalty!

Simple Checkout is an Easy E-Commerce Option

BY ANNE HERAGHTY

If you are looking for an easy and inexpensive way to accept payments on the Web, this could be the perfect solution. Authorize.Net's Simple Checkout is just that – simple. It's so easy to configure that you will save time and money bypassing a Web designer. Though Simple Checkout won't work for everyone, it is a great option for those who have a limited number of items to sell, wish to accept donations or offer clients another way to pay invoices.

Authorize.Net is a subsidiary of Visa and the world's largest provider of secure gateway services. They manage the routing of billions of transactions each year through the Internet. Their Simple Checkout option offers you the ability to add a "Buy Now" or "Donate" button to your Web page quickly and easily, as well as the capability to accept payments for invoices.

An account with Authorize.Net is all you need to begin. Clients of MTG are extended preferred rates – literally less than half the cost of going directly through Authorize.Net. The buttons for your Web site are created by filling out a basic form with information

about your products and merging it with the Authorize.Net Merchant Interface.

When selling an item, Simple Checkout allows you to customize several settings for each one, including a description of the item, quantity desired and shipping options along with the "Buy Now" button. If your business sells a limited selection of specialty items, it will allow you to take orders without the work of creating a shopping cart on your page.

If you are a nonprofit organization, you can specify suggested donation amounts and display the "Donate" button. This could be a real money-saver and will allow donations to be collected easily via the web.

The invoice payment feature allows you to get your clients' information so they may "Submit" a payment. MTG uses Simple Checkout for this very purpose.

Whatever your needs, you will also be provided an Authorize.Net verified merchant seal to display on your page, which is promptly recognized and verifies the safety of the transactions.

Whether you are taking orders or collecting money, Simple Checkout gives you the ability to secure your presence on the Web and secure your transactions, without spending a lot of hours or dollars to do so. Visit www.authorize.net and search Simple Checkout to see how truly easy it is. ✿

Anne Heraghty is a communications manager at Midwest Transaction Group, www.midtrans.com.

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Instructor: Tim Latimer, CF

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Every Wednesday
Sept. 12-Nov. 28, 2012
6:00-9:00 pm**



This comprehensive course will introduce beginning students to the exciting field of floral design. Principles and elements of design, proper mechanics of construction, care and handling of fresh materials and use of color are the focal points. For those desiring to become a Certified Florist, this class is a great first step.

Time will be divided between lecture and hands-on design. All materials are included in the course fee and students will have a completed design to take home each week. Topics include: vased arrangements, symmetrical triangles, asymmetrical triangles, horizontal centerpieces, round designs, hand-tied bouquets, corsages, and boutonnières.

The class will meet from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm every Wednesday for 12 weeks beginning September 12. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction.

Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no exams.

The limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

The CF manual is the text for this course. You may purchase this manual at www.michiganfloral.org or call 517-575-0110. This manual is recommended but not required. All other materials will be included in the registration fee.

Time will be divided between lecture and hands on design. A sample test will be given on each topic. Lecture topics include: care and handling of flowers and plants, product identification, customer relations, sales, delivery, marketing, accounting, display, and intermediate floral design. Design topics include: vased arrangements, bridal bouquets, corsages, boutonnières and sympathy. Designs will incorporate the contemporary techniques of grouping, layering, basing, framing, and many more. Each week you will take home your designs.

The class will meet from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm every Thursday for 12 weeks beginning September 13. There will be no class the week of November 22. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction.

Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no graded exams.

The limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

Steps to Certification

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching AIFD, CF

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September 19th, 2012
10:00 am-4:30 pm**



Cindy will guide those who plan on becoming Certified Florists. The session will cover do's and don'ts, methods and mechanics, insight and answers. This is a hands-on experience. There will be tips on how to prepare for both the written and design portions of the test. Students will spend part of the day reviewing the written test and then work in the design room learning what is needed to pass the exam, using all the new CF written and hands-on sections! Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to pass the prestigious national CF exam. Class will run from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm with a half hour break for lunch, which is included in the registration fee.

Bring your own tools.

Intermediate Floral Design Certified Florist Prep

Instructor: Tim Latimer, CF

**Member \$900
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**12 Weeks of Class
Every Thursday
Sept. 13-Dec. 6, 2012
6:00-9:00 pm**



This course builds upon the foundation of the basic design course. The focus will be on the information presented in the Certified Florist (CF) Manual with the goal of preparing students to take the CF examination. (Students who do not wish to take the CF exam will still be welcome.)

**Visit www.michiganfloral.org
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for more information
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Certified Florist Manual & Testing

Did you know? MFA's Certified Florist (CF) program is a comprehensive program that covers all aspects of professional floristry and is the most affordable program available to florists today. And the most convenient: you can self-study at your own pace with this great manual/reference resource. The Certified Florist accreditation is nationally recognized and an approved pathway to AIFD accreditation. MFA offers an optional, educational "Steps to Certification" class to help prepare for certification. Other Certification or Certified Floral Designer programs available today would cost you over \$1,000 and could take you years to accomplish! But not this program:

***Cost for manual and one round of CF testing is \$599.99 (includes tax & S/H)**

***Cost for manual only is \$399.99 (includes tax & S/H)**

Consumers today are offered more and more options for purchasing flowers and are looking for your credentials or certification to help them justify spending their money with you. Let them discover you are a Certified Florist when they look into your business!

Get your CF manual today and prepare for the CF exam, which consists of 2-1/2 hours of hands-on design (you make five designs: one duplicate for incoming wire service orders, one vase, one pin-on corsage, one wrist corsage and one wedding bouquet,) and two hours of written work (30 product ID and 120 multiple choice questions). If you pass each section with a score of 80 percent or better you, become a Certified Florist!

The CF Manual consists of the following chapters and books:

1. Care & Handling
2. Product Identification
3. Customer Relations/Sales
4. Delivery
5. Marketing
6. Accounting
7. Gluing
8. Lighting
9. Basic Floral Design (this topic is covered using two books that are included with your manual purchase.
Florists' Review Design School and
Flower Arranging... Step by Step Instructions for Everyday Designs)
10. Study Guide & Evaluation Forms



**Visit www.michiganfloral.org
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Upscale Floral Design Shop Seeks Creative Designer:

Terry's Enchanted Garden is looking for a floral designer with creative instincts. We are an upscale flower shop that has been servicing the community for over 35 years. This is a fun environment where hard work and dedication is rewarded. This designer position requires attending on and off site projects, therefore your own transportation is vital. Daily duties include customer service, ordering merchandise and floral product, display creation and heading a creative environment. Make each customer smile with your floral designs.

BENEFITS: Competitive Pay, Health Insurance, Supplemental Insurance. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Prior floral design experience, Must be able to pass Michigan Gaming Control Board Requirements, Creative Eye/Artistic Flair, Prior Sales Customer Service, Excellent floral knowledge. Resumes welcomed 313-342-2333 FAX. Phone 313-342-3758 (Shop number).

Full Time Floral Designer Wanted: Teleflora shop in Hastings, MI needs someone with training and/or experience. Send resume to Barlow Florist 109 W. State St. Hastings, MI 49058, Fax to: (269) 945-0469 or email: barlowflorist@barlowflorist.com.

Sales Help Wanted: Seeking a flower and plant loving, lively, outgoing, person to help at both Blumz locations (Detroit & Ferndale). Your duties will include phone and in store sales, cleaning, delivery, flower processing and maintenance, etc. Start as seasonal help with potential for full time hours. Experience is a plus, but not required. What's required is a willingness to work on a team and adjust to an ever changing environment where customer service comes first. Weekend availability is required on a rotating basis. **SALARY/ WAGE:** Entry Level Position & Payment Status: Part Time Shift: Days, Weekends Location: Blumz Detroit & Ferndale. Email your resume to Jerome@blumz.com.

Wholesale Job Opportunities: Nordlie, Inc., Michigan's largest wholesaler, has excellent opportunities for high energy staff in numerous capacities. Inside sales, route sales, designing, or merchandising – stop by our Warren, Flint, or Grandville stores. Full benefit program. Contact any one of our store managers: **Tom Figueroa** AIFD, MCF; Warren; 586-755-4200. **Cathy Davison;** Flint; 810-767-8883. **Leslie Walton / Deb Durrant;** Grandville; 616-534-6883.

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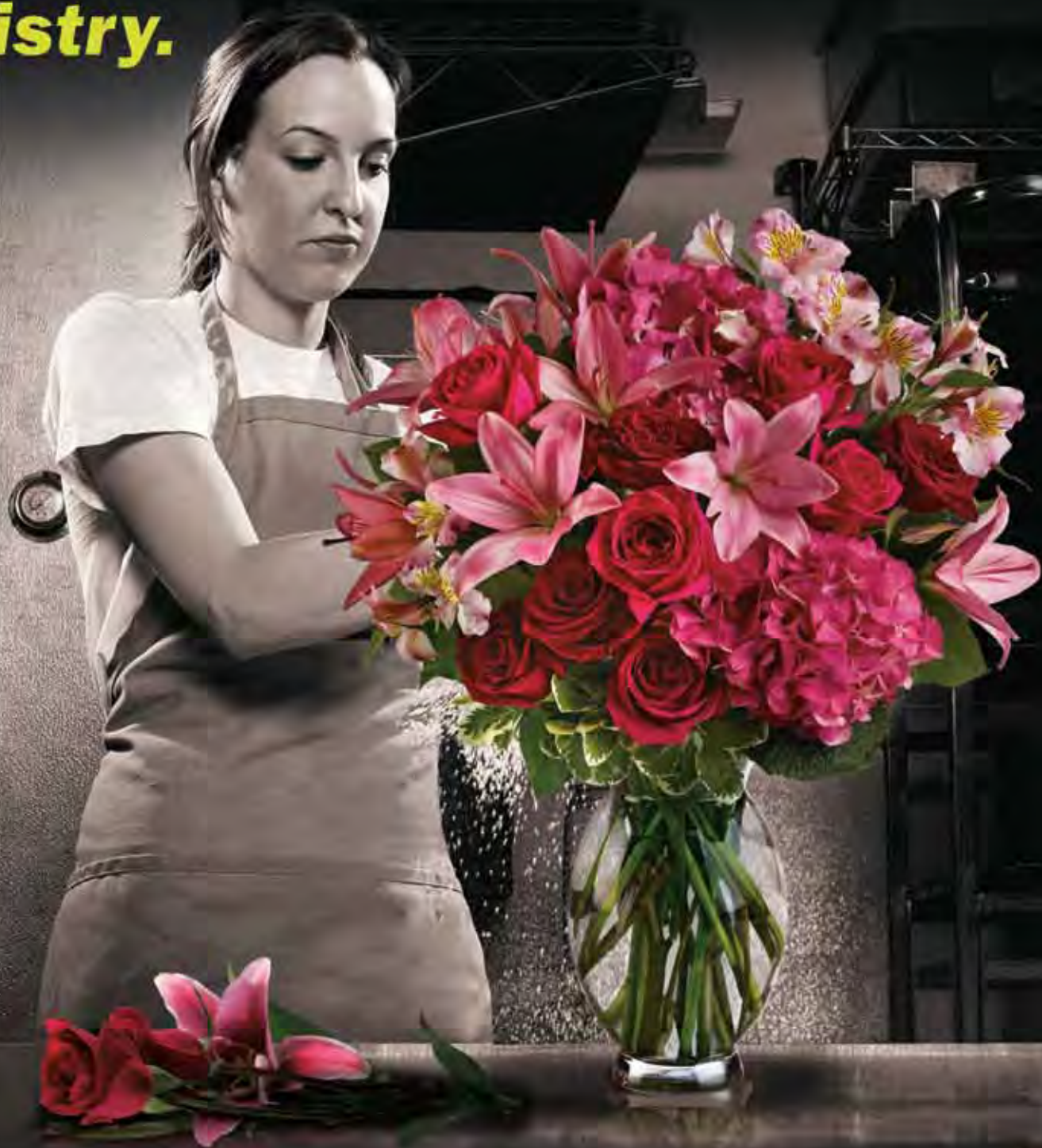


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