



STRATEGIES FOR A BEAUTIFUL MOTHER'S DAY

Boost your bottom line with these ideas for ordering, merchandising and marketing.

BY CINDY HANAUER

As the old Chinese proverb goes, "There's only one pretty child in the world, and every mother has it." Fortunately, as we hop out of Easter, floral retailers will have a mother lode of magnificent products to sell. And with effective ordering, merchandising and salesmanship, each will hold court as the "prettiest child" among some of the best marketers in the country.

The Easter holiday, filled with bright pastels and spring florals, creates a seamless way to visually transition from Easter to Mother's Day. The challenge is re-energizing each store with fresh and unique Mother's Day products so a customer who purchased Easter flowers for mom will be enticed six weeks later to purchase another floral gift for her. Here are some strategies to help you make those sales.

purge

There's nothing worse than a flower shop that looks like a mash-up of old Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, Administrative Professionals Day and Easter products weeks after the holidays are over. For every old product that's still sitting in a floral department after its selling prime, valuable space is lost for new, seasonally relevant products that will drive sales and profits for Mother's Day. There is a financial loss when throwing away outdated merchandise; however, there is a double loss of missed revenue and reduced profit dollars when unsellable products dominate the department.

Tip: If it's dead, distressed, seasonally irrelevant and cannot be converted to the season, let it go!

convert

A quick change of merchandise that's still in good condition will refresh and uplift floral departments between holiday shipments. New pot covers, wraps, ribbons, balloons and picks will make everything new again, and customers who previously would have walked by these items without a second glance will now look at them with new eyes.

Tip: Ship holiday hard goods and enhancements early, so they're available for the big conversion process the week following the

previous holiday. The sooner all remaining in-date and sellable products are converted, the sooner those upgrade profits will be lifting that ever-so-important bottom line. Don't forget to dig out any Mother's Day back stock from the storage room.

build in-your-face displays

Many people think Valentine's Day offers the most sales potential, but that's *not* the case, not by a wide margin. Only 54.9 percent of people celebrate Valentine's Day while a whopping 84.2 percent celebrate Mother's Day, the **National Retail Federation (NRF)** reports.

But do Valentine shoppers spend more? Absolutely not! Valentine shoppers spend an average of \$142 while Mother's Day purchasers spend an average of \$173, the NRF reveals. Mother's Day in the United States is worth \$21.2 billion, versus the value of Valentine's Day sales at \$18.9 billion. (*More statistics are on Page 42.*)

So Mother's Day must be approached even more aggressively than Valentine's Day, with a well-planned ordering budget for each store. With Valentine's Day 2016 falling on a Sunday, this is a perfect year to double-down on Mother's Day selling in order to regain sales that might have been lost due to a weekend holiday. How many \$173 Mother's Day gifts are in your floral departments? Think about it!

Tip: Be fearless and aggressive when planning budgets, and order accordingly. The only way to achieve a target sales goal is to have the same retail dollar amount of merchandise in each store.

bundle it up and multiply

Mother's Day is a holiday of multiples, in which a customer is likely to purchase more than one gift. Displays with an assortment of price points will encourage multiple purchasing, called "bundling," and will also increase average spend per customer.

Tip: When ordering accessories and enhancements, be sure to include picks, cardettes and balloons with sentiments for "other mothers" such as stepmothers, wives, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, godmothers and friends. These gift choices will encourage multiple purchasing.

shout it out

Did you know that the NRF says 33.4 percent of the population will visit a department store rather than a florist for a Mother's Day gift? The special gift services we provide in our floral departments mean the difference between a floral purchase and any other gift purchased in a department store. Do you custom-design? Shout it out! Do you gift wrap? Shout it out! Do you deliver? Shout it out!

Tip: Expand signage and other promotional efforts at each customer "touch-point" within the store, displayed at least four weeks in advance for optimal effectiveness: front doors, outdoor displays, bag stuffers, service desk, check lanes, employee badges, wine aisle, greeting cards, bakery and many other areas. Be sure to list all of the special services that are offered in addition to the beautiful products you sell.

cross-merchandise

The NRF reports that 80.0 percent of the population purchases greeting cards for Mother's Day, making them the single most popular gift for the holiday. Flowers come in second in popularity at 67.2 percent. The fourth most popular Mother's Day purchase is gift cards (a special outing is in third place).

Tip: Expand cross-merchandising tie-ins with other popular gift items, such as greeting cards and gift cards. Capture incremental floral sales by adding items to those displays.

get technical

Create a social media plan with your marketing department to make sure customers are engaged, interactive and ultimately inspired to purchase Mother's Day gifts from your stores. Floral presence should be on the company home page and all company social media sites.

Tip: Create a "Mother is ..." essay contest on Facebook, where the best essays will go viral with your company name tagged to it. Encourage employees to submit family or favorite childhood photos on Instagram, and also display the photos in-store. Create a Mother's Day board on Pinterest to begin a dialogue around the great products you offer, and don't forget to use hashtags such as #lastminutemothersday so potential customers can find you.

create the ideal customer experience

Indeed, each mother has a beautiful child, and we all like to think that each individual store is beautiful in its own way as well. But the greatest success comes from visual consistency in each store, which rolls up into an over-arching company brand that customers will recognize for every gift-giving event. In the eyes of customers, the prettiest store is the one with selection, service, value and freshness — and we can all have it. **sf**



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