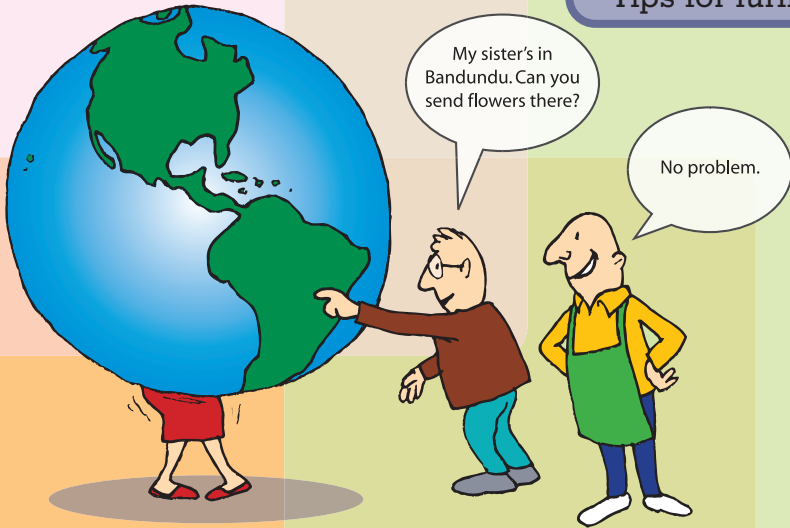


# Operation Local Sales

By Tim Huckabee

## Tips for luring local customers to your shop



the minimum? If she's sending birthday flowers to her favorite aunt, a minimal fee isn't likely to send her storming out the front door.

### Spread the Word

You don't need billboards all over town to educate customers. A simple grass-roots approach can be equally effective. First, understand what you're up against. Consumers are bombarded with inserts in credit card statements, e-mails, banner ads and radio pitches to use someone other than you, their local florist, for out-of-town orders. The enticement is often convenience and a few dollars in savings — not necessarily better

design or service.

Create a flier in-house or develop a postcard, showing images of your designs and telling customers you can help send flowers anywhere in the world through your own network of preferred florists. Let them know every order is backed by your guarantee. Consider offering a few bucks off customers' next outgoing order, but only if it is profitable for you and the receiving florist.

Hand out fliers and postcards in store, do a mailing, attach them to delivery orders — whatever it takes to get the word out and reclaim your outgoing wire business this year.

For a sample postcard template, e-mail [tim@floralstrategies.com](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com) or call (800) 983-6184.

## Small Steps Secure Customers

Do customers give you all their business? Most don't realize the "mom and pop" florist around the corner can handle national and international floral orders. During my visits to shops around the country, I've often heard customers tentatively ask, "My aunt lives in Timbuktoo. Can you get flowers to her?" They're amazed to hear the answer is yes.

Two critical factors are at play in building and profiting from outgoing wire business: how you advertise the service, and how you sell it.

### Forget Fees

Don't let staff sabotage an outgoing order by starting with, "Yes, we can do that, but there will be an \$XX relay fee and the minimum price is \$XX." Did the customer ask for

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## Web Wise Smart Ways to Win Online Customers

**R**andy Oberer of Oberer's Flowers in Cincinnati and Dayton entices traffic to his shop's Web site ([www.oberers.com](http://www.oberers.com)) with the "Guess Who" bouquet, a surprise bouquet sent with only a numeric code on its card. The recipient plugs in the code on Oberer's Web site to find out the identity of his or her secret admirer. The recipient can read the sender's card online and send a reply. About 250 to 300 of Oberer's average 2,400 weekly orders are for the Guess Who bouquets, says Craig Casey of Oberer's. Oberer's does not offer the special feature during holidays since it requires additional site maintenance, says Greg Turner, Oberer's chief technology officer.

