

Operation Local Sales

By Tim Huckabee

Tips for luring local customers to your shop



So I assume from your comments that you *like* the flowers that we delivered?...

Fruitful Follow-Up

Have you ever received a follow-up call on service done on your car? It's a nice touch and helps cement your relationship with that dealer or mechanic.

You can offer a similar service by following up with recipients of your deliveries. Before your mind starts racing, let me clarify — I'm not talking about orders sent to hospitals, hotels, schools or funeral homes. I only call "happy-order" recipients: birthdays, new babies, anniversaries, etc. When I worked in a New York flower shop, I made these calls for years and found they enhanced customer loyalty. Here's how you can do the same:

1. Get your list: Most order-entry systems let you run a report of yesterday's deliveries — or you can work with hard copies.

2. Qualify the list: Again, pull out only the "happy orders." I tend to avoid calling recipients of get-well orders because it's unclear how serious their illness is.

3. Start dialing: Once you have the recipient on the phone, confirm she received the flowers (maybe they were left at the front door and she always goes in the back) and ask if she's pleased with them. This will give you good insight on customer satisfaction. Offer her proper care instructions (keep them out of direct sunlight, away from extreme heat or cold and topped off with fresh water). Close by asking if she'd like to be placed on the mailing list (and confirm her address). Call (800) 983-6184 for a complete follow-up script (or e-mail tim@floralstrategies.com).

4. Handle the ups and downs: Naturally some of the recipients you follow up with will have complaints or problems. Don't get defensive — this is a perfect opportunity to correct the mistake and win the recipient as a customer. Remedy the situation as quickly as possible. Alternately, when you get rave reviews, be sure to share them with your design staff.

Invest some time in these calls each day and you'll reap rewards: happy recipients (who will hopefully turn into happy customers) and satisfied customers (who will be pleased when they hear their florist called to make sure the flowers were received and liked).

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Web Wise Smart Ways to Win Online Customers



Brides are inundated with pictures and more pictures when they visit the wedding section of **www.beachbouquets.com**. Donnie Wise of Beach Bouquets in Orange Beach, Ala., updates the shop's Web site with new pictures after each wedding so he and his business partner/wife, Glenda, can continue courting online destination brides. "I would say 98 percent of our brides don't live here and a high number of them come in and say, 'I saw your Web site,'" Glenda says. She and Donnie also include information on wedding packages on their site. Although most brides choose customized flowers at Beach Bouquets, the packages section "gives them a feel for pricing," Glenda says, which makes consultations more time-efficient.