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Innovative Web, Marketing and PR Solutions
For The Flower & Garden Industry

Let Your Story Be Told! (Long Version)

Email - most florists either love it or hate it! But, like it or not email is THE simplest, most affordable, direct, actionable, and most highly effective way for florists to keep in touch with their customers, clients, and prospects of all ages, preferences, and interests.

AND, florists - whether introducing themselves to new people, converting one-time visitors into buyers, or solidifying existing ongoing relationships - have a distinct advantage over other types of businesses in using email marketing because they have so much to offer in the way of useful information, interesting story lines, and valuable incentives.

Marketing experts agree that it is less expensive to sell to existing customer than to acquire a new customer. Florists can easily implement interesting, proactive communications to educate, entice, and keep themselves "top of mind" with their existing customers and those brand new leads sent daily by wire services and broker orders.

Since repeat customers have a tendency to spend 67% more than first time buyers, a follow-up email can help you convert a \$50 wire service order into a more than \$80 back end sale with a highly valued customer. Florists continually get new customers through brokers. An email marketing campaign blended with a well laid out website can back end those broker orders at 100% true value so it really is worth looking at how email can be integrated into the daily activities of the floral retailer.

Most florists spend an incredible amount of energy teaching their customers about their products, services, and unique lifestyle benefits. They explain care & handling scenarios to their customers over an over again often leaving out large gaps of information from one situation to another. An automated email "newsletter" series can offer small portions of a florist's hottest tips, tricks, and processes to every customer referring to every situation and circumstance - without skipping a beat.



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Email Marketing (Long Version) - Page 2

Once the newsletter series is written it can be delivered automatically, uninterrupted, forever (unlike one time hit or miss marketing systems) to every new client or prospect, taking them through the entire education process from beginning to end.

Most people would agree that an educated consumer is their most loyal and profitable customer. An automated email series is the perfect way to turn an occasional buyer into a valuable client who buys more flowers for more reasons, more often.

Many florists (being artists at heart) are not comfortable with the initial cold calling or sales process much less the use of add-ons, up-sells, or back-ends. With email broadcasts a florist can write a soft sales offer and send it out as a new client offer, preferred customer promo, special sales notification, or new service announcement. These sales letters can be supported on the florist's website by pictures of the florists' own creative work. The broadcasts can even be revised throughout the year and repeated from holiday to holiday or season to season.

Because email marketing is direct and can be target specific (using surveys and fields) florists can split their messages into groups, using different words and offers for different people, so customers get only the kinds of information they prefer. The florist can fine tune the offer, the sale, the message, and control it to get repeat business unlike any other medium of communication.

Email is fast! So, time sensitive information can be disseminated in minutes. Florists can quickly and spontaneously let customers know when there are unique and unusual (highly perishable, we've got to sell them right now) specialty products on hand that "CUSTOMERS JUST HAVE TO ENJOY FOR THEMSELVES - RIGHT AWAY"! Email broadcasts can be sent spontaneously within hours of an idea, need, or opportunity driving traffic to the store website, increasing sales, and controlling inventory.

A prospect needs to be reminded of a business several times (experts say approximately 7) before they remember or trust that business enough to become a customer and even more interaction between the two is needed before the customer develops into a truly valuable (profitable) client. That process takes time and financial resources. What's a Florist to do?

Because email is simple, easy, and cost effective it is the perfect medium for a Florist to develop a relationship with a new prospect, create a community of loyal repeat customers, differentiate their business from the competition, and support or enhance their identity or store brand. By offering useful information in their email newsletters and messages a florist becomes THE EXPERT that locals look to for advice, guidance, products, and services.

An e-mail marketing campaign through a florist's website becomes their virtual store that the prospective customer can visit at their leisure, as often as they want! An effective email campaign can align with specific landing pages on the florist's website – sending the reader back to the florist's "home base" with private offers, special sales, and time sensitive services.



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Email Marketing (Long Version) - Page3

In any medium other than email marketing or advertising a florist doesn't get a second chance. Once the ad has run, the newsletter or brochure printed – it's over. With an email marketing campaign florists can test results and have as many "Do-Overs" as needed to get just the right combination for success.

An email newsletter, announcement, invitation, or special offer can be sent to a small group of the florist's list and tested for results (number of responses, sales). Every component of the message (from line, subject line, greeting, body, close, and signature file) can be tested, tweaked and refined. Then the very best message can be rolled out to all the appropriate clients! Never before has a florist had so much control in their communication with clients and prospects.

Some flower shops don't even have their own structured marketing plan. Email is a very cost effective way for them to devise and implement a plan that fits their needs and lifestyle. Adding email to an already existing plan supports a florist allowing them to spend less time money and resources, on other efforts like direct mail, media advertising, coupons, statement stuffers, and brochures.

Whether a florist uses their own email software, a third party's mailing system software, or contracts an e-mail service there are some rules that need to be followed for an effective e-mail campaign. Following some general "Rules of Thumb" about structuring E-mail will persuade the reader open, read, and respond to an email. The Canned Spam Act has standards to follow so a florists E-mail campaigns won't be seen as SPAM by their list.

E-mail is most effective with a "Permission Granted House List". And, e-mail is still FREE so florists should be learning and testing how to use it before the government finds a way to tax it. All florists should be gathering the e-mail addresses of their clients, customers, and prospects - even if they don't know how they will use them!

For step-by-step tips on designing your personalized email campaign visit www.FlowerPR.com and click the MFA icon.

Here's to your Blooming Success,
Will Carlson, President
Flower PR

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