

floral management

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THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY

NOV/DEC 2018 | VOLUME 35 | NUMBER 8

Simply Divine

A white spray
chrysanthemum
wins SAF's
2018 Outstanding
Varieties Competition

LOVE WINS

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LET'S PLANT SOME SEEDS

> At the Society of American Florists' convention in September, I attended "Breeding Future Floriculturists," a program about ways to get young people enthused about horticulture. Its theme: If we want our industry to thrive, we will need to "seed" our industry with new employees and customers. It touched on many of the same points that convinced me — 45 years ago — that floriculture was my calling. Interestingly enough, one of the program's presenters, Anna Ball of Ball Horticultural Company, was among the first people who invested in me.

Twenty-five years ago, when I started at the University of Georgia, the school did not have a very good greenhouse program. We had difficulty teaching modern methods using circa 1920s greenhouses. I mustered the gumption to walk into Ball's office in Chicago and make a pitch for a new greenhouse. That requires lot of money, and there wasn't a lot of money coming from the state. I told Ball, if she would give me the seed money (\$25,000), I would work with other organizations to raise the rest and make it happen. She handed me a check, and I leveraged that donation into \$150,000, which got that greenhouse built.

With that greenhouse, we trained high school teachers in greenhouse management. Consequently, each year, 25,000 high school students now learn how to raise flowers from seeds and take them home to their parents. We don't do this to generate hordes of floriculture professors or business owners; rather, we're training people to appreciate flowers. Yes, we also train about 30 undergraduate students each year who go on to work in greenhouses and in management-level positions. By planting one seed, Ball helped us develop a program that reaches thousands.

Many years ago, at the urging of the late Paul Ecke Jr., I became involved with the Vic and Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program, run through the American Floral Endowment. It has transformed the department at UGA. Internships are now the mainstream of our curriculum. Students come back confident, invigorated and focused on a career in the industry. What's more, their

adventures motivate others to pursue internships, many of them with SAF members, including Lane DeVries, AAF; June and Ken Tagawa; and Art and Abe van Wingerden. These leaders transform students into inspired, enthusiastic industry members.

UGA was recently awarded a \$5 million USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant to study the cost economics of LED lighting in greenhouses. The only reason we received such a hefty award is because we had great preliminary data, which came from an earlier AFE grant. That "seed" grant allowed us to get things started and prove our ideas. And where did that money come from? Ladies and gentlemen, much of the AFE money comes from SAF members. Your donations help advance floriculture research. On behalf of my colleagues, let me say that we are grateful!

It was also an SAF member who seeded my future. On a cold November day in 1977, I walked into the Buffalo Grove, Illinois, office of Jim Leider, AAF, and asked for a job. He and his entire team made me feel welcome, and they supported my future endeavors. Everything I've achieved started with Mr. Leider saying "You're hired!" That's how you plant a seed.

There are other ways, too. You could plant ideas in young minds. Spend some time in middle schools or visit youth groups and tell them what you do. Once we spark their interest, we are on the road to success, because our industry is very, very good at nurturing people.

I'm nearing retirement, but throughout my entire career, I've had the support of many SAF members, including Marvin Miller, Ph.D., AAF; Terril Nell, Ph.D., AAF; and the Mellano family. I am thankful for all their help, and I challenge us all to embrace their ways. Planting seeds is essential for our industry's growth. I believe we can do it! 🌱

Paul A. Thomas, Ph.D., is a professor of floriculture at the University of Georgia. He received SAF's 2018 Alex Laurie Award. pthomas@uga.edu





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What Inspires Us

> The first thing I thought when I saw ribbons gleaming in the ballroom of this year's Outstanding Varieties Competition during SAF Palm Springs 2018: "We're going to need more pages."

Judges this year awarded 77 Blue Ribbons — that's up from 11 Blue Ribbons in 2016. What's behind that dramatic increase? As our contributing writer Bruce Wright notes in our cover story (p. 24), some of that uptick may relate to pent-up excitement for the competition itself, which was canceled last year after Hurricane Irma caused SAF to call off its entire 2017 convention. (And, in fact, SAF did have more overall entries this year — a lot more: 246 compared to 156 in 2016.) Judges — and SAF convention attendees — simply had more entries to ooh and ahh over, and maybe that's why the ribbon count was so high. But talking to judges, it also became apparent that, while SAF's Outstanding Varieties Competition has long been *the* place to find the industry's best new products, the bar is getting higher and higher. One

of the true delights of an SAF convention is walking through the competition and seeing people stare at these incredible flowers, marveling at their colors, taking notes about their foliage and laterals. This year in the competition room I heard more than one longtime florist say in amazement, "I've just never seen anything quite like this — I can't wait to get it in my store."

Having new, glorious varieties and lots of them is good news for our industry. More good news? At press time SAF's Petal It Forward had just wrapped. During that event hundreds of floral industry members came together to delight tens of thousands with the gift of two bouquets — one to keep and one to pass on. This deceptively simple concept means that people in every state along with Washington, D.C., and Colombia got to experience the joy of giving and receiving flowers — a feeling they won't soon forget. We give you a tiny taste of the day on p. 44 but be sure to head to safnow.org/moreonline for a more extensive roundup of



this year's stories, including some of the top media hits from the day.

Finally, as we move into the end of 2018 and start planning for 2019, please remember that Floral Management is *your* magazine — it's the magazine for SAF members! We want to hear from you. Send us your story ideas, your feedback, your top holiday recipes. And thank you for another great year together. We look forward to being with you and helping your business grow even more next year. 🌿

More Online ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON WWW.SAFNOW.ORG



CATCH UP ON CONVENTION

Were you the type who skipped your English Lit class and instead just picked up the CliffsNotes? It's OK, we won't tell. SAF has its own version of CliffsNotes from its convention — the collection of handouts and presentations — all easily accessible in one spot. safnow.org/palmsprings2018handouts



VALENTINE'S DAY GOALS

The world may be talking Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, but we know you're already planning for Valentine's Day. SAF can help you pitch the media (and master tricky interview questions) with our PR Bootcamp, and we have loads of resources to get your shop and social media ready for the megaholiday at safnow.org/pr-bootcamp.



PEOPLE POWER

If shoring up your HR policies is part of your plan for the new year, the Society of American Florists has tools to help get you started. (Think employee handbook verbiage, job descriptions, employee evals and more.) Familiarize yourself with these free tools at safnow.org/hr.



POISONOUS? NOT.

"Oh, we never buy poinsettias, they're poisonous." We hope that years and years of SAF's efforts to educate the consumer has minimized the occurrence of this phrase. But it certainly can't hurt to be at the ready with the facts, whether for a customer or a reporter. SAF has a handy pamphlet loaded with all of the facts about the anything-but-poisonous poinsettia. safnow.org/poinsettia

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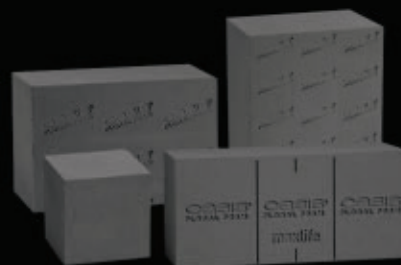
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What an inspiring issue of Floral Management on growing the industry and the up-and-coming young professionals. At AFE, we get to see firsthand the passion and enthusiasm of these individuals and many others like them through our scholarship and internship applications reviews, and during our internship visits. You did an excellent job of sharing their stories and their love for the industry with your readers.

It was great to see that many of the young professionals you interviewed had received a scholarship, internship, or other support from the Endowment, so thank you for highlighting AFE's programs and opportunities. We are certainly excited to welcome these young professionals as future leaders in the floral industry. 🌸

Debi Chedester
Executive Director
American Floral Endowment
Alexandria, Virginia

Just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed the Growth column by Manny Gonzales (September 2018, p. 18). Very to-the-point about how to catch and keep millennials, and that a lot of it is also upon us, the "older" generation, to embrace and see their strengths and how we can utilize that the best, instead of comparing their ways to our old-fashioned methods and attitudes. The world is constantly evolving — our clients, but also the people that work with us. 🌸

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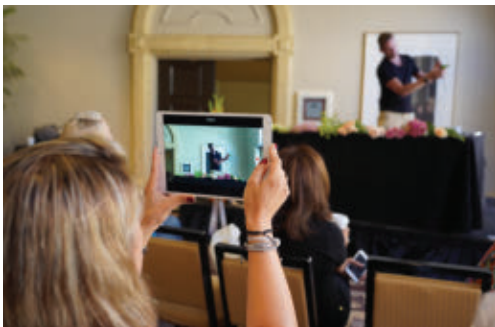
MEMBERS SHARE TAKEAWAYS FROM SAF PALM SPRINGS 2018

> As **Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF**, listened to the Kick-Off address at SAF Palm Springs 2018, one phrase piqued her interest: “workplace culture.” Like many floral industry members, Behlings wanted to find new ways to attract young talent. The presentation by HR expert Jamie Notter created a lightbulb moment along with clear takeaways.



ACTION PLAN Wendy Rockcastle of Rockcastle Florist in Rochester, New York, and Lori Haveman of Kennedy’s Flower Shop in Grand Rapids, Michigan, take notes on trends and technology during **The Future of the Retail Florist**.

“I wasn’t really familiar with that term [workplace culture] as a concept,” said Behlings, the owner of Jenny’s Floral in Custer, South Dakota. “But when I got back home, I asked my one employee, who happens to be a millennial, what she thought the culture was in our shop. What struck me was she knew exactly what I was talking about right away. That let me know that ‘workplace culture’ is a buzzword that we need to be more aware of if we want to hire and keep younger workers.”



OUTSTANDING VIDEO During one of the convention’s new Experience Zones, Derek Woodruff, AIFD, PFCI, CF, gave a design demo using flowers and foliage from the **Outstanding Varieties Competition**.

Behlings is far from alone. Practical tips and guidance on some of the biggest challenges facing retail florists and the floral industry at large were plentiful at the Society of American Florists’ 134th annual convention, held September 12-15 in Rancho Mirage, California.

The convention featured more than 50 educational sessions and programs and attracted 450-plus industry members, including 107 first-time attendees. Participants hailed from 45 states, six countries and every segment of the industry. One thing they all had in common: a willingness to share and learn — and a desire to put new advice into practice back home fast.



SOLIDLY SOCIAL Zabrina Campos-Melendez of CamFlor, Inc., in Watsonville, California, got some extra Instagram pointers from Jackie Levine of Central Square Florist in Cambridge, Massachusetts, after the **Social Media Madness Experience Zone**.

New Connections

For **Lynne Tischler, AAF, CPFD, PFCI**, of Your Enchanted Florist in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the sessions provided an opportunity to reflect on processes and procedures and find ways to improve.

She had an “aha” moment during “HR Hacks that Win Loyalty,” a session led by Glenna Hecht, founder of Humanistic Consulting and a regular contributor to *Floral Management*. “Like what to do when an employee shows up with blue hair that’s leaking dye,” she said with a laugh. “I’m in an expressive business, so I don’t want to be the hair police, but I may need to have a policy in place to make sure I don’t get blue dye on a \$4,000 wedding gown.”

Among the standout sessions for first-time attendee **Farai Madziva** of Kitayama Brothers, a grower in



FAMILY DINNER Diana Roy of Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers LLC in Fallbrook, California, was among the growers who talked about American Grown Flowers during the **Field to Vase Dinner**.

Watsonville, California: “Down and Dirty: Nitty Gritty Hacks to Extend Vaselife,” with **Steve Daum** of Floralife and **Jim Kaplan** of Chrysal USA and “The Amazing Race to Get Flowers to Your Shop,” a panel presentation on logistics with insight from industry members representing grower, supplier, wholesaler and transportation companies.

“Those sessions gave me a new understanding of what customers require, and also of what they know and don’t know about what takes place at the grower level, which is where quality begins,” Madziva said. “This will help me to communicate better with them in the future.”

Kathy Jones, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF, of Spring Creek Designs in Gillette, Wyoming, enjoyed getting to know growers at the Field to Vase Dinner — a first event of its kind at an SAF convention and the largest Certified American Grown dinner to take place in the series’ history.

“It’s great to be able to tell customers, ‘Hey, I met the guy who grew these



EMERGING LEADERS The industry’s Next-Gen members who are age 40 and under got some real face-time at a special new networking reception.

flowers, and here's his story," said Jones. "They're interested and excited to make the connection with where the flowers come from."



THREE'S A CHARM Tanja Rodgers of Donner Flower Shop in Bend, Oregon; Tanya Anders of Wascana Flower Shoppe in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; and Tanya Anderson of Springs in Bloom in Colorado Springs, Colorado, were among the 107 first-time attendees at the **First-Timers Reception**.

Social Media Savvy

First-time convention participant **Tricia Smith** of Twinbrook Floral Design in Chantilly, Virginia, said "The Future of the Retail Florist" was enlightening. The session with **Renato Sogueco, AAF, PFCI**, BloomNet's vice president of digital strategy and education, and a group of panelists looked at emerging trends to help businesses plan for what's next, especially in the tech arena. "I might not take care of everything relating to social media or marketing myself [at my busi-

ness]," said Smith, "but I always want to be in the know."

Likewise, **Elizabeth Seiji, AIFD**, said she hires outside people to take care of social media at Edelweiss Flower Boutique in Santa Monica, California — but she knows she needs to direct and monitor them. To do that effectively, she needs to be on top of the latest tools and trends.

"I'm definitely going to use more video," said Seiji, after attending "Using Video to Boost Engagement" with Crystal Vilkaitis of Social Edge. "She gave great advice about how to get good quality, like simple things you can buy to keep your camera steady."

Ideas Everywhere

Pointers on how to take effective photographs were at the heart of "Sales Jolt! Photos that Sell," with speaker **Reece Farinas** of Beretania Florist in Honolulu, Hawaii. Farinas gave advice on low-cost equipment and how to incorporate taking photos into your shop's behind-the-scenes routine.

That message resonated with **Brian Kusuda** of Jimmy's Flower Shop in Ogden, Utah. "We often feel like we don't have the time for that," he said, "but he made it sound so simple to do. That's why I invest the money to go to an event like this, to come away inspired and rejuvenated."



HANDS-ON Loann Burke, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, showed how to use cold glue to speed up prom work at one of six stations in **Advanced Design Techniques**.

Two sessions that impressed **Tim Farrell, AAF, AIFD, PFCI**, of Farrell's Florist in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, were "Between the Petals: What Research Tells Us About Floral Consumers," with **Charlie Hall, Ph.D.**, of Texas A&M University, and "Rock the Holiday — Your Holiday Playbook!" with **Vonda LaFever, AIFD, PFCI**, of TeamFloral.

"The first one gave me insight that I would never have had on my own about where the economy is going and how it could affect retail florists," said Farrell. Meanwhile, "Vonda showed how much more efficient you can be if you look at figures from last year and plan ahead. If you keep records, really the business is more predictable than most of us think."

- B.W. 🌿

NEW LEADERS TAKE POSTS ON SAF BOARD AND COUNCILS

> Society of American Florists members elected three new leaders to serve on its Board of Directors in September. Members also elected nine members to the association's Retailers, Wholesalers and Growers Councils.



Kaitlin Radebaugh, AAF

Towson, Maryland; Wholesaler **Oscar Fernandez** of Equiflor/Rio Roses in Miami, Florida; and Grower **Jamie**

The new members of SAF's Board of Directors are: Retailer **Kaitlin Radebaugh, AAF**, of Radebaugh Florist & Greenhouses in



Oscar Fernandez

Kitz of Sakata Seed America - Ornamentals in Morgan Hill, California.

Members voted in July for new leaders to serve on SAF's Growers, Retailers and Wholesalers Council for three-year terms. The new leaders are:

Retailers Council: Jennifer Barnard of Tillie's Flower Shop in



Jamie Kitz

Wichita, Kansas; **Rakini Chinery, AAF, AzMF**, of Allan's Flowers, Prescott, Arizona; and **Keith Rockcastle** of Rockcastle Florist in Rochester, New York.

Wholesalers Council: Rodger Callister of Ensign Wholesale in Salt Lake City, Utah; **Alvaro Crespo** of Lihmil Wholesale Flowers in Kernersville, North Carolina; and **Alejandro Perez** of Komet Sales in Miami, Florida.

Growers Council: Matt Altman of Altman Plants in Vista, California; **Austin Bryant** of Heart of Florida Greenhouses in Zolfo Springs, Florida; and **Robin van der Schaaf** of Flamingo Holland, Inc., in Vista, California.

See SAF's board, council and committee members at safnow.org/leaders. 🌿

INDUSTRY STARS HONORED AT SAF PALM SPRINGS 2018

> Hundreds paid tribute to some of the most accomplished professionals in the industry. Among the 2018 honorees:

Floriculture Hall of Fame



A floral designer known for her warmth, talent and passion posthumously received the floral industry's highest honor with induction into the

SAF Floriculture Hall of Fame. **Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford, AAF, AIFD, PFCI**, was honored for lifelong dedication to the industry and for creating untold opportunities for future generations. Shown here are her son, Bruce, and daughter, Cyndi, accepting the award on her behalf.

"She mentored hundreds, if not thousands, of younger industry members, giving each person the same undivided attention, sending personal, heartfelt notes regularly and offering up her unequalled brand of cheer," said Carol Caggiano, AIFD, PFCI, a member of the SAF Awards Committee.



Former SAF CEO **Peter Moran** also was inducted into the Floriculture Hall of Fame. Moran became SAF's executive vice president and CEO in 1991.

He retired from the position in 2017. "Peter made an indelible mark on our association, from his early years executing the new strategic plan and governance structure to our recent building project, where he led our board in leveraging a

key association asset into something the industry can benefit from for many years," said SAF Chairman Martin Meskers, AAF, of Oregon Flowers, Inc., in Aurora, Oregon.

Paul Ecker, Jr. Award



Charles R. Hall, Ph.D., professor and Ellison Chair in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University, received the Paul Ecker,

Jr. Award in honor of devotion to profession, industry and community. "Charlie has been a highly productive and successful academic who has excelled in research, teaching and extension," said former SAF Chairman Terril Nell, Ph.D., AAF.

Gold Medal Award



Blair Winner, who retired in March after 43 years with the PanAmerican Seed Company, received the Gold Medal Award, which honors the

originator or introducer of a widely distributed plant or flower that has become established as an outstanding product of significant horticultural and commercial value. "Blair's impressive breeding career led to a number of notable new varieties in the floriculture industry as well as advances in plant breeding that impacted the eye health market," said SAF Awards Committee Chairman Marvin Miller, Ph.D., AAF, of the Ball Horticultural Company in West Chicago, Illinois.

John H. Walker Award



Christine Boldt, executive vice president of the Association of Floral Importers of Florida, received the John H. Walker Award in recognition of her

role as a floral association executive. "It's because of her leadership that AFIF has become an integral part of many Miami flower companies," said Oscar Fernandez, director of sales at Equiflor Corporation. "She is always willing to go above and beyond to get the job done, and she will do whatever necessary to find the information needed in order for us to make decisions. She always has everyone's best interests at heart."

Alex Laurie Award



Paul A. Thomas, Ph.D., a professor in the University of Georgia's horticulture department, received the Alex Laurie Award for Research and

Education. "Above all, Paul is dedicated to nurturing and teaching aspiring horticulturists," said Paul Fowle, vice president of DVFlora and SAF's treasurer.

Tommy Bright Award



Deborah De La Flor, AIFD, PFCI, owner of De La Flor Gardens in Cooper City, Florida, was honored for achieve-

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NOMINATE AND APPLY NOW FOR 2019 SAF AWARDS

PFCI applications and Tommy Bright Award nominations are due Jan. 31. March 1 is the deadline for AAF and the Century Award applications, and to nominate individuals for the Floriculture Hall of Fame and other top honors. Celebrate honorees at SAF Amelia Island 2019! For details, go to safnow.org/awards.

ment in floral presentation with the Tommy Bright Award. "Deborah is a tireless champion promoting the floral industry throughout the world," said Grand Rapids, Michigan designer Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, PFCI. "An unabashed fan of others, she spreads joy and encouragement wherever she appears." De La Flor is shown on the facing page with PFCI Chairman D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, NAFD, NMF, PFCI, and her husband Gus.

Century Award

SAF celebrated the longevity of seven businesses with the Century Award,



which honors companies that have been in business for 100 years or more. From left: **City Line Florist** in Trumbull, Connecticut (Susie and Nicole Palazzo); **Gould's Flowers** in Lockport, New York (Janet Gould and

Find out more about each award winner at safnow.org/moreonline.

Kylee Peters); **Lake Forest Flowers** in Lake Forest, Illinois (John Looby); **Mitchell's Flowers and Events** in Orland Park, Illinois (George, Nancy, Megan and David Mitchell). Not pictured: **Janousek Florist & Greenhouse** in Omaha, Nebraska; **Johnston's Quality Flowers** in Fort Smith, Arkansas; and **Wistinghausen Florist & Greenhouse** in Oak Harbor, Ohio.

- J.S. 🌿

"FOLLOW YOUR YELLOW BRICK ROAD" TO THE SYLVIA CUP DESIGN COMPETITION



WE'RE OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD **Rey Rodriguez, AAF, AIFD, TMFA**, of The Gypsy Florist in Austin, Texas (left), won the trophy, \$3,000 grand prize and complimentary registration to SAF Amelia Island 2019. **Lisa A. Greene, AAF, AIFD, PFCI**, of Beach Plum Flower Shop in Newburyport, Massachusetts, was named first runner-up and awarded \$500. **Lee Burcher, AIFD, CCF, PFCI**, of Fleur de Lys in San Pedro, California, received second runner-up honors and \$250. Burcher won Sylvania Cup top honors in 2004.

> Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the Sylvania Cup is the country's longest running live floral design competition and named for Sylvania Valencia, a prominent designer and long-time SAF supporter. This year's surprise theme paid homage to "The Wizard of Oz" with contestants creating three designs: a whimsical monochromatic container design that would be fitting for the foyer of the Wizard's castle, recreating the storm's funnel cloud through a conical

design with a European flair, and an imaginative wand.

Here is a look at the Sylvania Cup at SAF Palm Springs 2018.

- J.S. 🌿

Jenny Scala is the director of marketing and communication for the Society of American Florists (jscala@safnow.org) and **Bruce Wright** is a contributing writer (bwright@safnow.org).



WELCOME TO THE LAND OF OZ Among the 19 floral designers competing were 12 members of the American Institute of Floral Designers, eight past Sylvania Cup contestants and three contestants sponsored by state floral associations.



FRESH GOODS Sponsor Certified American Grown provided the fresh products.



TERRIFIC TOOLS Sponsor Smithers-Oasis provided the design supplies and prize money. Shown: Ben Lee of Edelweiss Flower Boutique in Santa Monica, California.

snapshot

Maggie & Moe's Poplar Flowers & Decor TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



SHOW AND SELL Pre-makeover (left), 45 percent of Barrett's sales came from fresh flowers, but White only saw permanent florals on the floor — those made up 25 percent of sales. The revamped area (above) has plenty of fresh flowers and designs, including hand-tied bouquets, vase arrangements, and loose flower bucket vignettes.

EFFICIENT DESIGN To make designers more efficient, White assembled shelving units for containers and ribbons and created a workspace water system, along with a sliding barn door to open up the space. "Barrett has a great staff and a lot of great people, but no one was stationed up front at the counter; everybody was behind a proverbial curtain," White said.





COORDINATED COLORS White told Barrett that color blocking would be an ideal way to merchandise areas of the shop year round, with strategic holiday tweaks. "For the purple and gray section, White told us that we don't have to take it all away and bring in new merchandise for Christmas and the holidays," Barrett said. "We will just be adding and taking away a little bit, only changing out a few things to create the look we're going for."

SO FRESH AND SO CLEAN!

> Molly Barrett had a few specific goals in mind when she entered FTD's Makeover Magic Contest earlier this year: She wanted a more organized, inviting space — one that made it easier for her team to work quickly and encouraged customers to linger just a little longer.

FTD Education Consultant J. Keith White, AIFD, helped her do that and more at Maggie & Moe's Poplar Flowers & Decor in Terre Haute, Indiana, during a three-day transformation this fall. One of the most obvious changes: White moved some of the permanent botanicals off the 690-square-foot showroom floor to make way for more popular fresh flowers. He also turned his attention to the back of the shop. Maggie & Moe's is housed in a 5,000-square-foot 20th century house, which adds to its charm but makes for a disjointed design area, with employees racing between rooms to find vases and merchandise. White helped come up with better systems to organize merchandise and streamline functions (e.g., easier access to water sources) — changes that allow the staff to spend less time in the back and more time out front.

The results? Barrett achieved her goals. "I immediately saw customers come in and look around, spend more time in the shop, and purchase additional items that they hadn't originally come in the shop for," she said. "I've seen our designers become more engaged with customers, and they have more space now. Everything is close to them, it is a little more efficient." 🌿

Mackenzie Nichols is a contributing writer for *Floral Management*. fmeditor@safnow.org



**No. 10**

This is the tenth in a 10-part series aimed at empowering Floral Management readers to build a foundation month by month, sale by sale, for higher sales, more confident employees and happier customers.

FINISH THE YEAR STRONG

> As I bring this column to a close, I hope I have inspired and motivated you to get more actively involved in managing the sales and service process in your shop. As I traveled the U.S. this year speaking at various educational events, including the Society of American Florists' annual convention and 1-Day Profit Blast series, I heard a recurring theme that pleased me and I hope inspires you. Many people told me they never thought that much about *managing* their staff before, but this column took away some of that mystique and gave them an easy-to-follow blueprint. That was music to my ears! I hope you will try it too. This month, I'm going to recap my favorite tips from 2018 and offer a few pointers for the holidays.

The Big Takeaways

The most important point you should take away from Smart Selling is the need for **regularly scheduled meetings**, no matter how many or how few employees you have. I've visited more than 6,000 flower shops in my career and the best run businesses have made staff-wide meetings part of their culture. Meetings don't have to be big, elaborate, catered affairs at a local hotel. My definition of a good meeting is one that takes place OUTSIDE of regular work hours, includes all staff (make attendance mandatory — and, yes, you have to pay them) and is driven by a written agenda presented by the owner or manager. Show respect for employees and encourage them to be active team players by allotting an "open mic" time at the end of the meeting when staff members can share their ideas and feedback. For more advice on setting up meetings, review the entire 10 installments of this column at floralstrategies.com/saf.

The easiest way to increase your average sales order? Get your team in the habit of **selling add-ons**, also known as "finishing touches" in FloralStrategies speak — terminology I've found makes the dialogue with the customer more relaxed and less like a sales pitch. Just take a look at your website sales data. You'll see that customers love to purchase chocolate, balloons, plush animals, luxe gift cards, candles, bath products, etc., when they are presented online; however, if your employees

don't mention them in the store or on the phone, these products won't sell. I recommend your staff uses this language: "As a *finishing touch*, we can add a 'Happy Birthday' balloon for just \$4.95." Don't ask for permission; give your professional advice. Look back at past issues and you will find a sales tool you can print for your staff, which will help them sell more finishing touches this holiday season.

Holiday Help

Don't let the holiday season stress you out; instead, get organized and sail through. There are a few preemptive management steps you can take to maximize efficiency and minimize friction, such as **giving all employees their printed schedules for December before Thanksgiving** so there are no last-minute requests for a Saturday off to go Christmas shopping. Additionally, load up on bottled water, because **keeping your team well hydrated** as they are running to and fro makes a difference. On that same topic, give your team advance notice that you will **buy staff lunch** during "crunch time," Dec. 19 to 24. Consider this money well spent, as it keeps workers in the store, well fed and motivated. Additionally, free food is a morale booster; employees definitely appreciate gestures like this. On that note, this is a great time to start **offering monetary incentives**. Consider paying a few dollars for every arrangement sold that's \$20 more than your average sale. I can tell you from experience that money motivates, and this program is literally self-funding: When applying all the sales skills they learned from this column, employees will generate more revenue, which you're simply sharing with them! 🌿



COMING NEXT YEAR:

Join Huckabee in January to read "Tim's Calling," a new Floral Management column in which he will "mystery shop" florists across the globe, write about the experience and then share the actual recording online.

Tim Huckabee, FSC, is the president of FloralStrategies, which provides customer service, sales and POS system training to retail and wholesale florists. tim@floralstrategies.com



"Don't let the holiday season stress you out; instead, get organized and sail through. There are a few preemptive management steps you can take to maximize efficiency and minimize friction."



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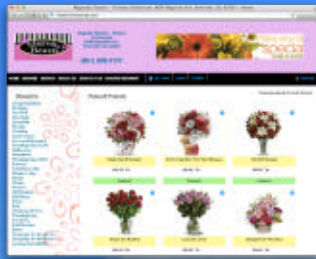
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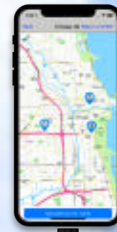
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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

ALEJANDRO MONTOYA
 Field Supervisor
 Deliflor Latin America
 Rionegro, Colombia

> When the Deliflor team found out their team had snagged eight blue ribbons in the Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition — including Best in Show honors for their 'Alma' white chrysanthemum — Alejandro Montoya was understated: "I'm really proud that I was a little part of that prize," he said. Juan David Lecuona, the company's commercial director, could hardly believe Montoya's humility. "Little part??" he wrote later in an email. "Alejandro played the *biggest* part." Yet that response is part of what makes Montoya so good at his job. "He gives 110 percent, he puts a lot of attention to the details and he's very focused," Lecuona said. "He's also a natural born collaborator." Born in Rionegro, a small town about an hour from Medellín, Montoya is the youngest of six. Since starting with Deliflor eight years ago, he's built a house for his own family — his wife, Yaquelin, and two daughters, and purchased a home for his parents, while becoming one of the company's top supervisors. "His great ambition to grow and take his family forward have made him an exceptional worker," Lecuona said.

How did you get your start?

Before Deliflor, I worked with another farm for 12 years. I started in maintenance. Step by step I was promoted to picking flowers and spraying. Then I moved to processes improvement assistant, and then introduction of new varieties assistant. When I started at Deliflor, I only had my high school degree; with their support, I've earned my degree in environmental management.

The best part of your job:

The interaction with my coworkers and the people who visit us daily. I learn every day about the processes done in the field to propagate and grow flowers with excellent qualities, and how we can create those conditions in other farms.

And the most challenging:

Finding new ways to implement technologies to improve production processes, optimize labor, improve product quality, and to be an example for flower growers in Colombia and the world. 🌿

Mary Westbrook is the editor in chief of Floral Management. mwestbrook@safnow.org



PRACTICAL HR

Balance Your Plate

I once reviewed an email from a job candidate that read: "We should talk, as I'm sure you would be *unimpressed*." Yikes! I felt sorry for that candidate. The person made a poor impression and didn't make it further in the interview process, but I had to wonder if this candidate also had too much on his or her plate.

We've all been there. You burn the candle at both ends, sacrifice sleep. Suddenly your brain is fuzzy. Everyone on your team has been there, too. Chances are someone on your team is there now.

How can you help your team through overload?

- **Stay informed.** Before you ask someone to take on an additional task, understand what is already on your employee's plate, including specific time frames and due dates and projects given to them by others on the team.
- **Talk to your employees.** Tell employees that they can ask for help prioritizing or completing a project. Train them to ask for that help in a timely manner — in other words, *not* at the eleventh hour, when it may be too late for you to respond or help.
- **Be real.** You know that a "20-minute" project may take 45 minutes. Set yourself and your team up for success by using real time frames, not impossible goals.

Glenna Hecht, SPHR, is a speaker, trainer, consultant and author. Follow her HR blog at glennahecht.com. Glenna@glennahecht.com

4 Easy steps to happier customers



Follow these 4 easy steps which will help you to reduce waste, increase quality and most importantly: to grow your business!

- **1 Hygiene**

Better hygiene helps to keep flowers fresh, to maintain the quality of your stock and to increase the vase life. That's exactly what customers want: flowers lasting longer.
- **2 Conditioning**

The right conditioning guarantees a longer sales period, by reducing waste and increasing the quality of the flowers.
- **3 Optimizing designs**

Your floral designs deserve to be enjoyed as long as possible. Use the best products to keep the flowers fresh and hydrated at all times.
- **4 Cut flower food**

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BUILDING EVERY DAY FOR TOMORROW

Editor's Note: This fall, Manny Gonzales and his wife, Clara, sold their business, Tiger Lily, after more than two decades of ownership. For this last column, Manny asked Clara, his writing partner throughout this past year, to take the lead.

> “How do you want to do tomorrow, babe?”

As a couple owning a flower shop together for 23 years, that was the question we often asked each other at night. Juggling meetings, shop coverage, our kids' activities, well, you know. Since selling Tiger Lily in October, the answer is: “I want to spend tomorrow exhaling.”

Exhaling and reminiscing about the amazing industry that we've had the privilege to be a small part of. We knew this day would come. We never saw ourselves passing down our business to our kids or owning Tiger Lily forever. Part of our strategy in the past few years, in fact, has been to make sure our business was as strong as it could be, for whatever new opportunity presented itself.

Manny and I came into this industry with absolutely no prior knowledge of being a florist. We were often told in the beginning to do things “by the book.” But we did things our own way. Sometimes, “the book” didn't work or make sense to

us. In this final column, I'd like to share some of the things that did work out.

Own the Dirt. Fifteen years ago, we sat at the kitchen table trying to figure out if we should buy property instead of continuing to rent. We used our six-year-old's Spider Man calculator to work the numbers. To come up with the down payment for our first property, a gas station we renovated, we drained most of our investments and savings and got a home equity loan. We moved funds out of our retirement IRA, then raced to replace it within 45 days to avoid penalties. It was stressful, but the risk paid off. The monthly mortgage payment was the same as our previous rent, and in the last 15 years that property has increased in value by 300 percent. The equity allowed us to buy property for a second shop we opened earlier this year. Florists' real estate needs are quirky. A “weird” but cheap property might work perfectly for a florist and turn out to be a great value. Keep your eyes open and crunch those numbers. Folks said we were crazy to buy that first property, then brilliant a couple years later. Neither is true, but we did think about the decision a lot, and we made it happen.

Margins Rule. Only a healthy, profitable business will reap a worthwhile sale price or be ready to hand off to the next

generation. Know your numbers and make sure your margins are tight, daily. Stress the numbers to your staff. Their jobs depend on hitting your goals. It's not sexy but when it's time to sell your shop, your books are the most important factor to a buyer.

Disrupt Your Local Market. When we bought our business in 1996, we dropped all five wire services and Yellow Page ads. We decided not to compete against grocery stores. People told us we'd never make it. Today, our average sales ticket is \$125. The message? Go with your gut. If something doesn't make sense, change it! You don't have to do weddings if you can't figure out how to make money off them. You can become the go-to florist for corporate work or sympathy. Want to only offer hand-tied bouquets in designer's choice selections? Crazy idea? Do it! You can't be all things to all people. Decide on YOUR path, then execute.

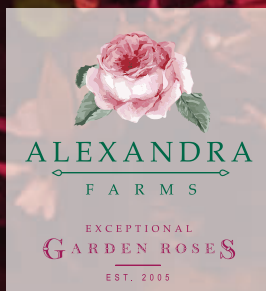
Get Involved. We would not be as successful, and we would not now be happily semi-retired, if it weren't for the Society of American Florists. SAF provided us with opportunities to improve, learn about our government — and to meet truly inspiring people. Without those connections, I might still be pushing a broom around the shop, wondering how to turn a profit.

Manny and I are proud of what we accomplished. Our floral career had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Highs and lows. It wasn't always easy, but it always challenged us in ways we now appreciate more than ever. We're also excited about our next chapter. Going forward, after the goodnight kiss we'll now ask each other a slightly different question: “What do you want to do tomorrow, babe?” 🌸

Manny Gonzales and Clara Gonzales are the former owners of Tiger Lily Florist in Charleston, S.C. Among other honors, Tiger Lily has been voted “Charleston's Best Florist” for 18 consecutive years. They live in Mount Pleasant with their kids, Luke and Ruby. manny@tigerlilyflorist.com



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HAUTE HOLIDAY PICKS

> *Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Happy holidays! Season's greetings! Peace on Earth!* There are myriad ways to express the joy of the holiday season — in salutations and décor. Here, designers from around the continent shared their preferred products for creating distinctive Yuletide arrangements.

"I love using ornithogalum and nerine because they are so delicate, uniquely shaped and fill space in any design," said Stephanie Herron, creative director of Scott's Flowers in New York City. "Their clean, elegant stems offer beauty in both compact and wild arrangements." Another favorite? 'Kaaps Platystar' leucadendron, which bears a slight resemblance to pinecones. "They are hardy, lend a fresh green color and have absolutely the coolest texture! They really create a point of interest."

"We don't use much red at all," said Cheryl Denham, co-owner of Arizona Family Florist and Lux Wedding Florist in Phoenix, Arizona. "We get quite a lot of requests for white flowers instead."

She likes to highlight snowy designs with silver brunia, dusty miller, rosemary and privet berries.



'PRINCE STAR' ORNITHUGALUM
Danziger



'KAAPS PLATYSTAR' LEUCADENDRON
Hilverda de Boer



'LYDIA' NERINE
Hilverda de Boer



'MONTBLANC' AMARYLLIS
Hilverda de Boer



SILVER BRUNIA
DVFlora



'GARDENIA' PEONY
Kennicott Brothers



WHITE ANEMONE
Onings Holland



'CLARE' KING PROTEA
Cape Flora

"Proteas make for stylish holiday pieces," said Walter Fedyshyn, AIFD, PFCI, of Kehoe Designs in Chicago. "I especially love the mink and king varieties. They last nicely and mix well with holiday greenery."

2018 Sylvia Cup first runner-up Lisa Greene, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Beach Plum Flower Shop in Newburyport, Massachusetts, seconded proteas as a holiday hit. "Our customers invest in a base of greens around Thanksgiving and add or change flowers periodically throughout the season," she said. "People appreciate proteas' longevity and they love their unique shapes and textures." She's also a huge fan of another vase-life superstar: dianthus.

Poppy Parsons, AIFD, CAFA, owner of Smart Flowers in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, fancies mixed foliage for the holidays.

"There are such fabulous varieties of greens all season long," she said, adding that her younger customers gravitate toward the "natural countryside" style. "A little touch of DesignMaster metallics on a magnolia or salal adds the perfect element of surprise."

Greene, too, reaches for greens — "pine, cedar, fir, boxwood, grevillea, olive leaves, eucalyptus, or my favorite, Carolina sapphire"— as well as gypsophila, cones, pods and ilex. "Texture creates character," she said.

"Use it with abandon!" 🌿

Katie Hendrick Vincent is the senior contributing editor of *Floral Management*. kvincent@safnow.org



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'ELMO BREANTHUS' DIANTHUS
Hilverda Kooij

Uncommon *Beauty*

With bright white petals surrounding a vivid green center, the daisy spray chrysanthemum 'Alma' won the hearts of judges at SAF's 2018 Outstanding Varieties Competition.



BY BRUCE WRIGHT
PHOTOS BY BETSY HANSEN



Ask anyone to draw a flower, and what do you get? A daisy. So, when you encounter the perfect daisy, it feels like more than just a daisy: It becomes the ideal embodiment of the abstract idea of a flower.

Maybe that explains why the judges at the 2018 Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition burst with enthusiasm for 'Alma,' a white spray chrysanthemum that won Best in Show. "When you've been a florist forever, a daisy is the most common thing you see and use," said Rakini Chinery, AAF, AzMF, of Allan's Flowers in Prescott, Arizona, who served as a judge. "But when I got to those daisies, my response was, 'Oh my God, they are so beautiful!'"

Chinery checked off the criteria used by the judges, noting how 'Alma' stood out in each one: color, size, bloom formation, commercial appeal, and the variety's crisp, dark green foliage on its sturdy stem.

But 'Alma' also sparkled with features that make it seem fresh and new. In particular, the bright green centers caught the eye of judges and other observers. "I've seen yellow-green before, never true green like this," said Tim Farrell, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Farrell's Florist in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.



WINNER, WINNER

'Alma,' a spray chrysanthemum from Deliflor Latin America, charmed judges and floral industry members during SAF's Outstanding Varieties Competition.

"How often do you see a white daisy chrysanthemum with so many blooms all open at the same time?" asked Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, PFCI, of Nordlie in Grandville, Michigan, another judge. "You eliminate waste. Look at the great long breaks," referring to the laterals. "That's going to be a satisfying flower all the way along the chain, from the grower to the wholesaler to the retailer to the end consumer. Everybody's going to love it because it hits all the marks."

'Alma' — submitted by breeder Deliflor Latin America — was grown by Galleria Farms in Colombia. Deliflor had intended to grow all its entries for the competition in its own greenhouses, said Juan David Lecuona, the company's commercial director. However, owing to its short cycle — a feature that growers love, and that potentially makes a variety more available and affordable, because it spends less time in the greenhouse — 'Alma' was in full bloom well before other Deliflor entries.

"We needed to send our star," said Lecuona. "We were lucky that Galleria Farms had a greenhouse full of 'Alma' that was maturing at just the right time."

'Alma' is one of many entries that were initially planned for SAF Palm Beach 2017 — SAF's 133rd annual convention, which had to be canceled owing to Hurricane Irma. The pent-up demand meant that competition this year was particularly fierce. Compared to 2016, when 184 entries vied for ribbons, this year's competition saw 246 entries submitted by nearly 30 growers and breeders in Florida, California, Oregon, and Hawaii, as well as Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador and the Netherlands.

The result? All the more inspiration for participants at SAF Palm Springs 2018 who lingered, admiring and taking notes, in the Outstanding Varieties exhibit. Each year, Farrell takes his notes from the exhibit back to his wholesalers. "I take a picture of the flower and the card next to it, and pass that information on. They'll find that variety for me and bring it in, and many times it becomes one of their best sellers." But meanwhile, Farrell has it first in his area: "You get a heads-up at the convention."

Everyone has their favorites — not always the same as the varieties favored by the judges. But for those who missed the exhibit, or who want to revisit it, the competition's Best in Class, People's Choice and Blue Ribbon winners are identified on the following pages; Red Ribbon winners and a list of the cutting edge suppliers who submitted entries can be found at safnow.org/moreonline.

Best

Standard Rose

'MARZIPAN'

Esprit Miami

A large, creamy rose with a hint of blush pink toward the center, 'Marzipan' boasts a vase life of 16 days. "We just started getting this variety on standing order," said Lani Callister of Ensign Wholesale Floral in Salt Lake City, Utah, one of the competition judges. She likes the waviness in the petals; guard petals have pleasing accents of pale green that define the petal edges and provide a color transition to the sepals and foliage.



in Class



Garden Rose

'MAYRA PINK'

Rosaprima

Not just pink, but a versatile pink, somewhere between medium and blush: "This is a color that everybody wants," Callister observed. In the case of 'Mayra Pink,' that color comes in a distinctive shape, reminiscent of a peony. Longer outer petals yield a rosette with a wide, flat top. "It's beautiful, and I know that it holds up. We went to the farm in Ecuador where this is grown," Callister recalled. "The grower cut a couple stems and handed them to me. When I got back to the hotel eight hours later, they were wilted, but I submerged them in water in the bathtub overnight, and they lasted another five days." Under more normal conditions, projected vase life is 10 days.

Spray Rose

'JULIANNE'

Euforia Flowers

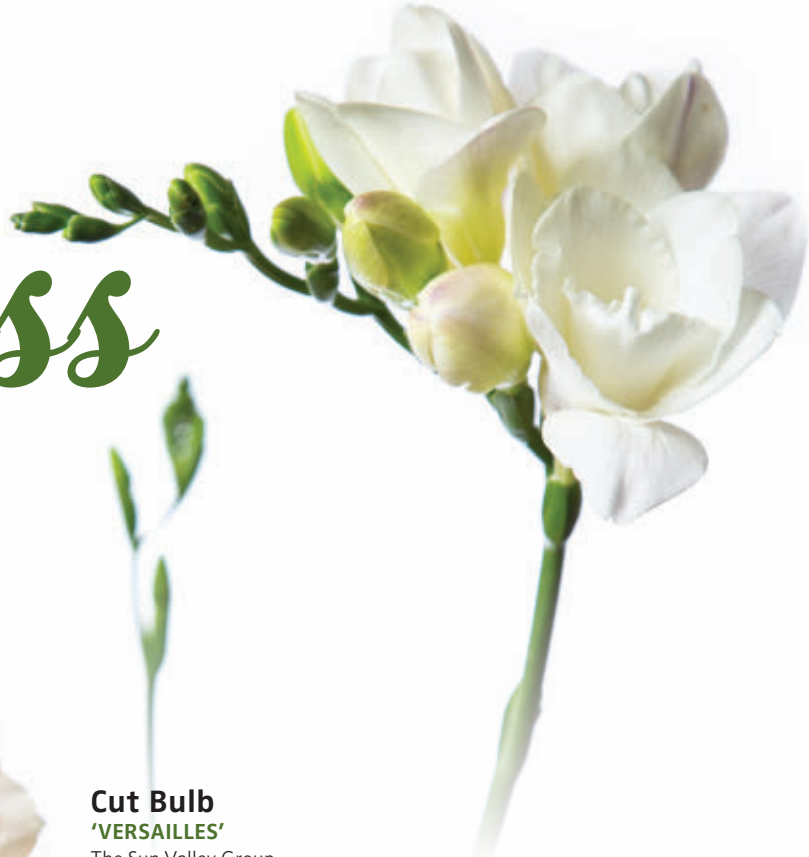
Slightly fragrant, 'Julianne' offers the perfect shade of peach (a perennial favorite for wedding work). Not too pink, not too coral, it blends nicely with a range of colors. "This is the new peach rose that retail florists are asking for by name," said Callister. A typical stem combines open blooms with buds, even rather tight buds, for a garden look, with a variety of texture, all of which promises ongoing fresh color in an arrangement that will last for some time: "Just like on a gladiolus stem, most of the time the ones at the very top are going to open last. I like it!"

Cut Bulb

'VERSAILLES'

The Sun Valley Group

A double white freesia, 'Versailles' fills a niche in the wedding-flower market. Lightly fragrant, with firm, hardy florets of impressive size, it has an impact "like a mini gardenia almost," said Farrell. Double freesia is typically more expensive than single, but not by much, considering its value in design. Historically, it can be harder to source than other flowers — wholesalers may order it from Holland by default. The good news for freesia lovers? 'Versailles' is grown by Sun Valley Floral Farms in California, which projects a vase life of 10 to 18 days.



Gerbera

'KENSİ'

Green Valley Floral

While the many rows of hot-pink petals might be first to catch your eye, they are beautifully set off by 'Kensi's' bright and tidy, yellow-green center. "Look at the petal count!" Waterous enthused, noting that the blooms in the bunch were consistent in size (over 4 inches in diameter). "Usually there's a double row outside, one inside, but here it seems like eight rows from the inside out. The stems are very strong, so this is a gerbera that's going to stand up well. It's beautiful in profile as well — a good value no matter how you use it."



Alstroemeria

'DIVA'

Flores Funza

Sheer beauty is a good starting point, but this 'Diva' promises hardworking, long-lasting strength as well, with a projected vase life of 15 days. "You can feel how firmly the petals are connected at the calyx, even on a bloom that is open wide," Waterous observed. "The blossom count is enormous, and they are not all clumped together, so you can get good coverage. With the long breaks, you can use those lateral stems individually in small arrangements. And the foliage looks green and bright."

Potted Flowering Plant

'KORI PARADE'

Poulsen Roser A/S

The high petal count and the bloom size, large for a 4-inch potted rose, only emphasize the charm of the miniature in 'Kori Parade,' with its abundant, diminutive, serrated leaves of a bright, even green. Packed with about 90 petals each, the wide-open rosettes offer instant gratification while alternating with buds that promise more to come. The color, a deep pink-purple, distinguishes this potted rose from standard red or pink. Customers can expect to enjoy blooms for up to three weeks.





Other Cut Flower

'CANDY PINK'

Arvi Farms/Groflowers

With a splash of light pink over creamy white, 'Candy Pink' fits a popular color profile, but the hydrangea also impressed with its size, strength and consistency. "It was very well shaped," said Adam Van Winkle of Cascade Floral Wholesale in Everett, Washington, a competition judge. "It didn't have darker hues or antiquing to it. It would be wedding perfect for an event. And then the foliage, how straight the stem is. It shipped well: It came in clean, with no mechanical damage, and that was probably a reason that it won best in class." Vase life is projected at 15 days.



Decorative Foliage

COTINUS (SMOKEBUSH)

The Sun Valley Group

In a color that varies from deep reddish green to dark purple and burgundy, cotinus provides the perfect foliage accent to the popular blush pinks. "We use this whenever it's in season," said Chinery. (The cotinus season starts in mid-May, around Mother's Day, according to Sun Valley.) Chopped to the ground in February or March, the plants can eventually grow to 9 feet tall, but usually stems are harvested when they are only 20 or 30 inches tall. The first crop is softer, shipped in water. Later, stems and foliage are firm: A single leaf holds up nicely in a corsage or boutonniere. By September, edges of the leaves may show attractive red markings.

Dianthus

'PEARL'

Flores Funza

'Pearl' received high marks for its peachy hue, stronger in the center where the petals are also denser, giving the blossom a garden-style look. The flower heads looked as though they had opened wide naturally, without any of the massaging that designers sometimes resort to, noted Van Winkle. "You can feel the weight of it," he observed, hefting a stem in his hand: "That's the head size and the strong stem."

People's Choice

'MADIBA'

Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers

Named to honor Nelson Mandela, after the nickname by which he was affectionately known, 'Madiba' has the commanding presence of other king protea varieties (*Protea cynaroides*) but is conveniently smaller than most. The entry, also a Blue Ribbon winner, has red-pink bracts surrounding a center dome of furry white florets and glossy, deep green leaves. 'Madiba' can open well in water even after it is cut and shipped rather tightly closed, to protect the tips of the bracts. Like other proteas, it offers an extraordinary vase life of two weeks or more.



Blue Ribbon Winners

Orientals and Oriental Trumpet Lilies

Orientals and Oriental Trumpet Lily Blue Ribbon winners make strong candidates for event work, with a dramatic presence, even from a distance. **'African Lady,'** buttercream **'Serrano,'** rich pink **'Dalian'** and vivid **'Metropolitan'** all offer large blooms with striking color, facing both outward and upward. Freckles that usually cluster at a lily's throat are sprinkled evenly over the thick petals of **'Tigermoon';** they would combine beautifully with flowers in a solid burgundy. Pure white **'Zambesi'** is a shoo-in for wedding work, while **'Firebolt'** hits just the right shade of deep violet-red: dark enough for drama, but light enough to show up in photography, with a ruffled edge to the petals and contrasting light green stamens.



'TIGERMOON'
Oriental Lily
The Sun Valley Group



'FIREBOLT'
Oriental Lily
Green Valley Floral



'SERRANO'
Oriental Trumpet Lily
Green Valley Floral



'METROPOLITAN'
Oriental Lily
Holland America Flowers

'AFRICAN LADY'
Oriental Trumpet Lily
The Sun Valley Group



'DALIAN'
Oriental Trumpet Lily
Oregon Flowers



'ZAMBESI'
Oriental Trumpet Lily
Oregon Flowers

'ZAMBESI'
Oriental Trumpet Lily
Green Valley Floral

Roselilies

Marketed as Roselilies, double-flowered Oriental lilies have come a long way since they were introduced commercially in 2000. Pollen-free and bearing only a light fragrance, they are usually shipped with nylon socks enfolding and protecting the many-petaled blooms. Pull off the socks, and the Roselilies open right away. "We get them in whenever we can, and we find that customers really like them," said Chinery, who particularly admired **'Isabella'** for its petite size and relatively compact branching. The newest varieties come in colors ranging from pure white to a rich dark pink.



'ISABELLA'
The Sun Valley Group



'SAMANTHA'
Equiflor/Rio Roses



'CELINA'
The Sun Valley Group



'DEJIMA'
The Sun Valley Group

LA Lilies

Ever since breeders started crossing *longiflorum* with Asiatic lilies a quarter century ago, this category has shown stunning results. At SAF Palm Springs 2018, judges singled out **'Royal Sunset,'** a tiger lily that combines a candy-corn yellow-orange throat with coral pink tips, and **'Eyeliner,'** porcelain white, with a peppered throat and a fine dark pencil line that outlines the inner three petals against the outer three.



'EYELINER'
Holland America Flowers



'ROYAL SUNSET'
Holland America Flowers

Chrysanthemums

"We're seeing a mum revival, and it's because we're getting such interesting varieties," noted Waterous. The winning entries combined athletic size and strength with show-biz personalities, covering the wide range of chrysanthemum types, from cushion mums such as **'Andrea'** and **'Veronica,'** in magenta and blush pink, or **'Magnum Yellow,'** with a vase life of 24 days, to novelties such as **'Roma Festa,'** with yellow spoons outlined in red, and **'Serenity,'** with striped petals in purple and white. **'Fuzzball'** adds another, much-desired vivid light green to designers' palettes; **'Lorax,'** a dark pink. The slender, pointed petals of **'Tiana Dark'** seem to be unfolding before your eyes, while the aptly named **'Sol'** will add solid rays of sunshine to any bouquet.



'FUZZBALL'
Deliflor Latin America



'SERENITY'
Deliflor Latin America



'LORAX'
Deliflor Latin America



'ANDREA'
Dümmen Orange



'VERONICA'
Dümmen Orange



'MAGNUM YELLOW'
Deliflor Latin America



'ROMA FESTA'
Deliflor Latin America



'SOL'
Deliflor Latin America



'TIANA DARK'
Deliflor Latin America

Dianthus

Like 'Alma,' 'Zeppelin' might seem at first like the most ordinary of familiar flowers. A closer look reveals a gem, with large, round flowers in an unusually bright and vivid shade of red. Small, firm, curling leaves, widely separated, adorn the strong stem.



'ZEPPELIN'
Dümmen Orange

Gerberas

Strong, saturated color has long been a selling point for those who love gerberas. This year's winning entries were no exception. In many, the rows of petalettes surrounding the central eye were thicker than usual, yielding a ruffled look, another step removed from the petal formation of a simple daisy. For designers looking for a smaller flower, winners included two mini gerberas: raspberry-and-cream **'Manolo'** and neon-magenta **'Picture Perfect.'**



'SILVERSNOW'
Green Valley Floral



'PANAMA'
Green Valley Floral



'TERRA EZRA'
Green Valley Floral

'HUMBERTO'
Green Valley Floral



'TERRA LAURO'
Green Valley Floral



'TERRA EZRA'
Dümmen Orange



'ALCOLEA'
Dümmen Orange

GERMINI 'MANOLO'
Dümmen Orange



GERMINI 'PICTURE PERFECT'
Dümmen Orange

Potted Flowering Plants

'Gigi Parade' bears candy-striped flowers that open wide. And this plant has staying power. It does well when replanted in a garden (a good tidbit to share with gift-giving customers).

'Posy Parade' was recognized for its on-trend color, blending from pink to apricot.



'GIGI PARADE'
Potted Rose
Poulsen Roser A/S

'POSY PARADE'
Potted Rose
Poulsen Roser A/S



Standard and Garden Roses

There's no doubt that the popularity of garden roses, as selected and grown for the cut-flower market, has influenced rose breeding overall. That's a good thing, said Callister: "I love that I can buy something like **'Moonstone'** packed in bunches of 25." Blue Ribbon rose entries approached the style of true garden roses, with a multitude of frilly petals that may even have a "quartered" look, versus the clean spiral of traditional hybrid teas. Many winning entries have outer petals with a distinctive look: greenish on blush-colored roses and darkened or variegated on roses in other colors. The one true garden rose among the winning entries, **'Tiara'** boasts a rare shade of dark lavender, with outer petals in antique green.



'FLAMINGO'
Standard Rose
Rosaprima



'AMOROSA'
Standard Rose
Ecuagarden Group



'GERALDINE'
Standard Rose
Esprit Miami



'PINK MONDIAL'
Standard Rose
Equiflor/Rio Roses



'PINK MONDIAL'
Standard Rose
Ecuagarden Group



'WASABI'
Standard Rose
Rosaprima



'APPLAUSE'
Standard Rose
Fresca Farms



'DYNAMIC'
Standard Rose
HojaVerde Cia.



'MOONSTONE'
Standard Rose
Esprit Miami



'TIARA'
Garden Rose
Alexandra Farms



'REGATTA'
Standard Rose
Royal Flowers



'ORANGE CRUSH'
Standard Rose
Esprit Miami



'CONFIDENTIAL'
Standard Rose
Rosaprima



'YELLOW KING'
Hybrid Tea Rose
Equiflor/Rio Roses



'FREE SPIRIT'
Standard Rose
Esprit Miami



'TYCOON'
Standard Rose
Ayura S.A.S.



'PEACH AVALANCHE'
Standard Rose
HojaVerde Cia.



'SHIMMER'
Standard Rose
Rosaprima

Spray Roses

In spray roses, a garden look is also on-trend, with an abundance of flowers on a single stem, plus a few tight buds among the blooms for textural variety. Blue Ribbon winners in this strong category ranged in color from white and cream to peach, yellow and orange, with a jolt of hot pink in the form of **'Mystic Gem.'**



'MILVA'
Standard Rose
Jet Fresh Flower Distributors



'SILANTOI'
Standard Rose
Dümmen Orange



'BRIDAL VEIL'
Eufhoria Flowers



'BRIDAL BOUQUET'
Eufhoria Flowers



'MYSTIC GEM'
Eufhoria Flowers



'PORCELINA'
Equiflor/Rio Roses

'VANILLA LACE'
Eufhoria Flowers



Other Cut Flowers

In the garden-flower vein, **'Erica,'** an exceptionally tall, feathery, dusty-pink astilbe, so big the lower laterals could be used separately in hand bouquets, caught the eye of competition judges.

'Premium White' hydrangea impressed with its size and pristine health. With heavily berried branches, **'Autumn Spirit'** ilex looks ready to ring in the fall season, with a hint of holidays to come.

For exotic touches that blend beautifully with more traditional florist flowers, **'Kauai,'** an extra-large, heavily textured anthurium in a pale lime green, offers both novelty and design versatility. Impressively large sprays of **'Melemeie'** oncidium orchids greeted visitors to the Outstanding Varieties exhibit; the graceful, bright green stems seemed to play a more important role than usual, laden with abundant flowers in pure yellow, without red or brown variegation. **'Arctic Ice,'** a king protea in creamy white, could make a striking focal point in an adventurous bridal bouquet, paired with dainty flowers (serruria or matricaria). "This is a break-the-rules kind of flower," Waterous said. 🌿

Bruce Wright is a contributing writer for Floral Management. bwright@safnow.org



'AUTUMN SPIRIT'
Ilex
The Sun Valley Group



'MELEMEIE'
Oncidium
Green Point Nurseries



'ARCTIC ICE'
Protea
Resendiz Brothers
Protea Growers

'PREMIUM WHITE'
Hydrangea
Arvi Farms/Groflowers

'ERICA'
Astilbe
The Sun Valley Group



'KAUAI'
Anthurium
Green Point Nurseries



Standard Bearers

The Society of American Florists gratefully acknowledges the commitment, time and expertise of its 2018 Outstanding Varieties Competition judges:

Retailers

Rakini Chinery, AAF, AzMF, of Allan's Flowers in Prescott, Arizona

Karen Fountain, AAF, of Flowers 'n' Ferns in Burke, Virginia

Lynne Tischler, AAF, CPFD, PFCI of Your Enchanted Florist in St. Paul, Minnesota

Wholesalers

Lani Callister of Ensign Wholesale Floral in Salt Lake City, Utah

Adam Van Winkle of Cascade Floral Wholesale in Everett, Washington

Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, PFCI, of Nordlie in Grandville, Michigan

Growers

Terril Nell, Ph.D., AAF, research coordinator at the American Floral Endowment

Leo Roozen, AAF, of Washington Bulb Company in Mount Vernon, Washington

Dan Vordale of Ocean View Flowers in Lompoc, California

SAF also would like to extend thanks to Chrysal USA for supplying the plant food, Syndicate Sales for the hundreds of vases used for the entrants, and **Dave and Megan Mitchell** of Mitchell's Flowers & Events in Orland Park, Illinois, and their team for coordinating the competition.

GO DEEPER

For a complete list of Best in Class, Blue and Red Ribbon winners, along with a list of exhibiting companies, contact information, and additional information on winning varieties, please visit safnow.org/moreonline.

BloomKonnnect — Creating a Global Floral Marketplace for the 21st Century



Raj Ravani, one of BloomKonnnect’s founders and a floral industry veteran, came across an article about the legendary Aaalsmeer flower markets of Holland several years ago. He began to ask himself, “how can we reinvent a 600-year-old marketplace for the 21st Century — an online marketplace designed exclusively for growers and floral professionals to buy and sell flowers across the globe?”

After many meetings with industry veterans and collaborating with a top team of industry leaders, BloomKonnnect was born. “This is the first of its kind! An online marketplace where flower growers, farms and flower professionals can do business together directly,” said Ravani, who has over 30 years’ experience as a florist, wholesaler and entrepreneur.

Launched in 2017, BloomKonnnect now has over 70 farms on the platform, from 24 different countries. The technology of BloomKonnnect provides florists and floral designers the ability to buy quality, colorful, flowers for their shops and customers, directly from farms around the world. Flowers are also 3-5 days fresher and priced 30-70% less than many traditional methods.

“When we say straight from the farm, your flowers are cut on the same day you order them,” said Ravani. “Flowers stay in cold chain during the entire duration of their journey.” BloomKonnnect growers and farms continue to join the marketplace everyday offering 15,000 different flowers searchable by color, variety, length, farm and country.

BloomKonnnect works primarily as a business-to-business online marketplace but also curates products for a better purchasing experience. The company has created a seasonal subscription service guaranteeing popular seasonal varieties at set prices, sections highlighting popular wedding flowers and much more.



Farm-Direct Flowers

The Products You Want • The Prices You Want • At Your Fingertips



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Enjoy **25%**

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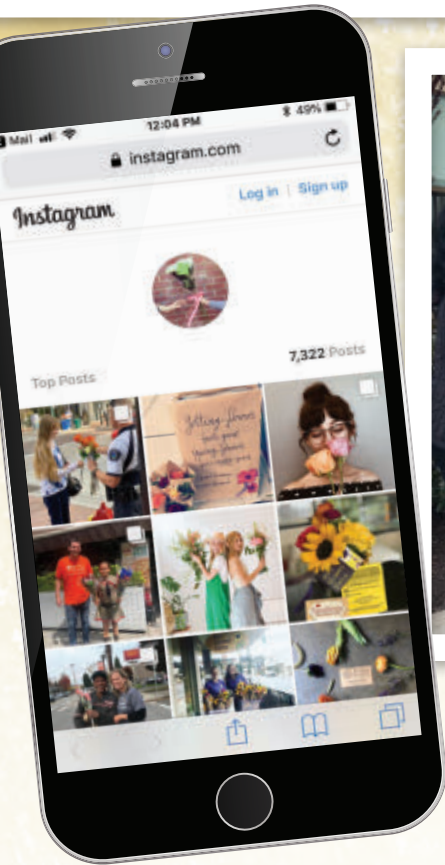
Shop BloomKonnnect.com



An online marketplace designed exclusively to connect farms directly with florists.

Can You Feel the Love?

BY MARY WESTBROOK



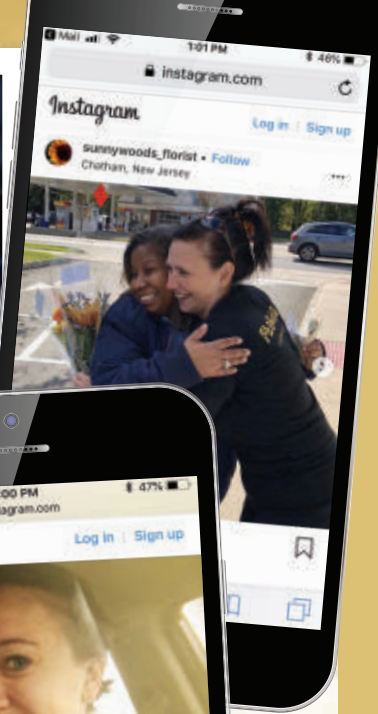
Industry members across the country spread goodwill and flower love through SAF's Petal It Forward.

COME TOGETHER

The floral industry stepped up for SAF's 2018 Petal It Forward. Consumers and businesses posted messages on social media and shared candid shots of the day. From left to right: Kitayama Brothers, Sakata Seed America and Floralive in Monterey, California; Ross Plants & Flowers in Orefield, Pennsylvania; Fifty Flowers in Boise, Idaho; Ashland-Addison Florist Co. in Chicago; Trig's, locations around Wisconsin; and Sunnywoods Florist in Chatham, New Jersey.

When Bruce Anderson stopped in a local deli in late October to hand out flowers, one recipient eyed him with suspicion. "How much?" the woman asked. "No charge," said Anderson. Moehring Woods Flowers in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, was taking part in Petal It Forward, an initiative spearheaded by the Society of American Florists in which floral industry members give recipients two bouquets, one to keep and one to pass on to someone else.

The next day, the woman appeared in Anderson's shop, tears in her eyes. She'd given the second bouquet to her 16-year-old son, who was struggling socially and academically. She hadn't seen him smile in months. "Flowers for me?" the teen asked, taken aback by the gesture. Then, a small miracle: He grinned. "Call me crazy," the woman said to Anderson, "but I think getting flowers from you yesterday was divine intervention."



Happy Headlines

In addition to local participants taking SAF's advice to reach out to their area media, SAF also enhanced those efforts through key public relations tactics to capture media attention and drive reporters to a list of Petal It Forward participants. SAF's PR efforts included the strategically timed distribution of a media advisory and press release to broadcast and print media nationwide, as well as targeted pitching and follow-up to markets where events were happening. To enhance their influencer marketing efforts, SAF has also partnered with key bloggers and influencers with large social media followings to spread the news about the floral industry's large-scale random act of kindness. Read more at safnow.org/moreonline.

-M.W.

The most amazing part: That poignant experience happened over and over again on Oct. 24 during SAF's 2018 Petal It Forward. In big cities and rural towns, in red states and blue states, in hip coffee shops, longtime diners, retirement homes and on busy street corners — Americans of all ages and backgrounds experienced the joy of giving and receiving flowers.

This year, florists in 410 cities in every state plus Washington, D.C., and Colombia signed on to participate, hosting 457 local events. At each event, recipients moved from surprise to delight — and sometimes tears. In social media posts and news stories, those recipients shared their stories and told countless others how good these floral gifts made them feel.

"We are thrilled by the enthusiasm of the floral industry to come together for a common goal to promote flower power in their local communities," said SAF's Vice President of Marketing Jennifer Sparks. "We know that giving flowers

PERSONAL STORIES One of the biggest successes of the day? Getting customers to post about their own positive experiences, as this recipient did, after receiving flowers from Dietz Flower Shop in Seguin, Texas.

is a gesture of connection — one that can bring people, even strangers, closer together. We showed the country a random act of kindness at its finest!"

At press time, SAF was still collecting stories from the year's event. Visit safnow.org/moreonline to read more about the individual efforts of growers, wholesalers, retailers and suppliers; review some of the top social posts from the industry and consumers; and find out about the high-quality news stories generated nationwide. 🌸

Mary Westbrook is the editor in chief of Floral Management. mwestbrook@safnow.org



GOOD VIBES Botanica International Design & Décor Studio handed out bouquets in Tampa, Florida, and scored prime news coverage with a story on ABC's "Good Morning Tampa Bay." Reporters highlighted the giveaway and the results of SAF's new study on the powerful, stress-reducing effects of flowers.





COLORFUL TROUPE The Professional Floral Communicators-International Board of Trustees dished up a “hue-ristic” analysis of fresh products, hard goods and tools — each a pot of gold! From left: Marlin Hargrove, AAF, AIFD, PFCI; Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF; Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF; Theresa Colucci, AAF, AIFD, PFCI; J. Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CF, MCF; Julie Poeltler, AIFD, CAFA, PFCI.

In Living Color

BY JENNY SCALA

The Society of American Florists' Premier Products Showcase presented bright ideas for new products and services.

Five pillars streaming with bright colors; six vibrant commentators each decked from head to toe in a color of the rainbow; songs like “Red Red Wine” and “Purple Rain” playing in the background; and most important, fresh products, hard goods and tools lining the perimeter of a ballroom set the scene for the “Premier Products Showcase: In Living Color” at SAF Palm Springs 2018, the Society of American Florists' 134th annual convention.

“The Premier Products Showcase is designed as a fast-paced, high-energy event,” said Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF, of Jenny’s Floral in Custer, South Dakota, one of the program’s presenters. “It gets you motivated and

excited to see the newest and greatest of what the industry has to offer.”

It’s no secret SAF’s Professional Floral Communicators-International (PFCI) Board of Trustees presents the annual Premier Products Showcase with flair. In 2016, the PFCI Board went back to school with the University of PPS, clowned around in 2015 with a circus theme, and discoed through a groovy ‘70s flashback in 2014.

“I learned so much because the PFCI team gave a lot of examples of how to use the products in many different ways,” said Rocio Silva, AIFD, PFCI, of the Instituto Mexicano Tecnio Floral in Mexico. “I loved the colorful theme, it made the audience have fun and be willing to learn.”

Here are some of the premier products that were given color commentary at SAF Palm Springs 2018 by Behlings, who was known as “Mellow Yellow”; “Poison Ivy” Theresa Colucci, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Meadowscent in Gardiner, New York; “Philippe Flickerman” D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF, of the Bill Doran Co., Omaha, Nebraska; “Red Riding Hood” Marlin Hargrove, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of the Pete Garcia Company in Atlanta; “Violet Beauregarde” Julie Poeltler, AIFD, CAFA, PFCI, of Fountain of Flowers & Gifts in Lone Tree, Iowa; and “Little Boy Blue” J. Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CF, MCF, of Blumz by JRDesigns in metro Detroit.

Care & Handling

Use **Foliage Sealer** by **DESIGN MASTER color tool, inc.** on chandeliers, garlands, purses, and every design out of water, Poeltler said, to lock in moisture and give leaves a natural look. > dmcolor.com



"If you're looking to enhance your brand recognition as well as provide a quality floral food for your clients, **Chrysal USA's Customized Sachet** is a great option," Yelverton said. "It is customizable with your logo and information and contains the top-quality product that Chrysal is known for." > chrysal.com



Containers



From the **FTD Designer's Workshop Collection**, the **Blue Glass Vase** features the Winner Winner™ Bouquet (pictured here) and the Crowned Bouquet. "The perfect shape and size to be your go-to vase for any occasion — a pleasure to design in and a pleasure to receive the perfect vase," Behlings said. > FTDi.com

Fresh Flowers



"May I introduce to you, '**Princess Aiko**,'" Hargrove said of a peach garden rose by **Alexandra Farms**. "It has a beautiful peony shape and a 10-day vase life." > alexandrafarms.com



"Your brides will be asking for it by name," Behlings said of Danziger's '**My White Cosmic**.' The brilliant white large gypsophila boasts a three-week vase life. > danzigeronline.com



"It's fabulously fun," Hargrove said of **Royal Flowers Inc.'s 'Paintball Pop' craspedia** with its 90-cm stems and large blooms. > royalflowersgroup.com



"Smilax lends itself wonderfully for use in decorating when you need a lush vine of dark green long-lasting foliage," Yelverton said, "perfect for wedding arches or gazebos." > For **Beautiful Things from Mississippi**, email jdelprience@pss.msstate.edu.



"How cute is he?" Behlings said, holding up a **Tommie Turtle Pot** from **Accent Décor**. "It is a great choice for interior décor and low-maintenance gardening. The perfect gift for college students or a girlfriend — who doesn't love turtles? Get him now — he's sure to go 'fast'!" > accentdecor.com

Design Trends



"When soaked, **Midnight Floral Foam** by **Smithers-Oasis** is a rich black color," Poeltler said. "Think about exposing it in your designs for an edgy, modern look." > oasisfloralproducts.com



Woven in the USA, **Duchesse Satin** by **CSS Industries (Berwick Offray/Lion Ribbon)** comes in 12 on-trend colors in No. 5 (7/8-inch) and No. 9 (1.5-inch) widths. "It features a new matte finish for a double face satin ribbon," Hargrove said, "perfect for softer bridal color trends."

"The pillow takes the old crumpled 'chicken wire' mechanic to a new, cleaner, recyclable level," Yelverton said of the **Holly Heider Chapple Pillow and Compote** from **Syndicate Sales Inc.** "Compotes come in a plastic form as well as a more upscale heavy glass." > syndicatesales.com

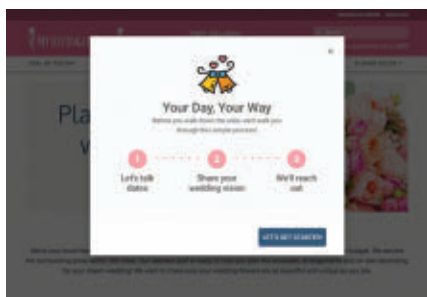
Computing POS/ Social Media

"**TeamFloral** will do the **Social Media** for you — posting several times weekly on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest — and coordinate with your web techs to ensure that the featured products on social media are available on your website," Poeltler said. > teamfloral.com



"**FloristWare** makes software that helps florists save time and money and increase sales," said Hargrove. > floristware.com

Efficient Events



"A wonderfully written wedding inquiry form leads the bride through all the important information that you will need to start her wedding planning journey," Behlings said about **Lovingly Weddings**. "Brides won't even know they're filling out a form — feels more like they're chatting with their BFF!" > lovingly.com



CurateProposals simplifies the sales process and integrates with popular accounting software and email calendars. "It gives you a beautiful, crisp proposal for your brides in no time at all — plus you're not going to undersell yourself," Behling said. "**Curate** has you and your success in mind." > curate.com



"**Details Flowers Software** offers you an amazing software package that will take you from the consultation, preparation of proposals, product management and purchasing, design worksheets and delivery/installation documents and more," Yelverton said. "When planning weddings and events, success is truly in the details." > detailsflowers.com

Mark Your Calendar



During **Congressional Action Days** (CAD) in March, SAF members successfully lobbied Congress to increase Floriculture and Nursery Research Initiative funding by \$1 million and restate the 2018 Floriculture Crops Report. "Go to CAD and be part of the action," Behlings said about SAF's 39th Annual Congressional Action Days, March 11-12, 2019. > safnow.org/cad



CalFlowers, the California Association of Flower Growers and Shippers, hosts **Fun 'N Sun 2019** at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort in Santa Barbara, California. "It's always informative and entertaining," Yelverton said. Open to floral designers, retailers, wholesalers, transportation providers and business partners, the event features a tour of flower farms. > cafgs.org



"This is perfect prep for your PFCI video," Samuel said about **"Speak Up: How Your Brand Can be Heard in a Socially Connected World,"** a course at the Floriology Institute Feb. 24-26, 2019, in Jacksonville, Florida. > floriologynstitute.com

Additional Gifts



"Here's a great gift for mothers, grandmothers, and daughters," Poeltler said about **Vintage Pearl's "Sweet Peas in a Pod" Necklace**. Fill the pea pod charm with up to five freshwater pearls for customization and wear on a silver-plated link chain. > tvpwholesale.com



"Here is an up-and-coming unique way to remember loved ones," Yelverton said. **"Eternal Remembrance"** takes it to the next level through an online system and mobile app that allows you to build a memorial page as well as provide global positioning systems that will 'pin' the location of the burial site." > eternalremembrance.com

In Remembrance

BUCKS FOR BOBBI!
Honoring the Legacy of
Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford, AAF, AIFD, PFCI



Through the American Floral Endowment, PFCI established the **Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford Memorial Tribute**. "By making a donation in her name, you too can keep her floral light shining eternally," Samuel said. "These funds will support floral education for years to come." Go to endowment.org/donate and specify that your donation is for **Bucks for Bobbi**. 🌸

Jenny Scala is SAF's director of marketing and communications and staff liaison to PFCI. jscala@safnow.org

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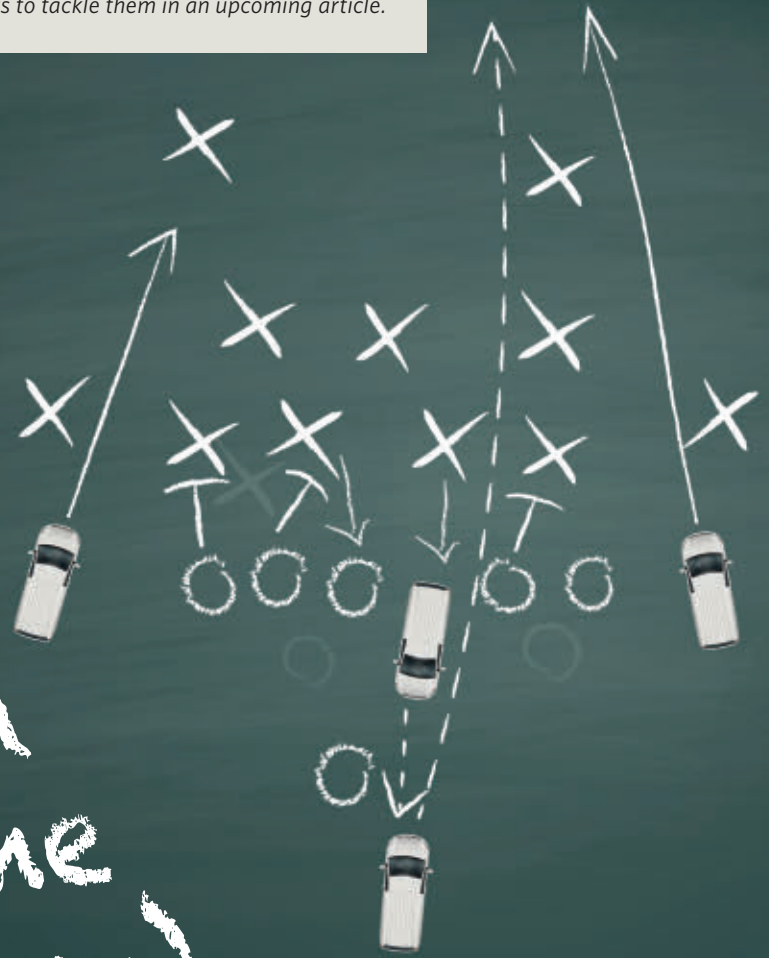
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Get certified by PFCI, the floral industry's speakers bureau. Applications are due Jan. 31, 2019, for membership induction at SAF Amelia Island 2019. safnow.org/pfci



EDITORS' NOTE *Paul Goodman, MBA, CPA, PFCI, and Derrick Myers, CPA, CFP, PFCI, love a good financial management challenge, however big or small. Send your questions to fmeditor@safnow.org, and we'll challenge the experts to tackle them in an upcoming article.*

Holiday delivery
can be efficient and profitable
when you create and stick
to a solid plan.



Get in the (Delivery) Zone

BY PAUL GOODMAN, MBA, CPA, PFCI

Major floral holidays come with myriad challenges for retail florists: Higher volume means more potential sales, of course, but also more costs. Delivery is one area that, when not handled properly, can reduce your profit margins — around the holidays and year round.

The solution: Create a delivery plan and stick to it. To ensure your deliveries contribute to your bottom line, divide them into five categories:

- Standard local deliveries
- Standard delivery zones
- Special deliveries outside your zones
- Timed/rush deliveries
- Holiday deliveries

Remember, many point-of-sale systems let you enter a delivery charge based on the recipient's zip code. Align your various delivery zones with zip codes and then set up the prices accordingly. That way, you and your staff won't have to figure out what the delivery charge is going to be for each order. Instead, the information will appear automatically on the order.

Standard Local Deliveries

These deliveries are typically close to your shop, usually within five miles. Your geography can change this average. Railroads, rivers, highways and other developments can also quickly increase the time and mileage of deliveries.

Take a map of your city. For the next 100 deliveries, plot the delivery point on the map. Then step back to get a big-picture view of your deliveries. Normally, you will see a concentration of most of your deliveries around your shop. That should be your standard local delivery zone.

Track your mileage and number of deliveries in that zone for the next week and calculate the average mileage. Using an average cost per mile for vehicle, fuel and driver of \$1, calculate what your standard delivery cost is. Double this cost to set your standard price. If it comes out less than \$9.95, set \$9.95 as your basic charge anyway. (That's the minimum any florist should charge in 2018.)

Standard Delivery Zones

Use the same process to determine your delivery cost in each zone. Use your mapping project to identify your most common zones. The number of deliveries will likely be fewer per trip than your local zone, so the average mileage will be higher and lead to a higher price.

Special Deliveries Outside Your Zones

Deliveries in this category tend to involve one arrangement at a time. Take the

GO DEEPER

For an overview of labor, fuel and vehicle costs, read Part I in our Delivery series, from June 2018, at safnow.org/moreonline.

total mileage for the delivery (out and back), multiply by your cost per mile and then double it.

If the figure seems too high, you can choose to do it for less. Just make sure you cover your costs. Alternatively, you can refuse the order or send it to another florist as a wire order.

Timed/Rush Deliveries

These orders normally require you to schedule a driver to make a single delivery at a given time. I recommend charging double your regular delivery fee.

If you want to capture more of this kind of order, set up "Standard Rush" delivery charges in your normal delivery zones. Assume you will make a single delivery to an average distance in that zone and do the math.

Holiday Deliveries

For decades florists have tried to lure customers to take early delivery for a holiday, especially Valentine's Day. Conclusion? It's a hard sell.

Another approach: Charge more for handling these holiday deliveries. For Valentine's Day, consider charging 30 percent to 50 percent more for deliveries on Feb. 14 and 15. If someone calls on those days for a delivery, up the price even more. Your finances will thank you, and experience says your customers will not balk.

Wanted: Reliable Drivers

Zones and fees aren't the only considerations with delivery. Drivers are also a significant cost and finding them can be a time-consuming task.

There are two categories you need to cover: everyday and holiday drivers. Both present unique challenges.

Everyday Drivers

Many florists make the mistake of hiring only full-time drivers. To keep your driver costs as low as possible, it is necessary to vary the amount of driver's hours based on your delivery activity.

For the next three weeks that are nonholiday, track how many deliveries you make each day. Calculate the average number of deliveries for each day of the week.

A full-time driver can make 20 to 25 deliveries in an eight-hour day. This

translates to about three deliveries per hour. Calculate the number of hours you need for each day. Hopefully you can schedule for that number of hours and no more.

How do you find drivers who are so flexible for everyday deliveries? One proven source is to hire retired people as drivers. Most retired people do not want full-time work. They will come in and work as needed and then go home when the work is done.

In addition, they are normally experienced and capable drivers as opposed to a younger person who might want to race out of every stoplight.

For everyday drivers, make sure you get your vehicle insurance company to pull MVRs (Motor Vehicle Report) on each driver to see what ticket and accident history they have. In addition, you might want to do routine drug testing, which normally you can have done at a local medical lab.

Holiday Drivers

Getting holiday drivers is no easy task. In addition to the usual sources — off-duty police, firefighters and delivery service drivers — here's an idea that has paid off for many retail florists.

Find a local group that needs to raise funds, like the school band or a church group going on a mission project. Offer them a fixed amount per delivery. You'll get people out to help with deliveries that you would otherwise never be able to hire.

And that brings up the issue of what to pay for deliveries. Most florists prefer a fixed amount per delivery. You will be safe paying the same amount that is your average cost for delivery or even a little more.

You'll still make a nice profit on your deliveries, and your drivers should be happy. The fee will cover the cost of operating their vehicles and give them a nice hourly wage. Most volunteers from an organization will volunteer their time and give the entire fee to the project. 🌿

Paul Goodman, MBA, CPA, PFCI, is the founder of Floral Finance Business Services based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, editor of Floral Finance and author of "The Profit-Minded Florist." plgoodman@aol.com

INDUSTRY GROUPS SUPPORT BUSINESSES DEVASTATED BY HURRICANE MICHAEL

➤ After Hurricane Michael hit Florida's panhandle as a Category 4 storm, floral industry groups jumped into action to help support businesses devastated by the storm.

The AIFD Foundation, in concert with the Florida State Florists' Association (FSFA), established the Hurricane Michael Florist Fund "to help rebuild the Florida floral industry," said CEO Lynn Lary McLean, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, TMF.

Help the Florida Floral Industry Rebuild!

HURRICANE MICHAEL FLORIST FUND

Hurricane Michael caused catastrophic conditions in Florida. The AIFD Foundation, working in concert with Florida State Florists' Association, has established the Hurricane Michael Florist Fund. 100% of the donations will help rebuild the floral industry in Florida.

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GOOD HELP The AIFD Foundation, in concert with the Florida State Florists' Association, established the Hurricane Michael Florist Fund "to help rebuild the Florida floral industry," said CEO Lynn Lary McLean, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, TMF.

The new fund "will provide 100 percent of the received contributions for distribution to those in need," McLean said. "We look to the floral industry to be most supportive of this effort with the hope to assist those with the greatest need."

Last year, in concert with Texas State Florists' Association, the AIFD Foundation distributed \$56,295 to industry members through the Hurricane Harvey Florist Fund. In partnership with FSFA, the Foundation also provided \$15,625.00 in relief via the Hurricane Irma Florist Fund.

Bob Tucker, AIFD, FSM, FSFA's executive director, said his group welcomed the opportunity to work alongside the AIFD Foundation again, even as the extent of the damage from Hurricane Michael remains unknown.

"At this point, places like Mexico Beach are still just totally devastated," he said in October. "The damage there has not even been fully assessed, and it may not be for quite some time."

At press time, the storm was estimated to have killed 45 people in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

Ben Bolusky, CEO of the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association, shared a similar perspective, noting that the storm took down 70 percent of cell towers in some hard-hit counties.

"In the area where Hurricane Michael made landfall, power is out and will be for some time," he said. "So, it's challenging to get accurate reports."

Bolusky added that "while there will likely be a loss of some plant material and there was some scattered structural damage, the nurseries have already been in clean-up mode: standing up plants and trees. The biggest need is power, followed quickly by the need for fuel to run generators so the irrigation systems can do as intended."

In the meantime, FNGLA established four staging areas at member nurseries, two in South Florida and two in the central part of the state, to receive supply, material and equipment donations.

The group also may work with former FNGLA president and current state Rep. Halsey Beshears, whose constituents "were among the hardest hit," according to Bolusky.

Individual industry members also are doing their part to support those devastated by the storm.

As she did last year after hurricanes Harvey and Irma, Deborah De La Flor, AIFD, PFCI, of De La Flor Gardens in Cooper City, Florida, has been coordinating an effort alongside industry wholesalers, growers and transportation companies to deliver nonperishable food, bottled water, toiletries and other needed supplies to victims of the storm.

"Once again, we find ourselves dealing with mother nature at her absolute worst, Hurricane Michael!" she posted to her Facebook page. "We were fortunate enough to be out of harm's way, but our friends in the Florida Panhandle were not so lucky."

-M.W. 🌿

IN NORTH CAROLINA, FLORISTS DEAL WITH FLORENCE AFTERMATH

> Six years ago, Patricia Limber, AIFD, and her husband were considering where to retire. Tired of paying high flood insurance premiums on their Neptune, Florida home, the Limbers decided to move up-country to Fair Bluff, North Carolina.

Since relocating, the couple has experienced catastrophic flooding twice, in October 2016 with Hurricane Matthew and last month with Hurricane Florence. "You have to laugh at the irony," Limber said. "If you don't look for humor in situations like these, you'll sink emotionally."

The Limbers were still in the process of repairing Matthew-related damage when firefighters stopped by the first week of September, urging them to evacuate before the storm reached the Carolinas.

"We didn't hesitate," Limber said. "With Matthew, the water from a nearby river rose in what seemed like 10 minutes, and we were trapped for weeks waiting for a boat to get through the trees to rescue us. We were not going to repeat that misery."

In Raleigh, the staff of English Garden Florist fared much better.

"We were so incredibly lucky," said owner Cydney Davis-English. "We closed for a few days, so we lost some revenue and floral product, but that doesn't begin to compare to the immeasurable losses endured by others around our state."

Thankful to escape "essentially untouched," employees voted to forgo a scheduled staff whitewater rafting trip, opting to volunteer with hurricane relief organizations instead.

English Garden has worked primarily with World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit founded by celebrated chef José Andrés to provide healthy food to victims of natural disasters. WCK set up an emergency team in Raleigh, preparing food for thousands in the kitchen of Rocky Top Hospitality, a company the flower shop collaborates with frequently.

"When Rocky Top put out a call for volunteers, we jumped at the chance," Davis-English said.



SHARE THE LOVE Three days after Florence made landfall in North Carolina, Cydney Davis-English shared a floral design in the shape of the state on social media. Marketing and events coordinator Cassidy Bennett turned the photo into a T-shirt design, which the shop is selling, with 100 percent of proceeds going to hurricane relief work.

Shop employees pitched in with simple food prep, such as baking snickerdoodle cookies and cubing cheese for chef salads. They've also driven 100 miles south to bring residents in Lumberton prepared meals, among other volunteer outreach efforts.

-K.H.V. 🌸

TRADE EXPERTS EXPRESS RELIEF OVER TRILATERAL AGREEMENT

> The new deal among the United States, Canada and Mexico that updates the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is being hailed as a win for U.S. industry — with many trade experts expressing relief that Canada signed on at the eleventh hour.

"The fact that this is a trilateral deal is the biggest takeaway," said Alice Gómez, vice president and counsel at Cornerstone Government Affairs in Washington, D.C., and an adviser on legislative issues to the Society of American

Florists. "We came very close to having a bilateral agreement presented to Congress, and that would have been a nonstarter for many lawmakers."

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, comes after more than 14 months of intense negotiation among the countries. It will replace NAFTA, the pact signed into law in 1994 that governs the more than \$1.2 million worth of trade among the three countries.

One important caveat: USMCA won't go into effect until leaders from

Canada, Mexico and the United States sign it and their respective legislative bodies sign it into law. Gómez said most experts agree the new agreement would "do no harm to trade as it currently stands with Canada and Mexico," and in fact "could facilitate trade in flowers if implemented correctly."

"USMCA will improve cooperation among Canada, the United States and Mexico on sanitary and phytosanitary matters by ensuring each countries' laws and trade practices are transparent and that decision making is based on science and risk analysis," she said, adding that other provisions in the legal text could also expedite import checks and reduce paperwork, which is important for perishable product.

-M.W. 🌸



NEW DEAL The USMCA agreement comes after more than 14 months of intense negotiation among the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Katie Hendrick Vincent is the senior contributing editor of *Floral Management* (kvincent@safnow.org) and **Mary Westbrook** is editor in chief (mwestbrook@safnow.org).



CALIFORNIA DREAMS
Ocean View Flowers in Lompoc, California, uses up to 500 acres to grow stock, larkspur, hybrid delphinium and delphinium, among other flowers.

KEEP IT COOL

> Tradition and innovation make a happy marriage at Ocean View Flowers. Headquartered in Lompoc, California, Ocean View tapped into local flower-growing customs when the business started in 1992. “Lompoc is known as the flower seed capital of the world,” said Ocean View President Dan Vordale. Among the local seed companies’ products: stock, which Vordale called “a natural choice” for his company to grow commercially. Twenty-six years later, Ocean View grows stock in 12 colors and ships nationwide. “Stock is what drives our business,” Vordale said.

Stock is a popular choice for fresh bouquets and arrangements. “Consumers love it for the fragrance, color selection and low cost,” Vordale said. “It’s also a thicker flower, which means it’s easy to fill a vase with just a few stems.” Stock is the No. 1 cut flower seed worldwide. But it wasn’t always this way. Turn the clock back a few decades, and stock was a seasonal item available only in the most local market.



QUICK TAKE

The company: Ocean View Flowers, Lompoc, California

Product: Tens of millions of stems annually on 400-500 acres; top crops are stock, larkspur, hybrid delphinium and delphinium

Employees: 50 full-time, 50 seasonal

OceanViewFlowers.com

The Big Chill

The secret behind stock’s prominence in the national floral market is cold chain management. That’s the practice of keeping flowers cool, arresting growth and aging so that water loss, tissue deterioration and disease development grinds to a halt. It’s not quite suspended animation for flowers, but it’s the next best thing. Effective cold chain management leads to significantly increased vase life.

“Once we figured out cold chain management for stock, it allowed us to really expand our markets and ship across the country,” Vordale said. “Stock is tricky because it’s a soft-tissue plant. It’s a good drinker in water, but stems are covered with tiny hairs, which are magnets for bacteria.” The only way to keep bacteria from entering stems and leading to premature death? Keep them clean and cold. “Before we determined the proper cold chain practices for stock, it only lasted a few days in a vase. With cold chain management, it lasts 10-plus days,” a trait that makes stock a desirable choice for everyday arrangements.

State-of-the-art cold chain management demands a heavy investment. Ocean View has a sister produce company, which already had the infrastructure in place for handling vegetable crops. “To start cold chain from the ground up would be pretty cost prohibitive,” Vordale admitted. “We’ve been able to do it since Day 1 because the facilities were already part of the business.” To improve efficiencies,

Ocean View has a solar farm on site to run the operation, which delivers huge cost savings.

Beating the Heat

Ocean View is “one of the few growers that packs flowers in refrigeration,” Vordale said. “Years ago, we thought the secret to longer-lasting flowers was to ship directly to customers the same day they were cut in the field. We now know that if we want flowers to last, we have to get the field heat out of the flowers before we ship.”

Ocean View cuts flowers in the field in the morning and places them into flower food solutions. In the afternoon, flowers go into cold facilities, staying there overnight. At that point, everything — flowers, buckets, solutions — is chilled to 34 F. The next day, flowers are packed, palletized, pre-cooled and shipped. The entire process removes all moisture from blooms — there’s no condensation present on petals, leaves or stems to allow diseases like botrytis to form.

With 95 percent of their product heading out on trucks, Ocean View has vastly grown its market through its cold chain management practices. “We ship to the East Coast, all over the Midwest and of course, locally,” Vordale said. “Cold chain management has put our product into places we never imagined two decades ago.” 🌿

Julie Martens Forney is a contributing writer for *Floral Management*.
fmeditor@safnow.org

Florida Greens for Christmas? Yes, Please

What's in your cooler?



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Photography by Ivey Pictures

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WHAT'S NEW IN SOCIAL?

> Liz Jostes, owner and founder of Eli | Rose Social Media in Memphis, knows that small businesses can struggle to find their footing when wading into social media waters, especially in the face of wave after wave of new platforms, tools and usage trends. For that reason, Jostes is a big believer in small businesses not trying to catch every new wave that comes their way.

"As a small business owner, you are limited by time, man- or womanpower, and budget," Jostes said. "If you spread yourself too thin, you won't be effective on any social platform."

As we get ready for a new year, Jostes and Niklas Myhr, assistant professor of marketing at Chapman University and author of the upcoming book, "The Social Customer Journey," spoke to Floral Management about some recent social media trends and how small businesses can decide whether to ride a wave or let it pass.

Management Tools

New consumer-facing social media tools catch the most attention, but the evolution in third-party resources that help small businesses manage their daily social media presence can be just as critical.

These tools, such as **Sprout Social**, **Hootsuite**, **eClincher** and **Buffer**, allow businesses to schedule and plan their social media activity. Some also provide robust analytics capabilities and other sophisticated tools. For instance, Myhr said, the **Agorapulse** program helps

businesses monitor and respond to online comments across social media platforms.

Beyond Posts

Social media is increasingly about much more than simple posts of photos and text. On Facebook and Instagram, for instance, **livestreaming functions** (including **Facebook Live**) allow users to connect with followers in real time. Myhr said livestreaming events can be effective for small businesses, even when they draw small numbers, because of the high quality of engagement of those who participate and because the livestream video often can be spun into other useful content. As an alternative, **polls** are less burdensome ways to feature products while engaging with consumers.

On Instagram, "**Stories**" and "**Highlights**" functions allow florists to feature their work in visually appealing fashion, Jostes said. Stories are videos or photos — sometimes with text or emojis — that disappear after 24 hours. Jostes said Stories have the advantage of being "in the moment" and providing customers with "a peek into the day-to-day" operation of a store, introducing both products and the people behind a brand.

"Since it's more natural and a story of your life, you don't need your photos or videos to be as polished as what you'd otherwise have on your feed," Jostes said.

Stories can carry staying power if they are transformed into Highlights, a feature that lets users group previous Stories together in a section that lives below a user's bio and burnishes its overall Instagram profile, Jostes said.

Memes and Newsjacking

Memes are images or videos posted online, adapted by social media users and shared prolifically.

A successful meme is succinct and uncannily memorable, boiling down a topic to a clever, humorous image and minimal text.

Memes can position a brand as light-hearted and savvy when used right, but the risk is that viewers will see a business straining to fit in online — and falling flat in the process. Jostes preaches caution to small businesses who are tempted to play the meme game.

"First, because it can be difficult to be funny," Jostes said. "And second because you want to make sure you don't offend your customers."

Even with the risks, Myhr said memes offer a valuable opportunity to be a part of the wider cultural conversation.

"If you have a leg up on getting people's attention thanks to a meme, why not use it to your advantage, as long as you have some value behind it?" Myhr said. "You may be jumping on a bandwagon that lasts temporarily, but at least you can experiment and add your two cents to the conversation."

Myhr also believes small businesses, including florists, should consider newsjacking. That's the practice of injecting your business into a breaking news story, typically with a social media post that ties the event to your own product or service. The trick is picking stories that fit a retailer's brand while avoiding stories that are sensitive, inappropriate or can otherwise undermine a business's reputation. 📌

Tom Gresham is a contributing writer for Floral Management. fmeditor@safnow.org



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EVERGREEN IDEA

> Jeanne Ha, AIFD, has a favorite trick that maximizes her ROI on hard goods, minimizes waste, appeals to eco-conscious customers and delivers the “wow factor” to boot.

After unloading a new shipment of vases, the owner of Park Florist in Takoma Park, Maryland, takes a few minutes to repurpose the packaging. Cardboard, she’s found, makes a handy design tool. By tracing Oasis bouquet holders, the author of the recently released “Asian Allure” creates cutouts she can customize with different materials, fashioning eye-catching bases that conceal her water source. “It makes a big impact in a unique way, without requiring much product,” she said.

Here, she used the technique to design two distinctive, low-labor, high-profit arrangements for the holiday season. 🌿



DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW Ha glued faux birch bark to her ring template “to give it a wintery feel.” White phalaenopsis orchids, roses, hydrangeas and freesia complete the design’s snowy aesthetic. “This would be a good choice for anybody in December, whether they celebrate Christmas or not,” she said. Design time: 15 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$26. Retail price: \$85.

OH, BY GOSH, BY GOLLY Using red satin ribbon, Ha transformed her cardboard cutout into a glamorous base to highlight this vibrant arrangement of ‘Freedom’ roses and ‘Mikado’ spray roses. She inserted a succulent and two stems of dusty miller because their gray coloring “pops” next to the crimson flowers. For accents, she added eucalyptus, faux berries, glittery star sticks and a cardinal. Design time: 15 minutes. Wholesale costs: \$33. Retail price: \$85.

Katie Hendrick Vincent is the senior contributing editor of *Floral Management*.
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Find complete recipes at safnow.org/moreonline.





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SECURE IN STYLE

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CONVENIENT CARRY-ALL

Make wedding delivery a breeze with Flopak's carry-all wedding box. This water-resistant container comes with three inserts and two spacers, which can hold six bouquets with or without the standard 7-inch bouquet vase. The spacers can be turned upside to hold boutonnieres or corsages. > FlopakUSA.com



ALL THAT JAZZ

Up your game for Valentine's Day 2019 by giving grab-and-go bouquets a fashionable finish. Available in four romantic colors — hot pink, light pink, purple and red — these floral sleeves have a clear front, allowing flowers' beauty to shine through. > DecoWraps.com



VOGUE-WORTHY VESSEL

Consider Bluma a cute tote, designed especially for cut flowers. This smartly cut bag comes in a variety of designs and patterns. The cutout version (pictured) allows the colors of the fresh floral product to peek through. > BlumaBag.com

Sheila Santiago is the Society of American Florists' director of publishing and digital strategist. ssantiago@safnow.org

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to the individuals and organizations who helped make SAF Palm Springs 2018 a success!



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Thank you to the 2018 Floral Design Team for volunteering their time and talents

Outstanding Varieties Competition Coordinators

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POWER UP YOUR PROTEAS

> With alluring colors, exotic shapes and rugged woody stems, proteas are the new “it” bloom. The family tree originates in South Africa and these flowers are vibrant and hardy. Vase life is always a concern for flower farmers, wholesalers, florists and consumers. Proteas have a reputation for having a long vase life, but even the most resilient cut flowers will not last if they do not receive proper care.

Farmers see proteas when they are at their best — in the field on the bush! Once harvested, proteas slowly start deteriorating. It's slowing down that waning process that makes all the difference.

Look for Quality Clues

Purchasing the freshest proteas possible is a great start. How do you know whether the flowers are fresh, or whether they have been sitting in a cooler room for days (or even weeks)? With many types of blooms, it can be difficult to spot the difference; often only the farmer can tell. However, with proteas there are some key clues.

Protea blooms should be clean and evenly colored, with no bruised or grayish bracts. Leaves should be green and healthy looking. Certain protea species, such as *eximia*, occasionally experience leaf blackening, which can happen even under the best circumstances. If you discover leaf blackening, but the protea otherwise appears fresh and healthy, a good trick is to remove the leaves, making the flowers even more prominent.

Proteas open over an extended period of time. As soon as the flower's bracts begin to separate at the tip of the bloom, they should be harvested. With genera such as *leucospermum*, *isopogon* or *waratah*, once the stamens emerge from the center of the flower and unfold out of base, farmers will pick them and the flowers will continue to open. As a rule of thumb, buy proteas that have not fully opened and enjoy watching them as they do.

Best Practices Put into Action

Fresh water is vital to the vase life of proteas. Processing stems in flower food will stop bacteria from growing. Proteas



MIND YOUR PROTEA Caring for proteas, including Protea King Madiba, is relatively straightforward with some best practice standards in place.

thrive in high-sugar solutions such as Chrysal Professional #3 Vase Solutions. Because of the complexity of their flower head, proteas have a very high respiratory requirement to complete their development. Re-cutting protea stems is an important part of their care because the stem tip may become blocked, preventing it from transporting water up to bloom. Cutting $\frac{1}{4}$ inch off the base of stems can increase the vase life of proteas by up to 45 percent.

Rough handling of the foliage and stem can release tannins into the water, which, when absorbed by the stems, can cause leaf discoloration. Removing leaves below the water line will also ensure the water stays fresh and that bacteria does not develop around the stems, choking off the water supply.

“Clean and fresh” takes on new meaning with proteas. Your buckets, containers, vases, knives, clippers, and other equipment must be sanitized. Bacteria can live in a dry bucket or vase for months. Proteas are thirsty flowers and

can take up 75 to 80 percent of the water in the first hour. Cold or warm water can help rehydrate stems faster than water at room temperature. Replenish water regularly. If the container is not transparent, check it every few days.

The best holding temperature range for proteas is 38 to 42 F. Proteas like cool temperatures and a well-lit cooler (they prefer to rest with the light on). Before displaying proteas, leave the stems in a cool place for at least two hours, or ideally overnight. This ensures that the flowers are fully hydrated before returning to a warmer environment. Keep proteas out of direct sunlight whenever possible. 🌿

Diana Roy is the business manager of Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers in Fallbrook, California. In September, the grower won Floral Management's Marketer of the Year award for its efforts to popularize proteas. Read about their campaign at safnow.org/moreonline. diana@resendizbrothers.com

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