

SNAPSHOT

Green Thumbs Get Dirty at Potting Station



CUSTOMIZED CONTAINERS

Customers at Strawberry Fields Flowers and Finds in Richmond, Virginia, can choose from a variety of plants, containers and accents at the shop's potting station.

> One of the most popular features at Strawberry Fields Flowers and Finds in Richmond, Virginia, is a potting bench where customers can pot their new plant purchases. Owner Deanna King had the idea for the planting station three years ago when she noticed an indoor plant craze among homeowners and gift givers — even before the pandemic hit.

"We had a potting station out back for our designers, but one day we thought, why not bring the process out front, make it look pretty, and let customers get their hands a little dirty," says King. "It's a fun way for a plant lover to interact with a selection and personalize it."

Easy-to-follow instructions guide anyone willing to try out the experiential display. Choices include house plants, succulents, and cacti; pebble or moss accents; and a variety of pots, vessels, and even glass terrariums. All of the accents are arranged in pretty jars and labeled. King also ensures that the soil on hand is high quality.

SOCIAL SAVVY

Reach New Customers on Social Media Marketplaces

> A survey by Square, a point-of-sale company that offers other business solutions, found that 75 percent of retailers are using social media to sell. Of those, 43 percent of retailers say that half or more of their revenue comes from social selling (retailers earn the most revenue from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok — in that order, according to Square). Here are some things to remember to leverage social media sales:

- **Keep it simple.** Until you get comfortable selling on social media, limit your inventory to just a few items that you regularly sell.
- **Use great photos.** Some social marketplaces now have a feature that enables users to take a picture of an item and see similar items for sale.
- **Details, details, details.** Be sure to provide ample information about the product, shipping/delivery, cancellations, etc.
- **Target the user.** Looking to sell corsages and boutonnieres for homecoming this fall? Add those products to the social marketplaces teens use. Want to sell back-to-school arrangements for teachers? Try the Facebook marketplace, which attracts an older user.

If Instagram is your selling platform of choice, try these five tips from Instagram Business:

- **Tell customers they can shop directly on your business account.** Create stories telling your followers they can now shop without leaving Instagram.
- **Experiment with different post formats.** You can tag your photos, videos, or multiple images or videos in a carousel post. You can also tag your stories with product stickers.
- **Add extra eye candy.** Feature more than one product in one post.
- **Try an exclusive sale or promotion.** Create a sense of urgency by promoting a limited-time, Instagram-only promotion.
- **Regularly feature your products to keep them top of mind.** Since shoppers may take time to make a purchase, decide which products are the most popular and highlight them more frequently. 🌿



The bench itself — a reclaimed cast iron sink purchased by King on a whim during a charitable event — contributes to the store’s casual, welcoming, European feel. “Our goal was to make the station appealing to the eye as well as practical in use,” she says. “Our displays include a lot of repurposed items; everything fits the same aesthetic.”

Depending on the greenness of their thumb, customers can choose simple-to-care-for options such as snake plants, “ZZ” plants (zamioculcas zamiifolia), or pothos plants — or they can try their hand at something more challenging like a Rex begonia, fiddle-leaf fig tree, or a string of pearl succulent. No matter the difficulty level, indoor plants are popular purchases because they are accessible, long-lasting and affordable, notes King. Because of these qualities, “They are extremely versatile gifts and are a particularly smart choice for anyone you don’t know particularly well,” she adds.

With the indoor plant craze still in full swing, Strawberry Fields’ potting bench is as in demand now as it was in 2019 when it launched — perhaps even more so. “We are in a constant buying frenzy to keep up with the demand,” admits King, “which is a good problem to have.” 🌿



BACKGROUND ART: SHUTTERSTOCK/PROSTOCKSTUDIO

TEAM BUILDER

Get to Know the Country's Newest Workforce — Gen Z

> As the decades pass, new generations, with their own cultural and career norms, age into the workforce. Right now, any one company might have Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials, and Gen Zers working together.

The Gen Z segment, born between 1997 and 2012, is still paving its way into the country's generational diorama. At age 25 or younger, these recent grads are the newest on the scene and their colleagues and bosses are still getting to know them.

If you're wanting to tap into the potential of this worker category — wondering how you can both hire and inspire them — here are some key traits to consider according to LinkedIn's Talent blog:

They are tech savvy. This is the first generation that's been exposed to the internet for their entire life. Gen Z uses social media heavily, particularly Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. Make sure your company's social media presence is up to snuff (Gen Z does not favor Facebook). And since Gen Zers are trained to read reviews before buying anything, keep an eye on any online reviews and feedback about what it's like to work at your company. Consider using their skills to modernize your job postings and potentially reach new audiences.

They are risk averse. Most were children or teenagers during the recession of 2008 and experienced its economic decline. As a result, they are looking for employers who offer stability, security, and opportunities for growth. The days of luring new hires with pool tables and espresso machines are waning. These younger hires are on the lookout for a livable pay and benefits such as a 401k and medical insurance.

They are independent. Gen Z knows there are alternatives to the traditional nine-to-five workday. Consider ways of allowing them to work hard at their job while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Also, communicate well and often about their work responsibilities and how they can increase ownership of them.

They are open-minded and comfortable with differing opinions. Gen Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation to date. This age group is known for being invested in

diversity and inclusivity. Equal pay and promotion opportunities and branding that is diverse, inclusive, and honest are important and valued.

They want to feel emotionally supported. The American Psychological Association has identified Gen Z as the most stressed generation, having faced severe global challenges like gun violence, climate change, political instability, racial reckoning, and a pandemic. They are drawn to employers who offer regular check-ins and encourage self-care.

Don't assume this generation is inexperienced or naïve. Take the time to fully explore their cultural complexities and unique outlook. Their aptitude for realness, for embracing others' perspectives, and for working hard in return for advancement and/or flexibility all have great potential. 🌱

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