

## Easy Ways To Influence Buying

“There are little things that you can and should do every day - little things that can have a powerful impact on the way your customers buy from you.”

When you think about trying to deliver a message to your customers you probably think about sending postcards or e-mail blasts. These things are great but far too easy to put off. Most florists do them far less often than they intend to.

There are however little things that you can and should do every day - little things that can have a powerful impact on the way your customers buy from you.

As an example we'll use Mothers Day and the idea of advance orders.

Most florists would like their customers to place their orders well in advance of the actual date. Buying, staffing and countless other things are easier if you have orders booked well in advance.

At first glance advance ordering is much less interesting to the customer. Why would they want to order for an event they aren't even thinking about yet?

You have to come up with a reason and create a message. Then you have to communicate it to them.

### Creating Your Message

You want your customers to order early for Mother's Day. How are you going to convince them to do it?

- Give them a reason. Don't just say "order now for Mother's Day". Tell them why. Tell them Moms love flowers and never buy them for themselves. Tell them how easy it is to order from you - that their shopping can be finished with a two minute phone call!
- Add value! One way to do this is mentioned above - convenience - but there are others. If you offer a points/loyalty/incentive program<sup>1</sup> offer double or triple points. This also builds loyalty and repeat business.
- Use a fund-raising campaign<sup>2</sup> - perhaps a small percentage of each sale will be donated to breast cancer research.
- Consider adding something (balloon, upgraded card, some chocolate or candy) free of charge.
- Whenever possible avoid discounting prices - your costs are going to be higher at Mother's Day so don't sacrifice margin or devalue your product.

### Delivering Your Message - The Easy Way

Once you have your message you have a couple of easy ways to get it out before you even start thinking about postcards and e-mail campaigns.

“Every time you speak with a customer you have an opportunity to promote desired buying habits. All you have to do is ask.”

### Mention Mother's Day In Every Conversation

When a husband calls to order flowers for his wife's birthday... end the call by encouraging him to order early for Mother's Day! Your employees should always be delivering a specific marketing message in every conversation - do not miss this opportunity.

Every time you speak with a customer you have an opportunity to promote desired buying habits. All you have to do is ask.

You need to deliver a simple, concise marketing message in every conversation. The hard part is doing it consistently.

The best way to do this is to train your staff to end each customer interaction with a message that you will adjust according to your current priority.

In this example we're trying to promote advance ordering for Mother's Day. Remember that this needs to be something your employees will feel comfortable with so we could start like this...

*Don't forget - Mother's Day is May 7th!*

We're really doing the customer a favor here. We're reminding them about something important they probably haven't even considered yet but we are also presenting them with a problem - the need to find a gift. We then get into reasons why they should order in advance...

*If you'd like a Mother's Day delivery please book it before the end of the April so we can guarantee availability.*

We're trying to establish scarcity and push the customer to action. You can also offer an incentive. If you run a points program you can say something like this:

*We're also awarding triple points on all orders placed before then.*

Now - not everyone is comfortable with this next step but it is only good selling practice to ask for the sale. We could add something to our script like this:

*Would you like to place an order right now? It would only take a minute and you would get those extra points!*

This nice thing about this is that you are also adding value by offering convenience. You have presented a problem (guying a gift for Mothers Day) and offer a solution - spend just a few minutes placing an order and the problem goes away!

That's it. This is easy, cheap, and very effective.

If you aren't sure it works pay attention as you do your shopping. You will see that the salespeople in the biggest and best retailers are almost always working from a script that ensures they are always delivering a consistent message. This doesn't mean that you can't have informal conversations with your customers - as a small business you can and should. You should also be sure to always deliver a consistent message.

“Every time you give a customer a receipt, invoice or statement you have a chance to communicate your message. Don't waste this opportunity.”

### Receipts, invoices, statements

Every time you give a customer a receipt, invoice or statement you have a chance to communicate your message. Don't waste this opportunity.

What makes for a good message? In this example we're trying to promote advance ordering for Mother's Day so we're going to start with something like this...

*Order soon for Mother's Day!*

...which explains the behavior we are trying to promote. We then get into potential reasons why they should order in advance...

*Quantities are limited and deliveries must be booked by April 30.*

...this isn't entirely true of course but we're trying to establish scarcity. It might seem cheesy but it works.

So far we have our stick. If you run a points program you can also offer a carrot like this:

*Receive triple points on all orders placed in April.*

Or - if you run fund-raising programs you could try something like this:

*Order before then and we will donate 5% of your sale to Breast Cancer Awareness.*

And of course you should always end with a “thank you”.

### It Really Is Easy

That's it. You can then make similar changes to your invoice and statements messages as well.

This is easy to do and very effective. If you aren't sure about that take a look at some of the receipts you have collected recently. The ones from the retailers that aren't very good at marketing probably have no message or one that is very vague - something like “Have a Nice” day or “Thank You”.

Then look at the ones from the biggest and most successful retailers. You will almost always see a very clear message that is promoting a specific behavior. These companies know what they are doing - follow their example.

