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SUPPLEMENT TO FLORIST MAGAZINE



BUSINESS BEAT

INDUSTRY NEWS EXCLUSIVELY FOR FLOWER SHOP OWNERS/MANAGERS

by Jean Adamczak

A glance at the competition

Many U.S. retail florists have felt the effects of competition from supermarket floral centers. Results of a recent survey may help florists better understand the role supermarkets play in floral consumers' lives.

The survey, Fresh Trends, is conducted annually by Market Facts Inc., Chicago, and Vance Research Services, Lincolnshire, Ill. There were 1,390 respondents to the 1991 survey that was mailed to a random sampling of 2,000 U.S. households. Florists may find the following survey results useful:

- Women are more likely than men to purchase flowers from a supermarket. Married people are also more likely to buy flowers from a supermarket floral center.

- Single-stem cut flowers, pre-made bouquets and green and blooming plants are most widely available in supermarket floral departments.

- Respondents indicated they were "extremely/very likely" to make a floral purchase while shopping in a supermarket, while 31 percent said they were "extremely/very likely" to plan a purchase.

- While respondents heavily favored supermarket floral products in terms of price, they gave higher ratings to non-supermarket florists' products in terms of appearance, overall condition of product and vase life.

- U.S. shoppers still do not appear to be heavy consumers of supermarket floral products. Only 9 percent of the survey respondents reported buying fresh-cut flowers and/or pre-made bouquets from supermarkets at least once every two to three weeks.

- Approximately 58 percent of respondents prefer to purchase custom-made fresh arrangements, and 37 percent prefer buying ready-made fresh arrangements, from non-supermarket retail outlets.

Source: "International Floriculture Quarterly Report," September 1991, published by Pathfast Publishing, 31 Second Ave., Frinton on Sea, Essex, CO13 9ER United Kingdom

Men rely heavily on florists' advice

"May I help you?" means more to some customers than others. Researchers found that men making flower purchases may rely more on florists' advice than women do. When asked who has a better idea of what kind of floral arrangements they want, florists usually give women the nod. In comparison, florists feel few men confidently order flowers.

Since men may want or need more guidance in picking the best bouquets, florists should think of ways to weave satisfying this need

into their customer service efforts. The American Floral Marketing Council (AFMC) offers the following suggestions to help florists guide male customers through the world of flower buying:

- Encourage male customers to describe the flower-feelings they have in mind, such as "romantic," "outdoorsy," or "traditional." Make suggestions based on those descriptions.

- Help men visualize what arrangements will look like by referring to wire service selec-

tion guide photos or pointing out similar arrangements on display in your shop.

- Offer to keep a calendar of customers' must-remember-with-a-gift dates, and follow-up with reminders and recommendations for floral gifts.

- Use new color findings to offer advice on colors most preferred by gender. (See related item in this Business Beat issue.)

Source: AFMC, 1601 Duke St., Alexandria, Va. 22314