



Valuing Website Customers

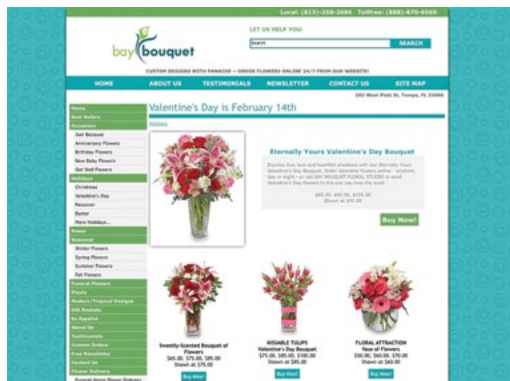
Are you missing an opportunity because you view your website orders as someone else's and not an extension of your shop?

You may feel website customers are remote and distant, but are they really? They may be the same customer who walks through your door once a month. Or, they may be that new customer you are looking for. And while they may appear voiceless and faceless, online consumers are valuable and satisfying them can be very beneficial for your business.

Think of your website as a valuable employee, and just like one of your employees, your website should:

1. Greet your customers.
2. Descriptively introduce your products.
3. Give customers all the information they need to place an order.

In essence, your website should reflect the customer service practices employed in your shop. With every website order ask, "If that same customer walked through your door or called you, how would you take care of them?"



Here's a common scenario: Customer wants to send flowers to someone outside of your delivery area.

Walk-in or phone customer action: You take the order and coordinate with another shop to deliver it.

What if it's a website customer?



Action – Take the order. (Flower Shop Network makes it very easy for you to coordinate that order with another florist). What do you gain? A loyal customer. You might even receive a great testimonial.

"Mary Beth and her staff are amazing!! Each time I make special requests.. they always come through and surprise me each time!! I highly recommend this florist!!" Mandy in MD (Actual testimonial of a Flowers By Flowers Parkville, MD customer)



Action – Refuse the order. What do you lose? A potential new customer or alienation of a loyal customer. *A florist, last Mother's Day, refused a website order outside of their delivery area. It turned out the order was placed by a good customer, a bank president who usually places his order in person. Unexpectedly caught out-of-town, he turned to the shop's website expecting the same quality customer service he receives in person. When the florist turned down the order the customer was highly upset.*

Another scenario: Customer wants a product or items you don't have available at the time of delivery.

Walk-in or phone customer: Apologize that their first choice isn't available and suggest other options.

Again, what if it's a website customer?



Action – Contact the customer to discuss a substitution. What do you gain? A better relationship with your customer and a potentially great testimonial.

"It was very easy to order online and the flowers were beautiful. I received a phone call telling me about a service delay, which was because I ordered late in the day. I expected the flowers to go the next day, but it was nice to get the call. Thanks!" Teresa in PA (Actual testimonial from customer ordering from Tamara's Flower Garden in Del Ray Beach, FL)



Action – Reject the order. What have you lost? Two opportunities:

1. A chance to win the confidence of the sender making them a loyal customer.
2. A chance to wow the recipient and make a new loyal customer.

So take advantage of every opportunity by giving every order special attention.

BIGGER, BETTER Valentine Sales!



Yes, everyone wants roses at Valentine's Day, but there is great opportunity to both sell at higher price points and to make a stronger impression on customers...

1. Don't Sell by Price. Sell by Description.

Roses can be found everywhere at Valentine's Day from the super market to the street corner, so educate consumers about what you, a real local florist, can offer. When you get the typical call, "How much are your roses?" don't just "offer" a price, because that makes it easy for them to say "OK, I'll call you back." Instead, offer a description of how your roses will look (What kind of filler? What type of foliage? Talk about the vase. Mention the ribbons and THEN tell them your price.

2. Offer Choices.

Don't just sell the standard dozen with babies' breath. Instead, offer at least two versions. For example, offer your Classic Dozen with the usual trimmings for \$79.99 and the Premium Dozen, which might include alstroemeria and 2 or 3 types of greenery for \$99.99. I promise that at least 1 out of 3 customers will go for the upgrade, as long as you give them the option!

3. Sell Those Finishing Touches.

Valentine's Day is the perfect holiday to offer balloons, chocolates, etc. to every customer. Simply follow the language covered in my last article, "As a finishing touch, I can attach an "I Love You" balloon to the roses. They're just \$5."

4. Be Consistent.

No matter how busy it gets, remember to offer EVERY customer the rose options and the chance to add a finishing touch to his or her Valentine gift.

We are pleased to have these helpful tips from guest writer, Tim Huckabee AIFSE of FloralStrategies.com.

To receive a FREE template script which covers all these points (you just need to add your prices), email tim@floralstrategies.com and put FSN in the subject line.



A Must Have For Valentine's Day



Get your FSN Floral Selection Guide for the Special Price of **\$99!** While Supplies Last!

Call your FSN Representative Today: 800.858.9925

Valentine's Day Delivery Tip

"Make sure your sales staff gets 2 addresses for Monday delivery, just in case it's a snow day & their place of employment is closed; especially schools & government locations. It makes the delivery route sooooo much easier! (We always get snow!)"

Submitted by Marybeth Devries Flowers from Flowers by Flowers Inc.



2011 Upcoming Floral Conventions

- Jan 21-23 - Florida State Florists' Association Mid-Season Convention*
- Jan 28-30 - Kentucky Florists' Association Mid-Season Convention
- Mar 4-6 - Georgia State Florists Association Convention
- Mar 4-6 - Great Lakes Floral Expo*
- Mar 10-13 - Illinois State Florist Association Convention
- Mar 12-13 - The Northeast Floral Expo*
- Mar 18-20 - South Dakota Florists Association Convention



For more convention information go to: www.flowershopnetwork.com/blog/floristconventions-flower-shows

**FSN Representatives Attending*

5 SEO Tasks For Success

For any search engine to consider you relevant, they need information about your company. The following tasks will help you get your information to the search engines.



Claim Your Local Information in The Following Places:

Google Places Page (Google Local), Yahoo Local, Bing Local, Yelp, Insiderpages, Angie's List, Citysearch, and YellowPages. *Be sure to include your eCommerce Url as part of your information. Make sure your information is consistent everywhere.*

Encourage Online Reviews.

Search engines value reviews. Encourage reviews in all of the places where you have claimed your local information.

Create Meta Information for Every Page of your Website.

Select keywords that are relevant to the page. On Christmas page, Christmas flowers would be a prime word to concentrate on.

Exchange Links with Other Local Businesses.

Links from other reputable websites act like a vote of authority to the search engines.

Participate in Social Media.

Being active in an online social community like Facebook is an indicator to Google that you are more relevant.

Do you have a website through FSN? As a **FREE** service with your website, FSN will help you claim your Google Places and Yahoo local, and set-up a Facebook Business page for your shop. Call your FSN representative for more information or go to: www.flowershopnetwork.com/blog/seo-tasks.

Respect Your Website



Website URL's are just as important as phone numbers. Customers reach you through both communication vehicles.

Promote your website to potential customers by splashing the URL everywhere you would publish your phone number.

Use this checklist to ensure your URL is displayed everywhere your phone number is.

- _____ Business Cards
- _____ Enclosure Cards
- _____ Coupons
- _____ Booth Displays
- (Bridal Shows, Trade Fairs, etc.)
- _____ Delivery Vehicles
- _____ Print Advertising
- _____ Direct Mailers
- _____ Surveys
- _____ Sponsored Events or Teams
- _____ All Promotional Messages
- (TV, Radio, Outdoor Signage, etc.)
- _____ Blogs
- _____ Media Interviews
- _____ Social Media
- _____ Guest Speaking Engagements
- _____ Forums
- _____ Store Windows and Doors
- _____ Shop Apparel
- _____ Press Releases
- _____ Customer Statements/Bills
- _____ Stationery and Envelopes

Valentine's Day Order Tip

Get a cell phone number for both the sender and recipient.

Out with the old in with the HUES! Color Trends for 2011

2011 is citing exotic elements of luxurious artistry in foreign lands like Africa, India, Peru and Turkey as inspiration for this year's color trends. These color palettes are BRIGHT and BOLD! As shown right, Tropical, Fun and Whimsical set the overall tone for a year of color indulgence. The intense and radiant colors, like apple-green or clementine orange are best showcased when in contrast with the neutral colors of these selections, like slate grey or chocolate mocha.



If your design calls for something a little more masculine, then these Vintage, Earthy and Sunwashed colors are sure to provide a solution.

Grey is the "It" color, but mocha is sure to return to one of the top favorites. Orange and triad hues of green capture an ECONOMIC/Urban color scheme.

How ever you choose to combine these palettes, they are sure to add visual interest and creative value to all your floral arrangements and designs.

To see more, go to: flowershopnetwork.com/blog/color-trends-2011

Make a Negative Review Work For You

Every business, no matter how professional and competent, will be on the bad end of a comment sooner or later. Whether the comment is spoken or posted online, businesses cannot keep this from occurring.

Studies show that when a negative review or complaint is handled professionally and positively, consumers actually gain trust in the company. Below are a few ways to deal with a negative review on the internet:

1. Go to the Internet site hosting the bad review. Many like Google have review response policies.
2. Wait 2 hours before responding. Unlike phone or in-store complaints, reviews on the Internet shouldn't be answered quickly. Give yourself time to cool off and compose a professional, rational and unemotional response.
3. Post your response. Be courteous and professional. Remember, the response is as much for the author of the review, as it is for readers.
4. Encourage customers, family and friends to write good reviews on your behalf. One bad review can be overcome with several positive ones.



For more info on writing a positive review, go to: flowershopnetwork.com/blog/negative-reviews

SCAM ALERT: When Free Isn't Free

Order-gathers are promising "free" websites and florists are paying dearly for them. Several florists have been conned into switching their strongly performing e-commerce url in exchange for a free website. What does the OG expect in return-20% or more for every order. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure out this isn't a good deal. You can pay a nominal fee for a website and keep 100% of every order or you can get a "free" one that takes 20% of your money.

