

STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

There has been a lot of discussion in recent years on how growers and garden centers can capture the attention (and the wallets) of the millennial consumer. This demographic holds the keys to future success of our industry.

While Baby Boomers continue to be incredibly important to our industry, the next generation of consumers (aka Gen Y) present different challenges than Boomers did when it comes to their perception of plants and purchasing them.

According to a new study released by the Floral Marketing Research Fund (FMRF) of the American Floral Endowment (AFE), here are just some of the hurdles our industry faces when trying to reach millennials (ages 25 to 35).

Oftentimes, millennials think flowers are traditional and not trendy. Gen Y needs reminders because they do not always think about buying plants and flowers. Millennials are more experience oriented than their parents. They like, and often expect, customization and personalization of their purchases. Millennials prefer to use social media to communicate.

Their mobile phone is their go-to resource for researching product purchases. Gen Y prefers loyalty programs that are easy to use and apply to their lifestyles. Millennials are not as tuned in as previous generations to the benefits that our products offer them — these benefits need to be communicated on a regular basis.

These are just *some* of the things the horticulture industry must keep in mind if we want to continue to grow in the future.


DO YOU HAVE A STRATEGY?

Here are a few strategies the FMRF suggests growers and retailers consider to tap into this market segment that currently is not buying as much of our products as previous generations:

- Encourage customization and personalization by providing millennials the opportunity to arrange their own bouquets or containers and customize their options, and reposition plants and floral products as trendy and modern.
- Provide value for their dollar by offering loyalty programs with awards or points that do not expire or creating easy-to-use subscription services. Overcome the price barrier by offering free gifts, coupons and discounts.
- Use electronic word-of-mouth to generate interest by maintaining a strong social

media presence. Develop apps on mobile phones that engage millennials using coupons, easy payment options and other engaging features. Create advertisements that contain funny, unique and interesting information about flowers.

The FMRF report has many other insights to consider. You can access the free report, "Marketing Tactics to Increase Millennial Floral Purchases," by going to <https://floralmarketingresearchfund.org>.

What are you doing to reach the millennial consumer? What are you doing to retain your Baby Boomer base of customers? Do you have a strategy for the future? 



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