

garden centers of america Garden retail trends report

August 10, 2013

Welcome to GCA's New Monthly Newsletter

Garden Centers of America (GCA) has a renewed vigor and is continuing to expand the services available to you. As part of this expansion, we have revamped the whole concept behind our monthly newsletter. It is the goal of GCA to provide you with the information and resources to help you grow your business. Garden Retail Trends Report is designed to keep you on top of what's hot in retailing, both within the industry and out.

These Promotions Pack a Punch for Garden Centers

Promotions require an investment of time and money - make sure you're spending both wisely. The National Retail Federation's Retail Insight Center survey recently measured how different types of pro-



motions influence consumers' brand or product preferences. Keep these promotions in mind for your garden center's marketing plan - the majority of adults surveyed say they have the biggest impact:

- Store loyalty cards (77%)
- In-store flyers (76%)
- Online coupons (75%)
- Special displays (73%)
- In-store events/contests (60%)

New @ IGCs! Planted Pallets

Pallet planting is a new trend that's taking off at garden centers across the country. The use of wooden pallets as planters jumps on the reuse/recycle movement, and works great for small outdoor spaces or balconies in urban environments.



The pallets can be put to use in a variety of ways - laid flat on the ground, standing upright, hung vertically on a wall or placed at an angle against a wall. IGCs are displaying examples of pallets planted up with herbs, vegetables and flowers to inspire customers. Some are even holding workshops that take customers through the process of planting pallets. For customers who don't want to do it themselves, stores like Bryant's Garden Center in Cleveland, TN, are offering pre-planted pallets for sale.

Don't Count Out Newspapers In Your Advertising Plan

Word of mouth might be the most sought-after form of advertising, but consumers don't only seek advice from within their social circles



before purchasing a product. Newspaper Association of America's "How America Shops and Spends" surveys reveal that 93 percent of adults used at least one of 19 advertising sources to plan their shopping or make purchasing decisions in the last seven days.

At the top of the list of media adults consulted before a purchase: print newspapers, with 62 percent. Combined with newspaper websites, that amount jumps to 66 percent. The credibility and predictability of information found in newspapers draws consumers. Women (65%) seek out newspaper advertisements more than men (58%).

Tied for second in the survey, with 57 percent each, are store product displays and online sources, which includes eight different channels such as e-mail, websites, social networks, search engines and mobile.

Euro-Chic Trends Your Customers Will Want To Copy

Europeans have a distinctive gardening style that is often sought after and adopted here in the U.S. Help your customers replicate a European outdoor living space in their backyards with this list of outdoor trends from spoga+gafa, the garden trade show that takes place in Cologne, Germany each year.



Color clash - Color clashes dominated the fashion world last year - now they're showing up in outdoor furnishings. Every color of the rainbow, in vibrant tones, is making a statement. Pastel accessories are growing in popularity, too; their pale hues complement the loud, colorful furniture.



Teak - Teak is returning to outdoor spaces as mesh items begin to pull back in popularity. The new teak has a modern twist, as manufacturers combine it with stainless steel. The combination of the warm wood with the cool steel creates an attractive contrast and lends an elegant ambience to customers' gardens or balconies.



Cool, casual swings - After working indoors all day, your customers want to relax and enjoy nature in their outdoor spaces. Swinging seats and lounges equipped with luxurious upholstery and cushions provide the perfect way to take it easy outside.



Outdoor fabrics - New developments in weatherproof fabrics are making outdoor rooms cozier than ever. Many outdoor sofas now look and feel just as comfortable as their indoor counterparts.



Deluxe barbecues - On deck are grills to fit every taste, whether gas or charcoal, modernly stylish or old-school. The selection of available accessories spans from pizza stones and chicken roasting baskets to vegetable pans and a new comer - a la plancha - an enamelled cast-iron grill plate in the Spanish tradition.

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- As it turns out, price may not be top of mind with your shoppers. A recent survey from the Garden Writers Association Foundation shows that 51% of respondents who have a garden look for the best quality when selecting a store to shop for plants, followed by 23% of respondents who look for a trained sales staff and 22% who look for the best price.
- In a world saturated by social media, face-to-face communication still counts. The National Retail Federation reports that 80% of consumers it surveyed seek out face time, not screen time, to get advice from another person before they purchase.
- June's new home sales were at their highest since May 2008, the Commerce Department reports. Compared with June last year, sales were up 38.1%. That's good news for garden centers ready to help these homeowners do it themselves or design the perfect landscape.

Your Affluent Customers Want Value & Sophistication



Restoration Hardware increased its sales by 38 percent in the first quarter, and now you can, too, with these key strategies. According to Unity Marketing, the upscale retailer saw positive results because it understands who its best customers are - the affluent with discretionary money to invest in improvements to their home environment.

Affluent consumers buy a wide range of products in a variety of stores, not just ones that target the luxury customer. They frequent a range of stores, from outdoor furnishing stores to discounters. And they look for bargains like everyone else.

Unity Marketing says the way to reach affluent customers is with an aspirational marketing approach that combines sophisticated design with good value, marketed through a seamless multi-channel strategy that includes retail, Internet, direct marketing and social media.

Salty & Sweet Speciality Foods Hit the Spot

Whether you're just getting into selling speciality foods or a seasoned seller, take a look at crunchy, salty and sweet combinations of flavors when selecting the goodies you sell. *Specialty Food Magazine* reveals that more and more products incorporating popular sweets into crunchy, salty snacks are flying off shelves.

The contrast of flavors make for a cravable treat that have customers ignoring the snacks' higher pricetags. That's because products that have two or more of the cravability drivers tend to be price-resistant, the magazine reports. These sweet and salty foods are deliciously popular right now:

Pretzels. Varieties include pretzels hand-dipped in dark chocolate, pretzels mixed with milk chocolate and toffee, pretzel crisps with white chocolate and peppermint, and pretzel rods hand-wrapped in caramel and dipped in chocolate.



Potato and tortilla chips. Chocolate-covered potato chips, a potato chip chocolate bar, and caramels with crunchy potato chips and a coating of chocolate on top cover all the cravings. Some tortilla chip/chocolate combinations add a spicy element, such as chile de arbol and chipotle chili powders.



Popcorn. Popcorn toffee, white chocolate popcorn, and kettle-corn drizzled with white and dark chocolate kick this pioneer snack up a few notches. Spicy can also be added in the mix with products that feature chipotle flavors.



Nuts. Chocolate-covered peanuts and cashews may not be new, but they are still popular. Now, organic versions featuring sea salt are available, along with ethnic combinations of cashews, coconut and curry. Spinoffs on trail mixes include marshmallows, nuts, buttered popcorn and pretzels in milk or dark chocolate.



Get your own taste for what's hot in speciality foods at the IGC Show's exclusive dedicated section in aisle 1700 at Chicago's Navy Pier. Register today at IGCshow.com. The trade show, concert and spotlight keynotes are free to all!

Four Ways to Win New Customers on the Internet

Even with a tight marketing budget, you can maximize your returns on investment and bring in new business to your garden center, according to Social Media 22. The web design, PR and Internet marketing firm offers these affordable ways to draw new customers.



1. Build your customer list with a value offering. Capture the names and e-mail addresses of people who visit your website by offering something of value for free - your value offering. It could be an ebook on gardening, a plant reference guide or a free product. Be sure to display your value offering at the top half of your website's homepage.

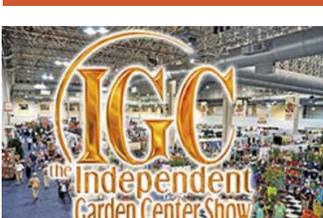
2. Contribute guest blogs. Find garden blogs with high traffic, then contact their owners and ask if they would be interested in posting a guest blog submitted by your garden center. Chances are, the bloggers will say yes because you can provide valuable content and variety for their blogs without them having to write it themselves. Make your blog interesting and informative, but avoid making a sales pitch and stay away from lengthy rambles. The most successful blogs are concise. Include a short bio to the end of your blog, making sure to link to your website and include a call to action: for example, "Like us on Facebook and receive a free ebook."

3. Create a button or small banner that can be used at other websites and blogs. It will help boost your search engine results and increase traffic to your website. Oftentimes, other businesses will gladly add your button in exchange for adding their information to your website.

4. Build a Facebook "Fan Reveal Tab." This Facebook tab features a value offering (coupon, ebook, guide, giveaway, etc.) that can only be claimed if the person "likes" your Facebook page. Once the potential customer likes your page, fan-only content appears with the download link or entry form to claim the value offering.

For more ways to generate new customers via the Internet, register now for the IGC Know2Grow Retail Conference, featuring Kyle Lacy's dedicated track, "Digital Marketing for IGC Retailers." Sign up today at IGCshow.com.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GCA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



IGC 2013 Is Just Days Away! Skip the Lines & Register Today!

GCA member benefits include:

- Two free drink tickets per company for use at Wednesday night's reception and 38 Special concert.
- Special reserved seating at the 38 Special concert Wednesday night. Be sure to come early - seating is limited!

IGC Show Registration: [Click here.](#)