



Garden Retail Trends Report

December 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.



Four Ways to Make Your Small Business Mighty, from NRF

The National Retail Federation recently posted these "Four Ways to Make Small Business Mighty" on its Retail's BIG Blog. Use them to your garden center's advantage!

- 1. Instill a can-do, customer-first attitude in your employees** - Your garden center doesn't need a big budget to treat your customers and employees right. "Concentrate on small details that big box retailers cannot," says B.J. Bueno, Founder of The Cult Branding Company. "People like to shop where they feel the owner truly cares about their wants and needs. If you want your associates to take care of your customers, start by taking care of your associates."
- 2. Encourage your customers to share** - Customers are increasingly using their mobile devices in-store to find information and share with friends. "Create an in-store offer and promote it with signage that asks your customers to share your offer on their favorite social channel," says John Perls, Founder of JoopLoop.
- 3. Embrace the 'little guy' persona** - Amy Showalter, Author of *The Underdog Edge*, says large companies are incorporating this into their marketing because they know bigger is no longer better in the consumer's eye. "Once we determine a person or entity is a worthy underdog, we view their situation and them completely differently," she says. "They must show that they have worked hard for the few resources they do have, that they play by the rules and that they are careful with what little resources they have. Being a worthy underdog is indeed an influence edge."
- 4. Foster a culture of integrity** - The people on your team are your biggest asset when it comes to forming good loss-prevention strategies. Teri Tapella, Corporate Manager for Retail Loss Prevention and Business Continuity Planning at Ace Hardware Corporation, says, "Make sure that owners and managers understand and enforce your chosen controls, and push that all the way down to your newest employee."

Great Customer Service is Good for Everyone, Study Shows

A recent study from American Express Service could get your employees excited about brightening your customers' day, and put pep in their step, as well. The study finds that both providing and benefitting from great service triggers the same basic cerebral reactions as feeling loved. The findings show that 68 percent of people felt their breathing rate decrease as they relaxed and became happier when thinking about great service. Seventy-four percent of people felt their heart rate increase when thinking about providing great service. Fifty-five percent felt pride when on the receiving end of great service.



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Get Social Online with Your Customers, They'll Notice

You connect with your customers on a daily basis by interacting with them on the sales floor, during events and classes, through your signage and by e-mail. Now, here are ways you can build closer relationships with your customers online that will set you apart from the competition and grow your garden center, as described in *Time* magazine:

- Request to "friend" or "follow" your customers and industry leaders to expand your garden center's presence and awareness.
- "Like" your customers' Facebook posts that you enjoy, follow them on Twitter and retweet interesting things they tweet about.
- Use your social media pages or e-newsletter to ask your customers what they think about your garden center's products or services, and then really listen to what they have to say.

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- Looking for ways to become a holiday shopping destination? During the five Saturdays leading up to Christmas, Sky Nursery in Shoreline, WA, **hosts local crafters and artisans who sell their creations in Sky's greenhouse.**
- **More than 60% of tech-savvy shoppers say they would be more likely to shop at a store that offers smartphone apps and other in-store online services,** according to a recent Zogby Analytics poll. The survey also shows that nearly 30% of tech-savvy shoppers have the money to spend, with household incomes of more than \$100,000 a year.
- For your speciality foods section: **Millennials looking for something new to sip are turning to speciality teas,** which are being introduced at an accelerated rate, reports Progressive Grocer. Coffee and teas are responsible for 15% of total overall new beverage sales, according to Information Resource, Inc.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GCA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



IGC Show Launches East Coast Edition, IGC East & IGC Chicago Set For Summer 2014

Even more benefits are on the horizon for GCA members!

The IGC Show will take place in two locations in 2014. IGC Chicago will convene, as usual, at Navy Pier on August 19-21, 2014. IGC East will make its debut August 5-7, 2014 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center complex in National Harbor, Maryland, located on the Potomac River, just minutes from Washington, DC, providing easy access to GCA members. Both IGC Shows will offer all the features and benefits the industry has come to expect: thousands of new products, free inspiring keynotes and headliner concerts, plus scores of spot-on conference sessions and networking opportunities at the GCA member lunch, as well as all of the GCA member discounts you enjoy in Chicago.

Watch for more details soon at www.IGCshow.com.

What to Do When Your Garden Center Gets a Bad Rap in Social Media

Bad customer reviews can be tough, especially in today's digital age. A single video that gripes about your garden center could go viral, and a scathing tweet could spread instantly, creating what Business2Community's blog calls a social media crisis. In "Manage Your Marketing: Handling a Crisis," it lists the following steps you can take now to make sure you come out with the fewest bruises possible:

Make sure your employees understand your brand. Social media crises in particular often arise because an employee acts in a way that is not in line with your brand. Make sure the hiring manager understands your brand and can bring in people who meld with your store culture. Make sure everyone is on board with how your business will be represented in any kind of public forum. This will come in handy should a crisis occur, because everyone will know how to react.



Create a crisis communications plan. Your crisis communications plan should cover all potential scenarios so that when a crisis does occur, you don't have to think about who should do what. Everything will already be scripted out. Consider holding an occasional drill to make sure everyone understands the process.

Watch other companies to understand what to do and what not to do. There are several books that offer real-life examples of what to do and what not to do in the face of a crisis. One mentioned in the blog is *The Social Media Strategist* by Christopher Barger, who worked as a social media strategist with GM when the company declared bankruptcy.

IGC Chicago 2014 Family Biz Keynoter Henry Hutcheson: 'Let Go So Your Store Can Grow'



To keep your garden center moving forward and avoid the pitfalls of stagnation, IGC Chicago 2014 Keynoter and *IGC Magazine* Columnist Henry Hutcheson suggests letting go of the reins and allowing the next generation to contribute ideas to grow the business. Hutcheson, a family business expert, says it's first important for the existing garden center owner to realize where the next generation is coming from - here are some key points to keep in mind:

They're going to have their own style. Their style will be different from yours, but that doesn't make it bad. In fact, research shows it's good. The future is different from the past, and the style of the past may not be effective in the future.

They need to make it their own. The difference between the passenger seat and the driver's seat has a profound mental impact.

They need to develop their strengths. This can only happen if they are given some free reign to make mistakes.

Don't miss Hutcheson's IGC Chicago 2014 Keynote, "Family Business Silver Bullets: Secret Weapons in the Fight for Your Garden Center's Success." Additional keynotes for IGC Chicago and IGC East will be announced soon. All IGC Keynotes are free to all attendees! Register today at IGCshow.com. Attendees registering by March 31 are eligible to win one of 10 Apple iPads.

Get the Word Out to Your Baby Boomer Shoppers: Gardening Leads to Longer Life

Encourage your older customers to get out in the yard more often by touting the health benefits of gardening. A Swedish study of more



than 4,000 people over the age of 60 shows that activities like gardening have been linked to longer life. The 12-year research finds that people in this age group who are more active on a daily basis have the lowest risk of heart attack, and even those who are active

without exercising had a lower risk. Remaining active reduces the risk of a heart attack or stroke by 27 percent and death from any cause by 30 percent.