

garden centers of america Garden retail trends report

June 11, 2014

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.

Get It! Apple's iBeacon Turns Showrooming Shoppers Into In-Store Spenders

Get them to spend more in your store with iBeacon from Apple, a new positioning system that could help your garden center bridge the gap between your customers' mobile and in-store shopping experiences. Bluetooth Low Energy transmitters enable a store's iOS device or other hardware to send notifications to customer iOS devices nearby. Using this system, you could greet shoppers



when they enter your store with a special offer, target them with sales messages based on their positioning near a product and even provide them with a store map to help direct them to exactly what they need - all via their mobile device. These in-store offers could go a long way toward combatting "showrooming" by prompting customers to spend their time considering your store's deals rather than using their mobile devices to comparison shop, says RetailingToday.com.

Debunking a Common Customer Loyalty 'Myth'

If you hold to the common belief, "It costs five times more to acquire a customer than to retain a customer," a new book, *Loyalty Myths*, could change the way you look at your customer base. It claims to debunk this "myth" with these retail truths:

Advertising and promotions don't just grab first-time purchases - While the expense associated with advertising and promotions is extensive, its impact isn't solely felt on new customers. Much of the benefit in advertising is about reinforcing your brand imagery and maintaining awareness among your current customers.



Costs will fluctuate over the life of your business - When a garden center is getting started, it spends a lot of money to build a customer base. A more established garden center, on the other hand, allocates more money toward customer retention.

Customers vary in their demands - The costs to acquire and retain a customer differ from customer to customer. Often, the most expensive customers to retain are those who generate the most profits for your store. They are likely aware of their importance to your business, and expect a higher level of service because of it.

Four Ways to Show Your Customers You Care - and Keep their Business

Win the respect of your customers with extraordinary customer service, and you'll win their loyalty - maybe even for life. These simple yet powerful principles from Entrepreneur.com will help you win the relationships that will earn you repeat business from your customers:

- 1. Keep your word.** Establish your credibility by following through on your promises. If a landscaping project is delayed, be upfront with your customer. If you warn her of a potential roadblock, she'll be more likely to forgive. If you say you'll special order a set of outdoor furniture and have it delivered in two weeks - have it ready in a week. Under-promise and over-deliver.
- 2. Be honest.** Be truthful in everything you do. Always honestly represent what you sell and what you do.
- 3. Admit when you're wrong.** The reality is all retail businesses make mistakes from time to time. Owning up to the mishap will resolve it faster. If the shade-loving shrubs your salesperson sold withered in your customer's sunny front yard, apologize and offer to replace them at no cost.
- 4. Play peacemaker.** Never react to an angry customer in anger - even if you know they're wrong. Even if you're boiling inside, don't let the customer see it. Maintain a calm disposition and stay on topic.



Good News for Your Garden Center! Consumer Spending Is Back On Track

Consumers are ready to spend - now is the time to get them to spend at your garden center! Consumer optimism is higher than it's been in years, and consumer spending is in line with pre-recession trends, according to Mintel's annual comparative audit report, *American Lifestyles 2014*. Mintel estimates that personal consumption expenditures on consumer goods last year reached \$10 trillion for the first time, and the outlook for this year continues the positive trend - with spending expected to increase further by 3.6 percent.

"In 2014, it appears that America has finally stopped holding its collective breath, waiting for the other economic shoe to drop," says Fiona O'Donnell, Category Manager, Multicultural, Lifestyles and Leisure at Mintel. "After five years of slow but steady growth, Americans have passed the tipping point of prolonged economic worry and have cautiously accepted that things are better. Confidence in personal finances has allowed consumers to think about the future and look forward rather than linger over the past."

Online Retailers Are Realizing: Nothing Compares to the In-Store Shopping Experience

Online is no longer enough for some sellers these days. More web-based retailers are opening brick-and-mortar stores to grow sales.

Trendy eyewear retailer Warby Parker started as an online seller four years ago - now it's on the way to selling from eight stores. Warby Parker execs realize a physical presence is integral to the business' growth, and the physical stores extend the brand experience: "Our retail spaces combine the snappy ease of online ordering with the fun and serendipity of real-life shopping (with a photo booth or two)."



Warby Parker's statement is acknowledgement that businesses can develop a base with online shoppers, but growth in select categories requires the kind of awareness, product credibility and experience that a physical presence offers, says RetailCustomerExperience.com. What are you doing to make your in-store experience more special than anything found online?

SummerWinds 'Custom Creations' Branded Container Services Cater to Small Spaces

SummerWinds' Cupertino store shows space-challenged customers what they can do in the smallest of areas with its branded Custom Creations container gardening services. Whether it's a planter box, a wooden barrel, a washtub or one of the many colorful pieces of pottery the store carries, SummerWinds provides imaginative container gardening possibilities for even the smallest porch or patio. Custom Creations services include grab-and-go containers, custom designs based on plants the customer chooses, and do-it-yourself selections.

SummerWinds is just one of the many garden center hot spots featured on this year's GCA Summer Tour, which heads to San Francisco June 22 - 25. Time is running out - secure your seat on the bus today. [Click here.](#)



Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- Planning a family-friendly event this summer to heat up sales? **The best time to get your e-mail marketing pitch to the household's head scheduler - mom - is Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.** These times have the highest open rates, according to punchbowl.com, since many moms check their e-mail in the morning while they get ready for the day.
- Make your website a hub of gardening knowledge, and your bottom line could reap the rewards. More than half of 2,511 consumers surveyed by the Michigan State University Extension said they've searched for gardening info online, and their **chances of making garden-related purchases went up 19 percent after doing some digging online.** Even though women are more likely to search online for gardening info, **men are more likely to make the actual purchase after an online search.**

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GCA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

GCA Summer Tour, San Francisco, June 22-25



This year's GCA Summer Tour takes you to the Bay Area's Best - spotlighting leading and innovative retailers in San Francisco, San Jose and the East Bay Area, and Sacramento - plus lots of local flavor and color!

Network with your fellow garden center professionals and energize your business with fresh retail strategies driven by the best practices proven to power profits. Wine tastings, specialty dining and other exciting events are being planned now. Join us in recognizing the father of modern garden center design, Ernest Wertheim, a principal of Wertheim, Van Der Ploeg, & Klemeyer and a longtime Bay Area resident.

Sign up today! [Click here.](#)

Save Big at IGC Chicago and IGC East!



GCA Members save \$100 on each IGC Retail Conference Passport registration during the early bird registration period, and \$60 off each IGC Show Garden Center Bus Tour registration!

Other benefits include:

- Two free drink tickets per company for use at the events' receptions and concerts
- Special reserved seating at the concerts - be sure to come early, seating is limited!
- GCA Member Networking Lunches

Log in to get your GCA Discount Code before registering: [Click here.](#)
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