



Garden retail trends report

May 10, 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.

Is Your Staff Up to Speed On Your Web Specials? Customers Demand It

Ninety-five percent of consumers shop a retailer's store and its website, according to a recent survey by CFI Group, and while they can tolerate inconsistencies across the in-store and online experiences, they are less forgiving of uninformed customer service. Respondents voiced frustration that sales associates are unaware of the retailer's web specials more than 75 percent of the time.



To keep your customers satisfied, it is imperative that your staff knows what's on your website. Try an online scavenger hunt of your website or pop quizzes about the content to keep them up to date on what your garden center is doing online.

'Customers Only Care About Price' & More Service Myths Set Straight

Focusing on customer service might seem like a no-brainer, but is your garden center's understanding of good customer service grounded in fact? From Business 2 Community, here are five common customer service myths to watch out for:

Myth 1 - Customers only care about price. The shopping experience weighs heavier than price on a consumer's decision to pay more for a similar or the same product. Other factors that influence a customer's buying decision include selection, level of service and speed of delivery.

Myth 2 - Customers will let you know if there's a problem. Only about 25 percent of customers complain when there's a problem. When you get a complaint, know that there are people who are probably having the same problem but are not reporting it - instead, they're finding someplace else to shop.



Myth 3 - Customers don't care about loyalty. Social media has proven that people like to talk about the stores they shop. When they leave happy, they will become loyal advocates for your garden center.

Myth 4 - Customers are always right. When the customer is in the wrong, find a balance between listening to her frustrations and seeking a solution to the problem.

Myth 5 - It costs a lot to keep customers happy. It's cheaper to keep a customer than to find a new one. Happy customers lead to word-of-mouth referrals, which is the most cost-effective form of marketing.

Smartphone Turnoffs: 'No Tracking or Push Notifications While I'm Shopping!'

Consumers don't like to be bothered by their smartphones when they're shopping, according to a survey by Retale. Seventy-one percent of mobile app users say they don't like being tracked into a store, and 56 percent say they aren't interested in receiving push notifications while shopping.



The survey, which asked more than 3,000 Apple iOS and Android users about their shopping experiences, also reports these results:

- Only 29 percent of mobile app users are unconcerned with being monitored
- Apple iOS users are more receptive to in-store push notifications
- Apple iOS users are nearly split in favor for and against push notifications
- The majority of Android users say they don't want notifications sent to their mobile while shopping

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- Specialty foods are growing strong with a record-breaking \$88.3 billion in sales in 2013, according to a Specialty Food Association report. **Nut and seed butter is the fastest-growing category, with 51.6% growth.** Feed the demand!
- Things are looking up for retail: **Sales increased 1.1%** seasonally adjusted month-to-month in March, with **3.8 percent unadjusted year-over-year growth**, according to the National Retail Federation.
- Edibles are going strong with Millennial consumers. **Nearly 80% of gardeners ages 18-30 purchase vegetables to grow**, according to the 2014 Home and Garden Panel by Metrolina Greenhouses.

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.

GCA members registering before May 31 qualify for a special early-bird rate. 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.](#)

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

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

Boomers Need You: Help Make their Dream Retirement Gardens Come True

Baby boomers plan to live independently and enjoy their homes after they retire, according to a national survey of people ages 49-67 released by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate. Fifty-seven percent plan to move out of their current home, and 70 percent believe the house they retire in will be their best home yet.



You can help these boomer consumers by giving them the low-maintenance, beautiful landscapes they desire. According to the report, 69 percent of those who plan to move out of their current home may make updates or renovations to their next home. It's time for an outdoor room makeover!



Sell It! There's Money to be Made & Saved In Gardening

As you're promoting the benefits of gardening at your garden center, don't forget to mention the green - greenbacks, that is. A recent article from *U.S. News & World Report* touts these financial benefits of gardening - pass them along to your customers!

Working in the garden can boost your mood. This saves your customers money when they choose to shop at your garden center and then spend time gardening, rather than participating in other mood-altering habits that may be pricier, such as shopping till they drop or indulging in treats at the coffee shop.

Gardening counts as exercise. Your customers can cancel their gym membership, at least for the summer. According to a study of adults age 60 and older at Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, the exercise you get while gardening lowers the risks of heart attack and stroke.

You can sell what you produce. Your customers can sell what they grow to neighbors. Maybe then, too, the gardening bug will bite other people in their community - more customers for you!

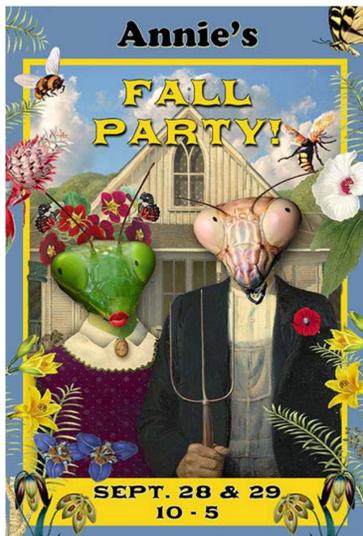
If you can't sell your produce, you can barter with it. Trading produce with neighbors can save your customers money, as well.

Gardening brings people together. No need to spend at the local bar or club to meet people when a community garden can put your customers in contact with gardeners just like them.

Save money on groceries. When customers set up successful edible gardens with your help, they won't have to buy as many expensive herbs and veggies at the grocery store.

Annie's Throws 'Parties' to Make Gardening Less Intimidating, More Fun

Annie's Annuals & Perennials in Richmond, CA, doesn't "host events," it throws parties! To help customers relax and have fun with gardening, this niche garden center and grower specializing in rare and unusual annual and perennial plants throws three "parties" each year. A Spring Planting Party in April, a Mother's Day Celebration in May and a Fall Planting Party in September give customers a chance to dress up in costume or gardening attire, or simply come for the games, live performances, food, gardening talks and demonstrations.



The parties mirror Annie's year-round fun atmosphere. This family-friendly destination also provides a play area and charming chickens to keep kids entertained while mom shops.

Annie's Annuals & Perennials 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. Secure your seat on the bus today. GCA members registering before May 31 qualify for a special early-bird rate. [Click here.](#)