



Garden retail trends report

November 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.

IGC's John Stanley: Pair 'The Familiar' with 'The Unfamiliar' in Your Displays - 5 Important Tips

If your customers are breezing by your displays, you may want to rethink your merchandising strategies. The goal of any display is to get customers to stop, look and then purchase. According to IGC 2013 Keynote Speaker John Stanley, garden centers need to pair the familiar with the unfamiliar in their displays to get customers' attention. His five key rules to make this strategy a success:

1. **Change your displays regularly** - As soon as the familiar-and-unfamiliar combination becomes expected, it's time to change up the display.



2. **Go off-the-wall** - You can be as crazy as you'd like with a display, as long as you don't offend your target market.
3. **Reuse** - Collect old scrap material that can be used as unusual props. It can be repainted to look more appealing if needed.
4. **Consider the customer's viewpoint** - You're building the display to attract the customer, not to please yourself. If it's selling product and the customer likes it, that's what matters.
5. **Measure success** - Monitor sales patterns so you can see what is and isn't working.

GCA Hot Tip! Check Out this Loyalty Punch Card App

Customer loyalty cards influence consumers' product or brand preferences more than any other promotion, with a National Retail Federation Retail Insight Center survey reporting 77 percent of adults say store loyalty cards have the biggest impact.



A new app, called Epunched, makes it easier for your customers to access your garden center's loyalty card on their mobile devices. It allows them to see how many points they've earned and what rewards they may qualify for when they complete their virtual punch cards.

To create the digital punch card, Epunched uses your logo and takes cues from your website to match your brand for a custom design. The company also sets up your access codes, rewards, birthday settings and push notifications.

Find out how your store can sign on at www.epunched.com.

Don't Call It a 'Gift Shop'

Calling your garden center's gift area a "gift shop" may leave some customers walking past it rather than through it to buy that perfect garden or home decor item as a gift to themselves.



A recent study from Unity Marketing, "A Declaration of Independents: A State of the Independent Specialty Retail Market," reveals that the positioning of a store as a "gift shop" weakens the store in the eyes of the customer. Among the 350

independent specialty retailers surveyed, most define themselves either primarily or secondarily as a "gift store." According to the data, the way these retailers identified their stores had a dramatic impact on revenues.

Pam Danziger, Unity Marketing's President, says, "While those who identified first as 'gift stores' had average revenues of around \$600,000, those who identified second as 'gift stores' brought in \$1.3 million."

Danziger recommends that independents position their stores as experiences rather than destinations for one particular item. "[Otherwise, customers] will see the store as relevant to their needs only when they need gifts, cutting out a large portion of consumer shopping that could take place in that very store."

"Go beyond 'things,' and talk about the customer's experience. It matters little whether the items you sell will be gifted or used by the original purchaser, as long as that customer has a memorable experience that brings them back for more."

Danziger says the stores that described themselves as "Home Furnishing + Gifts" or "Jewelry + Gifts" had better sales than those that described themselves as a "gift shop." To tell the full story of what your garden center's gift shop offers, consider signing it "Garden Lifestyle + Home + Gifts."

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- Create a holiday board on Pinterest and pin gift ideas from your garden center - it's a sure way to connect with gift-givers this holiday season. Punchbowl.com reports 60 percent of women planned to use Pinterest to search for gift ideas last season.
- Seventy-one percent of Americans are worried about pesticides in their food, according to new survey results from Lindberg International. Help quell their fears and introduce them to vegetable gardening by emphasizing your garden center's organic.
- Are your garden center's gift cards well-stocked and conveniently located for the holiday rush? Gift cards are the most requested items on Americans' wish lists for the seventh year in a row. According to the National Retail Federation's holiday consumer spending survey, 6 in 10 Americans say they'd most like to receive them as gifts.

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.



Your Private Labels Are a Source of Value for Customers

Private labels are gaining in popularity among consumers, and your store-branded garden offerings are well-positioned to benefit from this increase in favorability. A recent study from *The Checkout* says the consumer attitude changes toward private labels are due to improvements in quality, packaging and marketing, as well as current economic conditions. More than a third of shoppers say they are buying more private-label brands than last year. Another encouraging stat: 83 percent of shoppers are buying the same amount or more private-label products now as they did a year ago.

The study reveals more than half of shoppers name quality as their top priority when shopping for products, and less than a third say name brands are better quality or more reliable than private labels.

Shoppers have learned that the difference between private-label and name brands is often trivial or nonexistent, the study reports. To help your customers comparison shop, display your private-label products next to name-brand counterparts so they can see the value and lean toward your garden center's brand alternative.

Independent Spirit Drives Martha Stewart's 'American Made' Program

Independent entrepreneurs have found an advocate in Martha Stewart. Last year, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia started American Made, a program designed to celebrate U.S. innovators who create products and help them grow their businesses.



"All across America, millions of artisans, craftsmen, small business entrepreneurs and innovators are fueling a 'third-wave industrial revolution,'" says Stewart in a recent *USA Today* column. "I am thrilled by the success of this 'Maker Movement,' which celebrates the values of self-reliance, skilled labor and creative expression that I learned as a child growing up in Nutley, NJ."

This year, Stewart recognized innovators in nine categories as American Made Honorees. In the garden category, Alejandro Velez and Nikhil Arora of Back to the Roots in Oakland, CA, won for their grow-at-home mushroom kits.

Learn more at <http://www.marthastewart.com/americanmade>.

These 'Surprise' Planters Will Get Your Customers Talking



Start using "surprise" planters in your displays, and watch the uptick in store traffic as customers tell their friends, "You have to check this out." HomeGoods' blog has these fun ideas you can put to work at your store, with photos from HGTV:



Paint cans and step ladder. Unique, colorful and fun, these container gardens would be perfect for your customers' kids to nurture.



Purse and lunch boxes. Fill these bags up and hang them from a hook or fence post. This colorful idea would also work well on a garden gate.



Hats. If you can't find one around your garden center to plant up, try a yard sale or a flea market.



Brightly colored desk or dresser. This gardening desk is full of style. A grassy pencil cup and sprouting desk lamp complete the theme.



Baskets/luggage. Put that old, worn-out suitcase or picnic basket to good use.

Consumers Still Prefer Shopping In-Store vs. Online

The brick-and-mortar presence is still paramount to the shopping experience, according to the recent study from A.T. Kearney, "Recasting the Retail Store in Today's Omnichannel World." Sixty-one percent of consumers shop in-store compared to 31 percent who shop online, 4 percent who order from catalogs and 4 percent who purchase with their mobile devices, the research shows.

The study also confirms that shopping in-store leads to impulse buying: 40 percent of consumers spend more money than they planned in stores, while only 25 percent reported online impulse shopping.