



Garden retail trends report

September 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.

Affluent Millennials: What You Need to Know to Win their Dollars

Millennials' view of luxury is vastly different from their predecessors, according to new research from Unity Marketing. As members of this young demographic, born between 1978 and 2000, begin to reach their peak of affluence, IGC retailers must recognize what drives their purchases. Here are four ways millennials differ from the previous generation:



No more status symbols. Millennials determine their status through achievements rather than high-end status symbol purchases. Help them achieve great things in the garden, especially in edibles or DIY container gardens, where they can see fast results. Chances are, these young consumers haven't inherited a green thumb, so help them with class offerings that will develop them into accomplished gardeners.

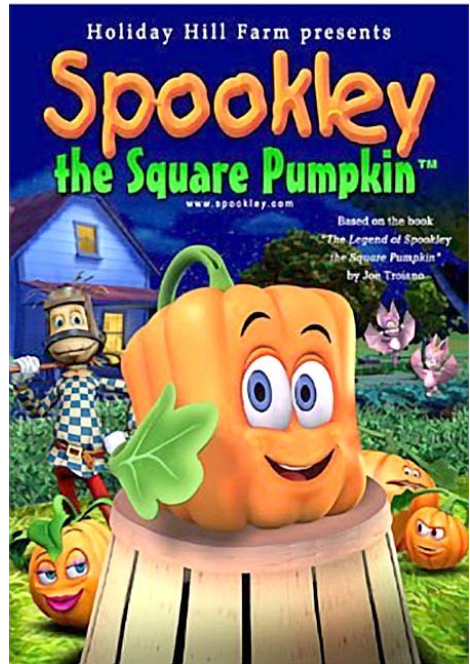
Trading money for time. While they take pride in achievements like completing a marathon, you won't find millennials racing to see who gets to the office first and who is the last to leave. Instead, they many times trade ambition in the workplace for free time to enjoy now. Show them how time in the garden can enhance that down time.

Conscious consumption. This group is guided by their values when it comes to their purchases. Some of the values millennials espouse are eco-conscious in nature, which puts you in a great position to market organic and natural options to them. Be that Earth-friendly go-to resource for them.

'Luxury' marketing doesn't appeal. Millennials are quick to spot the use of the term "luxury" as a marketing tool designed to entice them to buy. They instead want to know how a product is going to help them live the lives they want. Make sure your garden center's signage and POP connects to this generation's desire to know how your offerings will make a difference to them.

John Stanley: This Halloween, Host a 'Spookley the Square Pumpkin' Party

During his keynote at IGC 2013 in Chicago last month, John Stanley emphasized the importance of providing kid-friendly information and events to win mom's dollar. This Halloween, consider organizing an event around "Spookley the Square Pumpkin," the children's book character who is bullied for being square in a patch of round pumpkins. A Spookley story time or DVD viewing party, followed by pumpkin-themed crafts, is a wonderful draw for fall, Stanley says. To really wow the youngsters, have a few square pumpkins on hand. Click here for more Spookley ideas for your store: <http://spookley.com/interface.htm>



National Garden Bureau's Picks Will See Consumer Push

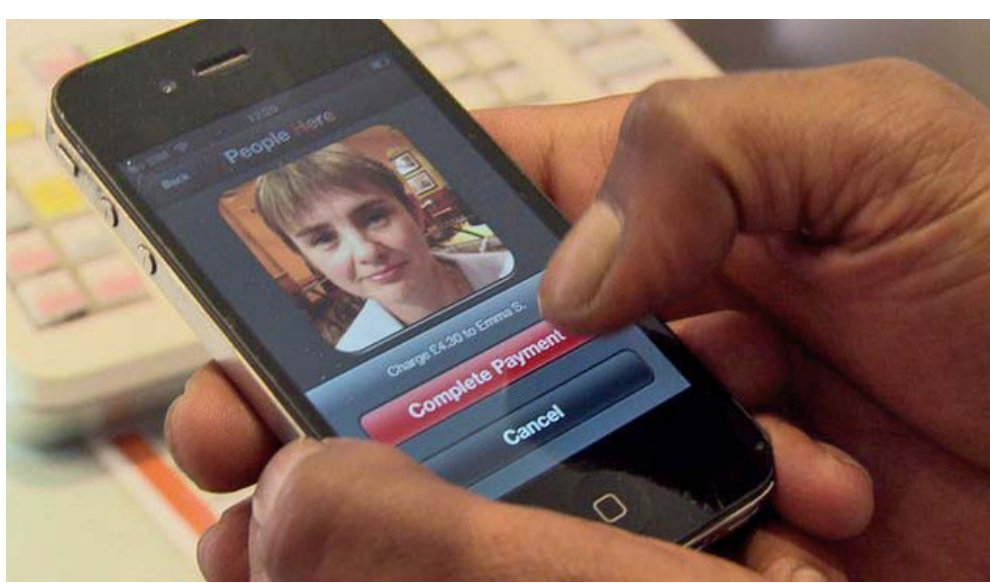


Watch demand for these pick up as the National Garden Bureau's three picks for its 2014 "Year of the" program. They'll get a strong push to consumers through the group's marketing campaign beginning in January. They were chosen for being easy to grow and offering many choices in variety.

- Year of the Petunia, for annual flowers
- Year of the Cucumber, for vegetables/edibles
- Year of the Echinacea, for perennials

Bradley: Use Props in Surprising Ways - It Works!

Dinosaurs, dolls and dismembered mannequins might seem like bizarre elements to include in your garden center displays - and, according to Jim Bradley, that's the point. In his IGC 2013 Know2Grow Retail Conference session, "Retail Props Turn Ordinary Displays Into Stories that Sell," he explained that ordinary displays will not lead to the sales you are looking for; to realize your full potential for profit, stage displays with unusual props that stop customers in their tracks. A truncated mannequin with a plant spilling over the waistline brought disapproval from his mother, but Bradley says it was successful at selling the displayed product. Mannequins, in general, are useful tools to get customers to take note, he says. When used in a disarming way, they are even more effective.



New PayPal App Eliminates Need for Cash, Credit Cards with Facial Verification

Wallets and purses could become passe for shoppers if PayPal's newly-launched phone payment app catches on. The online payment company is piloting a system in Richmond, just west of London, that maps out participating shops for consumers on their iOS, Android or Windows Phone devices. The customer chooses which shop she wants to patronize and "checks in" by clicking on that store's name.

Once the customer has checked in, her name and profile photo appear on the shop's payment system. When she has finished shopping and it's time to check out, the retailer simply verifies her identity by looking at the profile photo, clicks on the photo of the customer and charges the account. PayPal then sends an alert to the customer's phone, letting her know the amount she paid and giving her a PayPal receipt.

This no-hassle way to shop has caught on with the pilot program's retailers, who tout its efficiency. Not only does it free up the consumer, it makes transactions quick and easy, freeing up store employees, as well.

To see how it works, check out the video in this online report: http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57597555-93/paypal-tests-mobile-payments-using-your-face-for-verification

Turn an Angry Customer Into a Customer for Life

No matter how hard you try to provide excellent customer service to your customers, as the saying goes, "You can't please everyone." Still, don't lose heart - you might be able to turn that angry customer around with these strategies from Business 2 Community:



Respectfully acknowledge the problem - If the customer doesn't feel like you're taking her problem seriously, it will likely make her more irate. Assure her you care by saying something like, "I completely understand your frustration, and I will do whatever it takes to resolve this issue." This will often calm the situation; customers like to feel heard and valued.

Don't take it personally - One of the biggest mistakes managers make is internalizing customer complaints said in anger. Many people will lash out at you or your employees because they blame you for what happened. Try to put yourself in their shoes and handle the situation accordingly. Don't let them attack you, but don't fight back, either. Make sure the customer is satisfied no matter what the problem is; this, in turn, will make her realize being verbally abusive will not solve the problem.

Present solutions and follow up - Customers become angry in the first place because they have a problem that needs a solution. They aren't looking for someone to calm them down, they just want what they think they deserve. Ask them to explain the problem in detail. When you have the information, work to create a solution. It may help to give the customer your name and direct number so that, after you're done speaking, she can reach out to you if the problem goes unresolved. Following up with an e-mail to make sure the problem was addressed will make her feel appreciated and respected, and could win you a loyal customer for life.

Mural Could Help Your Store Stand Out, Too

Graffiti is usually an unwelcome sight for store owners, but for Shelly's Garden Country in Broomfield, CO, it was just what they were looking for. The garden center struggled with a drab cement wall on its property that was visible from the street. To make it more appealing, Shelly's looked to graffiti artist Carlos Guerrero, who spray



Painted a fun, bright mural on the wall. Images of dragonflies, bees, hummingbirds and, of course, flowers fill a meadow scene that draws attention from passersby. Do you have a spot that could be brightened with a mural? Original artwork has the potential to draw attention and gain landmark status for your garden center, and it could connect your store to the community with images that reflect your neighborhood's personality.

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- More shoppers hit the stores as summer progressed this year. ShopperTrak reports retail foot traffic increased by 5.2 percent compared with early summer reports. Independence Day and warmer weather prompted the mid-summer spike.
- Is your garden center store design in a rut? Consider IGC 2013 keynote speaker Taniya Nayak's clean slate strategy: The *Restaurant: Impossible* designer suggests building your store style from scratch by clipping photos from design magazines that have a vibe you want to copy.
- Consumers are more cautious and thoughtful when making purchases, according to National Retail Federation's President and CEO Matthew Shay. He says retailers are dealing with an "either/or" economy in which consumers are choosing big ticket items or discretionary items, but not both. Make sure you're stocking the range to appeal to a broader base.

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.