



CHRISTMAS 2018

# *Planning Guide*





## Season's Greetings!

FTD appreciates everything you do to inspire and delight your customers during the holidays and throughout the year. This season, hundreds of thousands of orders will be sent through the Mercury Network and our talented FTD Florists will handcraft each one to your customers' delight.

To make your holiday as successful as possible, we have packed this planning guide with best practices, tips and tools to help you drive more orders, boost your local business and market your shop for success.

We wish you a successful holiday season and thank you for your partnership.

We'll do everything we can to help you design, deliver and delight!

## GET SOCIAL!

Get the latest FTD news, events, education and promotions at:

 [facebook.com/MercuryNetwork](https://facebook.com/MercuryNetwork)

 [instagram.com/mercurynetwork](https://instagram.com/mercurynetwork)

 [YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork](https://YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork)

 [blog.ftdi.com](https://blog.ftdi.com)



**EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR A BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS.**

Be sure to visit [www.FTDi.com/Christmas](http://www.FTDi.com/Christmas) for additional information, including bouquet-specific design tips, substitution guidance and more.



## AN INSPIRED HOLIDAY

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the inspiration for this season's most spectacular bouquets on **page 3**.

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# AN *inspired* HOLIDAY

This Christmas, spread the joy of the season by embracing natural elements, sophisticated metallics and colors that evoke memories of a beloved treat.



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## MEET THE DESIGNER

A florist for more than 20 years and FTD's Lead Floral Designer, Andrea Ancel AIFD translates leading floral trends into gorgeous bouquets for our FTD Member Florists.



# Woodland Wonder

"I find inspiration everywhere, but to me the lush greens and berries found growing on bare branches in a winter forest remind me of my favorite hiking spots." – Andrea



The FTD® Holiday Homecomings™ Basket  
18-C13d



## CHRISTMAS CABIN

The perfect centerpiece in a weathered wooden box for those who want something different.

The FTD® Christmas Cabin™ Bouquet  
18-C7p

## STUNNING STYLE

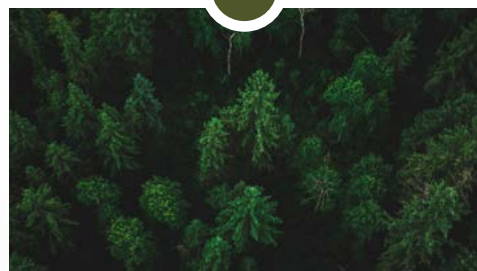
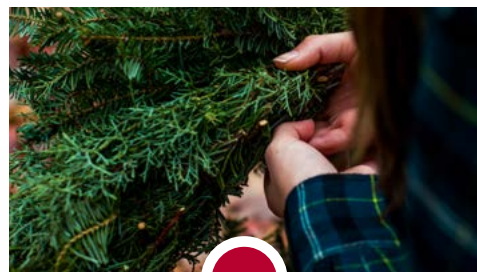
A complex mix of textures along with bright pops of fresh greens and deep shades of red.

The FTD® Stunning Style™ Bouquet  
18-C8p



## COLOR STORY

Dark and light shades of green with red are feature colors complemented by textured foliage.







The FTD® Take Me Home™  
Bouquet 18-C14p

## *Gilded, Glittery and Golden*

"I just love to add a touch of glitter and gold. It turns up the level of elegance and makes the holiday season sparkle." – Andrea

### COLOR STORY

Gold, ivory and lush shades of green turn a neutral palette into an elegant masterpiece.



### JOYOUS GREETINGS

The texture of the greens and pinecones coupled with the seeded eucalyptus pop inside the gold bark ceramic vase.

The FTD® Joyous Greetings™ Bouquet  
18-C6p



# Holiday Cheer

“There’s something so special about glimmering candles and sparkling decor at the holiday table that makes any celebration cheerful and bright.” – Andrea



The FTD® Christmas Magic™ Bouquet  
18-C5p



## BEAUTIFULLY BRIGHT

The fragrance of holiday greens make all senses take note and bring to the forefront the wonders and excitement of Christmas.

The FTD® Beautifully Bright™ Centerpiece  
18-C3p

## COLOR STORY

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas with traditional reds, greens and gold accents.







**The FTD® Christmas Magic™  
Bouquet 18-C5p**



**The FTD® Gracious Gift™  
Bouquet 18-C2p**



**The FTD® Beautifully Bright™  
Centerpiece 18-C3p**



**The FTD® Holiday Classics™  
Centerpiece B15-4924p**

## PROJECTED **TOP 22** BEST SELLERS

To help you plan for the anticipated demand of holiday orders, here are the projected Top 22 FTD.com best-selling bouquets for Christmas. Please use this resource to guide your fresh flower and container purchases.



**The FTD® Holiday Traditions™  
Bouquet 18-C4p**



**The FTD® Red Poinsettia  
Basket B13-3602**



**The FTD® Stunning Style™  
Bouquet 18-C8p**



### CLICK TO EXPLORE

View the Christmas 2018 Projected Best Seller Recipes and Substitution Guidance.



**The FTD® Joyous Greetings™  
Bouquet 18-C6p**



**The FTD® Make It Merry™  
Tree 18-C12d**



**The FTD® Sweet Joy®  
Bouquet 18-C1p**



**The FTD® Take Me Home™  
Bouquet 18-C14p**

Visit the Product Recipe Catalog at [FTDi.com/Quality](http://FTDi.com/Quality) to quickly find details about FTD arrangements. Searchable by product name or item number, it is your one-stop resource for all FTD codified and FTD Floral Selections Guide items.





**The FTD® Holiday Happenings™ Bouquet B24p**



**Dayspring® God's Gift of Love™ Centerpiece by FTD® 18-C11p**



**The FTD® Dreaming™ Bouquet 18-C9p**



**The FTD® Frosted Findings™ Bouquet B23p**

## PROJECTED **TOP 22** BEST SELLERS

To help you plan for the anticipated demand of holiday orders, here are the projected Top 22 FTD.com best-selling bouquets for Christmas. Please use this resource to guide your fresh flower and container purchases.



**The FTD® Winter Walk™ Bouquet B26p**



**The FTD® Wishlist™ Bouquet 18-C16p**



**The FTD® Striking Elegance™ Bouquet 18-C10p**



### CLICK TO EXPLORE

View the Christmas 2018 Projected Best Seller Recipes and Substitution Guidance.



**The FTD® Christmas Cabin™ Bouquet 18-C7p**



**The FTD® I'll Be Home™ Bouquet 18-C15p**



**The FTD® Holiday Homecomings™ Basket 18-C13d**



**The FTD® Gala™ Luxury Bouquet LX187d**

Visit the Product Recipe Catalog at [FTDi.com/Quality](http://FTDi.com/Quality) to quickly find details about FTD arrangements. Searchable by product name or item number, it is your one-stop resource for all FTD codified and FTD Floral Selections Guide items.



# CHRISTMAS Checklist

## FTD TOOLS

- ☐ Ensure you are well positioned for FTD.com holiday orders by reviewing your delivery area and same-day delivery cut-off times. This information is available in your FTD Florist Scorecard at [www.FTDi.com/Quality](http://www.FTDi.com/Quality)
- ☐ Host a lunch and learn or afterhours potluck with your team to watch FREE how-to design videos and business-building webinars on the Mercury Network channel on YouTube.
- ☐ Let FTD know how many orders you can fill this Christmas by accessing your Holiday Order Capacity Tool in Florist Link. Additional information is available at [Floristwiki.FTDi.com](http://Floristwiki.FTDi.com).
- ☐ Take a moment to review your internal processes for accepting/rejecting an order and sending a delivery confirmation. Make sure all of your FTD Mercury system operators know the guidelines.
- ☐ Train your staff on the importance of sending a delivery confirmation in a timely manner to ensure an excellent customer experience. FTD has the tools to make it easy!
- ☐ If you need to stop receiving orders, make sure your employees know how to suspend the FTD Mercury system. Directions are available at [www.FTDi.com/MercuryTechnology/Suspend.htm](http://www.FTDi.com/MercuryTechnology/Suspend.htm).

## TECHNOLOGY

- ☐ Scrub your email database and add new customers to your list in preparation for a marketing campaign.
- ☐ Optimize your website with Christmas products and promotions.
- ☐ Equip your drivers with as many delivery aids as possible, including the FTD Mercury Delivery app which includes delivery routing and mapping tools.

## PRODUCTS

- ☐ Review your results from last Christmas and determine which programs or initiatives were successful and should be repeated.
- ☐ FTD® Marketplace™ is your one-stop shop for containers and shop supplies. Visit [www.FTDMarketplace.com](http://www.FTDMarketplace.com) or call 800.767.4000 today to learn about offers and promotions or.
- ☐ Order your fresh flowers from FTD Flower Exchange by visiting [www.FTDFlowerExchange.com](http://www.FTDFlowerExchange.com).
- ☐ Develop a backup plan in case you need more delivery vehicles, drivers or supplies.



### CLICK TO EXPLORE

For more tools and resources for a successful Christmas, visit [www.FTDi.com/Christmas](http://www.FTDi.com/Christmas).



# DRIVE *Local* BUSINESS

According to Society of American Florists' 2017 post-Christmas survey, the following were the most popular ways to promote the December holidays:

**69%**

STORE  
SIGNAGE

**85%**

SOCIAL MEDIA

**60%**

EMAIL PROMOS

**40%**

PRINT ADS

**21%**

DIRECT MAIL

**50%**

ONLINE ADS

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Update your social media tools regularly to keep consumers engaged with your shop. Ask all customers to "Like" or follow you and tell them how to do so on your statements, all print marketing materials, emails and on your website.

## STORE SIGNAGE

Hanging banners, street signage or even a simple sidewalk sign can easily help increase foot traffic.

## EMAIL PROMOS

Email campaigns are simple and can easily be tracked. Make sure to ask every customer who places an order for their email address and send emails regularly.

## ONLINE ADS

Online advertising is typically inexpensive and is a great complement to other advertising mediums. The Internet's vast reach allows you to connect with a large number of consumers.

## WEBSITE SALES ON THE RISE

53% reported increased sales from their website.

Properly merchandising your website with holiday themed images and prominently featuring holiday products is key to conversion.

\*SAFnow.org. 55% of florists report an increase in December Holiday Sales. January 4, 2018.

## KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

According to the 2016 Generations of Flowers Study, nearly three-quarters of consumers have a high appreciation of flowers.



**65%** of consumers feel special when receiving flowers as a gift.



**64%** believe fragrance is important.



**70%** believe the sight and smell of flowers can improve mood.



**60%** feel flowers have a special meaning unlike any other gift.

## BUYING BY GENERATION

Purchasing preferences of Generation X (ages 40-51), Generation Y (ages 22-39) and Baby Boomers (ages 52-70)\*:

### GEN X

Most likely to purchase their flowers from a florist

### GEN Y

Most likely to buy on impulse

### BABY BOOMERS

Reported appreciating flowers more than the other age groups



## CLICK TO EXPLORE

Visit [www.FTDi.com/Christmas](http://www.FTDi.com/Christmas) for FREE social media and local marketing materials.

\*American Floral Endowment. 2016 Generations of Flowers Study.



# Tools & Resources

As an FTD Member Florist, a wealth of resources are right at your fingertips.

## FTD MERCURY MOBILE

The FTD Mercury Mobile app puts crucial shop information at your fingertips. Drivers can confirm deliveries while on their routes, capture signatures on their phones and access real-time maps and turn-by-turn directions. The app is free and compatible with iOS and Android devices.



## LOCAL MARKETING

Market your shop early and often leading up to the holidays. Be sure to check out all the time-saving resources FTD provides – from social media images to point of purchase posters – to help you promote your shop and grow your business.



### CLICK TO EXPLORE

Find all of our Local Marketing resources at [www.FTDi.com/LocalMarketing](http://www.FTDi.com/LocalMarketing).

## YOUTUBE

Watch and learn from FREE business-building webinars or how-to videos on our YouTube channel. These valuable education programs are great for refreshing your skills or training employees. Access them now at [YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork](http://YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork). Be sure to subscribe so you'll never miss a new video!

## FTD FLOWER EXCHANGE

The world's finest, freshest blooms are shipped directly to you from premium growers through the FTD Flower Exchange. You'll also have access to the Stem Count Calculator, a tool to help you determine how many flowers you need to purchase for FTD codified exclusives based on the number of bouquets you anticipate selling. Book early to secure the best pricing and availability! Contact your FTD Flower Exchange Representative at 800.767.4000 or visit [FTDFlowerExchange.com](http://FTDFlowerExchange.com) today.

## FTD MARKETPLACE

One of the key drivers of receiving FTD orders is purchasing the codified containers. These products are heavily promoted by FTD.com to consumers to drive those orders to local florists to fill and deliver. Contact your FTD Marketplace rep at 800.767.4000.

## MERCHANDISE YOUR WEBSITE FOR SUCCESS

Optimizing your website can help increase your holiday orders. We suggest the following strategies:

1

Feature your best-selling items on your homepage so customers can find them quickly.

2

Verify that your delivery areas and fee is accurate and up-to-date.

3

Post custom products on your website to showcase your artistry.

4

Update your online pricing to match what your store charges for Christmas and holiday orders.

5

Consider an FTD Local Search online advertising campaign so that your website is promoted in the sponsored links on all search engines.

6

Ensure your business listings in online directories are accurate using FTD eBiz Marketing (inaccurate listings can negatively impact search results for your business).



Contact FTD Florists Online at 800.576. 6721 or [floristsonline@FTDi.com](mailto:floristsonline@FTDi.com) for additional information.



## LET'S GET *Social*

Social media is an incredibly effective and low-cost way to promote your business. Update your social media pages regularly leading up to Christmas to keep your customers engaged and coming back for more!



### CLICK TO EXPLORE

Check out our collection of sample social media posts and images at [www.FTDi.com/Christmas](http://www.FTDi.com/Christmas).



### FACEBOOK

Post photos of your Christmas preparations and tag your customers on Facebook. The added benefit of doing this is that when you tag someone, the post also appears on their wall, allowing their friends to also see the photo, increasing engagement. You will only be able to tag people you are connected to. For a small fee to Facebook, you can promote your holiday posts to increase your reach.



### PINTEREST

Pinterest is a virtual mood board of thematic collections. Use it during the holidays to create themed "boards" to engage your customers and entice them to purchase from your shop. Create a variety of boards with floral and non-floral-related items and link your posts back to your website so that consumers can purchase right from the link. Include boards with gift suggestions, home décor, table settings and more.



### INSTAGRAM

Instagram is the smartphone photographer's app of choice. For florists, it's easy to stop designing for a moment, snap a photo with your smartphone and then post it immediately. Instagram's unique editing features can also help you tweak photos before uploading them. You could even try your hand at an Instagram Story, a video or photo that disappears from your feed after 24 hours.



### TWITTER

Don't overlook the best real-time tool in social media this Christmas. Sending tweets out to your followers is a great way to keep everyone updated on what is happening in your shop. Twitter is a great tool for connecting with people online and offline.

### CONNECT WITH US

Access news, events, education and promotions when you connect with us on social media.

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/MercuryNetwork](https://facebook.com/MercuryNetwork)

**Instagram:** [instagram.com/mercurynetwork](https://instagram.com/mercurynetwork)

**YouTube:** [YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork](https://YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork)

**Florist blog:** [blog.ftdi.com](http://blog.ftdi.com)

## DO'S AND DONT'S FOR SOCIAL MEDIA



Create a calendar of posts and tweets in advance of the holiday

Ask questions (e.g., "What is your favorite Christmas flower?")

Share pictures and videos to tell a story about your business

Spend at least 30 minutes a day on social media (read, learn, listen, post)

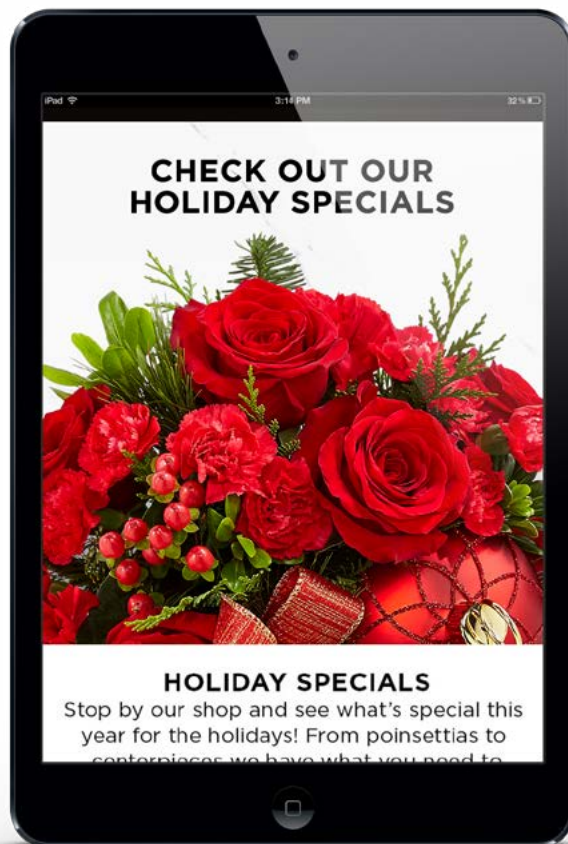


Do not tell your customers to just "Like" or follow you; tell them how and give them a reason to do so (for example, "Like us to see sneak peeks of our new designs and hear about sales first!")



## MARKETING TIPS

- 1** Only send emails to customers who have personally opted in to receive your emails; do not send an email to someone who has not as that is considered spam.
- 2** Include past online purchasers in your email marketing campaigns to remind them to purchase from you again.
- 3** Contact FTD Florists Online support for assistance in obtaining email addresses for customers who have purchased from your website in the past.
- 4** Use a professional email marketing service, such as Constant Contact®, not a personal account.
- 5** Always include a simple, one-click “unsubscribe” link in every email you send.
- 6** Use your prime real estate wisely. The “From” and “Subject” lines are the most important real estate; make your “From” line your store name or one that is identifiable with your shop.
- 7** Entice your customers to open your emails by telling a little bit about what they could find inside (e.g., “How to Pick the Perfect Christmas Centerpiece”).
- 8** To be most effective, 80 percent of your emails should be customer-focused content, such as tips and trends, and 20 percent should promote your store, products, sales, etc.
- 9** It is best to send shorter emails more frequently (about once a week) to increase their effectiveness.



## EMAIL

# Marketing

Email marketing is by far the most effective way of directly impacting your bottom line and growing your business. While you should be sending out emails to customers year-round, it is essential to boost business for the holidays. Email has a media return on investment of 122 percent – more than four times higher than other marketing formats, including social media, direct mail and paid search.

(Source: eMarketer, 2016)

## STRATEGIC USES TO GROW BUSINESS

- Share specials or sales.
- Introduce new products or services.
- Remind customers of upcoming holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- Promote an event in your shop (end-of-season sale, holiday open houses, education classes, etc.).

\*Exact Target



## BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

The following best practices can help you set up your shop for success this holiday season.

- 1** Hire additional drivers and make sure your delivery vehicles are in good working condition.
- 2** Get pay-as-you-go cell phones for delivery drivers so you can always keep in touch without increasing your cell phone costs.
- 3** Set up an assembly line to put together the top-selling arrangements the day or two before your busiest delivery day.
- 4** Save time by making arrangements in FTD's Christmas codified containers to offer for sale to walk-ins.
- 5** Have a plan and assign a contact person to handle customer service issues.
- 6** Give your computer a "tune-up" to ensure it is running accurately to minimize disruptions; make sure your ink cartridges are full, and your invoice and receipt papers are in stock and easily accessible.

## GENERAL QUALITY TIPS

Planning and preparing are crucial to a successful holiday season. The following tips can help increase productivity and customer satisfaction levels for both the holidays and every day. Bouquet-specific design tips for each projected best seller can be found on the Product Recipe Catalog on FTDi.com.

- 1 PURCHASE SMART**  
When possible, purchase your flowers in the correct stem lengths to maximize profit margins.
- 2 ORDER EARLY**  
Order products to match the timing of your production schedule and the proper stem counts to match your recipes.
- 3 KEEP HYDRATED**  
Keep flowers properly hydrated (including floral preservative) to create a better customer experience upon receipt and provide for the proper fullness in each design.
- 4 CARE AND HANDLING**  
To prevent ethylene buildup, remove any dead or dying petals and leaves and do not submerge foliage below the water line.
- 5 SOAK FLORAL FOAM**  
Properly soak your floral foam. As a reminder, when soaking your foam, you should gently place it in a large enough water reservoir to allow room for the foam to fill with water at its own pace. The foam should never be forced underwater, as this will cause air pockets to become trapped in the foam.
- 6 SCALE FOR SUCCESS**  
Keep scale and dimensions in mind when building each design. This is key to your customers' perception and satisfaction.
- 7 USE RIBBON CAREFULLY**  
Ribbon is an accessory and should only be used when called for in the recipe, and only in the manner in which it is described.
- 8 PACKAGING**  
Determine packaging per item prior to holiday to ensure safe delivery.
- 9 CHECK WATER**  
Check water daily on all of your premade arrangements prior to delivery.
- 10 DESIGN ONE BY ONE**  
When a SKU is offered in Good, Better, Best and Exquisite sizes, concentrate on one recipe at a time to help ensure proper stem counts in each design.



# MERCURY QUICK TIPS

## DELIVERY CONFIRMATIONS

FTD offers a variety of technology tools to make it quick and easy to submit a delivery confirmation. Visit [FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Tools.htm](https://FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Tools.htm) to learn more.

How-to guide      [FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Mercury.htm](https://FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Mercury.htm)

Best practices      Send a DCON with the delivery time after the order is successfully delivered by 5:30 p.m. (local time). As a sender, let your customer know the order was successfully delivered. If the order is from FTD.com, please keep in mind the customer automatically receives an email letting them know their order was delivered when you send a delivery confirmation.

What to avoid      Avoid sending a DCON message before the order is actually delivered or stating that delivery was attempted.

## ASK MESSAGE

Need order-related information? Send an ASK message.

Best practices      Send ASK messages to request address or recipient information specific to order, to notify FTD.com about a delivery problem or notify FTD.com of a major substitution issue with the order.

What to avoid      Do not send an ASK message to request a CANCEL message be sent on an order or to notify FTD.com that you cannot fill an order. Reject the order instead.

## REJECTING AN ORDER

Unable to fill an order? Reject it within two hours. For DRP guidelines, visit [FTDi.com/Quality/DRP](https://FTDi.com/Quality/DRP).

Best practices      If you are unable to fill an order, reject it within two hours. Rejecting an order right away allows us to find another florist who can fill it.

What to avoid      Avoid sending an ASK if you are unable to fill the order. Reject the order within two hours instead.

## REDUCING ZIP CODES

If you need to reduce your delivery area during the holidays, temporarily reduce your ZIP coverage.

Best practices      Communicate with FTD.com by sending a GEN message to 90-0075AA or email [distributiongroup@FTDi.com](mailto:distributiongroup@FTDi.com)

What to avoid      Do not use a GEN message to communicate any information specific to an order. Use an ASK, Reject or correct message type for the order. If you reject an order due to product unavailability, note it in the Reject.