



CHRISTMAS 2016

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 Take Your Business Further™.

GET SOCIAL!

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

 facebook.com/MercuryNetwork

 instagram.com/mercurynetwork

 YouTube.com/FTDMercuryNetwork

 blog.ftdi.com

Everything you need for a bright and beautiful Christmas.

Be sure to visit 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 inspirations for this season's most spectacular bouquets on **page 3**.



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A photograph of two women smiling and holding a large, festive Christmas bouquet. The bouquet is arranged in a red ceramic pot decorated with white snowflake patterns. The flowers include red roses, white chrysanthemums, red carnations, and red poinsettias, all accented with greenery and red and white ornaments. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a beige cowl-neck sweater. The woman on the right has dark curly hair and is wearing a white blouse with a bow at the neck. They are standing in front of a white paneled wall.

AN
inspired
HOLIDAY

This Christmas is all about sparkle and shine. Go behind the scenes with FTD's lead floral designer to learn more about what inspired our exclusive bouquets.

oh what fun!

"I can still remember sitting by the fire with my father and having him read Christmas books during the holidays. This collection is all about holiday tradition - snowmen, sleighs and the warmth of lanterns and candlelight." - Andrea



The FTD® Holiday Traditions™ Bouquet
16-C4p



Meet the Designer

A florist for more than 20 years, FTD Lead Floral Designer Andrea Ancel translates the hottest trends and flowers into beautiful bouquets for FTD Member Florists to offer in their own shops.



rustic charm

This candlelit table centerpiece features a rustic lantern that gives the arrangement a warm charm.

The FTD® Celebrate the Season™ Centerpiece
16-C3p



color story

This collection is inspired by bright holiday hues that evoke the feeling of celebration.

believe

"I wanted to convey the feeling of what it's like to see festive, colorful and beautifully wrapped gifts under the Christmas tree." - Andrea



The FTD® Believe™ Mug Bouquet by Hallmark 16-C7p

color story

The palette for this collection was inspired by seasonal reds and shades of Christmas green. These hues are meant to delight the child in all of us.



youthful joy

Your customers are sure to love our take on the childhood wonderment during the holiday season.

The FTD® Holiday Cheer™ Bouquet 16-C2p

holiday glitter

"It's the time of year when the house is filled with laughter, excitement and joy. Let's bring out the champagne and add sparkle and shine for the holiday festivities." - Andrea



The FTD® Season's Greetings™ Bouquet
16-C5p



color story

Burgundys and reds add warmth and pair perfectly with glitter and the sheen of gold.



all that glitters

Surprise your customers with this modern take on a holiday favorite featuring carnations, roses and Christmas greens.



The FTD® Season's Greetings™ Bouquet
16-C5p



The FTD® Holiday Cheer™ Bouquet
16-C2p



The FTD® Holiday Traditions™ Bouquet
16-C4p



The FTD® Holiday Wishes™ Bouquet
by Better Homes and Gardens®
16-C6p

PROJECTED
TOP 10
BEST SELLERS

To help you plan for the anticipated demand of holiday orders, here are the projected top 10 best-selling bouquets for Christmas. Please use this resource to guide your fresh flower and container purchases.



The FTD® Holiday Classics™ Centerpiece
by Better Homes and Gardens®
B15-4924p



The FTD® Believe™ Mug
Bouquet by Hallmark
16-C7p



CLICK TO EXPLORE

View the Christmas 2016 Projected Best Seller Recipes and Substitution Guidance.



The FTD® Red Poinsettia Basket
B13-3602



The FTD® Celebrate the Season™ Centerpiece
16-C3p



DaySpring® God's Gift of Love™
Centerpiece by FTD® 16-C11p



The FTD® Holiday
Celebrations® Bouquet 16-C1p

Visit the Product Recipe Catalog at 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.

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Deadline for January Directory advertising changes	2 Begin displaying your FTD Thanksgiving (US) merchandising materials	3 Send a Thanksgiving direct mailer to your customers	4 Call FTD Flower Exchange at 800.767.4000 to order your Christmas flowers	5
6 Daylight Saving Time ends	7 Plan your Christmas delivery processes with well-organized delivery routes and zones	8 Election Day	9	10	11 Veterans Day Remembrance Day (Canada)	12
13	14 Start your Small Business Saturday marketing campaign (visit SmallBusinessSaturday.com to download FREE materials)	15 January Directory Codification deadline for Valentine's Day, Spring and Mother's Day FTD Marketplace containers, call 800.767.4000 to order	16 Review Christmas sales from previous years and plan bouquet assortment	17	18	19 Begin displaying your FTD Christmas in-store merchandising materials
20	21 Stock cooler with centerpieces and bouquets for late Thanksgiving orders	22 Time to update your website for Christmas – call FTD Florists Online at 800.576.6271	23 Start making bows, greening containers, pre-building packing materials/boxes and filling water tubes for Christmas	24 Thanksgiving Day (US)	25 Mark down all leftover Thanksgiving and fall inventory	26 Small Business Saturday Start including Christmas stuffers in statements and with each delivery
27	28	28	30			

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Send a Christmas direct mailer to your customers	2 Hire extra holiday labor (designers, drivers, etc.)	3
4	5 Call FTD Flower Exchange to order your Christmas flowers at 800.767.4000	6 Send FTD Flowers All Hours your store hours for Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year's Day	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Call FTD Flower Exchange to order your spring tulips at 800.767.4000	8 Visit FTDUniversity.com for FREE webinars and two-minute how-to videos to help with training	9 Hold a holiday prep staff meeting	10
11	12 Poinsettia Day Start Christmas email and social media marketing campaigns	13	14 Check your flower supply. Running low? Visit FTDFlowerExchange.com for last-minute flower deals.	15	16 Call FTD Flower Exchange at 800.767.4000 to order your Valentine's Day flowers	17 Stock cooler with ready-to-go arrangements for last-minute shoppers
18	19	20	21 Winter begins	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Hanukkah begins
25 Christmas	26 Boxing Day Kwanzaa Clean out shop and re-merchandise shelves for Valentine's Day	27 Close out for Christmas inventory with an end-of-season sale	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Rest (Valentine's Day is only 45 days away!)

christmaschecklist

- Review your results from last Christmas and determine which programs or initiatives were successful and should be repeated.
- Scrub your email database and add new customers to your list in preparation for a marketing campaign.
- Check out FTDUniversity.com for FREE business-building two-minute how-to videos and webinars such as “Preparing for a Successful Holiday Season” and “Prepare for a Stress-Free Holiday.”
- Optimize your website with Christmas products and promotions. If you have questions, call your FTD Florists Online team at 800.576.6721.
- 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.
- FTD® Marketplace™ is your one-stop shop for containers and shop supplies. Call 800.767.4000 today to learn about offers and promotions.
- Order your fresh flowers from FTD Flower Exchange by calling 800.767.4000 today.
- Review your delivery coverage area with your FTD Directory representative at 800.788.9000.
- Take a moment to review your internal processes for accepting/rejecting an order and sending a delivery confirmation at FTDi.com/Quality.
- Train your staff on the importance of sending a Delivery Confirmation. Today’s consumers expect real-time notification when an order they placed has been delivered. FTD has a variety of tools, including FTD Mercury Mobile, to help you submit a timely delivery confirmation. Visit FTDi.com/MercuryTechnology for more details.
- Make sure your employees know how to suspend the FTD Mercury system at FTDi.com/MercuryTechnology/Suspend.htm to stop receiving orders that you are unable to fill.
- Develop a backup plan in case you need more delivery vehicles, drivers or supplies; go to FTDi.com/PDP for resources.
- Equip your drivers with as many delivery aids as possible, including maps, mobile phones and the FTD Mercury Mobile app. To get started, call FTD Technology Sales at 800.767.3222.

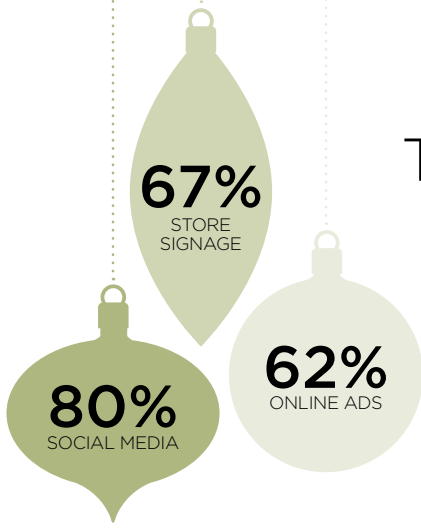


CLICK TO EXPLORE

For more tools and resources for a successful Christmas, visit FTDi.com/Christmas.

Best Ways To Promote Your Business This Holiday Season

According to SAF's 2015 December Holidays survey, these were the most popular ways to promote the December holidays.



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

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.

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.

PRINT ADS

Print advertising tends to target a specific audience, which means your ad is more likely to reach those who are interested in your shop.

DIRECT MAIL

Direct mail pieces have a longer shelf life than other mediums. With the U.S. Post Office's Every Door Direct Mail program, you can pick and choose who receives your mailings based on location, average household income and more.

*SAFNow.org. After a Cheery Christmas, Florists Worry about Valentine's Day Drop. January 31, 2016.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

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



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 FTDi.com/Christmas for FREE social media and local marketing materials.

*American Floral Endowment. 2016 Generations of Flowers Study.

UTILIZE FTD Tools & Resources

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

LOCAL MARKETING

Start locally marketing your shop early and often leading up to the holidays. FTD offers member florists a suite of marketing and promotional items to help you increase sales and grow your business locally. The tools and resources available offer you the opportunity to leverage the FTD Mercury Man logo, the most recognized floral brand and symbol worldwide, alongside your local brand.



CLICK TO EXPLORE

Find all of our Local Marketing resources at FTDi.com/localmarketing.

FTD FLORISTS ONLINE

FTD Florists Online makes creating a website easier than ever before with a dedicated support staff to help you create and update your site, or you can take control of maintaining it. You'll also have access to resources to help drive traffic to your site, such as online directories and email marketing tools and services. Contact FTD Florists Online at 800.576.6721 or floristsonline@FTDi.com for additional information.

FTD FLOWER EXCHANGE

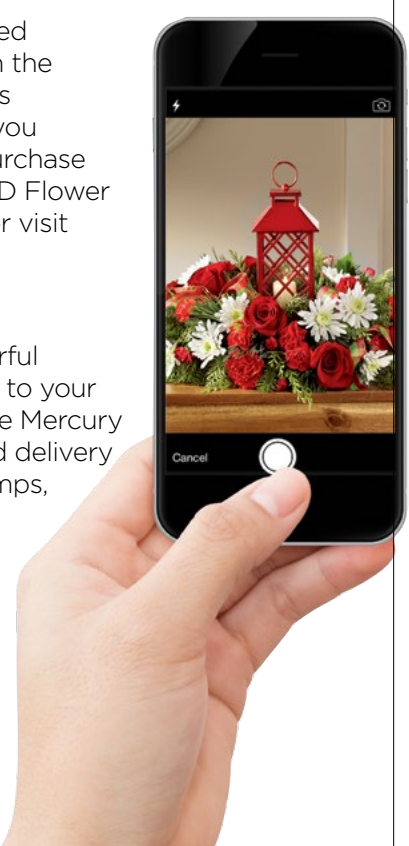
The world's finest, freshest blooms are shipped direct to you from premium growers through the FTD Flower Exchange. You'll also have access to the Stem Count Calculator, a tool to help you determine how many flowers you need to purchase for FTD codified exclusives. Contact your FTD Flower Exchange Representative at 800.767.4000 or visit FTDFlowerExchange.com today.

FTD MERCURY MOBILE

The FTD Mercury Mobile app provides powerful features to increase efficiency and add value to your business. Users enjoy on-the-go access to the Mercury Point of Sale dashboard and newly enhanced delivery confirmation features, including location stamps, delivery photographs and virtual signature capabilities. The app is compatible with iOS and Android devices. Download today!

FTD UNIVERSITY

Take a load off and watch a FREE business-building webinar or two-minute how-to video. These valuable education programs are great for refreshing your skills or training employees. You can access them now at FTDUniversity.com.



OPTIMIZE YOUR WEBSITE & BOOST ORDERS

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

1

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

2

Verify that your delivery information 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 orders.

5

Consider increasing your FTD Local Search online advertising spend so that your website is promoted in the sponsored links in 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).

Search is the number one driver of traffic to content sites, beating social media by more than 300 percent.

(Source: Outbrain)

*

Contact FTD Florists Online at 800.576.6721 or floristsonline@FTDi.com for additional information.

LET'S GET SOCIAL

Social media is an extremely helpful and cost-effective way to promote your business. Update your social media tools regularly prior to Christmas to keep your customers engaged and coming back for more!



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, it appears on their wall, allowing their friends to see the photo too, which increases 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.

TWITTER

Do not overlook the best real-time tool in social media for 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.



CLICK TO EXPLORE

Short on time or unsure how to use social media effectively? Let FTD "Market for You." Visit FTDi.com/MarketForYou for more information.

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 is easy to stop designing for a moment, snap a photo with your smartphone and then post immediately. Instagram has unique editing features so you can enhance photos before uploading them. Plus, you can instantly share your post on other social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr as you make your Instagram post.

DO'S AND DONT'S FOR SOCIAL MEDIA



Use content driven posts to gain followers and potential customers.

Engage your audience with questions and posts that encourage discussion.

Focus on sharing your brand story across all your social channels.

Plan your posts ahead of time.



Don't just ask your audience to "like" or follow your page.

Don't post content without describing what you've posted.

Don't post personal information on your business page.

Don't share content that is irrelevant to your business.

Email Marketing Tips

- 1** Only send email 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 Mother's Day.

With more than 91% of consumers checking email at least once a day, there is simply no competition.* More importantly, it is an integral part of our lives because no consumer will quit email — it is essential and unavoidable. Plus, it is an extremely cost-effective way of marketing your business.

EMAIL MARKETING USES

- 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

Get on a path to MORE ORDERS

FTD is here to help you generate more orders and drive local business. The greater the scope of products you offer and the greater the delivery areas serviced by your shop, the greater the chance your shop has to increase the quantity of orders received.

As an FTD Member Florist, you have many benefits and unique tools available to help you get on a path to more orders, potentially increasing your shop's profitability.



CAPITALIZE ON YOUR DELIVERY AREA

Expand advertising in the FTD Directory to include more towns.

GET CODIFIED WITH FTD MARKETPLACE

Purchasing holiday and everyday exclusive containers makes you eligible to receive codified product orders.



ATTRACT MORE FLORIST-TO-FLORIST ORDERS

FTD Mercury POS technology can save you time and help streamline your shop's operations.

ATTRACT ONLINE SHOPPERS

FTD Florists Online is a simple way to start an online business to drive local orders.

Place your container orders by the first week of December to be codified on both FTD.com and Mercury.

A decorative floral arrangement on a burlap background. The arrangement includes white flowers, red berries, a pine cone, and a red rose, all positioned around the central text.

APPENDIX

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 order.
- 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.

- 1 PURCHASE SMART**
When possible, purchase your flowers in the correct stem lengths to maximize profit margins.
- 2 ORDER EARLY**
Order product 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. 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 then 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 Standard, Deluxe, Premium 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 to learn more.

How-to guide FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Mercury.htm

Best practices Send a DCON with the delivery time after the order is successfully delivered by 7 p.m. (local time). As a sender, let your customer know the order was successfully delivered. For orders 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 the 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.

How-to guide FTDi.com/Quality/Delivery/Mercury.htm

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 shrink 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

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.



TAKE YOUR BUSINESS FURTHER™

