In This Issue

Letter from FTD CEO
Highlight: Coates Florist
Highlight: Englewood Florist
Page 1
Smart Money: Flower Power
Page 2
Your Words: On 2005 Easter Holiday
In the News
Page 3
Illinois State Florist Association
Virginia Allied Florist Association
Highlight: A. Dykstra Florist & Greenhouse
WUMFA
Georgia State Florists’ Association
Page 4
Member Celebrations
Highlight: Juliette Florist
Valley Wholesale Show
Alabama State Florist Association
Niagara International Association of Florists
Page 5
FTD Education: Flower Shop Makeover
Upcoming Events
Page 6
FTD Advertising
Page 7
2005 FTD Floral Extravaganza
Page 8

LETTER FROM FTD CEO
ON QUALITY

Dear FTD Members,

I am sure by now everyone is getting tired of hearing about quality. The reality is that quality is an ongoing effort for FTD and the entire industry, and we must take it seriously. This month the issue of quality has hit the front page in a variety of publications with florist-fulfilled bouquets receiving lower rates than their boxed-program counterparts. Although concerns quality may only arise in a limited number of instances, I am committed to removing poor quality florists from FTD.

A recap of a major news story this month:

SMARTMONEY RATES BOXED PROGRAMS BETTER THAN FLORIST FULFILLED

The May issue of SmartMoney magazine tested ordered five floral companies and for the first time in history, florist-fulfilled bouquets came out on the bottom. The FTD florist-filled order received the lowest rating with a one-star. Its boxed-program counterpart from ProFlowers received the highest rating possible – four stars. You’ll see on page 2, we reprinted the entire SmartMoney article so that you will understand exactly what consumers are saying about boxed programs versus a florist-filled order and what happens when poor fulfillment exists in our industry.

At FTD our commitment to quality continues stronger than ever. Again this month we sent out hundreds of letters to florists who were not maintaining the highest standards in the industry. In these letters we are giving florists the opportunity to take the corrective actions needed to bring their quality to the levels required of professional FTD florists. For the many of you who continue to send full value orders, fill every order to value and exceed the customer expectations, I applaud you and assure you I will continue to drive the highest quality standards into our network.

ON CONSUMERS

In upcoming articles, I am going to share with you some insightful research that FTD has been conducting with consumers and member florists to help us all fully understand the future of the floral industry and how best to grow in the changing market. The most important lesson that we understand at this time that our consumers are changing. We’ll answer the question of how in future articles. In the meantime, I hope your number one focus in May is on quality and that we never find a florist-filled order at a one-star rating versus a boxed program again.

We look forward to sharing more of our research and our initiatives with you throughout the next few months in the Newsletter and in person at the 2005 FTD Floral Extravaganza in Dallas. Thank you for your business and let us know if there is anything we can do to help you.

All the best,

[Signature]

At FTD we strive to keep our consumers happy, but we can’t do it without the support of our member florists. We are committed to providing the highest quality products and services to our customers. Your dedication to excellence is what sets FTD apart. We appreciate your hard work and commitment to the industry.

KUDOS TO FTD MEMBERS

KANSAS FLORIST WINS SEN丁NG CONTEST

Coates Florist was also awarded the 2004 Best New Business in Melrose by the Melrose Chamber of Commerce. They have been FTD Members for three years.

KUDOS TO FTD MEMBERS

Chris and Kim Coates of Coates Florist in Melrose, MA for going the extra mile to promote their business. After reading In Places Magazine, a new publication that focuses on businesses in the Boston area, Chris jumped at the opportunity to call the editor.

“I told them what we were all about and the next thing I knew they were at the store taking pictures,” said Chris.

In addition, Chris is a contributing columnist for the Melrose Free Press. He writes consumer interest pieces about flowers, plants, holidays and decorating ideas.

KANSAS FLORIST WINS sending contest

CARY AND SUSAN ENGLE, owners of Englewood Florist in Lawrence KS, were presented with two FTD watches for increasing their sending quantities and winning first place in a Kansas sending contest, which was held by FTD Field Business Consultant Lisa Chapin.

“I was excited Cary and Susan won the contest. They are big supporters of FTD and have increased their partnership with FTD by participating in Online Yellow Pages and FTD Flowers All Hours, registering for the FTD 2005 Floral Extravaganza in Dallas and upgrading their technology system,” said Lisa.

Cary and Susan Engle are pictured showing off their FTD watches.
FLOWER POWER

There have never been so many choices for ordering flowers for Mom—or so many ways to disappoint her. We put five fresh-cut flower services to the test.

LAST MOTHER’S DAY, JUDITH WILLIAMS started ordering flowers online and by phone for Mom in Halifax from Flowershope.com—and had chosen a vase that would match her mother’s china pattern. But instead of the dense arrangement of lilies, asters and other blooms, Williams says her mother got a thin handful of red carnations and “yellow, fuzzy-looking things” with leaves and petals that dropped from the tattered greenery. The vase? It was plain clear glass.

When she called home, “I could hear my dad laughing in the background,” says Williams, adding that her mother was a little kinder. “It was the first time I ordered flowers over the Internet, and my last,” she says.

Doesn’t Mom deserve flowers this Mother’s Day? This year Americans are expected to spend roughly $80 million ordering flowers online and by phone for Mother’s Day—more than they spend on flowers for any other holiday, even Valentine’s Day. But as Williams discovered, the process isn’t always a bed of roses. Indeed, with demand for these instant flower arrangements ever growing, the industry says it has to operate under its own set of rules for both delivery and substitutions. (A spokesperson for Flowers-hope.com says the holiday rush and using a Canadian florist may have led to Williams’s mishap but notes that substitutions are “permitted without permission.”) As prices have risen for bouquets, so have gripes: The Council of Better Business Bureaus says complaints against florists jumped 36 percent from 2000 to 2003, to 960.

By far, the biggest issue these days is just what your loved one will receive. Certainly, consumers have more to pick from than ever before, with Calyx & Corolla alone now offering more than 70 bouquets. And arrangements are turning much more artsy, with either exotic vases or an arrangement technique called “pavé.” But all this art comes at a price: Arrangements can easily top $100 before shipping. What’s more, many of them are just plain smaller than they used to be. The confusing marketplace has become “like the Wild, Wild West,” says Russ Schmitt, president of the Independent Florists’ Association.

So with Mom in mind, we’ve been doing a lot of flower shopping for you, and to help us sort through it all, we went to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, a 52-acre horticultural paradise in New York. There, we enlisted the help of Robb Moss, an appropriately named top-tier florist and one of the garden’s instructors, to help us separate the fine flowers from the weeds and give us a host of our own fresh flower tips.

We used five companies in our test, ordering a standard ($50 to $65) and deluxe ($70 to $124) arrangement from each. We started with the granddaddy of flowers-by-wire companies, FTD, which charges individual florists to be part of its network. Both bouquets looked nice enough to us, with roses, tulips and other blooms all in various shades of purple, but Moss had a very different reaction—and it wasn’t pretty. He dismissed the arrangements as “purple monstrosities” and said we didn’t get our money’s worth. Two of the flowers in the delivered arrangement, snapdragon and larkspur, were replaced with cheaper snapdragon and larkspur for bouquets from B. Brooks, an exclusive network of 700 upscale florists. (By comparison, FTD has 50,000 florists in its network.) And here we finally saw something attractive, though expensive. “Lizzy’s Roses,” a mound of white roses, cost $110, but Moss said that based on the quality and sheer number of flowers, it was actually one of the best bouquets in terms of value. Not so with its smaller version, which had just six roses, not quite enough to merit its $70 price tag. His verdict on B. Brooks? Not bad. But we were looking to be swept off our feet—we wanted to swoon. We came a lot closer with Calyx & Corolla, one of a growing number of outfits that ships flowers directly from the growers. The flowers we ordered, the “Bubbly Bouquet” in two different sizes, contained quality roses and lilies—no filler flowers here—and everything arrived in good condition. The vases were nice enough, but there was one big problem: Because of the company’s vases are shipped from a different location, our polka dot “bubbly” vase arrived a day before the flowers. Talk about ruining the surprise.

Still, Calyx & Corolla would have won had it not been for our next contestant. ProFlowers has vaulted to the top of the grower-direct business and touts itself as the largest grower-direct outfit (it handles Martha Stewart’s flower-delivery business). And sure enough, the flowers we ordered were stunning: The “Hugs and Kisses” deluxe bouquet, a huge arrangement of 20 irises and 20 red tulips, reached full bloom the day after they arrived. They were also a good value, as was the smaller arrangement with 12 tulips and 12 irises for $50. By comparison, 1-800-Flowers sells 15 irises for $45.

A deal in the Wild West of the flower business? We’d found it, and sure enough, we swooned. We figured Mom would too, although we’d have to give her one warning: As with many grower-direct outfits, because they skip the florist, flowers and vases arrive together—but in separate compartments. Mom will have to unpack and arrange the bouquet herself. But aren’t mothers good at that?

Good tulips will be firm and hearty, Moss says, and should reach full bloom a day or two after arriving.

Your words
on 2005 Easter Holiday

“This year’s Easter sales were down for us due to it following to early end of March, specifically Easter Lily sales were down tremendously. I did sell out of flowers because I planned it to be slower based off when it fell on the calendar, so it wasn’t a shocker. I usually do better than most shops on Easter because I promote it more with Spring displays of blooming plants and cash and carry bouquets out front market style. You can profit if you make them in bulk fashion and buy wise from wholesalers.”
– Leticia Burkett DBA, Anytime Flowers in Blackwell, Oklahoma

“Most of the business we generate is through our churches. We promote our business by providing our churches with all of the greenery, plants, and floral arrangements for the season.”
– Gary Googins, owner Bloomfield Florist in Broomfield, CO

“Don’t give up on this holiday; make sure you have lots of cash and carry cut flowers displayed in and outside the store - at REAL cash and carry prices. $9.95 works very well for us, customers are willing to spend $9.95 in our store just as much as they are at Wal-Mart or Sams Club!”
– Rick Conley, Oliver Flower Shop in Pittsburgh, PA

“Easter for the past two years has been very successful for us. We have seen a large increase even with cutting our advertising budget by using a different strategy, cutting out all radio and TV ads, and focusing on ads in our main newspaper and a few other smaller local newspapers. We also put up a tent at both of our retail locations (mostly just for a visual affect) and that increases foot traffic and interest in our stores, offering a large amount of Easter gift items, which we put out about a month before Easter, to help get customers in the mood. So, we still treat Easter as a holiday but we have to just put a new spin on how we do it.

Due to the fact that almost everyone sells Easter plants, Easter has become highly competitive and you have to market your plants differently from everyone else. Most florists are afraid to get in the trenches with ‘the tent guys’. We don’t have to; we just have to sell our products with sales and new ideas. ‘The tent guys’ are not professional florists and can’t offer the services that we can. What it comes down to is going the extra-mile to sell your product and yourself.”
– Jonathan Morrissey, Rich Mar Florist in Allentown, PA

“In the News

FTD FLORIST EXPRESSIONS IN BLOOM IN Corvallis, Oregon benefited from a local mention in the Corvallis Gazette-Times recognizing their status as a top member of FTD.

“We were thrilled to have again been chosen as Top Members in 2004 and decided to get some good publicity from the honor. What I did was create my own press release in the proper format and took it to our local newspaper. It seems to be much easier to get them to print good press about you if it is done as informative rather than promotional. We have since received many comments and compliments on our ‘award’ as the customers refer to it. It’s a great opportunity for some local PR that you can’t buy. It also helps significantly in ‘credentializing’ our business. It’s an opportunity that you have to take rather than be given, yet as easy as the time it takes you to create one.” - Jonathan Boudry, co-owner of Expressions in Bloom in Corvallis, OR.

FTD FRIEND CAROL BICE RECEIVED media attention for her status built through her 40-year floral design career in a special section within the Star-Telegram in Hurst, TX.

The article addresses Bice’s advice to new florists in order to become a floral designer, “…one should have a natural creative flair. That talent should be nurtured by a reputable teacher at an accredited floral-design school where students can learn the principles of design, such as color, depth perception, negative space and texture, she said.” Buddy and Carol Bice owned FTD Member shop Bice’s Florist in Hurst, TX. They recently sold the shop, which is upkeeping its high level reputation and strong partnership with FTD.

MANY FTD FLORISTS ARE GENERATING buzz in consumer media by thinking of creative ideas to promote the floral industry. Kremp Florist in Philadelphia received great media exposure on a local TV station encouraging consumers to think of spring flower arrangements with help from their shop, while Ashland Addison Florist in Chicago shared new design ideas for this year’s prom season on the popular Chicago CBS affiliate morning show. Partnered with a major department store, the news segment included prom dresses complemented with body flowers from the FTD Selections Guide including FTD® Spa Bracelet.

Owner Bill Sheffield and Floral Designer Martha Cantacio show off their floral archway at the local chicago CBS TV station

Blush™ Armband, The FTD® Happy Times™ Wrist Bracelet and the FTD® Serene Highness™ Bouquet.

Share your media exposure or buzzworthy news with the FTD Newsletter at newsletter@ftdi.com.

Share your words! Write to the editor of the FTD Newsletter at newsletter@FTDi.com or FTD Newsletter, 3113 Woodcreek Dr., Downers Grove, IL 60515. We look forward to hearing from you.
FTD supports Illinois State Florist Association

Florists gathered together for the Illinois State Florist Association Meeting in Decatur, IL. FTD Design Instructor Tommie Farris AIFD commented for a design panel, which featured the programs “Party Time,” “Celebrations of Spring,” “Designing on a Budget,” and “Spring Display and Merchandising.”

Jeffrey Rogerson of Jeffrey’s Greenworld Florist in Elizabeth, NC instructs participants. Jeffrey’s Greenworld Florist has been an FTD Member since 1985. (1) FTD Field Business Consultant Tom Spain joins FTD Members John Carr, owner of Betty and Bob’s Flower Shop in Decatur, IL and Diana Ferguson of Novak Flowers and Greenhouses in Bloomington, IL. John Carr was the highest bidder in the silent auction for a 2005 FTD Convention registration package and was also given the book “It’s Your Ship,” authored by Michael Abrashoff, the keynote speaker scheduled to appear at the 2005 FTD Floral Extravaganza in Dallas, TX. Diana was the second highest bidder in the auction. (2) FTD Field Business Consultants Tom Spain and Sarah Anderson (back) join (left to right) Debbie Schultz, Janet Huston and Kay Spruell of Burkland’s Florist of Effingham, IL. Burkland’s Florist has been an FTD Member since 1999. (3) FTD Field Business Consultants Tom Spain, Sarah Anderson (far left) and Dina Dandelles join the staff of Shirley’s Flower Shoppe of Mount Zion, IL. Shirley’s Flower Shoppe has been an FTD Member for 27 years. (4) Lee Martin of Nettle’s Flower Garden in St. Louis, MO shows off his creative floral design. Nettle’s Flower Garden has been an FTD Member since 2001. (5) Deb Hummel, owner of Upsie Daisy Florist in Champaign, IL, and her daughter Amy Hummel browse through the FTD Marketplace catalog. Upsie Daisy Florist has been an FTD Member for four years.

FTD Brings Education to Virginia Allied Florist Association

FTD Design Instructor Deborah De La Flor AIFD taught participants at the Virginia Allied Florist Association how to “Put Some Pizzazz in Your Everyday Work” by using FTD Marketplace containers. The event also featured corsage and silk workshops.

(1) FTD Field Business Consultant Bill Winckler joins FTD Member Chryslin Pruitt (right), owner of a Flower Boutique in Virginia Beach, VA, and her mother. (2) FTD Member Jeffrey Rogerson of Jeffrey’s Greenworld Florist in Elizabeth, NC instructs participants in a corsage workshop. Jeffrey’s Greenworld Florist has been an FTD Member since 1985. (3) FTD Field Business Consultant Bill Winckler and FTD Education Team Member Deborah De La Flor AIFD pose near the FTD booth at the Virginia Show.

FTD Member Benefits from New Technology

A. Dykstra Florist and Greenhouse in Spring Valley, NY is benefiting from the full spectrum of FTD Mercury Advantage features. Lynn Dykstra-Beers and MariEllyn Dykstra-Thurston of A. Dykstra Florist and Greenhouse said they use the system everyday and it is one of the best investments they have ever made.

“This system has maximized routes, eliminated overtime, cut down on the need for drivers during the holidays, and increased profitability for the shop,” said Lynn.

“MariEllyn is an expert on the mapping system. She has taken the time to work with tech support, Gearworks and Nextel to maximize efficiency of the system and has even helped fellow florists learn the system,” said George Williams, driver and dispatcher for A. Dykstra Florist and Greenhouse. A. Dykstra Florist and Greenhouse has been an FTD Member since 1963.

Creative Everyday Designs Bloom at WUMFA

FTD was excited to support the Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Florists’ Association recent event in Green Bay, WI. FTD Education Team Member John Klingel AIFD presented “Creative Everyday Designs,” which taught participants how to develop a signature style and create brand recognition.

FTD Field Business Consultant covering Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Kate Bank proudly stands behind the FTD booth.

Georgia Florists Enjoy The ‘Cent’ of Flowers

Hundreds of FTD Members benefited from the recent Georgia State Florists’ Association Convention. FTD Design Instructor Jeff Corbin AIFD presented “The ‘Cent’ of Flowers,” which focused on customer service techniques that can make the difference between owning a profitable store and fighting the losing battle.

“Jeff’s program, as always, was a success. Everyone that attended was talking about it,” said Lorenzo Cintron, vice president of Georgia State Florists’ Association and owner of Peterson’s Florist.com.

(1) Lorenzo Cintron, vice president of Georgia State Florists’ Association enjoys the successful event. (2) FTD Design Instructor Jeff Corbin AIFD presents “The ‘Cent’ of Flowers”. (3) FTD Field Business Consultant Doug Crescimanno joins Georgia State Florists’ Association President Mike Whittle for a photo in the FTD booth.
FTD MEMBERS CELEBRATIONS

(1) Rogers Flower Shop’s, Brockport, NY, owner Steve Manczak proudly displays his FTD 25-year anniversary plaque. (2) John and Sheila Hamel, owners of Flowers by Dick Burton Inc. in Batavia, NY, show their FTD Top 1000 plaque. (3) Eleanor Blum, owner of Rockcastle Florist and Grower in Canandaigua, NY, shows off her FTD 25-year anniversary plaque. (4) Robbie Griffin, owner of Casoi’s Flowers and Gifts in Corsicana, TX, received her Top 500 plaque from FTD Field Business Consultant Jayla Love. (5) Karen Clauss, one of the owners of Rudy’s Greenhouse Inc. of Elmira, NY, celebrates the shop’s 100th year in business and shows off their beautiful greenhouse.

CANADIAN FLORIST CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

JULIETTE FLORIST in St-Thérèse, Quebec is celebrating their 50th anniversary and three generations of family-owned business. In 1955, Juliette and Lionel Cardinal founded the business, which was handed down to their son Robert and his spouse Andree in 1966. An additional store was opened in 1989 in St-Janvier, Mirabel by their son Sylvain. Juliette Florist has been a FTD Member for 36 years.

Son Sylvain Cardinal proudly stands next to the FTD branded delivery van.

IN FRENCH:

Membre FTD depuis 36 ans, ils se sont impliqués durant 14 ans dans diverses fonctions au sein de l’Association, afin de promouvoir l’Industrie Florale et FTD dans toute les régions du Québec. En 1989, leur fils Sylvain ouvrit une succursale à St-Janvier de Mirabel. Un service personnalisé et de qualité, voilà les critères que le Fleuriste Juliette a su offrir, depuis 3 générations, autant à sa clientèle locale que pour les commandes recues et envoyées par transmission Florale.

La famille Cardinal est fière d’arborer dans leurs boutiques, le logo FTD symbole de garantie de satisfaction.

ALABAMA FLORISTS EXPERIENCE THE LATEST TRENDS

AT THE ALABAMA STATE FLORIST Association Convention, FTD Design Instructor Keith White AIFD presented on “Color In Style.” Keith showcased the latest color and design trends that are influencing the floral marketplace.

FTD Design Instructor Keith White AIFD (right) and FTD Regional Technology Sales Consultant Terry Thiel (left) join FTD Member Ross Railey (far left) of ETC by Ross in Decatur, AL. ETC by Ross has been a FTD Member since 2002.

FTD SUPPORTS NIAGARA INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLORISTS

FTD PROUDLY SUPPORTED THE Niagara International Association of Florists recent Spring Show in Amherst, NY. The event allowed participants to view the Spring 2005 holiday bouquets and the latest POS solutions in Mercury Technology.

FTD SPONSORS VALLEY WHOLESALE SHOW

FTD WAS EXCITED TO SPONSOR THE Valley Wholesale Show, which took place in Wichita, KS. FTD Design Instructor Keith White AIFD instructed the program “Wedding Floral Review,” which taught participants exciting and stimulating ways to increase their knowledge of wedding design. Keith featured three distinctive color pallets and versatile styles of floral products for weddings and receptions.

Keith showcased three displays of floral products for weddings during the FTD Education Program “Wedding Floral Review”.

(1) FTD Field Business Consultants David Leavitt and Angelo Pace discuss FTD products and services with Dick Miller, owner of Dick Miller Florist and Greenhouses in Tonawanda, NY. Dick Miller Florist and Greenhouses has been an FTD Member for 60 years. (2) Bruce and Brenda Vandersluis of Dobbie’s Florist, Ltd. in Niagara Falls, Ontario join the rest of Dobbie’s Florist staff for a photo. Dobbie’s Florist, Ltd. has been an FTD Member since 1984. (3) FTD Field Business Consultants David Leavitt and Angelo Pace join FTD Member Michael Cali from Cali’s Carriage House Florist in Oswego, NY. Cali’s Carriage House Florist has been an FTD Member since 1986.
FLOWER SHOP MAKEOVER
By FTD Design Instructor Deborah De La Flor AIFD

IF YOU HAVE watched any television at all in the past year, you will have noticed that makeover shows are all the rage. With that in mind, it’s very likely that your store is in need of at least a little help. If you can’t remember the last time you gave your shop a good once over, you may find that you’re in need of a complete makeover. Don’t be afraid or intimidated at the suggestion that your shop may be outdated. You’ll soon find that a makeover may be just what you need to inject new life into your business.

CAPTURE THE CUSTOMER
Start with the exterior; you have to make the average passerby feel that they need to come inside. If you can’t get people to notice your store, you have no hope of getting them to come inside. If you can’t get people to notice your store, you have no hope of reaching out to your customers. Your customers will appreciate your effort. This means product, but it also means that excitement along to your customers will go a long way toward keeping you in touch with the latest trends.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FITS YOUR STYLE
People like to see how your designs and products will look in their home, so consider removing old glass shelves and replacing them with a few pieces of furniture. Groupings of tables and chairs instead of those old mica pedestals will warm up the shop to foster creative and realistic ideas using the products you are selling your customers.

THINK FRESH!
If you have old silk arrangements that have been floating around your store for years, get rid of them. Silks are fantastic, but a design that hasn’t sold in three or four years probably never will. Out with the old that doesn’t move and in with the new. Make new designs, and try updating your language, for example how about calling them permanent botanicals, instead of silks. Whenever possible, update your inventory.

USE YOUR RESOURCES
You have many incredible resources all around you – use them! Ask your customers what they would like to see. Ask your vendors which vases or gift items are hot now – what is selling!? Treat yourself to a few new magazine subscriptions; home decorating and fashion magazines will go a long way toward keeping you in touch with the latest trends.

EDUCATE YOUR STAFF
It is also very important to make sure that your employees are on the same page as you are. Their appearance and attitude directly affect your bottom line. If you don’t feel they are dressed well enough for you to take them to lunch, then they are not dressed well enough to represent your business (this goes for drivers as well). If you can get them excited about the changes you are making, they will pass that excitement along to your customers without even realizing it.

ADD CREATIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE
Now that you have managed to attract new customers into your store, you need to make sure that you have something to offer them that can’t get just anywhere. This means product, but it also means service. You would be amazed at the effect of a small act of kindness when it is not expected. If you don’t have a coffee maker in your store, get one, even if you don’t drink it yourself. When you have walk-ins in the morning hours, offer them a cup of coffee. Buy a large golf umbrella, and leave by your front door. Then on rainy days, take the umbrella and walk your customers out to their cars. Simple gestures like this cost very little, but people will remember them.

EXPERIMENT WITH NEW IDEAS
Once your store has a nice fresh look, you must remember not to neglect your designs. Don’t be afraid to experiment with a new idea. There is a very nice feeling that comes with hearing a client say, “Wow, I’ve never seen anything like that before”. I’m not saying that you should forget the designs that you have learned, but I can’t stress enough the importance of keeping your work new and interesting. People will talk and the people they talk to can easily become future customers. Word of mouth is the best, and cheapest advertising you can get. Just give people something to talk about, and they will do the rest.

So you’ve done it. Your shop has a new, exciting look. Well don’t get comfortable! This is an ongoing process. You should refresh your shop’s look for each season. Your customers will appreciate your efforts, and so will your bottom line.
DESIGNS OF THE TIMES FLORIST FINDS MERCURY ADVANTAGE VERY PROFITABLE

BUSINESS OVERVIEW
STRAIGHT OUT OF COLLEGE, WITH an art major and a business minor, FTD Design Instructor Tina Stoecker AIFD knew that she wanted to own and operate her own flower shop. After a short one-year stint working with another shop, Stoecker opened Designs of the Times in Melbourne, FL in 1982.

As the business grew, Stoecker knew she needed to make changes. The shop already had a Unix-based floral shop management system in place. However, when Stoecker looked at Mercury Advantage in depth, she saw more business opportunities and greater possibilities for servicing her customers. “That’s what made our decision so easy,” explained Stoecker. “We wanted to enter that level of service that no one else was offering.”

RESULTS
“Mercury Advantage allows us easy access to customer history and has email delivery confirmation, which is extremely important for our customers,” comments Stoecker. “The marketing module is going to create some of our most lucrative advertising programs and campaigns to date.”

“With Mercury Advantage, I can tell you it was worth the investment. We save time and make more money.”

MERCURY MARKETING MODULE
Using the Marketing module, Stoecker sent out an email marketing campaign to 260 customers. “This one email campaign resulted in a 40 percent click-through to the Web site and 20 orders were written. Cost for the month on this campaign was $15. We do direct mail, radio, TV, print ads and billboards,” explained Stoecker. “But we don’t get the kind of response we’re getting by using the Marketing module and email marketing.” Another advantage of the Marketing module is the speed at which a direct mail campaign can be put together. “Developing a direct mail piece and inserting a coupon takes us only 20 minutes.”

MERCURY DELIVERY MODULE
The Mercury Delivery module consists of three areas to help maximize savings; address verification, electronic mapping and routing, and wireless delivery confirmation with GPS. One problem the shop was experiencing were numerous calls from customers wanting to know if their orders had been delivered. “This took a lot of time away from my staff,” explained Stoecker. “But now, with Delivery Confirmation, we can track every order at any point in time and send our customers an email telling them when the arrangement was delivered. Not a day goes by that I don’t receive an email back from one of my customers delighted with this service.”

MAPPING AND ROUTING
“We love the mapping and routing feature. The first real test was at Christmas with 20 drivers, and it was just fabulous,” stated Stoecker. Before mapping and routing, the drivers would have to physically look through the tickets, sort them and group them by specific delivery areas. “The process would take an hour each time. Now, with Advantage, it takes the drivers only 20 minutes.”

With the Delivery and Routing screen, it tells her how many arrangements are still in the process of being made, how many are out on the truck and how many were returned from delivery. “All that information helps me effectively plan our work schedule and it keeps us moving faster. To me, it’s just a phenomenal program.”

Drivers can plan their routes better and it also optimizes the routes so our drivers can be more efficient. Even on a regular daily basis we save about 20 minutes per route. We’re still learning the module, but with the optimizing feature our gasoline usage has also dropped by $75 per month and we’re able to get more orders out per day.”

Since Mercury Advantage, Designs of the Times average quantity of deliveries has increased with the same number of personnel. “I know Mercury Advantage is very cost effective. I truly believe this system is headed for a lot of shops.”

ORDER THESE GREAT FALL PRODUCTS BY JUNE 7, 2005!

FTD MARKETING MATERIALS
SPREAD THE GOOD WORD ABOUT incredible products you carry in your shop. Market The FTD® Grandparent’s Day Bouquet, The FTD® Sweetest Day Bouquet and many more through the FTD Marketing Kit. The FTD Marketing Kit includes quality statement stuffers, shop posters and a workroom calendar. Ad slicks, radio scripts and telephone reference sheets help you reach out your customers and drive business into your shop and are available at www.FTDi.COM for free downloads!

SEND YOUR SALES SOARING WITH AUTOMATED DIRECT MAIL SERVICE

FTD IS EXCITED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH a new service that will assist you in your marketing campaigns. We realize you may be too busy to create your own direct mail pieces, so FTD has launched an Automated Direct Mail Service, which will take a direct mail campaign from the design process to the mailbox.

All you have to do is provide us with a mailing list and we’ll take care of the rest. We will add your shop imprint or logo, a custom offer, and indicia and place them in the mail. Postal indicia can be obtained from the post office by asking for a permit number and providing them with the city, state and whether the mailing is first class or standard mail.

FTD EXPANDS THE FACILITY LINK PROGRAM

FTD IS PLEASED TO PRESENT OUR new Facilities Supplement in the May/June/July 2005 Directory. It is now easier than ever to find a filing florist when you have an order for a funeral home, hospital or nursing home.

Many FTD Members have taken advantage of the Facility Links on the FTD Directory CD in the past. In order to increase the visibility of FTD Members linked to local facilities, Facility Listings are now available in the printed FTD Directory as well. Look for the blue section near the front of the Directory, where facilities will appear alphabetically by city and state, with member listings following each facility.

Members who already had Facility Links on the FTD Directory CD have been automatically added to the Facilities Supplement for the original Facility Link price of $3.00 per link ($4.50 CAN). Starting with the August Directory, the cost to list in both the printed directory and the CD will be $6.00 ($7.50 CAN).

If you are interested in taking advantage of the expanded Facility Link program or wish to make any changes to your current links, please contact your Directory Sales Representative. Please reference the chart on page FAC-255 of the May Directory to find the Directory Sales Rep for your state. Or, you can send a GEN message to Directory Services at 90-0258AA. The deadline for the August Directory is Tuesday, June 7, 2005.
2005 FTD Floral Extravaganza
July 22-24, 2005 ★ Gaylord Texan Resort ★ Dallas, TX

3 REASONS TO DEDICATE DAYS TO YOUR BUSINESS

THE STRONGEST EDUCATION SCHEDULE IN THE INDUSTRY
• “8 Essential Steps to Finding and Keeping the Best Staff” by Donald Cooper
• “Thinking outside the container, turning inventory into cash” by FTD Design Instructor Jeff Corbin
• “Financial Management for the New or Non-Financial Floral Owner” by Gaylon Pyle
• “Fun, Cheap & Different Marketing Ideas to Grow Your Company” by Marty Grunder
• “Explode Your Sales!” by Bob Negen
• “Everyday Designs in Home Décor” by FTD Design Instructor Deb De La Flor

EXTRAORDINARY MEMBER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
• FTD Member Anniversary and Awards Celebration Luncheon! Nominate a fellow member for the prestigious awards TODAY including The FTD New Member Award, The FTD Marketing Award, The FTD Progressive Florist Award and The FTD Industry Service Award. Celebrating a landmark anniversary in partnership with FTD? Be recognized among thousands of peers.
• Special Guest Speaker Michael Abrashoff
• The FTD Reach for the Stars Gala Dinner including the presentations of the John A. Valentine and The FTD Lifetime Achievement Awards
• NEW! Regional Networking Breakfast

INCREDBLE VALUE AND DEALS!
• Check out the trade fair with great offerings from FTD Fresh Flowers, Giftwares, Greenbrier, Hickory Farms, US Balloon and many more!
• Benefit from FTD’s FREE room offer!
• Choose from one of the three low-priced registration packages to meet your business needs!
• Meet with experts in Mercury Technology and Member Services to see the ways that innovation can save you time and money!
• Browse the new seasonal offerings from Marketplace
• Discuss new marketing ideas on how to promote your Brand in partnership with FTD!

REGISTER NOW!
Online: FTDi.COM • Phone: 800-788-9000 ext. 6240 • Email: convention2005@ftdi.com

View the entire schedule of events and nominate a member for one of the prestigious FTD Member Awards online at www.FTDi.COM.