

MERCURYMESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2011



The FTD® Giving Thanks™ Bouquet
11-F4

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FTD

Flowers say it better. FTD says it best.™



Robert Apatoff
FTD President

DEAR FTD FLORISTS,

The holidays are here. As your partner, we want to make sure that you have the tools you need to attract more local orders as well as the resources to train your staff and keep their skills fresh.

The first action step is to visit www.FTDUniversity.com to view the helpful pre-recorded

webinars that we've hosted over the last several months. I encourage you to view "Preparing for a Successful Holiday Season" and "SuperSales Skills... Tips to Boost Your Profits" which will give you important tips to improve your bottom line.

Next, we're providing you with critical holiday information at www.FTDi.com/christmas. This valuable web site lists and shares the projected best sellers and tools to make sure that you are well-equipped for a successful holiday season!

Lastly, we know that e-commerce has changed customer buying habits. They demand transparency, value and quality. Merchants that don't deliver this usually don't get a second chance. We want to help you deliver a quality product that exceeds customer expectations. So, we're excited to share some upcoming initiatives in the adjacent (▶) article that will further expand our focus on providing a quality experience for the florists and customers. You can also go to www.FTDi.com/quality for FAQs and more details.

Wishing you a prosperous holiday season from FTD!

NEW QUALITY INITIATIVES SUPPORT FLORISTS

Knowing that today's consumer is focused on quality and value, FTD is continuing to invest in critical infrastructure necessary to help ensure that the Mercury Network delivers the highest quality fulfillment for member florists and consumers.

"We are excited about the number of upcoming initiatives that we believe will further strengthen the confidence of our member florists when sending their orders through the FTD network," said Michael Dorion, FTD Executive Vice President of CRM and Quality.

"Our efforts are concentrated on a wide array of customer and member feedback, putting particular emphasis into those areas that will result in an improved customer experience," Dorion continued.

Examples of a few of the upcoming quality initiatives are:

Quality Star - Expanding the number of members who can earn the Quality Star and providing member florists with visibility to those florists that have earned the designation.

Delivery Confirmation - Investing in an infrastructure to increase visibility to the delivery status of an order in a more timely fashion.

Address Verification - Increasing the level of address accuracy captured from the consumer to save the filling florist from having to track down correct information.

Test Order Management System - Further expansion of the test order process to help member florists improve quality through "secret shopper" feedback.

Post Fulfillment Survey - Expanding the breadth of surveys used to measure consumer satisfaction related to the purchasing experience, putting key emphasis on fulfillment.

"We believe that we must continue to strengthen our commitment to improving the quality of the customer experience," said Rob Apatoff, FTD President. "We recognize how quality will define our industry to a new, more critical and better informed customer. For 100 years, we have been a pioneering leader in promoting quality and we will continue to take the lead in standing for quality for our member florists and their customers."

For additional information on FTD Quality Programs, visit www.FTDi.com.

PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

FTD Design Instructor Tina Coker (formerly Stoecker), AIFD, PFCI, presented how to prepare for the holidays as part of FTD's FREE webinar series. Here are some program highlights:

What makes a holiday successful? Being Profitable | Creating a Great Consumer Experience
Managing Stress and Overtime | Overcoming any Last Minute Obstacles

Review these three areas carefully to ensure you have a profitable holiday:

1. Planning

- ✓ Review the last two years
- ✓ Calculate workload
- ✓ Create a limited product selection
- ✓ Generate a production schedule
- ✓ Create a marketing plan

2. Preparation

- ✓ Generate a check-off list
- ✓ Hold a staff meeting
- ✓ Provide training
- ✓ Create a back-up plan

3. Management

- ✓ Organize designs
- ✓ Manage delivery
- ✓ Complete post-holiday follow up



The FTD®
Seasons Greetings™ Bouquet

Missed the webinar "Preparing For A Successful Holiday Season"?
Visit www.FTDUniversity.com today and click *Webinars*.

FTD® SPOTLIGHT: ASHLAND-ADDISON FLORIST CO.

Chicago-based **Ashland-Addison Florist Co.** is a family-owned and operated business established in 1932 with a focus on creating a quality product with each and every delivery. With same-day delivery capabilities to Chicago and over 150 suburbs, they continuously meet customers' quality expectations. FTD talked with President Bill Sheffield.

FTD: *What does quality mean to Ashland-Addison Florist Co.?*

Bill: Quality encompasses all aspects of our services and products. It means that we start with a helpful voice answering the phones and finish with a friendly follow-up after the delivery. We purchase somewhere around 80% of our perishables direct from farms and/or brokers to ensure the freshest product and the best values, which we pass on to our customers. It also means we invest in technology to support the entire process.

FTD: *What type of processes do you have in place to make sure that the product being sent out meets your shop's quality standards?*

Bill: We have a number of employees responsible for different aspects of quality control. Receiving inspects the products upon arrival. Then, after each design is made, we check the card for spelling, accuracy and occasion; verify the inclusion of care instructions and a preservative food packet; then check the accuracy of any add-ons. The team is instructed to "kick it back" if they feel there is something that needs to be tweaked.

FTD: *Does your everyday practice of sending out a quality product change during the holidays when the order volume is so large?*

Bill: No, but the biggest difference is that when we pre-make arrangements for the holidays, we make sure to spot-check them as they get tagged. We still go through the whole quality control process. Also, we usually have one person dedicated to quality control during the major holidays.

FTD: *How do you incorporate sending a delivery confirmation in your order life cycle?*

Bill: We send an electronic copy of the order to the customer immediately after taking it. Once the delivery is made, the customer also receives a delivery confirmation. Whenever a delivery is left with a doorman, neighbor or by a door, we phone the recipient to confirm they received it. This process is generally done before our driver even returns to the shop.

FTD: *How have you adjusted your quality standards to meet the expectations of today's demanding consumer?*

Bill: All of the things we do now to improve quality was part of a learning process... some from mistakes and others from employee, customer and recipient input. It is true that today's customers are more demanding than ever before and that is why we make sure we are delivering quality products to the best of our ability every day. By adding an extra follow-up to both the customer and the recipient, we're letting them know we care!

For more information about Ashland-Addison Florist Co., visit www.ashaddflorist.com.



Photos courtesy of Ashland-Addison Florist Co.

Why FTD

PATH TO MORE ORDERS | LEADING TECHNOLOGY | BUSINESS SOLUTIONS | BRAND & INNOVATION

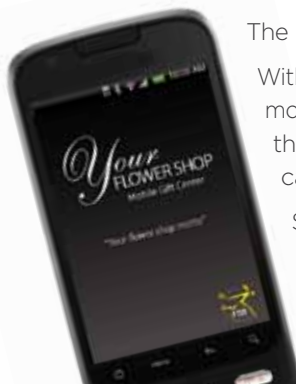
BEAT THE COMPETITION, GET A MOBILE APP TODAY

The holidays are around the corner and NOW is the time to get your customers engaged!

With special features like push notifications and multiple payment options, floralapp™ is the perfect mobile solution to connect you to your customers. floralapp™ allows customers to order flowers at the press of a few buttons and works on both Android and iPhone devices. Your customers can order flowers and gifts for delivery OR pick up.

Stay ahead of your competition and be the first to offer floralapp™ in YOUR market!

Contact techsales@FTDi.com today for more details about special promotions and offers.



EVERYDAY COMBO PACKS CAN HELP REDUCE COSTS

Combo packs can help you manage your inventory and fill orders successfully. Call your FTD Marketplace Representative today at **800-767-4000** to order your everyday combo packs including sympathy, birthday and baby containers.



COMBO PACKS AVAILABLE



COMBO PACKS AVAILABLE

The FTD® Birthday Bouquet

The FTD® Holiday Wishes™ Bouquet By Vera Wang

VERA WANG FLOWERS—YOUR NEW FTD EXCLUSIVE

Don't miss out on beautiful new florist-filled Vera Wang Flowers by FTD®. Call your FTD Marketplace Representative today at **800-767-4000** to place your order. You can also visit www.FTDi.com/VeraWang for more information on the full line.

BOUQUETS DESIGNED FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Several FTD best selling designs will be offered as “drop-in bouquets” for Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to pre-book these designs that will save you time during the peak of the holiday!

Drop-in bouquets will be available for the following designs:

- ✓ V1, V2, V6 and V8 Bouquets
- ✓ FTD® Red Rose Bouquet xx-4305
- ✓ FTD® Sweet Surprises™ Bouquet xx-4792
- ✓ FTD® Pink Lily™ Bouquet S22-4298

Contact your FTD Flower Exchange Representative at **800-767-4000** or shop at www.FTDFlowerExchange.com.

NEW E-NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT YOU!

If you're not receiving FTD Mercury Minute, sign up today at www.FTDi.com/email. You can also submit news and photos to prdept@FTDi.com.

NEXT CODIFICATION DEADLINE IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Call your FTD Marketplace Representative today at **800-767-4000**.

EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS FOR FTD FLORISTS

With FTD's exclusive discount offer with Budget, your business can receive up to 20% off when you use discount code **#56000143510**. Utilizing Budget trucks to assist with your increased holiday business is a flexible, low-cost business option.

To make a reservation, go to www.budgettruck.com/FTD or call **800-566-8422**.

FTD and FedEx are proud to announce a new member benefit! As an FTD member you are now eligible to receive valuable discounts of up to 29% on select FedEx® shipping services.

Visit www.FTDi.com/PDP & click on the FedEx logo for more details.

For a complete list of discounts, go to www.FTDi.com/PDP.



October issue of FTD Mercury Minute



FTD® SOLUTIONS

How Has FTD Helped You?

FTD Flower Exchange Offers Great Savings for a New York Florist

Bob Yedowitz of **Emil Yedowitz Sons, Inc.**, located in Yonkers, NY, wanted to maximize his flower buying process. He was looking to reduce his costs, yet increase access to a wider variety of inventory.

"We have been using the FTD Flower Exchange to purchase our flowers since 2006," said Yedowitz. "I originally tried the service because it offered a large variety of flowers, more than I could find at any one local wholesale florist. The product is offered at a fair price and comes with a guarantee that is not available from my local wholesalers. I also like the fact that I have the ability

to be billed for the flowers on my FTD Clearinghouse Statement.

"I continue to purchase a large amount of my floral product through the FTD Flower Exchange because of the one stop shopping capabilities, quality guarantee and great prices. In addition, the order process is simple, and fast, and if I don't see something I want listed on the web site, my Representative can find it for me. Also, if I need something in a hurry, I can place my order up until 2 pm and have the flowers in my shop by 10 am the next day.

"The FTD Flower Exchange Team is excellent. The team is very tuned into the florist as well as the farms. If a grower doesn't meet the expectations of FTD Flower Exchange and the florist, you probably won't see that farm or its product offered on the web site anymore."

To learn more about how you can save money, visit FTD Flower Exchange at www.FTDFlowerExchange.com or call **800-767-4000**.



Bob Yedowitz of Emil Yedowitz Sons, Inc.,
Yonkers, NY

CHANGE THE WAY YOU ORGANIZE YOUR EVENT BUSINESS WITH FTD MERCURY

FTD Mercury X3 Fall, the upcoming release of FTD's flagship floral technology solution, is right around the corner. The centerpiece of the latest software release is the Mercury Event Planner, providing unprecedented abilities to help you with your wedding and event needs.

The Mercury Event Planner will change how you track your events and weddings by helping you:

- ✓ Quickly build proposals from your existing FTD Mercury products.
- ✓ End paper clutter - consolidate information in a single, easy-to-access location.

- ✓ Keep track of the proposals you send, those that are accepted and those that are rejected.
- ✓ View upcoming events for the next 30 days at the click of a button.
- ✓ Automatically create tickets in FTD Mercury - integrating events seamlessly into your existing order process.

Built with extensive florist input, Mercury Event Planner makes it easy to not only track your upcoming events, but also to enter new events, from the initial interview to the final proposal. Once you have collected information about the event, intuitively organized screens enable you to add products to the proposal from your existing products in FTD Mercury - including all FTD Floral Selection Guide products. When you're finished entering products, quickly generate an event proposal. When a customer accepts the proposal, just click to convert the proposal into tickets in FTD Mercury. FTD Mercury X3 Fall will be available in December.

If you're not a current FTD Mercury customer, contact Mercury Technology Sales by phone at **800-767-3222** or by email at techsales@FTDi.com to schedule a free demo today!



The FTD® You're Special™ Bouquet



FTD Mercury Event Planner Dashboard

THE FTD TEAM IS WORKING FOR YOU

FTD Marketplace Sales
800-767-4000
marketplacesales@FTDi.com

FTD Flower Exchange
800-767-4000
ftdflowerexchange@FTDi.com

FTD Member Services
800-788-9000
memberservices@ftdi.com

FTD Mercury Support
888-205-7225

FTD Technology Sales
800-767-3222
techsales@FTDi.com

FTD Florists Online
800-576-6721
floristsonline@FTDi.com

FTD Flowers All Hours
800-669-1000
fah@FTDi.com

FTD Cash-Flo
800-788-9000
cashflo@FTDi.com

FTD Directory Services
800-788-9000
directoryservices@FTDi.com

FTD Newsletter
prdept@FTDi.com

FTD International Retrans
retrans@FTDi.com



By: FTD Design Instructor
Kristine Kratt AIFD, CFD

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

During a recent dining experience, the chef came out from the kitchen, and introduced himself and told us about the evening's specials. He answered some questions about things we were considering and then continued circulating through the dining room. We were charmed by the personal touch of talking to the professional that was creating our meal.

Showcase Your Talents

I have often thought about the correlation between the restaurant industry and the floral industry. Like chefs, florists also create recipes by hand, combining unique offerings for customers. Florists bring in the best and freshest product, honor local and seasonal elements and try to provide a stellar customer service experience. But how many

times does a floral designer come out front to present their creation to a customer in a flower shop? Most of the time we remain hidden away in the back room as our premade and prepackaged arrangements appear in the cooler for potential customers to see. To elevate our customer service, we must be that "chef" who greets the patron and takes the time to explain the product and how it was created for them.

Personal Interaction Creates an Experience

The trend of bringing the design staff to the front of the store offers unique product and interactive customer experiences, is memorable and builds loyalty. Plus, it shows off your skills and professionalism. It also allows people to see what goes into the design process, and helps them to understand and appreciate that

*"Like chefs,
florists also
create recipes
by hand..."*

their purchase is customized before their very eyes. Sales people can help a customer, just as a waiter or waitress can take

an order. When a designer, like a chef, offers personal interaction with a client, it can create a more intimate experience. Just remember that offering extraordinary customer service is the element that can set you apart from the competition.

Whether creating a delicious Chicken Marsala or a fantastic Biedermeier bouquet, being out front with people and sharing our expertise is the ultimate recipe for success.



Flower shops like **Jones the Florist** in Cincinnati, OH have great successes showcasing their designer in the main storefront.

WANT TO INCREASE PROFITS? REDUCE COSTS? FTD UNIVERSITY CAN HELP!

As part of your FTD membership, all florists have access to a wealth of professional online educational tools and programs on FTD University.

Check it out today! Visit www.FTDUniversity.com.

FREE
eLearning
WEBINAR

"TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR BUSINESS"

Tuesday, December 6, 2pm ET/11am PT

Don't miss this chance to learn how to get new business, as well as how to keep and grow your current business.

Host: Art Conforti, Beneva Solutions

Register today at www.FTDi.com/elearningworkshop

