New President Says WF&FSA should ‘Not be Nched’ to One Market, but Rather Should Embrace all Markets

WF&FSA Conference, November 5, 2010, Miami, FL - In the last ten years, as the ground moved from underneath us, we have all been trying to find our footing, our niche, the place where we function best and bring value. This current economic crisis has caused all of us to rethink our strategies.

As a member of WF&FSA you should be asking “where is WF&FSA going, and how does that benefit MY company?” I think WF&FSA benefits its members in very tangible ways. Let me explain.

In October 2009, the WF&FSA Board of Directors held a retreat to make sure WF&FSA was on the right path. From that meeting emerged some key strategies that will directly benefit member companies.

Not Nched

What came from the retreat is that WF&FSA must evolve with its members, and broaden WF&FSA’s focus beyond the traditional industry. Like its membership, WF&FSA should NOT BE NICHE to one market, but rather should embrace all markets that sell floral.
WF&FSA is expanding its marketing campaign to help members expand their business and open doors to new opportunities.

In a national survey, wholesalers projected a desire to maintain their retail florists as customers but they also want to dramatically increase their business with additional marketing channels to include event planners and independent grocers.

**Retail Florist of the Year**

Let’s look at the florist segment of the market first. WF&FSA helps its members help florists.

WF&FSA co-sponsors the Retail Florist of the Year Award with Florists’ Review magazine. WF&FSA supports this award to demonstrate to florists that wholesalers value them. This award recognizes not only excellence but also the passion that florists have for the industry. Only WF&FSA wholesalers can nominate a florist for this award. This is the eighth year that we have co-sponsored this award.

As a byproduct from this award, WF&FSA provides members with ready made best practices that they can personalize and send to their customers. This coming year WF&FSA will create audio conferences that members can promote to their customers featuring these award winning florists.

**Direct2Florist**

It has been projected that by 2020 as much as 35% of floral sales will be made through the Internet. WF&FSA is working hard and has made an investment to get florists more orders at full value as we enter this era of Internet growth.

WF&FSA, in partnership, owns the rights to Direct2Florist.com in the U.S. and Canada. Today, Direct2Florist provides Internet orders to over 1,800 florists in the U.S. and Canada at full value. The way to think about Direct2Florist is that WF&FSA has invested in an Internet company and it will take time to fully develop and mature. Direct2Florist is designed to help florist compete on the Internet. Anyone anywhere in the world can send an order through a florist in the U.S. and Canada and the
florists get 100% of the order. The consumer pays an $8 transaction directly to Direct2Florist and nothing is deducted from the value of the flowers.

We are not naive. We know that Direct2Florist is playing in a field of giants when it comes to flower sales on the Internet in the U.S. and Canada. However, we also know that even a small piece of this Internet business is big business.

Direct2Florist has hired a Search Engine Optimization Company that has promised results. Within a month of hiring this new company Direct2Florist has seen a 61% conversion increase and a 51% increase in traffic. We hope to continue to see these sorts of positive results.

**Event Planners/Independent Grocers**

After retail florists, wholesalers said that the most important market segments to their business are event planners and independent grocers.

WF&FSA helps its members better penetrate the event planning and independent grocer markets. The WF&FSA Marketing Committee has developed a three-step program for these markets segments.

WF&FSA is approaching both markets with the same approach.

**Step One - Investigate**
Investigate the business practices of each segment and educate WF&FSA members on how these segments do business.

**Step Two - Communicate**
Market and communicate directly to event planners and directly to Independent grocers and about the value of floral to their business and the value of wholesale distributors.
Step Three – Stay the Course
Build on the efforts of the first two steps and grow the relationship with these market segments over time.

Passion for the Industry

Those of you who know me well, know that I can be very passionate about the floral industry. I think our best days are still ahead of us. I am involved with WF&FSA to the degree that I am because WF&FSA is an innovative organization with a passion for the industry as well. And, as President, I will make sure that the passion only grows and becomes stronger.

It doesn’t matter if you are the president, CFO, branch manager, flower buyer, hardgoods buyer, sales manager, salesperson, operations, etc. You are all a part of WF&FSA.

Don’t be afraid to show your passion for the floral industry. Share it with your co-workers, your family, your friends and even with strangers. Everyone loves flowers and finds the floral industry fascinating.

Don’t be afraid to let your passion for flowers show.

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Wholesale Florist and Florist Supplier Association (WF&FSA)
105 Eastern Ave, #104, Annapolis, MD 21403-3366
Phone: 888-289-3372, Fax: 410-573-5001

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