

## QUICK TIPS ON CONVERSION

> If you're like most florists, website revenue represents 30 to 40 percent of business. Many of these purchases are from local customers already familiar with your brand, people who visited your site directly or used your name in a search. (You can confirm that fact with a quick review of your web analytics.) The rest stem from people finding you through geographic searches or arriving from social media, directories and website references.

How do you convince those customers — who don't know you or your shop — to stay on your site and make a purchase? That's the big question.

The purpose of search engine optimization (SEO) is to drive traffic to your website, but that goal is only half the e-commerce picture. Think of SEO as the strategy that opens the water spigot; your website is the bucket. Great SEO will fill the bucket fast, but if it's riddled with holes, the water just escapes.

This month and next, we'd like to impress upon you another website strategy that is just as important: conversion rate optimization (CRO). We'll explain its importance and share the various processes and methodologies of CRO. In other words, we'll tell you how to keep that bucket full.

### All About Conversion

A conversion is a customer who makes a purchase when they visit your website. Of all stats you'll find in analytics, this is the one you need to obsess over. Gauging the value of CRO to your bottom line is simple math. If you have a current conversion rate of 5 percent and you double the number of people who purchase from your online store to 10 percent — you've just doubled website (and overall) revenue.

Consider the practice of optimizing for conversions as the process of patching up those potential holes in your website. That means focusing on layout, photos, colors, fonts and functions that grab customers' attention while creating great content that drives customers to browse and boost their confidence, increasing the likelihood of them making a purchase.

### Work on Value Proposition

Before we talk about website form, function and correcting potential "conversion killers" (we'll dive more into this next month), let's chat about how to make a great impression with customers when they visit using compelling content.

Remember, getting customers to click is a marvelous feat in itself; however, you must make that click totally worth it for them by selling your value as a vendor they can trust. Otherwise, they'll just "bounce" off your website to someone else offering a better value proposition. (By the way, that bounce rate is another analytics stat you should be monitoring.)

So, when you look at your site, be the customer and ask yourself, "Why should I buy from you and not from a competitor?" You need to communicate the answer in about 10 words or less, and this core message must be featured on your homepage.

The challenge is the fact that you probably match value with local competitors on nine out of 10 elements. Still, just one defining element can set you apart.

Here are some potential elements that make you stand out:

- **Be hyper local.** Geographic searches are specific. Think: zip codes, venue names, streets, cities and suburbs. List your address at the very top of every page (which helps mobile users click and visit) and make sure content talks about how you're the local florist that serves the immediate area.
- **Confirm you're a brick and mortar.** The best way to convey literal street cred is to post street photos. A storefront shot is obvious, but consider showing folks a photo album of the shop: design area, parking lot, inside the cooler and more. Even better? Post a video tour! Be sure this media is search engine friendly by using the same keywords and phrases developed when you wrote up your value proposition and place that verbiage in the ALT tags and file names of photo files. Don't forget to tag those videos.
- **ID your crew.** Shoppers want to meet the people behind your business.



Post their photos, bios and, most important, what they do for the shop and any particular expertise. Also, make these personal by posting hobbies and/or interests.

- **Replace jargon.** "Sympathy" vs. "funeral flowers," "teddy bear" vs. "plush." Ditch the insider lingo in favor of the language customers actually use (including common flower names, colors and occasions). Detailed product descriptions help SEO and CRO. Stay tuned next month as we explore conversion-boosting methods such as optimal web design, use of colors and fonts, streamlining the shopping cart and how offering fewer options may mean more revenue for you. 📌

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### GO DEEPER

We've devoted plenty of past Plugged Ins to photography for a reason. Customers love to view quality photographs of products before they make a purchase. So, buy that DSLR, set up a studio with proper lighting and snap away. Get additional tips on taking excellent photos at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).