

Subject: NewsBud

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From: Flowers Canada Retail (sent by Flowers Canada Retail <flowers=flowerscanada.org@mcsv1.net>)

To: arman@flowerscanada.org

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January 25 , 2011		Send us an email
	<h1>NewsBud</h1>	
GROWING YOUR BUSINESS TOGETHER		
FLOWERS CANADA RETAIL FILES MISLEADING TRADE PRACTICES WITH COMPETITION BUREAU OF CANADA	CONTENTS	
	Flowers Canada Retail Files Misleading Trade Practices with Competition Bureau of Canada	
RE: RULING ON MISLEADING TRADE PRACTICES	Rose Supply Will Meet Valentine's Day Supply	
<p>I am the Executive Director of Flowers Canada Retail (FCR), the national trade association representing retail florists in Canada. FCR has recently received a complaint from Denise Scapellino, owner of the Flower Cellar, a member florist in Mississauga, concerning a website operated by a competitor. The offending website has included the complainant's business address in a list of Toronto-area florists without the complainant's knowledge or consent. The biggest problem with the offending listing is that is accompanied by a hypertext link which, in fact, goes directly to the competitor's website under the generic URL, www.afloristintoronto.com. As a result, unsuspecting users who access this website through the link are left with the impression that they are purchasing flowers from the listed florist, when they are, in fact, placing the order with an entirely different florist. According to the complainant, there has been a substantial downturn in her business since this link was placed on the afloristintoronto.com website. She believes that many of her former customers have been misled to place orders with her competitor as a result of the misleading listing and link.</p>	6 Reasons You're Being Social Media Ignored	
	Florists Pulling Out the Stops of Valentine's Day	

While the offending listing does not purport to offer any specific product, this misuse of the complainant's business address does on its face, appear to constitute an unfair trade practice under the Competition Act.

As the trade association representing retail florists across Canada, FCR is particularly concerned that this is not an isolated issue between two individual florists. Rather it is representative of the sort of misleading advertising within the florist trade that has become commonplace on the Internet. Companies represent themselves as being local florists in a particular town or city when, in fact, they are nothing more than call centres that gather orders which they then re-direct to local florists after charging a substantial commission for obtaining the order. The damage being sustained by legitimate local florists as a result of this misleading trade practice is very substantial.

In the case of the website that is the subject of this complaint, we find that, in addition to the complainant's address, it lists addresses of over 65 individual shops in the metro Toronto area, each of which links to the e-commerce website operated by the owner of the www.afloristintoronto.com website. Thus the listing of the complainant's business address is not an isolated case.

We would be obliged if you could look into this matter and let us know whether the listing of other businesses in this misleading way does, in fact, constitute an unfair trade practice under the Competition Act. If so, we would ask that appropriate enforcement action be taken to compel the offending party to remove the misleading list from their website and to compensate any parties who have been adversely affected by their unfair trade practices.

Sincerely,

Arman Patel, B.A.,M.A., MBA
Executive Director
Flowers Canada Retail

ROSE SUPPLY WILL MEET VALENTINE'S DAY NEEDS

With Valentine's Day quickly approaching, wholesalers are adjusting their rose buying strategies and keeping an eye on quantity, quality and price in the wake of severe weather and economic hardships that hit Colombia in recent months.

Their general consensus: supply is "tighter than usual," but, given global sourcing, still "sufficient."

Augusto Solano, president of Asocolflores, the Association of Colombian Flower Exporters, said the country has experienced "noticeable relief" from the torrential rains through the fall and early winter, which raised concern about the roses that would be available for Valentine's Day. He added that is still too early to determine what impact the rain and farm closures (due to the devaluation of the peso) will have had on Colombia's flower production.

"In the meantime, Colombian flower growers are working feverishly to harvest and fill their orders for Valentine's Day," Solano said.

By pre-booking, most reputable wholesalers, secure most of their Valentine's products from Columbia and, likely several wholesalers plan to get product from other sources, including Ecuador and California, to fill orders that come in later —

especially for pink and red roses, which he anticipates will be in short supply in Colombia for orders not pre-booked.

Despite a down year in production, Colombia, the no. 1 supplier of roses for the North American market, should still have an adequate supply. Diligently monitoring quality control, due to the excessive moisture and concerns about Botrytis, are generally the top priorities for sourcing from Colombia.

Another byproduct of the weather and economic pressures is some upward movement on price. Hopefully consumers will not notice much difference in the price of roses at their florists' shops.

The old analogy that the few cents that a wheat farmer receives makes little difference in the price of a loaf of bread is appropriate. The firmer market may actually help retail florists, as we expect to see less 'cut rate' roses at the supermarkets this Valentine's Day.

Weather issues impacting supply often become fodder for a "sky is falling" type of story from the news media, pointed out SAF Vice President of Marketing-Jennifer Sparks, who urges florists who get calls from reporters to "stay positive. Let them know flowers come from all over the world and you are in the business to wow their loved ones with the best selection of top-quality flowers," she said.

6 REASONS YOU'RE BEING SOCIAL MEDIA IGNORED

We're just three weeks into 2011 and you may already be feeling a little social media frustrated. It's okay, you can admit it. You can admit that, despite all your best efforts, your social media accounts are failing to connect with the right people. In fact, sometimes you're left to wonder if they're connecting with anyone. You're not seeing any replies, no retweets and your follower count has been stuck at 200 for three months. What's going on?

It's a question I get a lot from small-, medium- and even large-business owners when it comes to the status of their social media accounts. When things aren't going quite the way you'd hope, sometimes it can be tough to figure out why. However, below are some common reasons I see for why businesses find themselves social media ignored.

1. You don't update enough: If you want people to connect with you, you have to be present. You have to constantly be updating your accounts, sharing information, talking to people, and acting like you're part of the community. While we're all busy and it's sometimes hard to fit yet-another-task into your schedule, it's all part of creating that social presence. If you're having a difficult time finding time to Facebook, schedule it into your day or week. The same way you schedule in all your other work, schedule in these types of tasks to make yourself accountable for them.

2. You go update overboard: Woah, Nelly. Slow down. It's not necessary to post a new Facebook update every five minutes. In fact, you really don't want to. By posting too much information you begin to overload your community and make it difficult for them to keep up with your updates. They may also suffer brand blindness – failure to notice your avatar because it's all they ever seen. If you're not sure how many times you should updating you may want to take a look at how often some of your favorite brands update their accounts. What frequency seems to be working for them? Don't be afraid to experiment and see just how much (or little) your customers want from you.

3. You're not providing enough value: One big mistake I see brands make with social media is that they update for the sake of updating. It's almost as if it's Wednesday at 9am and they suddenly realize they haven't said anything all week. So they'll log into Twitter and write about what their cat did this morning or how much traffic there was on the freeway coming into work. While it's fine to share lifestyle tweets, you want to make sure you're also providing value. You want to create a strategy for the type of content you'll be sharing and how you'll communicate with your audience. Whether you decide you want to share value through posting links, writing great content, offering deals & promotions, or just having above-and-beyond levels of customer service is up to you. However, you should know what that value is and what your goal is for being there.

4. You don't respond to others: Are you monitoring your social mentions so that you can respond to people who mention your brand or who ask questions that you can answer? If not, it would help the health of your account to start. The point of

social media is to be social. Take time to track down the people talking about your brand or to monitor keywords appropriate to your business, and then hop into the conversation. There's nothing worse than a brand that has a Twitter account but doesn't respond when you ask them a question. It's like you're there, but ignoring them.

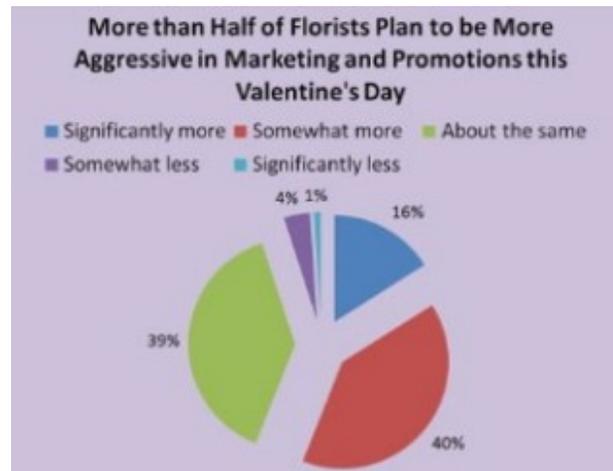
5. You're too salesy: We like marketing in social media the same way we like it everywhere else – subtle and when it doesn't feel like marketing. If you try to use social media to "sell" your customers, you may actually be turning them off. Instead, use these platforms to let them get to know the person behind the brand. Once they form that connection with you, they'll be much more interested in hearing about what you do for a living and how they may be useful to them. Avoid being salesy as much as possible. Instead, just be a person with a no agenda.

6. You're hiding from your customers: Do your customers know these social media accounts or are you [hiding from them](#)? Are you promoting your Facebook account from your Web site, in your email newsletter, on your Web site? If you're not and you're simply hoping they'll find your social accounts on your own, well, that may be a big reason why your numbers aren't growing. People can't connect with you if they don't know you're there. Make sure you're promoting your presence.

Source: *Small Business Trends*

FLORISTS PULLING OUT THE STOPS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

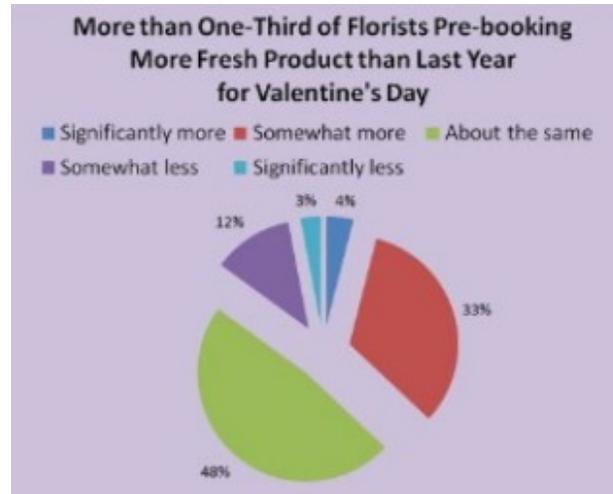
More than half of the florists responding to Zoomerang Valentine's Day Intentions Survey say they are being more aggressive this year than last in their promotions and marketing for the big holiday. Only five percent will scale back their efforts from last year.



With Valentine's Day falling on a Monday, historically not a great day for delivering to the work place, florists are incorporating the following messages in their promotions to urge customers to order early and arrange delivery on the Friday before the pre-holiday weekend or at home or restaurants:

1. Surprise your sweetheart at work
2. Gifts can be delivered to homes
3. Flowers make people happy (as shown by research)
4. Offering deals and special offers

Two slightly-less-popular messages include "gifts can be delivered to restaurants" and "flowers are affordable luxuries." (See Valentine's Day Playbook for additional ideas for early-order incentives.)



Floral wholesalers will be happy to hear that more than a third of florists (37 percent) are pre-booking more fresh product than last year. Just under half (48 percent) are pre-booking at last-year's level while only 15 percent are buying less.

More than 60 percent plan to be open all day Sunday before Valentine's Day, with an additional 28 percent open part of Sunday. Only six percent will be closed all day while the rest hadn't decided yet.

Retailers also indicated that they'd price both dozens of arranged and unarranged roses about 4 percent above last year's levels.

Source: Zoomerang Survey

**Flowers Canada Retail represents all segments of the Canadian Retail Floral Industry.
Our goal is helping you reach yours.**

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