



# How to Expand Your Flower Shop Business to Include Wedding Events



# Introduction

Seasoned florists understand how the flower industry continues to evolve and change over time. Gone are the days when buying flowers was a case of stepping into your favorite local shop, chat about the week's events and having your bouquet arranged, decorated and handed to you with all the ceremony that makes flowers such a special affair.

Times have changed and florists are exploring avenues outside of their brick and mortar stores to meet modern customers' needs. With walk-in clients on the decrease and e-commerce replacing traditional sales, expanding your reach as a business owner is important to long term success.

Fortunately, there are more ways than one for florists to branch out their budding businesses. One way is to make a name for yourself as the wedding florist of choice in your local area and beyond.

Think about weddings for a second: they happen all year round and there are always brides-to-be who are in the market for a florist who can take care of everything from consultations, to design, to delivery, setup and breakdown of floral arrangements on their special day.

Establishing yourself as the local guru for all things floral for weddings may appear daunting at first, but is a sure-fire way to boost your bottom line and create new avenues for you to explore as a business owner.

This quick guide includes a few clear-cut strategies and tactics that you can follow to make in-roads as the new wedding florist on the block. Keep it handy as you embark on this new and exciting chapter in your career as a floral genius.

*According to a Real Weddings Survey, in 2012, the average American wedding budget was \$28,427, with \$1,997 pegged to flowering budgets.*





# Getting Your Name Out There

Starting off small with weddings for friends, acquaintances and family members is a good way to test the waters and get your name out as a wedding florist.

Small events mean less dependencies, smaller budgets and less risk, which is a good way to measure your ability to meet the demands of preparing for events while managing your flower shop daily. But don't be misled into thinking that catering for smaller events will be a matter of "rinse and repeat". Wedding trends of late see couples looking to add their own personal touch to ceremonies as traditions evolve and younger couples seek to find their own avenues for expression.

*"Couples are more focused than ever on creating a unique, personalized and once-in-a-lifetime experience for their guests – plus they're doing so in a modern way, by planning from their smartphones, publicizing details on social media and more." - The Knot*

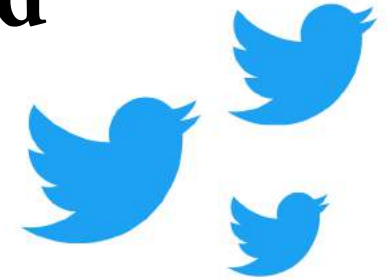
# Here are a few ways you can kickstart your brand as a wedding floral connoisseur

- Your new best friends by far are wedding planners. They can open up a plethora of new opportunities for your new business, so make sure you partner-up and work well alongside wedding planners, caterers and others who work behind the scenes at events. A good reputation amongst your peers will serve you well.
- Many of the bridesmaids might also be planning an upcoming wedding and be on the lookout for potential florists for their big day. A mention from the bridal couple will go a long way, or you could creatively place business cards in your flower arrangements and other accessories. Remember, however, the trick is to keep it subtle.
- Connect with owners of wedding venues and provide them with samples or catalogues of your work. A good relationship with a popular wedding venue can be a steady source of gigs for your business.
- You can also use your flower shop as a bridal party venue or to host wedding consultations. What better way to showcase your work to the bride-to-be while impressing her entourage of future brides? Or how about turning your shop's window into a wedding flower display once a month?
- Every wedding has a photographer. You could even team up with one or two and discuss having your arrangements shot in exchange for posting their work on your website, or for an agreeable fee. A bit of networking will surely get you in touch with the right people to help take your new venture up a notch.
- Wedding catalogues are great for showcasing your versatility as a florist. Have printed copies in your store and on clear display and make sure you create an equally stunning online version for your website.



# Go Social, Get Online and Get Noticed

No business today can deny the value of the internet as a marketing tool. With Web 2.0 technology making high-resolution imagery and video footage the norm, florists have a great opportunity to showcase their talents to millions of online users. According to The Knot, "...the use of smartphones to access wedding planning websites has nearly doubled from 2011 (33%) to 2014 (61%)." This means florists who focus their time on reaching online brides-to-be are tapping into a huge potential market.



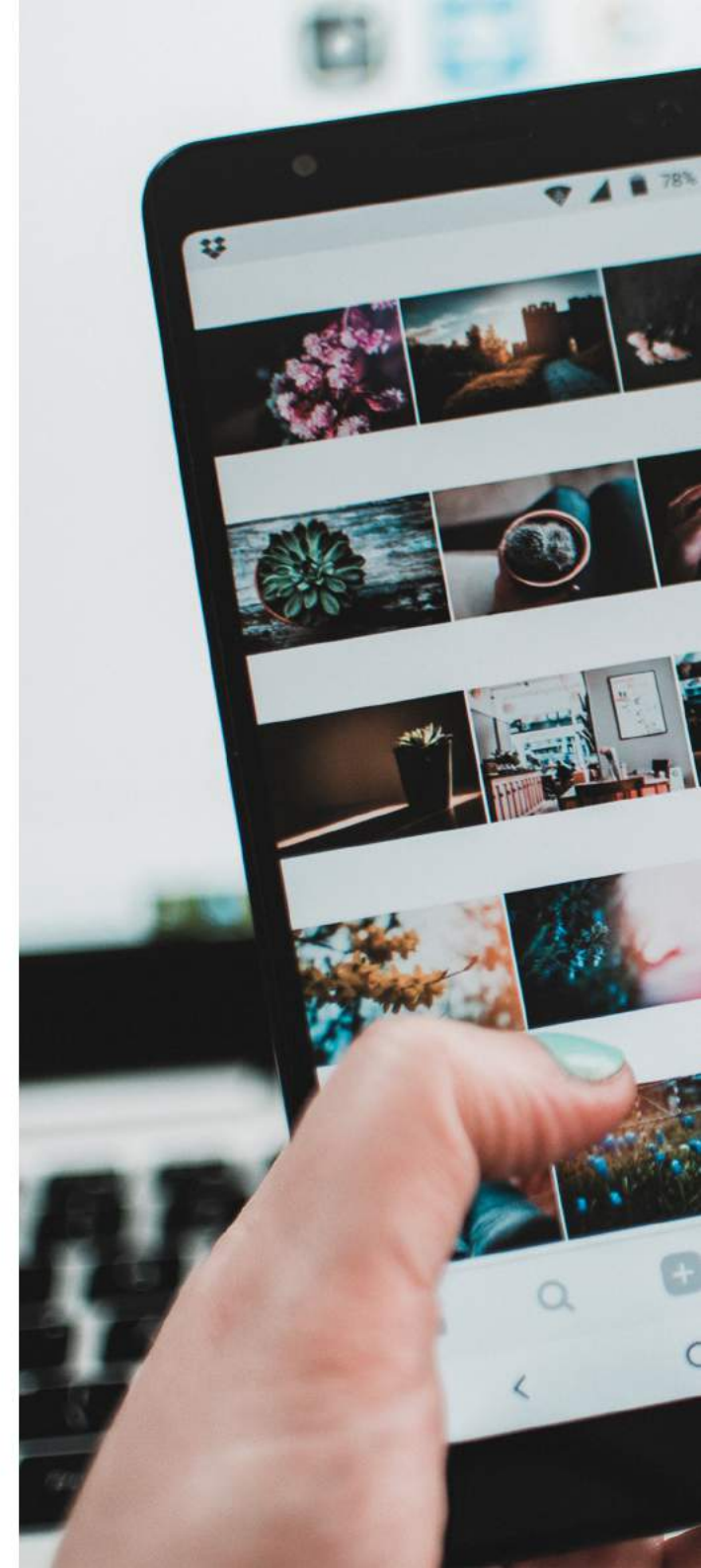
Some social media channels work really well for florists. Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube and Twitter should all be part of your social media repertoire. Brand your social media profiles with your logo and make sure all of your followers know that you provide flower arrangements for weddings and commit to updating your profiles on a regular basis.

*Advertise your social media profiles on your website, invoices, newsletters, brochures at wedding expos and any other communication that you send to clients to grow your online following.*

People follow brands on social media because they want information. Most florists have been in the industry for at least a decade, so consider yourself an expert and give everyone, from wedding planners to mothers-of-the-brides tips, advice and pointers. Share tips, news and insights and become the persona people will naturally turn to when they need to consult a wedding florist. Also, remember to take videos of the weddings that you do, post the clips to YouTube, take screenshots of videos and share these as pictures on Instagram, tweet a short snippet about the bridal couple with a link to the video that you uploaded – there are many ways to repurpose content for different channels to create a buzz around your work.

# Did You Know?

1. More than 50 percent of people recommend companies and products on Twitter.
2. Visual content is more than 40 times more likely to get shared on social media than other types of content, which is great news for florists.
3. More than half of Facebook and Twitter users are more likely to buy the products of brands they follow online.
4. More advanced florist POS systems have social media tools built into them that allows you to market your business.
5. 71% of consumers who have had a good social media service experience with a brand are likely to recommend it to others
6. There are 800 million users active on YouTube everyday.





# Get the Basics Right From the Start

Working with wedding parties can be tough. People are prone to emotional decision-making, changing their minds on a whim and coming up with new ideas on the fly. While you won't be able to eliminate a bit of back-and-forth with clients, you can plan for success by making sure you invest enough time in doing your wedding flower consultations well.

Remember that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Make sure that you are on the same page as your client with regards to their floral budget so that you both know what's realistic and are able to manage expectations accordingly. Besides the bride's bouquet, boutonnieres for the wedding party and flowers for the table, there is often a whole list of other items that are needed on the big day.

Flowers in church and reception halls, as well as floral arrangements next to table seating boards, for example, will be standard. Create a checklist for the bridal couple so that they can tick off all the items that you will need to create for them. As a wedding florist, you need to be engaged in every aspect of the event, so take the time to understand how it will unfold to help you come up with creative and relevant ideas.

It's also worth your while to create a list of flowers that can be used as possible substitutions if the type that the bride wants are out of season. Before the initial consultation, ask the bride to gather things like dress fabric swatches, or anything else that she will be incorporating into the wedding.

Preparing for a wedding has many moving parts and your clients will undoubtedly be somewhat overwhelmed by what it takes to pull off a memorable event. As the florist-in-chief, you'll need to get all the information you need from all parties involved to ensure that you have a thorough briefing of what's expected of you.

It will take some resilience, but getting all the information right from the get-go will help you deliver the goods on the big day.

# Make Sure the Price is Right

Once you have a complete list of all the floral arrangements and items that will be needed on the day, you can start to calculate costs. Keep in mind that some flowers are always available and therefore cheaper.

Flowers such as roses and lilies are generally always available so they may cost less than orchids, frangipanis and tulips, for example. As mentioned, offer substitutes if you think that the cost might be an issue.

The bride may expect you to supply extra bits and pieces that form part of the wedding décor, such as overlays, runners, chair tie backs and flower vases. You'll have to decide whether you are going to supply any additional decor items and if it will be worth your while to do so.

Factor in the cost of purchasing and maintaining non-floral items for repeat use at events and make a call on whether they are financially sensible to include in your service offering.

*Always consider the comfort of wedding guests first. Avoid flowers with a strong scent as they can become overwhelming in large numbers within closed areas.*

It's not uncommon for people to underestimate the cost of wedding flowers. A good piece of advice is to create a few quotes so that the bride can see that you offer flexible wedding packages that can meet their budget.

Draw up an initial costing according to their wishlist as well as a few options where certain items are reduced to trim costs. Provide sensible alternatives when certain items are out of budget. You don't want to cross items off the list entirely when other options can be made available -flexibility on your part will be important.

If you were able to create a mockup of the bouquets or centerpieces during the consultation, make sure you attach these photos to the cost. Include all of your details in the quote and give the bride a deadline to either accept or decline your quote. Also state what type of deposit you will need to complete the job and when the final amount will be due.



# *Hana Software's Pro Tip*

When budgets are limited, incorporate greenery into your designs since they allow you to use less flowers, yet can spruce up any arrangement if done creatively. Branches are also great for adding texture and creating lines that flow.



# Don't Stumble at the Threshold

Word's getting around, you're getting noticed and you're in demand - great! Let's take a look at how you can manage all the hoop la around your newfound fame while simultaneously managing to keep things on an even keel.

## **Don't overreach**

Balance is key to ensuring you don't overstretch any of your resources in the early stages of your new venture. Be sure that catering for events doesn't involve dipping into resources needed to running your store each day. Many small business owners make the mistake of underestimating new resource demands that come with growing their businesses.

## **Don't mesh your finances**

Treat your wedding income as a separate source of revenue and capital for catering to weddings and do the same with your flower shop. Enlist the help of a professional accountant or business planner if need be. Make sure cash flow is accounted for and don't embark on spending sprees because you're suddenly seeing more money in the till.

## **Remember, you can't please everyone**

As any seasoned wedding florist will tell you, catering to bridal parties can be taxing. You want your clients to see you as a creative, yet capable florist, but you won't be able to answer every question or cater to every whim on the fly. So make sure you price competitively, communicate clearly and deliver an end-result that meets clients' expectations while managing resources and budgets efficiently.

## **Be flexible**

While it's important to manage expectations, flexibility is an important part of becoming a successful wedding florist. Brides or couples may prefer out of season flowers or specifically themed arrangements. There will be times such as these when you will be required to step outside of the norm to impress your clients' exacting needs.

# Watch Your Business Bloom with Hana POS

As a wedding florist, no two clients will ever be the same and you'll often find yourself stumped for inspiration. Remember that keeping an open mind and trusting your creativity will be a key factor to creating works of floral art that will take guests' breath away at wedding events.

But that doesn't mean you have to go at it alone. Hana florist POS offers florists an advanced event planning solution that helps you take your business to where opportunities are. Expanding your business to include wedding floral services is easy with Hana's comprehensive event planning features. At Hana POS, giving florists the freedom they need to express themselves is why we get out of bed every day.

We built a point of sale system designed to give you more freedom to create the things you love and focus your energies where they matter most - your business. Whether you're looking to expand your business or simply reduce the hours you spend on paperwork and repetitive processes, Hana POS will help you make the business of flowers personal again.

Ask us how by visiting [hanaflorist.com](http://hanaflorist.com)

