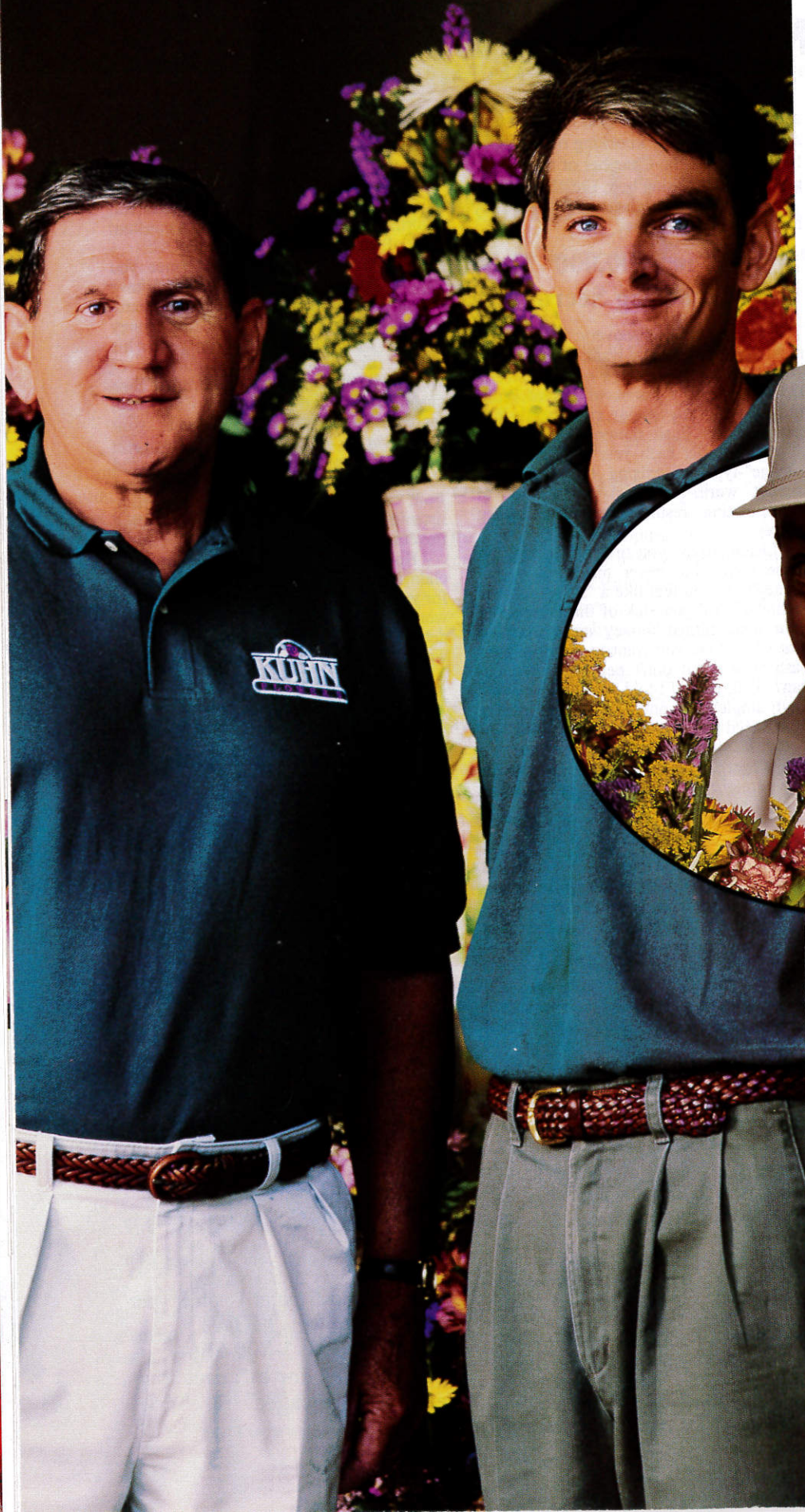


*Floral Management's*  
**1998** *Marketer of*  
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Kuhn Flowers' Bill Cutting  
(left) and Andy Graham used  
Dave the Delivery Guy (inset)  
to turn around a three-year  
trend of flat sales growth.



**Even with** close to 60 percent of the town's floral business, Bill Cutting wanted more. The president of Kuhn Flowers wasn't trying to create a monopoly in Jacksonville, Fla. (although that would be nice). He just wanted to cure the 51-year-old shop's recent bout of stagnant sales. With help from a character named Dave, here's how the store now sees nine percent growth in sales each month and earned itself *Floral Management's* coveted Marketer of the Year for 1998.

**An Idea Is Born**

With sales growth flatlined for the past three years, Cutting had had



**Floral Management's 1998 Marketer of the Year awards the creativity and success of an ad campaign with a goofy delivery driver as its central character.**

# Talk *of the* Town

*By Kristin Young*

enough. He set his sights on increasing annual sales by five percent and threw the gauntlet to Andy Graham, his marketing director. Graham, a college grad fresh from a recent stint at an advertising agency, once was a delivery driver for Kuhn Flowers. Maybe that was what spurred him to create a whimsical delivery driver that caught the public's attention and garnered Kuhn Flowers the increases it was hoping for.

A few years ago when Kuhn Flowers showed off Christmas centerpieces on a TV station-produced commercial, customers weren't exactly beating down the shop's door. "People would say they saw your ad," Cutting says, "but no one ever got excited about them. There wasn't any real story to it."

Cutting wanted try TV advertising again, but he wasn't going to settle for hum-drum this time-around. He wanted excitement. He wanted to do something memorable, some-

thing that would get the customers not only talking, but buying.

Enamored with PromoFlor's defunct Buzz the Bee concept, Cutting decided to try a similar premise. He wanted to use an icon, a figure that represented not a particular product, but the idea of sending and receiving flowers. The character needed a lively and lovable personality. It needed to be zany and fun but not stupid. And most importantly, the public needed to identify it with Kuhn Flowers.

But what kind of character? With 22 trucks delivering in a hundred-mile radius, they provided a great advertising "vehicle" for the store. And who better to represent the store than a delivery person, says Graham. That was when "Dave" was born — or, rather, discovered by the ad agency. The young actor has an expressive, friendly, almost goofy face, perfect for all his closeups when he meets the most interesting people delivering for Kuhn



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Flowers. "If I had to find him," Cutting says, "I'd be forever looking."

## Takes Money to Make Money

Cutting is a busy man and he didn't waste any time going to professionals for help. "The problem," Cutting says, "is that florists think they know all about



*An enthusiastic flower recipient embraces Dave the Delivery Guy in one of the 30-second ads.*

advertising." To do it right, you're going to have to spend the money, he says. "It's an investment, not an expense. It's a measure of how much you believe in your business."

According to Cutting, a florist needs to allocate at least five percent of their total sales to advertising. Even after a budget is set, Cutting says florists tend to stop

spending money too soon. "They might have put aside \$50,000 to advertise their product, and then they stop when they see it is beginning to take off. That's when you should be putting extra money into it."

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*Dave proves that women do love getting flowers—the closing shot in one of the Kuhn Flowers television commercials.*

Graham spent \$30,000 to create, produce and edit the television commercial. Even when Graham went \$8,000 over budget — and they hadn't even bought air time yet — Cutting was undaunted by the expense. "You don't want it to look like it was made in someone's basement," he says. Graham admitted he could have saved money by having the local television station do the commercial, but most TV stations won't spend the whole day on location with you, and you also have to work around their schedule.

### Pick Your Media

Once the concept of Dave was fine-tuned, he was ready to meet a market of more than one million prospective customers. Jacksonville is a big news-watching community, says Graham, with 20 local broadcasts each day on more than four networks.

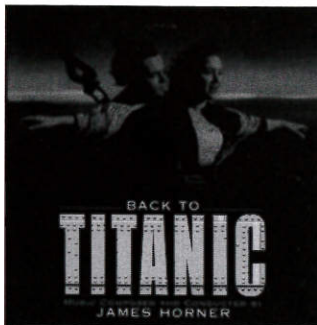
Graham decided to buy the ad space directly, saving the 15 percent the ad agency would have charged him. One lesson he learned: You have to be careful with media reps. "Everybody is going to tell you that their station is number one," he says. "You have to do your own market research."

Graham asked a number of upper middle class people with grown children what they thought of the various stations' news casts. Armed with that information, he spent \$45,000 for air time on the two stations he thought would best target Kuhn's market.

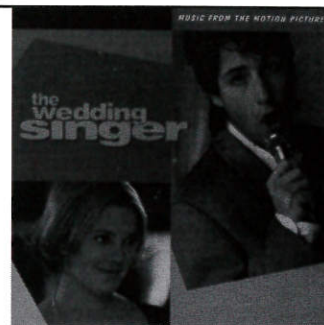
Because of the large placement, Graham was able to dictate where the spots would run, like during the local weather report. When the broadcast would return after the commercial, the announcement, "Tonight's

weather brought to you by Kuhn Flowers," reinforced the commercial.

Once you find a good time slot, you need to know what months you should run your ad. "There is no reason to run an ad in months like August," says Graham, "because that's not when people spend their money in flower shops." Graham bought spots to run three weeks before Christmas. In the spring,



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# Get Your Money's Worth

**B**ill Cutting and Andy Graham of Kuhn Flowers reveal how to get the most out of your media with these tips:

Research your radio. If your shop serves the over-35 market, then don't advertise on the stations that play in the trendy teen shops, even if those stations boast a 30 market share. Those teens won't be buying in your shop no matter how much you advertise.

Go to the professionals. "I don't operate on myself," says Cutting, "I go to the doctor." And if you want your commercial done right, go to a professional. Cutting not only used an advertising agency to help fine-tune the design of the character, but he also hired a production company to tape a smooth-looking commercial. "If it's cheap," says Cutting, "it's worth every penny they pay for it - nothing."

Buy your spots carefully. You might get a deal if you buy 100 cable spots for \$100, but will your target market see them? If those spots broadcast in the middle of Looney Toons, that's not money well spent.

Trick of the trade. When you shoot a commercial on video, it could look sharp and hard, compared to film. Instead of paying \$5,000 more to shoot it on film, ask the film editing company to adjust the frames per second to get the "film look".

he lumped his Easter, Secretaries Week and Mother's Day promotions all into one schedule set for April and May. Instead of just going with the two prominent stations, he spread the wealth by placing ads on various networks. He utilized programs that attracted the upper middle class with grown children demographic group the store wanted to reach like "A&E Biography", "Wheel of Fortune", "Mad About You" and "Good Morning America".

The Dave commercial will have a lifespan of three years, playing only during the spring and winter holiday seasons. "We will be able to capitalize the expense, spreading it out over the three years," says Graham.

## That-a-boy, Dave

Dave's 30 seconds of fame delivered the Kuhn Flowers' message so well, people began calling Kuhn Flowers asking for Dave to deliver their flowers.

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"The reason they call us," Cutting says, "is because we have become dominant in their minds." Thanks to Dave, Kuhn Flowers adds about 100 new house accounts each month.

What's important to remember, says Graham, is that you can have the most creative and innovative marketing cam-

paign, but it's not worth a dime if it doesn't sell flowers. "It's not a successful campaign," Graham says, "until we have collected the order and gained them as a loyal customer. And to get a loyal customer, you need to be able to deliver quality service and quality product."

What's next? All the delivery drivers

are going to wear new delivery shirts with a "Dave" insignia. "People are calling all the delivery people Dave anyway," says Cutting, even though half his drivers are female. But why not, he asks. "Business should be fun." ■

*Kristin Young is senior editor of Floral Management.*

## What Makes a Marketer of the Year?

When *Floral Management* launched the Marketer of the Year award in 1994, we hoped to draw attention to some of the industry's outstanding marketing efforts — and inspire the rest of the industry with their ideas. *Floral Management* invites retailers, wholesalers and growers to take part in the contest, luring them with the prospect of a \$5,000 cash prize. For the fifth year in a row, the cash prize is sponsored by Designer Master color tool, Inc.

### The Criteria

What constitutes an outstanding marketing effort? The judges are charged with reviewing the entries and rating each entrant in the following six categories:

<i>Effectiveness of campaign</i>	<i>Use of available resources</i>
<i>Originality</i>	<i>Professionalism</i>
<i>Success</i>	<i>Overall excellence</i>

### The Judges

We know that only experienced marketers with a track

record of success are qualified to judge other marketing efforts. So, each year we choose a panel of seasoned professionals within and outside the floral industry.

George Boulton, *retailer, Flowers by George in Arlington, Wash.*

Holly Money-Collins, *educator, Department of Environmental Horticulture and Floristry at City College of San Francisco in San Francisco.*

J. Sten Crissey, *AAF, retailer, Crissey Flowers & Gifts in Seattle, Wash.*

Steve Dahllof, *vice president of marketing with Ogilvy Adams & Rinehart, the agency that handles the Society of American Florists' national consumer relations campaign.*

Gordon Perkins, *retailer, Perkins Flowers, Inc. of Lapeer, Mich.*

### How to Enter

Want to enter *Floral Management's* 1999 Marketer of the Year contest? Call, fax or e-mail a request for an entry form to Cheryl Burke at *Floral Management*: (800) 336-4743; fax (800) 208-0078; e-mail [cburke@safnow.org](mailto:cburke@safnow.org). Applications for the 1999 award will be mailed after the first of the year.



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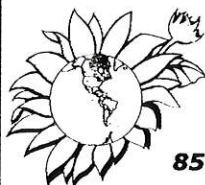
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