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## CONFESSIONS OF A MARKETER OF THE YEAR WINNER AND JUDGE

> When you read this month's cover story on the 2018 Floral Management Marketer of the Year award winner, you might find yourself wondering: What does it take to win that award? As someone who has been part of an award-winning application twice, in 2013 and 2016, and also served as a judge, I think I have a unique perspective to offer.

Winning Marketer of the Year is something my boss Sandy Nielsen-Baumann and I are incredibly proud of. We've been humbled by the honor. We never expected to win.

The short answer to the question "How do you win?" is this: You need to impress the judges with a unique campaign that generated clear results. Through the years, winning campaigns have varied dramatically. In fact, our own campaigns were completely different from each other.

In 2013, our entry concerned the entire store, from appearance to staff to website and merchandise. In 2016, we created an app and then a marketing campaign around raising consumer awareness and use of that app. For both campaigns, we had to explain our purpose and goals and then provide data that backed up our success.

That second part is key. As judges of the competition, Sandy and I look for those specific numbers and goals; that's how we benchmark an entry's results. Sometimes we'll see an entry that has so much creativity and originality — fabulous qualities — but if the campaign didn't get results (or the owner didn't show us the results), we move on.

It's also important to have your analytics match your goals. If you're running a campaign to increase your holiday sales, a statistic on how many likes and comments your social media posts generated doesn't provide much information. Engagement on social media is wonderful, but to make a fair assessment in this scenario, judges need your holiday sales number. That's how we know if the campaign got results.

Often, the campaigns that stand out the most are the ones that are the most relatable. A business has identified a

common problem (getting more people in-store, marketing a brand to the right audience, raising awareness for a cause or product), come up with a solution and run with it.



The bar is also high for this competition — and it's getting higher. Florists are rightfully proud when they update their stores and logos or refresh branding components, including social media platforms and websites. We run visual businesses! These elements are important, but they aren't necessarily the makings of a Marketer of the Year, at least not on their own. In fact, these periodic refreshes are now the minimum of what a florist wishing to compete in the modern market should be doing.

For us, winning the competition meant two things: A pat on the back... and then a trip back to the drawing board. It's exciting to win, but evolving our business never stops. With e-commerce and competition from grocery stores improving year after year, things that used to make us unique are now standard services. We have to keep moving forward. Not everything we try works out — we've had plenty of marketing nonstarters at our business — but we are always willing to give new ideas a go.

In that spirit, the Marketer of the Year award can be a time for all of us to pause and reflect, and to ask ourselves, "What's working?" "What isn't?" "Can we draw ideas from other businesses and other industries?" From there, we can delve into our next marketing moves, hopefully finding that next step that fits our business — and maybe even winning an award in the process. 🌸

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