

GET THE MOST OUT OF NEW CUSTOMERS

> Social distancing guidelines created a lot of first-time flower buyers throughout the spring and early summer, as consumers sought contact-free ways to deliver a virtual hug to friends and family. E-commerce expert and longtime floral business owner Steve Ozment shared how to turn these new customers into lifelong clients.

“Shops that were able to stay open likely saw a lot of new customers,” said Ozment, the owner of Flowerama in Columbus, Ohio, and Emerald City Websites, during a June webinar for the Society of American Florists’ “Reignite Your Business” series. “We found that businesses with strong websites that did a lot of online marketing saw significant volume increases, in some cases more than 100 percent.”

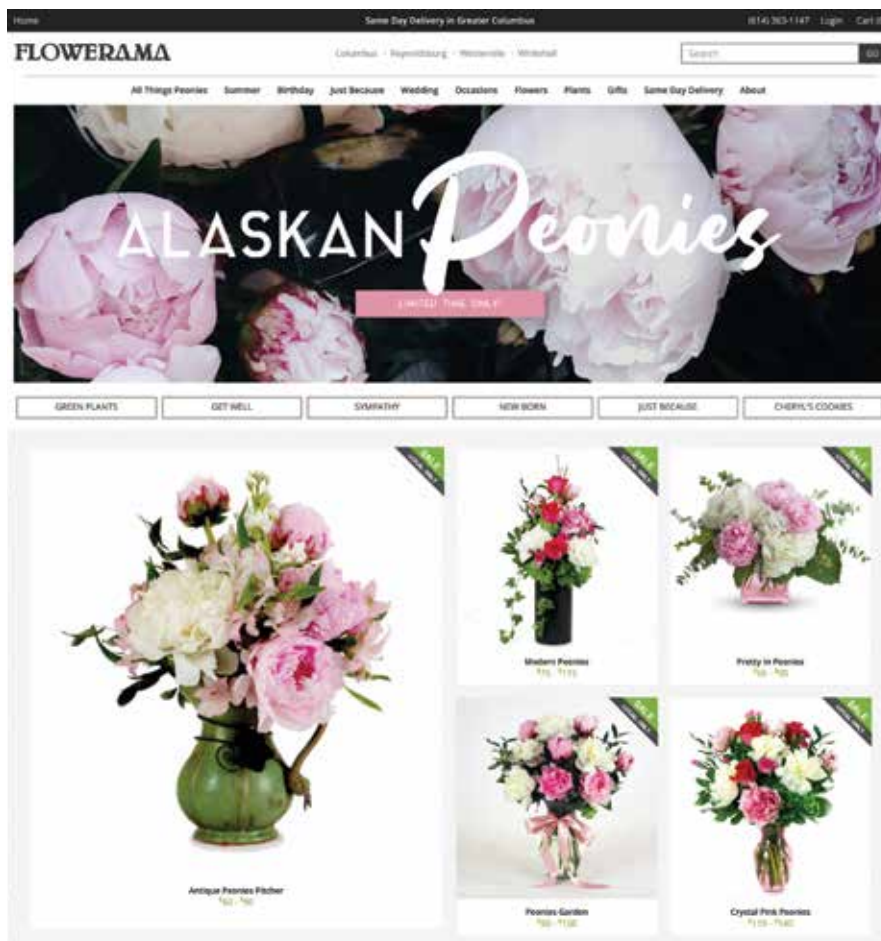
Here are a few of his tips:

Scrutinize your website. Expect online shopping to become even more dominant as time goes by. To keep attracting customers, your website needs to be in peak shape. “Your website is your storefront, and there’s always room for improvement,” Ozment said. He suggests regularly visiting your website — on a desktop, as well as a mobile device. Are your graphics fresh and on point? Are your photos current? Are they crisp or pixelated? How’s the lighting? Does your layout make sense? Are the right occasions showing at the top of the home page? What do customers have to go through to check out? “Make the user experience as good as possible,” he said.

Market away. With every online order, you collect an email address.

MORE TOOLS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SALES

Read more about loyalty campaigns, best practices on email marketing, and watch Steve Ozment’s full SAF webinar, part of the association’s Reignite Your Business series, sponsored by Teleflora, at safnow.org/moreonline.



SHOW YOUR GOODS “Your website is your storefront, and there’s always room for improvement,” said Steve Ozment. Earlier this summer, his website colorfully promoted Alaskan peonies.

Don’t squander this info; reach out to them. Email marketing is a cheap and effective way to stay in front of customers. Ozment recommends, at a minimum, sending welcome/introductory emails to new customers and reminder emails for birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. For holidays, start marketing at least 21 days in advance, he said.

Turn Two. There are still plenty of people who prefer to order by phone. While you have them on the line, think of a second potential sale you could make. Some opportunities will be obvious if you look for them. “It’s amazing how many people take advantage of this when offered,” Ozment said. “They’re grateful. You’re providing a service, saving them time down the road. And you’re taking a

customer out of the marketplace before they have an opportunity to shop around and buy from someone else.”

Establish a loyalty program.

Incentivize customers to keep choosing you for gift options by offering rewards for continued purchases. “Loyalty programs turn once-a-year buyers into three-times-a-year buyers and three-times-a-year buyers into monthly buyers,” Ozment said. At Flowerama, loyalty members receive one point for every penny spent, which converts to a dollars-off discount. To prevent hoarding, Ozment caps the discount for any one order at \$100. 🌸

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