

## FOUR WAYS TO KEEP THE WEDDING BUSINESS FLOWING

> If you are like me, you are experiencing a second round of postponed (or canceled) events with clients who are literally scared. You console your clients in an upbeat, cheerful way; then, when alone, cry your eyes out as you look at your eroding bank account.

You pinch yourself — hard — and realize you are wide awake. This isn't just a bad dream.

But there are reasons for hope. The Society of American Florists' recent online Reinvention Summit provided exactly what I've needed — a major pick-me-up! The presentations and conversations amongst attendees solidified the fact that people continue to need — and want — flowers.

And weddings will continue, just in a different way. Couples will be more mindful of their spending, celebrating love in all forms and creating a fulfilling wedding experience. Here are four ways you can help them do that:

### 1. Guarantee the Price

Something I have always done is guarantee the flower price to a wedding client once he or she hires me. To my shock, not many other florists do. Advantage: Bloomtastic!

Here's how I do it: I will create an email, Facebook and Instagram posts, and ads targeted to engaged women with a headline reading, "Pay 2020 pricing for your 2021 wedding!" It's catchy and motivating to a bride or groom who is counting the pennies right now (and who isn't?), and I see an increase in inquiries immediately.

I use wedding proposal software, so I revisit my pricing before I start this campaign to ensure I have a healthy mark-up and even anticipate increases. This way I make certain my costs are covered and my profit is intact. September is the perfect time to do this, by the way, because it's just before the holidays, when lots of engagements typically happen.

How about teaming up with your favorite wedding pros and creating an elopement package? A baker, photographer, florist and officiant can combine their talents to create a memorable and affordable wedding experience!

### 3. Market. NOW.

Chances are your competitors are not spending their dollars on marketing, so you should! It's all about targeting the right place to reach your ideal wedding client. Right now, that's online. Internet use is up 70 percent since the pandemic started; Facebook reported a more than 50 percent increase in activity.

Thinking back to point No. 2: What can you do differently from the pack? How about you create a Facebook group for local brides (hello, leads!)? Offer a live talk about how to deal with the local mandates for weddings and answer questions. (Afraid to go live? Record it and post to Facebook and even YouTube.)

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### 2. Offer What Your Competition Won't

Discover what the other wedding florists are *not* offering and make it one of your selling points. Your competition won't show the client a free centerpiece mock-up? You do it! (Then sell it or use as a display in your store. I've convinced countless other wedding clients to upgrade a centerpiece, all because I had a live sample in my store they saw and loved.)

Do they offer rentals, such as arches, easels, table numbers? These are the pain-in-the-butt items our clients often must source on their own. So why not do it for them and make some extra money? Etsy is a great place to find unique pieces you can rent over and over!

### 4. Know the Answers Before They Ask the Question

The list of questions a wedding client asks have changed; are you prepared with the answers? Here are a few you can expect to hear:

- *What if I need to reschedule?*
- *What if we are quarantined or locked down?*
- *What if I contract COVID?*
- *What if you contract COVID?*
- *Do flowers carry the virus?*
- *What about the boxes/packaging/vases — can they spread the virus?*

Create a list of questions and prepare the answers ahead of time. While you are at it, share the information on your website. It will make you look super prepared and transparent! 🌸

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