

4 WAYS TO INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

> In my previous career I worked for a national insurance company where continuing education was a core component. Now, as the owner of a flower shop, I also emphasize to my staff the importance of continuous learning. I tell myself and my team all the time: Never stop learning. If you don't use it, you lose it, so exercise that brain!

I was shocked to learn while chatting with a well-known floral designer and educator that some other owners aren't as invested in the growth and development of their designers. I am a life long learner and lover of change, and I encourage my team to embrace ongoing education as well. I make sure to either bring in a designer or send team members to floral conferences once a year, and I share tutorials often. Here are four ways to inspire and educate your team to learn and keep your business ahead of the competition:

1. **Constant Flow of Golden Nuggets**

Send a tutorial (video or blog post) to your staff weekly on various topics, anything from how to take a better picture with your cell phone to tips for handling an upset customer or even tutorials on how to lessen stress at work with simple stretches. Share short videos and articles, then ask your team to tell you how they are going to apply what they learned.

2. **Get a Hobby** Studies have shown that having hobbies uses a different part of the brain, improving memory and concentration (and we all can use that!). As a team, take some time to work on something non-job related such as a paint and sip class, a trip to a zipline course, or a yoga class a several times a year. Not only will experiences like these activate their brains and improve their performance,

but you'll also build team morale and enjoy lower turnover.

3. **Rewarding Incentives** Sending a team member on an all-expense paid trip to a floral conference may sound like a huge expense to you, but to your staff it is a huge privilege! Use it as an incentive. Perhaps you have a contest for your designers and the winner gets to go. Maybe it's an anniversary gift when an employee has been with you so many years. No matter how you treat it, make it an incentive to work hard and get rewarded. Then, have them share what was learned at the conference with the rest of the team over a breakfast meeting before the store opens.

4. **Book Club** This idea was first introduced to me by Manny Gonzales, who owned Tiger Lily Florist with his wife Clara for many years. Gonzales created a book club within his company, meeting once a week to discuss the chapters he assigned. I recommend shorter reads that can be applied to both work and life, such as "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" and "Failing Forward." These self-development classics will also serve your business well. I also recommend "The Little Red Book of Selling" by Jeffrey Gitomer. It has few words, lots of illustrations and massive amounts of tips your staff can use to make the buying experience better for your customers.

The key is to simply never stop learning. Whether it's new trends, skills, the latest app or something out of your comfort zone, you and your team will only grow and better serve your customers. And I promise, it will be far more fun than high school calculus class! 🌿

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