

## GROW YOUR CUSTOMERS' GREEN THUMBS

> A new generation of plant parents are eager to expand their indoor jungles. Capitalize on the houseplant craze by investing in your customers' success. How? By providing top-notch care tips for every plant that goes out the door. That sounds practical and maybe even obvious, but it's not the easiest thing to do. Finding reliable resources to guide best care practices for plants takes time, creativity, and organization. Learn how two florists cater to their houseplant customers to cultivate growing success.

### Glean from the Experts

At Blumen Meister's Flower Market in New Braunfels, Texas, Tymonee Wilburn inspires customer success by sharing her own passion for houseplants. She's a self-confessed plant collector whose first love is cacti, but she's added more houseplants over the years. "I wouldn't say I'm an expert, but I do have a good knowledge base of each plant. We always encourage customers to give us a call if something's not working out. We can help walk them through most issues," she says.

When customers are shopping, Wilburn guides their plant selection to find the right houseplant for the type of light they have. She also puts a focus on soil. "Soil is a big part of houseplant success and many of our plants, including succulents and cacti, come from the wholesaler in peat moss, which isn't ideal for those plants," she says. Blumen Meister's offers a planting bar for customers or staff to transplant newly acquired plants. Wilburn creates a custom mix for succulents and cacti containing a lot of inorganic material for drainage. Customers choose from different containers and top dressings for soil.

The shop also gives customers care cards for each different plant species. "Our goal is to help them succeed by giving instructions and tips," Wilburn says. "It might be something like, 'Before watering, check the soil to see if it's dry.' Or 'It's okay to water on a schedule but also check the soil to see what it's like.'"



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### Craft Branded Care Sheets

Lafayette Florist, Gift Shop & Garden Center in Lafayette, Colorado, is a fourth-generation family business. "We pride ourselves on our printed care sheets for houseplants," says Tanner Wheat, garden center manager. Each plant has a specific care sheet that details how to care for the plant in a home in Colorado. The sheet also has the shop's contact information.

With some plant groups, such as cacti and succulents, the care sheets are basic and readily apply to the majority of the shop's inventory. This helps save time and space. "The most important thing with these care sheets is to leave some room for notes," Wheat says. "Maybe when you're selling the plant you'll jot down, 'This plant is for your west window. Bring it inside early in fall.' Or maybe you'll mention it's poisonous to dogs or share some propagation tips."

In the care sheet file cabinet, the shop also keeps a plant toxicity list

from an accredited university. "We like the toxicity list from the University of California. It gives ratings from non-toxic to major toxicity, while including animal toxicity," he says.

Wheat stresses that customizing care sheets to your local environment is important because indoor plant care varies between Colorado and Florida, for instance. Find regional information through your local extension service or local growers and suppliers.

Wheat warns against simply copying and pasting care tips from generic online search results. "You want to keep verbiage similar with all the care sheets you make," he says. "The sheets serve a major purpose for the business — keeping our name out there — and also ensures the customer's success." That's a win all the way around. 🌿

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