





# that winning feeling

**CalFlowers' "Flowers. Self care made easy" campaign** was perfectly timed to resonate with a pandemic-weary nation — and it gifted the industry with its marketing assets to use on a local level, earning it the **Society of American Florists' Marketer of the Year award.**

BY AMANDA JEDLINSKY

With the camera focused on an empty vase, TikTok influencer Jayria Nicole began arranging pink spray roses and green hydrangea. "Flowers are scientifically proven to be good for you, almost like nature's mood booster," she says in the video. "So just know, when you see me going to get flowers every week, it makes me feel amazing! They bring new and good vibes, and we love good vibes!"

With the click of a button, the video was posted to her account, @HerDresscode, which has more than half a million followers.

That self-care message is at the heart of the floral industry's first national marketing campaign in decades, funded by CalFlowers (the California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers). It launched in January 2022 across digital platforms and engaged influencers such as Jayria Nicole and the floral industry, which was given access to the marketing assets for use on a local level.

The cornerstone of the campaign, "Flowers. Self care made easy," was a video of a woman hilariously failing at different forms of self-care. There is the face mask that removes her eyebrows, scream therapy and more. In the end, she discovers the simplicity and benefits of buying flowers.



**3, 2, 1...ACTION!** Actress Lexie Braverman portrayed a woman hilariously failing in her self-care attempts until she discovers flowers in CalFlowers' "Flowers. Self care made easy" campaign, which won SAF's Marketer of the Year award.

"It's conditioning consumers in a very playful and engaging way to just take a second look at flowers," says Steve Dionne, AAF, executive director of CalFlowers. "So maybe next time they're driving by their retail florist, or next time they go to their farmers' market, they look at flowers and say, 'You know what? I could use a mood boost today. I could use a little pep in my step.'"

Millions of consumers saw the video and other marketing assets and liked the campaign, as evidenced by social media impressions and post-campaign surveys. The campaign also racked up accolades such as an Epica Award and an ADDY from the American Advertising Awards.

And now, CalFlowers can add to that list of accolades the Society of American Florists' 29th annual Marketer of the Year award.

Judges of this year's contest scored the campaign high for its creativity, how it related to its target demographic, the results it achieved, and for its accessibility to the industry.

"This was a groundbreaking campaign for our industry from the perspective of creativity, mass adoption, and viral reach," said Jessica Kegerreis, senior marketing and creative manager at Syndicate Sales and one of the contest's six judges.

Another judge praised the campaign for how it leveraged the opportunity for exposure in response to the Miley Cyrus song, "Flowers," in which she croons, "I can buy myself flowers." The That Flower Feeling Foundation, established in 2022, sent Cyrus a custom-made vase of her hand and rented billboards and billboard trucks around Los Angeles thanking Cyrus for unofficially promoting the campaign's message in her song.

"The originality of this campaign is undoubtedly a winning factor," said Sahid Nahim of Above All Flowers and New Bloom Solutions, a floral marketing agency. He added that the spinoff campaign targeting Cyrus "showcases remarkable creativity."

### Self-Care Made Easy

The board couldn't have known in the early stages of planning just how well-timed and on target the campaign's message of self-care would be.

Before the pandemic, with the help of research from a San Francisco-based



**MILEY GETS IT** CalFlowers sent Miley Cyrus this custom vase of her hand filled with flowers and rented roving billboards to thank Cyrus for unofficially endorsing the campaign's message in her hit song, "Flowers."

# Using the Campaign Assets



The "Flowers. Self care made easy" campaign assets are available for anyone in the industry to use for free. In addition to social media graphics and videos, the assets also include digital files for store signs, truck wraps, audio and more. Go to [thatflowerfeeling.org](https://thatflowerfeeling.org) to get started.

advertising firm, CalFlowers had already identified the self-care industry and the target demographic — those 25 to 39 with the potential to become lifelong flower purchasers.

"We felt it was really important to associate flowers with that self-care space, which is a mega, billion-dollar industry," Dionne says. "And so we knew if we could get ourselves in an industry that provided an avenue for growth and also put us in a demographic that could grow with us over the years, we'd have a successful campaign."

Enter 2020. As people in the U.S. reeled from the isolation of the pandemic, they began searching for ways to lower stress and anxiety and bring joy and beauty into their homes — which is exactly what flowers are scientifically proven to do. The timing for national marketing promoting flowers as a form of self-care couldn't have been better.

"We felt like that was our moment to get out there in front of consumers with the message that we had," Dionne says.

That moment was a long time coming for Joost Bongaerts, CEO of the wholesale

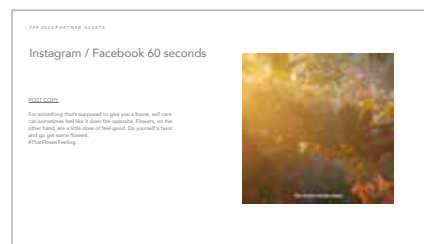
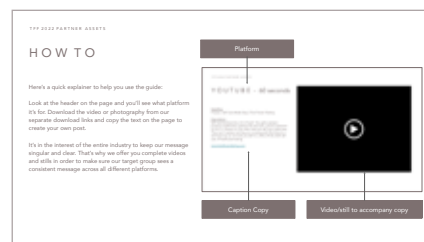
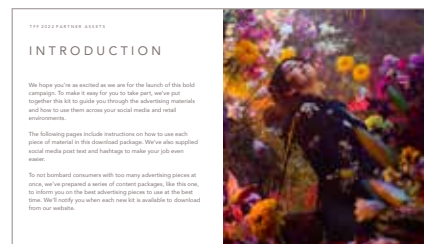
company Florabundance and a member of the CalFlowers board of directors and marketing co-chair for the campaign.

"I've been in the floral industry 42 years, and I've always said we need to get a national ad campaign," he says. "When this project came up, I put in my full support. I see it as giving something back to the industry. I am adamant about promoting flowers because it works. Advertising works."

In 2021, armed with marketing research and a \$2.5 million budget, CalFlowers established the "That Flower Feeling" brand, and set out to create a marketing campaign to reshape Americans' relationship with flowers. The goal, Dionne says, was to "crack the culture code and change consumer attitudes" so Americans would come to see flowers not just as a gift purchase for special occasions, but as part of a year-round self-care routine.

## Spreading the Message

CalFlowers took its self-care idea to 180 Amsterdam, the same ad agency that the Flower Council of Holland has used



for its marketing. Filming took place in the fall of 2021 in Warsaw, Poland, and the still photography was shot in Amsterdam.

The campaign launched in January 2022, first to the industry during a virtual viewing party, then across various platforms that included Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, TikTok, Spotify, as well as on six major podcasts including Jay Shetty's "On Purpose with Jay Shetty" and Nicole Beyer's "Why Won't He Date Me?" That Flower Feeling also sent fresh flowers to 26 social influencers who conveyed the message to their hundreds of thousands of followers.

"We're hitting it every possible way we can," Dionne says. That includes encouraging businesses in the floral industry to help spread the message using the digital marketing assets provided by CalFlowers.

"The flower industry has an internal army that could get the messaging that much further," says Jeanne Boes, general manager and COO of the San Francisco Flower Market and CalFlowers' vice-president of the board of directors



**MARKETING MADE EASY.** These marketing assets and others available to the industry appeal to the campaign's target demographic, those ages 25 to 39.

who served as the marketing co-chair for the campaign.

"Marketing is a local game," Dionne says. "We can go with the national thing and try and change imagery, but the sale happens at a local level. And we knew that if we got those assets in the right hands, that would help activate sales at a local level." To date, about 275 companies have accessed the marketing assets.

The decision to provide those materials "was a significant financial decision," Dionne says. Because the marketing assets were going to be distributed, CalFlowers had to pay for licensing for the Bolivian pan flute music featured in the video, the hand photography and more. Those fees added up.

Another factor the board considered, and ultimately decided against, was requiring the companies using the assets to help fund the campaign. "We understand with the voluntary funding model that certain companies are going to be

riding the coattails of the companies who chose to fund the foundation," he says. "But we're hoping that by providing the assets, we provide that next level of impetus to people who are kind of on the fence, because now they actually have something of high value in their hands that they're able to convert to additional revenue for their company."

### The Spend

While a \$2.5 million marketing budget may seem enormous to many small floral businesses, in the world of marketing "the amount of money that we spent is ridiculously small," Dionne says. "We think that the model we've created is the most efficient, the most effective. I don't think it's possible to get this level of impact for the industry for this small amount of spend."

He points out that Floral Board, the most recent national marketing proposal drafted under guidelines set forth by the

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, is estimated to generate a much larger annual sum — about \$15 million or more — for national marketing that comes from assessments on domestic growers and importers. That proposal has yet to gain widespread industry support, which is needed to move the initiative forward, but some members of the proposal's drafting committee have chosen to financially support the "Flowers. Self care made easy" campaign because they believe so strongly in the need for national marketing.

"National marketing is so important, and what we are seeing now with sales declining from last year, is that we need to keep flowers top of mind," says Oscar Fernandez, a member of the drafting committee, SAF's president & chair, and director of sales for Equiflor/Rio Roses in Doral, Florida, which has pledged monthly donations to the campaign.

## The Results

The success of the campaign is measured by its social media impressions and a post-campaign survey of consumers, as well as the recognition it has received outside of the floral industry.

Last year the campaign won the global Epica award in the luxury goods category — alongside brands such as Louis Vuitton, Burberry and others. “Those are companies that spend hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars to establish a brand at that level,” Dionne says. “We spent \$2.5 million and got to that level on our first run. We’re extremely proud of that.” The campaign also won a bronze ADDY from the American Advertising Awards.

In digital spaces, the campaign had nearly 60 million impressions in its first three months and drew nearly 20,000 people to the website. The campaign was launched in digital spaces again in early 2023, and began its third digital run in July. CalFlowers did not have the metrics for the second and third digital runs tracked, but estimates that collectively they will bring the total impressions to more than 100 million people.

The campaign was also a win with consumers. CalFlowers hired Lucid, a market research firm, to survey consumers on their attitudes after seeing the campaign. They found that 72 percent of consumers surveyed agreed that the campaign made them think about fresh cut flowers in a new way. Consumers also agreed after viewing the campaign that flowers aren’t just for special occasions, and that they could help improve focus, concentration, mood and sense of well-being.

“I think we provide an absolutely compelling story that this is the right approach, and this is the way the floral industry can [promote flowers],” Dionne says.

## Future of Campaign

The future of the campaign and new campaigns produced under the That Flower Feeling brand largely depends on the willingness of everyone in every segment of the industry to fund it. “Every business and individual who will benefit from an increase in floral consumption in the U.S. should commit and help the campaign so the That Flower Feeling



**BEHIND THE SCENES** Joost Bongaerts, CEO of the wholesale company Florabundance and a member of the CalFlowers board of directors and marketing co-chair for the campaign, on set for the filming of the campaign’s video.

## By the Numbers

**The Campaign:** CalFlowers in 2021 created the That Flower Feeling brand, under which it launched the “Flowers. Self care made easy” campaign. The campaign targeted people ages 25 to 39 and encouraged them to see flowers as part of their self-care routine.

**The Cost:** \$2.5 million

**The Result:** Marketing assets available industry-wide and downloaded by 275 companies

Projected consumer exposures from January 2022-December 2023:

- Instagram: 40.4M impressions
- Instagram Influencer posts: 108K impressions
- TikTok in-feed: 14.5M impressions
- TikTok Influencer posts: 340K impressions
- Pinterest: 24.4M impressions
- YouTube: 9.4M impressions
- Podcasts: 4M impressions
- Spotify: 2.6M impressions
- Reddit: 4.4M impressions
- iHeart Media: 1.5M impressions
- LinkedIn: 727K impressions
- Total impressions: 102.3 million

that  
flower  
feeling™



**MASS MARKETING** Jet Fresh Flower Distributors in Miami used the campaign's assets on one of their delivery trucks, enabling the campaign to reach thousands of consumers as it drives through the city.

Foundation can expand the campaign and refresh the assets," Bongaerts says.

The brand is now under the direction of That Flower Feeling Foundation, which was established about a year ago and will be governed by a board of directors tasked with overseeing voluntary monetary contributions and the direction of future campaigns. The group's goal is to raise \$2.5 million a year.

"All we need is funding and we will maintain this premium, high-quality marketing effort," Dionne says. CalFlowers is contributing \$500,000 for the next three years. As of this summer, the foundation had received financial

contributions from more than 60 companies totaling nearly \$247,060 — with 82 percent of those companies pledging money for recurring payments. That Flower Feeling Foundation estimates the combined pledges will total at least \$2 million in three years.

Jet Fresh Flower Distributors is one of the campaign's supporters. The Miami company pledged a monthly donation and wrapped a delivery truck with the graphics provided by the campaign. Jet Fresh's founder, Mike Black, says he believes in the power of national marketing and liked that the campaign used a European marketing agency and

approach ("Europeans are the most successful when it comes to flower consumption," he says). He also appreciated that the campaign used comedy in the messaging. "If you can make them laugh, you can make them buy," Black says.

He emphasized the need for the industry to support the campaign, and by doing so "we are all supporting our future."

The possibilities for future campaigns are vast. That Flower Feeling Foundation's board will be intentional with the demographic they target, the messaging, and the type of assets they develop for the industry to use, Boes says. "The advertising world has changed so much," she says, including where people are consuming media and making online purchases and even their attention span.

"The goal is to just keep marketing flowers," she says. 🌸

**Amanda Jedlinsky** is the senior content strategist for the Society of American Florists and editor in chief of *Floral Management*.

## Learn More

For more about SAF's Marketer of the Year contest, including how it's judged, how to enter next year, and what qualifies as an entry, go to [safnow.org/moty](https://safnow.org/moty)

For more about That Flower Feeling's "Flowers. Self care made easy" campaign, visit [thatflowerfeeling.org](https://thatflowerfeeling.org)