

Lessons from a Global Retail Guru

John Stanley is a global retail consultant who specialises in Garden Centres and recently visited Scotland. Although flower growers aren't garden centres (obviously!) we do share some common ground in that we deal in perishable goods and non-essential items. So, here is an edited-for-flower-growers version of John Stanley's words of wisdom.

Retail trends for 2017

Customers are looking for:

Unique experiences - why is what you offer different to the norm?

Product quality, transparency and sustainability

Personalised service

Trends are towards:

clean/healthy living

kitchen gardens/kitchen counters - including food with decoration

Indoor gardens

Gardens delivered to your door

Urban agriculture

Customers to watch

- 'millennials' are starting to affect the market and shop in a very different way
- 'baby boomers' are experiencing reduced incomes as they retire

Key aspects of the 'millennial' mindset

A discomfort in feeling ignorant - they will do their homework and start shopping before they reach you

They only trust the expert - we will need to demonstrate why we are the expert

Online advice and trusted real world advice are important - they will use forums and online recommendations to find you

Is your brand a friend of mine? Recommendations will come via social media. If what we do is 'cool' and hits the right buttons we'll be tagged and highlighted.

Make it personalised, give options - they want to feel you're putting them first.

Marketing for 2017

People want to buy wellbeing - health for the planet, home, person

Communicate to your customers that what they are buying is good for them, will improve their wellbeing

Market to the senses, -

I love flowers because they stir a memory

I love flowers because they make me feel like an artist

I love flowers because they are a way of sharing the moment

Provide a way for people to create moments together

Customer engagement and inclusion in decision making are the most effective ways of gaining commitment to your brand

The good news is that flower growers are already heading in this direction and what we do directly addresses most of the issues John Stanley raised. The key challenge is to make sure we can communicate what we do clearly and show how good it is for our customers.

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