

## Flower Power Marketing

Field of Flowers President Donn Flipse shares his newest marketing strategies, such as how to undercut the competition and grow



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## *Marketing campaign blossoms with Internet, e-mail assistance*

For executives with Field of Flowers, marketing support for a new product line was like promoting an entirely new company.

The product was Simply Flowers, a fresh flower delivery service. Unlike national chains, which use overnight delivery services, Simply Flowers' bunches are sleeved in a nutritional solution and remain upright

throughout the same-day delivery process using the company's own 10 refrigerated trucks. The cost is about two-thirds that of the national chains, said Donn Flipse, the Davie-based company's founder and president.

The challenge was to wrap those key message points into a marketing campaign.

Flipse focused on a mix of media, some of which he had never used before – newspaper fliers and inserts in mailed coupon packages. The company also is e-mailing existing customers, utilizing cooperative e-mail programs through a local vendor.

Flipse is experimenting with banner ads and pa-per-click

advertising, too.

The company launched its marketing program in June with a message focused mainly on price.

"Price is crucial to the concept and the advertising," Flipse said. "Freshness and quality are important, but the eye-opening thing that will spur people to order is to see how low the price can be."

The company turned to Google Ads as "a natural for this kind of product," Flipse said. By localizing generic

keyword strings like "fresh flowers delivery" with city names like "Hollywood" or "Boca Raton," Simply Fresh is able to rise high in ad results, he said. Flipse set a monthly budget of \$2,000; the system alerts him once clicks have exceeded that level.

"Google and Yahoo have perfected a pretty easy interface for a business to use," he said.

Moreover, Flipse was able to assign a staffer to the program, instead of adding the cost of an outside vendor. Visitors to the company Web site also can navigate to "Flowers by the Bunch" to order on line.

The other Internet-based program is e-mail announcements and promotions. Equilibrix, a Davie-based e-mail marketing service, sends a monthly "neighborhood newsletter" to thousands of recipients in the area, which now includes promotions for the new service. Flipse grows his own e-mail distribution list by getting customers to sign up at the cash register or online. The enticement: a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

More traditional components to the campaign are mailing postcards and coupons, and inserting circulars in South Florida daily newspapers. This component of the campaign debuted Aug. 2

Each insert and coupon has a barcode to track the source to allow for tracking in a delivery area from Delray Beach to Miami's Civic Center.

The company handles almost all marketing internally. It created the package and logo design. The company works with national vendor Advo for coupon mailing. Boardroom Communications in Plantation handles public relations. Equilibrix handles much of the e-mail distribution. In all, the budget is about \$50,000 for the coming year, Flipse said.

"We're not a big company, so that's pretty significant investment for us," said Flipse, who spends about \$300,000 a year marketing Field of Flowers. "The lesson here is to keep your eyes and ears open to what's successful out there, and see how you can do it in your own way."



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