

What Inspires Us

> If you've ever been to a floral trade show, you know how impressive they can be: one exhibit after another, overflowing with vases, buckets and urns of seemingly endless varieties of fresh-cut flowers and foliages. We had a taste of that eye candy this spring, during two back-to-back events, the World Floral Expo 2009 held in mid-March, followed by the WF&FSA Convention a few weeks later — both great opportunities for scoping out new fresh product and connecting with the buyers and suppliers in the industry.

As stunning as the floral displays were in the booths, the one that stood out the most to me had but a handful of flowers in it, despite the fact that the exhibitor, Golden Flowers, is a cut flower importer. Instead, the booth was awash in large, bright posters and baskets of

buttons with the slogan, "Helping People Express Feelings with Flowers."

At first, we thought it was the makings of a new consumer campaign. But we found out that the message is geared not toward the end user but to the flower seller. "Sure, there are 300 million consumers to reach on the outside," the concept's originator and chief engineer, Gabriel Becerra, acknowledged. "But there are 300,000 employees on the *inside* of the industry." And he thinks they could use some inspiration. "We get so involved with the logistics — the trucks, the planes, getting product from here to there," he said, exasperated. "But *this*," he said, pointing to the slogan, "is the *essence* of what we do."

So you'd be hard-pressed to find a Golden Flowers team member without the button (and you can read about one such employee's reaction to it in Viewpoint, p.2). But Becerra wants to see everyone in the industry don these buttons, so he makes the artwork, which businesses can customize with their own logos, available on www.expressfeelingswithflowers.com — a fact that wholesaler customer Gary Staton, of Bill Doran Company, appreciates: "What I like is that it's not about Golden — any company can do this."



This month's issue is a natural complement to Becerra's effort — while he's inspiring the industry's front lines with the very reason they're coming to work every day, we're giving tactical, ready-to-use ways to make the most out of their time on the job. In "Fork it Over," p.22, editors Kate Cantrell and Amanda Long dish out advice from the restaurant industry and some of our industry's most talented salespeople for getting existing customers to buy more. During this month that honors mothers, we couldn't resist turning to the industry's moms for some additional inspiration, in "My Mama Told Me: You Better Be Nice." And for that occasional not-so-nice customer, find out how to keep them in the customer category, in "Hot, Bothered and Always Right," p.30. 🌻

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WHO HAS THE BUTTON? Gabriel Becerra, right, wants to see the front lines of the industry, including Gary Staton, left, wearing his buttons.

Off the Page ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON WWW.SAFNOW.ORG



NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Florists and museums are partnering up to put their works of art in the hands of consumers. See how the florist featured in First Hand Account (p.12) put her creations right into those of local artists at www.safnow.org/photostogo.

STAY ON TRACK

This month's Up the Supply Chain gave you peek into the minds of growers (p.18), but why stop there? Find out what every segment is really thinking — about this recession, their own chances of recovery and resiliency — in the spring Floral Trend Tracker, www.safnow.org/floraltrendtracker.com.

SIT FOR A SPELL

Some folks just need to sit down and type out a full sentence without abbreviations and emoticons. But until they give their thumbs a rest, you can decode their texts with our handy glossary at www.safnow.org/infotogo. Now you'll know what everyone is LOL about.



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FORWARD THINKING

Hey you, over there, holding that BlackBerry the same way Linus grips his security blanket, let go and read up. Your smartphone may be making an etiquette idiot out of you and your sales staff. Forward this month's Plugged In column, p.40, to all your staff. Just open the digital edition (www.safnow.org/floralmanagement), and click on "share."

LUCKY 13

You can learn a lot more than just his name from a guy who wears a nametag 24 hours a day, including how to make a name for yourself with customers. Author and super approachable business coach Scott Ginsberg shares 13 phrases that make customers feel so good about giving you money, they'll never want to stop. Take his words for it, at www.safnow.org/infotogo.