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KATE F. PENN EDITOR IN CHIEF
VP OF PUBLISHING AND COMMUNICATIONS
KPENN@SAFNOW.ORG

AMANDA LONG MANAGING EDITOR
ALONG@SAFNOW.ORG

KATE CANTRELL ASSISTANT EDITOR
KCANTRELL@SAFNOW.ORG

MARY WESTBROOK CONTRIBUTING WRITER
MWESTBROOK@SAFNOW.ORG

SHEILA S. SANTIAGO ADVERTISING
AND PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
SSANTIAGO@SAFNOW.ORG

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
BUSSOLATI ASSOCIATES
JAMIE MITCHELL, ART DIRECTOR
SHIKHA SAVDAS, GRAPHIC DESIGNER

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
PETER J. MORAN, SAF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DREW GRUENBURG, SAF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

EDITORIAL OFFICES
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FLORISTS
1601 DUKE STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-3406
(800) 336-4743; (703) 836-8700; FAX (800) 208-0078
WWW.SAFNOW.ORG

ADVERTISING SALES
DAVID FACINELLI
DFACINELLI@SAFNOW.ORG
(727) 866-9647; FAX: (727) 866-9222

DONNA BOATMAN-RILEY
DBOATMAN@SAFNOW.ORG
(815) 393-4624; FAX: (847) 699-8681

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Your Growth is Our Business

THE CURIOUS CASE OF GABRIEL'S BUTTON

> I'm not a button-wearer. I don't have any bumper stickers on my car. And I don't consider T-shirts a good way to share my deep philosophical beliefs. So when Gabriel Becerra asked me to wear a bright yellow button with hot pink type that reads, "Helping People Express Feelings with Flowers," I did so because, well, he's my boss.

It was back in January, when every conversation seemed to start or end with a reference to how bad the economy was, and many people in the industry were preparing for double-digit decreases at Valentine's Day. Gabriel had this theory that if we are more excited about flowers, we'll be able to sell more of them, and that this button would help us do that.

At first, I attached the button to my shirt and didn't think too much about it. Then, people started asking me about it: a neighbor, a cashier at the supermarket, fellow attendees at the WF&FSA Convention. And, as I explained it to them — the Harvard research that proves that flowers make people more creative, the Rutgers University research that proves that flowers make people happy — it took on a new level of importance to me. I felt proud to talk about our industry.

We gave buttons to our entire team, and we challenged our sales advisors to resist the temptation to talk to customers and co-workers about all of the depressing economic news — a real dead end of a conversation — and to instead talk about what we could do to keep things going in a positive direction.

Sure, there was some skepticism, but for the most part there was enthusiasm. Let's face it, sitting at a desk for eight hours a day can get tedious. You have to shake it up on a daily basis and have some fun.

Some sales advisors put the button's sentiment on their instant messenger. One team member found the sentiment to be very personal, because it reminded him of the times he sent flowers to his mother when he first started in the industry and the happiness it gave her.



Another said that it typically leads to a conversation that people can feel good about. This one button alone seemed to elevate our energy and enthusiasm for what we do on a critical holiday for the year — and that enthusiasm may have something to do with the fact that our sales for the Valentine's Day were actually very good.

Having an energized team can certainly sell more flowers, but this button campaign is bigger than Golden Flowers. Gabriel wants to see an industry of enthusiastic people because more can be accomplished with partners who share enthusiasm about what they do.

Just this morning, the sales manager for Sole Farms walked into my office and asked for 20 buttons to take to his kids' school, where he was going to talk about the Flowers for Kids program (www.flowersforkids.org). My guess is that 20 kids are going to go home with buttons on their shirts, and some of them are going to find a way to get some flowers in their homes.

Successful people tell us all the time that believing in what you do and having a passion for it are the most important ingredients for success. If the button is a reminder of what's good about our industry, then maybe some pride and passion will come out of it. And if that translates into more sales, then I'll be willing to wear a button every day. 🌻

Jody Whitekus is the technical manager of Golden Flowers in Miami. E-mail: jody@goldenflowers.com.