

SNAPSHOT

# Get Creative with Holiday Décor

> When it came time to assemble their usual Christmas tree display last year, Lenzee Bilke, AIFD, and Lacey Bilke, CFD, found their order embroiled in a supply chain shortage. The items they'd chosen for their front window weren't going to arrive in time. The entrepreneurs, who own and operate Madeline's Flower Shop & Greenhouse in Edmond, Oklahoma, with their mom, Barbara, were forced to brainstorm alternative designs.

A chance glance at a home design magazine inspired them to consider a very on-trend and easy-to-source solution: pampas grass. "We ordered grass from our fresh flower supplier, dried it, and incorporated the fronds into our artificial trees with fan palm accents," Lenzee explains. "Every year we include some ornaments, but primarily we decorate our trees with small retail items that complement the theme."

At Madeline's, the holidays are a big celebration requiring a whole-store transformation. The merchandising shift is complete just in time for a much-anticipated holiday extravaganza, held annually on the weekend before Thanksgiving. In recent years, the shop has expanded this tradition to include other local businesses — a jewelry maker, wine shop and bakery — optimizing cross-promotion and giving customers even more reasons to stop in.

A third-generation florist and 72-year fixture on Edmond's South Broadway, Madeline's has successfully employed a variety of holiday themes ranging from cheerful color to glittery metallics to luxurious velvet and more. The owners decorate anywhere from three to seven trees depending on the scheme, always with a creative edge that transcends the everyday.



**FESTIVE FEATURES** Madeline's Flower Shop & Greenhouse in Edmond, Oklahoma, used pampas grass and fan palms to dress up the shop's Christmas trees.

"One year we dyed paint sticks bright colors to match our ornament collection," Lenzee recalls. "Another year we opted for Frida-inspired florals." But the pampas grass pivot ended up being one of the family's favorites to date.

"We incorporate some classic items, but mostly our displays go beyond the traditional," summarizes the store owner. "Our goal is always to draw people in with something enticing and unique." 🌿

# Create an Effective Social Media Ad

> Megan Gerace knows how competitive the online landscape is for florists. “With so much competition out there, anything you can do to set yourself apart and make sure you’re being seen by your buying market is huge,” says the account executive and digital marketing director for GravityFree Studios, which specializes in e-commerce websites and digital marketing for retail florists.

According to Gerace, one slice of the digital pie with great potential for florists of all sizes is social media advertising. “These types of ads don’t require a big budget to generate a nice ROI,” she explains. “Social budgets are usually in the hundreds of dollars versus the thousands required for pay-per-click.”

If you’re new to this type of advertising or wanting to improve your current campaign, here is some helpful advice from the digital marketer:

**Make a plan.** Before launching a campaign, first think about your business goals. Typically, these goals fall into three main categories: building brand awareness, generating leads (usually more important for florists specializing in weddings, special occasions, and corporate events), and driving sales of online products.

**Choose your platform.** Instagram and Facebook ads can be controlled within the Meta ad manager, offering both convenience and efficiency. “The great thing about Meta is that you can divide your spend between Instagram and Facebook via dynamic targeting,” says Gerace. “With just one budget, your

ads populate on both automatically. Meta will reach people who interact with your ads most often, even if it’s not the platform on which you post the most.”

And don’t ignore Pinterest. “Pinterest is still big for customers planning weddings and events,” says Gerace. “It has a larger buying market and audience than Facebook and is very competitive with Facebook when you line up the numbers. It offers great pricing for lead-generation ads.”

**Select imagery.** “As a general rule, faces and spaces do really well on social media,” says Gerace. She suggests opting for someone holding a bouquet versus just the bouquet itself. And the good news is that professional shoots aren’t required. “Social media really thrives off authentic content,” she explains. “Sometimes just a simple picture on your phone with a caption works well.”



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## TEAM BUILDER

# Help Your Team Stress Less

**Experiment with video.** “Video is king on social media right now. Since Meta is pushing this format, you might get bonus points for a video ad, aka a boost in displays,” says Gerace, adding that Meta’s ad manager can even auto-generate video from a collection of images. “If you opt for video, make sure your selection instantly grabs attention; you don’t want a slow buildup in an ad.” Also, choose a clip that doesn’t require audio.

**Target your audience.** “Make sure your ads are served to people within your delivery or service radius. Facebook can get really carried away; you don’t want to spend valuable money on clients who can’t purchase,” Gerace says. Then narrow your audience further via their interests. Wedding florists, for example, can check off users who are recently engaged or who interact with bridal-focused content.

**Be clear.** Make sure that the purpose and intention of your ad is clear. A product-driven ad should link directly to the product shown to avoid customer frustration.

**Review insights.** Social campaigns provide a great deal of information about your audience, including age groups, interests, geography and device type. Use this data to target your future ads even further, increasing ROI.

**Consider holiday ads carefully.** First, florists need to assess whether they have the capacity for any added volume generated by ads. Also, it’s hard to compete with the spending power of big brands during key holidays, warns Gerace. If a holiday push is an important goal, consider “order ahead” ads for Valentine’s Day or Mother’s Day to encourage customers to place orders ahead of the rush. 🌿

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➤ Stress among employees reached an all-time high last year. A Gallup report found that 50 percent of North American workers reported feeling stressed at their jobs the previous day. In a summary of the findings, the *Harvard Business Review* noted that level of stress poses a risk to businesses. “If leaders aren’t paying attention to employee wellbeing, they’re likely to be blindsided by top performer burnout and high quit rates,” the summary said.

Are you or your team headed for burnout? Barry Gottlieb, a coach and author who works with the floral industry and recently presented a series of wellness webinars hosted by the Society of American Florists, shared five signs that you or your team may be headed for burnout.

- Everything about your job annoys you.
- You have zero energy.
- Your life/work balance is nonexistent.
- You eat, sleep, and dream work.
- You are irritable.

If that sounds familiar, Gottlieb has some pointers to help you and your employees stress less.

- Take control of your phone and social media use so it doesn’t control you.
- Eliminate any unnecessary negativity, such as exposure to 24-hour news cycles.
- Practice gratitude to counter negative thoughts.
- Practice meditation to stay grounded in the present.
- Use affirmations such as “I believe in myself,” and “All I need is within me right now.”
- Have a growth mindset. Instead of saying “I have to do this,” say “I get to do this.”
- Give yourself the gift of time. Find an hour of the day to disconnect and do something you enjoy.

Want to learn more? Go to [safnow.org/ondemand22](https://safnow.org/ondemand22) to watch “Mental Well Being: The Impact on Productivity, Retention and Profits,” the three-part webinar series with Gottlieb. 🌿

— Amanda Jedlinsky

