



# “How-To-Enter”

packet for the  
Merchandising  
Award of Excellence  
Contest

## Your packet includes:

- Award entry form
- Sample sales-contest outline to encourage individual store entries
- Suggestions from a real-life winner
- Tips on:
  - Props
  - Backdrops
  - Color
  - Lighting
  - Signage
  - Product placement
- Advice on shooting top-notch photos
- Last-minute reminders for filling out your entry form

# Merchandising Award of Excellence Entry Form



All entries must be of displays in or near a supermarket floral department or other high-volume floral operation. The primary emphasis of the photo and display should be fresh flowers. The contest is open to floral department and store employees only.

Name of store: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and titles of people who created display: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's name and title: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Store or chain's director of floral: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme of display: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Include a description of the display, including the reaction it received from customers. You may attach to the entry form.**

If selected as a winner, the name(s) on the award should be: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Please provide the name of the person who will accept the award at the International Floriculture Expo in June (one person only): \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that no materials will be returned and that they might be used for publication in *Super Floral* magazine or for other purposes deemed appropriate:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 30

# Sample

## Sales contest promotion

### Attention all floral managers:

[NAME OF YOUR STORE] is planning a sales contest to promote the upcoming [NAME OF EVENT] holiday. Your department is required to create a display or displays aimed at increasing floral sales for this holiday. Your displays should include: [LIST PRODUCTS, FLOWERS, BOUQUETS, PLANTS, ETC., THAT STORES WILL BE RECEIVING OR ARE EXPECTED TO ORDER TO INCLUDE IN THIS PROMOTION].

The best displays not only will win prizes in the sales contest but also will be entered into the national *Super Floral* magazine/Börger Systems “Merchandising Award of Excellence” contest.

#### **The Grand Award Winner in the national contest receives:**

- the prestigious, crystal Börger Cup, engraved with your name
- a free trip to attend the International Floriculture Expo
- recognition at a special award ceremony at the International Floriculture Expo
- a feature article written about the winner and published in *Super Floral* magazine

#### **Honor Award winners will receive:**

- miniature crystal, engraved Börger Cups
- an invitation to accept their awards in a special ceremony at the International Floriculture Expo
- a feature article about them and their displays in *Super Floral* magazine.

#### **When building your displays, follow these tips:**

- Use props that get attention. Props should contribute to the overall display and not simply fill space.
- Use backdrops that are simple and contrast with the products on display. Do not use backdrops—such as fabric, wallpaper or other surface—with small, busy designs. Solid-colored, muted backdrops are best. Do not allow background colors to overpower the display.
- Coordinate complementary colors in your display.
- Group products—particularly flowers and plants—by color for greater impact.
- Use lighting to highlight displays.
- Create signage that identifies varieties, labels plants, provides care-and-handling tips and emphasizes price. Use verbiage such as: *Fresh today! \* Fragrant! \* Long lasting! \* Value! \* Easy to care for! \* Great colors! \* Limit 6! \* Save \$2.00! \* Look!*

- Price everything. Customers should not have to ask about prices—because they won't!
- Highlight one or two great items in a display—don't use the entire selection. Don't allow a display to get busy.

#### **After you have built your displays, take photos of them. Follow these tips:**

- Be sure all parts of the display are visible in at least one photo.
- Take close-up photos of larger displays so smaller aspects can be seen.
- Make sure signage is readable in photos.
- Use a fluorescent-light filter. These filters attach to the lens of your camera and help lessen the green cast that fluorescent lights cause when photos are developed. Colors will be brighter and bolder.

Send in your display photos to [FLORAL DIRECTOR'S NAME] by [DATE].

#### **Winners in the contest will be judged by:**

- **Color harmony.** How effectively is color used throughout the display? Does the display feature a specific color technique?
- **Cross-merchandising.** How effectively does the display sell non-floral items? Do the floral and non-floral items complement one another, or do they seem out of place?
- **Signage.** Are the signs legible? Do the signs fit into the overall theme of the display?
- **Theme development.** Does the display have an easily recognizable, cohesive theme? Does it complement the products for sale and make the display more effective?

Prizes in the contest will be [LIST PRIZES]. Prizes will be awarded [WHEN?].  
Good luck and great merchandising!



# 12 tips for entering—and winning!

## The “Merchandising Award of Excellence” Contest Sponsored by *Super Floral* and Börger Systems

You have three seconds to catch the customer’s eyes as she walks past your department. After that, if she isn’t intrigued by what she sees, she’ll keep walking and forget she even glanced your way.

Developing great merchandising displays, then, is an important aspect of increasing sales in the floral industry. To encourage, recognize and celebrate merchandising that helps reach this goal is the purpose behind the “Merchandising Award of Excellence” contest each year.

When you’ve taken the time to create show-stopping displays, you deserve credit for all your creativity and hard work. So, by entering the contest, you not only have the opportunity to cash in on the credit—and win some fabulous prizes and awards—but you also allow others to see your work, build on your ideas and help improve our industry as a whole when they are published in *Super Floral* magazine.

This packet is designed to give you tips and ideas to get you started on sending in your first entry or improve your chances of winning if you already are a frequent entrant.

Join others around the country as we work together to promote the floral industry in a positive, creative and successful manner!

We wish you the best of luck in entering this year’s “Merchandising Award of Excellence” contest!

### The Grand Award Winner receives:

- the prestigious, crystal Börger Cup, engraved with his or her name
- airfare and hotel accommodations to attend the International Floriculture Expo in June
- recognition at a special award ceremony at the International Floriculture Expo
- a feature article written about the winner and published in *Super Floral* magazine.

### Honor Award winners will receive:

- miniature crystal, engraved Börger Cups
- an invitation to accept their awards in a special ceremony at the International Floriculture Expo
- a feature article about them and their displays in *Super Floral* magazine.

# 1. Follow a leader: One winner's tactics

## Indiana chain encourages creative merchandising.

The offer of free money can be a great motivator. Nevertheless, the lure of cash isn't the primary reason Buehler Foods Inc., Jasper, Ind., always gets a great response when requesting entries from its floral managers for the national "Merchandising Award of Excellence" contest. The spirit of teamwork and good-natured rivalry between stores is the main reason.

Floral Director Jerri Prose plans sales contests for all major holidays, selecting two balloons and one container each store must promote. After that, though, managers have no guidelines on developing their merchandising efforts. "I just tell them to 'step over the line,'" Ms. Prose says.

When she first learned of *Super Floral's* merchandising contest, Ms. Prose made it mandatory for every floral manager to enter. Now, however, the stores' floral staffs have developed such a competitive rivalry with one another that mandatory requirements aren't necessary.

The company further encourages the friendly competition with its own prizes. Sometimes winners receive checks for as much as \$500. Other

times, the prizes might be trips, cameras or watches. The company relies on vendor rebates and gifts for the rewards.

The company also promotes award winners to local newspapers, in circular advertising and in dealer newsletters.

The friendly competition among floral staffers has developed from longtime relationships between many. Two-thirds have been floral managers for 10 years or more, Ms. Prose says.

"One will be talking to another or hear about another's display and will want to outdo the other," she says. "They constantly tease each other about what they are doing."

And while winning is important, it's not the managers' ultimate goal. "They want to win, but they don't do it just to compete," Ms. Prose says. "They also do it to stop the customers. We figure we have five seconds to get the customer's attention, and if a display doesn't look exciting enough to attract them, then we're in trouble."

## 2. The importance of props

- **Use props.** Props can include anything from a bale of hay for autumn to a step-ladder for Labor Day to a filing cabinet for Administrative Professionals Day.
- **Be creative.** Using dynamic props allow you to upstage competitors with similar product selections.
- **Be on the look out.** Constantly keep your eyes open for interesting items.

- **Establish your display schedule** at the beginning of the year. Then, you can search for appropriate props throughout the upcoming year.
- **Don't let props muddy your display.** Although you might find some themes have great prop possibilities, you don't want the display to appear cluttered. Each display should be easy to perceive and understand. Each prop should contribute and not just fill space.

### 3. Advice on backdrops

- **Avoid background props that are too busy.** This includes items such as a trellis panel for a garden display. It may seem like a natural choice, but its crisscross lines are too distracting when placed behind a bouquet. The same is true about patterned wallpaper or fabric.
- **Don't use a large floral design**—such as an oversized silk arrangement—as a backdrop. It, too, may seem to be an obvious choice. However, a large floral design might actually compete with the merchandise on display instead of enhancing it.

- **Choose simple backgrounds** that contrast with your products. For example, use a piece of stainless steel, copper sheeting or a piece of wood.
- **Select something with a hard surface or a totally different texture** from the products and/or flowers in your display. That surface will make the softness and romance of the flowers stand out much more.
- **Use soft fabric, if it is plain and not busy.** Fabric is a wonderful prop if it is used in a way as to always be subordinate to the flowers.

### 4. Use color

**to create mood and attract attention.**

Color is an essential part of designing displays. It creates moods. Color also can be at the root of display problems.

- **Look at the colors** in a display. If they just don't feel right, there is probably an inconsistency in mood because of wrong color combinations.
- **Consider the intensity and value of the color** in your display. Perhaps the background color doesn't fit the product and prop colors. A fun, cheery spring floral display with bright colors should not have a sophisticated background, such as plum/aubergine or teal.
- **Choose a background color** that is complementary to the mood of the display.
- **Don't use colors that recede** and won't show up from a distance. Half of the color wheel is made up of such colors. They include the cool colors such as violets, blues and greens. The warm colors (reds,

oranges and yellows), however, are more aggressive and better for distance.

- **Choose yellows, oranges or warm reds when possible.** When it comes to visibility, the strongest choice is yellow. The human eyes have to look at it; they just are immediately drawn to it. Orange and warm reds also have strong visibility.
- **Avoid cool reds.** Although red is a color that jumps out, different lighting conditions can make it less effective. For example, in an outdoor display, red will turn to brown at twilight and lose its visibility.
- **Consider lighting.** If your store has fluorescent lighting, which is cool, it highlights the cooler colors. If the lighting is track lighting or some kind of incandescent lighting, it is warmer and kills the cool colors. Prior to choosing colors, analyze the type of lighting you have in the interior or display windows of your store.

# 5. Consider color moods

**Following are eight color moods and the color combinations that establish these moods. Use these combinations to create the moods you are targeting in your displays.**

## 1) Whimsical

This fun-loving, free-spirited, joyful set of color combinations includes red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. The group mixes many brights and offers significant contrast. The dominant colors are warm reds, cherry oranges, smiling yellows, gumdrop greens, electric blues and hot purples. This combination sets a mood that is lighthearted, playful, capricious and alive. These paint-box and jellybean colors can make people feel happier than any others. These are the colors you see at a circus or theme park, in a child's toy box and on animated cartoons. Keep them in mind when targeting kids or attempting to appeal to the childlike side of adults, such as when promoting your licensed products.

*Whimsical combinations:*

- *Bright rose, snow white and blarney green*
- *Strong blue, grass green and daffodil*

## 2) Tranquil

These color combinations evoke the sound and sight of a babbling brook or languidly drifting in a canoe on the lake. The cool, clear, light-to-mid-tone shades of clear greens, misty aquas, soft blues, cool mauves, pristine white and vaporous grays evoke a serene, restful, soothing, peaceful and quiet mood. With the use of deeper dusky blues, blue-greens and shaded lavenders, the mood becomes even more restful. This color grouping is an excellent choice for displays set in a bedroom, spa or any other spot of respite and relaxation. They create a place to literally cleanse the soul as well as the body.

*Tranquil combinations:*

- *Sea blue, seafoam green, gray violet and star white*
- *Spa blue, orchid ice and gray mist*
- *Purple haze, dusk blue, celestial (blue) and hushed violet*

## 3) Nurturing

This group would be perfect for a baby display. The colors are snuggly baby-blanket colors that take us back to the TLC of infancy. They include the lightest warm yellows, peaches, roses, melons and creams balanced by touches of pastel blues, subtle greens, lavender tints, barely gray and tinted whites. They are fragile, soft, caring, tender tints that make us feel safe, snug and loved. They also create the mood of an escape, making them ideal for a bedroom or bathroom. Although similar to Tranquil, these colors are lighter, more delicate and predominately warm as compared to the cooler hues of Tranquil.

*Nurturing combinations:*

- *Mellow yellow, pearl blush and antique white*
- *Soft pink, silver birch and seedling green.*

## 4) Traditional

This color grouping will help you establish a sense of history, substance and stability. Navy, burgundy and forest green in deep, strong, muted tones capture the strength of Brooks Brothers button-downs, Burberry raincoats, grandfather clocks and a library filled with well-used books. The timeless colors of this mood range from muted shades of teal, deep purple, light taupe and antique gold to deeper tones of wineberry, hunter green, insignia blue, brown stone and patrician purple. Consider this combination for your Father's Day or Grandparents' Day displays.

*Traditional combinations:*

- *Tapestry green, antique gold and claret red*
- *Eggplant, shaded spruce and plaza taupe*

## 5) Contemplative

If you're in search of the most simplistic color scheme for your display, this is it. Neutral gray, beige, taupe, ivory and other off-whites establish a

less-is-more environment. This grouping would work well as the backdrop to one or two dynamic products, giving them the full attention you think they are due. Key to this mood are words such as pensive, thought provoking, sacred and spiritual.

*Contemplative combinations:*

- Cobblestone, feather gray, birch and deep purple
- Sauterne, willow green and ruby wine
- Jade green, bright red violet and pastel rose tan

## 6) Dynamic

This group of color combinations is energetic, electric, dramatic and powerful. Choose such a color scheme for a center-stage display. The mood ranges from contemporary sophisticated to traditional. Soft colors are left out of this grouping, and flamboyance and sparkle are the focus. Colors include chrome yellows, Ming greens, crimson reds, royal blues, prism violets, ebony blacks and bright whites. Slick surfaces and metallic finishes such as chrome and brass or gold and silver, angled geometrics, strong contrasts or bright accent colors bouncing off combinations of black and white also combine well with this color grouping. You might accessorize a display using these color combinations with black glass, granite, stainless steel or white marble. The multifaceted jewel tones are necessary to keep the black and white from becoming too sterile and stark. For a more flamboyant setting, leave out the black and white.

*Dynamic combinations:*

- Amethyst, empire yellow, black and white
- Peridot, topaz and star sapphire
- Charcoal gray, magenta and silver

## 7) Romantic

Not only is this mood extremely popular but it is also one not to be missed by floral retailers. Romance takes on a homey feel. An herb garden, a delicious whiff of bread baking in the oven, a sense of intimacy—this is the Romantic mood, nostalgic and sentimental but never cutesy or contrived. These are the colors of flowers pressed into books as keepsakes, of dried roses and baby's

breath, muted colors that delight the senses and soothe the soul. These colors are “in between”—a sophisticated take on the midtones, not too deep or too pale, too hot or too cool. These color combinations would work well with a display of hand-made grapevine wreaths accented with flowers or crafted birdhouses. Weathered pine and wicker combined with damask or lace would be ideal prop selections for accessorizing a display with this mood.

*Romantic combinations:*

- Dusty lavender, teal blue and apricot
- Tawny birch, bridal rose and basil

## 8) Sensuous

A definite consideration for a Valentine's Day display, this color grouping sets a seductive mood with an exotic touch. This is not a setting for the fainthearted—there is a commitment here to robust reds, rich browns, desert camel, burnished gold, indigo blues, hot pinks, orange mango, the spicy tones of curry and paprika and, of course, jet black. Consider exotic plants for a display with this color scheme. Accessorize with tiger or leopard prints, faux fur, plush textures, an Oriental rug and a chaise lounge. This is the ideal setting for merchandising scented candles and bath oils.

*Sensuous combinations:*

- Curry, hot pink and indigo
- Italian plum, rich gold and antique bronze

**Regardless of the color scheme you choose, when designing a retail display, follow this rule of design: Each color needs to appear more than once and odd numbers are usually best. Repeating a color at least three times will make it most effective and keep it from being lost.**

## 6. Follow color fashions

- **Use color to shock customers once in a while**, no matter how conservative you think your clientele is. Create some unusual displays because someone will thrive on such a look.
- **Use the family of reds** to create a fashion-forward display. The combination of mango orange, shocking pink, true red, plum red and cranberry gets its interest not only from the fact it is red but because it breaks with tradition. In the past, contrasting colors on the color wheel were the focus. But this color scheme develops contrast from within its family: mango orange vs. crimson vs. plum red.
- **Consider other popular color families**, such as blue-green and blue-violet. This palette could be called H2O because it is all water colors. Thrown

in are seashell pink and sandy beige. It all works together because it repeats what you might see on the beach.

- **Consider your customers.** Although universal color theories exist, you have to make sure they work for your particular clientele. For example, if you have a large Japanese audience, you may want to avoid red in displays because the color is usually associated with the Chinese, and Japanese clients might feel you are grouping them with all other Asian cultures.
- **Don't design displays in a college town in the colors of rival sports teams.** The same is true for a florist near a particular high school. School spirit may be a major factor in your particular community.

## 7. Background colors

- **Never let the background color overpower the products** you're trying to sell.
- **Don't choose the brightest color**, even if you want to pull a color from the display for your background. Instead, step it down in value, instead of up, for the background. In a Zen-style display that is low-key and restful, for example, a quiet background is necessary and shouldn't be

brighter than any of the flowers in the display.

- **Choose green when in doubt.** Select a green in the range of mint green or evergreen. You need only to look at nature to see how it always seems to work. It is always safe and will never interfere with the flowers themselves.
- **Don't use neon yellow-green.** Avoid this color. It's the only exception to the rule above.

## 8. Lighting tips

**Good displays can't happen without good lighting.**

- Use **pin spotlights** and **halogen lighting** to make merchandise jump out and to spotlight certain merchandise.
- Before you install lighting, **hold some of your merchandise under the lighting** to evaluate its effect.
- Use the **1-3-5-10** concept. How it works:
  - In areas where shoppers walk, the **lighting requirements are minimal** because the overall store lighting will sufficiently light their path.
  - **For shelves or display tables**, create light levels that are three times the minimal

amount so that you will attract attention to those areas.

- **For displays at which you want to direct more attention**, such as new products, use lighting that is **five times** that of the shoppers' walking path.
- **To encourage customers to circulate** throughout the entire department, place a display toward the back of the department with **10 times the amount of lighting** as the shoppers' path. Without knowing it, they (shoppers) will automatically gravitate to that spot.

## 9. Signage hints

**Signage is a necessary part of a display production. It not only coaxes your audience into making purchases, but its information also might influence a customer's ultimate buying decision.**

- Create signage that is **simple, clear and legible at a glance**.
- **Create lots of pricing signage.** It is the most important signage you can have. Not pricing products is one of the biggest mistakes retailers make. Unpriced products might scare off shoppers because they might think the items are too expensive for their budgets. They expect the items to cost more than they do. If there is a price, no matter what that price is, whether it is \$17 or \$170, shoppers see it and make a judgment whether it looks worth the money. Many **people are embarrassed to ask a price** because they don't know the products well enough to know their value. Pricing signage makes customers feel more at ease. When items are priced, you never run the risk of insulting your customers by making them feel as if they can't afford them.
- **Identify flowers with signage.** This type of information is a lot more important now than it was in the past because shoppers today know more about the flowers. They want more knowledge—what the flowers are, where they come from and how to propagate them.
- **Label plants.** You'll give the shoppers confidence that you know what you are selling.
- **Use bright, yellow colors in signage.** Any color that works with the display will work in the signage, unless there is a distance factor. If you want to direct people from a distance to a certain place, use brighter colors. Outlining letters, especially lighter ones and less vibrant yellows, is always a good idea.

## 10. Placing products

- **Don't allow the display to become too busy** when you pull together your props and products. Otherwise, you'll create a collage, which prevents customers from getting an impression of anything specific.
  - **Make sure props don't take over the display.**
  - **Highlight one or two wonderful items** instead of your entire selection. Develop a display that makes products look so desirable that people can't resist them.
  - **Displays of similar items**—such as a foliage plant display—should have depth in both price and assortment.
  - **Stress a variety of prices.** Even a millionaire likes to eat a hamburger once in a while because it is the appropriate thing for the occasion.
  - **Don't underestimate the possibilities.** Your average clients may never need \$500 arrangements, but they may work for a company that decorates its lobby. If they see them in your department, they know where to go.
- Every shop should have a few things to “ooh” and “ahh” over. Whether or not customers buy them, you are giving them a thrill. Who knows? They may give up a different kind of purchase somewhere else to come back and purchase an item they saw in your department.

# 11. Shoot sharp photos

**In *Super Floral*, we'd never spend hours setting up a creative photo shoot and then take a low-quality picture to use for publication. And neither should you.**

After putting extensive time and energy into a creative merchandising display, don't just take an ordinary snapshot to submit as an entry for the "Merchandising Award of Excellence" contest. Take some time to capture your creative genius on film. It doesn't take expensive photography equipment to get a great photo. All it takes is a willingness to think before you shoot.

- **Be sure all parts of the display are visible.** If your display is large enough that it will require a somewhat distant shot, shoot that, and follow up with some close-ups and shots from different angles.
- **Compose your shots**—don't automatically center everything. Whether it's a shot of the full display or a close-up, think about context, foreground and background. Look at the overall composition inside of the viewfinder. Look at the edges. Consider turning the camera 90 degrees and shooting vertically. You can't be creative if you shoot according to "the tourist formula": horizontal with focal points centered. Choosing the right composition can enhance your photo and give you a better submission.

- **Make the photo as aesthetically pleasing as your display.** Because it is difficult to appeal to taste, touch, smell or hearing through a photo, concentrate on the visual aspect.
- **Use your flash.** When it comes to indoor photography, lighting is most important. In most cases, indoor lighting is too weak. But don't fret: The flash on your camera can be a useful source of artificial light depending on distance.
- **Make use of the available light.** This is the light that comes in through windows or from artificial lights in the room. The advantage of using available light over adding another light source is that the mood evoked by the room's natural illumination stays the same.
- **Look closely for shadows before you shoot.** Dark spots seen through the viewfinder will be greatly exaggerated when film is developed.
- **Make sure the signage in your display is readable.**
- **Use a fluorescent-light filter.** Filters are fairly inexpensive and greatly reduce the green cast that is sometimes present in photos taken under fluorescent light.

# 12. Last-minute reminders

**for filling out your entry form.**

- Make sure to **complete all questions on the entry form.**
- **Package photos so that they will not be damaged in shipping.** Add cardboard or bubble wrap to protect them from getting bent.
- Send original, uncropped images. **Do not crop, cut or fold the pictures in any way.**
- Write your name, store name and city and state on the back of each photo using permanent marker. **Allow the ink to dry before stacking photos on top of one another.** If you don't, the ink might smear onto the front of the next photo. This not only ruins our ability to see the image clearly but

it also may disqualify your entry if the image is permanently damaged.

- **Include a written description** of your displays. Describe how you created and built the display, how you developed the signage, how customers reacted and if you had a significant increase in sales.
- Make sure you **identify the people** who should receive credit for building the display.
- **Mail to** Merchandising Award of Excellence, c/o *Super Floral*, 3300 S.W. Van Buren, Topeka, KS 66611.
- **Beat the deadline** of April 30.
- **Have questions?** Call (800) 355-8086.