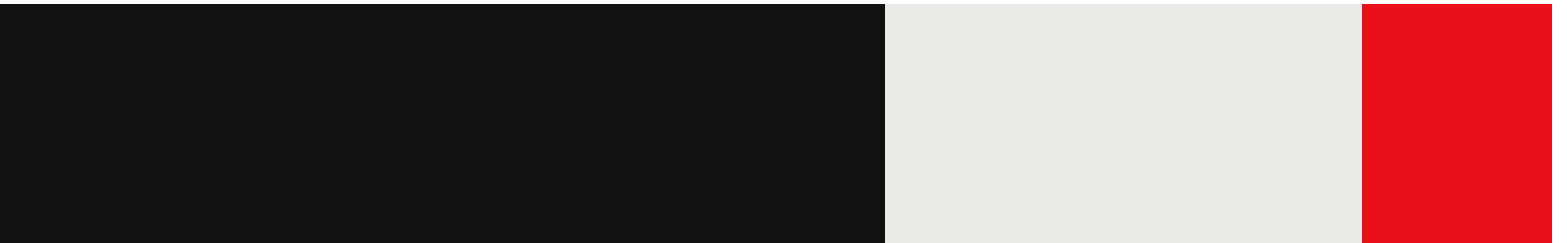


Q&A: Gift-giving year-round with FTD

Article



Christina Cubeta

Chief Merchandising Officer of Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD)



Christina Cubeta, chief merchandising officer of Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD), oversees new category development, brand and product design, and ecommerce integration for the online floral and gift-delivery company. Cubeta shared with Insider Intelligence how cultural trends impact the creation of their products, driving consumer interest outside of holiday seasons, and more.

Insider Intelligence: How do you increase conversion rates outside holiday seasons?

Christina Cubeta: We have these few moments of the year that we think of as our Super Bowl: Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas. What's important for a business like ours is thinking about the other important occasions where gifting is important and understanding how we can expand to meet gifting needs outside of florals.

One of our merchandising approaches was thinking about how we build the business and develop products by telling stories. We think about questions like what's happening with

consumers in the world, what is interesting to them right now, and what are they going through, and then how does our product matter to them or map to that?

For example, starting in COVID and growing, there's been a trend around plants for men, which we have lovingly deemed "mants." We've seen a trend of men being more interested in plants and people buying plants for men, and we've started to merchandise that more.

We're also paying attention to the major occasions throughout the year that are picking up steam in terms of gifting, even if it's not a formal occasion, but it's "thinking of you" or "get well soon." Obviously, those are moments that are now much more relevant than they may have been pre-COVID.

II: What is the future of gifting?

CC: A greater ability for a consumer to get a gift faster that fits their occasion and need and, within the checkout flow, being able to surface in a smart and intelligent way for the consumer to gift something special, elevating more thoughtful choices.

Consumers are interested in anything that combines ease and immediacy with meaningfulness. You can go on Amazon and get something delivered in one day and use that as a gift, but it doesn't necessarily have the same impact on the person you're sending it to when it comes from a place like FTD that is specifically curating products and packaging it in a certain way. One of the things that we're looking really closely at is how we unlock the power of local artisans and local businesses and couple that with the ease and immediacy of the internet. It's figuring out how to pair interesting products with local florist delivery that not only increases the business for the florist but also increases the specialness of that gift for both the person who's getting it and then the person who got to send it.

II: How do broader trends in the retail space impact the products you create?

CC: There's an enormous amount of analysis that goes into creating our products, even in things like the number of stems the bouquet has and how the exact shade impacts whether or not conversion goes up or down on a bouquet. We analyze this data every single week and track what's happening in broader cultural trends in art, fashion, and music. Other cultural spheres trickle down to the color palettes that are trending right now and what our flowers will look like.