

2016

# Marketing Tactics to Increase Millennial Floral Purchases



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In 2008, volunteers of the American Floral Endowment (AFE) Board of Trustees established the **Floral Marketing Research Fund (FMRF)**. The purpose of the FMRF is to collect funds from industry sources to be used in the support of funding consumer research benefiting the entire floriculture industry. This report is one of many projects funded by the FMRF. Other reports include a social media guide, a guide to floral tributes in funeral services, a study analyzing barriers to purchasing flowers from non-flower buyers, and more!



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**Table of Contents**

---

Introduction..... 1

Survey Procedure and Respondent Demographics ..... 2

Top Key Findings ..... 5

**Chapter 1. Millennial Consumers’ Perceptions of Floral Products & Their Benefits ..... 8**

Millennial Consumers’ Attitudes about Floral Products ..... 9

Perceptions about Floral Products ..... 11

Generating a Flower-Friendly Experience among Millennial Consumers ..... 13

Summary ..... 15

Recommendations..... 16

    Attitudes ..... 16

    Perceptions ..... 17

    Relevance & Engagement..... 17

    Customization & Personalization..... 19

**Chapter 2. Millennials’ Purchasing Barriers & Important Floral Product Attributes ..... 21**

Flower Consumption among Millennials..... 22

Preferred Retail Outlets..... 23

Millennials’ Barriers for Purchasing Floral Products ..... 24

Local Florists – Barriers to Purchase and Ways to Improve Purchase Likelihood ..... 27

Important Floral Attributes ..... 30

The Importance of Sustainable Attributes ..... 33

Summary ..... 35

Recommendations..... 36

    Retail Outlet Selection ..... 36

    The Price Barrier ..... 36

    Other Purchase Barriers ..... 36

    Specific Recommendations for Florists ..... 37

    Attribute Improvements ..... 38

Care Instructions .....	39
Sustainability-related Attributes.....	39
<b>Chapter 3. Advertisements, Promotions, Loyalty Programs, &amp; Subscription Services.....</b>	<b>40</b>
Floral Advertisements.....	41
Preferred Sales Promotions.....	44
Value Added Options.....	45
Loyalty Programs.....	46
Subscription Services.....	47
Summary.....	49
Recommendations.....	50
Advertisements.....	50
Promotions – Sales and Value Added Options .....	51
Loyalty Programs .....	52
Subscription Services .....	53
<b>Chapter 4. Marketing Flowers to Millennials - Social Media, Mobile, &amp; Online Options ..</b>	<b>54</b>
Social Media and Flowers.....	55
Flowers and Mobile Devices .....	61
Mobile Apps.....	62
Other Important Online Features .....	65
Summary.....	66
Recommendations.....	67
Social Media.....	67
Mobile Devices / Apps.....	69
Additional Online Features .....	70
References.....	71
<b>APPENDIX 1: Detailed Suggestions for Marketing to Attract Millennials.....</b>	<b>72</b>

## Introduction

Recent floral consumption trends show that younger consumers are purchasing fewer flowers than two decades ago (Zhao et al., 2016). However, young consumers (“Generation Y” or “Millennials”) are key players in the floral industry’s future. Millennials are individuals born between 1977 and 1994 and were between 20 and 38 years old (the time of the study). They are of interest to many industries because they are finishing college, entering the job market, and have more purchasing power than in previous years (Cui et al., 2003; Dawn and Powers, 2013). Specifically, millennial consumers have a collective annual buying power of \$200 billion with indirect spending reaching over \$500 billion (Fromm and Garton, 2013).

There are significant differences that set millennial consumers apart from other generations.

Millennials are not the core consumers of floral products, and their opinions toward flowers vary substantially from previous generations (Russel Research, 2016; Zhao et al., 2016). As a result, marketing to millennials can be complicated. To effectively market to millennial consumers, firms must be aware of their unique needs, attitudes, and preferences. Millennials are resistant to traditional marketing strategies (Bush et al., 2004), so in order to attract millennial consumers, marketing efforts need to align with their media usage, lifestyles, and needs. Apart from traditional marketing programs, this generation is easy to approach through new technologies including email, voice mail, internet, and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube). To effectively target this cohort, marketers must know exactly how millennial consumers use media, which type of media they use, and when they use it (Luck and Mathews, 2010).



The American Floral Endowment and the Society of American Florists recently released a report called the “Generations of Flowers Study” investigating generational differences with regards to floral products (Russel Research, 2016). Results addressed Gen X (40-51 years old), Gen Y or millennials (22-39 years old) and Baby Boomers’ (52-70 years old) perceptions of floral gifts. Specifically, for millennials, the “Generation of Flowers Study” analyzes their attitude, purpose, knowledge, occasion, usage, purchase location and information source of flower purchases. Most of the findings are in line with the results of this report. For example, millennials purchase flowers mostly on holidays and special occasions, and are more likely to purchase flowers online compared to other generations. Millennials’ attitudes and imagery of flowers as gifts are primarily positive, but they are still concerned with the price and longevity of floral products. Meanwhile, millennials do not always think about flowers, but social media can be an efficient

platform to communicate flowers to millennials in their daily life. These major findings pertaining to millennials from the “Generations of Flowers Study” have been investigated in much greater depth in this report.

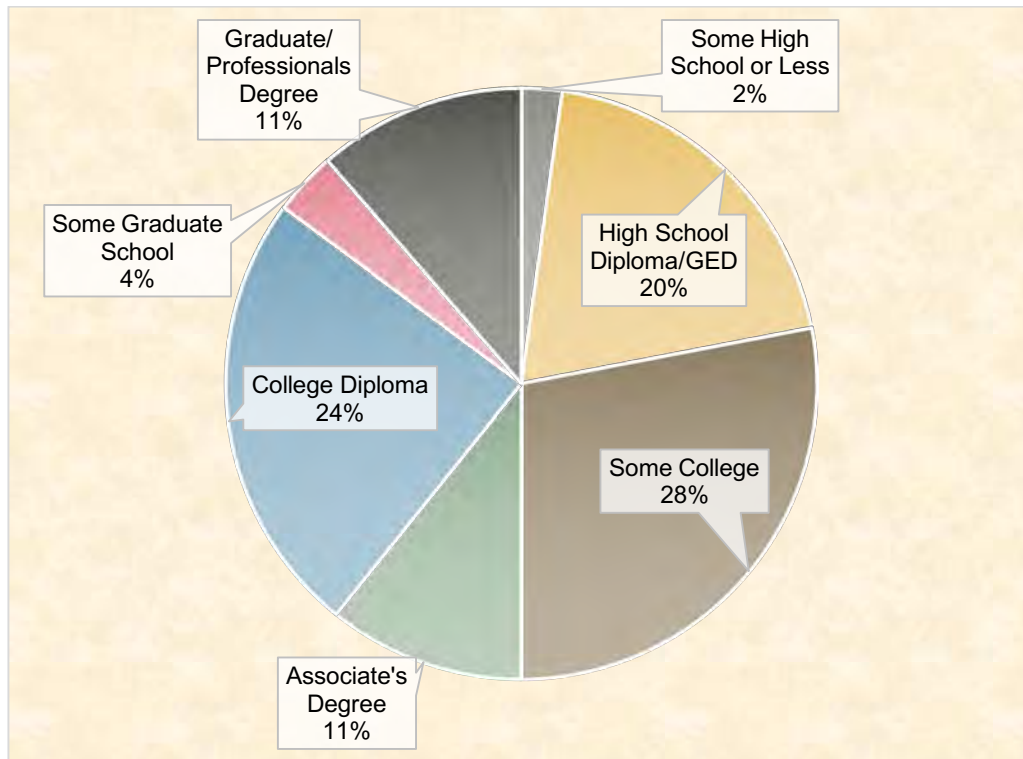
Overall, the “Generations of Flowers Study” focused on comparing the similarities and differences between the three generations; this study is unique in that it focuses merely on millennials and conducts an in-depth investigation into the practical marketing tactics to increase millennials’ floral purchases and attract them to the floral industry. There are four chapters in the report. Chapter 1 summarizes research that quantifies millennial consumers’ attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of floral products and their benefits. Chapter 2 summarizes consumers’ purchasing frequency, retail outlet preferences, and barriers to purchase and important flower attributes. Chapter 3 summarizes millennial consumers’ perceptions of floral advertisements, ad format and content, sales and value promotions, loyalty programs, and subscription services. Chapter 4 summarizes millennial consumers’ perceptions of online, social media, and mobile options. Results from the four chapters will help floral industry stakeholders to better target and attract millennial consumers.

## **Survey Procedure and Respondent Demographics**

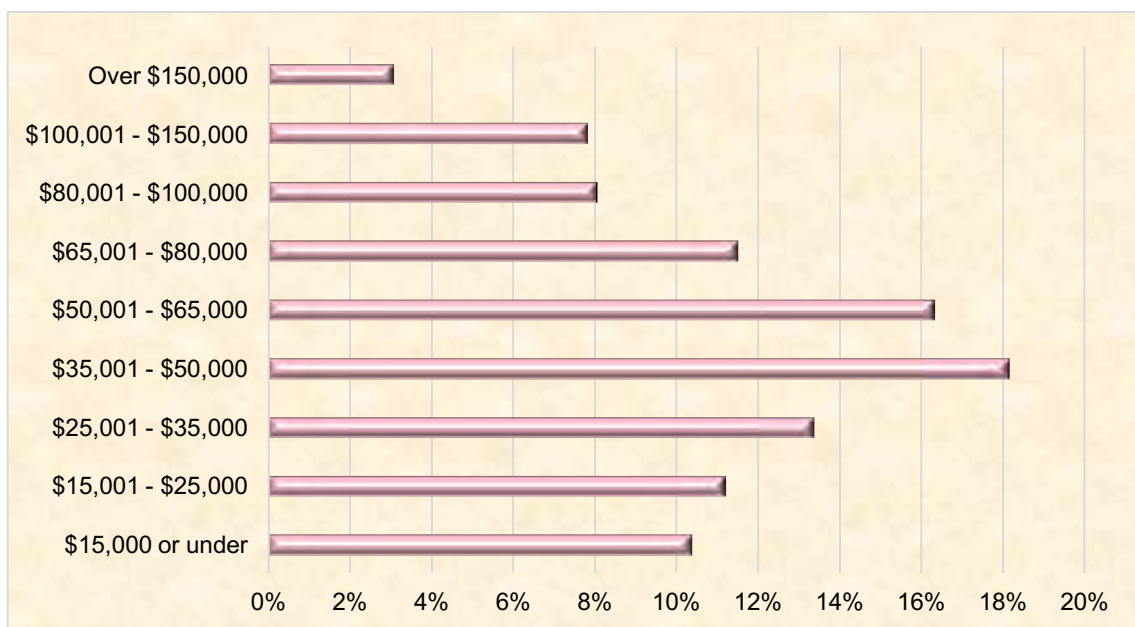
A two-step process was utilized: first, millennial consumers were invited to participate in focus group discussions where open-ended questions were used to elicit their existing perceptions toward floral products; next, the focus group responses were analyzed and paired with existing literature and information from other industries to create questions that were included in a nationwide online survey. The online survey was the primary data collection method due to the inclusion of participants from across the U.S. which is more representative of the target population. A total of 3,011 millennial consumers (whose ages were between 18 and 40 years old) participated in the national survey.

Sample demographics were collected and included age, gender, marital status, children in home, occupation, education, income, race, and house type. Seventy-nine percent of respondents were female, 21% were male. Approximately 38% were married, 35% were not married/single, 25% were in a relationship, and 2% were divorced/separated. The majority of respondents (76%) were not students and did not have children under 12 living in their households (58%). Respondents had completed various levels of education with 28% having completed some college, 24% their college diploma, and 20% their high school diploma/GED (Figure 1). Similarly, respondents’ household income ranged from under \$15,000 to over \$150,000 with most respondents being in the \$35,001 to \$50,000 range (Figure 2). Regarding race, most respondents were white, followed by black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska native (Figure 3). Sixty percent of respondents lived in

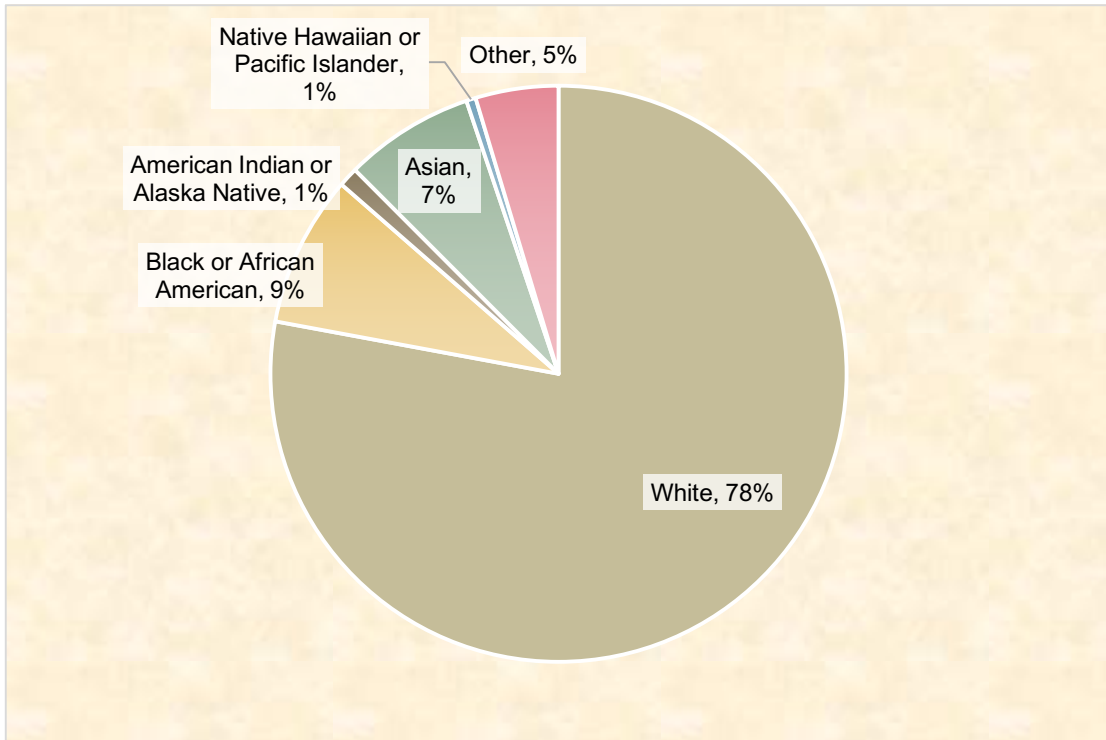
single-family detached homes, followed by apartments/condos/flats (28%), townhouses (6%), and duplex/other (3% each).



**Figure 1. Education level**



**Figure 2. Respondents' 2015 household income**



**Figure 3. Respondents' race**



## **Marketing Tactics to Increase Millennial Floral Purchases**

### **TOP KEY FINDINGS**

- 1. Millennials do not always think about buying flowers. They need reminders and more reasons to buy/send floral products.**
  - Use advertisements or promotions to educate millennials that floral products are great gifts that can be used for many occasions.
  - Tout different ideas and ways that flowers can be used (i.e. décor, just because gifts, etc.).
  - Send occasional reminders to millennials to purchase flowers for themselves and others.
  
- 2. Millennials agree flowers have many benefits, but they do not automatically associate flowers with meaningful benefits.**
  - Promote and educate millennials about the benefits of floral products.
  - Emphasize floral environmental and health benefits to improve their relevance to millennials.
  
- 3. Millennials are more experience-oriented than older consumers.**
  - Explore means of improving millennial consumers' engagement and experience with floral products.
  - Offer fun/adventurous activities both in-store and at local hot spots.
  - Provide millennials the opportunity to arrange their own bouquets.
  - Provide a casual space and/or entertainment in the store.
  
- 4. Millennials perceive flowers as traditional and not trendy.**
  - Reposition floral products as trendy.
  - Demonstrate how flowers fit into millennials' modern lifestyles using images, promotions, photos and displays.
  - Partner with trendy industries to improve flower trendiness (e.g. the fashion industry, etc.).
  
- 5. Millennials value customization and personalization.**
  - Give millennials ample opportunity to customize/personalize their purchases.
  - Providing customized/personalized delivery, designs, and discounts to add a personalized/customized feel.
  
- 6. Electronic word of mouth is important to millennials when they are making purchasing decisions.**
  - Generate online content that is of interest to millennials to encourage online conversations. Millennials like sharing information related to floral art, funny/humorous videos, symbolic meanings of flowers, and sales events/specials on social media.

- Motivate millennials to share the content through social media recommendations, likes, tweets, check-ins, etc. by offering incentives (e.g. giveaways, coupons, etc.)
- Provide timely responses to customers.
- Use social media to invite millennials to appealing events.
- Leverage your social media presence by involving millennial employees in content development and sharing.

**7. Facebook is millennial consumers' most frequently used social media platform, followed by YouTube and Instagram.**

- Use these social media platforms to reach millennial consumers.
- Provide interesting content to encourage conversations and share on social media.

**8. Perceived high price is the major floral purchase barrier for millennial consumers.**

- Reduce the 'expensive' perception through value-added properties (e.g. psychological benefits, add-ons, customization options, specialness of the products, etc.). Millennials value incentives and appreciate receiving free items such as a gift with purchase.
- Overcome price barriers by using price promotions that are the most influential, such as discounts and in-store coupons.

**9. Convenience is one of the primary purchasing barriers at florists.**

- Improve convenience through online services (e.g. online ordering and pick up in store).
- Make flowers more conveniently located by having them available in areas millennials frequent.

**10. Short longevity is a major floral purchase barrier to millennials.**

- Provide millennial consumers with clear care instructions, nutrient packets and technologies that optimize flower growth and longevity.

**11. Millennials value sustainable practices including good work ethics, fair treatment of workers, and reduced chemical usage.**

- Source sustainable products and promote those sustainable practices so that millennials are aware of what makes those products special.

**12. Millennials did not frequently notice floral advertisements. TV commercials and social media advertisements are the most influential advertisement formats for millennials.**

- Advertise flowers on TV and social media.

- Use creative/quirky advertisements or sales/price promotions to have the most impact in terms of catching millennial consumers' attention.

**13. Millennials expressed interest in loyalty programs aligned with their needs.**

- Make loyalty programs attractive and easy to use.
- Loyalty program awards/points need to not expire.
- Provide free gifts or customized coupons on special occasions (e.g. birthday, etc.), special discounts for members, and flexible awards that can be redeemed at other stores (coffee shop, wine store, etc.).

**14. The use of subscription boxes is rising in popularity among millennial consumers. Approximately 44% of millennial consumers are interested in a floral subscription service.**

- Consider offering subscription services.
- Ensure that the subscription service is easy for millennials (and other customers) to register for and cancel if needed.
- Offer a free trial so the customer can try the service risk free.

**15. Millennials use online information when selecting products/stores, which makes an online presence essential.**

- Take actions to improve your online presence.
- Provide accurate pricing and product information (e.g. pictures of the actual products instead of model products, detailed descriptions, product dimensions, etc.).
- Allow online order/pay and offer convenient check-out (e.g. drive thru).
- Provide clear online care instructions.

**16. Millennials use their mobile phones as quick, easy information sources.**

- Improve your presence on mobile devices.
- Insure the company's website is mobile compatible.
- Offer coupons and mobile payment options (i.e. mobile credit/debit card services, etc.).
- Provide a mobile app with relevant content.

**17. Millennials often use mobile apps that have relevant content and features.**

- Develop a floral mobile app with desirable features.
- The following mobile app features are desirable to millennials: built-in care instructions, flower dictionary, flower recognition function, customization options (design your own bouquet, customized coupons, personalized digital greeting cards, etc.), fun flower quizzes and games, built-in loyalty programs, 360° pictures of flowers, real-time order/delivery tracking option, and incentives for downloading the apps.

## Chapter 1

# MILLENNIAL CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FLORAL PRODUCTS & THEIR BENEFITS



In order to effectively market to millennial consumers, companies must be aware of their unique needs, attitudes, and preferences. This chapter summarizes research that quantifies millennial consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of floral products and their benefits.

### Millennial Consumers' Attitudes about Floral Products

Understanding consumers' attitudes is important because attitudes shape beliefs and influence shopping behaviors. In this chapter, millennial consumers' overall attitudes toward, knowledge about, and views of floral benefits are discussed.

#### Overall Attitude

Regarding millennial consumers' overall attitudes toward floral products, **they agreed the most that there is great potential to personalize/customize flowers, that flowers cheer them up, and that using/purchasing flowers can be made into a fun experience** (Figure 1.1). They also believed that floral products could be made relevant to men, they liked sharing pictures of flowers on social media, and that flowers could make them look good among their peers.

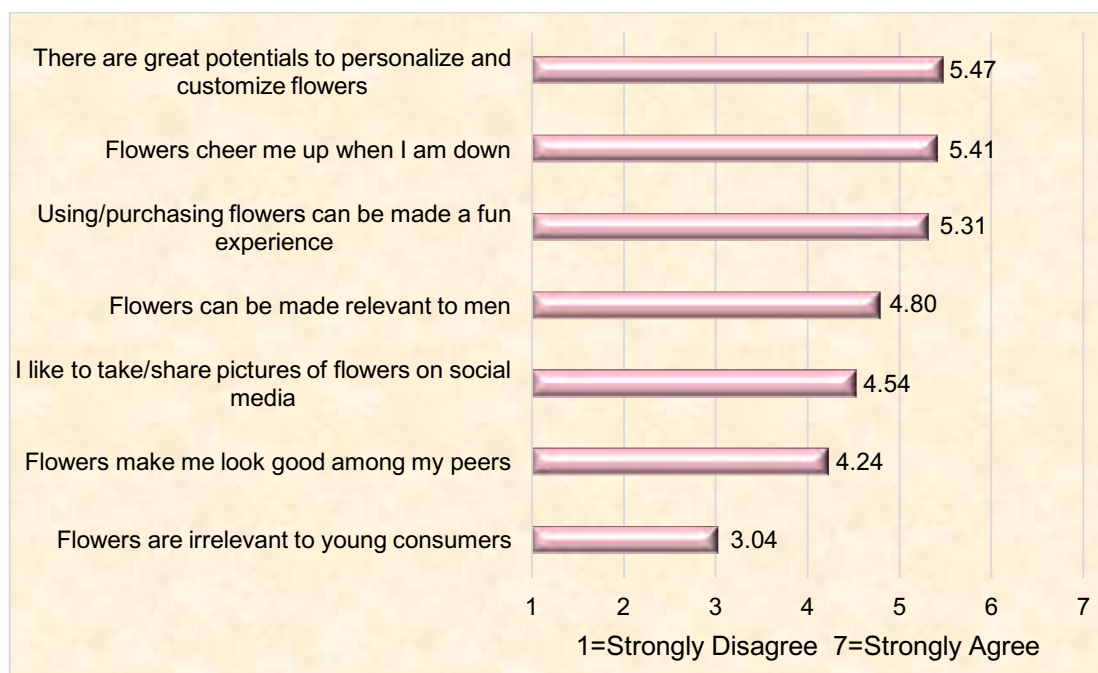
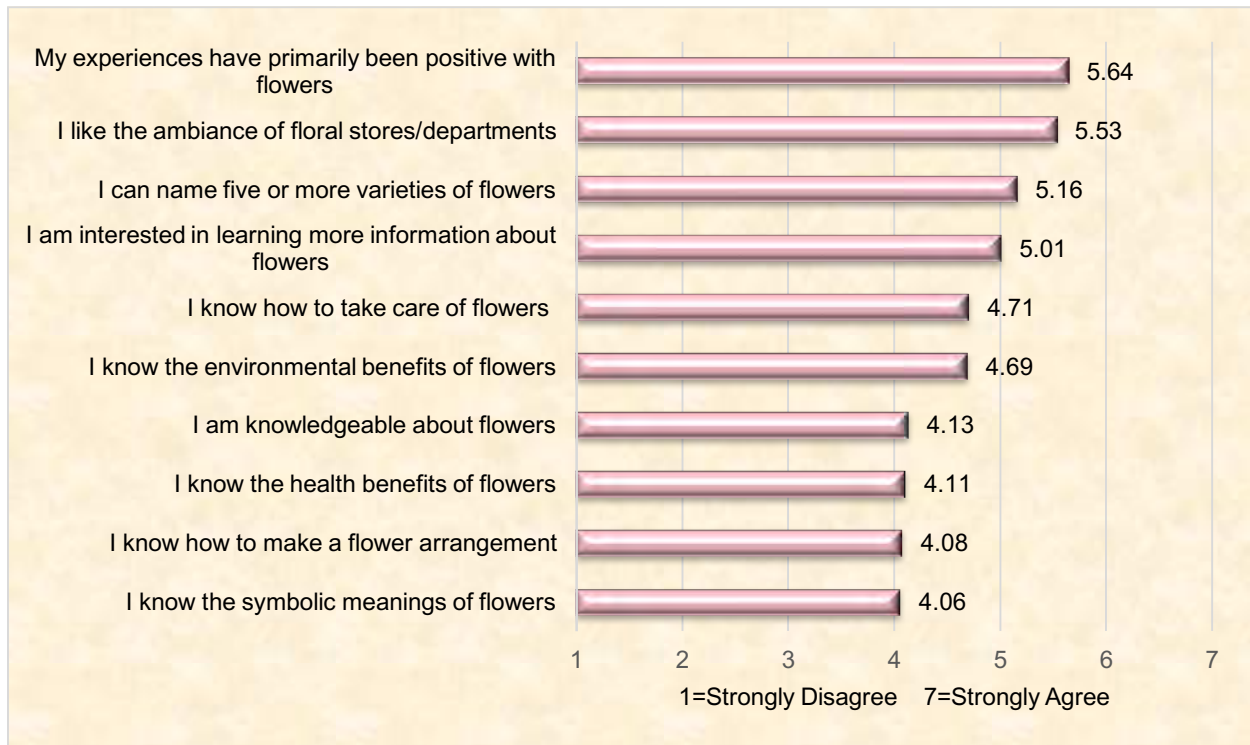


Figure 1.1. Millennial consumers' attitude toward floral products

#### Knowledge of Floral Products

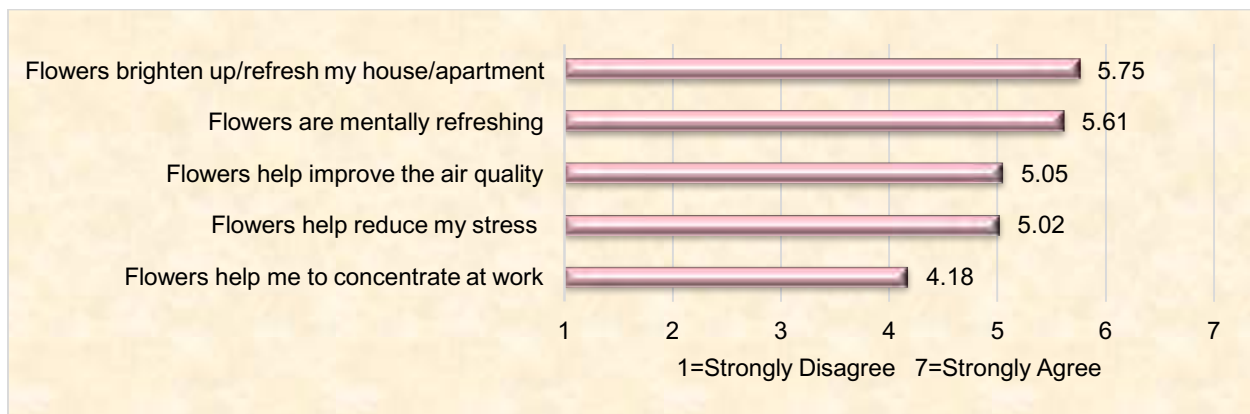
Most millennial consumers indicated that their floral purchasing experiences were fairly positive, that they liked the ambiance of floral shops, they could name 5+ flower varieties, and that they were interested in learning more about flowers (Figure 1.2). But they were less confident in their knowledge about caring for flowers, knowledge of flower benefits (environmental and health), and general flower knowledge. **Respondents indicated they are the least knowledgeable about making flower arrangements and the symbolic meanings of flowers.**



**Figure 1.2. Millennial consumers' knowledge about floral products**

***Floral Benefits***

Regarding millennial consumers' agreement with various floral benefits, they agreed the most with the benefit that flowers brighten up/refresh their living space and that flowers are mentally refreshing (Figure 1.3). They also agreed that flowers improve air quality and reduce stress. They agreed less with flowers improving concentration at work. Although respondents agreed with many of these benefits, they indicated they were not aware of floral benefits (Figure 1.2). This indicates that even though *they believe there are benefits to having flowers in their homes, they do not necessarily think of those benefits while shopping for flowers or during everyday life.*



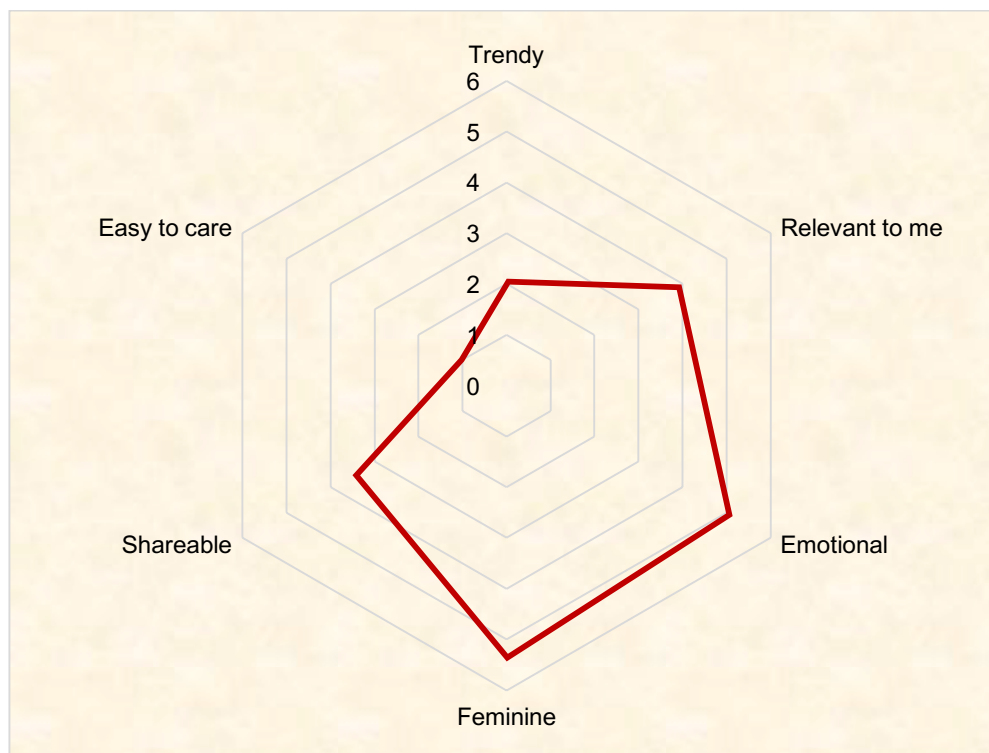
**Figure 1.3. Millennial consumers' agreement with floral benefits**

## Perceptions about Floral Products

In this section, respondents indicated their perceptions of floral products using perceptual maps and survey questions. In perceptual maps, respondents were given a scale with two opposite descriptors (for instance, forgettable and memorable). They were then asked to indicate where they perceived the product on that scale. Perceptual maps allow respondents to provide an in-depth image showing where flowers are located in their minds.

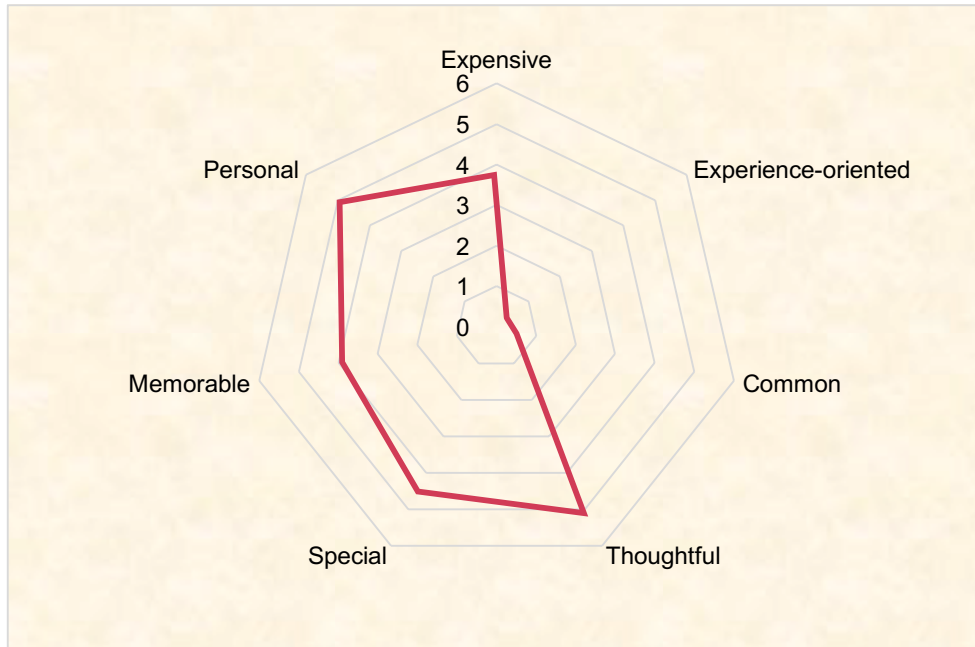
### *Millennial Consumers' Perceptions of Floral Products*

The multiple dimensional perceptual maps give a complete image of millennial consumers' perceptions of floral products as shown in Figure 1.4. Millennial respondents indicated that flowers are feminine and emotional gifts that tend to be relevant and shareable. But flowers are not considered as easy to care for or trendy by millennials.



**Figure 1.4. Millennial consumers' perceptions of flowers**

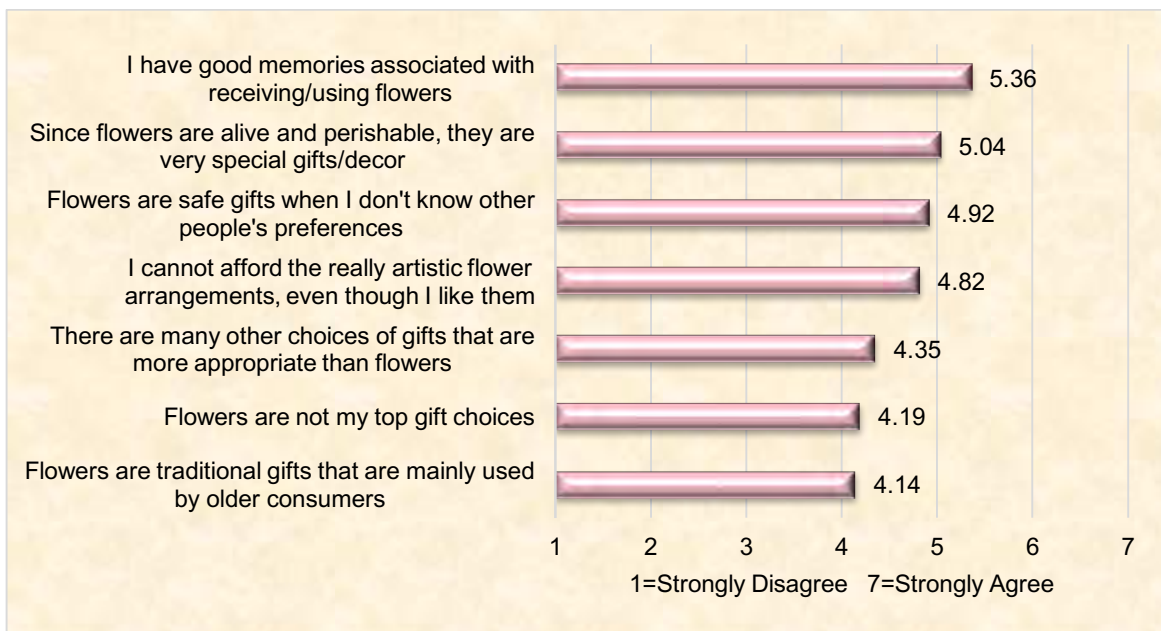
Floral products are frequently purchased as gifts (Bonarriva et al., 2003). Floral product use (self versus gift) could greatly impact consumer perceptions of the products. If the flowers are purchased as a gift, millennial consumers perceive them as **very thoughtful, personal, memorable, and special** (as opposed to ordinary) (Figure 1.5). They also perceived floral gifts as being expensive, slightly common (as opposed to unique), and slightly experience-oriented (as opposed to product-oriented).



**Figure 1.5. Millennial consumers' perceptions of floral gifts**

***Millennial Consumers' Perceptions of Floral GIFTS***

In general, millennial consumers had *good memories* associated with floral gifts (Figure 1.6). Additionally, they viewed floral gifts as *special* and *safe* gift options. However, they believed they could not afford the artistically designed arrangements despite liking them. They slightly agreed that there were other more appropriate gifts than flowers, that flowers were not in their top gift choices, and that flowers were traditional gifts suitable for older consumers.



**Figure 1.6. Millennial consumers' perceptions of floral gifts**



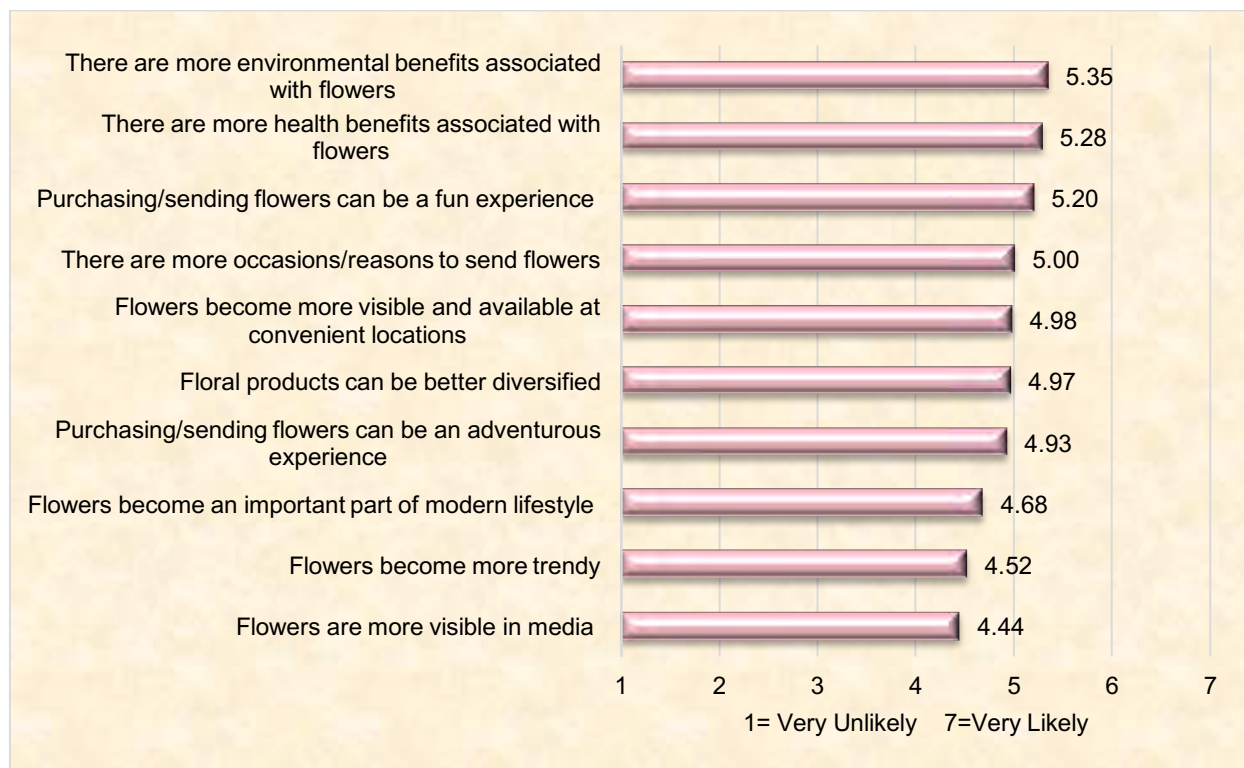
## Generating a Flower-Friendly Experience among Millennial Consumers

An important means of cultivating millennial consumers' purchase likelihood is improving their experiences with floral products. In this section, ways to improve millennial consumers' experiences with floral products are discussed. Specifically, we address improving floral products' relevance, engagement and customization/personalization for millennial consumers.

### *Improving Relevance of Floral Products*

Relevance is important in that it indicates that the product/service is important to the consumer and resonates with him/her. Although millennial consumers indicated that floral products were fairly relevant (Figure 1.4), ample opportunities still exist to improve floral products' relevance. Millennial consumers indicated that the primary way to improve floral products' relevance was having more benefits associated with flowers, including environmental and health benefits (Figure 1.7). Another means of improving relevance was to make the purchasing and sending experience more fun, enjoyable and/or adventurous. Giving millennials more reasons to send floral products and making the products more visible and conveniently located increased relevance. The floral industry can also offer a variety of diverse products and demonstrate how flowers are an important part of modern lifestyles. Additionally, if floral products became more trendy and more visible in media, millennials would perceive them as more relevant.

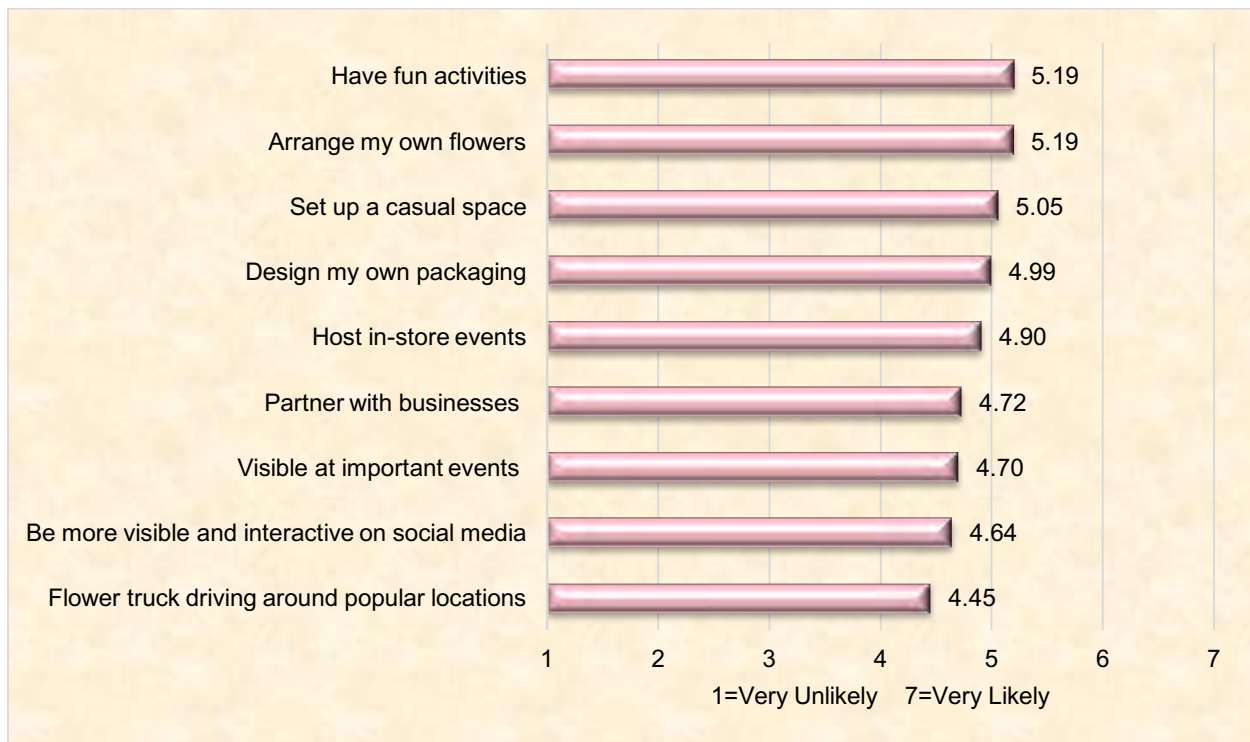
*Promoting floral benefits increases product relevance!*



**Figure 1.7. Ways to improve floral products' relevance for millennial consumers**

### ***Improving Millennial Consumers' Engagement with Floral Products***

In addition to relevance, an important way to attract millennial consumers is through engaging them with floral products. As discussed in this report, millennial consumers perceived floral products as somewhat experience-oriented which increases relevance if shopping for floral products is a satisfactory experience. Therefore, improved engagement could increase millennial consumers' enjoyment of floral products and ultimately result in more purchases. Millennial consumers indicated that the primary way to **improve their engagement was to have fun activities, followed by arranging their own bouquets, and having a casual space in the store** (Figure 1.8). Millennials also indicated that designing their own packaging or hosting in-store events would improve their engagement. Partnering with other businesses or being visible at important events (e.g. promotions, sponsorships, flower trucks) and on social media improved their engagement as well.

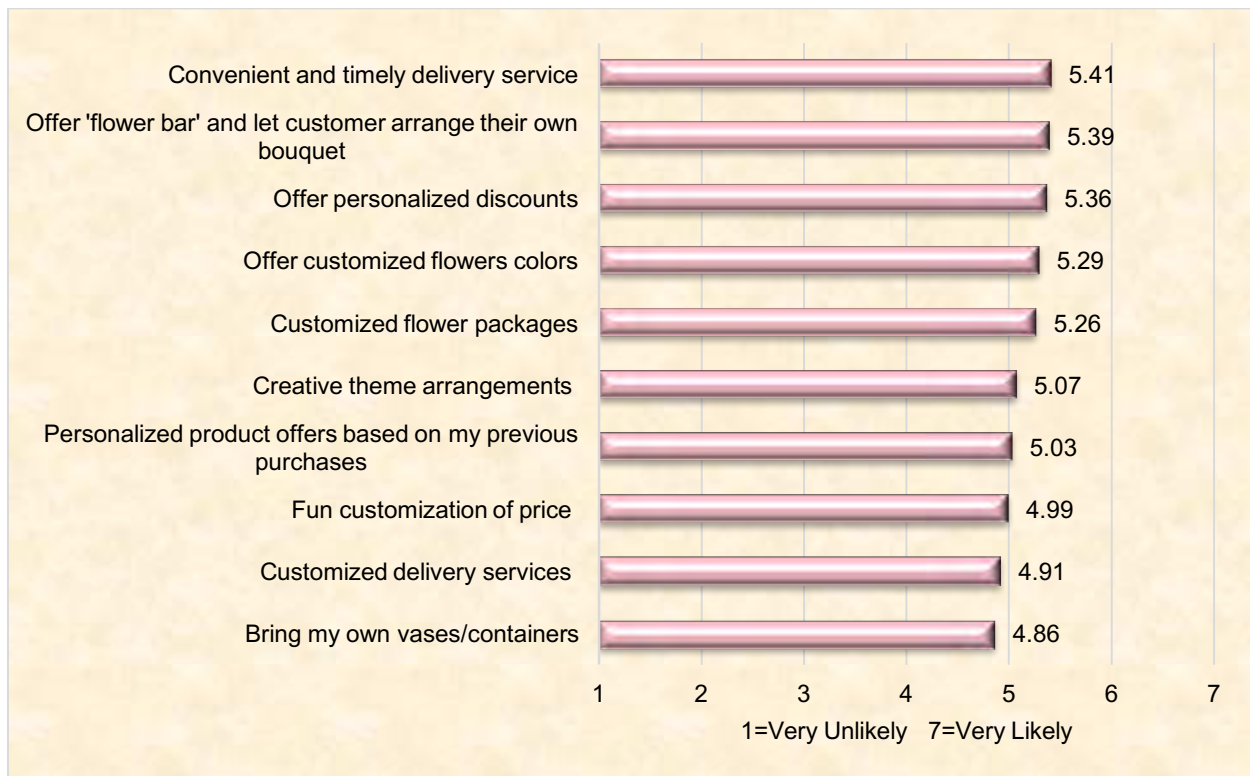


**Figure 1.8. Ways to engage millennial consumers with floral products**

### ***Ways to Increase Millennial Consumers' Floral Customization/Personalization Options***

Millennials value uniqueness and authenticity. One means of incorporating these values into floral products is to provide them with the flexibility of customizing and personalizing their purchases. This can be a challenge for businesses since they need to weigh the pros of increased customer satisfaction with the cons of decreased efficiency (i.e. time, labor, available products). This task can be further complicated when dealing with perishable cut flowers. However, customization and personalization can be obtained through offering a set of pre-arranged options. Thus, customization and personalization are obtained without compromising business efficiency.

Here, millennial consumers expressed their interest in various customization/personalization options from delivery to design and incentives. Specifically, millennial consumers were **most interested in convenient, timely delivery** (Figure 1.9). They were also interested in a variety of design options, including a flower bar where they could arrange their own bouquet, customized flower colors, customized packaging, creatively themed arrangements, personalized product offerings based on previous purchases, customized prices, customized delivery services, and ‘bring your own vase/container’ options. Customized price examples include discounts based on previous purchases, loyalty cards, rainy day discounts, and fun price promotions (e.g. discounts on flowers that match the customers’ outfit, drawings, etc.). They also expressed interest in personalized discounts.



**Figure 1.9. Options to improve floral products’ customization and personalization**

### Summary

This chapter summarized millennial consumers’ floral product attitudes and perceptions toward floral products. Ways to improve millennials’ perceptions of floral products are also provided. Overall, millennial consumers have positive attitudes toward floral products but they often fail to think of them due to perceptions of flowers being costly or other perceived shortcomings (such as short longevity). Intuitively, millennial consumers recognize that floral products have benefits (e.g. improve mood, etc.), but they often fail to consider those benefits while making purchasing decisions. There is an opportunity for the floriculture industry to remind customers about the

benefits associated with flowers which in turn could increase sales. Additionally, millennial consumers view floral product gifts as thoughtful, personal, memorable and special. Lastly, there are many opportunities to improve floral products' relevance, engagement, and customization options to attract millennial consumers. Given the insights of millennial perceptions shown in this report, the floral industry must be aware of their attitudes and perceptions to highlight the positive and turn the negative into positive perceptions to attract millennial consumers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Attitudes*

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Floriculture firms can take actions to improve millennial consumers' attitudes toward and relevance of floral products. For instance, the floral industry can use trendy cultural trends to appeal to millennial consumers. Food and personal health are two popular cultural trends. Firms can appeal to foodies by partnering with hip, cutting-edge restaurants to offer private dinner parties. They can also promote floral products as part of feeling good and being good for the spirit. Both actions improve millennials' interactions and associations with floral products.

Relatedly, many millennials indicated that they were not aware of or failed to consider the benefits associated with floral products. Firms can remind customers about the benefits associated with floral products. Specifically, flowers brighten up/refresh their homes and mindsets, improve air quality, and reduce stress. All the benefits associated with flowers make the products more meaningful since they serve a dual purpose (i.e. décor and benefits). This improves their value to the customer and may increase the customer's likelihood of purchase.

Similarly, millennials identified men as a potential market niche. Firms can identify and incorporate means of increasing the relevance of floral products to men. Men tend to be more interested in edible plants (National Gardening Association, 2013). The floral industry could offer edible plant/flower options to appeal to this segment. Additionally, they could provide masculine décor and accessories (packaging, sports-themed, add-ons, etc.) to attract men.



Value can also be increased by providing information about environmental benefits, health benefits and symbolic meanings. This information should be readily available to customers in-store, online, and on social media platforms.

## ***Perceptions***

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Floral firms can leverage promotions and marketing activities to highlight millennial consumers' positive perceptions about floral products. For instance, they can use promotions to highlight and demonstrate that millennials view floral products and floral gifts as thoughtful, special, personal, memorable, relevant and sharable. They can also emphasize that floral products are (or can be made) experience-oriented, which speaks to millennials who value experiences over material possessions. The floral industry can also overcome flowers' 'traditional' stereotypes by marketing floral products year-round and showing millennial consumers using floral products in their everyday lives (e.g. home décor, gardening, etc.)

It is important to motivate millennials to buy floral products 'just because.' This will increase their frequency of purchase which in turn results in them viewing floral products as more trendy and relevant. The floral industry can also promote how floral products cheer people up regardless of age, lifestyle and occasion.

The floral industry can provide and emphasize the opportunities that millennials can customize floral products to their own tastes and preferences. Millennial consumers (especially infrequent purchasers) may be unaware of the customization options and intimidated by the vast selection of flowers. Floral firms can provide examples to overcome these issues while giving them ideas of ways to make the floral product more expressive of themselves. It is important to highlight millennials' customization options in displays, promotions, social media posts, and so on.

Millennials value fun experiences so it is important to create fun experiences while shopping for floral products. Since floral products are slightly experience-oriented, retailers can build on this by making floral shopping an event (similar to visiting an apple orchard or winery). Positive experiences will draw consumers back and generate positive word-of-mouth advertising as they tell their friends and family about their experience.

## ***Relevance & Engagement***

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Millennial consumers' perceptions can be improved by increasing the relevance and engagement of floral products. Since millennials are incentive driven, firms can provide millennials incentives (e.g. freebies, etc.) for sharing product photos, 'liking' the business, and 'checking into' the business on social media platforms. To connect with millennial consumers, firms must have a social media page with relevant content and incentives for millennials (and other customers) to like, follow, and share the site with their friends and families.

Floral firms can use social media and other promotions to connect with millennials. Millennials value authenticity and transparency. Businesses can engage millennials prior to purchase by telling them the company's personal story. The story needs to be short and clear and reinforced through branding, promotions and product offerings. Telling a story is one means of making a personal connection with millennials by reminding them about positive memories and associations connected to floral products.

The floral industry can use promotions to educate and remind millennials about floral products. Millennial consumers were interested in learning about the environmental and health benefits associated with floral products. To gain exposure, floral firms can use promotions and advertisements in locations where millennials hang out (e.g. post relevant benefit information online and on social media platforms). Since millennials may not think about giving or purchasing flowers frequently, the floral industry can remind them that floral products are great for everyday life and that they brighten the room and cheer people up.

To attract more millennial consumers, floral firms can offer diverse products that align with millennial consumers' interests. For instance, if edible plants are of interest, product offerings should include edible flowers, complementary recipe cards, and matching centerpiece ideas. Providing additional information related to those products (such as recipes) as well as having staff available to answer questions and offer suggestions is another way to engage millennials. Firms can encourage millennials to experiment with the products and interact with staff and other shoppers. This is important because millennials are more likely to revisit a store where they had a fun, positive experience interacting with staff.

One means of keeping floral products relevant to millennials is by demonstrating how they fit into modern lifestyles. For example, floral firms can demonstrate how floral products are trendy through pictures of products in advertisements, on the company's website, and on social media. The pictures should be high quality and illustrate product offerings and how those products can be used (e.g. décor/accent pieces, gifts, etc.).



Millennials are self-aware due to growing up in a culture of social photo sharing where image is important. Firms can build on this trend by emphasizing how floral products are a positive cultural item by providing action photos of people enjoying floral products and the floral products at different occasions/events (i.e. baby showers, dances, dinner parties, etc.) rather than just the flowers by themselves. Retailers can also have a fun and inviting photo area in stores so millennials can take photos and share them on social media.

Millennials indicated that they value convenience and engagement. Firms can consider partnering with other businesses to provide mutual benefits of convenience and diverse product offerings (for instance, a café/floral shop combo or leasing a space in a grocery store). Convenience can also be improved through streamlining the check-out process (in-store and online), diversifying the delivery options, providing convenient store locations, and setting appropriate hours of operation. Firms' engagement with millennials can be improved by hosting

fun activities, store openings, seasonal promotions, greenhouse/floral farm tours, and in-store events (e.g. wine/beer tasting, food, etc.). Additionally, floral firms can improve their presence at important events through sponsoring/donating to the cause, having promotions, or possibly having a floral truck (similar to food trucks). Having a presence at important events demonstrates the firms' commitment to the local community and increases their convenience for end consumers.

Millennials are more experience-oriented than older consumers. Floral firms can enhance the floral purchasing experience by altering the store's atmosphere and shopping environment. For instance, firms can offer hip beverages (e.g. coffee, etc.) and café style treats, host seasonal activities, schedule design classes, and so on. Another means of inviting millennials into the store is designating an area as a casual/relaxing space to encourage customers to linger, visit and browse the shop.

### ***Customization & Personalization***

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Millennials value customization, authenticity, and expressing themselves. Floral retailers can emphasize customization options (i.e. in-store, promotions, etc.) to inform and educate millennial consumers about their product offerings/options. Firms can consider creating a flower bar that allows customers to select products, design and arrange their own floral products. The flower bar should contain various colored products, add-ons and packaging options (for example, packages with first names). Millennials should be encouraged to experiment and be adventurous with their floral products by offering a design-your-own packaging option where scrapbook/craft items (such as stamps, ink, stickers, etc.) are provided or firms can have pre-saved, easy-to-print packaging ideas available (either online or in-store at a kiosk) that customers can customize, select, print and use. Millennials may also have a container that is "just right." Firms can cater to millennials' need to customize by allowing customers to bring their own vase/container and then select a theme, colors, or flowers to be arranged by a designer using that vase/container.

Floral firms can use displays to showcase unique, customized arrangements that demonstrate color combinations and themes that millennials may be unaware of. This is an opportunity for the company to draw attention to creative options within the customer's budget. Floral retailers can also encourage and give millennials the opportunity to suggest color combinations or designs (via in-store design contests, online feedback, etc.) that are then featured in online content and available for purchase. There is an opportunity for floral retailers to capitalize on the local movement by selectively offering local add-ons (e.g. locally sourced packaging, food, fillers, wine, etc.) to show support for the local economy and local movement.

Millennials also indicated that customized delivery and promotions were important. Floral firms should highlight their stellar delivery services that are both convenient and timely and offer real-time tracking on deliveries so customers can see where their package is and when they should expect it to be delivered. Floral firms can use customers' previous purchase information to offer personalized promotions, discounts and products that align with the customer's needs. For

instance, if they purchase a purple themed arrangement for a friend's birthday, offer a reminder the following year with images of similar purple arrangements that they may be interested in. Fun price promotions (e.g. discounts on flowers that match the customers' outfit or drawings; give a free flower to a person whose first name is Emma, etc.) are also preferred by millennials and can motivate them to share the events on social media and generate electronic word of mouth advertisements.



## Chapter 2

# MILLENNIALS' PURCHASING BARRIERS & IMPORTANT FLORAL PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

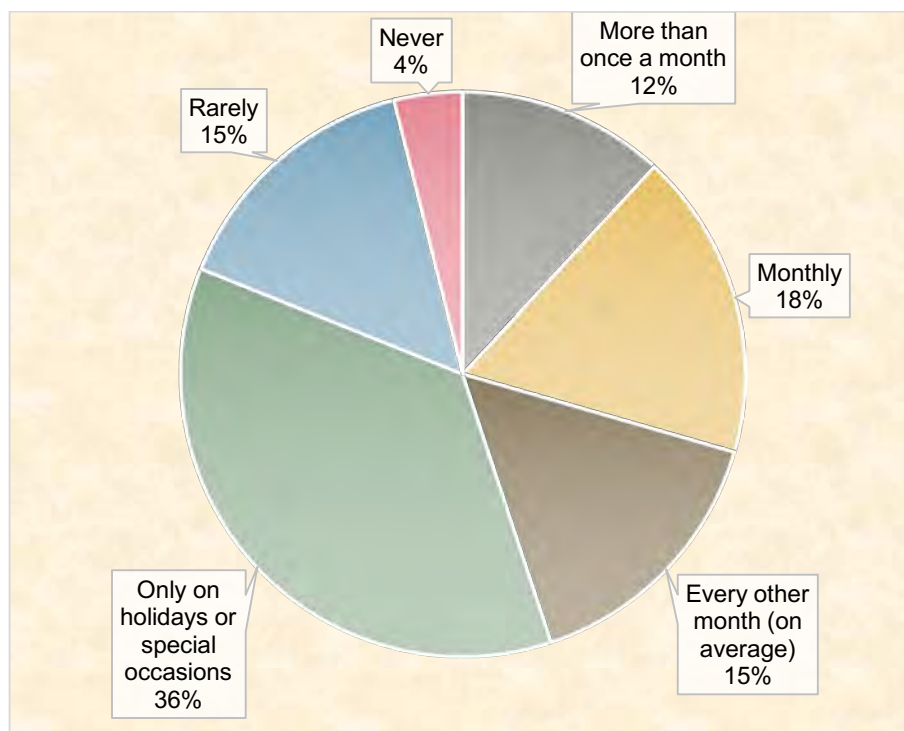


In order to better understand millennial consumers' current use of floral products, this chapter quantifies their consumption patterns, retail outlet selection, purchasing barriers, and the important floral attributes to them. Understanding their current purchasing behavior and their interest in various floral attributes is important in generating relevant product selection and marketing content. Overall, results from this chapter are applicable to floriculture industry stakeholders who are interested in knowing more about their millennial consumers.

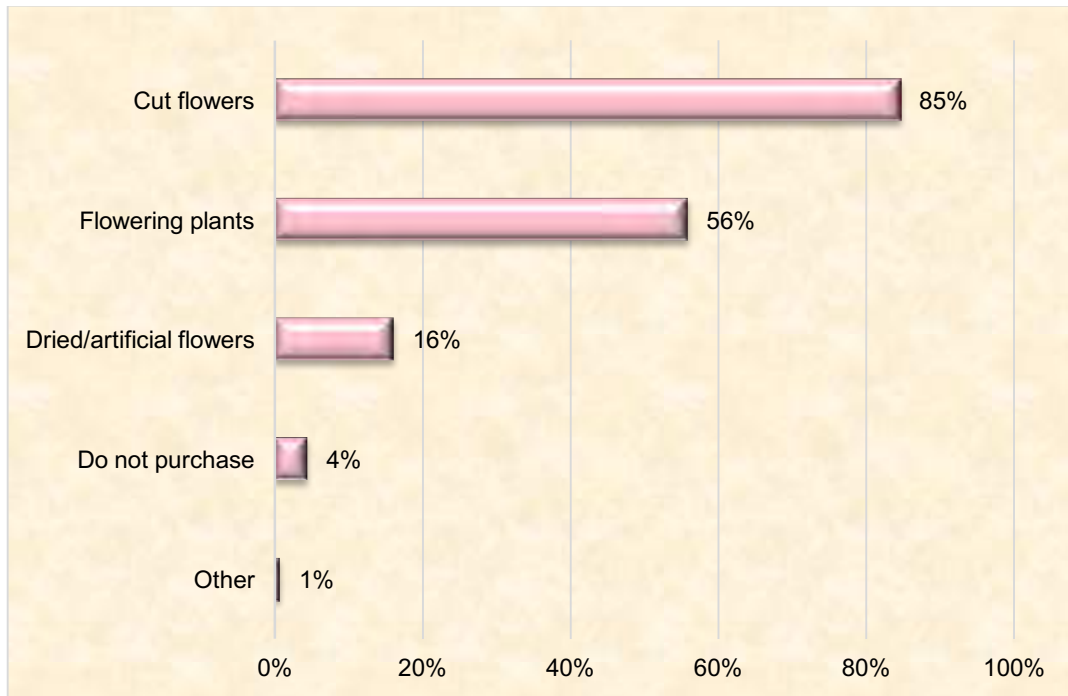
### Flower Consumption among Millennials

To effectively market to millennial consumers, it is imperative to understand their current shopping behavior. Here, we show millennial consumers' floral consumption habits and product preferences. Previous research indicates that millennials purchase floral products less frequently than older consumers. This study found similar results with **millennials primarily purchasing flowers for holidays or special occasions (36%; Figure 2.1)**. Interestingly, 18% indicated they purchase floral products monthly and 12% more than once per month. Fifteen percent purchased floral products every other month while 15% rarely purchased floral products. Only 4% never purchased floral products.

Regarding the types of floral products purchased, **millennial consumers primarily purchased cut flowers (85%), followed by flowering plants (56%; Figure 2.2)**. Only 16% purchased dried/artificial flowers and 0.8% purchase 'other' including seeds, bonsais, garden plants, edibles, succulents, vegetables, and foliage plants.



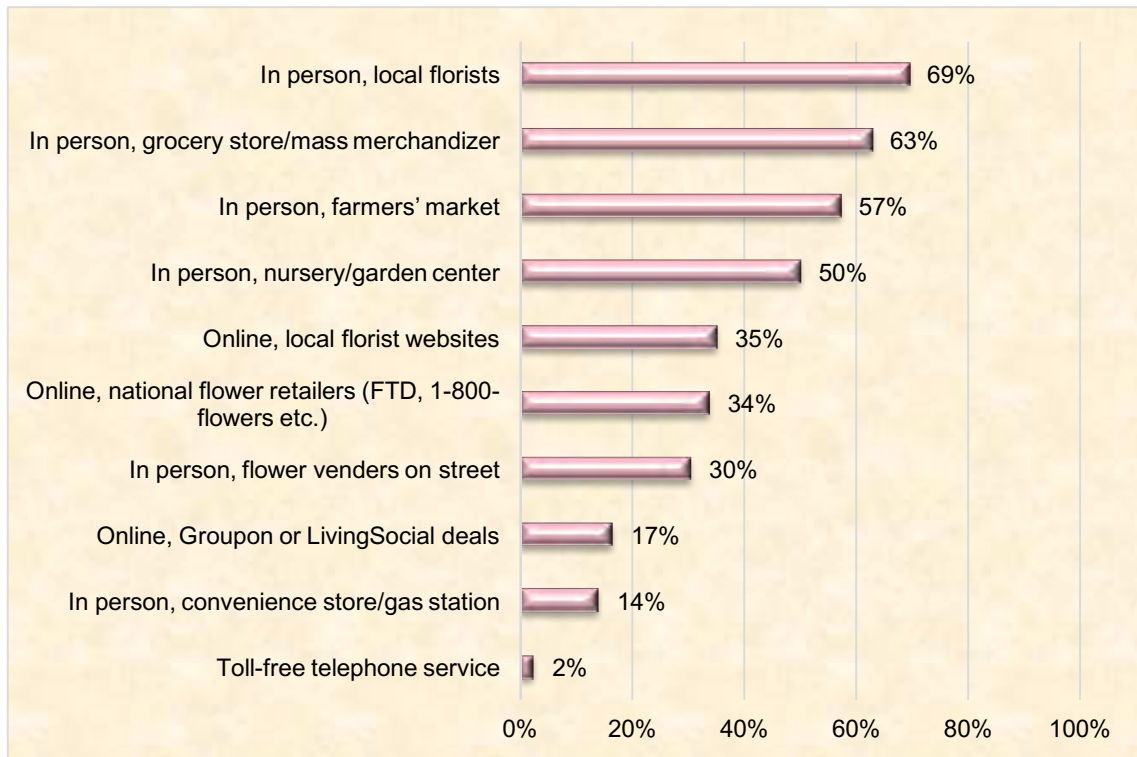
**Figure 2.1. Millennials' frequency of purchasing floral products (cut flowers and flowering plants)**



**Figure 2.2. Types of floral products purchased**

### **Preferred Retail Outlets**

Understanding where millennial consumers purchase floral products is important because it informs floral stakeholders about millennials' preferences and shopping behavior. Most millennials preferred to **purchase floral products in person at the local florists (69%)**, grocery store/mass merchandizer (63%), farmers' market (57%), or nursery/garden center (50%; Figure 2.3). Often consumers prefer to purchase floral products in person because they can easily use visual cues to assess flower quality. Additionally, there is a lot of variability in terms of floral products' appearances (i.e. color, number of blossoms, foliage color, decorative add-ons, etc.) which leads to the consumer wanting to select the product that best matches his/her needs and preferences. Regarding online options, **35% of respondents preferred local florist websites, followed by 34% preferring national online floral retailers, and 17% preferred Groupon or LivingSocial** (Figure 2.3). Approximately 30% preferred shopping in person at floral street vendors and 14% preferred convenience or gas stations. Very few (2%) preferred toll-free telephone options.



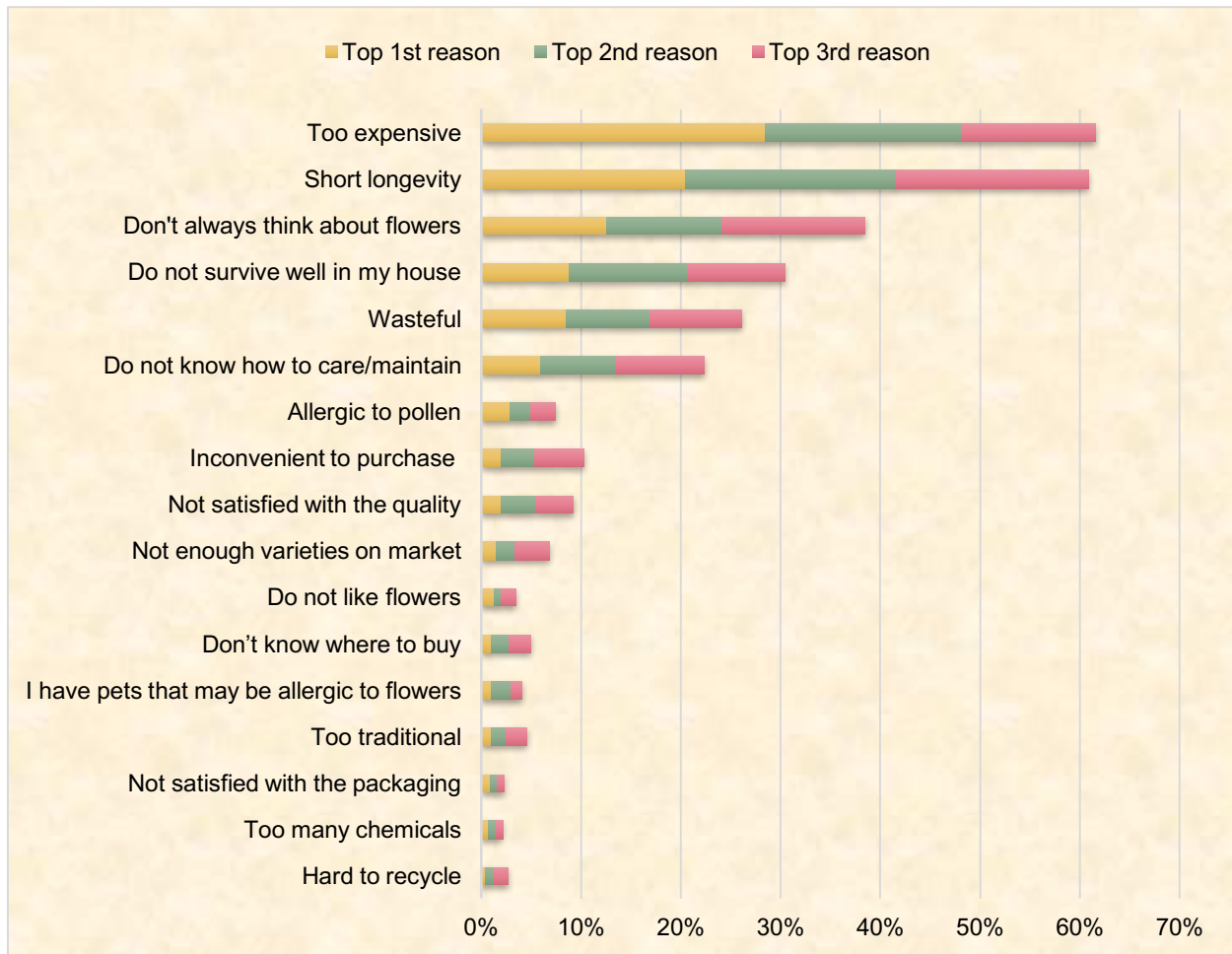
**Figure 2.3. Millennials' preferences for retail outlet type when purchasing floral products**

### **Millennials' Barriers for Purchasing Floral Products**

Often consumers have specific reasons behind their purchasing decisions. Similarly, there are barriers keeping them from purchasing certain products. If a business understands millennial consumers' barriers when deciding to purchase (or not purchase) floral products, they will be able to emphasize those motives in advertisements and promotions while developing strategies to minimize consumers' barriers. This section discusses purchasing barriers and ways to improve purchase likelihood.

#### ***Barriers to Purchase***

Not surprisingly, many millennial consumers have several reasons reducing their likelihood of purchasing floral products. Millennial consumers do not purchase floral products due to perceptions of them being expensive or their longevity being too short (Figure 2.4). Additionally, millennial consumers do not always think about floral products when they are shopping. Another barrier to purchase is that floral products do not survive well in consumers' homes due to air conditioning, pets, etc. Approximately 14% of respondents view floral products as wasteful and 12% do not know how to care for them. Less frequently selected barriers to purchase include inconvenient to purchase, quality concerns, allergies, not enough variety, do not know where to buy, etc.

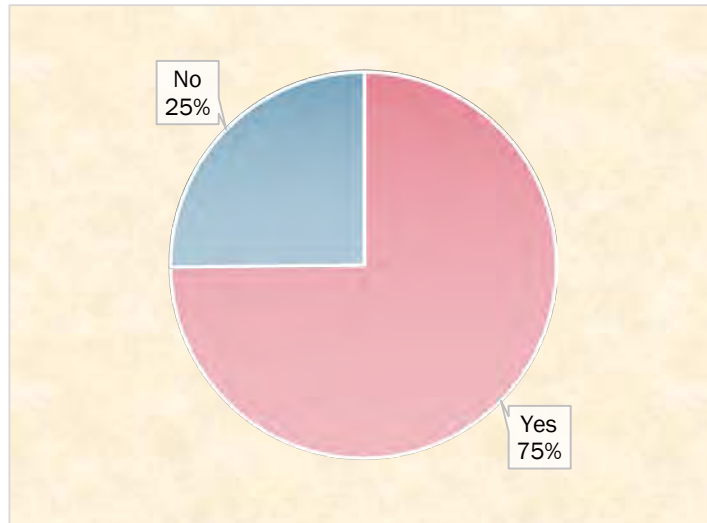


**Figure 2.4. Top three reasons millennials do not buy floral products**

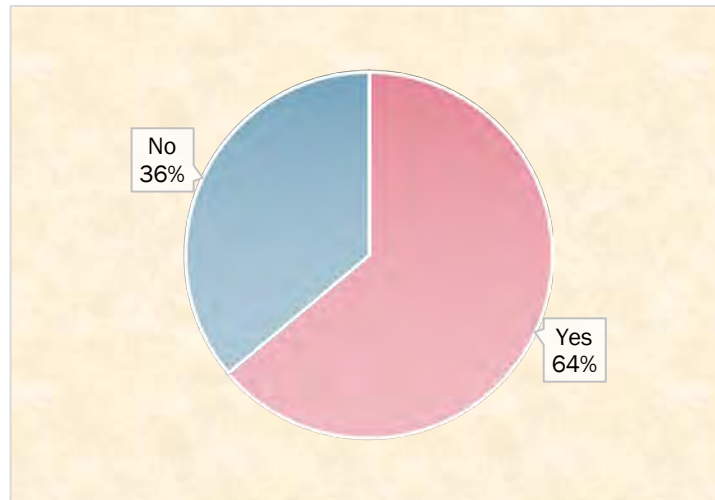
***Price as a Barrier to Purchase***

**Price was a major barrier to purchase for 75% of millennial consumers** (Figure 2.5).

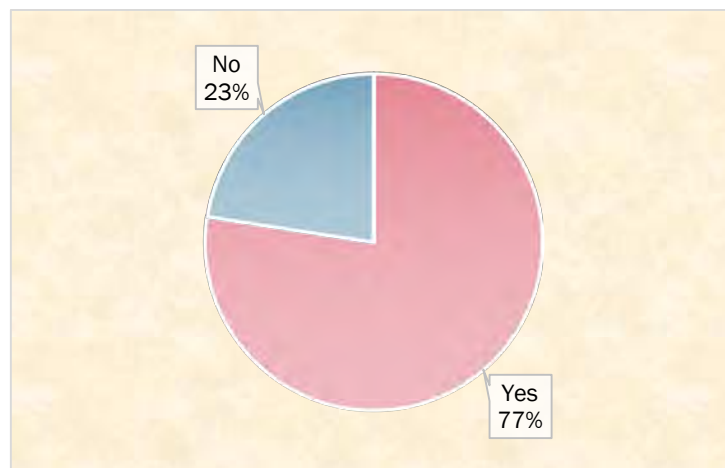
Although the majority of men and women both agree that cost is a major purchasing barrier, women agree with this statement more so than men (Figures 9 and 10). These results may reflect different product uses. For instance, women may purchase floral products for themselves as well as for gifts; whereas a larger portion of men may purchase floral products as gifts. Often when consumers purchase gifts the price is less of a concern (Banks, 1979). As a result, women are more sensitive to the price of floral products than men.



**Figure 2.5. Price is a major barrier to purchase**

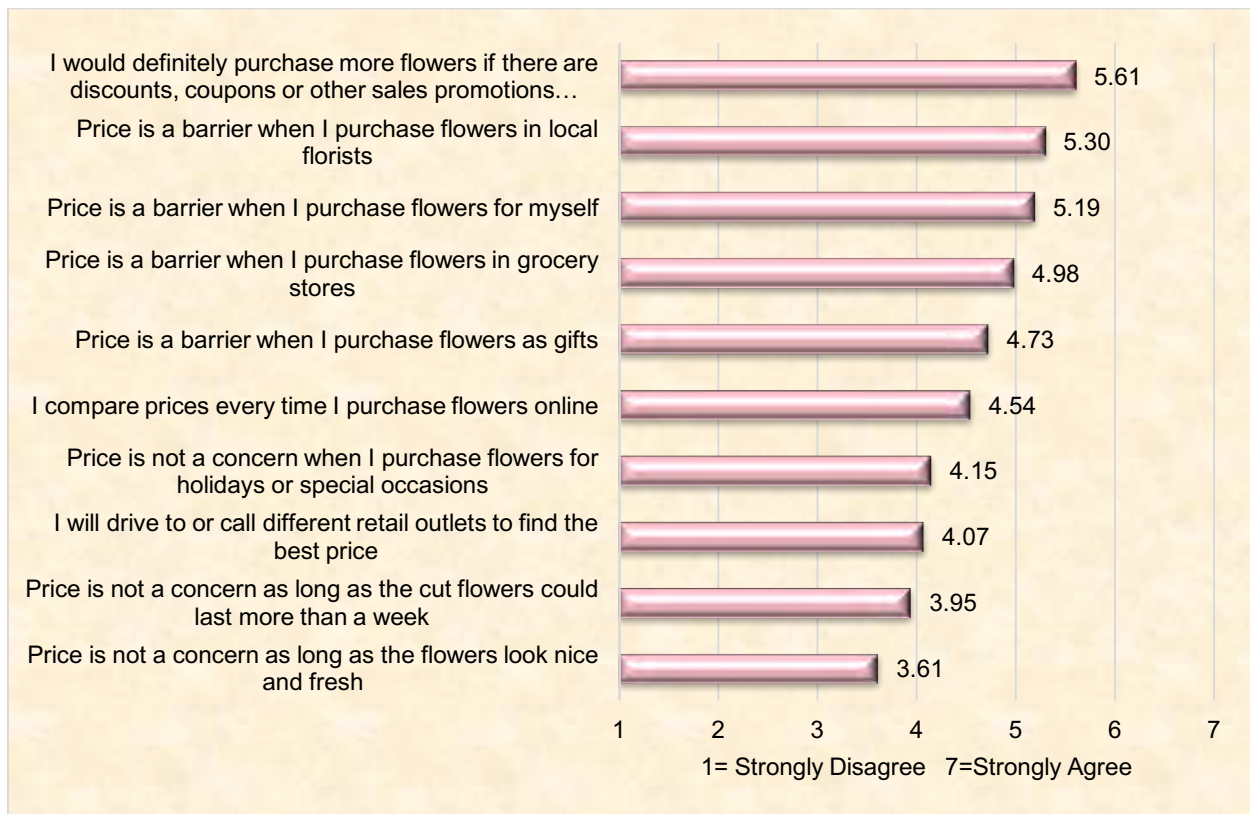


**Figure 2.6. Price is a major barrier to purchase, MALE millennial consumers**



**Figure 2.7. Price is a major barrier to purchase, FEMALE millennial consumers**

Millennial respondents also indicated that they *would definitely purchase more floral products if they received price-related promotions* (discounts, coupons, and sales promotions; Figure 2.8). They also agreed that price is a major barrier when purchasing flowers, regardless of retail outlet type. However, they thought that price is more likely to be a major barrier when purchasing flowers at local florists compared to grocery stores. Millennial consumers were fairly neutral about comparing prices and comparison shopping for floral products to find the best price when shopping online or driving/calling different retail outlets. However, price is less likely to be a concern to millennials if they are purchasing the products for a holiday or special occasion. Even if the flowers' longevity is good and appear fresh and aesthetically pleasing, price is still a barrier that prevents millennials from purchasing flowers.



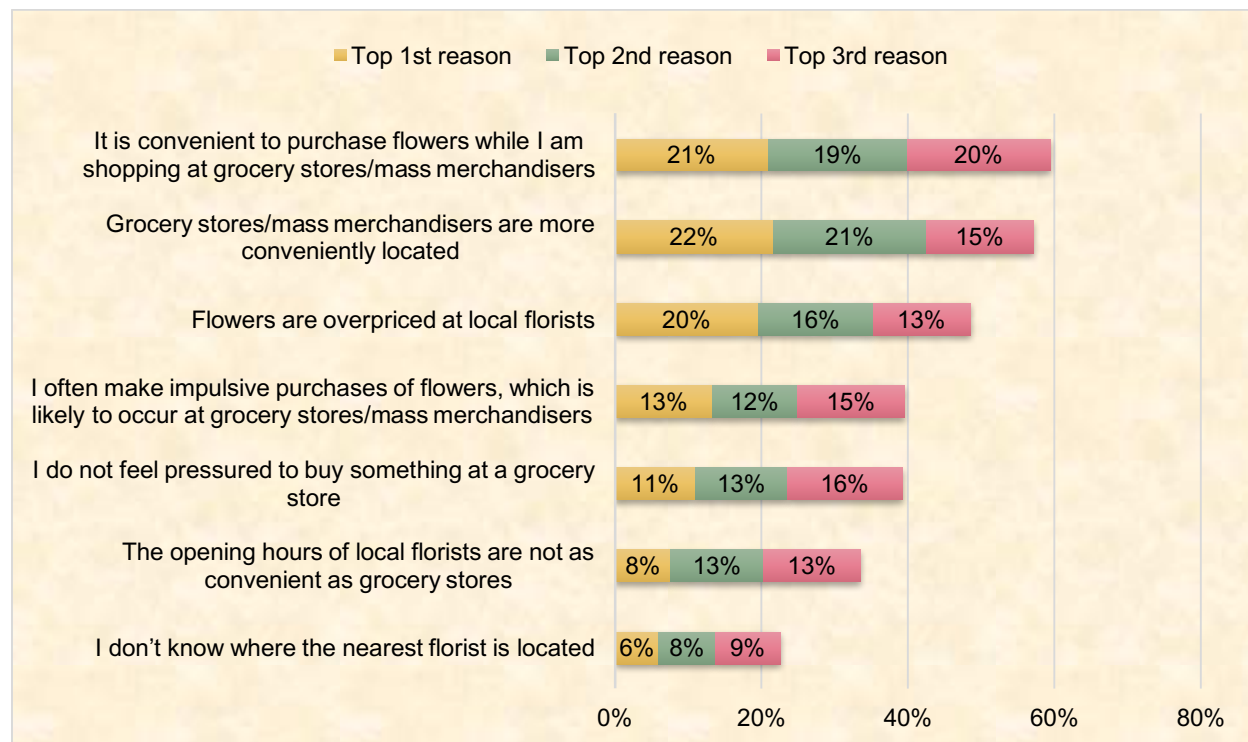
**Figure 2.8. Respondents' level of agreement with statements about flower prices**

## **Local Florists – Barriers to Purchase and Ways to Improve Purchase Likelihood**

### ***Barriers to Purchase from Local Florists***

Since millennials prefer to purchase floral products in-person from local florists (Figure 2.9), it is important to understand why they may not purchase from local florists. Understanding the barriers to purchase gives florists the opportunity to counter negative perceptions and take corrective actions to attract more millennial customers. *Convenience* was one of the primary barriers since consumers visit grocery stores/mass merchandisers for other products and these

stores are often more conveniently located (Figure 2.9). Another major barrier was millennial consumers *frequently perceive local florists as being more expensive* than non-specialized retailers. Grocery stores/mass merchandisers also facilitate impulse purchases of floral products since consumers are already visiting the store for other products. Other potential barriers included feeling pressure to purchase products, inconvenient hours of operation, and lack of awareness of the florist’s location.



**Figure 2.9. Top three reasons millennials do not purchase floral products from local florists**

***Ways to Improve Millennials’ Purchase Likelihood at Florists***

The best way to **improve millennials’ purchase likelihood from local florists is by providing financial incentives including more affordable prices, in-store deals, affordable delivery, and Groupon/LivingSocial deals** (Figure 2.10). Services also improve millennial consumers’ purchase likelihood, including friendly, knowledgeable staff, online ordering with in-store pickup, clean products, return/replacement policies, longer hours, expert designer, and warranties. Having a variety of unique flowers and/or edible plants is also important to millennial consumers. Regarding ease of use, they prefer a well-designed website, attractive store/environment, no hard sell, and more entertainment when shopping. There is also an opportunity to partner with other businesses to sell flowers at different locations where millennials congregate (e.g. coffee shops, etc.), offer workshops, or have in-store Wi-Fi/coffee/water. Other activities include engaging the consumers through reaching out to them and using social media platforms. Other options include appointment scheduling, casual in-store relaxation area, and selling essential groceries.





**Figure 2.10. Actions and practices to improve millennials' purchase likelihood at local florists**

### Important Floral Attributes

One means of encouraging millennial consumers to purchase more floral products is to provide products with relevant attributes and information. Regarding important product attributes, men and women had different perceptions (Figure 2.11). **For women, price was the most important attribute**, followed by flower/bloom quality, flower type/variety, longevity, ease of care, design, and fragrance. Conversely, **men valued flower/bloom quality the most**, followed by price, flower type/variety, fragrance, design, longevity, and then ease of care. The gender differences may reflect different product uses. Men more often purchase floral products as gifts. As a result, price is less important than quality (Banks, 1979) and they are less concerned with longevity and care. Conversely, the experience-related attributes (i.e. design, fragrance) become more important. Women, on the other hand, tend to purchase flowers for themselves and therefore attributes related to obtaining (i.e. price), perceived quality (i.e. quality, variety, longevity) and caring for the products become more important.

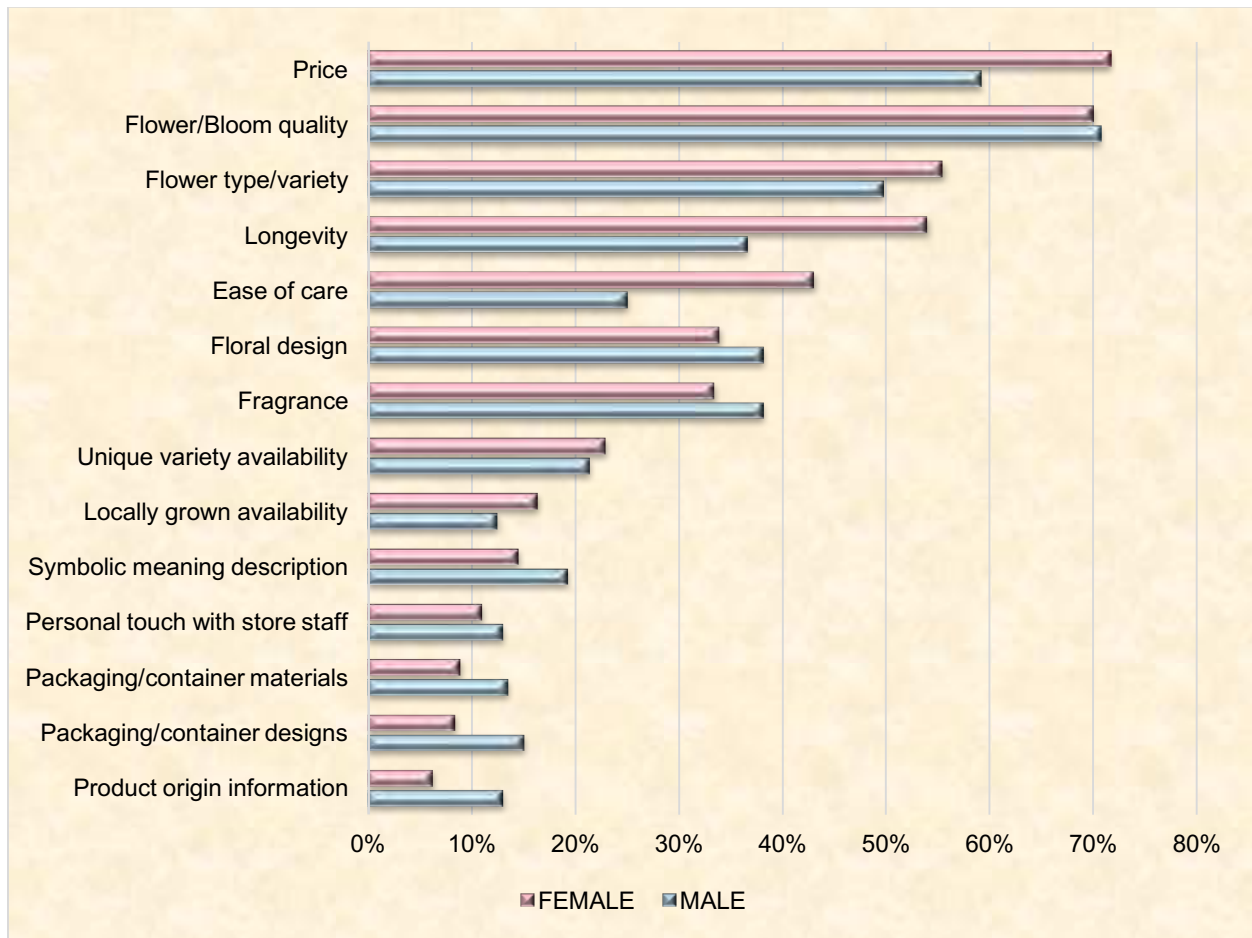
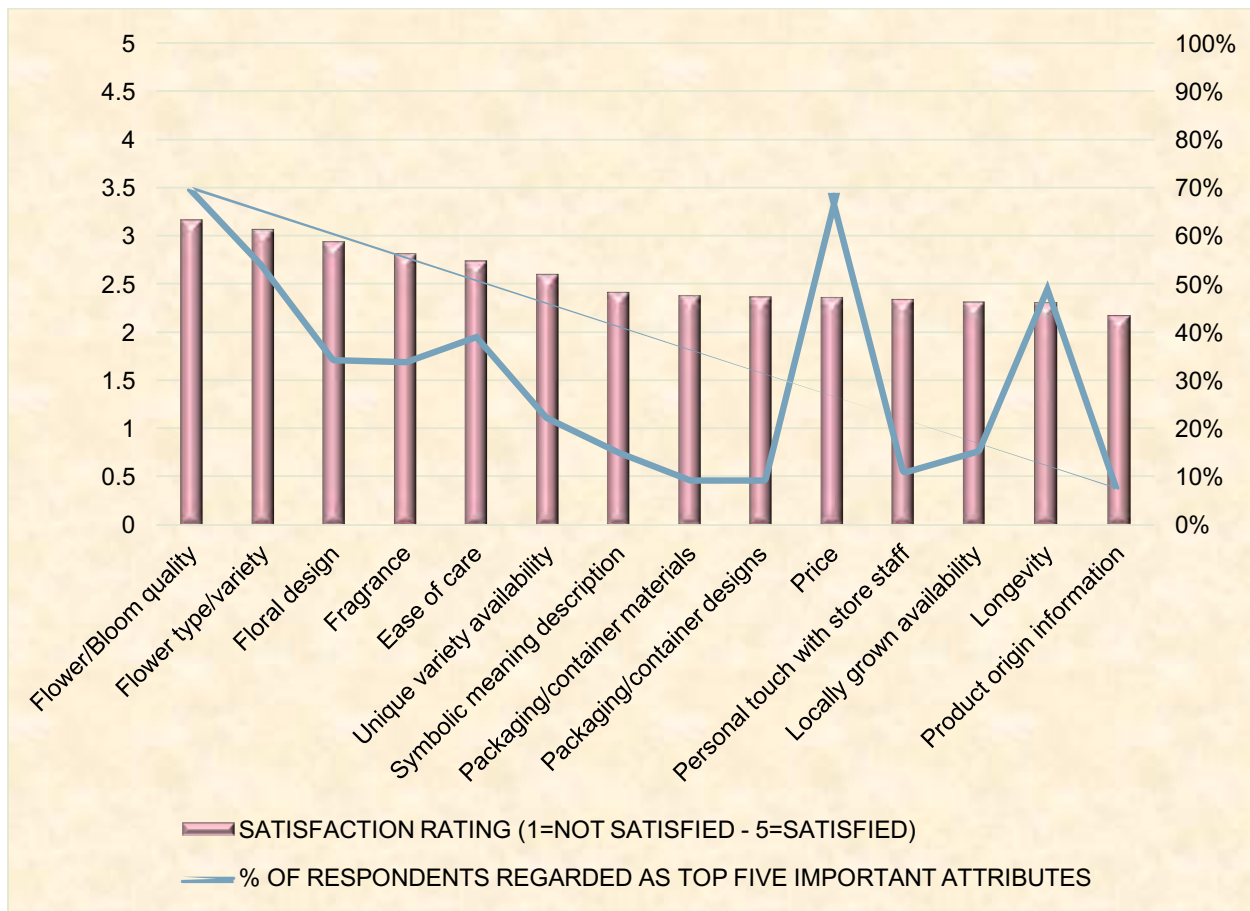


Figure 2.11. Top preferred attributes, by gender

### *Millennial Consumers' Satisfaction with Important Floral Attributes*

In order to determine if the floriculture industry is meeting millennial consumers' expectations, millennials rated the five most important floral attributes and their level of satisfaction with those attributes (Figure 2.12). In general, millennial consumers considered flower/bloom quality and flower type as important and they were satisfied with these two attributes. Millennial consumers were not quite satisfied with other floral attributes. Millennial consumers were least satisfied with origin information, longevity, availability of locally grown products, contact with/the personal touch of store staff, price, packaging/container designs/materials, and symbolic meaning descriptions. Figure 2.12 also indicates that the most important traits to millennial consumers are product quality, variety, price and longevity. Unfortunately, results indicated that there were significant discrepancies between important traits and millennials' satisfaction. Specifically, millennial consumers were unsatisfied with floral products' price and longevity.

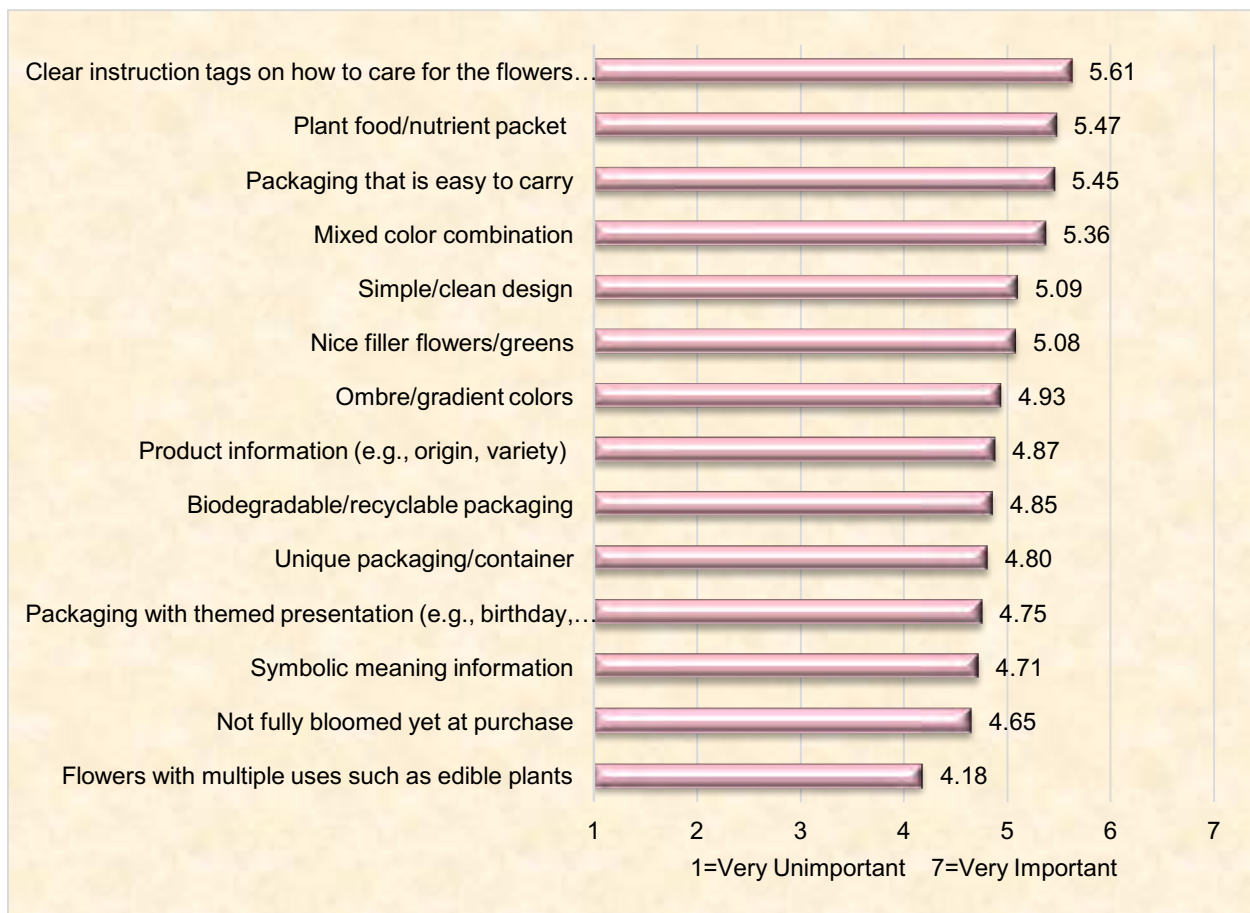


**Figure 2.12. Most important attributes and millennial consumers' satisfaction rating**

### *Millennial Consumers' Attitudes toward Detailed Floral Attribute Improvements*

Besides general floral attributes, we also asked respondents to rate the relative importance of various detailed floral attribute improvements. As shown in Figure 2.13, the **most important attribute improvement to millennial consumers was having clear care instructions for**

**optimal growth and longevity.** Other important attribute improvements included receiving a nutrient packet, easy to carry packaging, mixed color combinations, simple/clean designs, and nice fillers. Millennial consumers also expressed interest in ombre/gradient color mixes, product information (origin/variety), biodegradable/recyclable packaging, unique packaging, themed products, and symbolic meaning information. There was some interest in the products not being in full bloom with the idea that they will last longer after purchase. For instance, if the consumer was interested in purchasing Stargazer Lilies, s/he would be more interested in lilies that were not fully open. Over the next couple of days, the partially and fully closed flowers would open and give the consumer beautiful blooms for a longer duration of time.



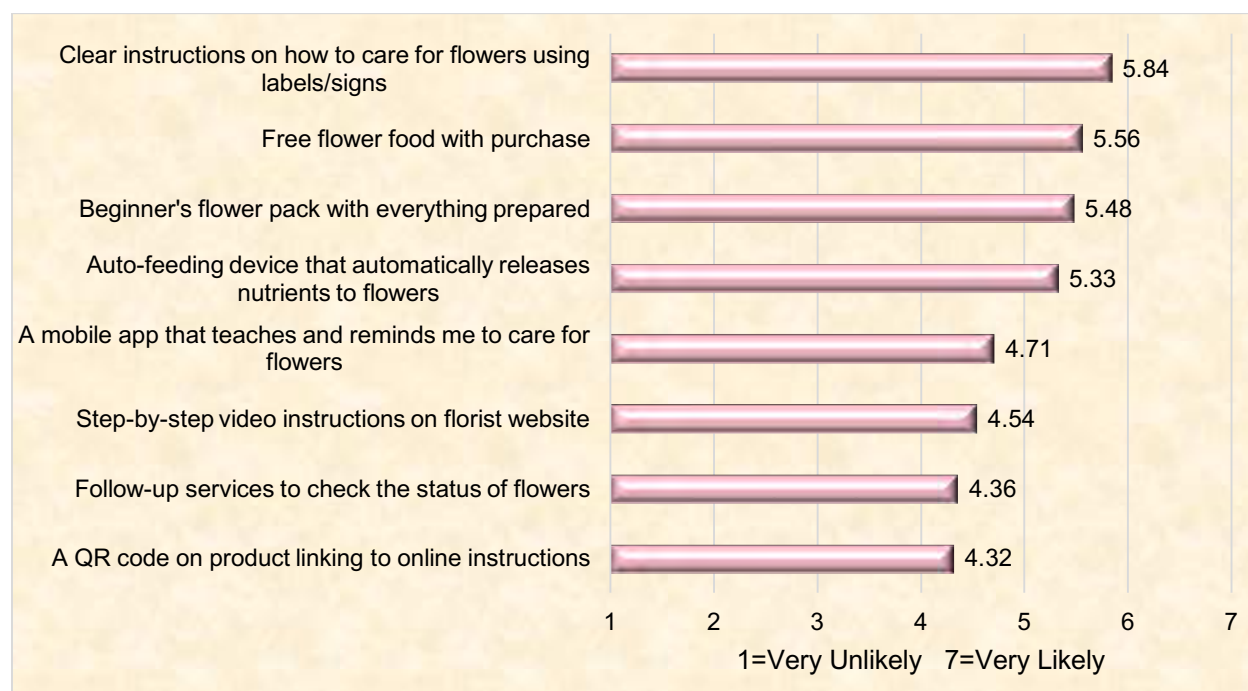
**Figure 2.13. Important floral attributes to millennial consumers**

***Millennial Consumers’ Attitudes toward Ways to Improve Floral Care and Maintenance***

Proper care is essential in improving a floral product’s longevity. Figure 2.12 showed significant discrepancy between the importance of longevity and millennials’ satisfaction of longevity, while Figure 16 also suggested the importance of care instruction for optimal longevity. Therefore, we further discuss practices that can be implemented to educate and improve millennial consumers’ care of floral products and thus flowers' longevity. By providing proper

care instructions, the customer has a better experience, which results in positive feelings toward the business, their products, and potentially results in return visits and purchases.

The number one way to **improve millennial consumers’ care of floral products is providing clear instructions on plant/flower labels and signs, followed by free flower food with purchase, a beginner’s flower pack with everything pre-prepared, and an auto-feeding device which automatically releases nutrients to the flowers** (Figure 2.14). Other practices include care reminders using mobile apps, a step-by-step video, follow-up services to check on the status of flowers, and a QR code linked to online instructions.

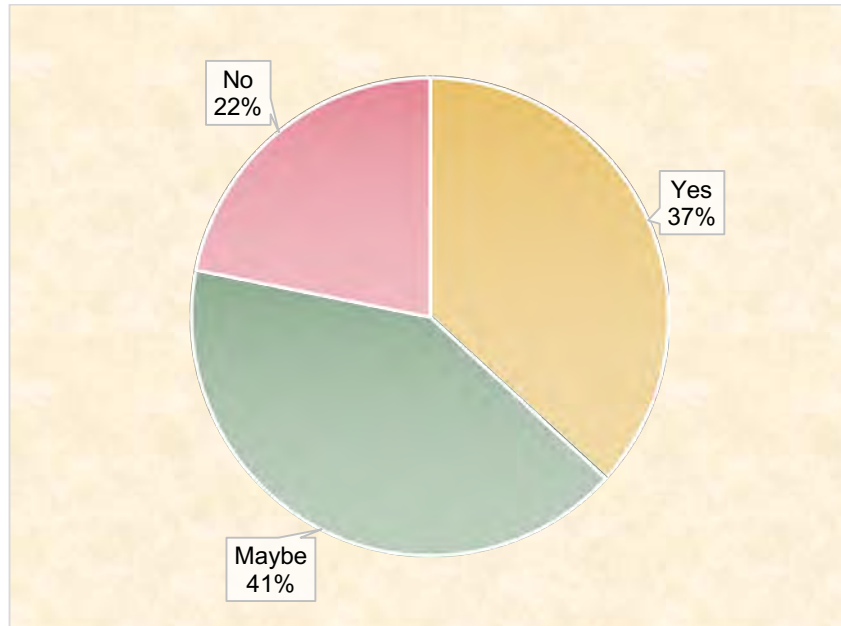


**Figure 2.14. Practices to improve millennial consumers’ care and maintenance of floral products**

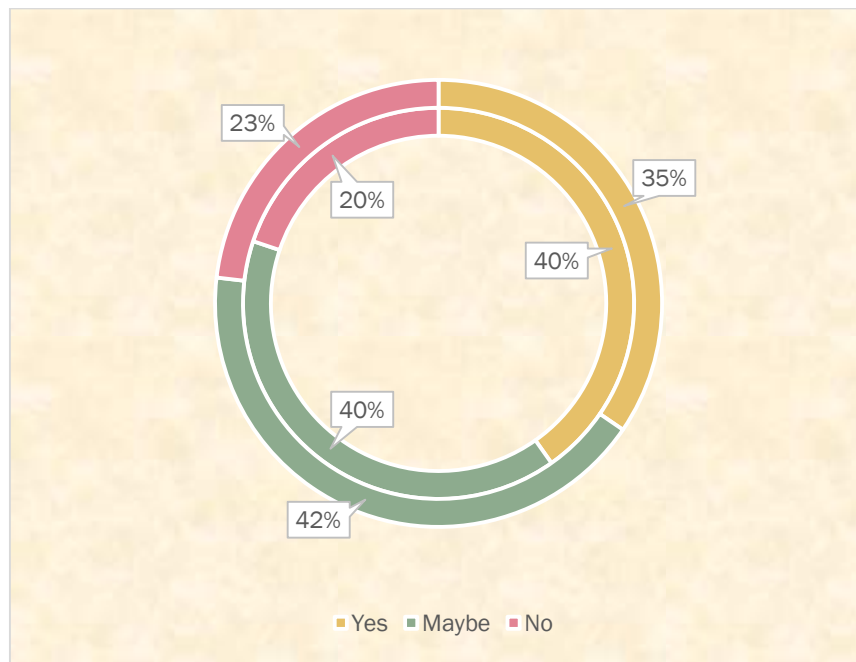
### The Importance of Sustainable Attributes

Compared to previous generations, millennials are more aware of the long-term consequences of their actions (Ristino, 2013). As a result, they often seek products that are more sustainable. Approximately, **37% of the sample indicated they would be more likely to purchase floral products from a company with sustainable practices** (Figure 2.15). Forty-one percent indicated ‘maybe’ while only 22% said ‘no’ indicating it would not influence their purchasing choices. These percentages changed when the millennial consumer had a child less than 12 years old in his/her household (Figure 2.16). Specifically, if they had a child, 40% indicated ‘yes,’ 40% indicated ‘maybe,’ and 20% indicated ‘no.’ Conversely, if they had no children, 35% indicated ‘yes,’ 42% ‘maybe,’ and 23% ‘no.’ Not surprisingly, the presence of a child increases

the probability of sustainable practices having a positive influence on the consumer's purchasing behavior.



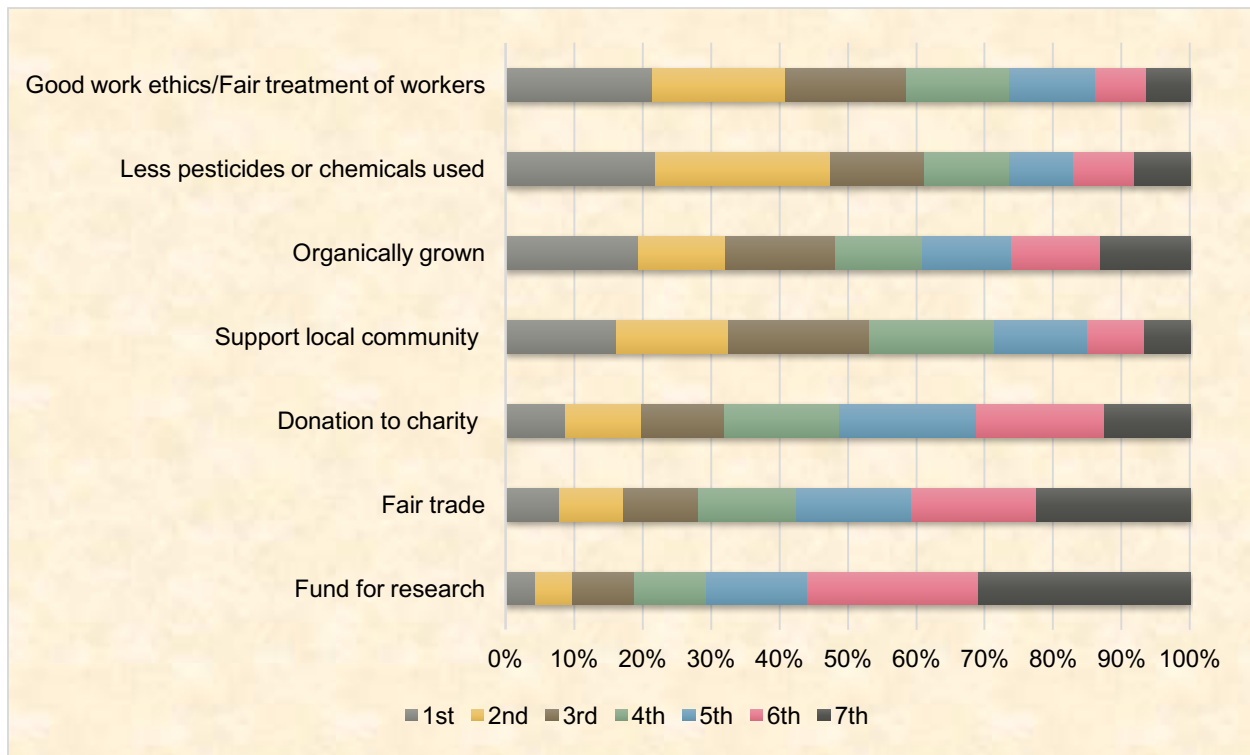
**Figure 2.15. Floral companies' sustainable practice influence on millennials' purchasing decisions**



**Figure 2.16. Sustainability influence on millennials' purchasing decisions based on the presence of children <12 years old (inner circle = with children vs. outer circle = without children)**

### *Sustainable Attributes*

Sustainability is a gray area that can have various meanings and includes numerous attributes. With respect to the floriculture industry, we asked millennials to rank detailed sustainable attributes. The two attributes that were ranked the highest were **good work ethics/fair treatment of workers and less pesticides/chemicals used** (Figure 2.17). Other sustainable practices with high rankings included organically grown and supporting the local economy. Charitable donations, fair trade, and research funding were ranked relatively lower.



**Figure 2.17. Millennial consumers' rankings of sustainable attributes**

### **Summary**

This chapter summarizes millennial consumers' preferred retail outlets and barriers preventing them from purchasing floral products at florists, and important product attributes and attribute improvements. Millennials want to purchase flowers in-person from local florists, but low convenience and high price perceptions can deter them. The high price perceptions are more impactful for women than men. Consequently, offering financial incentives is one major means to attract millennial consumers. Other actions include improved convenience, knowledgeable staff, improved services, and attractive websites. To millennial consumers, the most important floral attributes include price, longevity and quality. For men, quality is most important while women value price most. However, there is a disconnect between millennial consumers' most important traits (longevity and price) and their level of satisfaction with those traits, meaning there is room for improvement. Sustainable attributes are important to a third of millennials and

potentially important to another third. The level of importance increases if the millennial has a child at home. The most important sustainable attributes include work ethics/treatment of workers and less pesticides/chemicals. In order to reach this customer segment, the floral industry needs to be aware of their purchasing behavior and preferences for attributes in order to attract millennial consumers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Retail Outlet Selection***

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Floral retailers can improve millennial consumers' shopping experience by increasing the convenience of shopping for floral products in person (e.g. hours, location, availability, delivery, ordering options, etc.). Due to the increased cost of relocating, firms should consider partnering with or leasing space in companies that millennials frequently visit (e.g. coffee shops, breweries, etc.) This is one way of bringing floral products to where millennials are. Another means of being located near millennial hangouts is a portable floral stand which brings floral products to areas of high foot traffic (e.g. restaurants at meal times, shopping areas, etc.). Lastly, millennials are very tech-savvy so it is imperative that floral firms develop and maintain a professional website with vivid pictures of products.

### ***The Price Barrier***

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Price can be a major purchasing barrier to millennials. First, millennial consumers believe they cannot afford artistically designed floral arrangements. Floral retailers can counter this perception by providing artistically designed arrangements at various price points. They can reduce the 'expensive' perception and make floral products more approachable through educational advertising informing consumers about the value-added properties of floral products (e.g. psychological benefits, add-ons, customization options, specialness of the products, etc.)

Alternatively, floral firms can provide millennials with price incentives such as coupons, discounts, loyalty programs, etc. to make floral products more affordable. These incentives need to be posted/promoted where millennial consumers will see them – online, social media, etc. Firms can also reward millennials for promoting the company. For instance, they can give millennials coupons or discounts for sharing the company's webpage or interacting with the company using social media. Also, they can offer loyalty programs to reward customers for revisiting the company. Another strategy specifically designed for millennial consumers is to develop a student or young professionals discount program to target millennial consumers who are just starting out in the job market.

### ***Other Purchase Barriers***

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Many millennial consumers view cut flowers' short longevity as a purchasing barrier. Floral firms can counter millennials' perceptions of floral products' longevity being too short by using promotions to highlight superior product quality which increases longevity. In addition, they can



promote the limited longevity as a benefit – it provides customers the opportunity to bring nature indoors, refresh their home accents frequently, increased ‘specialness’ due to the perishable nature of the product, etc. Due to millennials not considering floral products very frequently, there is a need for floral firms to remind millennial consumers that floral products are great gifts for everyday purchases with promotions in locations they frequent – restaurants, stores, malls, etc.

Floral firms also need to be aware that millennials are experience-oriented. They can use creative advertising, events and photos to highlight ways that floral products provide an experience (e.g. fragrance, décor, ambiance, sharing, etc.)

### ***Specific Recommendations for Florists***

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Florists need to have a professional, visually appealing online presence and provide online options. Millennials grew up using technology and often use it when searching for ideas (e.g. Pinterest), businesses (e.g. Google, Google Maps, etc.), references, and product options. Therefore, having an updated, professional website that is compatible with many devices (e.g. mobile, tablet, laptop, etc.) is essential when targeting millennial consumers.

Florists can attract more millennials by offering them increased convenience. Florists can improve the convenience of shopping at local florists through being open hours when millennials are not working and through being located close to high traffic/frequent shopping areas. Other convenience options that florists can offer include online ordering and in-store pick up, affordable delivery, and easy return/replacement policies. Millennials are also budget conscious, meaning that florists can improve floral products’ perceived affordability through in-store deals, affordable delivery, Groupon/LivingSocial promotions, warranties, and online incentives.

Millennials also value friendly, knowledgeable and helpful staff. Therefore, it is important that



florists keep staff up-to-date on the latest offerings and how to care for the products since millennials value these attributes. Florists can also improve millennials’ in-store experience and customization opportunities by having a floral designer readily available to advise customers about their product choices. The designer should be presented as very approachable. One means of increasing the approachability of the designer is by promoting ‘free consultation’ regardless of project size. Many millennial consumers may not be aware of this option

or believe their budget is too small to warrant consulting a designer, but the designer could give them an artistic showpiece regardless of budget. In turn, this could increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth advertising.

Florists need to continue to provide a unique variety of plants and flowers since that is one of the core factors driving foot traffic into the store. Social media and websites are a great way to promote new arrivals and to inform customers about their options since these platforms are relatively easy to change images on/update and they are frequently visited by millennial consumers. Florists need to have/design a professional website that appears high on an internet search list (e.g. Google) to inform millennials (and other customers) about the store's location, hours and products. The store must be easy to find online in order to attract millennial consumers. An important feature is that the website is compatible with a variety of mobile devices.

Florists also need to keep the store atmosphere attractive and inviting to encourage millennials to come in and browse. Florists could consider providing entertainment while shopping. For instance, they could offer Wi-Fi and beverages (coffee, tea, etc.) to encourage customers to linger and view the products. Ultimately this adds to the customer's experience.

### ***Attribute Improvements***

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Floral industry stakeholders can take several actions to improve floral products for millennial consumers. First, to optimize millennials' experiences with floral products, firms can provide clear, concise care instructions for optimal growth and longevity. Additionally, they can include a nutrient/flower food packet with purchase, obtain the highest quality products (flowers and filler), and maintain their quality so the consumer has the best products possible. Also, millennials are less experienced with floral products than older consumers. It is important to adjust their longevity expectations by clearly indicating how long the product should last, the best care measures to get the greatest longevity, and how to select the best quality product.

Stakeholders can also provide floral products with a variety of value added features. For instance, they could have a selection of fragrant blooms for customers to choose from if the customer wants a product with more sensory impact. Floral retailers can also provide a variety of floral products and color combination options so millennials can choose the most appropriate and visually appealing arrangement that matches their needs and personal styles. Firms can offer unique, customizable designs to allow customers to express themselves and personalize gifts/products. Another way to increase consumer attention is by providing interesting product information, such as origin, variety, etc. Millennials are also environmentally conscious, meaning floral firms could gain a competitive advantage by offering biodegradable/recyclable packaging options.



### ***Care Instructions***

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Millennials are less knowledgeable about caring for floral products than other generations. Floral firms can improve millennials' purchasing intention with floral products by improving the ease of caring for their floral purchases. For instance, millennials should be provided with clear care instructions on plant and flower labels and signs. Additionally, firms can give consumers free flower food with each purchase and provide instructions on how to use that food properly. Since millennials are very busy, firms can explore an auto-feeding device which automatically releases nutrients to the flowers as needed. For instance, slow-release fertilizers are used for potted and landscape plants or long-term feeders are used in fish tanks and can last from a couple of days to weeks. Another example is that firms can track their customers' purchases and provide new customers with a free beginners' flower pack with everything pre-prepared. Certain elements of the pack may be reusable (for instance if it includes a vase) and it is a nice 'thank you for your business and welcome to our family' gesture.

Millennials are also very tech-savvy. This gives firms the opportunity to use modern technology to remind and educate consumers about proper flower/plant care. For instance, firms could develop a mobile app to remind customers to take care of their floral products or create a step-by-step care video that is available from the businesses' website or social media account(s). They could also provide an automated follow-up service to check on the status of the product and ask for customer feedback. Another option would be to offer in-store and/or on packaging QR codes linked to online care instructions.

### ***Sustainability-related Attributes***

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Since millennials are interested in sustainable products, floral firms can attempt to source products from sustainable sources and promote those sustainable practices so that millennials are aware of what makes those products special. For instance, firms can buy products grown with reduced pesticide/chemical usage and promote that benefit. Millennials are also very interested in local products. Firms should promote local ties to the community and how the business supports other people in the area.

Often, millennials who focus on sustainable practices have children. Floral firms can appeal to millennial parents by having a 'kids section' where the flowers are sensory-oriented. This gives the kids an opportunity to interact with the flowers and promote that they are safe for the kids to touch, smell, and interact with.



If sustainability is part of the firm's business model, the firm should promote it through advertisements, online posts, and in-store promotions. Floral firms can interweave sustainability into all aspects of the business to provide a consistent, authentic message. This information needs to be posted where it is readily accessible to millennials (e.g. areas they hang out, social media, in-store, etc.)

## Chapter 3

# MARKETING FLOWERS TO MILLENNIALS – ADVERTISEMENTS, PROMOTIONS, LOYALTY PROGRAMS, & SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

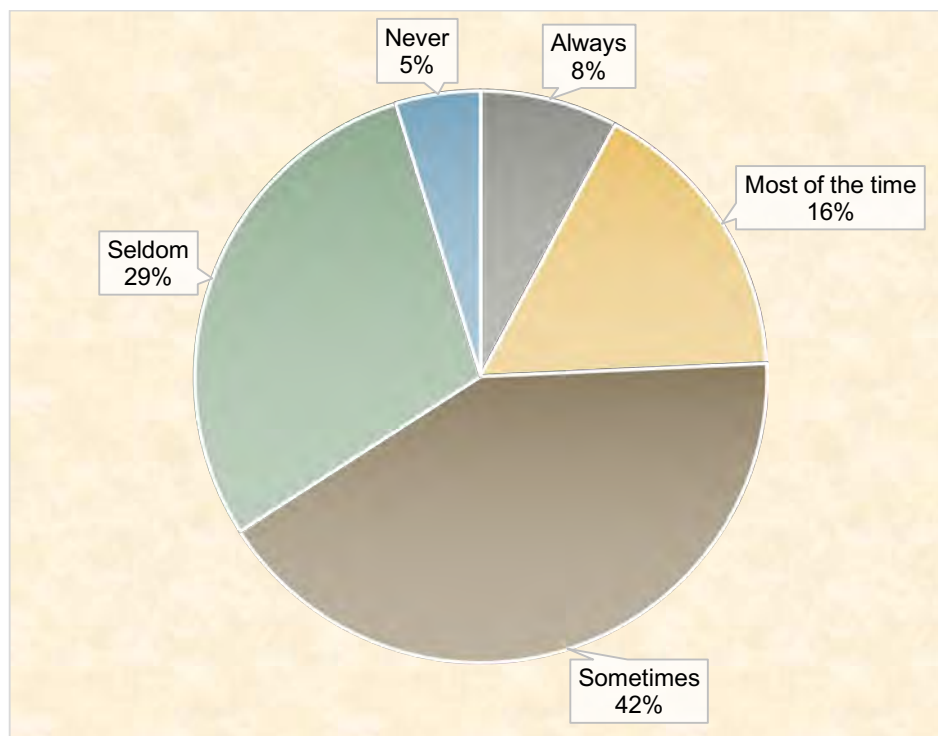


This chapter summarizes research that assessed millennial consumers' preferences for floral advertisements in traditional media outlets, social media, and mobile apps. Results are applicable to floral industry stakeholders who are interested in targeting millennial consumers with tailored advertisement and promotional strategies.

### Floral Advertisements

Often advertisements are used as a reminder to customers or to inform them about new products, sales, store location, etc. For an advertisement to be effective, it must be easily noticed, remembered, and appeal to the target audience. In this section, floral products' advertisement frequency, location, format and content will be addressed from the millennials' perspective.

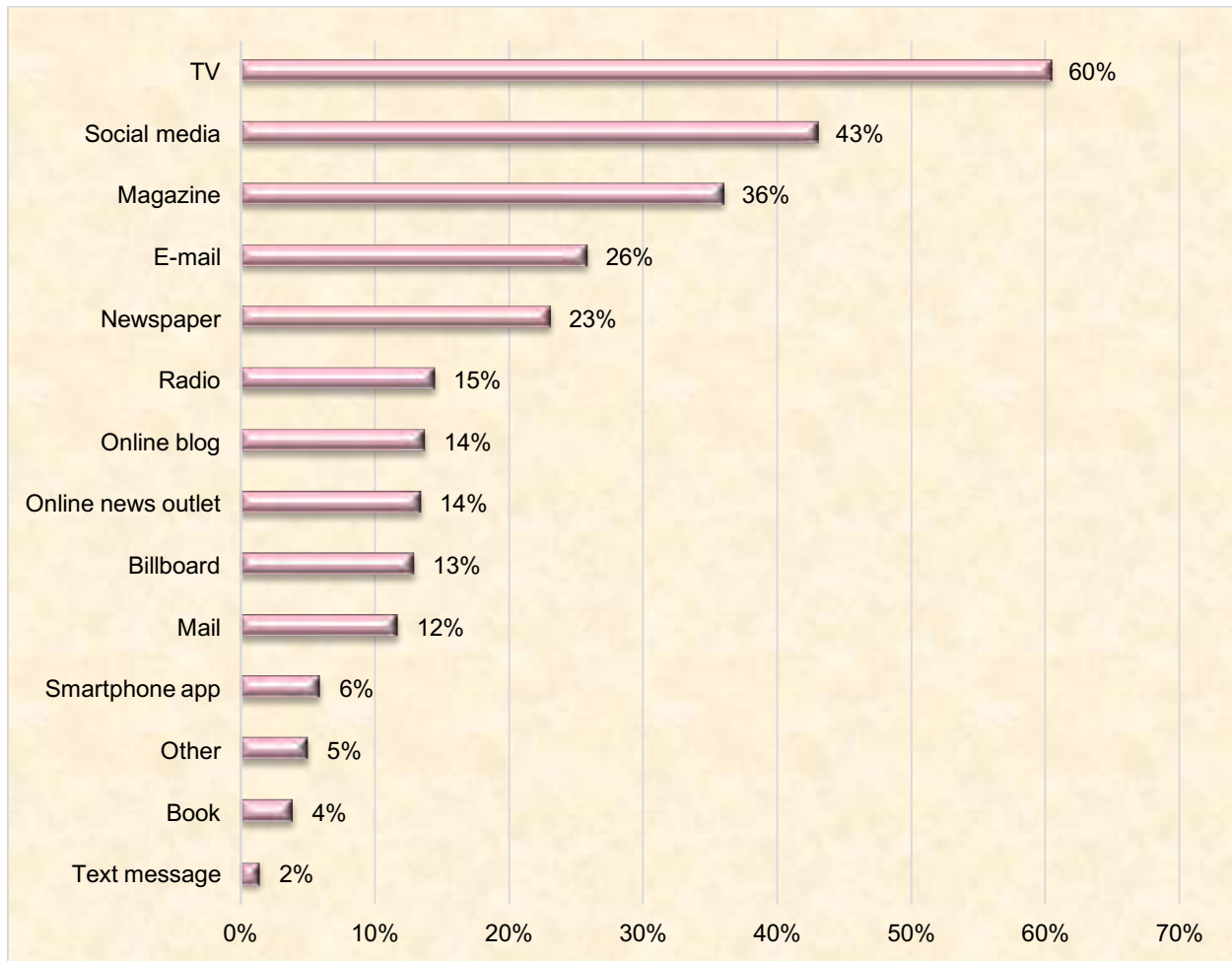
Overall, millennial consumers indicated that they did not frequently notice floral advertisements (Figure 3.1). Specifically, 42% of respondents sometimes noticed floral advertisements, 29% seldom saw floral advertisements, and 5% never saw floral advertisements. Conversely, only 24% noticed floral advertisements frequently.



**Figure 3.1. Respondents' frequency of viewing floral advertisements**

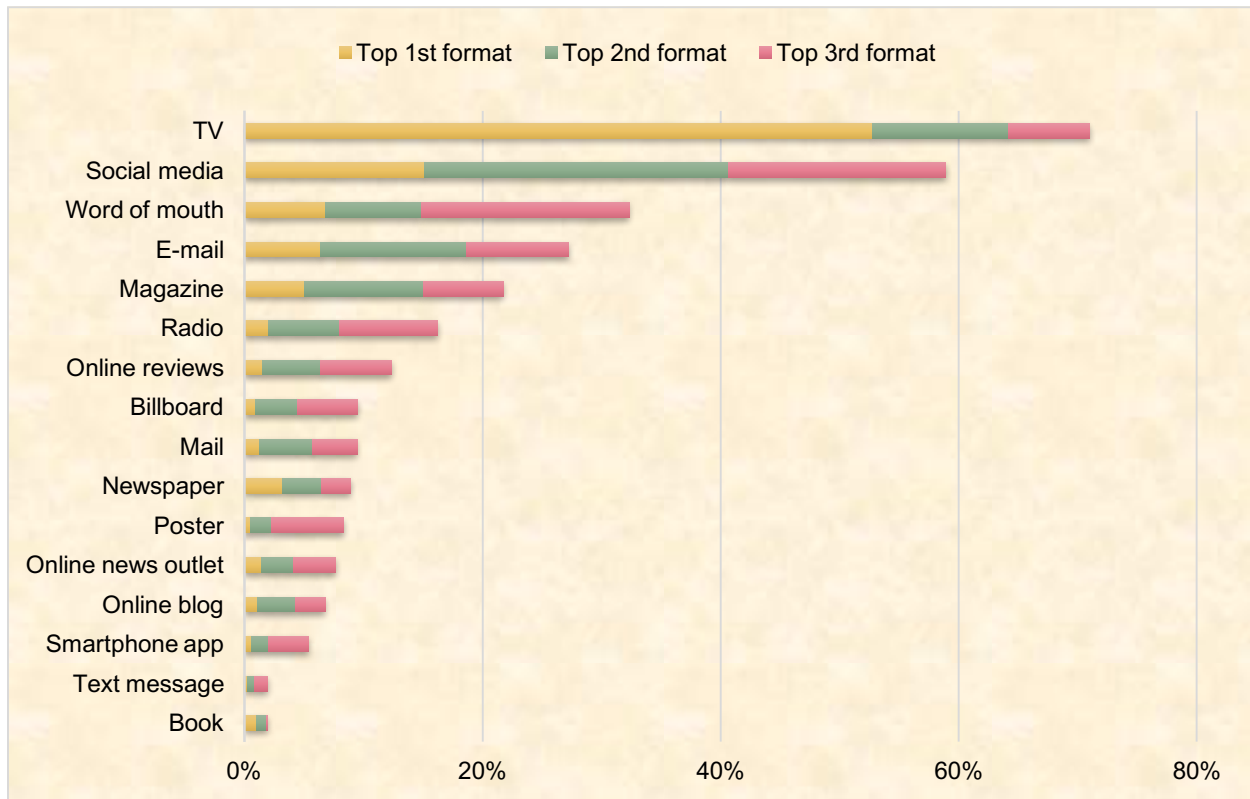
Millennial respondents **recalled seeing the majority of flower advertisements on TV commercials, followed by social media, and magazines** (Figure 3.2). E-mail and newspaper flower advertisements were noticed by 36% and 23% of the sample, respectively. Radio, online blog, online news outlets, billboards, and mail advertisements were noticed less frequently. Flower advertisements were recalled the least frequently from smartphone apps, other (e.g.,

YouTube, billboard, in-store, magnet, podcast, on vehicles, and none/NA), books and text messages.



**Figure 3.2. Primary advertisement type noticed**

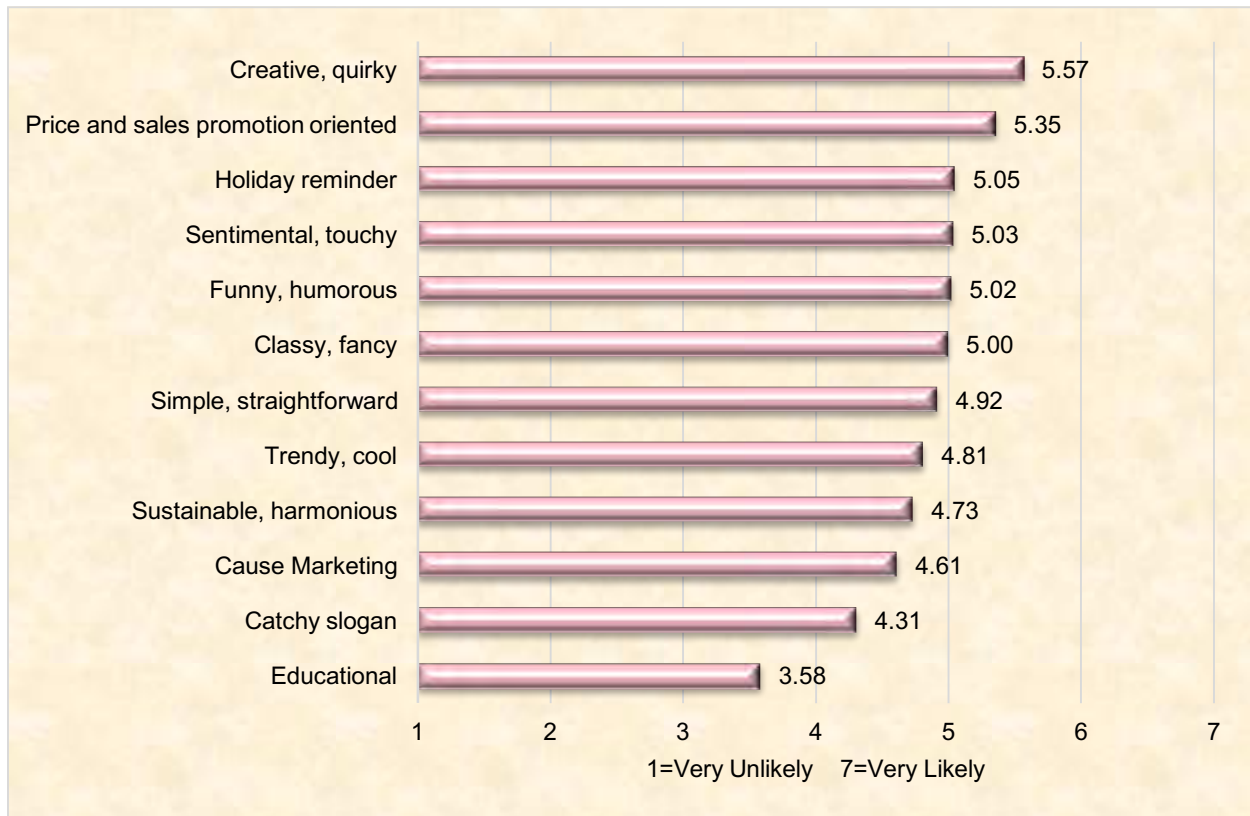
Advertisement format also influences which ads are noticed and used by consumers. Regarding respondents' preferences for advertisements, **the vast majority (71%) attended to TV commercials the most with more than 50% ranking TV commercials as the most preferred advertisement platform** (Figure 3.3). As expected, many millennial respondents (59%) also attended to social media advertisements. Approximately 32% attended to word of mouth from friends, family or colleagues, 27% attended to e-mail advertisements, and 16% attended to radio advertisements. Other advertisement options were presented to respondents but received less attention; see Figure 3.3 for the complete list.



**Figure 3.3. Top three formats of advertisements respondents preferred**

An important factor that influences millennial consumers’ attention and recall of advertisements is the content. To address floral advertisement content, respondents were asked to indicate what content would catch their attention in floral advertisements. **Creative, quirky content was rated the highest by respondents, followed by price and sales promotions** (Figure 3.4). Holiday reminder, sentimental/touchy, funny/humorous, and classy/fancy content was also ranked highly. Other positive content included simple/straightforward, trendy/cool, sustainable/harmonious, cause marketing, and catchy slogans. Educational content was the least likely to catch respondents’ attention.

Overall, the advertising results indicate there is a need to create advertisements that attract and resonate with millennial consumers. For instance, focus group participants indicated that advertisements, trials, and promotions that create pre-store buzz generate consumer excitement before they even enter the store. Additionally, millennial consumers value transparency, authenticity, experience, humor, and uniqueness. Therefore, having promotions that are not financially driven but instead showcase the products in unique, humorous ways is one means of engaging millennial consumers. One good example is the successful rebranding of Old Spice where they launched a hilarious (and often ridiculous) advertising campaign which helped the brand attract a broader and younger customer base.

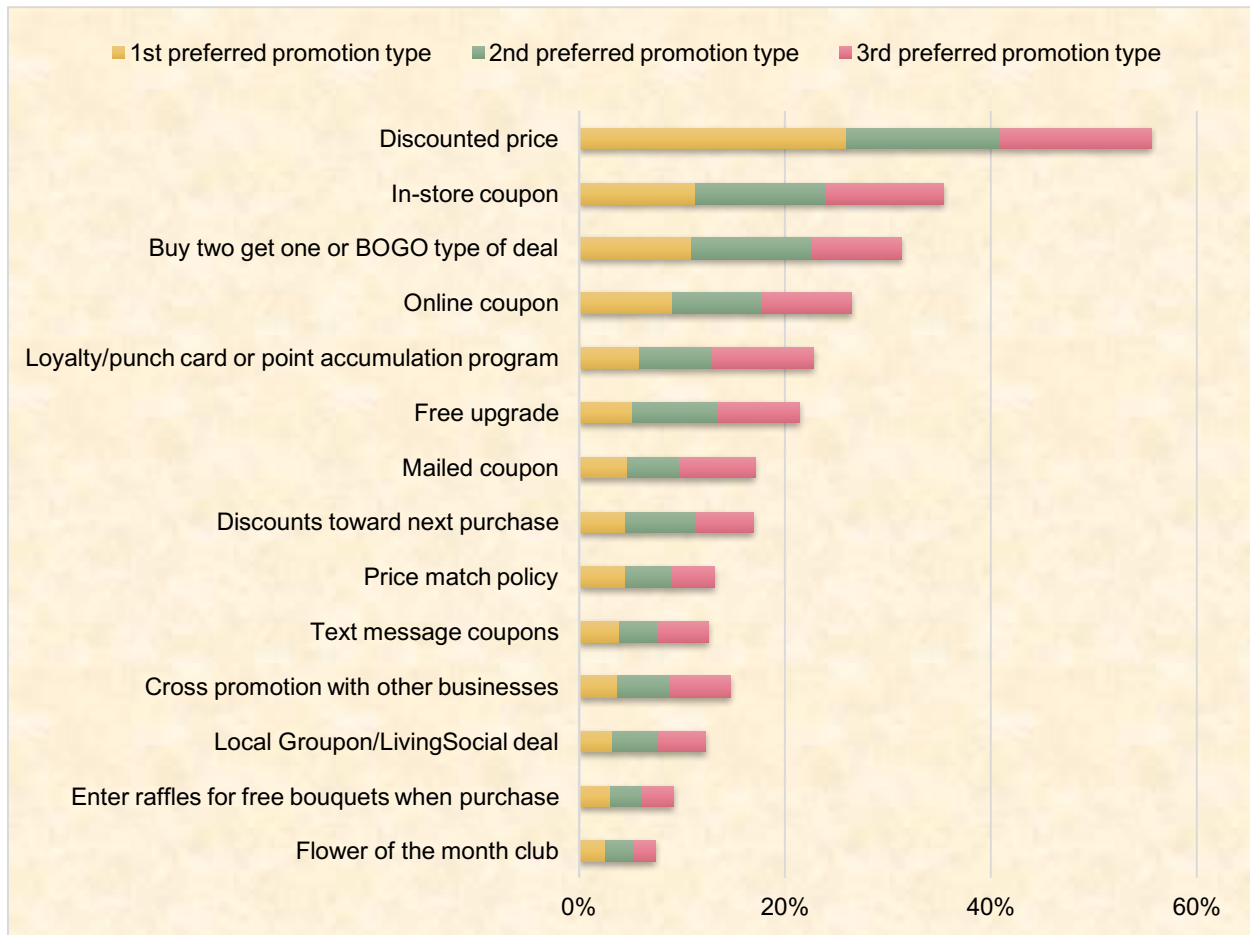


**Figure 3.4. Floral advertisement content that catches respondents' attention**

### **Preferred Sales Promotions**

Since price and sales promotions were highly ranked content and there are many price-related promotional options, it is important to understand which options are most preferred by millennials. Overwhelmingly, millennial consumers preferred discount price promotions (Figure 3.5). Next, they preferred in-store coupons, followed by ‘buy two, get one’ or BOGO deals. Approximately, 27% of respondents indicated they preferred online coupons, 23% preferred a loyalty-based program, 21% preferred receiving a free upgrade. Less preferred promotions included mailed coupons, discounts toward next purchase, price matching policies, text message coupons, cross promotions, Groupon/LivingSocial deals, raffles, flower-of-the-month clubs, back to school sales, and other.

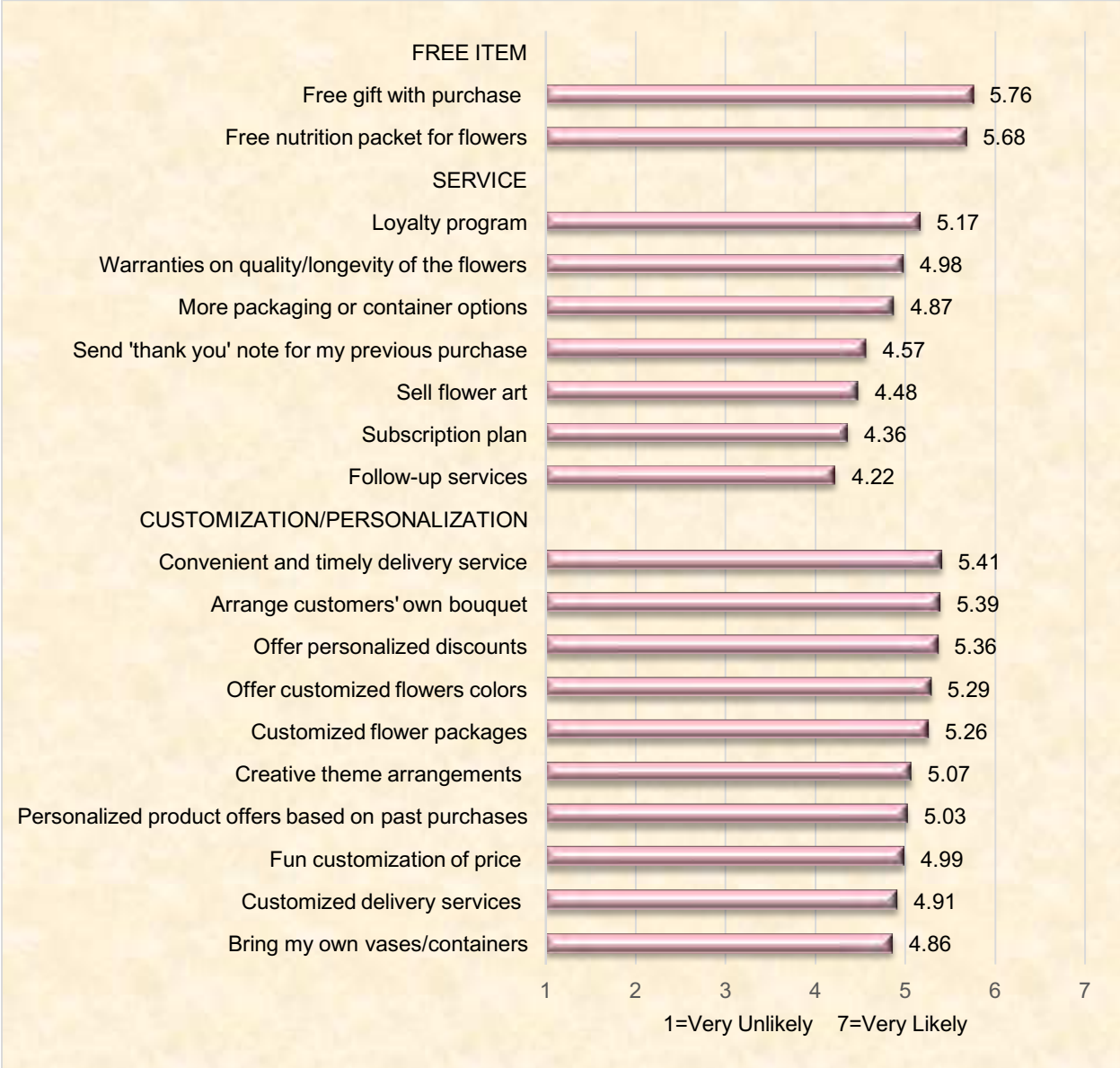




**Figure 3.5. Millennial consumers' preferred top 3 sales promotions**

### Value Added Options

Millennial consumers indicated there were three main categories of value added options that they were interested in, including: free items, services, and customization/personalization (Figure 3.6). **Millennials were most interested in free items including a free gift with purchase and a free nutrient packet with the flowers.** Next, millennials were interested in many of the customization/personalization options. They were primarily interested in convenient/timely delivery, a ‘flower bar’ option, personalized discounts, customized colors, customized packages, creative theme arrangements, and personalized product offerings based on previous purchases. Other customization options included price, delivery, and bringing their own vase/container. For services, millennials perceived loyalty programs as adding the most value to their products. They also viewed quality/longevity warranties and additional packaging/container options favorably. Millennial consumers were less interested in post-purchase thank you notes, flower art, subscription plans, and follow-up services.



**Figure 3.6. Millennials' preferences for options to improve perceived value of floral products**

**Loyalty Programs**

Loyalty programs are one way to encourage customer loyalty and reward those individuals who frequently purchase products. Loyalty programs are often customized by individual companies and thus vary from firm to firm. Here, we assess the important loyalty program features to millennial consumers.

Millennial consumers perceived having **no expiration date on the awards/points to be the most important loyalty program attribute**, which is potentially because millennials do not frequently purchase flowers, meaning their points could expire before they are used (Figure 3.7).

The next most important attribute was a free gift for one’s birthday or special occasions, followed by special discounts for members, the ability to accumulate points/purchases toward a free item, and coupons linked directly to a member’s account that automatically apply at check out. Other attributes that were perceived positively include flexible awards for other stores, phone number/email tracking rather than a card, and member-only sales events. Less desirable attributes include text message promotions, personalized recommendations based on purchase history, paying a fixed fee and receiving free shipping, and store newsletters.



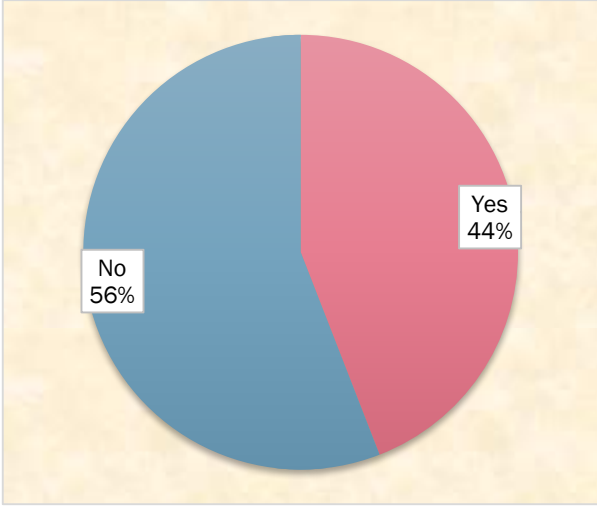
**Figure 3.7. Perceived importance of loyalty program attributes**

### Subscription Services

A subscription box is a package of retail products sent directly to a customer on a recurring basis for a set fee. The package can be continuous or have a pre-set duration (3 months, 6 months, annual renewal). Subscription boxes are used by subscription based ecommerce businesses and can target a wide range of consumers and cater to a variety of specific needs and interests. The use of subscription boxes is becoming more and more popular among millennial consumers. In the focus group discussion, participants showed great interest in subscription services for

flowers. So in the national survey, millennial consumers were asked to indicate if they were interested in a flower subscription service and what features would be important.

**Nearly half (44%) of millennial respondents indicated they were interested in subscription services for floral products** (Figure 3.8). Regarding important features for a floral subscription service, millennial consumers indicated that *ease of registering and cancelling* is the most important (Figure 3.9). A free trial was also positively received. Free trials allow for the consumer to try the service without any financial risk. This reflects favorably on the company supplying the service because it demonstrates their commitment to their product’s quality and their ability to provide the service. Millennials also appreciated more price discounts with the subscription, flexible delivery dates, options in terms of products, and the ability to select which products are delivered. Due to millennials’ various budgets, they indicated that having different levels at different prices would be important. They also appreciated the ability to customize their subscriptions, for instance, personalizing products based on preferences or bundling with other products. Additionally, they appreciated having the option to forward the subscription to someone else if they were unavailable. Some respondents were also interested in a mystery box where they receive a surprise product monthly.



**Figure 3.8. Millennial consumers' interest in subscription services for floral products**



**Figure 3.9. Important floral subscription service features**

**Summary**

Millennial consumers are tech-savvy, incentive driven, and yet value authenticity in advertising and company offerings. As a result, marketing to them can be challenging. In this report, we found that floral ads are not frequently viewed by millennial consumers, but they do notice TV and social media ads the most frequently. Ads that are quirky and creative or provide incentives (sales information, coupons, etc.) are the most influential. Sales promotions that discount the price of the products are also influential. Millennials also responded favorably to free gifts and nutrient packets with purchase and the ability to customize their order. Important customization options included delivery and design options. Some millennial consumers expressed interest in a loyalty program. Important loyalty program features with no expiration date on the rewards/points, a free gift on special occasions, and member-only discounts. Nearly half of respondents were interested in a floral subscription service. Millennial consumers indicated that having an easy subscription/cancellation system was imperative to the subscription service. They also valued a free trial, discounts, flexible delivery dates, and having multiple product options to choose from. Overall, millennial consumers indicated that incentives are important to floral promotions and advertising because that motivates them to purchase the products and reflects favorably on the industry.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Advertisements*

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Millennial consumers value authenticity, the experience, humor, uniqueness, and information. Firms need to respect and embrace millennials' individuality through advertisements and product offerings by keeping it real. Promotions should provide timely, relevant information about the products and services while emphasizing product quality. Firms should be willing to participate in self-mockery in advertisements. Other millennial-friendly advertising ideas include being unique, having depth, and marketing with celebrities and offering transparency, simplicity, non-financial promotions, and messages that appeal to "emotional considerations" such as environmental concerns. Millennials value unique advertising, meaning that firms should think outside the advertising box and communicate about the innovative product attributes and social causes that those products support. Promotions can also be used to create resonance with millennials to encourage feelings of ownership which will encourage store visits and purchasing. Firms can appeal to millennials' tech savviness by using interactive images online to allow customers to browse ads, promotions and products.



Another way to appeal to millennials through advertising is by finding ways to reposition flowers as 'cool' and 'trendy'. For instance, firms can partner with the fashion industry – flowers used as décor on clothes, hair, etc. to improve perceptions of trendiness. They can also offer product and packaging designs that appeal to millennials. For instance, millennials often value functionality, so offer a container/packaging that adds to their lifestyle and reflects their personalities. Millennials are also environmentally conscious, so floral firms can offer environmentally friendly packaging (recyclable, biodegradable, etc.) Additionally, floral firms need to talk about how the product/services make millennials better or different.

Firms can encourage impulse purchases by offering convenience options in-store such as free Wi-Fi or charging stations. These services encourage customers to linger and consider their purchases.

Floral firms can use advertising as a way to connect with millennial consumers. One means of connecting through advertising is scouting trends in other industries (i.e. sports, technology, entertainment, lifestyle). This information can be utilized by the floral industry when determining product offerings, advertisements and designs. Firms can generate pre-store buzz through trials, competitions, promotions, cause/social marketing, freebies and giveaways. They can also offer services or products at little to no cost (e.g. t-shirts, discounts, etc.)

Location-based advertising is another way to encourage millennials to stop and shop. Firms can inform millennials about relevant events nearby and how that connects to the business/industry. Floral firms can also utilize primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities by advertising in their welcome packets, bulletin boards, newsletters (online and offline), school publications, events, clubs, and so on. Floral firms can target parents to get the product in front of the younger generation with limited budgets. Furthermore, millennial consumers often seek their parents' advice on decisions and options. Another way to encourage millennials to try the product is by providing free samples.

Floral firms should find ways of connecting with customers based on shared values. This signals to consumers that the firm is authentic. For instance, if the firm values environmental stewardship, talk about the actions (via promotions) that are being taken and how the products are grown and sourced in a way that supports that cause. Social responsibility and cause marketing are two great ways of emphasizing shared values.

### ***Promotions – Sales and Value Added Options***

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Millennials love incentives. Floral firms need to consider which incentives align best with their businesses. For instance, they can identify the best price-based promotion and promote it to millennials through various media channels (e.g. TV, social media, college paper, etc.). Price-based promotions that resonate well with millennial consumers include: discount price promotions, in-store coupons, 'buy 2, get 1' or BOGO style deals, online coupons, and loyalty-based discounts. Millennials also value personalized discounts based on past purchases and life phases (i.e. new student, new baby, child graduation, etc.). Beyond financial promotions, floral firms should consider non-financial incentives such as a free upgrade, a free gift, and/or (flower) nutrient packet with purchase.

Floral firms can improve millennial consumers' experiences with floral products through offering value added features, such as offering personalized product offerings based on previous purchases. Firms can provide convenient and timely delivery services and promote the delivery options on the company website, social media page(s), and in-store. Floral firms can also devise quality and longevity warranties to indicate that the company stands behind the products' quality and want the customer to be satisfied. Another option would be for floral firms to develop and promote loyalty programs that reward customers for returning to and purchasing from the store.



Technology is important to millennial consumers. Floral firms can reach millennials through social media platforms to effectively engage them, inform them about the business and its story, and tell them the core values of the business. These promotions need to be authentic while showing the creative floral options that are available to customers. Floral products are extremely

visual; any promotional photos should emphasize their beauty. Additionally, images/videos that show customers interacting with floral products can be used to show how floral products connect people and influence ambiance. All web-based promotions and websites/social media sites need to be up-to-date, professional, and have high quality photos. Firms can then monitor what is being said about the company/brand online (e.g. social networks) and participate in the conversation.

Lastly, floral firms need to be aware of the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. Specifically, they can monitor all promotional activities to identify which are the most effective at reaching millennial consumers and influencing their behavior. For instance, they can use a multichannel ecommerce marketing strategy and make data-driven decisions about where to allocate future advertising dollars.

### ***Loyalty Programs***

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Loyalty programs are a great way of encouraging repeat buying behavior. Floral firms without loyalty programs should consider establishing one to build the firm's reputation and to give customers an incentive to frequently shop at the store. Loyalty programs can be used to increase sales by providing incentives (e.g. rewards, free product, discounts, member-only sales, etc.) to join and make purchases. Incentives (rewards) should encourage customers to shop more frequently rather than just receiving a discount. Loyalty programs should also be easy to use. For instance, firms can link coupons directly to members' accounts and automatically apply them during check out. A member's phone number/email can be kept on file to keep track of their status rather than requiring them to carry a card or barcode. Customers should also be rewarded for participating. Members could receive a free gift for special occasions such as their birthday or exclusive access to relevant experiences, vouchers, personalized services, special events, experiential rewards, etc. Firms should consider using online and app reward systems to improve millennials' ease of "cashing in" their points.

Millennials are at the age of starting or beginning to think about expanding their families. Floral retailers can use the loyalty program to make floral purchasing a family experience. A loyalty program provides the opportunity to offer a 'kids club' where children can get involved through learning about and experiencing floral products. They can also use interactive plants that attract kids (e.g. ticklish fern, fragrant, soft, etc.)

Millennials want points/rewards that do not expire. Appeal to millennials by allowing members to retain their points/rewards indefinitely. Floral firms can improve the attractiveness of their loyalty program by partnering with other businesses to allow for flexible rewards where customers receive a product (e.g. coffee, wine, flowers, etc.) or discount with their reward points. There is an opportunity for floral firms to develop product codes allowing users to manually enter them and receive points or rewards (similar to Pepsi Pass app). Floral firms can offer to personalize product recommendations through e-mail or mail based on purchase history and



member profile. Additionally, they can use geo-location to inform customers about the store, its location, sales promotions, and store events, etc. when they are close by.

The loyalty program needs to reinforce the firm's story/key message to strengthen the brand and the authenticity of the company. Lastly, floral firms can use loyalty program customer information to help direct future marketing efforts.

### ***Subscription Services***

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Millennial consumers expressed interest in floral subscription services provided they are easy to subscribe/cancel and use. Firms can develop a system that allows potential subscribers to easily subscribe and/or cancel their subscription. Another good idea is to allow consumers to try the subscription service for free for a set duration of time. This gives the customer confidence in the company, their products, and their ability to provide the subscription service without financial risk. Similarly, firms can provide incentives (e.g. discounts, coupons, etc.) for customers to join the company's subscription services. Since people are unique and have different lifestyles, firms should be flexible in terms of delivery dates, product options and combinations with other products (candles, wine, toys, etc.). Similarly, they can offer several levels of the subscription plans that have different price points to accommodate various budgets.

## Chapter 4

# MARKETING FLOWERS TO MILLENNIALS – SOCIAL MEDIA, MOBILE, & ONLINE OPTIONS



This chapter summarizes millennial consumers' use of and preferences for social media, mobile apps, and online features. Results are applicable to floral industry stakeholders who are interested in targeting and reaching millennial consumers using new technologies.

### Social Media and Flowers

In the past decade, social media has become an important marketing platform for many companies targeting tech-savvy consumers (e.g. Millennials, etc.). Companies often use social media platforms to launch marketing campaigns because social media offers many benefits including targeting specific customer segments, wide reach, adaptability, and so on while being fairly inexpensive to use. Additionally, social media demonstrates that the business is hip, cutting edge, and more savvy than those not utilizing social media platforms. This can be used to counter perceptions of floral businesses being 'traditional.' Millennial consumers utilize technology (e.g. social media, mobile devices, etc.) to connect with people and products more so than previous generations. Therefore, it is important to understand how millennial consumers utilize social media and how that information can be used by the floral industry to better target this customer segment.

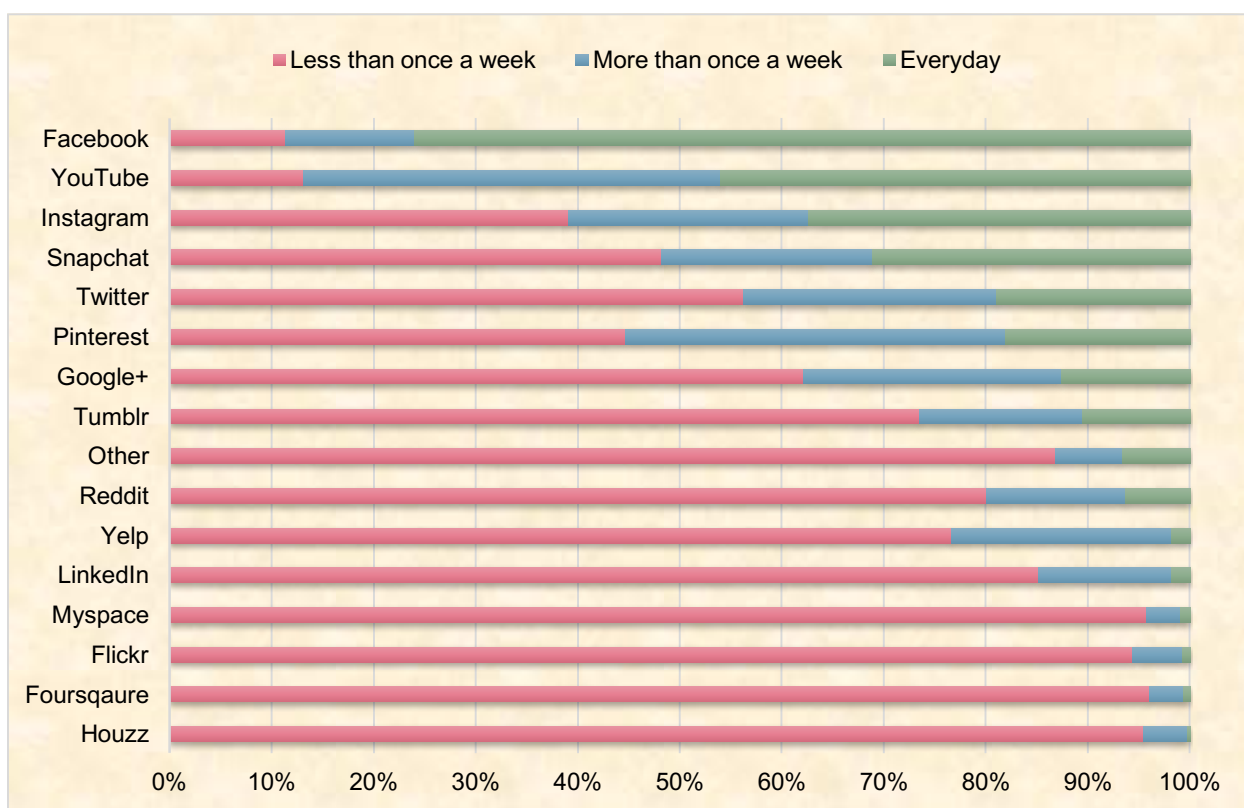
In order to reach a business' clientele (or potential clientele) it is important to identify social media platforms that they frequently use. Facebook was the most used platform by millennial consumers (Figure 4.1). Specifically, **75% of respondents indicated that they used Facebook daily**, 13% used Facebook 1+ times per week, while only 11% used Facebook less than once per week. Facebook provides companies many opportunities to engage their customer base through two-way conversations. For instance, customers can receive incentives for 'checking in' at a business, referring friends, writing reviews, sharing posts, and so on. **Due to the popularity of Facebook among young consumers and the ability to interact with them, it is imperative that a floral business targeting millennial consumers has an interactive Facebook page.** To keep consumer interest, it is also imperative to keep the content relevant, interesting, authentic and up-to-date.



Next, YouTube was visited by 46% of respondents daily, 41% more than once per week, and 13% less than once per week (Figure 4.1). YouTube has the ability to track who is viewing the videos. From a floral businesses' perspective, it would be beneficial to have promotions appear near videos that are being viewed by the target market. Additionally, the floral industry can

develop a viral video that generates positive electronic word-of-mouth advertising. YouTube videos can also be used to showcase products and examples that customers may be unaware of.

Furthermore, respondents indicated they use Instagram and Snapchat fairly frequently (61% and 51% visited these platforms frequently; Figure 4.1). Instagram provides photo- and video-sharing networks that can be connected with other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which is suitable for publicizing floral related pictures and artwork. Snapchat is also an image messaging and multimedia mobile application that can be highly adopted by the floral industry. Lastly, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google+ were used at least weekly by 44%, 55%, and 38% of respondents. Conversely, Tumblr, other, Reddit, Yelp, LinkedIn, Myspace, Flickr, Foursquare, and Houzz were used the least frequently.

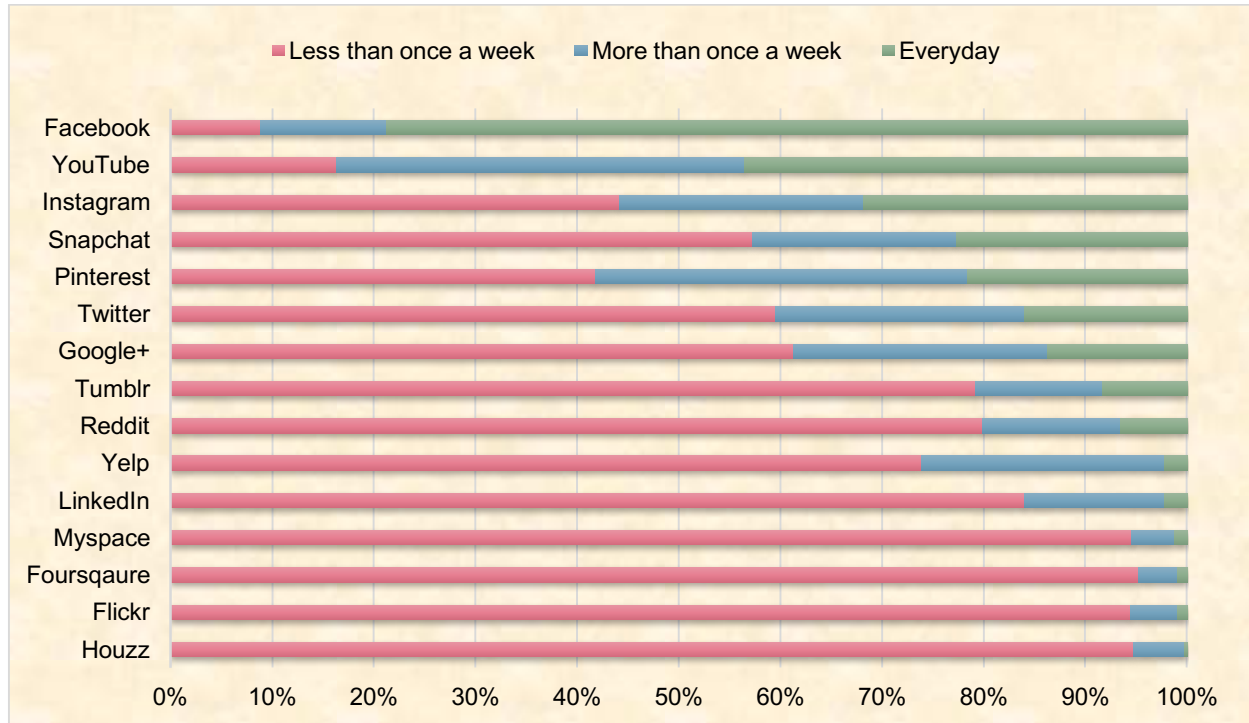


**Figure 4.1. Frequency of social media platform use**

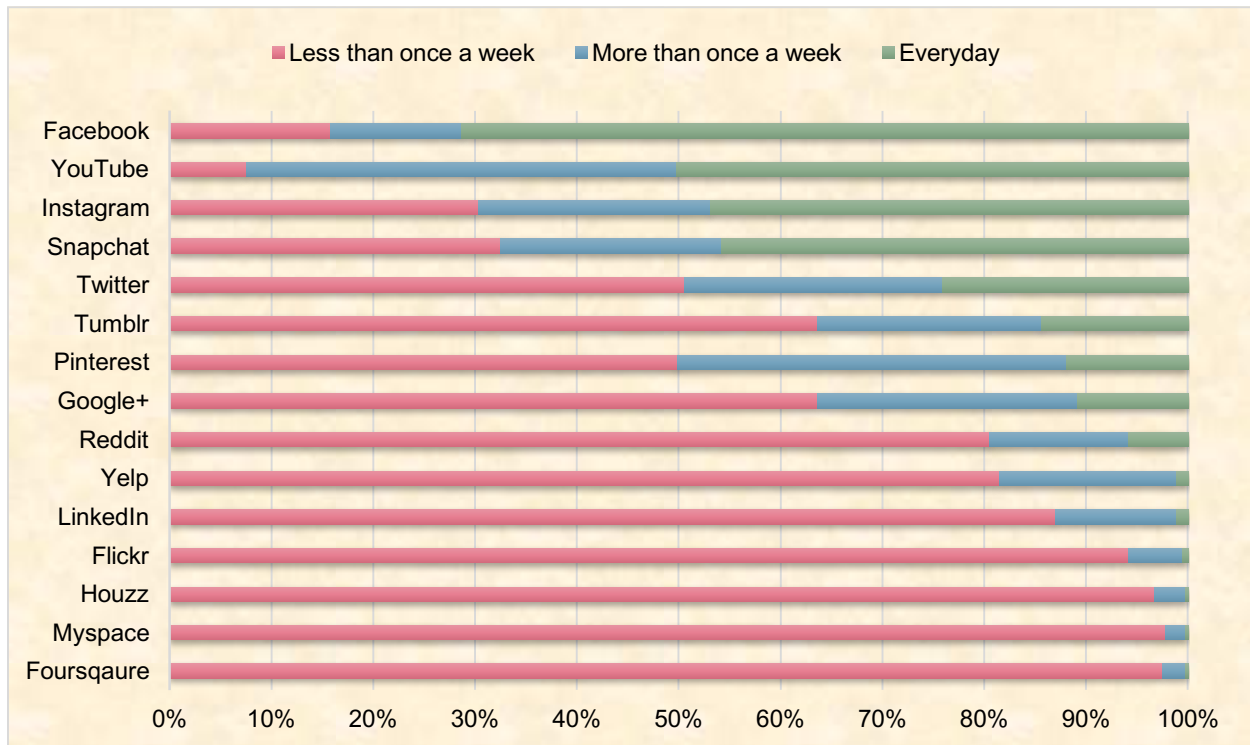
### ***Social Media Use, by Age***

Age frequently influences consumer behavior. Here, millennial respondents were divided into an ‘older’ group (older than 26 years) and a ‘younger’ group (less than 26 years old) to determine the influence of age on social media platform usage. **Interestingly, older millennials used Facebook more frequently than younger millennials** (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Conversely, younger millennials used YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and Tumblr more often than the older group. Pinterest and Google+ were equally used between the two groups. Likely, the differences in social media platform use reflect when the platform was released. For instance,

older millennials have had more exposure and time to join Facebook whereas the younger group may be more interested in newer, cutting edge social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. For additional information on other social media platforms, please see Figures 4.2 and 4.3.



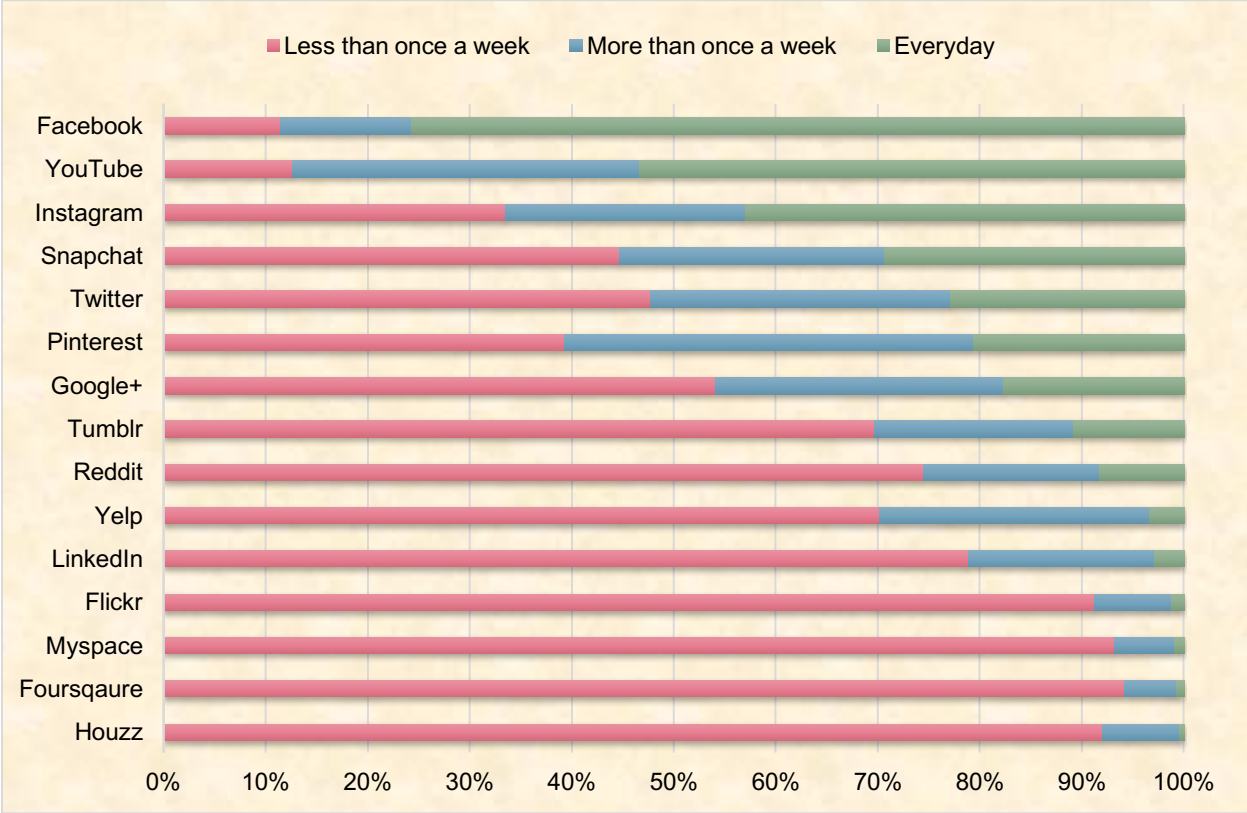
**Figure 4.2. Social media use by millennials OVER 26 years old**



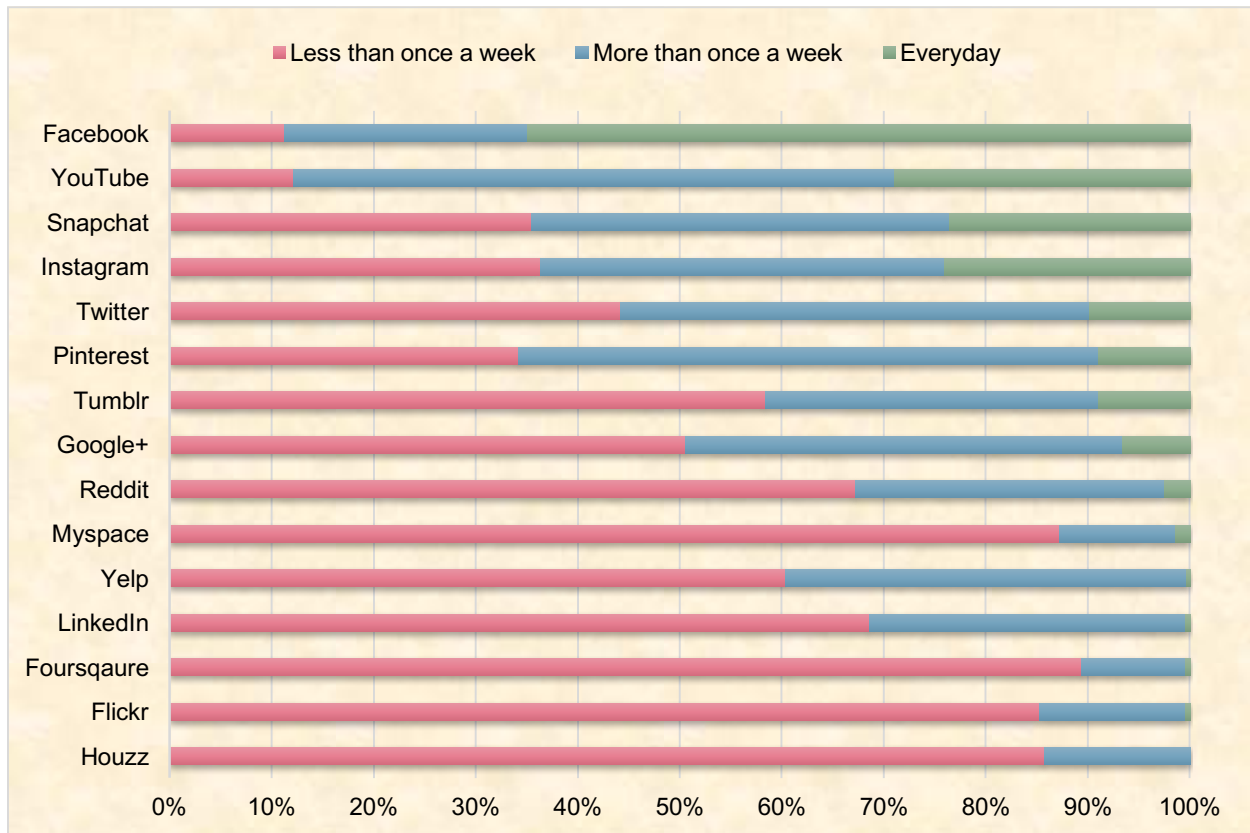
**Figure 4.3. Social media use by millennials UNDER 26 years old**

***Social Media Use, by Purchase Frequency***

Knowing how frequently consumers utilize social media platforms allows businesses to streamline their promotions to better align with their target markets. Therefore, we differentiate the usage of social media based on millennials’ floral purchasing frequencies. A ‘frequent floral purchaser’ is someone who purchases floral products at least every other month. Conversely, an ‘infrequent floral purchaser’ is an individual who purchases floral products rarely or never. In general, frequent floral product purchasers used social media platforms more frequently than non-purchasers (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). **Frequent purchasers used Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google+ more than non-purchasers.** Conversely, non-purchasers tended to use Tumblr, Reddit, Yelp, LinkedIn, FourSquare, Flickr, and Houzz more than frequent purchasers. Overall, visual-based social media platforms were more preferred by flower purchasers. This highlights the importance of using high quality visuals in social media promotions.



**Figure 4.4. Social media use by Frequent Floral Purchasers**



**Figure 4.5. Social media use by Infrequent Floral Purchasers**

***Social Media Content***

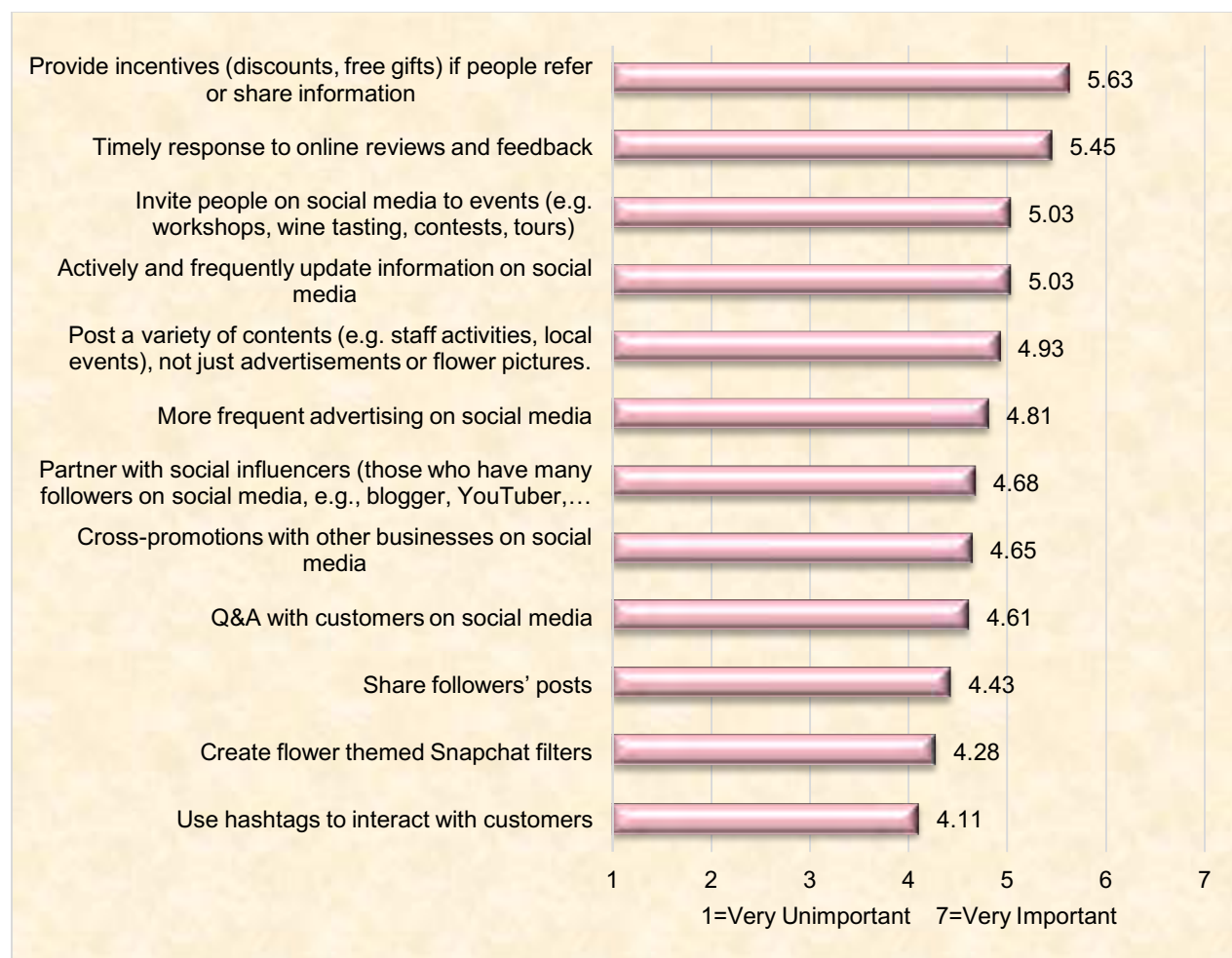
Research has shown that business profile pages are preferred to sponsored stories or advertisements because they allow consumers to ‘like’ (on Facebook) or ‘follow’ (Twitter) the business’ page to receive relevant information or incentives (e.g. coupons, news, updates, etc.). This gives the consumer more control over what s/he views.

Millennial respondents indicated the importance of various social media practices to initiate conversations and reach customers. **Respondents responded positively to all options indicating that company involvement and actions that facilitate conversations/interactions are effective when using social media platforms** (Figure 4.6). Respondents indicated that the best practice was to *provide incentives* for them to follow floral-related topics and the floral industry. Companies can provide their customers with free products, coupons, discounts, reward points, contests, prizes and so on for ‘checking in’ at their businesses, sharing their content, providing reviews, and referring friends.

Additionally, timely feedback is important since technology makes information available in real-time (Figure 4.6). Inviting consumers to events and having an active, up-to-date account is also important. Respondents indicated a desire for a variety of content beyond advertisements. For instance, information about events, contests, publicity stunts, unique/humorous ads, one-of-a-



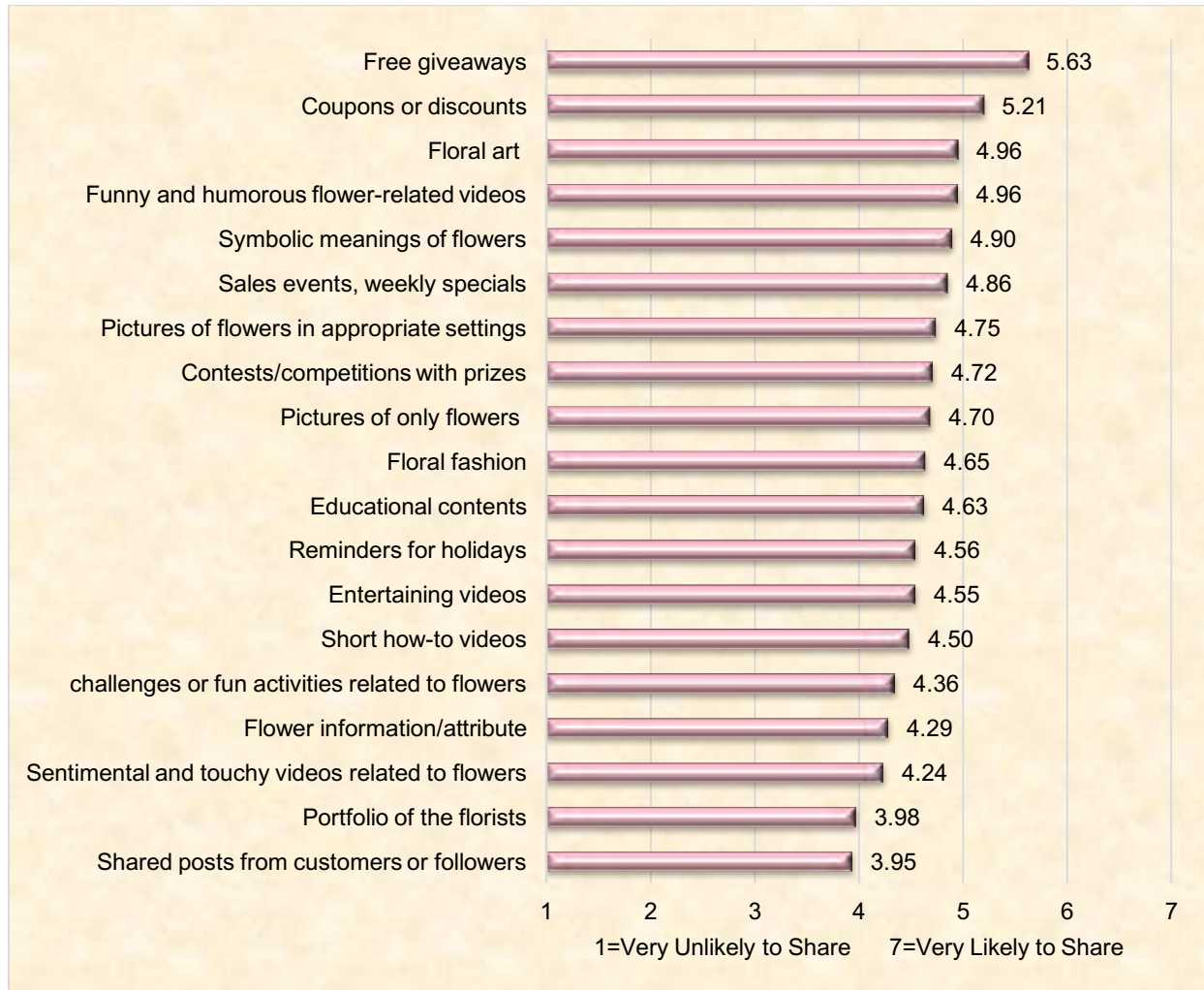
kind selling points, cause marketing, and so on. Companies also have an opportunity to partner with social influencers and other businesses to increase content importance/relevance. Social influencers could be online sensations, celebrities, fashion icons, or other brands/stores. Lastly, companies can host Q&A sessions and share their followers' posts. Relative to the other options, creating flower-themed Snapchat filters and hashtags were deemed less important.



**Figure 4.6. Important social media practices that the floral industry can use to reach millennial consumers**

Due to the dynamic, conversational interactions of social media, one means of leveraging the platform is to have followers share the company's posts/content. This keeps the content relevant for followers. However, in order to post relevant content, one needs to be mindful of what the consumer is interested in. To identify relevant content, millennials were asked what type of information they would be willing to share from the floral industry. Similar to important practices, **respondents were the most willing to share free giveaways and coupons/discounts** (Figure 4.7). They were also willing to share floral art, funny/humorous videos, symbolic meanings, and sales events/specials. Many of the content respondents were willing to share was

related to floral visuals, including pictures of flowers in appropriate settings, pictures of only flowers, and floral fashion. There was some interest in educational content, holiday reminders, entertaining and/or short how-to videos, challenges/fun activities, additional product information, and sentimental/touchy videos. Respondents were not interested in sharing florist portfolios or customer/follower posts. One means of creating relevant content can start within the company by recruiting millennial employees to generate social media buzz through post design and providing the employees with incentives (e.g. gift cards, bonuses, prizes, etc.) to share the company's social media posts.

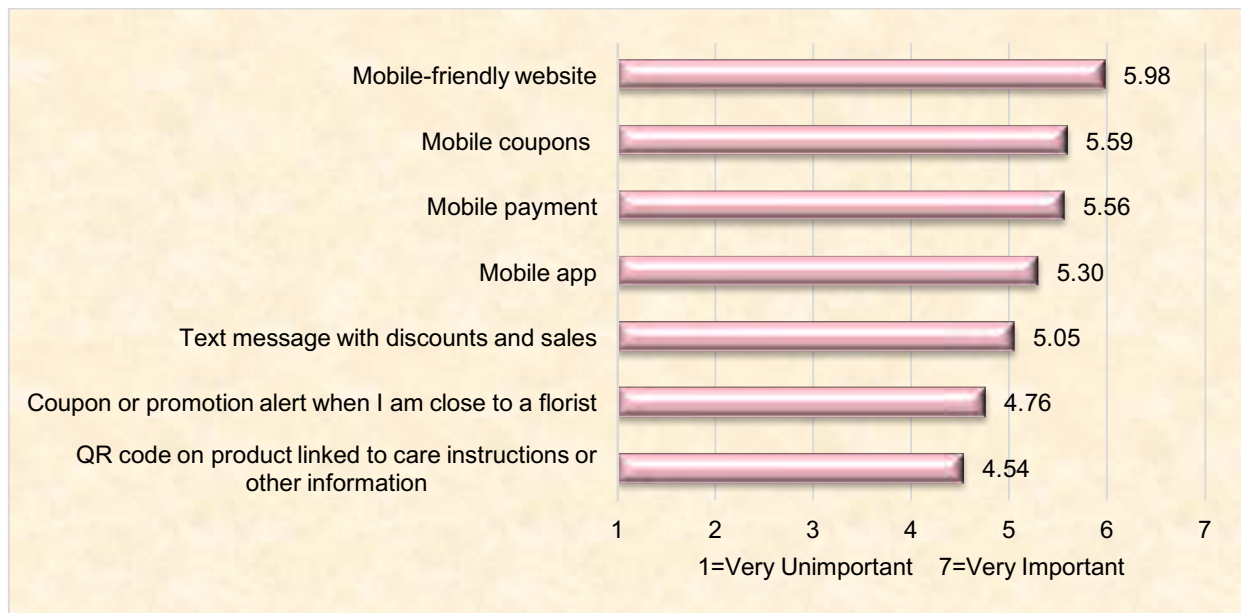


**Figure 4.7. Respondents' willingness to share floral social media content**

### Flowers and Mobile Devices

Building on millennial consumers' use of social media and technology, mobile device options are also important to millennial consumers. There are many opportunities for businesses to utilize smart phones and other mobile devices in their marketing strategies. Here, the most important mobile device features and options are presented.

Unsurprisingly, a **mobile-friendly website was the most important factor to millennial consumers** (Figure 4.8). A mobile-friendly website literally gives consumers access to the company’s information, location, products and services with a swipe of their finger. This increases ease of use, access, understanding, efficiency, and awareness. Mobile coupons, payment options, and apps were also important to consumers due to creating incentives and improving ease of use. The option of receiving text message coupons and discounts were also viewed favorably. Other important mobile options included coupons/promotional alerts when a consumer is near the florists and QR codes with care information. Regardless of the mobile device feature, it needs to be optimized for all mobile screen displays in order to increase consumer access and ease of use. If the customer is unable to easily access the website, s/he may choose to go to another business and/or have unfavorable perceptions of the company without a mobile device-friendly website.



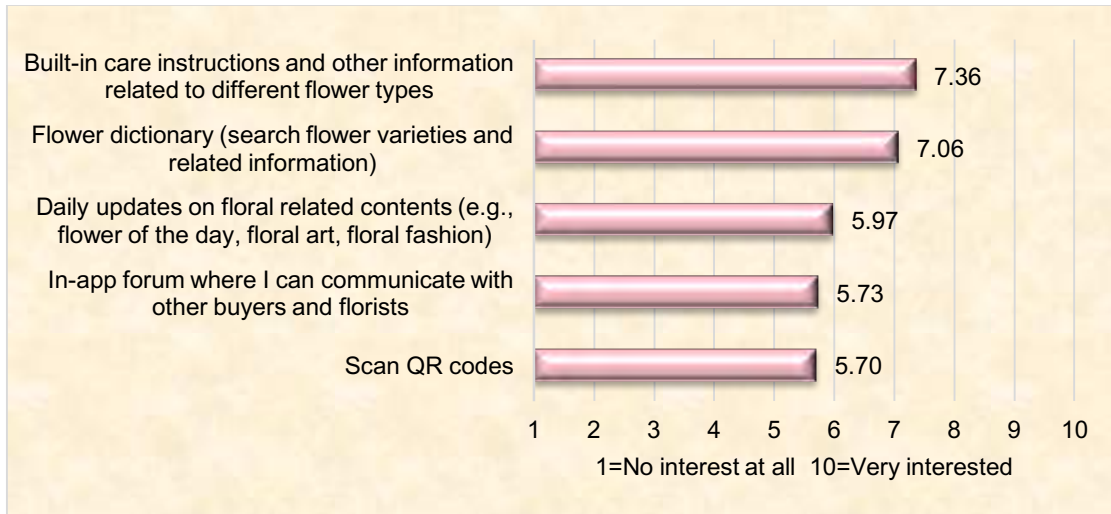
**Figure 4.8. Importance of mobile device options**

### Mobile Apps

Mobile apps allow businesses to tailor their promotional materials including available information, customer experience, and purchasing (pre-, post-, during) involvement. Each component has several elements that merge together to formulate the customer’s total experience. Their experiences in turn influence their company/brand perceptions, loyalty, and future purchasing behavior. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest in mobile apps with information, experience, post-purchase, during purchase, and pre-purchase features. Overall, respondents were most interested in features that improved the “during purchase” experience and timely delivery of the products. Specific results are discussed below.

### Mobile App Information

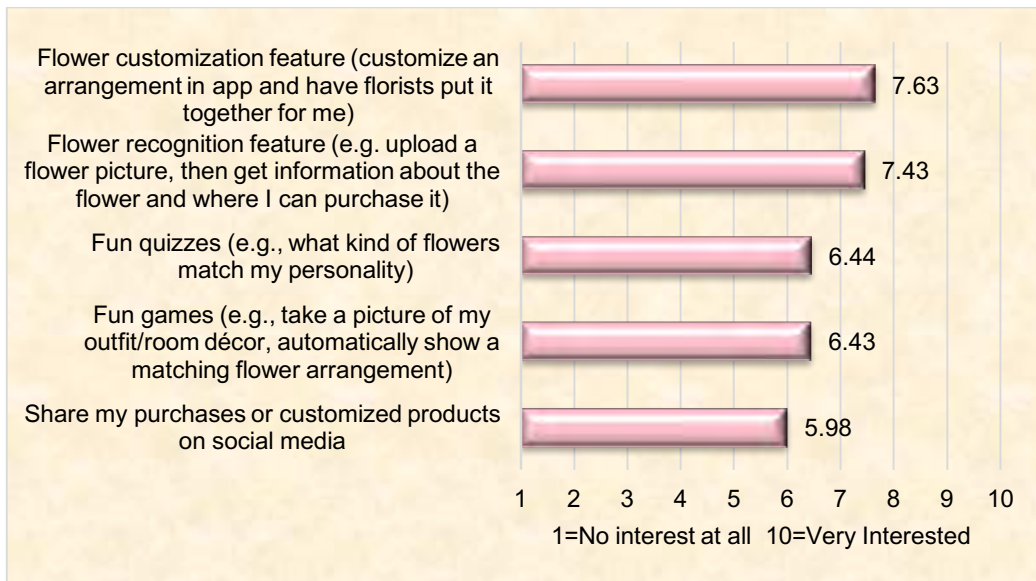
Respondents were most interested in information about the flowers themselves (Figure 4.9). They wanted **built-in care instructions, information related to flower types, or a flower dictionary option**. They were also interested in daily flower-related updates, communication forums (with buyers or florists), and QR codes.



**Figure 4.9. Floral-related mobile app features – Information**

### Mobile App Experience

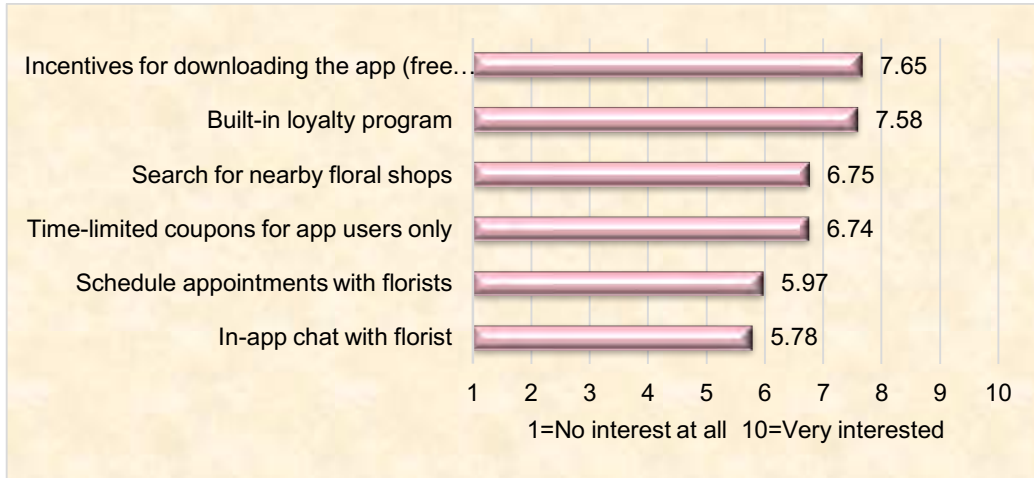
Regarding respondents' experiences, millennials were most interested in features that allowed **customization and the ability to identify a flower through a mobile picture** (Figure 4.10). Fun quizzes and games were also of interest. Additionally, they were interested in sharing their purchases via social media platforms.



**Figure 4.10. Floral-related mobile app features – Experience**

### *Mobile App Pre-purchase*

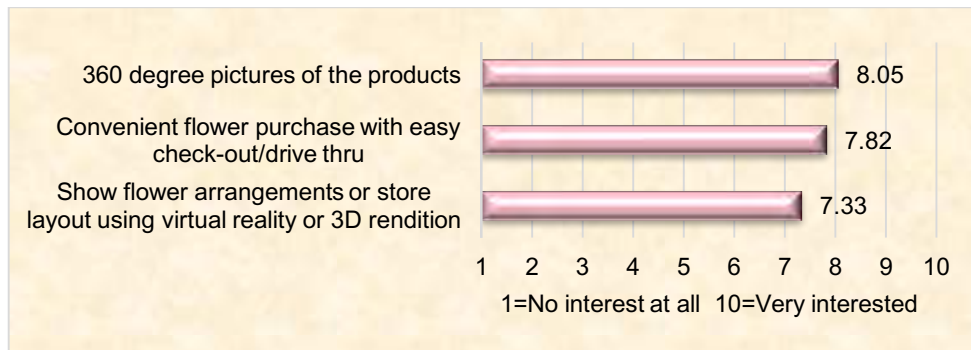
Respondents were very interested in **pre-purchase options that provided them financial or ease of purchase benefits** (Figure 4.11). Specifically, they were interested in incentives for downloading the app, built-in loyalty programs, a search for nearby floral shops, and time-sensitive coupons. They were also interested in a scheduling option or in-app chat with the floral retailer.



**Figure 4.11. Floral-related mobile app features - Pre-purchase**

### *Mobile App During Purchase*

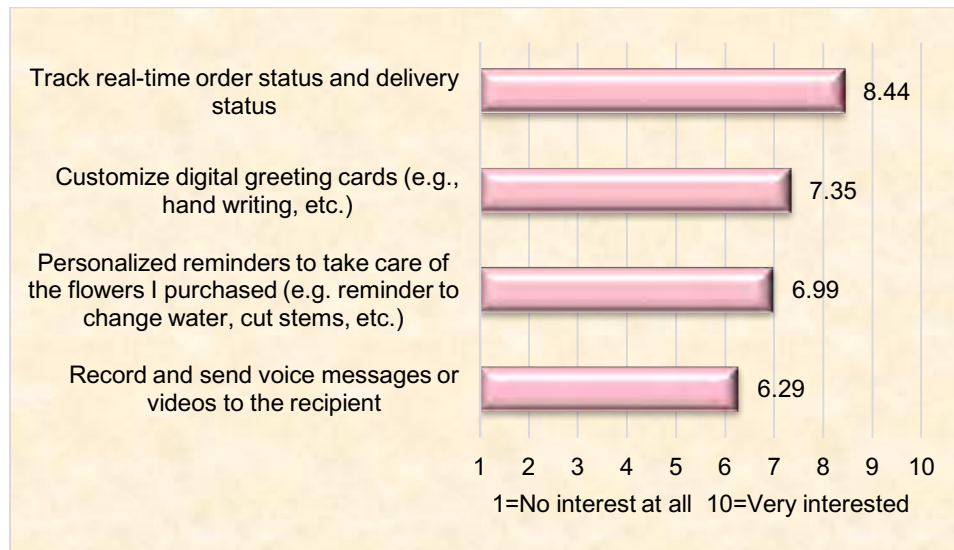
Respondents were very interested in an app that allowed **360° picture of the product** (Figure 4.12). Floral products' visual appeal is one of the main purchasing drivers. If a consumer is purchasing the product online or through a mobile app, s/he does not have the opportunity to visually inspect the product prior to delivery or pick-up. Therefore, having a 360° view option would greatly reduce his/her potential dissatisfaction if the product does not quite meet his/her needs. Additionally, if the product is ordered as a gift, it allows the gift giver to view the product prior to delivery to insure it aligns with expectations. Respondents were also interested in convenient check-out, drive thru options, and viewing the flower arrangements or store layout using virtual reality or 3D.



**Figure 4.12. Floral-related mobile app features – During Purchase**

### **Mobile App Post-purchase**

Respondents were the **most interested in having a real-time order/delivery tracking option** (Figure 4.13). Many shipping companies offer this service and customers have come to expect being able to track their shipments. This provides several benefits including knowing where their order is and (in the case of live flowers) being able to arrange pick-up if the product cannot stay outside due to the climate. Respondents were also interested in having customized digital greeting cards, personal reminders to take care of the flowers, and an option to record/send a voice message or video.

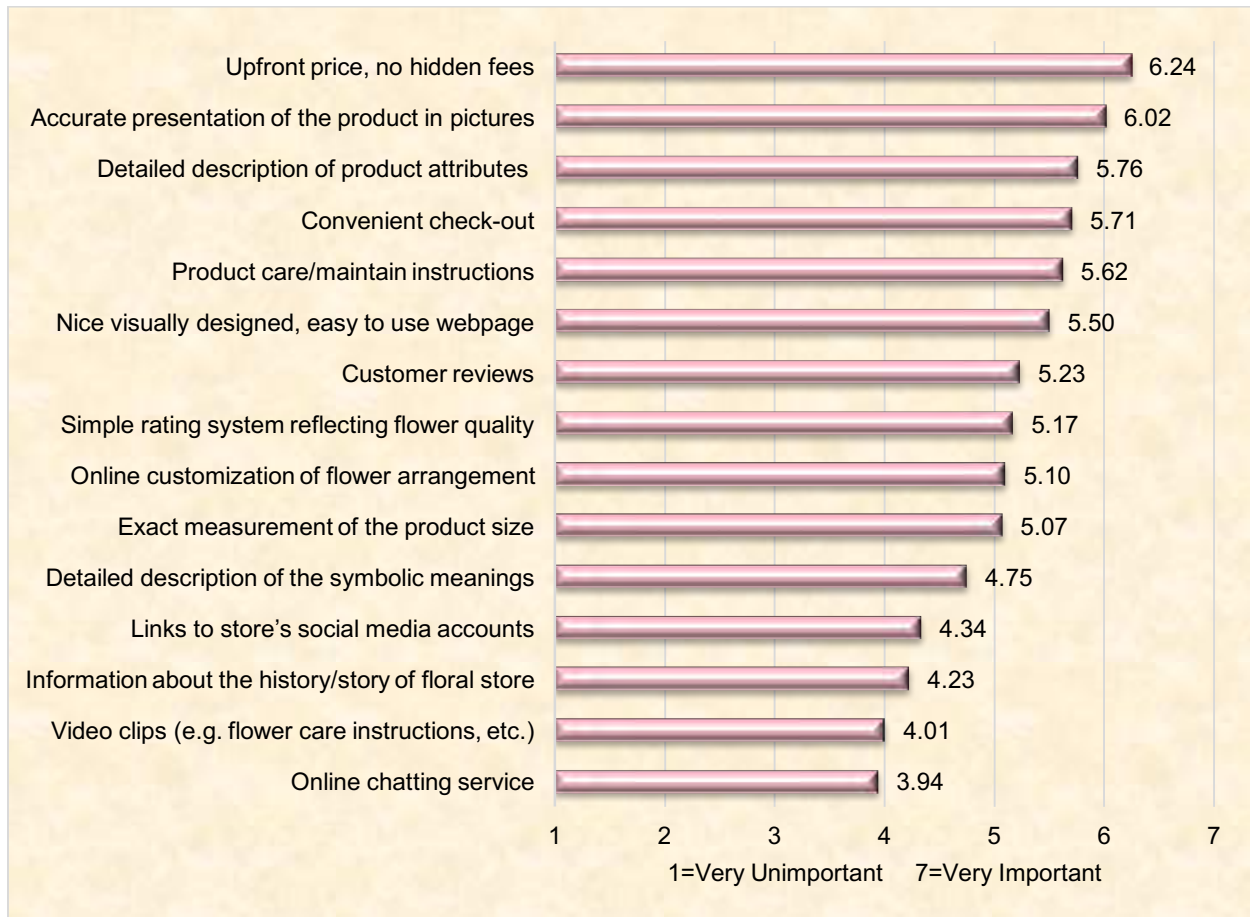


**Figure 4.13. Floral-related mobile app features – Post-purchase**

### **Other Important Online Features**

Since many millennial consumers are online and better connected than ever before (due to increased access through smart phones, iPads, tablets, etc.), it is imperative that industries provide relevant content online. This can be challenging to businesses because there are a wide variety of content options. Here, millennial consumers indicated the importance of online features when shopping for floral products. **The most important feature was upfront prices with no hidden fees** (Figure 4.14). Often millennials have strict budgets they need to stay within. They could become frustrated if they have selected and/or designed a product then realize it is outside their budget. **The second most important feature was accurate product pictures, followed by detailed description of product attributes, convenient check-out, and clear care instructions.** Other important online features included a visually appealing, easy to use website, customer reviews, simple flower quality rating system, and online arrangement customization options. They also valued having a scale to demonstrate the actual size of the product. This is important since they are purchasing the product without seeing it. Each of these features improves the customer’s ease of use and reassures the customer that the product they are purchasing is exactly what they want. Less important features included symbolic meanings of

flowers, social media links to the store, flower history information, video clips, and online chatting services.



**Figure 4.14. Important online features when purchasing floral products**

### Summary

Millennial consumers are socializing and shopping using new technologies. As a result, companies need to speak their language where they are socializing in order to effectively reach them. In this chapter, we found that Facebook was the most used platform indicating that a business targeting millennial consumers should have a Facebook page with relative content. Millennial consumers indicated that incentives (e.g. free products, discounts, reward points, contests, etc.) were a primary driver of them liking and sharing businesses' Facebook pages/information. They also appreciated timely feedback. All websites need to be multiple-mobile device friendly or risk being ignored. Millennial consumers indicated that a floral app that allows customization, provides incentives, offers product pictures, and allows for real-time delivery tracking would be well received. Lastly, any online floral options should be easy to use, accurate (in terms of pricing and product descriptions), and professionally designed. Overall, millennial consumers utilize technology in their everyday interactions and purchasing decisions;

in order to reach this customer segment, companies need to match their need for tech-friendly products and services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Social Media*

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Social media is engrained in millennial consumers' lives. Therefore, businesses need to have a social media presence if they want to reach millennials. Floral firms need to develop a social media page to allow consumers to follow/like the business. This gives them the choice to communicate with the firm on a personal level. The firm must be conscious of the amount of social media and mobile advertisements sent and balance consumer engagement and satisfaction without intruding upon their lives. Firms should use hashtags but not go overboard. The hashtags need to be relevant, unbranded, short, simple, and specific. Additionally, customer service should be available through Facebook and other social media platforms.

Millennials' actions are driven by incentives, incentives, and more incentives (e.g. free product, coupons, discounts, reward points, contests, prizes, etc.). Floral firms can cash in on this by allowing customers to 'check in' on social media at the business via their mobile devices and then rewarding them at the business with coupons, discounts, prizes and freebies. This encourages sharing of information through providing incentives. Customer-shared information is perceived as much more trustworthy than information directly from the company. Firms can also pair the ability to pay online with receiving incentives to increase customer loyalty.

Social media content is very important to keep millennial consumers interested and engaged. The firm's social media page must stay up-to-date with hip, cutting edge content that is relevant to the business/industry. The content needs to be interesting, short, and catchy to stick to the instant gratification consumer (for example, tell stories, be socially responsible, product sourcing, sponsorship, etc.). Social media content should be strong and relevant during and after marketing/promotional campaigns to link the effort to a sustained marketing push in the weeks and months after it is implemented. The messages should be consistent and supportive of the firm and products. When in doubt about the content, firms can ask millennial employees for their opinions.

Other people should be involved in generating interest in the firm's social media page. For instance, a firm can leverage its social media presence by involving millennial employees to foster brand loyalty. Loyal





customers, friends, family and employees are good people to involve in campaigns. Millennial employees can spread content by connecting with their peers and initiating conversations, which helps make it personal. Firms can incentivize employees to share the company information with cards, gifts, bonuses, etc. Firms can also identify key social media influencers in the area and send them a floral gift for their birthday so they can share their positive experience with their followers.

Firms should actively manage their online presence. For instance, the online manager can observe and insert company information into conversations. Regarding online conversations and tone, a firm should stay up-to-date on social media language but keep the conversation professional. Ideally, the firm can create one seamless conversation with each customer to increase the human factor. Increased involvement allows a firm to respond to customer concerns and/or compliments while pulling insights from each exchange to discover what customers are interested in and want to see in promotions, the store, and online. Essentially, firms should speak ‘with’, not ‘to’ or ‘at’ customers. Floral firms should be aware of what the customer watches, follows and attends in order to think more like them and market to them. Then, floral firms can capitalize on the popularity of different topics by having related posts.

Lastly, floral firms can use social interaction to promote the firm. For instance, floral firms can use ‘refer a friend’ promotions, events, publicity stunts, unique/humorous ads, one-of-a-kind selling points, etc. Contests are also fun ways of engaging consumers. For example, a firm can have a contest challenging their followers/customers to develop their own product and sponsor competitions where they enter their floral photos/designs, etc. Customers can also be involved with social media marketing. Firms can ask shoppers to share photos of their purchases and how they use them with rewards for the “best” use(s). Posting can be encouraged through use of a contest-wide niche hashtag with prizes for the most likes or comments. Winners can be spotlighted on the firm’s social media pages or rewarded with loyalty points. The firm can maintain a weekly or monthly roundup of the best images/uses of the customer products. This encourages customers to mention the firm in their own posts. Firms can also feature do-it-yourself projects and floral designs/décor to provide more interaction options. Another way of engaging customers on social media is by allowing them to share their own videos/experiences. There is also the opportunity to use Snapchat story ads to personalize advertisements and mobile experiences for millennials.

## *Mobile Devices / Apps*

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Many millennials have smart phones and other devices. Mobile apps are a great way to improve consumers' convenience and shopping experience. First, the firm must optimize their website for mobile screen display, SMS text messaging, and mobile browser access. This improves ease of use and decreases user frustration. Also, floral firms must make sure the mobile app is suitable across multiple devices. Floral firms can develop an interactive app that allows consumers to set preferences and have a two-way conversation with the business. The app can be used to introduce customers to the company and its values.



Apps are very adaptable and can be used to allow customization and online ordering. There is an opportunity to develop an arrangement/bouquet design toolkit available for customers and/or roll out a customized flower bouquet design mobile app. Floral firms should provide a picture of the real product (not the model product) customers order to give them instant gratification and the ability to inspect their purchase. Similarly, firms should consider using an online store which shows aisles and 3-D views of the actual products which the customer can purchase online without entering the store. Even if an online store is not an option, firms should offer mobile check out to streamline the purchase process. Many Millennials are using mobile check outs or their phones as credit cards. This gives them checkout and payment options all at the swipe of a finger.

Mobile marketing efforts can be used by floral firms to emphasize convenience and affordability through carefully tailored, personalized communications. For instance, millennials can receive deals/promotions/vouchers that are mobile friendly and easy to use. The vouchers can be easily redeemed in-store by tapping/activating them. QR codes can be used creatively and offer incentives to encourage use among customers. Lastly, firms can provide a daily tip or product offering to remind customers about the store and product options.

Location-based promotions are another great way to encourage purchases, especially impulse purchases. If the customer buys the product on impulse, it gives the firm the opportunity to engage him/her and give him/her a positive experience. This may lead to repeat visits and purchases. An example of a location-based promotion includes sending consumers information about products when they are in close proximity to the store or near products in the store. Firms could also develop a mobile alert program to give customers special offers/information on the go. This allows for targeting audiences based on location, interests, traffic, demographics, etc. Beacon technology can be used to send consumers alerts and product information when customers are passing by products within a store.

An important component of mobile apps is providing customers with relevant content. Floral firms should explore the existing companies that use mobile phone GPS to track customers and offer tailored content (e.g. GPSshopper, etc.). This will give them insights on what millennials value, how they want to learn about information/promotions, and how to best reach them. Overall, the mobile app should be informative, have relevant games, instructions, etc. that can be viewed on a mobile device or printed. Another good practice is to provide mobile coupons, shopping maps, and assistance. Firms can use their app to gather information about/remember customers' preferences, product choices, and important dates. This streamlines the process for the customer and can be used to improve their shopping experience. Firms should allow customers to sign up for individual-specific product offerings/information. The information that is relevant for one person, may be irrelevant to another. To complement the app, a firm should consider creating a digital loyalty program which offers incentives and rewards to customers that are passing close to the business.

### ***Additional Online Features***

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Since millennials are very tech-savvy, it is important for a floral firm to develop a professional, easy to use website that is visually appealing, provides customer reviews, and rates the flower quality. The website should give customers detailed care/maintenance instructions that can be e-mailed, text messaged, printed, or saved by the consumer. Additionally, millennial customers want detailed, accurate product descriptions to insure the consumer knows exactly what s/he is purchasing.

Floral firms should use visuals to communicate with the customers. The visuals need to be high quality, finished pictures/videos of the products with size dimensions that show exactly what the consumer is purchasing. Content needs to be visually engaging. Firms can encourage year-round purchases by posting visually appealing photos of party spreads, occasions, décor, etc. that include floral products from the firm. Additionally, videos can be used to showcase the various available services and events/activities happening at the firm. The video should be high quality and short, but incorporate key messages, authenticity and humor.

Millennials value upfront pricing. Floral firms can provide pricing information as the consumer makes his/her choices. For instance, a price calculator in the corner of the ordering website is a great way to show what the product will cost with taxes and delivery included. Firms could also consider price-match guarantees since consumers can easily search prices online. Lastly, floral firms can streamline the checkout process so the consumer can easily purchase their products using any online device.

Firms can also leverage their involvement with social causes and customization options to improve floral products' value to the customer. For instance, firms can post information about social causes that the business supports on the company website. Then, to highlight customization options, the website should include cool digital elements online and in-store to

show shoppers where the floral products are coming from and help them experience the products. There should also be an option for consumers to customize their online orders.

Lastly, floral firms can use online measures to develop future marketing strategies. For instance, they can develop key performance indicators (e.g., Facebook likes/shares, retweets, coupons used from different media sources, website visits, etc.) so the marketing team can measure the return on investment and improve/direct future initiatives.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Detailed Suggestions for Marketing to Attract Millennials**

Millennials are a tech-savvy, large consumer segment with distinct preferences that vary from previous generations. Overall, they had positive experiences with and attitudes toward floral products; however, they had many suggestions on ways to reach consumers in their age group. This appendix lists specific marketing suggestions aimed at attracting millennial consumers.

### ***Attitudes & Perceptions***

- Use cultural trends (e.g. personal health, fitness, food, local, etc.) to appeal to millennial consumers and position floral products as trendy.
- Partner with other popular, trendy businesses.
- Promote personal health/psychological benefits associated with floral products to reinforce and remind millennials about floral health benefits.
  - Emphasize that floral products brighten up/refresh rooms/mindsets, improve air quality, and reduce stress.
- Make floral products more relevant to men by offering features that are of interest (such as edible flowers/plants, masculine décor/accessories, etc.)
- Use promotions that are more likely to be seen/noticed by millennials, including in-store signage, online/social media posts, TV commercials, etc.
- Use advertisements to emphasize that millennials view floral products favorably (i.e. thoughtful, special, personal, memorable, relevant and sharable gifts).
- Emphasize that floral products are experience-oriented by using images and examples of floral products in use.
- Market floral products year-round to overcome traditional/seasonal perceptions and motivate everyday purchases.
- Promote that flowers cheer people up regardless of age, lifestyle and occasion.
- Allow and encourage millennials to customize their purchases by providing example ideas. Emphasize customization options in displays, promotions, social media posts, etc.
- Make floral shopping an event to encourage repeat visits.

### ***Relevance & Engagement***

- Provide millennials incentives to share product photos, ‘like’ and ‘check in’ to the business on social media.
- Develop a social media page with relevant content and incentives to encourage customer visits and shares.
- Use social media and other promotions (e.g. contests, stories, etc.) to engage customers prior to them visiting the store.
- Use the store’s story/history to engage customers. Inform customers about the story behind the company. Keep the story short, clear and consistent with other promotions, posts, brand, and product offerings.

- Reinforce the relevance of floral products by promoting them where millennials are hanging out.
- Offer diverse products that align with millennials' interests (e.g. edible flowers with recipe cards and centerpiece ideas, etc.)
- Provide an upbeat, fun store atmosphere to encourage lingering and repeat visits.
  - Offer hip beverages and café style treats.
  - Host seasonal activities.
  - Schedule design classes.
  - Have a designated casual/relaxing space.
- Use promotions and photos (online, in-store, in promotions, etc.) to demonstrate how floral products fit into modern lifestyles (e.g. décor, accent pieces, gifts, etc.)
  - Encourage millennials to share store/brand/product photos by having a fun, inviting photo area.
- Explore ways of improving convenience.
  - Partner with stores that are frequently visited by millennials.
  - Lease space in grocery/mass merchandiser stores.
  - Streamline the check-out process both in-store and online.
  - Provide diverse delivery times and price points to accommodate different schedules and needs.
  - Tailor hours of operation to align with when millennials are not working.
- Be present at important events to show commitment to the local community.

### ***Customization & Personalization***

- Use advertisements to inform and educate consumers about product customization options.
- Develop a flower bar which provides customers with add-ons, packaging options, etc. that customers can use to customize their purchases.
- Encourage customers to experiment and be adventurous by offering a design-your own packaging option with scrapbook/etc. items.
- Have pre-saved, easy to print packaging ideas available.
- Allow customers to bring in items (e.g. vase, photo, etc.) to add a personal touch.
- Use displays to effectively showcase unique, customized arrangements.
- Provide examples with a variety of price points to encourage all customers to customize their purchases.
- Provide millennials the opportunity to suggest color combinations (e.g. in-store design contests, online feedback, etc.). Follow up with online content and in-store examples.
- Selectively offer local add-ons (packaging, crafts, food, fillers, wine, etc.)
- Highlight how delivery options fit into a variety of schedules and budgets.
- Offer real-time tracking of floral deliveries. Make the tracking compatible with a variety of devices (e.g. phone, tablet, etc.)
- Use previous purchase information to offer personalized promotions, discounts, and products.

- Offer unique price promotions (e.g., free product drawings, customers whose first name is “Emma” get a free rose, etc.)

### ***Retail Outlet Selection***

- Improve store visit convenience by adjusting hours of operation, location, product availability, delivery options, ordering options, etc.
- Consider leasing/partnering with businesses that millennials frequent.
- Consider having a portable floral stand to improve convenience by being located in high foot traffic areas.
- Develop and maintain a professional website with vivid pictures.

### ***Price & Other Purchasing Barriers***

- Provide artistically designed arrangements at a variety of price points to appeal to budget conscious individuals.
- Use educational advertisements to inform customers about value-added properties of floral products (e.g. psychological benefits, add-ons, customization options, specialness of products, etc.)
- Provide price incentives (coupons, discounts, loyalty programs, etc.)
- Post/promote incentives where millennials will notice them (e.g. online, social media, etc.)
- Reward millennials for promoting the company (e.g. give them coupons, discounts if they share the company’s information on social media).
- Use a loyalty program to reward repeat customers.
- Target millennials by designing a discount program for young professionals and/or students.
- Counter longevity-related barriers by highlighting superior product quality and care to increase longevity.
- Promote limited longevity as a benefit (e.g. provides nature indoors, refreshes home accents more frequently, increased ‘specialness’, etc.)
- Use advertisements to remind millennials about floral products in areas they frequently visit (e.g. coffee shops, malls, etc.)
- Create advertisements, photos and events to emphasize how purchasing and/or using floral products can be a fun experience.

### ***Barriers to Purchasing at Florists***

- Develop a professional, visually appealing online presence with examples, location information, references, etc.

- The website must be compatible across different devices (mobile phone, tablet, laptop, etc.)
- Improve store convenience (i.e. hours of operation, location close to popular shopping areas, online ordering and in-store pick-up, affordable delivery, easy return/replacement policies).
- Appeal to budget conscious millennials through in-store deals, affordable delivery, Groupon/LivingSocial promotions, warranties, and online incentives.
- Keep staff up-to-date on the latest offerings and care requirements. Train staff to be open, friendly and approachable.
- Offer free design and design advice ('free consultation' advertisements) regardless of budget or project size. Emphasize this service in advertisements and encourage millennials to interact with the designer.
- Use social media/website photos to highlight new varieties/color combinations.
- Keep the store atmosphere inviting and friendly to encourage visiting and lingering.
- Consider offering in-store add-ons such as beverages, Wi-Fi, etc.

### *Attributes & Sustainability*

- Improve millennials' experience by improving the ease of care for floral products.
- Provide millennials with clear, concise care instructions for optimal growth and longevity.
- Include complimentary nutrient/flower food packets with purchase with clear instructions on how to use the flower food.
- Explore an auto-feeding device with automatic, slow-release nutrients.
- Develop a complimentary 'beginners flower pack' that provides customers with care information and everything pre-prepared.
- Use technology to remind and educate customers about how to care for their purchases.
  - Mobile app reminders.
  - Step-by-step care videos.
  - Automatic follow-up service to check on product status or ask for feedback.
  - In-store or packaging QR codes linked to online care instructions.
- Always provide the highest quality products to enhance longevity.
- Educate millennials about how long flowers last so they know what to expect and thus decrease their possible post-purchase disappointment.
- Show millennials how to select the best quality product.
- Provide flower products with a variety of value-added features.
  - Have a fragrant flower section or list for millennials to choose from.
  - Have a variety of colors/combinations.
  - Offer unique, customized designs.
  - Provide interesting product information (origin, variety, etc.)
  - Offer biodegradable/recyclable packaging options.
- Source products from sustainable companies and promote what makes the product sustainable using in-store, online, and mass promotions.



- Interweave sustainability into all aspects of the business to emphasize your values.
- Promote local ties and how the company supports other people/businesses in the community.
- Appeal to millennial parents by having a ‘kids section’ where sensory, low chemical, non-toxic floral products are available for kids to interact with.

### *Advertisements*

- Provide timely, relevant information about the products and services and emphasize quality.
- Be willing to participate in self-mockery in advertisements.
- Develop advertisements that are unique, in-depth, and/or incorporate celebrities.
- Keep advertisement content simple and transparent.
- Diversify advertisements so that they are not all financially driven. For instance, advertise events, giveaways, etc.
- Use advertisements to communicate the innovative product attributes and social causes the company supports.
- Use interactive images online to allow customers to browse ads, promotions and products.
- Use advertisements to reposition flowers as ‘cool’ and ‘trendy’.
  - Partner with the fashion industry or other trendy industries to promote flowers as décor, fashion statements, etc.
  - Scout other industries for upcoming trends, product offerings, advertisements, and designs.
- Offer containers/packages that add to the customer’s lifestyle and reflect his/her personality.
- Offer environmentally-friendly packaging.
- Promote how the product makes millennials better (e.g. personal health benefits).
- Encourage impulse purchases by having flowers conveniently located.
- Use ads to create pre-store buzz through trials, competitions, cause/social marketing, freebies, giveaways, and services/products.
- Use location-based advertising to keep millennials engaged.
  - Inform millennials about nearby events.
  - Utilize schools, colleges, etc. by advertising in welcome packets.
  - Provide free trials and samples to encourage repeat purchases and allow new customers to try the products with little risk.
- Connect with customers using shared values (such as cause marketing). Talk about the actions the company is taking and how the products/series relate to those values.

### ***Promotions***

- Provide incentives that align with the business goals and target market (i.e. price-based promotions, etc.)
- Consider price-based promotions to encourage first time purchasers (i.e. discounts, in-store coupons, 'buy 2, get 1,' online coupons, loyalty programs).
- Offer personalized discounts based on previous purchases.
- Consider promotions that are not price-based (e.g. free upgrade, gifts, etc.)
- Offer and promote value added features (personalized products, etc.)
- Provide on time, convenient delivery. Promote delivery options to customers.
- Devise quality and/or longevity warranties to signal product quality and business values.
- Use loyalty programs to encourage repeat purchases and visits.
- Use social media platforms to engage and inform customers about the company and its values.
- Keep promotions authentic, creative, and visually appealing.
- Use high quality, attractive photos in every promotion.
- Show customers interacting with floral products to demonstrate potential uses as well as emotional benefits (making people happy).
- Monitor promotional effectiveness to identify future promotions and the foot traffic they generate.

### ***Loyalty Programs***

- Use a loyalty program to increase sales through providing rewards or incentives (e.g. free product, discounts, member-only sales, etc.)
- Make the program easy to use by linking coupons directly to member accounts and automatically applying them.
- Use email or phone numbers as account numbers rather than cards or usernames/passwords.
- Reward participants for being members (e.g. free birthday gift, etc.)
- Use an online/app reward system to improve ease of 'cashing in' points.
- Consider using the loyalty program to encourage family participation.
  - Develop a 'kids club' to involve children and offer educational materials.
  - Use interactive plants to attract kids (e.g. ticklish fern, etc.)
- Make the rewards/points indefinite (e.g. no expiration date).
- Partner with other businesses to allow for flexible rewards or discounts.
- Develop product codes that are available on the products. Consumers can then enter them online (like an online rewards club) and receive points/rewards.
- Offer personalized rewards and recommendations based on consumer purchasing history/profile information.
- Use geo-location to inform customers about the store, location, sales, and events.

- Use loyalty program information (i.e. interest in products, promotions, etc.) to direct future marketing efforts.

### ***Subscription Services***

- Make subscribing and canceling the subscription easy.
- Allow a free trial period.
- Provide incentives (discounts, coupons, etc.) for joining the subscription service.
- Allow flexible delivery dates, product options, and pairings (e.g. wine, candles, toys, etc.) to accommodate different tastes.
- Develop several levels of subscription services at different price points to encourage millennials to use.

### ***Social Media***

- Develop and maintain a social media presence to engage millennial consumers.
- Be conscious of the amount of social media posts to balance engagement without intruding upon customers' personal accounts.
- Use hashtags but do not go overboard. Keep hashtags relevant, unbranded, short, simple and specific.
- Highlight customer service through social media.
- Provide millennials incentives (e.g. free product, coupons, discounts, reward points, contests, prizes, etc.) for 'checking in', sharing, or tagging the business in their social media conversations.
- Pair online paying with receiving incentives (i.e. reward/loyalty points, coupons for next purchase, free delivery, etc.) to motivate customers to use the online paying option.
- Provide up-to-date, hip content that is relevant to the business and millennial consumer.
- Content needs to be short, interesting and catchy (e.g. a story, social responsibility, product sourcing, etc.)
- Use social media posts to promote marketing/promotional campaigns in different media.
- Keep messages consistent with the company and the company's values.
- Consult millennial employees for relevant content ideas.
- Ask millennial employees to spread content with peers and initiate conversations.
- Provide employees incentives (e.g. gift cards, gifts, bonuses, etc.) for talking about the company.
- Identify social influencers in the area and send them a floral gift for their birthday to generate buzz.
- Be active in managing your online presence.
- Observe and insert company information into conversations at appropriate situations.

- Stay up-to-date on social media while keeping your voice professional.
  - Create one seamless conversation with each customer.
  - Respond to customer concerns and compliments.
  - Keep track of what customers are interested in and want to see in the store.
  - Be aware of what is popular in other industries and incorporate that information into online posts and in-store product offerings.
- Use social interaction to promote your company.
  - Use “refer a friend, get something for free” promotions, events, publicity stunts, unique/humorous ads, one-of-a-kind selling points, contests, etc.
- Involve customers with social media marketing by asking shoppers to share photos of the purchases and how they use them.
  - Encourage participation by rewarding the ‘best’ ideas at regular intervals (weekly, monthly, etc.)
  - Use a contest-specific hashtag with prizes for the most likes or comments.
  - Spotlight winners on your social media pages.
- Feature do-it-yourself projects and designs/décor ideas.
- Allow customers to share their own videos/experiences.
- Use Snapchat story ads to personalize ads and mobile experiences.

### ***Mobile Devices / Apps***

- Optimize your website to be mobile screen, SMS text messaging, and mobile browser access compatible.
- Make sure the app is usable across multiple devices.
- Develop an interactive app allowing customers to set preferences and have two-way conversations with the business.
- Use the app to allow online customization and ordering.
- Provide pictures of the real products.
- Consider using an online store with 3-D views of the products.
- Offer mobile check out.
- Use mobile marketing to emphasize convenience and affordability.
  - Send mobile friendly deals, promotions and vouchers.
  - Provide a daily tip or product offering to keep the store relevant for customers.
- Use location-based promotions by sending customers reminders or incentives if they are near the store.
  - Have a mobile alert system to send special offers on the go.
- Explore how other companies use mobile marketing to reach their customers and adopt techniques that align with the company and customers.
- Keep the mobile app informative and relevant.
- Information provided via the mobile app should be able to be viewed on the device and/or printed.
- Provide mobile coupons, shopping maps, and customer assistance (i.e. product selection/design, care instructions, longevity expectations, etc.).

- Use the app to gather customer information to remember their preferences, product choices and important dates.
- Allow customers to sign up for individual-specific offerings/information.
- Consider creating a digital loyalty program to provide incentives and rewards.

### ***Other Online Features***

- Develop a professional, easy to use website with visual appeal, customer reviews, and flower quality ratings.
- Use the website to provide customers additional information.
  - Detailed care/maintenance instructions.
  - Detailed, accurate product descriptions.
- Offer care/maintenance instructions in multiple formats (i.e. e-mail, text, print, etc.)
- Use high quality, professional visuals (pictures and videos) with size dimensions.
- Encourage year-round purchases with photos of party spreads, occasions, décor, etc.
- Use videos to showcase available services and in-store events.
- Videos need to be high quality, short, and authentic while incorporating key messages and humor.
- Offer upfront pricing.
  - Use a price calculator showing an ongoing amount based on what is selected.
  - Include delivery and taxes.
  - Consider a price-match guarantee.
- Streamline the checkout process so customers can purchase products using a mobile device.
- Post information about social causes.
- Allow online customization.
- Consider developing online performance measures (e.g. social media likes/shares/retweets, coupons used, etc.) to improve future initiatives.

2016

# Marketing Tactics to Increase Millennial Floral Purchases



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