

Gifttrap

In *full* **BLOOM**

Online marketing secrets
from the founder of Edible Blooms



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Baker-Jamieson on the launch of Edible Blooms: "I had sales from the moment we opened and made \$1,000 in the first week of business, so online marketing has been good to me from the beginning."

WHY: Your website needs to be regularly updated.

HOW: To increase your conversion rate.

ADVICE: The importance of segmenting your customer base.

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In full BLOOM

When Edible Blooms founder Kelly Baker-Jamieson first came up with the idea to launch a website that sold delicious chocolate and fruit bouquets online, she had no idea how quickly her business would grow. Here, the multi-award winning entrepreneur shares the secrets to her sweet online success.

For Kelly Baker-Jamieson, founder of The Edible Blooms Group, business is blooming. In less than 10 years, Baker-Jamieson has launched three separate brands, offering a range of complementing products that meet her customers' every gifting need.

Established in 2005, Edible Blooms reinvented the concept of sending flowers, instead delivering chocolate bouquets, fruit blooms and gift hampers to loved ones' doors. Two years ago, Green Thumb Gifts was launched, giving customers the option of sending a longer-lasting memento in the form of trees, herbs and potted flowers. And just launched in February, The Flower Studio is Baker-Jamieson's latest venture. Partnered with an Adelaide florist, The Flower Studio supplies luxury floral arrangements to the wider Adelaide area, which can be purchased in-store or online.

Million-dollar lady

Despite being a self-confessed technophobe, Baker-Jamieson says online marketing has been the key to her success. Starting small, Edible Blooms was launched with an email campaign sent out to the 50 people Baker-Jamieson knew in her new home of Brisbane. The email was simple and to the point, explaining what Edible Blooms was, that it was opening the next day and everything was half price.

"I had sales from the moment we opened and made \$1000 in the first week of business, so online marketing has been good to me from the beginning," she recalls.

Baker-Jamieson didn't know just how good it would be – a year later, sales reached one million dollars and today, Edible Blooms averages around 1,000 deliveries per day. Since then, Baker-Jamieson has won an impressive slew of awards and accolades, including Telstra Business Woman of the Year (SA), Marie Claire Young Business Woman of the Year (SA) and in 2012, she was a finalist in the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year awards. →

Photography: Studio Commercial; Art direction and styling: Nina Christian; Hair and make-up: Lisa Toyer; Dress and jewellery: Vintage Allsorts; Shoes: Shoes of Prey; Location: Era Gallery; Chippendale; Chocolate and fruit blooms, Edible Blooms; Herb pots, Green Thumb Gifts

Creating a website for the long haul

According to Baker-Jamieson, each of her brands' websites reflects the goals, values and culture of her company, which is all about "inspiring happiness".

At The Edible Blooms Group, the rule of thumb is websites are overhauled every 18 months to two years to achieve a fresh look, change the navigation and add new features. In between this, small changes are made to the website's function and design, with banners updated weekly and new products loaded daily.

"You can't just load up your website and think 'I'm done'. It has to be an ongoing process of adding content and products, making sure you always stay relevant," Baker-Jamieson offers.

While it's important to have a visually appealing website, Baker-Jamieson learnt the hard way, through a complete server crash, to keep the design simple and images small but clear.

"Quick load times are really important, otherwise customers will get sick of [your site] and won't return," she warns.

One year ago, Edible Blooms moved to a new web platform that made the site quicker and easier to use. The result was a 40 per cent increase in web conversion and a 10 per cent increase in shopping cart size. At the same time, unique features were added, such as a bio and photo of the staff member who designed each product. To combat cart abandonment, the gift card function was relocated to the product page, allowing customers to write their message while looking at their chosen product.

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"We believe it gives an emotional engagement with the product, which means less cart abandonment," Baker-Jamieson explains.

The latest addition, which features front and centre on the Green Thumb Gifts website, is the personal gift shopper service. Customers enter who they are buying for, how much they would like to spend and the occasion. The service then selects the most appropriate gift from all of the Edible Blooms Group's brands.

"This new service is great for anyone in a hurry who thinks, 'I need it now, but I still want my gift to be thoughtful and different'," says Baker-Jamieson.

To satisfy the needs of a nation on the move, Baker-Jamieson says retailers need to be aware that when designing a website, being mobile compatible is no longer optional. Each of her websites has been custom designed for mobiles, with the full website available on tablet devices. The key to designing a mobile or tablet compatible website is to keep it simple.

"People shopping on iPhones or tablets want the buying experience to be quick, with easy navigation and checkout," she says.

While it may seem like an additional commitment to some small business owners, Baker-Jamieson says the average shopping cart size of customers on tablets is actually higher than on their desktop computers.

Targeting the right customers

Consumers who sign up to receive a brand's newsletters want to be the first to hear about new products, special deals, and receive VIP treatment. While you can generalise about the motivations for joining a mailing list, the secret to engaging with your database is to send out targeted communications.

Edible Blooms sends out two main newsletters. One is sent to the entire database, while the other offers behind-the-scenes updates to customers who are shown to access the primary newsletter more frequently. →



Spreading happiness around. Some of the beautiful offerings from Baker-Jamieson's businesses, Edible Blooms and Green Thumb Gifts.



According to Baker-Jamieson, her company's core values are to be 'fun, fresh and authentic'.

Over the years, Baker-Jamieson has invested considerable time and effort into developing and segmenting Edible Blooms' 80,000 strong database, allowing the company to target their customers with relevant offers.

"If you send a female-only offer to your entire database, you are automatically alienating the male proportion of your customers," she says.

Trigger campaigns have proved hugely successful for Edible Blooms. If a customer hasn't purchased a product in three months, an email promoting their favoured products and a gift certificate is automatically sent to them. Baker-Jamieson believes these email campaigns offer the best return on investment for Edible Blooms, as they are targeted around a customer's personal interaction with their products.

"It's about finding those sweet spots where you can entice customers back for more frequency of purchase, or give them a reason to come back," she advises.

Connecting with customers

In no other space are The Edible Blooms Groups' company values, 'fun, fresh and authentic', more relevant than on social media. The company has a strong presence on Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and GooglePlus.

However, Baker-Jamieson wasn't always convinced of the relevance of social media. While attending a conference two years ago, she described social media as "a hygiene activity", something that wasn't necessarily beneficial for small businesses.

Today, she proudly admits that after the website, Facebook is the strongest marketing tool for Green Thumb Gifts. While social media doesn't necessarily translate to sales, it does create awareness and a buzz around a brand.

"People want you to be real and honest, they want to connect with the business and they want to have a great customer experience," Baker-Jamieson says.

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Despite the fact that Edible Blooms has 14,000 Facebook followers, Baker-Jamieson says, "It's not just about 'likes', but how many people are talking about you that's important, and you need to be innovative in order to get that engagement on Facebook."

Inspired by TV show host Ellen DeGeneres' gift giveaways, Baker-Jamieson ran 10 days of giving on the Edible Blooms' Facebook page. Each day over the Christmas period, a product was posted with a description of who the gift was best suited to. Followers were invited to nominate, for instance, their sister to win. What Baker-Jamieson enjoyed about the campaign was people shared stories about their loved ones and connected personally with the brand. ♦♦♦

KELLY BAKER-JAMIESON'S TOP FIVE TIPS TO ONLINE SUCCESS

- First and foremost, be honest and real.
- Don't be afraid to give something a try. If you make a mistake, you can always recover from it.
- Don't waste precious time over-planning. The great thing about being online is that your website doesn't need to be perfect from the start. Get your products online, make changes as you go and get feedback from customers along the way to make it the best offering you can.
- Have fun with it.
- Strive to be different.