

GROWERTALKS

Features

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Planning Email Campaigns for the Future

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While it might feel like a never-ending grind to get all the marketing (especially your availability emails) done in the thick of the season, with a little planning you can streamline your email newsletters into speedy greyhounds and not lumbering elephants. How?

Start building your spring emails NOW. Make what we call “campaign shells” or draft emails for Weeks 10 to 25 in 2026 and you’ll be miles ahead of the game. Once the campaigns are built and largely filled in, they’ll be

ready for a final flourish and send, rather than a last minute panic build. This is the way to sell more plants with less scrambling in the spring.

Weather acknowledgment: This spring was WILD. It was a cold, slow start in most of the United States and every spring is different. By creating campaign shells with week numbers—if you’re truly buried in snow for three weeks later than usual—you can just push back your start of sending and send sequentially. Even if the weather gives you a slow start, the order in which you promote your products doesn’t need to change drastically unless you have a crop failure or a sudden unexpected run on something.

Here are our actually tested tips (we do this all day, every day!) for getting started on getting ahead.

How to use your data to plan marketing

Pull your sales data from this spring and analyze it. We know ... DATA! Everyone’s least favorite thing. However, looking at your data from this year can help you decide what to push when for next year.

Here’s what to look for:

- **Track those trends:** We’re talking about trends in YOUR data, not necessarily trends in the outside world. When do certain products or SKUs start picking up steam? When do they wind down? Can you start pushing a week earlier to get more out the door when they’re looking great? Can you extend your promotion for a week to sell more at peak performance for the plant without breaking price?
- **What’s selling like hotcakes?** What did you run out of? This will help you determine if you can grow more or plan several sequential crops to offer something that sells well for longer into the season. Do you track unfulfilled requests? If not, go through the purchase orders from this spring and see what you

were unable to fill due to high demand or demand at a specific time and figure out how to meet that demand next year.

For example, maybe you sold out of something near the end of April and there was a second spike in demand near the end of May. If you're seeing demand from garden centers, they KNOW they can sell the plant they're asking for. It's not like a consumer asking for cilantro in July.

- **What's not selling?** Once you figure out what was a slow mover, you can look back at your promotion schedule from this year. Did you feature that item in your availability emails? Did you show pictures of it? Did it get posted on social media (if you use social media)? Consider picking up the phone and talking to some of your biggest customers and asking them about specific slow-moving products. They likely can tell you whether consumer demand is flagging or if they didn't know you had it. Either way, that's valuable info to act on.

Prepare your assets

Data in hand and analysis complete, you can look at your assets and make new ones.

- **Review and organize your photo stash:** Photos are the NUMBER ONE LIMITING FACTOR in productive marketing. If you can, ORGANIZE! Come up with a Google Drive, Sharepoint or Dropbox file system. Make a folder for each plant and name it with whichever name you use in marketing, then corral all of the photos from your staff and get them into the folders.

In photo licensing, the person who takes the photo owns the copyright. It's a good idea to have a simple photo release stating that the person who's taken the photos at work—whether with a company phone/camera or their own—grants the business a perpetual, irrevocable license to use the photos in business-related marketing and collateral. Also, we're not lawyers, so have your attorney review it to make sure the agreement is legally binding. Why do we mention this? We've had clients that learned the hard (and expensive) way that they needed to do this.

- **Make a shot list.** What photos are missing? Can you get any now? Make a list of what you need to take as soon as things are looking good in the spring. The same goes for videos. People love to see "in progress" videos, so don't limit yourself to imagery of "retail ready." Take pictures and videos throughout the growing season. (Pro tip: Set a calendar reminder weekly to get pictures from the start of the grow through shipping.)
- **Update your contact lists:** Staff changes constantly, so make sure that you have the most updated buyer and owner information for your customers. Tag your contacts with the types of plants they buy so that you can reach out when you have a special promotion or an overabundance of something they might be interested in.
- **Collect more email addresses!** Add sign-up forms to your website and social media. Email addresses are GOLD! If you're worried that someone might not be a qualified wholesale customer, you can have your form go to a list that you manage. You can also include wholesale order rules at the bottom of each email. Consumers KNOW that plants are marked up. Them knowing the wholesale prices matter far less than what you might think.
- **Update your website.** Provide clear, concise, bulleted information about how opening an account works, how ordering and payment works, delivery options (if you have them), and how order fulfillment works.

Craft availability emails with PUNCH

We call these "Availability+" emails. Yeah, sure, everyone wants to know what you're selling. You have to include

that. But your availability emails will work much harder for you if you provide more info and inspo. Each email is an opportunity to establish expertise, quality, customer service, unique offerings and whatever else sets you apart.

Content to include in emails:

- Make a spreadsheet to note which plants you want to promote which week. You should have a pretty good idea of what will work well when, based on your data analysis.
- Add your personality with blog posts, photos, video, stories and staff plant picks. THIS is where it's good to take a look at outside trends and work them into emails.
- Tell customer stories.
- Feature staff people and their stories.

If you really use your data and your time wisely this fall, you can work on all of this and get 95% of your emails done before you ship even one plant.

How to get emails done early

1. Organize yourself and your team with easy tools like Google Docs/Sheets. Everyone can contribute and see what's going on. The spreadsheet should have week numbers, the send date, any deadlines such as pre-book deadlines or planned promotions, the main products to promote, and two to three other content features.
2. Establish deadlines and put them on the shared calendar like the deadline is a meeting. (Trust us on this!) Fill in the calendar first, then start making draft campaigns.
3. Start making draft email campaigns and use standard naming conventions. Here's an example of what to name the campaign in your email software: Week15_APR8 (Week number and send date). This reminds you when it should go out and can make it easier to track year over year.
4. Organize folders on a shared drive for photos and text using the same naming conventions. Drop things in as you have time.
5. Once you have the email campaign drafts or "shells" prepared, when it's time to send, you can eyeball them, pop in any "fresh picks" pictures and let 'em fly. And you'll feel like flying because you didn't just have to spend five hours in the middle of your rush to start from zero.
6. These tips will help you send more inspiring emails that get better results, because in the end, we shop from people, not portals, and your emails should reflect that. When they do, you'll see a big difference in sales. In fact, we'd bet on it. **GT**

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