

GROWERTALKS

Guest Column

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“I Can Buy Myself Flowers ...”

Matthias Redlefsen



On January 12, Miley Cyrus released her new song “Flowers.” The essence of the hit is an empowering self-care message of a young woman. Quite inspiring. The chorus of the song starts with “I can buy myself flowers.” Nice. So it’s no surprise that the song shot right up the U.S. and European charts to Number 1 immediately—203 million global streams in just two weeks. Impressive.

What struck me, though, was something else: In early February, Lidl, one of Europe’s largest discount retailers, announced that during the two weeks following the release of the song, their flower sales had shot up by 52%! BAM! Out of the blue.

What can we learn from this?

First of all, flowers are still super emotional. Flowers. Make. Happy. I cannot think of anyone who doesn’t like flowers. They’re 100% positive emotions. Yes, there are more and more people who have no clue about flowers, species or their maintenance. And, yes, it’s tricky to get the next generation into gardening when their attention span is shorter than that of a fly. But this is our job as breeders, growers and retailers to come up with solutions for this trend, which we are. So let’s not forget how blessed we all are to be part of an industry that’s liked, if not loved, by ... well ... everybody.

Secondly, our business is more and more about being on your toes. Nobody—not Lidl, not the song producers, nor even Miley Cyrus herself—saw the increase in flower consumption coming after the release of a song. Nobody had planned it; it’s a byproduct of her song. Can you foresee or even create such a hype?

Sometimes, yes. This is what influencers attempt to do every day. But in most cases, these things happen without intention, so you better be ready and alert for such developments. And when they happen you have to go for it.

Lidl had the product in their stores to serve the rocketing demand. That’s an achievement. But someone had to be willing and able to take the risk for that. Not an easy task for a grower, who has to plan his production months ahead. And even less easy for a breeder and seed producer like us, who needs an average of five years to bring a new variety to market. Yet we all have to be ready to harvest opportunities that present themselves so unpredictably. Corporate versatility will be a key factor in the successes of our companies, so we better be on our toes.

Thirdly, we have to approach the next generation of consumers differently. But how? Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials), Gen Z and now Gen Alpha where are we? I’ve lost track.



Somewhere in there are my kids. They don't do Facebook anymore—that's for the 50-plus people like me. So where are they? The other day my wife had to write our kids a Snapchat message to please check our family group on WhatsApp, so what's the right platform today? Instagram? Snapchat? BeReal? And for how long will they be there? Is it worth it for a company to invest in a presence on Instagram if in two years they'll probably all be somewhere else? Is it even worth it to maintain a website for a generation that doesn't bother to send emails anymore? Where do we

present ourselves as a company? And where do we present our products?

This can be overwhelming. To me, it is, and I have to admit that I don't have the answer to it ... yet. The good news is that we don't have to. We can (and should!) leave this field to the next generation. Listen to them. Engage them. Empower them. As co-workers and as consumers, let the young people come up with ideas for this challenge. Personally, I find myself more and more happy to do so because I can trust in the lasting power and potential of our product—flowers.

So empower the young, stay on your toes and listen to Miley Cyrus.

By the way: The three-minute-long video of the song "Flowers" doesn't show a single flower. Just imagine what Lidl could have announced if it did. **GT**

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