

## A SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR FLORAL RETAILERS AND WHOLESALERS

### Case Study: Bachman's Floral Gift & Garden

Bachman's, Inc. is an independent Minnesota-based floral and nursery business founded in 1885 by Henry Bachman, Sr., to grow vegetables. During the 1920s the company changed their focus to primarily sell flowers, opened the first retail store on Lyndale Avenue in Minneapolis, MN, and focused on building their brand around their name and signature color purple. Since then, the company has grown to include landscaping, nursery wholesale products, plant leasing, weddings, and home decor which are available at six retail floral, gift and garden centers within the Twin Cities, MN. Additionally, Bachman's products can be found in local Lunds and Byerly's stores, which are upscale grocery stores. In total, Bachman's has over 1,300 employees to assist their customers.

Seasonality greatly influences Bachman's marketing activities with many activities focused around the gardening season and holidays. A marketing calendar is used to schedule and synchronize their marketing endeavors with their buyers' needs. The calendar helps maintain consistency across all departments and stores. Bachman's marketing activities include traditional marketing media such as print ads, television commercials, ad buys, and signage to improve brand recognition and the customer base.

But social media has been becoming an increasingly important marketing tool for Bachman's. A key person to Bachman's social media efforts is Angie King who coordinates the majority of the company's direct to consumer e-mail, website and social media communications. Her responsibilities also include managing Bachman's biweekly e-club newsletter which contains coupons and other items of interest.

King emphasizes that social media is a great way to increase awareness and word of mouth advertising on a limited budget. For instance, social media can be used to spread the news about products, events, activities and awards. Social media also gives companies the opportunity to share interesting "behind the scenes" information about existing or new and exclusive products.

Currently, King is working on creating a "social media army" where Bachman's employees post interesting, relevant pictures and stories to create more connections and points of interest for the consumers. Additionally, social media gives consumers a place to connect with one another and the company in an online community. By sharing this information, there is greater potential to

increase consumers' awareness of and interest in the company which ultimately helps build consumer – company relationships.



Another important key success factor to using social media tools is to increase consumer awareness to the company's social media presence. To do this, King recommends integrating social media logos and links into all promotions including newsletters, websites, and print media to get the word out and in front of consumers. Ultimately, social media serves as a great way to share photos and information about products and services which strengthens the consumers' connection to the company.

The main social media sites that Bachman's uses to reach and communicate with their consumers are Twitter and Facebook. King states that their Twitter and Facebook users are slightly different audiences. Twitter is more about sharing and reposting articles; whereas Facebook is more of a conversation with lots of commentary. Therefore, King suggests limiting reposting articles to both sites since they both showcase different materials better.

For instance, King recommends posting articles that are conversational and comment worthy to Facebook. However, King will broadcast an article to both if the content is related to a product or is something Bachman's customers would really enjoy. Currently, Bachman's has more Facebook fans than Twitter

followers and King attributes this to Bachman's consumers liking to be more involved.



Consumers' comments are a key element to using social media. King's advice is to leave comments up. She is not concerned with negative comments but if the comments are irrelevant she will remove them. However, having negative comments gives a company the opportunity to use consumers' feedback to demonstrate responsibility and compassion. If a negative comment seems to be valid, King suggests asking for more information and details. This information can then be used to fix problems and customer service can do a follow up. By taking these actions, the company demonstrates that they value their consumers. As a result, it is important for companies with social media presences to respond and react accordingly to consumers' feedback. The speed at which the response occurs is important as well. A swift response is essential since social media is an immediate medium.

According to King, there are a variety of social media tools that can be utilized to improve efficiency. For instance, she recommends HootSuite™ to improve scheduling efficiency on Facebook and Twitter. This program allows companies with social media networks to schedule their posts in advance so the posts occur only during business hours or can occur over the weekend without having an employee manually enter the post. HootSuite™ also develops reports which can be used by the company to view the effectiveness of different social media ventures and determine which are worth doing again. King suggests checking these reports often and using them to improve one's social media presence.

King also recommends using ShortStack when engineering contests through Facebook. For small scale companies (less than 2,000 followers) this service can be used for free to help generate more “likes.” ShortStack works by using a “fan gate” when developing contests. A “fan gate” means that the contest is only visible to fans. As a result, people have to “like” the page in order to participate in the contest which leads to more buzz about the company and contest ultimately resulting in more fans. When it comes to social media contests, King cautions companies to brainstorm potential negative results and determine the best way to avoid them. If they are unavoidable, reconsider if the contest is really necessary.



King’s advice to companies who are just starting to use social media is to think about who their customer is and what are they interested in to help direct the type of content that is posted. She also suggests companies make a list of what they want to post and why – is it to drive sales, create brand awareness, or improve customer loyalty? If the post does not support one of these goals, it probably should not be posted because it can negatively impact the company’s social media presence.

King also recommends that companies learn the acceptable posting frequency for their consumers. For instance, she typically posts two times per day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon) because it is enough to keep people interested without polluting their social media accounts. Understanding consumers’ expectations and needs is very important when determining what to post on social media sites.



Bachman's Floral, Home & ... [Fall How To Videos](#) Like

## Fall How To Videos

Get tips from Bachman's experts on caring for your lawn and garden this fall.

Fall Lawn Care Share More info



0:03 / 2:10

The image shows a video player interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text 'Bachman's Floral, Home & ...' and a dropdown menu 'Fall How To Videos'. To the right is a 'Like' button. Below this is a white box containing the title 'Fall How To Videos' and a subtitle 'Get tips from Bachman's experts on caring for your lawn and garden this fall.' The main content is a video player. The video title is 'Fall Lawn Care'. The video shows a man in a blue shirt speaking. A large, semi-transparent logo for 'BACHMAN'S' is overlaid on the video. The video player controls at the bottom show a play button, a progress bar at 0:03 / 2:10, and various settings icons.