

by Fred Russell

'Facing'

YOUR CUSTOMERS

Lenny Kantz uses Facebook and traditional networking to reach customers.

It didn't take long for Lenny Kantz and his wife Marcy, owners of South Jersey Florist, in Galloway, N.J. to know they needed to get into the social networking arena. They learned from their two sons, ages 19 and 22, that if you wanted to reach generation "Y" it was going to be through MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter.

That's one reason why *floriology* wanted to sit down with Lenny and find out a little bit more about what he's up to. Lenny says this age group does not want to be bothered and doesn't always have time to come into a retail location. So, if you want to



make them a customer you have to reach them through mobile applications and while they are on their computer. They make their purchases online and not at the cash register.

The best part is right now, it's all free. Lenny invites as many friends as he possibly can to attract new customers and keep top of mind with his regulars. His profile picture on Facebook is his South Jersey Florist logo. So every time he comments or updates his status his logo is seen by everyone he has befriended. It's a great way to build brand and gain market recognition.

● **HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?**

When I was 15 I used to babysit two kids on my block whose father owned the local flower shop in the South Philly neighborhood where I grew up. One day he asked me if I would be interested making a little extra money helping him clean-up after school and do whatever needed to be done. I did this for about 6 months and just before Valentine's Day, his designer quit and he needed help with arrangements. By the time I was 16, I was a designer and soon after I was managing full time.

● **WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?**

Trying to increase my business and running more efficiently. Getting aggressive in the social media world has helped and it really doesn't take that much time. I usually spend 30 minutes a day uploading images and sending out promotions—it's time well spent. I also make sure our websites are always kept up to date with specials and holiday items. Even though your doors are closed, your website is open 24-7 so you had better take advantage.

● **DISCUSS BUSINESS STRATEGIES THAT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL.**

I got involved with my local Business Networking International (BNI) chapter

and it's been a great way to increase business. The dues are not that much and it has a great ROI. They only take one person per professional specialty and it's a great referral system. (For more info, visit www.bni.com.)

● **WHAT GOALS HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED AND WHAT WOULD YOU STILL LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH?**

Goal number one is not going bankrupt and putting my kids through school I say jokingly. My older son has one more year at Rutgers and is getting a bio-medical engineering degree and my younger son is at Stockton College and is in a Masters program there. After that the sky's the limit! Relax for a little bit and maybe move down to Florida where it's warm!

● **WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE?**

It sounds cliché, but customer service is what it's all about. The first thing we do when someone walks in the door is acknowledge them and let them know we're here when they're ready. Nothing aggressive, but if they have any questions or need help we're ready to assist. Also, whenever there is a problem we fix it. Whether we made a mistake or not, it doesn't matter the customer is always right! 

FAST FACTS

Owners:

Lenny and
Marcy Kantz

Shop:

South Jersey Florist

Location:

Galloway, N.J.

Year Established:

2003

Interesting Tidbit:

- * In his early 20's, Lenny left the floral industry to work in a casino in Atlantic City. However, his passion for flowers never left. One day he walked into a local florist to see if they needed any design help. After working there for a while, he decided to give up his job as a pit boss at the casino and buy a flower shop of his own.