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## Capitalizing on the Moment

*Jennifer Polanz*



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We are having a moment. We being our industry and plants in general. They're everywhere—in advertising for other products, on clothing, home goods and more. People are reveling in the fact that they're plant parents and crazy plant ladies (and men). They're asking more questions, seeking out more places to buy plants and adding to their collections at a rapid pace.

In fact, Bloomberg recently ran a story titled "The One Thing Millennials Haven't Killed is Houseplants." They like us, guys. They really, really like us. Turns out all this hand-wringing over how to attract Millennials may have been premature. I would venture to guess with Millennials buying homes, lawn and garden won't be far behind the houseplants. According to a recent study by the National Association for Landscape Professionals, 82% of Millennials said a lawn is the most important factor in renting or buying a home.

Now, take stock. How are your sales? Foot traffic? Average ticket? If these key indicators are level or down, let's think about why. What did you do this season to capitalize on this moment? Did you do the exact same thing you've done every year?

I'll tell you a few fun ideas I saw from garden centers this spring: Valerie Nalls at Nalls Produce (and 2015 Young Retailer Award winner) did unboxing videos on Facebook Live for succulents. I don't know what it is about opening a box live, but people seem to like the excitement of seeing what's new.

Hillermann Nursery & Florist worked with a local sixth-grade class to help them learn how to make a butterfly garden. This is especially important outreach, since according to Seed Your Future research, most middle schoolers don't understand what horticulture means.

Petitti Garden Centers' Angelo Petitti did a walkthrough on Facebook Live with Cleveland meteorologist Mark Johnson to highlight the locally grown plant material at their Casa Verde operation. The comments ranged from sentiments like "I never knew how they were grown," to "Thank you for the tour" and "More videos like this." People want to see how their plants are grown, and they'll feel a special connection to see your employees and automation hard at work for them.

These are just a few of the many great ideas I've seen on social media and through in-person events in the community. If you haven't seen an uptick in interest, it's time to get out in the community and find out why. Did you

stop stocking your houseplant department when the annuals and perennials arrived? Houseplants are becoming a year-round business, so consider what your customers want before changing the mix.

Industry consultant Sid Raisch has a few ideas about why some retailers may not be enjoying the same success as others right now. He'll get you started with strategies to right the ship (hopefully) before it's too late.

We also have some inspo for you and your customers to enjoy fresh blooms all summer long on those patios and porches (while they're admiring their lawn). Turn to Ellen's story for plants to use in that outdoor room. Then check out new outdoor cooking options—there's nothing better than grilling out on a warm summer night.

And finally, we have our annual essays from our *Green Profit*/RBI Young Retailer Award nominees. I'm always impressed by the work ethic and forward thinking shown by our nominees, and this year's group is no exception. We asked them how they balance the day-to-day grind with an eye toward the future. It's something we all have to figure out and they've got a great start. **GP**