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In the Moment

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Pictured: To go with the holiday theme, here's our tree, filled with our family's ornaments (some are 40-plus years old!).

As a Gen Xer, there are a few key movies that are ingrained as generational gospel. One of them, for better and for worse, is "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."

I never particularly cared for Ferris, even back in the '80s. My Type A, anxious personality identified more with Cameron and Ferris' laissez faire attitude annoyed me more than anything (maybe I identified more with his sister, then). However, there are some quality life lessons to be learned from Ferris' attitude. This one is a classic and hits hard: "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

You could miss it. This is where I'm at, with a senior in high school on the precipice of lots of change (for all of us). It's been a busy fall and winter with lots of lasts, and more to come. And I'm here, trying to slow it all down

as it swirls uncontrollably around me. But all I can do is try to enjoy it as it happens and get ready for the future.

That's where you may be, too. 2024 was a wild ride that didn't seem to slow down at any point. Now that it's January, hopefully, you can grab a breather, take a beat, reflect on the pros and cons of last year, and start planning for whatever 2025 is. But don't forget to celebrate the victories, and enjoy the moments that matter with your team and your customers. Sometimes it's an inside joke, a particularly hard-fought win or even a big sale. It's hard when you're in the thick of things to take that step back, but it really does matter.

This issue is all geared toward helping with that, from buying and trying new products, offering employees new incentives, and taking a look at consumer trends. Let's jump into some highlights:

We kick it off with a winter market preview, highlighting just a few of the many (MANY) new introductions you'll see in the gift, garden and holiday segments. Then we offer a little holiday display inspo with a photo drop from some of our travels (and a special surprise addition) last winter.

We're always looking for ways to reposition fan favorites. This month, we take a look at the option of offering marigolds in the fall as consumers look for them to complete holiday celebrations like Día de los Muertos and Diwali, as well as add them into their porch pot mixes.

When it comes to your employees, we know it's important to stay competitive with pay and benefits. This year's report on the Salary & Benefits Survey is the second year we've partnered with AmericanHort and Industry Insights for it, and if you find the information helpful, I hope you'll add it to your to-do list to fill it out in the fall! Once you're done jotting down that note to your future self, read Bill McCurry's rundown on additional low-cost benefits you can offer to help attract and retain employees.

And finally (but not really), you can read about consumers insights from 2024 (meh) and what to expect in 2025 (hmm?!) in Axiom Marketing's most recent Gardening Outlook Study. The not really is because there's loads more to read about in this issue, but I don't have the space here to call it all out! You'll have to meander your way through and find the rest of the gems yourself like the treasure-hunter you are.

My final thoughts for this year? In the immortal words of Ferris Bueller: "Come on! Live a little!" **GP**