greenPROFIT

First

4/30/2026

The Importance of Being Nimble

Jennifer Polanz



There are times when it's vital you have a plan in place and execute the plan, and then there are times where it's better to stay flexible and pivot in the moment. (More on that in a minute.)

Most people know I'm a big figure skating fan. This year was quite the excitement, between the roller coaster of emotions of the Milano Cortina Olympics and then the redemptive skates at World Championships about a month later (check it out if you'd like to see beautiful freeskates from Ilia Malinin, Yuma Kagiyama and Kaori Sakamoto). In both those competitions, there were times when it paid to stick to the plan and other times where skaters needed to think on their feet. Miss the chance at a combination of two jumps together on the first pass? Better tack that double toe (or if you're really good, triple toe) on the end of another jump or risk losing all those points.

Folks, we may have to tack the figurative double or triple toe on to this spring season, whatever that looks like for you. It may mean thinking on your feet and adding product, changing pricing or promoting new activities to generate excitement in the summer months. Why do I think that? Early indications are people are ready to buy plants—whether that's replacing ones that died in a freeze, adding color to the patio for a staycation or growing their own food (Victory Gardens?). However, there are headwinds.

My instinct here is with the constant drumbeat in the media about higher prices, independents have an opportunity to sell products that have little or no price match. That could be custom containers in pots—either plastic or ceramic—with a variety of annuals and perennials, collections of annuals or perennials for a fixed price, and possibly even native plants that aren't found at box stores but have become popular. Kitchen gardens in the form of mixed containers or bundles with a raised-bed kit would help in small spaces. We've talked before about promotions bundling shrubs and trees with hardgoods like Espoma's Bio-Tone and a bag of planting mix or soil amendment for a one-year warranty. Sourcing local and small-batch products like pots from ceramic artists can also dodge those price comparisons.

More opportunities include offering experiences they can't get elsewhere. We've talked a lot about that recently, but one that you can jump on in June is Pollinator Week, if you haven't already planned for it. We keep hearing of continued interest and excitement around pollinators and the plants that attract them, and breeders have taken notice with lots of new options this year.

One other category to note is houseplants—the theme of this issue. While they aren't huge sellers during May and June, those sales can stay steady along with the outdoor stuff, especially if you have unique items that catch the customer's eye. Our main story this month around houseplants deals with an age old problem (that I continually battle): chronic overwatering. It's not just an affliction for consumers, either. It's often a challenge to teach new employees how to water properly. Read more on that from Ellen Wells.

I asked freelancer Matt Olson to continue exploring unique offerings with a houseplants version. Then freelancer Wendy Komancheck looks at the connection between houseplants and wellness, and why it matters.

To go back to experiences, in this month's Adapt or Die column, Sid Raisch, John Stanley and Dries Jansen focus on how you can create those unforgettable experiences that make customers want to come back (also, find out more about their one-day, in-person event in June!).

I hope throughout this issue you find some ideas that can help you differentiate and improve your bottom line. I also want you to know that I'm rooting for each of you and hoping it's an amazing spring full of beautiful plants, meaningful connections and joy.

Here's to being nimble! **GP**