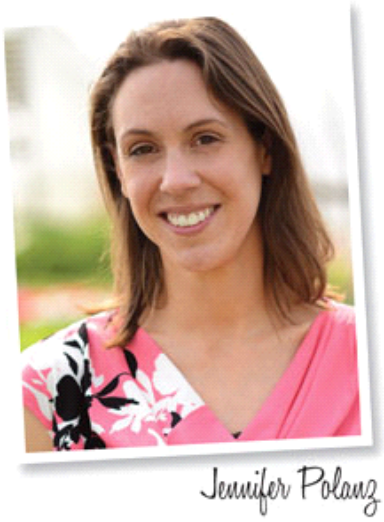
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First

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Nostalgia in the Modern Day

Jennifer Polanz



I'll venture to guess in the last year you may have purchased yourself some delicious Girl Scout cookies (in fact, you may have some Thin Mints residing in your freezer—might I suggest crushing them up in a milkshake? Yum).

These iconic, nostalgic treats leave a feel-good impression on those who buy them, as they know while they're snacking they've helped out a troop of girls hoping to do something meaningful. However, the behind-the-scenes process is nothing like it was when Thin Mints first hit the streets in the 1950s.

I'm a troop leader and our girls love to tout the fact that we take credit cards at our cookie booths. But that's just one aspect that's changed. Training for cookie moms who have already gone through at least one year of sales? All online. The initial order process and reorders? Online. Need to find the nearest cookie booth to satisfy a craving? There's an app for that. Oh, and the girls can now take digital orders and nearby customers can bypass shipping to have it delivered by a girl, while those farther away can have it shipped to their door.

So while the brand may remind customers of a simpler time, the fact is the organization has taken advantage of modern advances and technology to create a faster, easier-to-use system that can translate into more sales. To me, it's a great example of how traditional retail can still evoke nostalgia and a positive feeling among customers while also making new technology work for them. I think there's a fear that if our industry adopts too much technology, it will lose its natural appeal to customers. And while that may be true in the extreme, customers are so used to seeing technology everywhere that they won't balk at digital shelf talkers, apps, email newsletters and other high-tech ways of providing customer service.

In fact, in this issue, we're encouraging creative ways of using technology and serving customers. Ellen put out a call for ideas that can make garden retailers more money and at least one involves the use of technology.

Katie Elzer-Peters is ready to help retailers make the most of their enewsletter marketing, which can bring in big returns if done properly. Her first goal? To get you started.

Lest you think this issue is all about tech, I'll point you in the direction of a couple tech-less goodies. Find out why Amanda Thomsen thinks a new study showing customers don't want to be acknowledged in the store is a bunch of

hooey. Then find out what garden retail in Tasmania looks like (you might be surprised to find it looks rather similar to our Left Coast). And finally, in looking ahead toward those dog days of summer, check out our report on annuals that love the heat, so you can replace all those weary spring baskets. **GP**