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An Endless Supply of Products

Jennifer Polanz



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I'm currently in Atlanta as I write this, recovering from miles of walking at AmericasMart's multiple buildings full of new garden, giftware, gourmet foods, décor, furniture, toys, apparel, jewelry—you name it, it's here.

To the buyers who spend days here, sorting through the showrooms and pinpointing the products that will get you to the next level, I raise a glass to you. Holy cow. I've been here multiple times before, but as I get older, it definitely gets harder. Here are a few of my takeaways from this January's adventure:

- Displays matter. The more I walk these floors, the more I realize the most effective showrooms are the ones that spend time and money on displaying their products properly with colorblocking, high-end fixtures and thoughtful arrangements. The least-effective ones jam tons of product into a small

space. Clutter is not shoppable, whether it's wholesale or retail. We can all learn a ton about display through the best showrooms.

- You need a plan. You can't walk into this show, or any trade show for that matter, without a budget, a plan for what you're going to buy, what footprint it will occupy in your store and how much it's expected to make there. The best buyers create a book of color palettes, display ideas and goals for margin. I had a plan for exactly what I was looking for, and still got distracted (darn you, gourmet foods) and found myself on floors I didn't need to be on.
- The plan, part 2. I talked to one buyer who said she spends days perusing the showrooms, comparing prices and keeping detailed notes. Then on the last day she goes back and writes the orders.
- Florals and greenery sell other products. I think this is something we often forget because we have so much of it in other places. But I constantly see signage, designs, and faux florals and greenery in showrooms that have nothing to do with garden selling their products.
- Comfortable shoes and ibuprofen are a requirement. Also, post-market massages should be a business expense.

The market is a blessing and a curse. So much product under three roofs can help you get a lot accomplished, but can also be a challenge. Stay tuned to the March issue for highlights of new products from the market, as well as MANTS and TPIE on both sides of the magazine.

In the meantime, jump into this issue for new container trends, buying tips and products. Our newest contributor,

Lowell Halvorson, homes in on edibles that make great basket and container additions.

We continue our series with researchers Melinda Knuth, Bridget Behe, Alicia Rihn and Charlie Hall with a fascinating look at how mental health and a person's future outlook can be impacted by plants. And, finally, come along with us as we visit Grow Geneva, a charming houseplant shop in Geneva, Illinois.

Enjoy the issue, and don't forget to invest in those comfortable walking shoes! **GP**