

A rosy future

The Flower Parrot reaps benefits of partnership with The Home Depot

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The father-son team of Peter and Chris Stanley provide fresh cut flowers to The Home Depot stores. With sales near \$6.3 million, their Oceanside-based company, The Flower Parrot, is experiencing a 20 percent growth over last year. “The key magic word is control,” Peter said. “We are in control of everything.” Sean DuFrene
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It is like going to Las Vegas every week.

Betting, gambling and then worrying about the outcome is a way of life for Chris Stanley, general manager of The Flower Parrot Company in Oceanside.

Between deciding which flower colors complement each other, how many of each to include in a bouquet and ultimately, what will attract a consumer's eye, Stanley likens his daily work to a vacation in Sin City.

A full-service bouquet manufacturer, The Flower Parrot provides flowers to The Home Depot stores in San Diego, Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Founded by Peter Stanley, Chris' father, in 2001, the company is run by the 65-year-old Peter and Chris, 34.

A veteran of horticulture and the flower business, Peter wanted to apply his experience and start his own business.

“(Peter) has a passion for flowers. He loves flowers and he's driven,” said Melody Phillips, an independent contractor for The Flower Parrot.

Four years after its inception, The Flower Parrot is going strong, and generates \$6 million in annual sales.

“People in the trade say, ‘The Flower Parrot?’ and they think we're wacky, but people remember the name,” Peter said, laughing.

The Flower Parrot obtains flowers, creates bouquets, ships and manages its product in 85 Home Depot locations.

Using a “pay by scan” program that ensures profitability for The Home Depot, The Flower Parrot owns the flower bouquets until they are scanned and paid for.

In an average week, the company may have \$120,000 worth of flowers in the stores — up to \$750,000 during a holiday season.

“It's a numbers game where you have to be very accurate with the amount of product you put in and what the product mix is,” Chris said.

He has done extensive research to determine the best location to market flowers in The Home Depot, which is generally frequented for home repair supplies, not flowers.

“We place our displays right near the entrance. Once you pass the turnstile onto the main store (you see our flowers),” Peter said. “A lot of people think they should be close to the register, but our experience has been that location in The Home Depot works well.”

The company produces three main bouquets, ranging in price from a mixed bouquet, which retails for \$5.97, to a bouquet of roses that retails for \$12.97.

“They’re price competitive. They always try to give the customer the best value,” Phillips said.

Types and colors of flowers included in the bouquet differ throughout the year.

For the fall season, the company’s 20,000-square-foot Oceanside warehouse is full of orange and red flowers.

The warehouse receives daily deliveries, which are organized, arranged and shipped by the company’s 25 to 30 employees within 48 hours.

An additional 13 employees manage deliveries and on-site maintenance at The Home Depot stores.

The majority of The Flower Parrot’s flowers are grown in Latin American countries such as Ecuador, Colombia and Guatemala. A smaller percentage of flowers originate in California and the Pacific Northwest.

Looking to the future, the Stanleys hope to expand their business, but expect to work primarily with The Home Depot.

“We have a very strong bond with The Home Depot. It doesn’t mean that we’ll never do other accounts, but we’re in 85 Home Depots and counting, and we probably could be in 100 by this coming Valentine’s Day, and it does fill our plate quite a bit,” Peter said.

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