



LEAFY COUTURE GUIDE

Contract Flowers

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WWW.LEAFYCOUTURE.CO.UK



A GUIDE TO

Contract Flowers

Contract flowers are weekly deliveries of fresh flowers and plants to businesses or private homes. They usually happen weekly or monthly, but can happen more frequently or less depending on each clients demands, and play a large part of the modern florist's business. They are important as they are a regular income and usually guaranteed by the signing of a tender meaning the florist company will have a set income per month for a set period of time. This is invaluable as it maintains cash flow when wedding season is over and can keep businesses ticking over nicely.

Finding contract flower opportunities

Now this is a difficult process and usually requires lots of cold calling and very little feedback. As a general rule when looking for new contract flower opportunities the best place to start are local hotels, restaurants and luxury fashion and goods outlets as these are most likely to be able to afford to pay for weekly flower deliveries. Once these have been found contact needs to be made. In the first instance an email is usually the best way, attaching your brochure and explaining a little about your company and what you can offer. If there's no response then a follow up phone call is needed. If contact still can't be made then another follow up email is usually sent and as a very last resort a flower drop of a beautiful bouquet of flowers often does the trick!

Securing a new contract

Once you've been invited in to discuss the opportunity and decided its right for both you and the company involved, there's often a trial period. This is to assess whether you can offer what the client is asking for e.g. delivering flowers that last the timeframe given, compliment the company brand and are on budget. If everything works out the contract will be signed by both parties and the hard work can really begin!



Tips to remember

- *Logistics and access to the buildings is usually required at anti social hours.*
- *Heat and lights sources in the offices can make life difficult depending where the vases are placed.*

Flower types for contracts

Usually contract flowers need to last 5- 7 days depending on the business, for example hotels are a 7 day a week business whereas a bank or office might only need their displays to last 5 days.

Equally some companies might be happy to have softer varieties of flowers that require a refresh, so this is also something to consider during the initial meetings.



Tips to remember

Scents, for example if using lilies, in a small office space can be quite overpowering, whereas in a large atrium the scent might work quite well.

Flowers that will last 5-7 days include:

- Tropical - including orchids (vanda, cymbidium, phalaenopsis, oncidium, dendrobium etc) anthurium, strelitzia, heliconia.
- Chrysanthemums
- Lilies
- Delphinium
- Gloriosa
- Eremurus
- Amaryllis
- Grasses
- Foliage
- Nutans
- Arum
- Calla
- Long stem roses (Avalanche and Colombian varieties)

Things to consider

Looking after the clients

Ultimately we are there to provide a service to them. Its often worth touching base with them every few weeks to discuss what they've enjoyed and what might not have worked quite so well. Showing interest in them really does make the world of difference - whether they are spending £50 per week or £5000 per week.

Knowing when to walk away

This is a hard part of the job but it's really important. Many things can cause the end of a contract. For example the client has been complaining for a few weeks and you've literally bent over backwards for them then perhaps it isn't the right fit. The other situation is if the budgets get squeezed and you can't make your margins. If this happens it's worth talking to them in the first instance and discussing alternative options, for example plants or faux. At the end of the day we are all in this business to make money.

Contract styles

There are many exciting and refreshing ideas you can offer that steer well clear of the college taught curled leaf, oasis blob with steel grass. A few examples are below:



Classic
Abundant mixed vase of lasting varieties



Contemporary
Repetitive vase placements of similar colours and varieties

Contract styles



Landscapes

Groups of vases and flowers at differing heights



Statement pieces

Large and impactful displays

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