

Floristry

Industry Overview

Businesses in this industry purchase flowers from growers or wholesalers and sell them in loose bunches, mixed posies or add display foliage to create floral arrangements. Florists only sell about half of all retail flowers – competition comes from supermarkets; petrol stations; convenience stores; fruit and vegetable shops; road-side stalls and internet retailers – so florists respond by specialising in freshness, quality, customer service, special orders and supplementary gift lines.

Floristry is a small sector and most businesses are owner operated with the majority of owners being “hands on” and employing an average of three staff. As at the end of June 2017, there were 2,231 flower retailing businesses across Australia, of which 218 were in Western Australia (WA). Of the 218 WA businesses, 97 were non-employing businesses.¹

Three out of every five purchases are gifts – bought mostly by men – while about one-quarter are for home decoration – bought mostly by women over 50. Floristry businesses often have regular orders but also hotels, funeral parlours and reception centres make up other important customer groups. Australian native flowers (wildflowers) are becoming more popular – as is including a gift in the arrangement, such as wine, chocolates, balloons and soft toys.

Supply and demand

The floristry industry is largely reliant on events and occasions such as weddings, funerals, and corporate events with two of the largest occasions being Mother’s Day and Valentine’s Day. The industry can no longer rely on ‘walk-in’ trade. Employment within the industry is declining and full time numbers are unlikely to vary over the next four years. Where there is an increased demand for event flowers, which often requires assistance from casual staff, many businesses have a pool of people they can draw from to meet the demand. The traditional florist needs to look at marketing a range of parallel products to meet future demands offering a one stop shopping experience to customers. While most florists have an on line connection through agencies such as Interflora they also need to explore developing an on line presence specific to their business.

Skills demand and shortages

There have been no identified skill shortages for the floristry industry however businesses undertaking corporate or events work require a higher level of skills. To meet customer expectations, greater emphasis is on creativity, structure and execution of the arrangement which in turn requires a disciplined attitude that is essential for employees within more specialised florists. Most of these skills are learned in the workplace. Digital technology training would be of great benefit to the floristry industry.

Floristry graduates are accepted but the industry has concern that too many graduates have learned the fundamentals of the trade but often lack the experience of operational independence and customer contact and communication.

¹ 2018. 8165.0 - Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, Jun 2017. Table 2.

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Technological or innovative advances.

The growth of on-line orders direct and through third party placement highlight the needs of florists to have an on-line presence. The industry estimates that the total on-line component represents approximately 25-30% of retail floristry business over a 12-month period.

To manage this effectively the industry will require skills in digital technology to equip businesses to develop, maintain and manage digital platforms.

Training product issues

As with all industries, the floristry Training needs to have an inclusion of digital technology skills embedded in the Certificate III and Certificate IV qualifications. Most florists are owner operators with 40% being non-employing businesses² so training would essentially need to be flexible and accessible for small business to easily access and implement. Specific skill sets that meet the needs of the business are recommended.

Communication units within training packages need to be expanded and improved to meet the requirements of cultural diversity within the workplace.

Strategic direction

Many of the smaller floristry operations follow industry leadership and react to market trends. Some florists have informal strategic/development aspirations to establish a one stop shop with parallel product ranging. This could include offerings such as; indoor plants, pottery, gifts cards and ribbons. These are likely to be longer range objectives.

The industry has embraced sustainability through the use of eco-friendly sterilisation procedures and the use of products such as wrappings, ribbons, cardboard boxes and foams that are environmentally friendly.

Policies or targets in relation to certain workers

There are no barriers to entry into the floristry industry on the basis that they possess numeracy, literacy, language and good communications skills.

² IbisWorld - June 2018

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Industry workforce priorities for the next four years

Upskilling floristry personnel to meet the changing operational and administrative requirements of the industry. These skills include:

- Digital literacy
- Expanded communication which includes cultural diversity