

# **Late Bloom Farm**

## **Strategic Marketing Plan:**

### **A Market Development Plan for the Wedding Flower Industry**



Fresh cut flowers from Northfield, MN

**Team Deliver:**  
**Jimmy Cron, Harper Foote, Elias Hofrenning,**  
**Betsy Probst, Carrie Sayre**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>1. Executive Summary</b>                            | <b>3</b> |
| 1.1 History  | 3        |
| 1.2 Mission  | 3        |
| 1.3 Objectives of this Plan                            | 3        |
| <b>2. Current Marketing Strategy</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| 2.1 Current Target Market                              | 3        |
| 2.2 Current Marketing Strategy                         | 4        |
| 2.2.1 Product:   | 4        |
| 2.2.2 Price:   | 4        |
| 2.2.3 Place:   | 4        |
| 2.2.4 Promotion:                                       | 4        |
| <b>3. Competition</b>                                  | <b>5</b> |
| 3.1 Regional Wedding Florists                          | 5        |
| 3.2 Regional Sustainable/Organic Flower Farms          | 5        |
| 3.3 Immediate Conventional Competition (in Northfield) | 6        |
| 3.4 Assessment of Near-Term Competitive Environment    | 6        |
| <b>4. Industry Considerations</b>                      | <b>6</b> |
| 4.1 Predicting positive trends                         | 7        |
| 4.2 Keys to taking advantage of trends                 | 7        |
| 4.3 Barriers to entry                                  | 7        |
| <b>5. Analysis of External Environment</b>             | <b>7</b> |
| 5.1 Cultural/Social Considerations                     | 7        |
| 5.1.1 Marriage trends:                                 | 7        |
| 5.1.2 Wedding trends:                                  | 8        |
| 5.1.3 Environmentally friendly trends:                 | 8        |
| 5.1.4 Green Industry Considerations:                   | 9        |
| 5.2 Demographic Considerations                         | 9        |
| 5.2.1 Wedding trends:                                  | 9        |
| 5.2.2 Green/local trends:                              | 9        |
| 5.2.3 Trends working against weddings:                 | 10       |
| 5.3 Technological Considerations                       | 10       |
| 5.4 Economic Considerations                            | 10       |
| 5.4.1 Northfield, MN Statistics                        | 11       |
| 5.4.2 Minnesota Statistics                             | 11       |
| 5.5 Political Considerations                           | 12       |
| 5.6 Key Insights                                       | 12       |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>6. SWOT Analysis</b>                                     | <b>12</b> |
| 6.1 Strengths   | 12        |
| 6.2 Weaknesses  | 12        |
| 6.3 Opportunities   | 13        |
| 6.4 Threats   | 13        |
| 6.5 Late Bloom Farm's Sustainable Competitive Advantage     | 13        |
| <b>7. Segmentation</b>                                      | <b>14</b> |
| 7.1 College-Educated, Socially Conscious, Millennial Brides | 14        |
| 7.2 Socially-Conscious Gen X getting (Re)married            | 14        |
| 7.3 Eco-Friendly Wedding Florists in Twin Cities Area       | 15        |
| <b>8. Targeting</b>   | <b>15</b> |
| 8.1 Representative Consumer                                 | 15        |
| 8.3 Place: where do they shop?                              | 17        |
| 8.4 Price: how do they value?                               | 18        |
| 8.5 Promotion: how to reach them?                           | 18        |
| <b>9. Positioning</b>                                       | <b>20</b> |
| 9.1 Product   | 20        |
| 9.2 Place   | 21        |
| 9.2.1 Online:   | 21        |
| 9.2.2. Offline:   | 21        |
| 9.3 Price   | 22        |
| 9.4 Promotion   | 22        |
| 9.4.1 Traditional Marketing                                 | 22        |
| 9.4.2 Social Media  | 23        |
| <b>10. Implementation</b>                                   | <b>25</b> |
| 11.1 Social Media   | 26        |
| 11.1.1 Facebook:  | 26        |
| 11.1.2 Instagram:   | 27        |
| 11.1.3 Pinterest:   | 27        |
| 11.1.4 YouTube:   | 27        |
| 11.2 The Knot:  | 27        |
| 11.3 WeddingWire:   | 28        |
| 11.4 Farmers' Markets                                       | 28        |

# **1. Executive Summary**

## ***1.1 History***

Michael and Kristi Pursell graduated from St. Olaf College in 2003 and 2004 respectively, both with degrees in English. From there, Michael pursued a Master's in Journalism at the University of Minnesota, but ended up more interested in the topic he was writing about: agriculture. He had done a lot of gardening growing up, and soon found himself urban farming with some from friends who were growing vegetables for a CSA. Vegetables turned to flowers when Michael was approached by Christine Hoffman, founder of the Twin Cities Flower Exchange. Christine had recognized that there was a seeming disparity between the popularity of and urgency for organic, sustainable, and local produce, and the mass importation of foreign flowers grown unsustainably and, often, unethically. Her goal was to bring together local flower farmers in order to create a local and chemical-free wholesale market for retailers and designers to buy flowers from, and today the exchange is one of the first of its kind in the U.S. Michael had a friend who was farming in Northfield who offered to let him rent an acre of land, and thus Late Bloom Farm was born. They have now just completed their second fully functioning season and are looking to expand beyond CSAs and wholesaling into the wedding business.

## ***1.2 Mission***

Late Bloom Farm strives to grow and sell beautiful, locally-grown flowers to southern Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro area. The species they raise are all native to the the Midwest and are grown with strictly organic and sustainable practices and inputs.

## ***1.3 Objectives of this Plan***

- Expand business to encompass more wedding design and supply.
- Get on wedding planner and wedding venue lists.
- Get press via wedding blogs and websites (i.e. theknot.com).
- Expand and strategize social media activity.
- Increase touch points with potential customers (i.e. farmers' market stands).
- Better inform consumers of the importance of the value that Late Bloom Farm offers.

# **2. Current Marketing Strategy**

## ***2.1 Current Target Market***

- Regional Co-ops (sell wholesale to)
  - Just Food Co-op in Northfield, MN
  - Eastside Co-op in Minneapolis, MN
- Individuals that value local and organic produce (via co-op stands and CSA shares)
  - The average consumers at co-ops are middle-aged, educated professionals who have

above average incomes.<sup>1</sup>

- Current Wedding target market has mainly consisted of family and friends and attendees of weddings Late Bloom has designed for.

## 2.2 Current Marketing Strategy

Late Bloom Farm currently operates in the floral supply and Community Supported Agriculture industries. They supply wholesale to Just Food Co-op in Northfield, MN and Eastside Co-op in Minneapolis, MN and collaborate on a CSA with a couple of other farms in the Northfield area.

### 2.2.1 Product:

- Local flower species grown with non-certified organic farming practices and sustainable labor practices (this is seasonal due to Minnesota's harsh winters and Late Bloom's lack of greenhouse).
- Offered as bouquets at local co-ops, wedding arrangements, and DIY buckets of unarranged stems.
  - Wedding decor includes centerpieces, boutonnieres, corsages, head pieces, bridal bouquets, and bulk buckets.<sup>2</sup>
- A personable, direct relationship between farmer and bride.

### 2.2.2 Price:

- Approximately 75 cents per stem (relative to approximately 25 cents per stem through a conventional grower).
- CSA: Full Share \$210 Northfield / \$230 Twin Cities.
- Weddings: Variable depending on size and number of arrangements.
  - Option of DIY buckets.
  - According to prices from Sweet Roots Farm, the full service for wedding flowers are 5 times more expensive than the bulk blooms.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2.3 Place:

- Displays at co-ops (Just Food Co-op in Northfield and Eastside Co-op in Minneapolis).
- Twin Cities Flower Exchange.
- CSA Bouquets (Northfield and Twin Cities).

### 2.2.4 Promotion:

- Word of mouth.
- Branding (stickers, posters, logo).
- Physical stands/posters in retail spaces (co-ops, see ).
- Website/social media.
  - Instagram- @latebloomfarmmn



Fig. 1: Late Bloom products found at Just Food Co-op in Northfield.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.grocer.coop/articles/location-location-location>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.latebloomfarm.com/events/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sweetrootsfarm.com/organic-wedding-flowers/>

- Facebook- Late Bloom Farm

### **3. Competition**

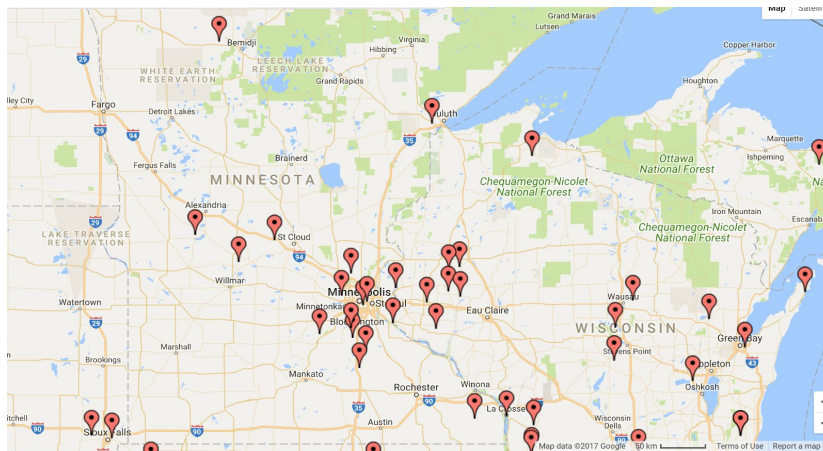
Late Bloom Farm currently acts primarily as a wholesale flower supplier. Their current competition therefore includes industrial/conventional wholesale flower suppliers\* as well as other small, local flower farms that act as wholesale suppliers. As they look to expand into the wedding market, their competition will grow to include all regional florists and farms that do wedding design. They will be competing most directly with other local, organic flower farms that offer wedding design services as well as wedding florists that source locally grown, organic flowers.

*\*Conventional suppliers/florists are those that import mass-produced flowers from abroad.*

#### ***3.1 Regional Wedding Florists***

There are well over 30 florists in the Twin Cities alone and most if not all of them offer wedding arrangements. Two of the Twin Cities wedding florists that directly compete with Late Bloom farm are Artemisia Studios and Lilia Flower Boutique. Artemisia Studios offers “eco-chic” arrangements and uses local, fair-trade, sustainable, and organic products. Lilia Flower Boutique offers local, organic, sustainable options in addition to the conventional and imported.

#### ***3.2 Regional Sustainable/Organic Flower Farms***



*Fig. 2: Members of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Grower*

- Farms from above map that supply/design for weddings:
  - Rustic Designs in Belgrade, MN
  - Flower Child Farm in Inca, MN
  - Gullywash Gardens in Belle Plaine, MN
  - Foxglove/Twin Cities Flower Exchange in Saint Paul, MN
  - Green Earth Growers in Prior Lake, MN (do DIY buckets)
  - Arcola Trail Flower Farm in Stillwater, MN (do DIY buckets)
  - Red Barn Farm in Prescott, WI
  - Humble Pie Farm in Plum City, WI
  - Green Light Farm in Prairie Farm, WI (only do DIY)
  - Winnowburrow Farm in Colfax, WI
  - Green's Flower Farm in Wausau, WI (do DIY buckets)
  - Wild Hollow Farm in Ashland, WI (do DIY buckets)
  - Windswept Acres in Cecil, WI
  - Rock River Farm in Chatham, MI (do DIY buckets)
  - Folklore Flowers in Baileys Harbor, WI
  - Petal Pusher Gardens in Green Bay, WI
  - Petal and Thorn Flowers in Westby, WI
  - Alissa's Flower Farm in Hull, Iowa (do DIY buckets)
  - Honey Dome Farms in Plymouth, Iowa

### ***3.3 Immediate Conventional Competition (in Northfield)***

- Judy's Floral Design Studio
  - Family owned florist with retail location in Northfield, MN
  - Serves Northfield's surrounding areas and the South Metro
  - Arrange flowers for weddings, funerals, memorial tributes, and other events.
  - Does online orders and worldwide shipments
  - Not local flowers; sells "tropical flower arrangements."
- Forget-Me-Not Florist
  - Family owned florist with retail location in Northfield, MN
  - Serves Northfield's surrounding areas and the South Metro.
  - Customize and consult for any event.

### ***3.4 Assessment of Near-Term Competitive Environment***

Currently, organic flower farming is a niche industry. Thus, more companies will be looking to enter the market, especially the wedding market as this is where the most pre-cut flowers are sold in the U.S. Competition comes at Late Bloom Farm from both directions: conventional wedding florists turning to organic inputs and organic farmers turning to wedding design (as can be seen in the competition categories above). Weddings are a main market for organic flower farms and constitute a high percentage of their revenues. These farmers offer pre-made arrangements, with customizable color palettes, and some offer bulk flowers which allow the client to craft their own designs. It is difficult for these farmers to do mass amount of weddings, however, because they are also harvesting all of their inputs. The conventional wedding florists that have turned green have the advantage of being more specialized in what they do, but lose value in being less connected to the growing of their flowers and the personal interactions this creates. Late Bloom Farm also has 2 close geographical competitors in Northfield, but Judy's and Forget-Me-Not do not comply with organic and sustainable practices. They are therefore not quite within Late Bloom's niche and lack the value that organic and sustainable product offers, but they are able to import globally year-round, offer a wider range of product, and have cheaper prices.

## **4. Industry Considerations**

Flowers are a higher-value product than normal food crop<sup>4</sup>, they are easier to grow and sell for more. A 2014 U.S. Department of Agriculture report found floriculture to be among the best profitable crops for small farms<sup>5</sup>. The barriers to entry are rather low; only a little over an acre of land is needed to start one's farm. The significant boundary is the knowledge needed to effectively and efficiently run a sustainable farm. Organic practices are more costly and require more care than conventional flower shops<sup>6</sup>.

- Average amount people spend on flowers and decor in Minnesota is \$1,870.
- Average amount spent per guest in Minnesota is \$145, the national average is \$237.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://modernfarmer.com/2015/02/sustainable-flower-farming/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://modernfarmer.com/2016/03/slow-flowers/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://garden.org/learn/articles/view/66/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theknot.com/content/minnesota-wedding-planning-tips>

- The wedding industry is a \$76 billion industry that employs 1.2 million people, and has grown 2.8% on average between 2012-2017.<sup>8</sup>

#### ***4.1 Predicting positive trends***<sup>9</sup>

- IBISWorld estimates that industry revenue will increase at an annualized rate of 2.8% over the five years to 2017, totaling \$75.6 billion.

#### ***4.2 Keys to taking advantage of trends***<sup>10</sup>

- Have a good local reputation.
- Target higher income individuals.
- Vary service options to cater to different people.

#### ***4.3 Barriers to entry***<sup>11</sup>

- Generally minimal barriers to entry; low startup costs, no specific licensing requirements.
- Costs of establishing floral retail outlets is minimal compared to other retail industries.
- Heavy market saturation and other local competitors will inhibit entry and growth.
- Often reputation-based barriers to entry; local communities enjoy supporting environmentally friendly operations with management that shows a commitment to enhancing the area.
- Imported flowers constitute a majority of the floral industry's supply
  - \$863.19 million dollars' worth of flowers imported in the first 8 months of 2017.<sup>12</sup>
  - Top 5 markets the U.S. imports fresh-cut flowers from are Colombia, Ecuador, The Netherlands, Canada, and Mexico.

## **5. Analysis of External Environment**

### ***5.1 Cultural/Social Considerations***

#### **5.1.1 Marriage trends:**

- Marriage rates have been declining nationally since the 1980s. They dropped from about 11/1000 in 1980 to only 6.74/1000 in 2015 and have declined more since.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ustradenumbers.com/commodities/commodities/imported-fresh-cut-flowers/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/state\\_marriage\\_rates\\_90\\_95\\_99-15.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/state_marriage_rates_90_95_99-15.pdf)



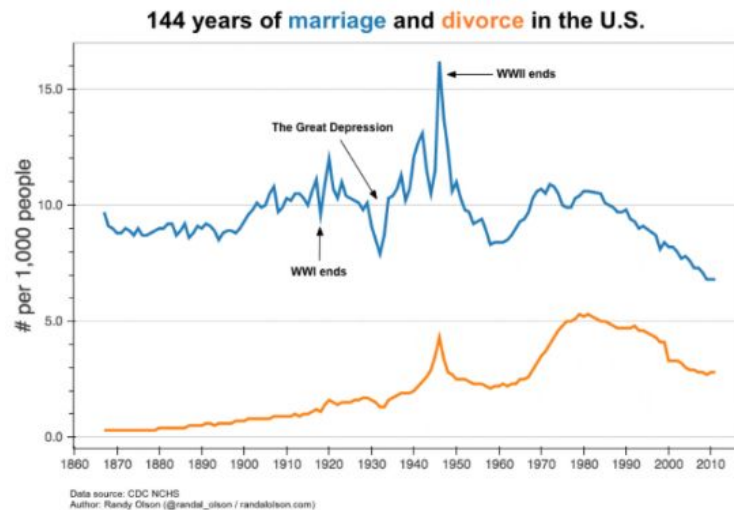


Fig. 3: Marriage and divorce rates in the US in the last 144 years.

- The marriage rate in Minnesota is below the national average.<sup>16</sup>
  - Has dropped from 7.7/1000 people in 1990 to 5.6/1000 people in 2015.
- Same-sex marriages have increased within the last 2.5 years.
- 61% of same-sex cohabiting couples are now married, up from 38% before the Supreme Court decision.<sup>14</sup>
- There has been an increase from 37% to 62% of public support for same-sex marriage.<sup>15</sup>
- Legalization of same sex marriage means more weddings.

### 5.1.2 Wedding trends:

- According to theknot.com, 42% of people get married in the summer, 38% of people get married in the fall, 15% of people get married in the spring, 5% of people get married in the winter.<sup>18</sup>
- 86% of weddings are black tie or semi-formal.<sup>18</sup>
- Cocktail receptions and garden-style parties are frequent celebration types for weddings.<sup>16</sup>
- Couples in Minnesota plan their weddings for about 11.7 months, which is less than the national average, according to theknot.com
- Social media increases the importance and popularity of having a pretty, photogenic wedding.

### 5.1.3 Environmentally friendly trends:

- People are more concerned with organic products, so buying organic flowers goes along with buying organic food.
- Eco-friendly wedding trends include low or no waste weddings.
- DIY trends in weddings reflect greater societal trends of individualism.
- 66% of global respondents of the Nielsen survey say they're willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies that are committed to positive social and

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/26/same-sex-marriage/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/26/same-sex-marriage/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theknot.com/content/minnesota-wedding-planning-tips>

environmental impact.<sup>21</sup>

- Organic products have shifted from being a lifestyle choice for a small share of consumers to being consumed at least occasionally by a majority of Americans.<sup>17</sup>
- However, according to Lauren McKay, consumers are catching on with current social trends of being green and shopping local and the local/organic flower industry will thus likely follow similar growth to local/organic food and agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

#### 5.1.4 Green Industry Considerations: <sup>19</sup>

- Global flower industries, including wedding decor, are harmful due to the carbon footprint left by conventional flower production.
- For every 100 million roses produced, the estimated carbon footprint is 9,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide.
- Local flowers are much less harmful to the environment because they do not travel nearly as far before purchase.
- The movement for local flowers is becoming so strong that this month, the Senate passed a resolution supporting domestically grown flowers for Mother's Day.

## 5.2 Demographic Considerations

### 5.2.1 Wedding trends:

- Millennials are the largest age group (born between 1980-1996, depending on source), and are currently at an age to get married, but it is predicted that only ¼ of millennials will get married.<sup>20</sup>
- Median age for marriage in 2010s is 30, compared to 23 in 1970s.
  - Average age for first time marriages= 26 (women) 28 (men).
  - Average age including second time marriages= 29 (women) 31 (men).<sup>21</sup>
- The top cities in Minnesota to get married in are Minneapolis/St. Paul and Rochester.
- As of 2016, according to the New York Times there were 3,641 gay couples married in Minnesota; of that, most were women.<sup>22</sup>

### 5.2.2 Green/local trends:

- Almost 75% millennials are willing to pay more for sustainable offerings compared to 51% of baby boomers.
- 72% Gen Z willing to pay more for products from companies with good social and environmental awareness/impact.<sup>23</sup>
- The OTA survey found that 73% of organic buyers in America identify as white, 16% as Hispanic,

<sup>17</sup><https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/natural-resources-environment/organic-agriculture/organic-market-over-view.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> <https://search.proquest.com/docview/222775818?accountid=351>

<sup>19</sup>[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/flowers-may-be-nice-for-mom-but-theyre-terrible-for-mother-earth/2015/05/07/fb69f9f4-f4d5-11e4-b2f3-af5479e6bbdd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.8566f68bea85](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/flowers-may-be-nice-for-mom-but-theyre-terrible-for-mother-earth/2015/05/07/fb69f9f4-f4d5-11e4-b2f3-af5479e6bbdd_story.html?utm_term=.8566f68bea85)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/09/24/record-share-of-americans-have-never-married/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://flowingdata.com/2016/03/03/marrying-age/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/13/upshot/the-most-detailed-map-of-gay-marriage-in-america.html>

<sup>23</sup><http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/green-generation-millennials-say-sustainability-is-a-shopping-priority.html>

and 14% as African American.

- The average consumers at co-ops are middle-aged, educated professionals who have above average incomes.<sup>24</sup>

### 5.2.3 Trends working against weddings: <sup>25</sup>

- Longer engagements leading to lower frequency of weddings.
- High unemployment leading to lower wedding budgets.
- Higher average marriage age is pushing the marriage rate down.

## 5.3 Technological Considerations

- The internet allows people to research and find inspiration, vendors, etc on their own. Websites like theknot.com, Pinterest, and others are big resources.
- Technology leads to more competition, estimated increase in industry profit over next 5 years, with higher average spending on weddings.<sup>26</sup>
- Technology often allows customers to purchase directly from the florist via internet orders.<sup>27</sup>
- Apps empower customers; with more prior knowledge comes the ability to further analyze competing florists.
- Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allow florists to communicate with potential customers
- Development of Next Generation Technology:<sup>28</sup>
  - patented technology that provides breads, cubes, or plugs, from a new wool fiber revolutionary rock.
  - This technology offers tremendous benefits with a better rooting, and wider control area promotes both consistency and re-saturation, a better distribution of humidity and conductivity.
  - This product provides robust and uniform plants, capable of developing a robust and healthy root system in low-light conditions, or in situations of intense brightness.

## 5.4 Economic Considerations

- After a decrease during the Great Recession, consumer spending has been on the rise since 2009.<sup>29</sup>
- Recent economic growth predicts higher average spending on weddings.
- National average cost of florist/decor is \$2,534.
- Average income in Northfield, MN is \$55,657.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.grocer.coop/articles/location-location-location>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research-reports/other-services-except-public-administration/repair-maintenance/wedding-services.html>

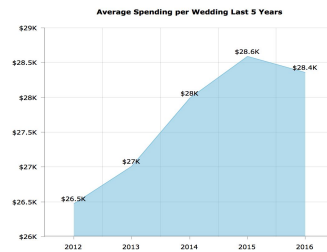
<sup>27</sup> <https://www.engadget.com/2016/04/26/latest-technology-trends-in-flower-industry/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.engadget.com/2016/04/26/latest-technology-trends-in-flower-industry/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/consumer-spending>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.city-data.com/city/Northfield-Minnesota.html>

### 5.4.1 Northfield, MN Statistics<sup>31</sup>

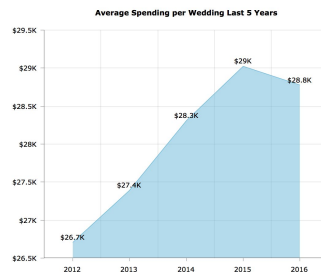


*Fig 4: Average spending on weddings in Northfield over the previous 5 years.*

- Average wedding cost in 2016 was \$28,350.
- The above graph illustrates average spending on weddings in the Northfield, MN area over the previous 5 years.
- From 2012-2015 there was a steady increase in average cost from \$26,500 to \$28,600, with a slight drop to \$28,400 in 2016.
- As of 2016, the average cost of wedding flowers and decor for a Minnesota wedding was \$1,870.

32

### 5.4.2 Minnesota Statistics<sup>33</sup>



*Fig. 5: Average spending on weddings in the entire state of Minnesota over the previous 5 years.*

- From 2012-2015 there was a steady increase in average cost from \$26,700 to \$29,000, with a slight drop to \$28,800 in 2016.
- Average cost trends in the Northfield, MN area and the entire state of Minnesota are very similar over the last five years.
- Average costs from 2012-2016 are slightly higher across the entire state than in the Northfield, MN area, leading to the conclusion that residents of the area local to Late Bloom tend to spend slightly less than average on wedding expenses.

<sup>31</sup>[https://www.theweddingreport.com/index.cfm/action/wedding\\_statistics/view/market/id/22060/idtype/m/location/Faribault\\_Northfield\\_\\_MN/](https://www.theweddingreport.com/index.cfm/action/wedding_statistics/view/market/id/22060/idtype/m/location/Faribault_Northfield__MN/)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.theknot.com/content/minnesota-wedding-planning-tips>

<sup>33</sup>[https://www.theweddingreport.com/index.cfm/action/wedding\\_statistics/view/market/id/27/idtype/s/location/Minnesota/](https://www.theweddingreport.com/index.cfm/action/wedding_statistics/view/market/id/27/idtype/s/location/Minnesota/)

## 5.5 Political Considerations

- Becoming organically certified takes time and can cost thousands of dollars,<sup>34</sup> depending on farm size. Renewal fees are an ongoing expense. There are cost-sharing programs through the USDA and others though.
- Legalization of same-sex marriages opens up a new wedding market.
- Couples are required to submit an application in the city they want the wedding to take place.
- In Minnesota, one must get a marriage license at least 5 days before the wedding day.
- One must apply for permits to have weddings at state parks or historic buildings.

## 5.6 Key Insights

- People are getting married later and less often compared to the past, but they are spending more on weddings, which indicates that there is still a growing market for wedding companies.
- Being environmentally conscious is a growing societal trend that has crossed into the wedding industry, and this means there are many new opportunities for green, local, and eco-friendly vendors.
- Technology such as the internet and social media has increased the ability to find and share information, leading to greater exposure of small or niche companies.

# 6. SWOT Analysis

## 6.1 Strengths

- Late Bloom is a farmer florist, so at weddings there are no intermediaries making it less expensive and more personal and easier.
- The flowers and bouquets are high quality, because of the strict organic practices the farm utilizes.
- Due to Northfield and Minnesota being an agriculturally inclined setting, it is an optimal location for selling local flowers.
- They utilize highly sustainable growing/ labor practices.
- Flower buckets are a differentiated product and cater to the growing Do-It-Yourself (DIY) trend.

## 6.2 Weaknesses

- The flowers and bouquets are expensive compared to conventional flower shops.
- There is a lack of familiarity and education of local flowers, and thus there is less demand. Consumers are more aware of foreign flowers and therefore have higher demand for familiar flowers.
- The current advertising strategy is primarily word of mouth, friends, mutual friends, and minimal use of social media.
- Not certified as an organic farm, due to certification costs.
- It is a seasonal business, therefore there is a limited time period for selling flowers.

---

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.thebalance.com/how-much-does-organic-certification-cost-2538018>

### ***6.3 Opportunities***

- Culturally, there is a movement for locally grown items.
- The movement for sustainable options supports use of flowers produced using safe labor methods and few chemicals.
- There is a growing demand for weddings on farms and DIY weddings. These sorts of weddings tend to be less expensive therefore there is high demand. Weddings are typically on weekends, which is an optimal time for Late Bloom Farm to provide flowers.
- There is a current trend for organic products.
- There is potential to expand into production of winter arrangements.
- There is potential to become a certified organic farm.
- Late Bloom can sell flowers at local farmers' markets.
- They can expand to different types of events (i.e. funerals/ memorials, parties, high school dances, and holidays).
- They can develop a stronger social media presence.
- With millennials getting married at later ages, they will be making more money and will be able to spend more on flowers

### ***6.4 Threats***

- The majority of flowers sold in the U.S. are imported.
  - Threat of established "industry norm."
  - Threat of lower pricing.
- The industry is growing due to low barriers to entry.
- Other florists are less expensive.
- There is susceptibility to pests (due to organic practices there is low pesticide use) and dramatic weather changes.
- With well over 20 wedding florists in the South Metro area, the industry is rather saturated.
- There is less urgency to support organic flowers because the consumer is not directly consuming them.

### ***6.5 Late Bloom Farm's Sustainable Competitive Advantage***

Late Bloom Flower Farm's product sets itself apart from competition of conventional flower shops. The flowers are grown locally and organically, not imported en masse from around the world. Additionally, sustainable labor practices are ethically superior to the competition. The social trend of organic and sustainable farming is diffusing to the flower market leading to the creation of a new and growing segment. Late Bloom offers seasonally curated bulk buckets of flowers for the crafty bride or host, as opposed to pre-made boutonnieres and bouquets. These Do-It-Yourself wedding flower buckets are seldom offered by the competition and gives Late Bloom a differential competitive advantage. In this niche, flowers go directly from farmer to consumer, unlike conventional flower shops. This allows Late Bloom to have a higher contribution margin by avoiding associated costs and a more personal relationship with their clients.

## 7. Segmentation

### **7.1 College-Educated, Socially Conscious, Millennial Brides**

#### Millennial

- The median age for marriage is 30 and millennials (born 1980-1996) are between the ages of 21 and 37.
- More than nine in ten millennials would switch brands to one associated with a cause.<sup>35</sup>
- 73% of millennial respondents say they're willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact.<sup>36</sup>
- Half of millennials believe that brands "say something" about "how they fit in" to the world as a whole, and 59% are willing to pay more for a brand that portrays the right image.<sup>37</sup>

#### College-Educated

- According to the World Values Survey, the higher a person's level of education, the more likely they are to express concern for the environment.<sup>38</sup>
- When forced to choose between protecting the environment and boosting the economy, respondents with secondary education favor the environment more than those with less than secondary education.<sup>39</sup>
- The average consumers at co-ops are educated professionals who have above average income.<sup>40</sup>
- Being college-educated increases likelihood of being married.<sup>41</sup>

### **7.2 Socially-Conscious Gen X getting (Re)married**

#### Socially-Conscious<sup>42</sup>

- In a San Diego State University study, 25% of Generation X respondents said it is important to become 'personally' involved in programs to clean up the environment.
- 71% of Generation X respondents said they had made an effort to conserve heating fuel in their homes.
- Only 8% of Generation X respondents said they had made no effort to help the environment.

#### Gen X/Baby Boomer Remarriage

- 40% of marriages involve remarriage.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/green-generation-millennials-say-sustainability-is-a-shopping-priority.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.pkgbranding.com/blog/5-reasons-why-visible-sustainability-matters-to-millennial-consumers>

<sup>38</sup> <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2015/12/08/education-increases-awareness-and-concern-for-the-environment/>

<sup>39</sup> <http://news.gallup.com/poll/168017/americans-again-pick-environment-economic-growth.aspx>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.grocer.coop/articles/location-location-location>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/04/education-and-marriage/>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.alloy.com/well-being/todays-20-somethings-arent-as-green-as-their-parents-123/>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/11/14/chapter-4-marriage-and-remarriage-among-newlywed-couples/>

- In 1960, just 13% of all married people had been married sometime before; by 2013, that figure was up to 23%.<sup>44</sup>
- In 2013, 57% of adult Americans aged between 35 and 44 years, who were previously married, remarried again afterwards.<sup>45</sup>
- Remarriage is increasing for those 55 and over, as 67% of people 55-64 have remarried after previously being married.<sup>46</sup>

### Older first-time marriage

- According to new research by the Office for National Statistics, marriage rates among the over-65s rose by 41% among men and 56% among women from 2009 to 2014.<sup>47</sup>

## 7.3 Eco-Friendly Wedding Florists in Twin Cities Area

At least two Twin Cities Wedding florists currently source local, organic flowers for their wedding designs. Artemisia Studios uses “local, fair-trade, sustainable and organic whenever possible” and Lilia Flower Boutique states, “we obtain our supplies from local, organic and sustainable sources whenever possible and strive to have a chemical free flower for you.” An option for Late Bloom Farm could therefore be to expand their wholesale supplying to wedding florists that source locally.

## 8. Targeting

The most viable and lucrative option for Late Bloom Farm to pursue as they expand their wedding design business is: *College-Educated, Socially Conscious, Millennial Brides*

This segment is attractive for many reasons, including that millennials make up the largest generation in history, with over 80 million<sup>48</sup> members, and have more than \$600 billion<sup>49</sup> in buying power. This large demographic group is approaching the average age for marriage and many actively seek out socially conscious companies and products and are willing to pay more for them making them the ideal target for Late Bloom. Furthermore, millennials account for the largest percentage of the online audience and are avid users of social media channels, making them both a reachable and responsive group.

### 8.1 Representative Consumer

A consumer within this segment is:

- 21-37 years old (born between 1980-1996).
- Active user of social media.<sup>50</sup>
- Recently engaged, in process of planning a wedding.
- Likely college-educated with at least a four year degree.
- Prioritizes environmental and social values.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.thecut.com/2017/02/how-many-people-in-america-get-remarried.html>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/419017/american-adults-who-remarried-after-their-first-marriage/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/11/14/chapter-2-the-demographics-of-remarriage/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/mind/truth-late-life-marriage/>

<sup>48</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.rangeme.com/blog/what-millennials-want-from-consumer-goods/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>



## 8.2 Product: what do they need, want, and value?

- Want an experience
  - 78% of millennials prefer buying experiences over things.<sup>51</sup>
  - They prioritize spending on “multisensory experiences and events over product ownership.”<sup>52</sup>
  - Demand a “seamless end-to-end experience.”<sup>53</sup>
- Value sustainable and social
  - Nearly half of Millennials report wanting to do business with companies that are environmentally conscious or support social causes.<sup>54</sup>
  - A significant portion of millennials consider a store’s values when choosing where to make a digital purchase.<sup>55</sup>
  - Millennials prefer to do business with corporations and brands with pro-social messages, sustainable manufacturing methods and ethical business standards.<sup>56</sup>
- Validate lifestyle
  - 59% of millennials are willing to pay more for a brand that portrays the right image.
  - Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have led millennials to create content under their own personal “brand,” or online persona.<sup>57</sup>
  - Millennials are motivated by social media to gather shareable experiences.<sup>58</sup>
  - Want to be able to share their experiences with friends on social media.<sup>59</sup>

For weddings specifically, desired floral arrangements consist of:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ● Brides’ bouquet  | ● Entryway or welcome table arrangements |
| ● Bridesmaids’ bouquets  | ● Altar/chuppah arrangements             |
| ● Tossing bouquet (for the bouquet toss at the reception)                | ● Pew or chair arrangements              |
| ● Flower girl’s bouquet (or basket of petals, floral crown, or pomander) | ● Aisle decorations                      |
| ● Groom’s and Groomsman’s’ boutonnieres                                  | ● Tossing petals for guests              |
| ● Ring bearer’s boutonniere  | ● Reception Flowers                      |
| ● Mother of the bride’s corsage  | ● Cocktail table arrangements            |
| ● Mother of the groom’s corsage  | ● Bar arrangements                       |
| ● Father of the bride’s boutonniere                                      | ● Escort-card table arrangements         |
| ● Father of the groom’s boutonniere                                      | ● Centerpieces                           |
| ● Grandmothers’ corsages   | ● Bride’s and groom’s chair decorations  |
| ● Grandfathers’ boutonnieres   | ● Buffet-table/food-station arrangements |
| ● Officiant’s boutonniere  | ● Lounge area/Powder room arrangements   |
| ● Ushers’ boutonnieres   | ● Flowers for wedding cake               |
| ● Ceremony Flower  | ● Cake table arrangements                |
|  | ● Getaway car arrangements               |

<https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2017/09/11/surprising-retail-habits-millennial-shoppers/>

<sup>52</sup><https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/our-insights/meeting-millennials-where-they-shop-shaping-the-future-of-shopping-malls>

<sup>53</sup> <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2017/09/11/surprising-retail-habits-millennial-shoppers/>

<sup>54</sup><http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/green-generation-millennials-say-sustainability-is-a-shopping-priority.html>

<sup>55</sup><https://www.emarketer.com/Report/US-Millennial-Shoppers-2017-How-Digitally-Native-Generation-Changing-Retail/2001937>

<sup>56</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahlandrum/2017/03/17/millennials-driving-brands-to-practice-socially-responsible-marketing/#6da2051e4990>

<sup>57</sup> <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2017/09/11/surprising-retail-habits-millennial-shoppers/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2017/09/11/surprising-retail-habits-millennial-shoppers/>

Brides also search for a variety of floral arrangement styles including:<sup>60 61</sup>

- Classic, Rustic, Chic, Romantic, Natural, Bold, Modern, and Wild

### ***8.3 Place: where do they shop?***

- Online and Offline
  - A majority of millennials make most of their purchases offline.<sup>62</sup>
    - Only 16% of millennials make the majority of their purchases on a mobile device.
    - Older millennials (32-35) are more likely than the group as a whole to make a purchase on their mobile device.
    - Younger millennials (20-23) are more likely than the group as a whole to make a purchase in a physical store.
    - When they shop for something in a store and online, they are more likely to purchase in a store.
  - They are omnichannel shoppers: often research products online before buying in store.<sup>63</sup>
    - Despite a preference for digital shopping<sup>64</sup>, millennials “still want to touch, feel, and explore products before purchasing them”<sup>65</sup>
  - Often will go to store to experience product and then buy online to find the best deal.<sup>66</sup>
- Brides find their florist through:<sup>6768</sup>
  - Word of mouth
    - Typically from people recently married
  - Wedding planner
    - Wedding planners typically have vendors they prefer to work with.
  - Wedding websites
    - APW Vendor Guide
    - Here Comes the Guide
    - Wedding Wire
    - The Knot
  - Florists’ websites

<sup>60</sup><https://www.brides.com/gallery/how-to-get-the-wedding-flowers-you-want-communicating-with-florists-bl-m-fw08>

<sup>61</sup> <https://apracticalwedding.com/how-to-hire-a-wedding-florist/>

<sup>62</sup>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardkestenbaum/2017/06/14/this-is-how-millennials-shop/#61f57c62244c>

<sup>63</sup><https://www.emarketer.com/Report/US-Millennial-Shoppers-2017-How-Digitally-Native-Generation-Changing-Retail/2001937>

<sup>64</sup><https://www.emarketer.com/Report/US-Millennial-Shoppers-2017-How-Digitally-Native-Generation-Changing-Retail/2001937>

<sup>65</sup><https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/our-insights/meeting-millennials-where-they-shop-shaping-the-future-of-shopping-malls>

<sup>66</sup> <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2017/09/11/surprising-retail-habits-millennial-shoppers/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://apracticalwedding.com/how-to-hire-a-wedding-florist/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.brides.com/story/things-never-to-do-according-to-wedding-planner-sandy-malone>

## 8.4 Price: how do they value?

- Millennials are “prepared to make personal sacrifices to make an impact on issues they care about, whether that’s paying more for a product, sharing products rather than buying, or taking a pay cut to work for a responsible company.”<sup>69</sup>
- 73% of millennial consumers are willing to spend more on a product if it comes from a sustainable brand.<sup>70</sup>
  - The top sustainability purchasing drivers for those willing to pay more include: (1) products made by a brand/company I trust, (2) product known for health and wellness benefits, (3) made from fresh, natural, and/or organic ingredients
  - Statements about price-driving product attributes like sales and coupons didn’t even make the top five among those willing to pay more. For those willing to spend more, the findings show that personal values are more important than personal benefits, such as cost or convenience.<sup>71</sup>
- Cost-conscious
  - 80% of millennials are influenced by price even when looking for other values such as authenticity, local sourcing, ethical production, etc.<sup>72</sup>
  - The combination of high student loans and experiencing the Great Recession has made millennials a cost-conscious generation.<sup>73</sup>
  - Millennials on average are more risk-averse and are less likely to spend money unnecessarily than previous generations.<sup>74</sup>

## 8.5 Promotion: how to reach them?

- Social Media:
  - Facebook
    - According to an RBC Capital Markets social media survey, an average of 33% of Millennials increased the time they spent on Facebook in the past year.<sup>75</sup>
    - 41% of millennials use facebook every day.<sup>76</sup>
    - The survey found that 48% of respondents aged 30 through 34 use Facebook every day, compared with 38% of respondents aged 18 through 24 and 36% of respondents aged 25 through 29.<sup>73</sup>
  - Instagram
    - 33% of brides are connecting with brands and products through Instagram.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>69</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2015/green-generation-millennials-say-sustainability-is-a-shopping-priority.html>

<sup>72</sup>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardkestenbaum/2017/06/14/this-is-how-millennials-shop/#61f57c62244c>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.emarketer.com/Report/US-Millennial-Shoppers-2017-How-Digitally-Native-Generation-Changing-Retail/2001937>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahlandrum/2017/03/17/millennials-driving-brands-to-practice-socially-responsible-marketing/#6da2051e4990>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/reaching-millennials-with-social-media-new-research/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.adweek.com/digital/survey-41-of-millennials-use-facebook-every-day-infographic/#/>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/brides-american-wedding-study-2016-unveils-latest-wedding-trends-spending-habits-engaged-2149673.htm>

- 75% of Instagram users take action, such as visiting a website, after looking at an Instagram advertising post.<sup>78</sup>
- Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6% more engagement.<sup>73</sup>
- Most Instagram users are between 18-29 years old.<sup>79</sup>
- In March 2017, over 120 million Instagrammers visited a website, got directions, called, emailed, or direct messaged to learn about a business based on an Instagram ad.<sup>80</sup>
- 50% of Instagram users follow at least one business.<sup>73</sup>
- 60% of users say that they have learned about a product or service on the platform.<sup>73</sup>
- 36.5% of Millennial respondents to an RBC Capital Markets survey increased usage of Instagram in the past year, and more plan to increase their usage in the future.<sup>81</sup>
- Almost a quarter of all millennials rank Instagram as their favorite social media website and among the younger millennials it is ranked as their top network.
- Pinterest<sup>82</sup>
  - DeepFocus study found that over 40 million people "turn to Pinterest for guidance across the wedding planner journey" every year.
  - Per year, Pinners save nearly 900 million Pins about weddings.
  - 27% of Pinners plan for their wedding several times a day, compared to 18% of non-Pinners.
  - 81% of engaged Pinners start planning on Pinterest before they're even engaged
  - Pinners conduct 378 million wedding-related searches every year.
  - People also start using Pinterest earlier than other wedding sites, "when they're still in discovery mode and looking for ideas that spark their interest..
  - Pinterest also notes that January through to March are the busiest months for wedding planning.
- Youtube<sup>83 84</sup>
  - Adding a video on your website can increase the chance of a front page result in Google by 53 times.
  - ComScore and Youtube both recently found via survey of 2,940 respondents, that Youtube "Die Hards" are millennials.
  - YouTube reaches more 18-49 Year-olds than any cable network in the US.
  - When asked to select their one preferred provider for any form of video content, YouTube was the leader among Millennials at 35% (this included regular TV content).
  - On average, a user spends 40 minutes on YouTube on their mobile phone per day.

<sup>78</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/04/20/instagram-statistics>

<sup>80</sup> <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/reaching-millennials-with-social-media-new-research/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/pinterest-releases-new-data-how-people-use-platform-wedding-plans>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.socialmediamarketo.com/youtube-stats-video-marketing-infographic/>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/What-Millennials-YouTube-Usage-Tells-Us-about-the-Future-of-Video-Viewership>

- Other media platforms
  - E-mail: Despite a strong presence on social platforms, millennials still respond well to email marketing, as over half list email as the primary influence to make a purchase from a retailer website.<sup>85</sup>
  - Blogs: 33% of millennials refer to blogs prior to making a purchase.<sup>86</sup>
- Word of Mouth<sup>87</sup>
  - Almost seven in ten say they are influenced by friends' social-media posts.
  - 83% say they trust recommendations by friends and family shopping.
  - They rely on peer recommendations.
- Values: Want Transparency and Corporate Responsibility.
  - Millennials are inherently curious and suspicious of information they receive on a daily basis.<sup>88</sup>
  - Millennials expect modern brands to be open and communicative about how they operate in the world and to seek incremental and positive social change.
  - "Millennials strongly favor businesses with transparency and a clear commitment to give back to society."<sup>89</sup>
- Wedding Websites
  - TheKnot is the nation's largest source for wedding news and inspiration.<sup>90</sup>
    - It had 13.29M website visits in the last six months (as of Nov 2017).
  - WeddingWire is the second largest website in the wedding industry.
    - WeddingWire had 3.64M website visits in the last six months (as of Nov 2017).<sup>91</sup>

## **9. Positioning**

### ***9.1 Product***

Late Bloom Farm currently offers sustainably and organically grown local flowers in the form of wholesale bouquets to co-ops, CSA subscription bouquets, wedding arrangements, and DIY buckets. As they attempt to expand the wedding design portion of their business, the suggested target is the sustainably-inclined, college-educated millennial bride. Based on the research collected above, a large percentage of millennials want, and even prefer, doing business with environmentally and socially conscious companies and often look into these characteristics before buying products. It is therefore crucial that Late Bloom clearly emphasizes the less tangible components of its product offering: the lack of chemical growth agents, a lower carbon footprint, and the unique beauty of local species. Furthermore, research shows that millennials often prioritize buying experiences over material products. Late Bloom has much to offer in this realm and should capitalize on the personal

---

<sup>85</sup><https://www.emarketer.com/Report/US-Millennial-Shoppers-2017-How-Digitally-Native-Generation-Changing-Retail/2001937>

<sup>86</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2017/10/24/executives-whos-got-your-back-in-the-digital-revolution/#6ee754c83fbd>

<sup>87</sup><https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/our-insights/meeting-millennials-where-they-shop-shaping-the-future-of-shopping-malls>

<sup>88</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>89</sup> <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/2017/1/millennials-and-csr/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.theknot.com/more/about-us>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.similarweb.com/website/weddingwire.com#overview>

farmer-to-bride relationship they provide as well as the unique story of each stem as it goes through the process of being grown and designed. Specifically regarding wedding products, Late Bloom should specify and list the species and arrangements/designs they offer and expand these offerings to include more items on the list of most frequently desired arrangements listed above (under 8.2 Product). Other ideas for product expansion include offering winter arrangements of fall/winter species as well as creating how-to Youtube videos and design kits that complement the DIY buckets.

## **9.2 Place**

### **9.2.1 Online:**

The Internet is one of the first places millennials go to research and compare product offerings. Millennials frequently buy products online and they often do online research to find the best deal before going to a physical store. It is therefore crucial that Late Bloom has a functioning website that clearly outlines the specific products and value Late Bloom offers and serves as a platform for consumers to connect with the business. Another online option for Late Bloom to pursue would be wedding websites such as TheKnot and WeddingWire as these are some of the first places millennial brides go to start their wedding planning.

- Website: In addition to showing off past work and stating design options, the website should have an “add to cart” option so customers can easily order CSA boxes and make event deposits.
- Wedding website vendor lists: Wedding websites such as The Knot and WeddingWire often have online vendor lists for local companies with reviews and pricing. Minnesota Bride is a local site and publication with similar resources (see section 11 below for more info).

### **9.2.2. Offline:**

Despite millennials’ heavy presence on social media, they still strongly desire to experience products in person before committing to a purchase. It is therefore in Late Bloom’s best interest to make themselves available in as many physical places as possible including Farmers’ Markets, wedding expos/conventions, the Twin Cities Flower Exchange, and other storefronts such as co-ops or flower shops.

- Farmers’ Markets: While Late Bloom may not be selling wedding-specific flowers at the market, it is still a good way to interact with customers and gain name recognition and brand awareness with potential customers. The face-to-face nature of these markets can help people connect with the product. Because they are a destination that attracts the local and organic-inclined type of shopper already, there is a high potential for success.
- Twin Cities Flower Market: This market, located at the Good Acre in St. Paul, brings together local flower suppliers under one roof. It is only open to florists and other professionals, who buy wholesale. This is good place to make contacts and create awareness about the brand.
- Vendor Lists: Vendor lists are suggestions of companies that wedding planners or locations have used in the past and are known to be reliable and worth working with. It is helpful to be on these lists because it brings companies one step closer to possible customers, and these recommendations can help clients narrow down choices. These lists have a rather low barrier to entry as they are often free, entail a lower level of product discrimination than direct interaction with consumers, and require little ongoing maintenance.

- **Wedding Expos:** Wedding conventions and expos are another gathering place for potential customers. Attendees here are specifically looking for information on wedding vendors, so it is easy to connect with possible clients.

### **9.3 Price**

While millennials are proven to be rather cost-conscious, risk-averse, and highly influenced by price, they are also willing to pay more for sustainable and ethical products. It is therefore crucial that Late Bloom clearly articulate their value proposition: why they are worth the 50 extra cents per stem. Late Bloom must communicate what their unique growing practices entail and they must educate their viewers and followers what the unethical and unsustainable actions are that they are working against. Why is the local flower industry important and why should millennials support it?

Late Bloom could also consider offering price drops or discounts for early commitments, specific times of year, or referrals (see 9.4 Promotion section). Listed below is the average amount brides are willing to spend depending on the specific product.

- Bridal bouquet: \$150-\$350
- Bridesmaid bouquet: \$65-\$125
- Boutonniere: \$24-\$45
- Pin-on corsage: \$32-\$48
- Wrist corsage: \$48-\$65
- Reception flowers: \$75-\$250
- Flower girl petals: \$65 per bag
- Altar flowers: \$75-\$500
- Arrangement next to sign-in book: \$150-\$250
- Flower crown: \$45-\$120
- Arrangement next to place cards: \$65-\$125
- Head table centerpiece: \$65-\$150
- Sweetheart table garland: \$12-\$45 per foot
- Guest table centerpiece: \$75-\$400
- Cake flowers: \$25-\$150

### **9.4 Promotion**

As discussed under Product and Price (9.1,9.3), millennials desire sustainable and ethical products and are willing to pay more for them. Furthermore, they are interested in knowing how businesses operate in relation to the bigger world and seek those out that are contributing to positive social change. It is therefore critical that in promotional strategies and materials, Late Bloom emphasizes and communicates the sustainable, organic, and local components of their business.

#### **9.4.1 Traditional Marketing**

Website: [latebloomfarm.com](http://latebloomfarm.com)

- The Late Bloom website should be used as a place to educate the customer about the above value proposition and the products they offer. It would be great to have a larger gallery of images for brides to look through and potentially even a gallery for each individual wedding depicting every arrangement in context. Since photographers already take professional grade photos for weddings, there is hopefully a plethora of potential content if couples are willing to share.
- The website should be linked to the Instagram account so the photos and posts appear in a designated social media section. YouTube videos should also be posted here.

Discounts

- As mentioned in the 9.3 Price section above, Late Bloom could consider offering discounts or special deals to brides who book early.

- Have a “buy x bouquets, get 1 free” to encourage buying in bulk.
- Have prices go down as they buy more arrangements or offer packages.
- If the couple uses Late Bloom as their wedding florist, they receive a discount on next year’s CSA subscription.

#### Emails

- Email lists are still relevant for millennials. The emails can include exclusive content, and contain sale information or special deals for subscribers.

#### Wedding Websites

- Wedding websites are viewed by many millennial couples when planning for their wedding. Late Bloom could increase their exposure and be viewed as more valid by millennials if they were present on sites such as WeddingWire and TheKnot.

#### Sign at Weddings

- As much of Late Bloom’s current success has been via word of mouth, it would be a good idea to have a sign somewhere at the weddings they design for with contact information and their logo.

#### Like flowers... love grows

- To increase exposure and further personalize the couple’s experience, Late Bloom can offer a packet of seeds with the phrase, “Like flowers... Love grows” and a charming pot. At some point throughout the week of their wedding or at the last meeting between the couple and Late Bloom, the couple can plant their seeds. As a result, the couple will look back fondly on their experience with Late Bloom as they see their flower growing. As friends of the couple may see the flower, the couple can share their story with their friends, which will further increase exposure.

## 9.4.2 Social Media

### Facebook and Instagram

All research on marketing to millennials emphasizes social media as the most effective means of reaching them. Research shows that millennials frequently and consistently visit Facebook and that Instagram usage closely follows (especially for the younger millennials) and has been increasing in the past year. Furthermore, three quarters of Instagram users take action after viewing a post (visit a website or research a product), and posts with hashtags show higher engagement levels. The best practices for Facebook and Instagram marketing include allowing viewers to feel engaged, frequently posting new and different content, using high quality photos and videos, utilizing influencers<sup>92</sup> and having a posting strategy. Some sample campaign ideas that utilize these best practices are listed below.

- Couple Stories on Instagram and Facebook
  - A key component to effective marketing is telling a story. In Late Bloom’s case, this could mean these posts will highlight couples who use Late Bloom flowers in their weddings. They will give a little background on the couple, such as how they met or a fun story about them. Also included will be a description of the kind of flowers and design theme. These posts portrays the uniqueness of each couple and how Late Bloom worked to create special arrangements for their special day. They will appear on Instagram with relevant hashtags and also shared on Facebook.
- The Life of a Flower/ Stem Stories on Instagram and Facebook

---

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/27-expert-tips-for-marketing-to-millennials.html>



- In this marketing campaign, Late Bloom will track the life of single stems and create a video. They will follow the flowers life including being planted, growing, being arranged in a bouquet, and going down the aisle or being on display at a wedding. The objective of this campaign is to highlight on the organic and sustainable practices used in growing the flowers as well as the hands-on, unique story of each stem in contrast to mass-produced flowers imported from abroad. The videos will also touch on how Late Bloom's flowers are of high value and how each flower has a life of its own. They could be small clips or even timelapse videos.
- Potential names and hashtags for this campaign include farm-to-aisle, field-to-aisle, start your story with flowers with a story
- "Meet the Farmer" posts on Facebook and Instagram
  - As stated above, it is really crucial that Late Bloom make clear that they are a family farm that uses ethical labor practices and whose growers put their heart and soul into every individual stem. With the hopeful constant gaining of new followers, it is a good idea to semi-frequently directly or indirectly post about the hands behind the hard work of Late Bloom.
- Hashtag campaign on Instagram
  - Creating a consistent routine of hashtags, for example #FridayFlower, will make followers excited to keep coming back to the page. Also, it is a best practice to post many different, generic hashtags like #flowers, #organic, #northfield, #pink, so that posts appear in the Explore page of instagram exposing your post and page to new potential followers.
  - Example hashtags: #KnotYourAverageFlowers #BloomToBride #StemStories #SomethingGreen #LoveBloomsWithLateBloom #SustainableLove #FridayFlowerFact
- Utilize Influencers: Tag other influential accounts in Instagram posts
  - One of the ways many Instagram users find accounts is through photos that larger accounts photos that they have been "tagged" in.
  - Large Instagram accounts that particularly enjoy the account that they are receiving tags from may feature the account in an Instagram story, post, or takeover.
    - This would lead to increased exposure of Late Bloom's account
- Make Instagram account business account
  - Converting Late Bloom Farm's Instagram account into a business account allows them to evaluate metrics and monitor web traffic, and accordingly make decisions about future posts and tactics
  - Allows for Late Bloom Farm to be as efficient with their Instagram posts as possible

### Pinterest

Pinterest is one of the sites first visited when planning a wedding. Women will often have a board related to their wedding even before being engaged. If Late Bloom Farm created a profile on which their products and services were promoted, brides and potential brides would have early exposure to the brand and their products. Crucial marketing practices for Pinterest is to have catchy images with interesting text, and have phrases containing many key-words in the description which will allow for images to be easily findable.

- Create DIY step by step guides for making arrangements
  - One of the top uses of Pinterest is the ability to search for DIY guides to creating products. Late Bloom can promote their DIY buckets by having "how to" guides directly related to this product. Late Bloom can gain exposure by being pinned on users' boards.
- Highlight the variety of styles Late Bloom offers

- Many brides go to Pinterest for planning their weddings. Pinterest allows brides to see a multitude of options at once. Late Bloom can have a board that shows the variety of styles they offer. This will increase exposure to the unconventional
- Keys marketing practices to Pinterest:
  - Catchy images with interesting text
  - Have interesting text in the description
  - Follow relevant accounts to expand network and followers.

#### Youtube

- YouTube provides an opportunity to post instructional videos, clearly showing how to make a corsage, boutonniere, or other Late Bloom Products. An option is to accompany with appropriate music.
- As noted before, many millennials prefer YouTube content to traditional TV.

#### Blogs

- Blogs can act as a sort of newspaper for Late Bloom Farm, informing followers of updates and new products, discounts and sales.
- Blogs allow followers to respond to company posts, facilitating an interactive discussion between Late Bloom Farm and its followers.

## **10. Implementation**

#### In the next month...

- Change @LateBloomFarmmn Instagram from a regular profile to a business profile.
- Update website to include all product offerings and the flowers offered for the 2018 Summer season.
- Pick and/ or develop a slogan (see ideas listed above) and a consistent hashtag .
- Create and build a Pinterest account.
- Set up an account with WeddingWire and TheKnot.

#### In the next 3 months...

- Create how-to videos for bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages, headpieces, etc.
- Develop content for social media and create schedule for social media postings.
- Connect with wedding planners, and get on vendor lists.
  - Reach out to at least 10 wedding planners and venues.
- Begin posting on social media on a weekly basis.
- Continue to augment the WeddingWire and TheKnot account.

#### In the next 6 months...

- Start taking photos and video of the flowers being planted and growing.
- Ask couples if you can use their wedding photos as promotional material.
- Consistently post on social media accounts.
- Create and implement Stem Story campaign.
- Create a blog highlighting the company, farming, the flowers, and fun facts.

#### In the next 9 months...

- Create an option for fall arrangements.
- Update the gallery on the website with recent photos.
- Utilize the content created over the summer to develop new stories for the website and social media
- Be present at farmers' markets.

#### In the next year...

- Create winter promotion where brides can sign Late Bloom as the florist and receive discounted materials as a result.
- Develop winter offerings for brides.

### Stem Stories



### How To Guide (*This would be in video format*)

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Items Needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flowers</li> <li>- Ribbon</li> <li>- Green floral wire</li> <li>- Green floral tape</li> <li>- Corsage pins</li> <li>- Floral pins</li> <li>- Scissors</li> <li>- Pruners</li> <li>- Tape</li> </ul> | <p><i>Step 1:</i><br/>Gather flowers cut them to approximately 1"</p>  | <p><i>Step 5:</i><br/>Enjoy!</p>  |
|---|---|--|

## **11. Return on Investment**

Outlined in the previous Promotion and Implementation sections, Late Bloom has many ways to benefit from both the financial and labor resources spent to further their brand awareness and market share. Specifically, through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube, Late Bloom can engage the consumer and develop connections. Furthermore, financial investments like premium advertising on wedding websites and a presence at farmers' markets has the potential to deliver a wide range of exposure to a variety of engaged couples.

## **11.1 Social Media**

### **11.1.1 Facebook:**

The goal of implementing a more intensive and specific Facebook campaign is to accumulate more “likes” on Late Bloom’s business page. Fans will receive updates on their news feed, informing them about what flowers are being grown, when they are fully grown, and where they will be located for purchase (Farmers’ Market, CSA, Co-ops). Late Bloom will in turn receive statistics detailing insights about the audience each post is viewed by, engaged with, and total pageviews. With scheduled, intentional posting, it is feasible to increase page likes from 336 currently to 1000 likes by the end of the 2018 growing season.

### **11.1.2 Instagram:**

With regards to Instagram, Late Bloom will mainly look to accumulate more followers. By posting consistent, fun, and creative pictures and captions, fans will become personally invested in the brand. Creating hashtags will allow each picture to reach a large audience of viewers who are “exploring” posts. Converting Late Bloom’s Instagram from a personal profile to a business profile will give access to impression and engagement data that is necessary in determining the effectiveness of each post. Similar to Facebook, with consistent posting, it is feasible to increase page followers from 350 currently to 1000 followers by the end of the 2018 growing season.

### **11.1.3 Pinterest:**

With Pinterest, Late Bloom will be starting from scratch. They can therefore track their progress from its outset and keep track of which posts receive the best attention. For each pin, there is a link back to the original site. As a result of creating and maintaining a Pinterest account and board, Late Bloom will therefore increase traffic to their website. Referring to prior research, many brides-to-be search for wedding material before they are even engaged. Since Pinterest is involved so early along the wedding process, Late Bloom will be contained within the evoked set of many brides to be, increasing exposure.

### **11.1.4 YouTube:**

Youtube is the number one video sharing website in the United States. As noted before, 35% of millennials prefer YouTube to traditional television. Not only can Late Bloom gain views through creative YouTube videos, adding a video to the Late Bloom website can increase the chances of a front page result by 53 times in a Google search increasing traffic to their website. In addition, Late Bloom Farm can see the amount of views for each video, and viewers’ comments giving them direct feedback as well as an idea of who their viewers are.

## **11.2 The Knot:**

TheKnot offers four different levels of profiles. The basic “Limited” account is free and allows space for the vendor to post photos and contact information. The “Lite” profile costs \$50 a month and comes with additional space for photos and a section for reviews. The next level up is the “Standard” profile for around \$130 a month. Here you have unlimited space for photos, social media links, a space

for a personal bio, and preference above other vendors. The final level is “Featured” this guarantees that your profile will be on the front page. (Pricing for Featured is on request). With just a Lite profile of \$50 a month, Late Bloom will be able to penetrate new customers unaware with their brand. Even if they do not directly recoup their \$50 a month payment, the goodwill gained in the form of brand awareness and legitimacy will justify the price tag and likely lead to increased incremental revenues recovering any expenses.

### ***11.3 WeddingWire:<sup>93</sup>***

There are five different levels of account on the WeddingWire. The free “Lite” version gives you space for photos and a place for clients to review your brand. The “Standard” profile costs \$40 a month and comes with access to marketing statistics and metrics of your page. The “Professional” level guarantees placement on the vendor directory and WeddingWire will not promote competitors when viewing your page; the cost is \$130 a month. The “Featured Ad” is said to be the most popular level for \$220 a month. You’re guaranteed a listing on the first page of the vendor directory. The ultimate level is the “Spotlight” level that puts your business at the very top for \$500 a month. Unlike TheKnot, WeddingWire offers visitors the option to sort by number of reviews and by average star review. This will offer Late Bloom more tangible statistics and reviews to analyze. Additionally, it has the potential to act as another platform for consumer-to-consumer word of mouth marketing. Creating a lite account will put Late Bloom in the same pool as other wedding flower providers and allow for positive reviews on the page (with no financial cost).

### ***11.4 Farmers’ Markets***

A regular stand at a local Northfield or Twin Cities Farmers’ Market would allow Late Bloom to connect directly with their target market in a direct and memorable way. The immediacy and visual impact of having actual flowers for sale is effective promotion in itself and simply adding a sign stating “we do weddings” and potentially having an email sign-up could grant Late Bloom a whole new set of interested consumers. However, there is both a financial cost and application process associated with most Farmers’ Markets and there would also be a substantial opportunity cost associated with setting up and maintaining a booth. A suggested approach would be for Late Bloom to collaborate with one or two other local farmers and split the monetary and time commitments. Late Bloom should keep a detailed record of the emails they gain, the bouquets they sell, and then evaluate at the end of the season if the sales gained exceeded the costs.

---

<sup>93</sup> <http://nuphoriq.com/the-knot-vs-weddingwire/>