



MOSMILLER INTERNSHIP REPORT

KENTS FLORAL GALLERY

Let the Beauty of what you
Love be what you DO.

Katelyn Stoops

Summary

My weeks spent at Kent's Floral Gallery in Columbia, MO have been one of the most rewarding experiences in advancing my education in the floral industry thus far. The shop is very well known in the area for high-end, consistent designs, excellent customer service and expert knowledge of the industry. I immediately fell into the rhythm of the company and felt at home, learning and growing with some of the best designers in the area.

Work Experience

It is honestly hard to recall what my time in the floral industry was like before my summer experience. The crew at Kent's took me under their wings and taught me so much. Each day was different and filled with exciting, memorable and learning moments. Each week I worked 8-5, or later, and 4 days a week or more if we were busy with weddings or short staffed. After learning the basics, most days were spent designing everyday orders, answering the phones, interacting with customers in the front of the shop, processing flowers, cleaning, and updating the front of the store with new merchandise coming in. Occasionally I would interact with wholesalers and other suppliers, learning how to do prices and order fresh and hardgoods products. I definitely know the different areas of Columbia and local

hospitals like the back of my hand from making deliveries when we were busy.

Overall, I can say that I learned at least a little bit of all aspects of owning and operating a retail floral shop, which is 100% what I wanted to learn!

Skills Learned

After my first day at Kent's I knew that my summer was going to be full of learning, from sweeping the sidewalk to executing a full wedding.

- Customer Service
 - I was very intimidated of answering the phones for the first week or so, since it was an area I had little to no experience in. I remember, near the end of the day my first day, Kent and I were the only ones still working. The phone began to ring and he was on the other line, so I knew I needed to answer. I was extremely nervous, but I'm really glad that I did, because each phone call I answered after that first day I felt more and more comfortable with it and grew to want to answer the phone! I learned to love to interact with customers. Finding out what they were looking for, to make the person they're sending the arrangement to feel even more special, was very rewarding.

- Design

- My prior experience in design was mainly assembly line event and wedding work with set recipes and pictures to match. By watching and asking questions I feel that my product choice for designing different styles of arrangements improved greatly this summer. Also, learning to understand the recipes and designs of orders from companies like Telefora, and how important it is to match the picture, but stay within the price point and recipe, so that we are still profitable. Lora, a lead designer, was so great at answering all questions I had about types of flowers I'd never seen before and growing habits.
- Employee Interaction
 - Learning how to interact and ask questions in a new environment is always a challenge for me, but everyone was very helpful with teaching me anything that I asked about. It was interesting to see the dynamic of Kents, how the employees interact with each other, customers and the workplace norms.
- Marketing
 - A couple of weeks into my internship I asked if I could post a new special that we had on Facebook. They all said yes and from then on, I have been trying to be more interactive on our social media accounts.

Since I was offered a part-time position while I finish up school, I have taken a larger role in social media and have started scheduling posts on Facebook for the weeks to come. I've found that a lot of our loyal customers are continuing their loyalty to us on Facebook, as they are liking, commenting, and sharing our posts. I am excited to see where I can take our social media during the rest of my time at Kents.

Company

Kents Floral Gallery is owned and operated by Kent Anderson, who has over 42 years of experience and has been open in downtown Columbia for 20 plus years. He employs a variety of full-time and part-time designers, sales representatives, drivers, and a book-keeper. They specialize in high-end giftware and home décor, custom designs, and wedding and event design.

Impact on Career/Education

I graduate in December from the University of Missouri with a BS in Agribusiness Management. Before my summer experience I was completely up in the air about what to do when I graduate, and now I have a little more of a plan. I am currently looking into graduate schools that have degree programs in retail

sales and management, expecting to start in fall 2018. Until then I plan to stay in Columbia and work at Kents to gain more experience on the different holiday rush times and retail management.

Future Plans

Within the next five years I plan to move back to my home area and with my husband open a retail floral shop. My focus will be on leading a business with consistent, elegant arrangements, unique and natural home décor, genuine and sincere customer service, and be the trend setting, go-to brand for the area. And later, branching into other towns and being the floral market in south central Missouri. I hope to vertically integrate into growing plants, seasonal blooming plants and cut flowers, while educating locals in the community and youth. Eventually, creating an elegant event venue on a farm, that houses our greenhouses and seasonal events. Interning at Kents has opened my eyes to what the industry has to offer me and that my involvement is infinite with hard work and faith.

Photos



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