Preface

I am a horticulture student under the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at Mississippi State University. This spring (May 2013), I completed required course work, excluding the Floristry Internship, for a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Horticulture with an emphasis in Floral Management. In pursuit of my degree, I have taken courses in plant science, floral design, general business, and art. An internship is a degree requirement for the Horticulture program at Mississippi State University. This internship is to provide professional experience in the floral industry or related field.

After expressing my interest in a wholesale internship, my advisor Dr. Jim DelPrince, AIFD presented me with a list of reputable wholesale companies throughout the United States and Canada. After doing some research, I decided to inquire with Baisch and Skinner about an internship position. Dr. DelPrince put me in contact with Mark Miller a salesperson at Baisch and Skinner, Miller then forwarded my inquiry to the Human Resources department at the company. A few days later, while at Southern AIFD Conference in Puerto Rico, I received a phone call from Dawn Loehr, a member of the Human Resources department at Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Floral Distributor. Dawn informed me that Baisch and Skinner was interested in hiring me as an intern. She interviewed me briefly about my goals and what I wanted to achieve through the internship. She asked for some time to review the syllabus and speak to a few people in the company about the potential internship position. After a few more phone conversations discussing the details with Dawn, she said that I would be receiving phone calls from various departments throughout the company. The next few days a couple
members of the team interviewed me. Within a week or so, I heard back from Dawn offering me the position as an intern at Baisch and Skinner headquarters in St. Louis. I was thrilled to be considered by such as prestigious wholesaler in the floral industry. I accepted the position and made plans to move to St. Louis, Missouri.

My fiancé, Eric, helped me find an apartment in downtown St. Louis, roughly two miles from Baisch and Skinner. I was nervous, but excited to move to a big city. It would be much different from what I was used to. Not only did I attend college at Mississippi State University, I also grew up in the college town for more than fifteen years. Although I was apprehensive about leaving my family and friends behind, I knew it would benefit me to look beyond Starkville, Mississippi, if only just for a short time.

I would like to thank Baisch and Skinner for providing me with this wonderful opportunity. I would also like to thank the American Floral Endowment, particularly the Mossmiller Internship Scholarship, for the scholarship they awarded me. I am truly grateful for this entire experience. It is my goal to continue to be active in all the industry has to offer. I hope to become an asset to the floral industry and provide education to aspiring floral designers, business owners, and other allies in the floral world. I believe Baisch and Skinner and the American Floral Endowment are leaders in providing continued education and service to the floral industry. Thank you both, again.

Beth McDougald
Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Floral Distributor

Internship Report

Company History

Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Florist was opened 1952 by Roy Skinner and Art Baisch. Baisch and Skinner started out by consigning fresh flowers, from local growers, in a 3,700 square foot space located in the St. Louis, Missouri Flower Market, among other competing wholesale florist. Baisch and Skinner became known for the quality of its fresh flower offerings. Art Baisch’s sons John and Bob now run the company. To this day, Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Florist has maintained its reputation for exceptional quality in fresh flowers and customer service. Today, Baisch and Skinner has eight store locations throughout the mid-west and Arizona. Baisch and Skinner prides itself on a company-wide motto. “There is no substitute for quality.”
Beth McDougald Internship Rotation Report—
✓ Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Floral Distributor

Baisch and Skinner Wholesale Floral Distributor provided me with a unique internship opportunity. They created a rotation schedule for me, so that I was able to see all aspects of the wholesale floral business. Through this rotation, my tasks and responsibilities changed frequently depending on the department I was in. Below, I have listed the departments I rotated and the duties I performed specific to each one.

↘️ Sales—Roger Nelson (Supervisor)
✓ Used add-on sales techniques with fresh flower orders.
✓ Used suggestive selling technique in cold calls offering weekly specials.
✓ Contributed to sales quota goal in 5x5 Sunflower special (week of May 20th).
✓ Handled customer complaints when needed.
✓ Organized merchandise such as ribbon and tools in front of the main store.
✓ Organized and maintained clean, attractive coolers as product arrived.
✓ Operated computer systems including cash register and/or electronic credit card machine.
✓ Learned proper item codes for fresh flowers used in point of sales system.
✓ Opened and closed the store.
  o I was given the opportunity to open the store. I organized customer pick-up list and prepared the store of opening.
  o I was also given the opportunity to close the store multiple times. I printed sales reports, counted cash drawers, and shutdown computer systems.

↘️ Buying Department-- Ashley MacDonald (Supervisor)
✓ Purchased fresh flowers and foliage from all over the world for all eight Baisch and Skinner locations.
  o Ashley and I used a shared document on the company’s “intranet” to access branch store fresh flower orders.
  o We would then order from vendors based on the counts the stores provided us.
✓ Issued Credits to vendors for product that arrived dead or damaged.
  o Ashley and I would receive notification from floral processors at Baisch and Skinner that product arrived damaged. We would then go inspect the product and take images of the quantity, the damage, and the box (to provide vendor with accurate date of invoice and shipment).
✓ Researched new products provided by vendors.
  o Vendors would send samples of their product to Baisch and Skinner. Ashley and I would examine the product, observing its quality, color, and uniqueness. We would gather feedback from the sales staff popular.
  o Observed/participated in a meeting between buyer and sales representative.
✓ Developed ideas for in-store specials.
Working with the sales manager, Ashley and I developed “push boxes”. A push box is created with product that we had overstocked for the week. In the summer, business begins to slow down. To acclimate to that, Baisch offers push boxes that provide fresh product at a discounted rate.

➤ Ashley and I frequently spoke to vendors, mostly through Skype Instant Messaging and Email.
➤ We also met with local growers when they would deliver their product to Baisch and Skinner.
   ○ LeFevre Blooms—Product Variety: Annabelle Hydrangeas.

Market Place—Kathryn S. (Supervisor)
✓ Created multiple displays for showrooms.
✓ Operated computer systems including cash register and/or electronic credit card machine.
✓ Checked-in new merchandise for Christmas Showroom.
✓ Informed customers of new products.
✓ Assisted customers in selecting products for their projects.
✓ Devised ways to market slow-moving merchandise

Marketing Department—Margaret Herget (Supervisor)
✓ Merchandised and Organized decorative products on the Web Store.
✓ Added new products through the backend of the Web Store.
✓ Used advanced computer-design programs to modify images for the Web Store.
   ○ InDesign
   ○ Photoshop
✓ Used accounting database to add new customers and edit existing customer information.
✓ Developed ideas for in-store specials.
✓ Assembled new customer packets.
✓ Contributed to weekly marketing strategies.
✓ Added new customers to E-blast lists.
✓ Developed signage and flyers to market products.
✓ Posted signage in store windows and counters to market upcoming events and/or specials.

Corporate Decorative Buying and Importing Department/Arrangement Department—Tracy Vester (Supervisor)
✓ Observed purchase orders created to provide vendors.
✓ Created multiple silk arrangements for Christmas Showroom.
✓ Developed fresh design concepts for grocery store accounts.
✓ Strategized with the team to find the most efficient way to mass-produce fresh arrangements for grocery store accounts.
✓ Assisted in preparing for Christmas In July Design Show.
✓ Demonstrated floral techniques and trends in Christmas in July Design Show.

Warehouse—Greg Stockmann (Supervisor)
✓ Checked merchandise into the warehouse.
✓ Broke down and distributed merchandise to branch store pallets.
✓ Prepared branch store merchandise for delivery.
✓ Pulled merchandise for branch stores.
✓ Scanned products into computer system to allow bar codes to scan on all systems throughout the company.
✓ Restocked “picking room” and “front of the main store” with product from warehouse.

Studying the Area
✓ Visited the following wholesaler competitors’ operations
  o Harold’s Wholesale/Walter Knoll
  o DWF
  o Floral Supply Syndicate
  o Lasalle Wholesale Florist
✓ Virtually toured Baisch and Skinner branch stores via Facebook sites.
  o Kansas City, Missouri
  o Springfield, Missouri
  o Cape Girardeau, Missouri
  o Quincy, Illinois
  o Wichita, Kansas
  o Topeka, Kansas
  o Phoenix, Arizona
✓ Visited the Missouri Botanical Gardens on Saturday July 13, 2013.
  o Missouri Botanical Gardens staff frequent Baisch and Skinner. I had the pleasure of being able to interact and assist with this customer account.
✓ Visited Wedding/Event Floral Design Businesses located in St. Louis Flower Market.
  o Artistry-Wedding and Event Specialist- Randy
  o Wildflowers-Wedding and Event Specialist-Jane

Internship Experience

Efficiency

During my internship at Baisch and Skinner I improved many skills and developed in floral management. I found with each department I rotated in, the most consistent skill that Baisch and Skinner employees exemplify was efficiency. During my
time at Baisch and Skinner, I realized how important it was to be efficient in the tasks I was given. Baisch and Skinner management does an excellent job of evaluating its staff and ensuring that everyone is staying on task. The overall productivity of the wholesale flower business is based on how well and how fast you can complete a task. Working in a high-paced environment, like a wholesale florist, efficiency is key. In order for a wholesale florist to be successful, the company and how it operates must be efficient. In my opinion, Baisch and Skinner demonstrates efficiency at the highest level.

**Customer Service**

One of my favorite aspects of the floral industry is being able to interact with so many different people. At Baisch and Skinner this summer, I was able to work at the front of the main store and interact with customers. Baisch and Skinner's customer service is the one of the best in the industry. Employees value Baisch and Skinner customers and have developed long-lasting relationships with each of them. As soon as I stepped foot into Baisch and Skinner, the staff was so friendly. They were always pleasant to work with. When it comes to good customer service at Baisch and Skinner, it is necessity. I found it was important to get to know your customers and value each one equally. With a large sales staff, Baisch and Skinner provides the absolute best service to its customers. The positive attitudes and quality personalities at Baisch and Skinner keep their customers coming back.

My experience at Baisch and Skinner this summer was wonderful. It is hard for me to choose one aspect I liked the most and the least. Each department fulfilled my floral management experience. I think the most enriching learning experience I gained from Baisch and Skinner was one that spoke not to my brain, but to my heart. A few
months ago, I was concerned about where I would be after I finished my degree in Floral Management. But after my summer internship, I found promise in the floral industry at Baisch and Skinner. I was moved by their exceptional quality of customer service, their constant growth throughout the region, and their commitment to staying current with the trends and technology in the floral industry. With companies like this in our industry, I know now I chose the right career path and will always find someone to share my passion for flowers with.