

# Blooms' bite of the big time

CAMERON ENGLAND

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most



WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS: Edible Blooms founder Kelly Jamieson.

Picture: AAP/EMMA BRASIER



romantic day of the year but for Edible Blooms founder Kelly Jamieson Valentine's Day is one when her company, based in Keswick, will make a delivery somewhere in Australia every 20 seconds.

It's a phenomenal figure but one which has been built up over 13 years of hard work and resulted in the company recently being rated the No.1 online florist in Australia.

But as anyone who has received a "bouquet" from Edible Blooms can attest, it's not exactly your

traditional "florist".

Ms Jamieson started the business in Brisbane, with a mission to change the way people sent gifts, backed by a family passion to find just the right present for each other at special times of the year.

The business has always had a strong digital focus, and has had to adapt as digital marketing has evolved and social media has become a much more important part of the mix.

"When I started Edible Blooms in 2005, customer acquisition costs were real cheap because Google Adwords were in the cents," Ms Jamieson says.

"Back then you could buy a click on your website for a couple of cents, now you'd be lucky to buy it for a couple of dollars. That's one of the bigger challenges I see now, acquiring customers."

And it's a challenge the company is now facing on a new geographic frontier.

In Australia, where the company has offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, and in Auckland, NZ, the focus – along with growth, naturally – is around servicing a customer base which knows the company well or has been referred by a friend.

But Edible Blooms, under the new brand Gift Rebellion, has branched out into the UK, where it is once again facing the task of getting the message out about who they are, and that they are a trusted supplier of that last-minute gift or bouquet for a loved one.

(As an aside, you can't overstate the importance of delivering on time and "as expected" in this business. A late or incorrect delivery can have serious repercussions, especially for those who have left their Valentine's Day or birthday run too late).

The new platforms for customer acquisition are, perhaps not surprisingly, social media such as Instagram and Facebook, and the company is working with "influencers" in this new market to gain a foothold – a path to market which did not exist when the company was founded.

"One of the things I'm certainly recognising is the power of brand. Our most profitable click is a brand click on Google or social – someone that knows our brand and they're looking for us. But there's a cost to build a brand and there's a cost to maintain a brand.

"We're really focusing our resources on our brand ... and we've had the likes of Telstra, National Australia Bank and Star Track ask us to be ambassadors for their brand so that's been really exciting."

Brand collaborations are also possible with emerging businesses, with Ms Jamieson saying bundling her products with other brands, such as luxury luggage company Kinnon for example, is a way for both to add to the customer experience and tap into a larger database of potential customers.

"You don't actually need to go to Google or to Facebook any more; you can say 'well my customer audience is a female, she's this age, she likes doing these things, who else has got a similar audience to me, how can we do a co-promotion?'.  
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"That's where I'm seeing the most value in marketing."

When Edible Blooms started, the product range was based around fresh fruit, providing a novel alternative to the traditional flower bouquet.

It has evolved to more than 300 products, up from an initial nine, including everything from doughnut bouquets to AFL-team themed gift buckets with beer and champagne.

There is also a sub-brand, Green Thumb Gifts, which delivers live plants as gifts.

But for the overseas expansion, the company decided to launch a brand which gave them more freedom to supply a wider range of products.

Gift Rebellion maintains the brand identity of gifting done differently but it has broader appeal for men as well as women and gives the scope to stock virtually any product.

“What Gift Rebellion is positioning us for in London is to be a much bigger gifting company, so Edible Blooms is a product range that’s sold by our London office.

“We’re building a brandnew brand. There’s a lot of support for Australian companies in the UK which is good.”

Ms Jamieson said building awareness was the number one priority at the moment, with customers needing a fair degree of trust to buy online.

That process was helped in the early days through strategies such as being involved in the Telstra Business Awards in Australia, which gave the business credibility.

Ms Jamieson said being a digitally-savvy business, the company received a lot of data and it was enjoyable to use that to drive sales and improve the customer experience.

Her sister and co-founder Abbey Baker is heading up the overseas foray, and the company is not confined to the UK either, but can deliver across Europe.

And there is an Edible Blooms office operating in Geneva, Switzerland, also.

Ms Jamieson says it was gratifying to receive the Canstar award recently, and says she’s still passionate about helping people find the right gift, backed by consistently great customer service.

“We keep innovating all the time. We want to be a point of difference,” she says.

“I still think there are occasions for flowers, I don’t ever want to replace flowers but we want to provide our customers with a chance to do things differently and that’s what our brand essence is all about.

“It’s the unexpected which we like to deliver, and I think that’s why we’ve been able to grow over time and I think we’ve still got a lot of growth ahead of us.”