

VISUAL IMPACT

THE BUSINESS OF LOOKING GOOD

The wedding consultation room at Carolyn Shepard Design Group is “completely void of display items or merchandising product,” says Carolyn Shepard, AIFD. Or, at least, void of *conventional* merchandising.

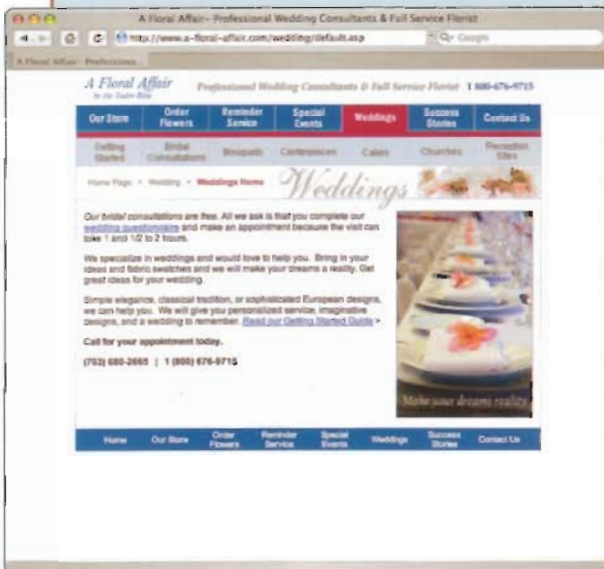
Instead of displaying product brides-to-be can potentially carry down the aisle, the room has walls painted bright green — the shop’s signature color — accented with mounted magazine covers of publications that have covered the shop.

“We have found that merchandising who we are and our vast experience (as documented on the walls) sells us best,” Shepard says. The proof is in the numbers. She says almost every bride that comes for a consultation in books Carolyn Shepard Design Group for her wedding day.



Web Wise

Smart Ways to Win Online Customers



www.a-floral-affair.com

Before brides-to-be walk in A Floral Affair in Woodbridge, Va., the shop already knows what color her bridesmaids will wear, the bride’s favorite flower (and least favorite flower), where the couple is holding the ceremony and reception and their floral budget. Shop owners pull the information from A Floral Affair’s Web site, www.a-floral-affair.com, where brides fill out a wedding questionnaire before scheduling a consultation. The Web site promises the questionnaire will cut down on consultation time and will let the shop offer “the best selections and recommendations” for the bride-to-be.

Part of the Web site’s “Getting Started Guide” for brides also includes a sample price list for wedding flowers that let the couple see how much wedding buds may cost in three different categories: “Lovely,” (the lowest price range), “Celebration,” and “Wow!!!” (the highest price range).