

A STUDY OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF RETAIL
FLORIST BUSINESSES, IN OKLAHOMA

By

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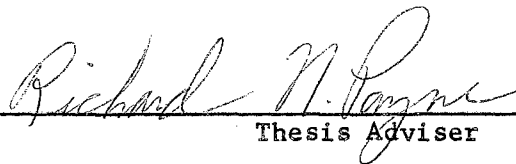
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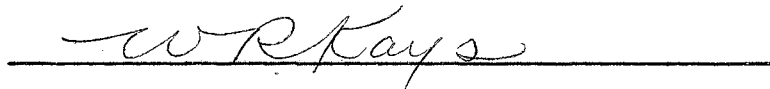
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INTRODUCTION

The retail florist is governed by the Oklahoma Insect Pest and Plant Disease Law (2) which provides for inspection of plant materials in order to control and prevent sale of plants which contain pests and diseases.

The statute requires that persons dealing in the sale or distribution of "nursery stock", which by terminology includes herbaceous plants, decorative plants, flowering plants, bedding plants, flowers or blossoms, and other florists' stock, shall purchase either a Dealer's License Certificate, a Certificate of Inspection, or a Special Nursery Inspection Certificate.

Any dealer not growing at least twenty-five percent of the plants which make up his gross sales who engages in the sale or distribution of "nursery stock" shall first secure a Dealer's License Certificate from the State Board of Agriculture authorizing transaction of business. Over seventy-five percent of Oklahoma's retail florists are in this category.

Any individual or firm which grows more than twenty-five percent of the "nursery stock" which makes up their gross sales must apply for a Certificate of Inspection. An authorized agent shall then make an inspection of his "nursery," which according to the law includes any field, ground, greenhouse, bin, pit, plot or premise where nursery or floral stock is grown, propagated, or sold, and shall issue to the person in charge of the "nursery" a full and complete report of his findings in the course of the inspection. The agent shall then report to the State Board and if the results of the report comply with the law a Certificate of Inspection is issued.

To qualify for a Special Inspection Certificate, the nursery stock must be produced incidental to gardening or farming operations, the grower must not be regularly engaged in the nursery business such as buying nursery stock for resale, the nursery stock must not be advertised for sale, and gross sales from the nursery stock must not exceed one hundred (\$100.00) during the license year.

According to the Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture there are over 400 retail flower shops in Oklahoma. In 1962, three hundred seven (307) of these shops bought the Dealer's License Certificate. The remainder of the florists bought either the Inspection Certificate or the Special Inspection Certificate. During the period that 307 flower shops bought the Dealer's License, 747 retail stores such as variety and grocery stores did the same. No distinction relative to licensing is made between a retail florist and other stores retailing plants and flowers.

Many problems are involved in conducting a successful florist business. The Oklahoma State Florists' Association, Inc. recognized a need to initiate business studies to help improve the retail florist business in Oklahoma. With the state association's support the Oklahoma State University Department of Horticulture and Department of Agricultural Economics consented to undertake a survey study of retail florist businesses in this state.

The work reported herein represents an initial industry study of retail florist establishments in Oklahoma relative to amount of sales, size of business, and methods of management used in the operation of these businesses.

The objectives of the study were to provide an analysis of:

- (1) a broad, general description of the nature of the florist industry in Oklahoma,

- (2) business management practices followed by Oklahoma retail florists, and
- (3) special problems of Oklahoma retail florists which might be more intensively studied in the future.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Fossum (19), there were approximately 12,000 establishments in the United States engaged in commercial production of flower crops in both 1949 and 1959. During this 10-year interval, the wholesale value increased from \$200 million to \$300 million.

In general, prices per unit, dozen, or bunch underwent little change. Consequently, the 50 percent increase in wholesale value of the crops was largely due to increased production.

During this same period that portion of retail floriculture covered by the business census underwent an increase of 30 percent in respect to the number of establishments and 70 percent in relation to the value of sales.

Fossum concluded by stating that the decade of the 1950's found the following related business or economic factors undergoing an increase of about 50 percent: (1) industrial production, (2) florists' crop production, (3) per capita disposable income, (4) all retail trade, (5) consumer expenditures for the goods and services of floriculture, and (6) the retail sales of specialized retail florists and retail growers.

According to the Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture and the Oklahoma State University Department of Horticulture there have been no published research studies conducted concerning business practices of retail florists in Oklahoma, although such organizations as the Florists Telegraph Delivery Association (FTDA) have closely followed various phases of business in the state.

A study of the retail florists in Texas by DeWerth, Sorenson, and Odom (16) identifies the fact that most retail florist establishments in the United States are independently operated. About 85 percent had annual sales of less than \$50,000 in 1954, as compared with 82 percent for all types of retail stores.

They further stated that the average retail florist used little advertising and had not developed a substantial demand for flowers for everyday decorative purposes in the home.

In addition, 36 percent of the firms did a net sales volume of less than \$30,000 per year. Thirty-six percent of the firms reported between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year, and 28 percent reported more than \$50,000.

The researchers indicated that location of a flower shop is of minor importance since it is a retail business which primarily serves the demand created by special occasion buying.

The study showed that flower shop sales were lowest in the late summer and early fall and highest during the 3 winter months. The majority of sales are made by telephone or telegram and the buyer seldom makes a personal selection.

The survey indicated that more than 85 percent of the participating firms kept their own books, and that 75 percent did not keep stock records.

The markup for cut flowers indicated by the Texas florists ranged from 50 to 400 percent. Eighty-two percent of the florists reporting indicated a 300 percent markup. A 3 to 1 markup on pot plants was most frequently mentioned. There was less variation in the markup of gifts and accessories. A 2 to 1 markup represented the choice of over 89 percent of the firms interviewed.

There was much confusion over the markup for design work. Nineteen percent stated that a cost-plus basis was used, but none explained his method. Thirty-five percent did not use a markup charge for design work. A 20 percent charge for design was mentioned most frequently.

A large number of credit sales, 83 percent, was indicated, chiefly due to the great proportion of telephone sales. About 70 percent of the accounts were a month old or older, while 21 percent were from 2 to 3 months old.

The employment of sales people was reported by 61 percent of the firms interviewed. Forty-nine percent indicated that they employed designers. Employees' wages tended to rise while owner's compensation fell as sales volume increased.

The Texas study further indicated that a large majority of the florists were not interested in increasing gross sales either by raising the volume and lowering the markup or by hiring additional labor.

The survey also showed that there was almost a complete lack of adequate records and that delivery was a costly item and an acute problem of the retail flower shop operation.

A recent study in Pennsylvania by Voigt (41) of a limited number of retail florists showed these conclusions: (1) A retail florist should have a better idea of how his net income and other operating aspects of his business compare with similarly situated florists. (2) The largest cost of doing business is the cost of merchandise. The initial areas in which a retailer can make noticeable improvements in his operations are in better buying practices, more profitable selling and better use of as much merchandise as possible. The more successful shops bought in volume those items used regularly, allowed only a minimum loss of perishables by using older flowers first and by using preservatives to extend "shelf-

life" and to assure better customer satisfaction, sold volume through the use of "specials" and good merchandise, and priced the same as, or higher than, competitors' prices. (3) Thorough knowledge of the business is of utmost importance. Unless accurate records are kept, one cannot know how to improve on the operation. (4) Location of the shop is important to future florist success. If it is located in a poor market area, or in a location where procurement of perishables is difficult, it might pay to consider relocation in another town where a more densely populated area could bring greater sales volume. (5) Knowledge of delivery costs is vital so that a decision can be made on the best way to handle this important business cost. (6) Knowledge of competition- its volume, strong points, and weak points-can help sharpen the operation. (7) Efficient use of labor is important.

It is interesting to note that in the Pennsylvania study location with reference to population was considered very important while the Texas study indicated that location within the town was relatively unimportant.

The average net income of the florist in the Pennsylvania project was \$4,911.53 for those in the \$27,000 to \$37,000 gross sales category, \$6,712.18 for those in the \$40,000 to \$57,000 category, \$7,330.49 for those in the \$66,000-\$87,000 group, and \$11,724.22 net income for florists with gross sales of over \$100,000.

Voigt's study also showed that the hourly average wage of the top employee (not including the manager's wage) for the \$27,000 to \$37,000 gross sales category was \$1.00. One dollar and thirty-two cents was the average wage in the \$40,000 to \$57,000 category, \$1.85 was average in the \$66,000 to \$87,000 group, and \$2.17 was the average wage in those shops of over \$100,000 gross sales.

A profit and expense survey of Florist Telegraph Delivery affiliated florists (FTD) (4) revealed that the larger florist establishments spend a greater percentage of the total sales dollar for advertising. In actuality, large shops were spending at least 25 percent more of the sales dollar for advertising than were small shops.

The FTD survey indicated that bad debt losses per sales dollar were twice as great for shops over \$125,000 gross sales as for shops under \$30,000. This ratio held true when compared to both total credit sales and to total sales. This indicates that the ratio of total credit sales to total sales of both groups is approximately the same.

Another area of this survey revealed that the percentage of income derived from cut flowers decreased as the size of the shop increased. Similarly, these stores handled more giftware and miscellaneous merchandise as they increased in size.

Another fact brought out in the employee analysis section of the survey indicated that, based on a unit of \$10,000 annual sales, the greatest number of employees relative to sales volume is employed in the small volume shop and that there is no correlation to the wage expenses of the shop groups. The percentage difference in employees is largely responsible for the marked increase in operating expenses for large shops.

The survey data also showed that delivery expenses are greatest for the florists having the smallest volume of sales. This trend is largely patterned by the costs of delivery borne by the use of company-owned vehicles and participation in delivery pools.

It was indicated throughout the FTD study that the small florists are bearing heavy costs that might be described as "fixed." These costs would remain stable, or at least relatively stable, even if business

volumes were to take a sharp upturn. Those shops which already have more business are apparently putting more dollars per unit of sales into promotions and advertising in order to achieve and maintain a relatively higher level of sales.

Cut flowers accounted for more than 60 percent of annual total dollar sales in all sizes of FTD florist shops.

It is evident from these studies that operational costs are a problem of the retail florist. In connection with this, Parvin and Krone (32) conducted a survey of 54 shops in Michigan. The cooperating florists were grouped into four categories according to their gross sales: (1) less than \$25,000, (2) those between \$25,000 and \$50,000, (3) \$50,000 - \$100,000, and (4) those over \$100,000.

These researchers found that delivery expenses (except salaries) accounted for 4.06, 3.18, 2.92, and 3.27 percent respectively of the total costs of the 4 groups, while advertising (except FTD) accounted for only 3.10, 2.39, 2.21, and 2.48 percent respectively of the total costs. It was further found that sales of gifts and pottery accounted for 3.86, 12.55, 8.61, and 8.19 percent of total sales in each of the 4 shop categories.

Black (14) also emphasized that delivery costs are an important area in which retail shops could make substantial improvements.

Between the years of 1955-58, Kelly (22) conducted experiments in Illinois designed to test consumer acceptance of cut flowers and potted plants offered for sale in selected mass-market retail outlets.

During the 3-year tests a total of 11,496 plants and bunches of flowers were sold through 3 selected outlets. These were a supermarket, a variety store, and a retail flower shop. Approximately 41 percent of the units were sold at the supermarket, 36 percent at the variety store,

and 23 percent at the florist shop. Although the total number of plants sold through the variety store was not as great as through the supermarket, the trend in sales indicated that the variety store was an increasingly acceptable outlet for floricultural products, rising 15.5 percent during the three years.

Weekly sales per variety store averaged 64 units in the second year as compared to 32.5 the first year - an increase of nearly 97 percent. The variety store had the greatest increase in volume between the first and second year, 191 percent compared with 86 percent at the supermarket and 35 percent at the florist shop. Average weekly sales increased further at the variety store and floral shop the third year, but the volume of the supermarket declined 15.5 percent. Gross profits per square foot per week for all space used for selling in the supermarket were \$0.71 in 1956, \$0.68 in 1957, and \$0.67 in 1958. This compares with \$3.18, \$3.13, and \$2.61 per square foot per week from the floricultural display during the three periods of the experiment.

After adjusting gross profit by the cost of the flowers and plants removed for all reasons, the supermarket still had an adjusted gross profit of \$1.15 per square foot per week, the variety store \$1.38, and the florist shop \$0.68.

Krone, (26) commenting on the impact of mass marketing on the florist industry, brought out four important points: "(1) The retail flower shop usually is not located in a position where it can attract sufficient customer traffic, (2) Many retailers are not interested in low margin sales, (3) Too small a percentage of the gross volume of sales in many retail flower stores today constitutes cut flower or potted plant sales, and (4) Many retailers are not interested in sales of loose flowers, or in special sales promotions, or in anything but artistic arrangements

and perhaps they are right. It's the one thing that they have to sell that isn't available in a chain store -- plus, of course, delivery service, telephone service and credit."

In seeming contrast to the previous study, The Canadian Florist (12) reports that cash and carry flower "supermarkets" have been successful in France and that there are at least four of these shops in Paris alone. Every item is plainly marked and the customer serves himself. No design work of any kind is done. The shop sells nothing but flowers and plants, cash and carry. The result is a price level at least 50 percent below that of regular flower shops. In addition, the shop is usually open 12 hours a day and as a result average daily sales are unusually high.

As early as 1954 the School of Business at the University of Illinois (1) conducted a study of overhead and markup in seven types of stores. These findings were reported on the basis of the price at which the stores studied would sell a pair of nylon stockings costing \$0.50 a pair in gross lots. If sold in a flower shop the price would be \$1.23. A jeweler would ask \$1.01. A furniture and radio store would price them at \$0.92, a department store \$0.79, a drug store \$0.73, and a supermarket \$0.62.

In an article in The Michigan Florist, L. J. Tolle (39) states, "Cooperative allied florists' advertising, struggling for survival, will, I think, gradually grow and succeed in limited areas. We should be aware that our industry has not, to date, ever had such advertising programs and therefore has never experienced their effects. As these programs grow and mature we can expect the advertising to become less "shot-gun" and more "rifle". We shall begin to advertise specifics (flower types, colors, and assemblies) instead of "flowers-in-general".

"This means that the flowers advertised will be the flowers sold. For this reason, producers -- especially the specialists -- will need to share the advertising costs and even develop their own private programs to get their share of sales.

"The advertising programs of the retail florist will also need to emphasize the distinctive nature of florists as sellers of flowers. This will be a natural consequence of the increase in mass-market sales, making it necessary to tell the consuming public what it gets from a florist which it cannot get elsewhere. We shall see in the advertising programs an increased emphasis on the "service" features of flower stores: credit, delivery, professional assistance, wider selection, etc., all in an effort to persuade the consumer that these features of flower buying also have value."

Sorenson, Hammond, and DeWerth (34) indicate that wholesale florists are concerned with the conditions and problems of both retail flower shop owners and growers. When wholesalers were asked what information and research they considered necessary to improve their service and reduce costs, they listed the following: (1) credit studies, (2) business education for the retailer and the grower to develop better business management on the part of both, (3) a more accurate knowledge of the types of flowers available, and (4) continued emphasis on the solution of crop production problems. The wholesalers also indicated that the major marketing problems were (1) competition with flowers from out-of-state that sell for less than production costs in Texas, (2) poor quality flowers, and (3) attracting more consumers to the use of florists' products.

The advantages and disadvantages of telephone, mail questionnaire, and personal interview techniques of collecting data were considered.

According to Blankenship (15), the most commonly claimed advantage of the mail questionnaire is economy. But since the number of returns commonly does not exceed 15 percent, the cost of each returned questionnaire may be higher than previously calculated. One distinct advantage of the mail questionnaire is that it eliminates possible interviewer bias. On the other hand the greatest deficiency is the lack of assurance that a representative group of persons will reply.

Blankenship further states, that the chief advantage of the personal interview is that it permits rigid control of the sample of respondents. It also permits the use of questions of a wider scope and a more complicated nature. It is however, more expensive and introduces the possibility of interviewer bias.

In discussing the merits of the telephone, Blankenship mentions that the method results in a random selection and rapid results, but that the expense is a disadvantage.

Ferber (18) concludes that mail questionnaires are less expensive per response and actually produce more frank answers. In a number of instances though, omissions require follow-ups and causes for attitudes are difficult to obtain. Mail surveys are like contests, according to Payne (33). Respondents may find help from references or consult friends to obtain answers for a mail questionnaire.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

In January, 1963, a questionnaire (see appendix pages 64-66) was mailed to approximately 400 retail florists in Oklahoma.

It was decided that the mail questionnaire would be used for three reasons. (1) It was more economical. (2) It was thought that the florists would be more willing to supply answers to specific questions concerning income and wages by mail rather than by personal interview. (3) It was believed that contact with all florists in the state would develop rapport and build up confidence that is so vital among the individual businessmen, the state association, and the university. It was hoped that by handling this initial study in a methodical, informative, yet highly confidential manner many florists would share in the results, benefit from them, and encourage others to do so in later studies.

Details of the development and mailing of the questionnaire follow.

Questionnaire Construction

Since construction of the questionnaire was essential to the success of the study, questionnaires used in other research projects were studied to aid in the preparation of questions.

It was considered very important that each florist be assured that no information received through the questionnaire would be identified with individuals, but would be used only in compiled form. In order to assure the florist of this intention the title of the questionnaire was "Confidential Questionnaire for Retail Florists." The last page (see appendix page 69) provided space for, and urged the florist to include,

any comments or suggestions which he might wish to provide or considered pertinent. The last statement suggested that he not sign his name unless he so desired.

In the interests of clarity, brief questions were used. Only one question (Number 15) was longer than twelve words.

If the question required an affirmative or negative response the words YES and NO were written beside the question and blanks provided so that only a check mark would be necessary to indicate an answer. (See questions 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 15, and 21).

Questions which dealt with gross sales and net income provided grouped ranges which included all possible answers. Blanks were provided so that only a check mark was necessary to indicate the category which pertained to the florist completing the questionnaire. (See questions 5, 6, and 8). It was felt that by giving the florist an opportunity to indicate a range as his answer less time and minimum reluctance would be realized in answering questions concerning income.

Each word in individual questions was made as clear and precise as possible. If a question still held the possibility of misinterpretation an explanation was made beneath the question. (See questions 8, 11, and 14).

In these ways, the questions were worded to return relevant, specific, and valuable information, but yet be concise, easily read, easily understood, and easily answered.

Testing the Questionnaire

To gain confidence concerning the comprehensiveness and validity of the questionnaire, a copy was sent to each of five members of a "statistical research" committee of florists and wholesalers appointed by the president of the Oklahoma State Florists' Association. They

were asked to criticize and evaluate the work and return suggestions for improvement.

The committee's suggestions for improvement were evaluated and used in improving the questionnaire. Suggestions to include certain omitted questions, to ask a larger number of questions, and to make the questions more specific were of substantial help.

The revised questionnaire was then given to other members of the Department of Horticulture and suggestions for improvement were requested. The questionnaire was then taken to (1) a professor of journalism, who is noted for his successful work with questionnaires, (2) an agriculture finance professor, (3) a social psychologist, and (4) an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture who is experienced in surveying farmers. In each case their suggestions were considered, evaluated, and whenever possible, incorporated in the questionnaire. The final form of the questionnaire was then sent to the Oklahoma State Florists' Association committee for evaluation and approval.

The Cover Letter

A cover letter (see appendix page 63) was developed to accompany the questionnaire. The letter explained the nature of the study and pointed out that the questionnaire was being sent to all florists. It was felt that this explanation would tend to eliminate the impression that a particular business was under study while others were not.

The letter further explained that returned information would be held in the utmost confidence. This explanation was underlined to add emphasis.

A list of names and addresses of current retail florists in Oklahoma was compiled from a directory published by the Oklahoma State Board of

Agriculture and from an Oklahoma State Florists' Association membership list. Each letter was individually typed on a "Rova-typewriter"^{1/} and the individual florist's name and address was used in the inside address in an attempt to make the letter completely personal. Each letter was then individually signed by the Head of the Department of Horticulture, W. R. Kays, by Professor R. N. Payne, and by the author, Mac Irving.

Immediately following the letter there was an attached sheet entitled "Important Points to Remember." (See appendix page 68). This page stressed that effort in filling out the questionnaire was appreciated, that the information would be handled in utmost confidence, and that the florists would share in the results of the study.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope was then provided in which the questionnaire could be placed and returned to Professor R. N. Payne, Department of Horticulture, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

The cover letter, "points to remember" page, self-addressed, stamped envelope, and questionnaire were then placed in a large envelope and mailed.

Two weeks after the questionnaire was mailed, a letter was sent to each florist encouraging him to send in the questionnaire if he had not done so. It was further explained that there was no way of knowing who had returned the questionnaire and to disregard the letter if the questionnaire had been returned.

A time of approximately two and one-half months was allowed for receipt of as many of the questionnaires as possible. The information received was compiled and used to obtain the results of the study shown

^{1/} Rova-typewriter located in the President's Office, Oklahoma State University.

in the following chapter.

RESULTS

From the 420 questionnaires which were mailed, 100 were returned which could be used in the study. The 100 which were used represented slightly over 23.5 percent of the total number mailed. Several additional questionnaires were also returned which were only partially answered, or explained that the persons were no longer in the florist business.

It is important to note, however, that all of the 100 florists did not answer every question; therefore, the number of participating florists for the various questions was not constant.

The data in Table I show that the greatest number (28) of participating florists in the study were from cities with populations greater than 50,000 people. The second largest group (14) were from towns having populations of 2,501 - 5,000 people. The smallest number of participating florists (4) were from towns having less than 1,000 population.

The population category having the largest percentage participation was the 10,001 - 20,000 population group in which thirteen (36.1 percent) usable questionnaires were received from a total number of thirty-six retail establishments in towns of this size.

The average number of flower shops and greenhouses per town or city increases as the population category increases in size, with a very sharp increase in number of establishments between the 20,000 - 50,000 and over 50,000 population categories.

It is interesting to note from the data in Table II that the group of florists participating in this study were distributed very similarly, relative to population of their towns and cities, to the total distri-

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES IN THE VARIOUS POPULATION
CATEGORIES OF TOWNS AND CITIES IN OKLAHOMA

Population categories of towns & cities in Oklahoma	No. of towns & cities in Oklahoma in each category ^{1/}	Total no. of flower shops & greenhouses in each category ^{2/}	Av. no. of flower shops & greenhouses per town	No. of questionnaires returned & used from each category ^{3/}	Percent of questionnaires returned & used of total flower shops & greenhouses in each category
Less than 1,000	845	29	.034	4	13.5%
1,000 - 2,500	79	77	.98	12	15.7%
2,501 - 5,000	36	69	1.9	14	20.3%
5,001 - 10,000	26	69	2.7	12	17.3%
10,001 - 20,000	12	36	3.0	13	36.1%
20,001 - 50,000	9	65	7.2	12	18.4%
Over 50,000	3	120	40.0	28	23.3%

^{1/} 1960 Census population as shown for incorporated places only.

^{2/} As shown by a "Directory of Oklahoma Flower Shops and Greenhouses," August, 1962.

Oklahoma Board of Agriculture. (Firms doing wholesale business only were excluded).

^{3/} Ninety-five of the 100 participating florists gave the population of their town or city.

TABLE II
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO POPULATION CATEGORIES OF THE
 TOTAL NUMBER OF OKLAHOMA FLOWER SHOPS AND GREENHOUSES IN
 COMPARISON WITH THE RETAIL FLORISTS
 PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

Population categories of towns & cities in Oklahoma	No. of towns & cities in Oklahoma in each category ^{1/}	Percent of total no. of flower shops & greenhouses in Oklahoma in each population category ^{2/}	Percent of total no. of participating flower shops in each population category ^{3/}
Less than 1,000	845	6.23	4.21%
1,000 to 2,500	79	16.55	12.63
2,501 to 5,000	36	14.83	14.73
5,001 to 10,000	26	14.83	12.63
10,001 to 20,000	12	7.74	13.69
20,001 to 50,000	9	13.97	12.63
Over 50,000	3	25.80	29.48

^{1/} 1960 Census population as shown for incorporated places only.

^{2/} As shown by "Directory of Oklahoma Flower Shops and Greenhouses," August, 1962. Oklahoma Board of Agriculture. (Firms doing wholesale business only were excluded)

^{3/} Ninety-five of the 100 participating florists gave the population of their town or city.

bution of retail florists and greenhouses in Oklahoma.

Table III indicates the distribution of gross sales. Fifty-six percent of the florists reported gross sales of less than \$30,000, 24 percent of the total were between \$30,000 and \$75,000, and 20 percent had gross sales of over \$75,000.

The distribution of wholesale purchases is shown in Table IV. Almost seventy percent of the 92 reporting florists indicated that their annual wholesale purchases did not exceed \$20,000.

Net income distribution is shown in Table V. Thirty percent of the 92 reporting florists indicated that their annual net income was less than \$3,000. Fifteen percent reported incomes between \$5,000 to \$6,000 and 15 percent reported over \$10,000 income, while only one of the 92 indicated his net income to be between \$8,000 and \$9,000. It is interesting to note the large number of florists at both the high and low ends of the income range.

The estimated capital investment in the florist business of the responding florists is shown in Table VI. Over 73 percent of the reporting florists had a capital investment of less than \$30,000, 6.8 percent reported between \$30,001 and \$50,000 and 19.5 percent indicated an investment over \$50,000.

The data in Figure 1 show the estimated capital investments of florists in the various gross sales categories. Those reporting annual gross sales of less than \$10,000 had an average capital investment of \$3,900, while the capital investment of those grossing over \$100,000 was \$99,818. The average capital investment of all florists reporting was \$31,127. The reported investments for florists grossing \$75,000 - \$100,000 were unusually low, averaging only \$17,600 which did not follow the trend shown for the other gross sales categories.

TABLE III

ANNUAL GROSS SALES CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION OF NINETY-SIX
PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Annual Gross Sales Category	Number of florists report- ing in each category	Percent of total number (96) of florists report- ing in each category
Less than \$10,000	17	17.7%
\$10,000 to \$20,000	19	19.8
\$20,000 to \$30,000	18	18.7
\$30,000 to \$40,000	9	9.4
\$40,000 to \$50,000	5	5.2
\$50,000 to \$75,000	9	9.4
\$75,000 to \$100,000	5	5.2
Over \$100,000	14	14.6

TABLE IV

ANNUAL WHOLESALE PURCHASES CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION OF
NINETY-TWO PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Wholesale Purchases Categories	Number of florists report- ing in each category	Percent of total number (92) of florists reporting in each category
Less than \$10,000	36	39.1%
\$10,000 to \$20,000	28	30.4
\$20,000 to \$30,000	9	9.8
\$30,000 to \$40,000	8	8.7
\$40,000 to \$50,000	2	2.2
\$50,000 to \$75,000	3	3.3
Over \$75,000	6	6.5

TABLE V

ANNUAL NET INCOME CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION OF NINETY-TWO
PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Net Income Category	Number of florists re- porting in each category	Percent of total number (92) of retail florists reporting in each category
Less than \$3,000	28	30.43%
\$3,000 to \$4,000	7	7.60
\$4,000 to \$5,000	9	9.78
\$5,000 to \$6,000	14	15.21
\$6,000 to \$7,000	6	6.52
\$7,000 to \$8,000	6	6.52
\$8,000 to \$9,000	1	1.08
\$9,000 to \$10,000	7	7.60
Over \$10,000	14	15.21

TABLE VI
 CAPITAL INVESTMENT CATEGORY DISTRIBUTION
 OF EIGHTY-SEVEN REPORTING
 RETAIL FLORISTS

Capital Investment Categories	Number of florists report- ing in each category	Percent of total number (87) of retail florists reporting in each category
\$5,000 or less	19	21.84%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	17	19.54
\$10,001 to \$20,000	15	17.24
\$20,001 to \$30,000	13	14.94
\$30,001 to \$50,000	6	6.89
Over \$50,000	17	19.54

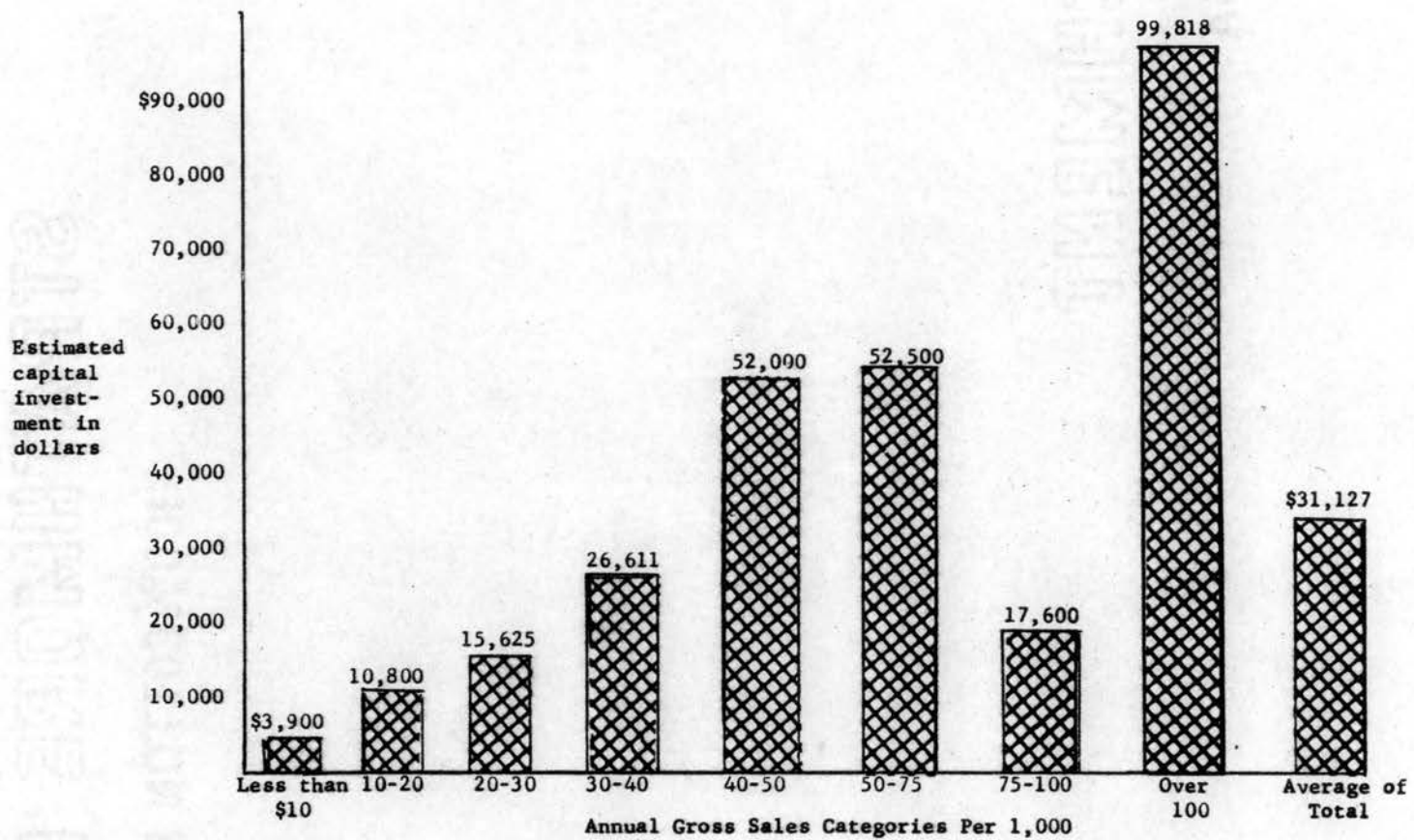


Figure 1. Average capital investment of eighty-five retail florist businesses according to annual gross sales categories.^{1/}

^{1/} Eighty-five of the 100 participating florists answered the capital investment & gross sales questions.

The individual florist in this study had been in business an average of 17.7 years. Figure 2 shows that of the 97 who indicated the number of years in business, 15 florists (15.4 percent) reported being in business over 30 years. Fifteen (15.4 percent) reported between 21 and 30 years, 23 (23.7 percent) between 16 and 20 years, 12 (12.3 percent) reported between 11 and 15 years, 15 (15.4 percent) between 6 and 10 years, and 17 (17.5 percent) reported being in business 5 or fewer years. Table VII shows that participating florists in towns with up to 5,000 population averaged fewer years in business than florists from the larger towns and cities.

A comparison of the florists in the eight categories of annual gross sales in relation to their number of years in business is shown in Figure 3. The shops grossing between 40 and 50 thousand dollars annually averaged the greatest number of years in business (32), with those grossing 100,000 dollars or over following closely with an average of 28.35 years in business. Shops with the lowest gross sales (below \$10,000) also averaged the fewest years in business (7.81 years).

It is evident from the data in Table VIII that the population category is very important in relation to gross sales. For example, the fourteen shops reporting gross sales of over \$100,000 were all located in cities with over 20,000 population as were the four firms reporting \$75,000 - \$100,000 gross sales. None of the shops in towns with 20,000 or fewer had gross sales in excess of the \$50,000 - \$75,000 range. It can be seen however, that the businesses located in cities with over 50,000 population were distributed from the lowest to the highest gross sales categories.

Table IX shows that 35 (41 percent of the total) florists who answered both the population and income questions reported net incomes of

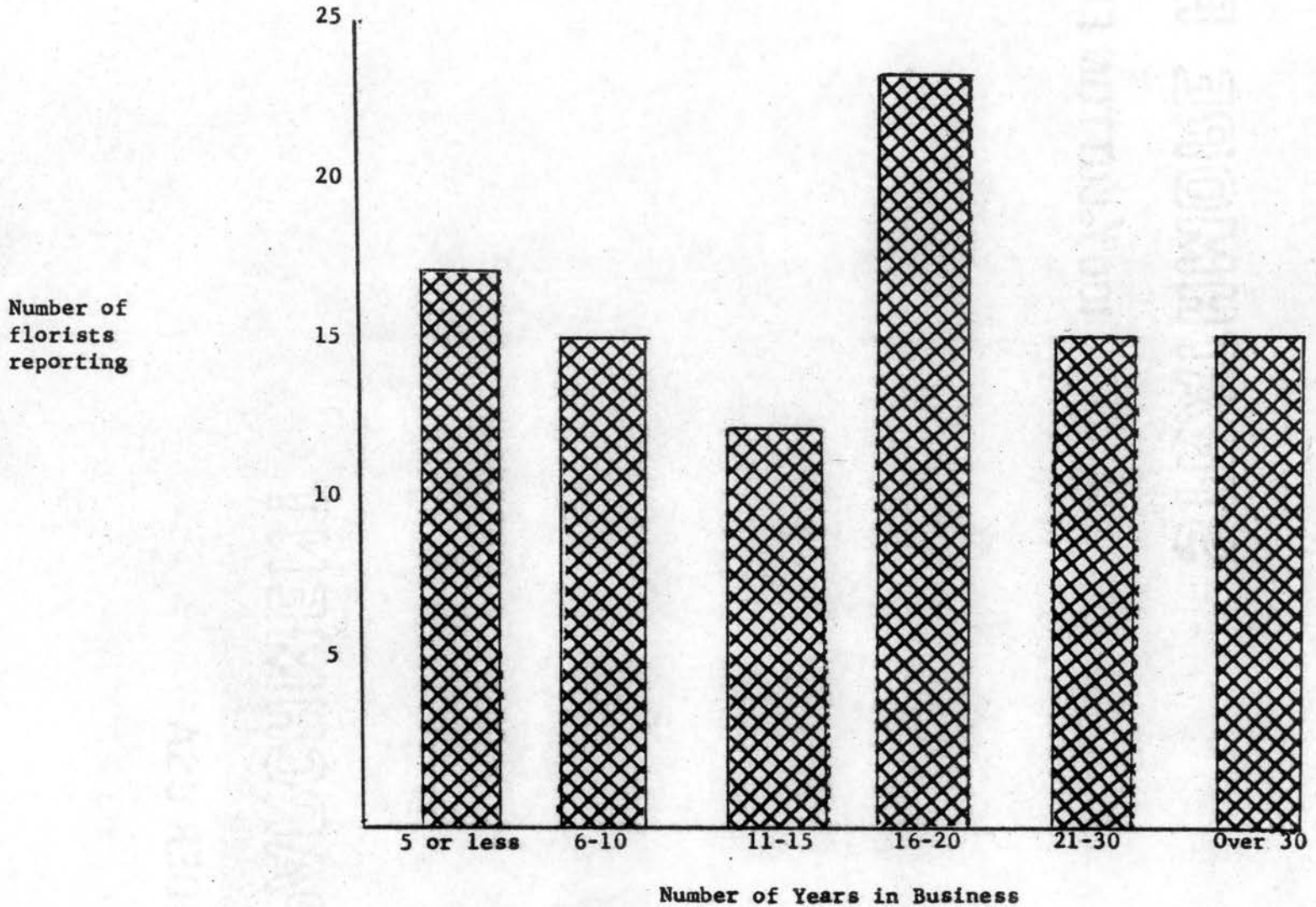


Figure 2. Number of years in business of ninety-seven participating retail florists.

TABLE VII

AVERAGE YEARS IN BUSINESS OF NINETY-FOUR REPORTING RETAIL
FLORISTS ACCORDING TO POPULATION CATEGORIES OF
THEIR TOWNS AND CITIES^{1/}

Population categories of towns and cities	Average years in business of 94 reporting retail florists
Less than 1,000	6.25
1,000 to 2,500	10.15
2,501 to 5,000	13.23
5,001 to 10,000	20.91
10,001 to 20,000	22.76
20,001 to 50,000	20.08
Over 50,000	21.14

^{1/} Ninety-four of the 100 participating florists answered the questions concerning population and years in business.

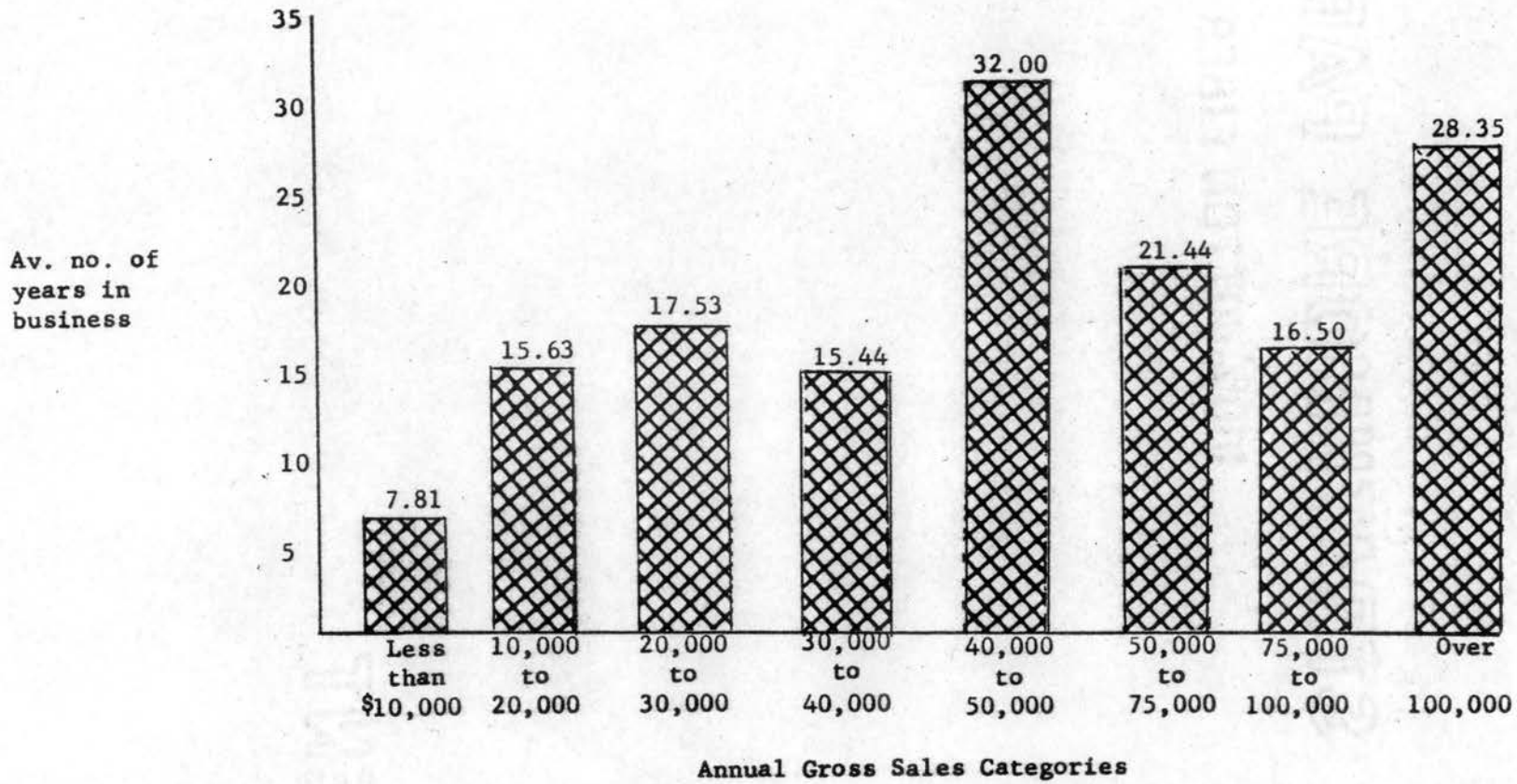


Figure 3. Average number of years in business of ninety-seven retail florists according to their annual gross sales volume.

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF NINETY PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLOWER SHOPS
 ACCORDING TO POPULATION AND GROSS SALES^{1/}

Population categories	Total no. of florists reporting	Annual Gross Sales Category							
		Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000
Less than 1,000	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1,000 to 2,500	12	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
2,501 to 5,000	10	-	4	3	3	-	-	-	-
5,001 to 10,000	11	-	2	4	3	2	-	-	-
10,001 to 20,000	13	-	4	3	1	1	4	-	-
20,001 to 50,000	12	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	7
Over 50,000	28	3	3	7	1	1	4	2	7

^{1/} A total of ninety of the 100 participating florists indicated both their gross sales category and population of their town or city.

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF EIGHTY-NINE PARTICIPATING RETAIL
FLOWER SHOPS ACCORDING TO POPULATION
AND ANNUAL NET INCOME^{1/}

Population categories	Total no. of florists reporting	Annual Net Income Categories								
		Less than \$3,000	3,000 to 4,000	4,000 to 5,000	5,000 to 6,000	6,000 to 7,000	7,000 to 8,000	8,000 to 9,000	9,000 to 10,000	Over 10,000
Less than 1,000	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1,000 to 2,500	12	9	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
2,501 to 5,000	11	1	-	2	4	-	1	-	3	-
5,001 to 10,000	11	-	2	-	3	1	1	1	-	3
10,001 to 20,000	12	3	1	2	1	2	2	-	-	1
20,001 to 50,000	11	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	6
Over 50,000	28	6	2	4	5	2	1	-	2	6

^{1/} Eighty-nine florists reported both population and net income categories.

\$6,000 or over. Nineteen of these florists were located in cities with over 20,000 population. Fifty-nine percent of the florists reported net incomes below \$6,000, and 37 percent of the 59 percent were located in cities with over 20,000 population. The majority, 63 percent, were located in towns with up to 20,000 population.

Ninety-one florists answered question 1 which was "What percent of your total business income do you estimate the florist business to represent?" As shown in Figure 4, 11 indicated 30 percent or less, 13 reported between 31-60 percent, 11 between 61-99 percent, and 56 indicated 100 percent. Thus, over half of the participating florists derived all their income from the retail flower business. The great majority of the florists (91) reported that shops were housed in structures other than homes. Only eight of ninety-nine reporting florists indicated that their shops were not in separate structures from their homes. (See question 3, appendix page 64).

Forty percent of the participating florists reported that they produced some greenhouse flowers which were sold in their retail flower shops, while 60 percent indicated that they did not. Eighty percent of the 39 florists growing flowers in greenhouses indicated the value of this production. The range in value was from \$300 to \$86,000, while the average value of greenhouse production was \$15,119.

Ninety-two florists answered question 2 as to "How many full-time personnel does your flower business employ?" The average number of full-time employees was 3.19. The data in Table X show that the average number of full-time employees varied according to the annual gross sales category of the shops, ranging from an average of 0.68 employees in shops grossing less than \$10,000 to 9.23 employees in shops grossing over \$100,000. Florists in the \$50,000-\$75,000 gross sales category averaged

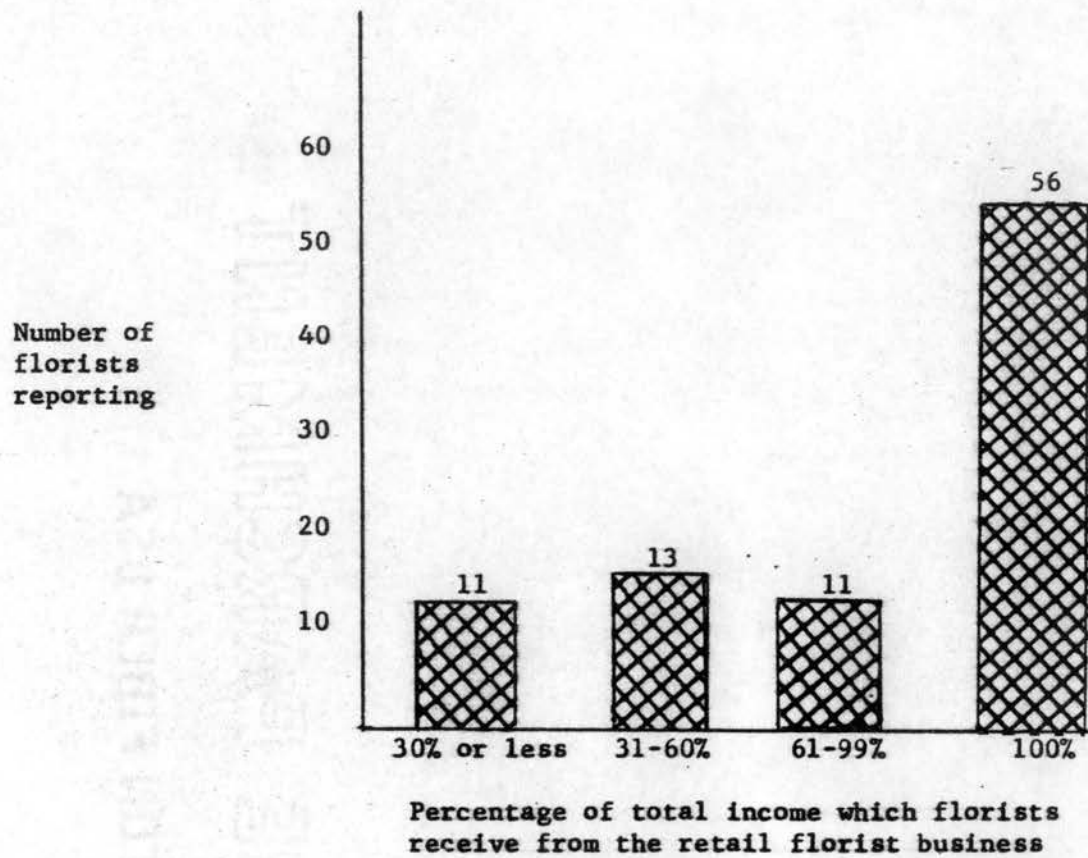


Figure 4. Estimated percentage that the retail florist business represents of total income as reported by ninety-one florists.

TABLE X
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES OF EIGHTY-NINE
 PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS ACCORDING
 TO GROSS SALES CATEGORIES^{1/}

Gross Sales Category	Average Number of Full-time Employees
Less than \$10,000	0.68
10,000 to 20,000	1.68
20,000 to 30,000	1.82
30,000 to 40,000	2.50
40,000 to 50,000	4.00
50,000 to 75,000	3.22
75,000 to 100,000	5.60
Over 100,000	9.23

^{1/} Eighty-nine of the 100 participating florists answered the gross sales and full-time employee questions.

approximately one less employee than those in the \$40,000-\$50,000 category, an exception to the general trend indicated in this table.

Ninety-eight florists answered the question, "Do you hire any floral designers?" (Question 9, see appendix page 65). Fifty-eight did hire designers while 40 indicated they did not. The average number of designers was 1.7 for each of the 58 establishments, but the average for all businesses in the study was 1.0. The wages paid to floral designers are shown in Table XI. Most designers were paid an hourly wage which averaged \$1.26 per hour, while those paid weekly averaged \$73.91 per week. Only four firms indicated that they paid their designers on a monthly basis. This monthly wage ranged from \$200-\$400 per month and averaged \$343.75.

Ninety-three florists answered the question, "Do you hire any sales people in your flower business?" (Question 10, appendix page 65). Fifty reported that they did hire sales people, and 43 reported they did not. Of the 44 who indicated the number of sales persons they hired, the average was 1.6 sales persons per business, while the average for all the shops studied was 0.68.

Sixty-four florists participating in the study indicated the use of extra hired help to cover such peak rush periods as Christmas and Easter. These florists reported the use of an average of 418 man hours of extra help annually. The range of man hours of extra help per year used to derive this average was very great, with florists reporting from 24 hours to 3,500 hours of extra help per year.

Seventy-eight florists indicated the hourly wage paid for extra hired help for peak periods. This information is contained in Table XII. Fifty-one and three-tenths percent of the responding florists indicated a wage between \$0.81 and \$1.00, while only 8 percent paid wages between

TABLE XI
 AVERAGE WAGES PAID TO FLORAL DESIGNERS BY FIFTY-EIGHT
 PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Method of Payment	Number of Florists	Average Wage	Range
Hourly	32	\$1.26/hr.	\$0.50 to \$2.00
Weekly	22	\$73.91/wk.	\$35.00 to \$100.00
Monthly	4	\$343.75/mo.	\$200.00 to \$400.00
Daily	0	0.00	0.00 0.00
Did not hire designers	40	----	----- -----

TABLE XII

WAGES PAID FOR EXTRA HIRED HELP FOR PEAK PERIODS BY
SEVENTY-EIGHT PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Wage Per Hour	Number of Florists Reporting
\$0.80 or less	14
\$0.81 to 1.00	40
\$1.01 to 1.20	6
\$1.20 to 1.40	14
Over \$1.40	4

\$1.01 and \$1.20. The average hourly wage paid for extra help was \$1.02.

Eighty-five responding florists indicated that their average yearly expense for advertising was \$851.18. The annual advertising expense for each gross sales category is shown in Table XIII. Generally, the advertising expenses increased progressively as the amount of gross sales increased. Only those shops grossing \$30-40,000 were an exception to this trend. The advertising investment for the less than \$10,000 gross sales category was \$166.38, while it was \$2,966.66 for those grossing over \$100,000. Sixty-eight of the florists indicated that they advertised in newspapers and that 50.3 percent of their advertising expenses went to that medium. Forty respondents used radio and spent 23.4 percent there, 37 indicated the use of direct mail advertising and spent 18.1 percent in that area, eight used television and spent 43.1 percent of their advertising for it, while 55 used advertising means other than newspapers, radio, direct mail, and television and spent 40.5 percent of the advertising expense in this manner. The items which make up this category will be enumerated later. (See appendix page 69).

The florists were asked to indicate the amount of markup on cut flowers, potted plants, and gifts and pottery. Table XIV shows the average percent markup according to the gross sales categories. The markup on cut flowers ranged from 40 to 400 percent with the average being 195 percent. The markup on potted plants extended from 50 to 300 percent with the average being 180 percent. The markup on gifts and pottery was very consistent as evidenced by the fact that 84 percent of the florists used a markup of 100 percent for this item. The average was 100.3 percent.

It is interesting that florists grossing over \$100,000 had the highest average mark-up on both cut flowers and potted plants.

TABLE XIII
 ANNUAL ADVERTISING EXPENSES ACCORDING TO GROSS SALES
 CATEGORIES OF EIGHTY-FIVE PARTICIPATING
 RETAIL FLORISTS

Gross Sales Category	Annual Advertising Expense
Less than \$10,000	\$ 166.38
10,000 to 20,000	221.33
20,000 to 30,000	543.05
30,000 to 40,000	374.87
40,000 to 50,000	688.75
50,000 to 75,000	1,193.12
75,000 to 100,000	1,675.00
Over 100,000	2,966.66
Over-all Average	\$ 851.18

1/ Eighty-five of the 100 participating florists answered the gross sales and advertising questions.

TABLE XIV

PERCENT MARKUP ON CUT FLOWERS, POTTED PLANTS, AND
GIFTS AND POTTERY ACCORDING TO GROSS SALES
CATEGORIES BY NINETY PARTICIPATING
RETAIL FLORISTS^{1/}

Gross Sales Category	Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000	Total Average
Number in Category	13	19	18	8	5	9	4	14	
Average Markup on Cut Flowers	145.83%	183.68	214.72	215.62	180.00	183.33	212.50	218.57	195.00
Average Markup on Potted Plants	161.53	169.73	189.17	202.77	175.00	155.55	187.50	211.50	180.00
Average Markup on Gifts & Pottery	96.63	104.68	96.87	100.00	90.00	104.44	112.50	92.85	100.3

^{1/} Ninety of the 100 participating florists answered the gross sales and markup questions.

Table XV shows the categories of markup for cut flowers in relation to the gross sales categories. Twenty-three and nine-tenths percent of the 88 answering florists indicated a markup of 100 percent or less, 41 percent used between 101 and 200 percent markup, 34.1 percent reported markup between 201 and 300 percent, while only 1.1 percent used over 300 percent markup.

Table XVI shows the percentage distribution of sales of cut flowers, potted plants, and gifts and pottery according to the gross sales categories. The \$20,000 to \$30,000 category indicated the highest percent of cut flower sales. The less than \$10,000 category reported the highest percent of potted plants and gift and pottery sales. The overall average of percent distribution of sales was cut flowers 54 percent, potted plants 32 percent, and gifts and pottery 14 percent.

The respondents' answers concerning distribution of sales for certain occasions are shown in Table XVII. The \$10,000 to \$20,000 gross sales category showed the highest percent (62.44) of funeral work, and florists grossing \$75,000 or over had less funeral work than those with lower annual gross sales. Florists in the less than \$10,000 category had the highest percent (14.50) of wedding work. This phase of the business made up the smallest average portion of the total sales reported. The \$75,000 to \$100,000 group showed the highest percent (25.00) of hospital work, and the \$50,000 to \$75,000 category reported the highest percent (18.33) of holiday sales. The average percent distribution of sales for certain occasions for all florists reporting was funeral 49.53 percent, wedding 7.35 percent, hospital 18.33, holidays 14.8 percent, and others (such as for everyday sales for the home) 9.79 percent.

The florists were asked to estimate the percent of retail flower business done by (1) cash and carry, (2) personal selection without

TABLE XV

PERCENT MARKUP ON CUT FLOWERS ACCORDING TO GROSS SALES
 CATEGORIES BY EIGHTY-EIGHT PARTICIPATING
 RETAIL FLORISTS^{1/}

Gross Sale Category	Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000	Total Average
Number in Each Category	12	18	18	8	5	9	4	14	
Percent Markup:									
100% or less	6	6	2	-	3	2	-	2	21
101 to 200%	5	5	10	1	1	4	3	7	36
201 to 300%	1	7	6	7	1	3	1	4	30
Over 300%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

^{1/} Eighty-eight florists reported both markup and gross sales categories.

TABLE XVI

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESS AS TO CUT FLOWERS, POTTED
PLANTS, AND GIFTS AND POTTERY ACCORDING TO
GROSS SALES CATEGORIES OF EIGHTY-TWO
PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS^{1/}

Gross Sales Category	Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000	Over- all Average
Number in Each Category	15	18	17	9	5	9	5	14	
Cut Flowers	45.00%	60.27	60.29	58.44	57.00	54.44	47.60	46.20	54.00
Potted Plants	34.71	30.27	30.05	28.33	33.60	29.00	28.00	34.00	32.00
Gifts and Pottery	22.42	9.44	10.82	13.22	9.40	16.55	19.20	19.21	14.00

^{1/} Figures are non-additive since they are rounded and all florists did not account for 100% of their sales.

TABLE XVII

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF SALES FOR FUNERALS, WEDDINGS, HOSPITALS, HOLIDAYS,
AND OTHERS ACCORDING TO GROSS SALES CATEGORIES OF
NINETY PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS^{1/}

Gross Sales Category	Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000	Over- all Average
Number in Each Category	12	18	18	9	5	9	5	14	
Funeral	49.00%	62.44	50.27	55.55	59.00	45.55	34.40	39.92	49.53
Wedding	14.50	5.23	6.94	6.00	5.40	5.77	9.00	6.85	7.35
Hospital	16.63	18.82	19.44	9.00	13.20	17.00	25.00	22.07	18.33
Holidays	12.91	10.12	15.44	15.55	14.20	18.33	16.00	15.85	14.80
Others (such as everyday sales for the home)	6.91	5.50	7.88	12.77	7.40	13.33	16.60	14.57	9.79

^{1/} Figures are non-additive since they are rounded and not all florists accounted for 100% of their sales.

cash and carry, (3) telephone, (4) wire orders, and (5) others. The percent of business realized by these methods of purchase is shown in Table XVIII. The telephone method of purchase was by far the most used, representing nearly 60 percent of all purchases. The cash and carry method followed with 15.8 percent, wire orders had 12.0 percent, personal selection 11.7 percent, and others 2.8 percent.

In estimating the amount of cash and credit sales done by their businesses, the florists indicated an average of 25.52 percent cash against 74.48 percent credit. The average percent of cash and credit business done by florists in the various gross sales categories is shown in Table XIX. It is interesting to note that the less than \$10,000 gross sales category reported an average cash business of 45.06 percent, while the over \$100,000 category reported their cash sales to represent only 14.64 percent.

Forty-one florists indicated that they did have a delivery charge limit, while 56 indicated that they did not. The average charge limit of those 41 who indicated that they did have a limit was \$2.24. Fifty-eight florists indicated a maximum distance for delivery, whereas 34 indicated none. The respondents who indicated the use of a maximum distance delivery limit mentioned the city limits most often. The majority of the remaining answers ranged from 10 to 25 miles.

Eleven and eight-tenths percent of 93 reporting florists indicated that they worked 40 or less hours each week in their business, and 22.6 percent said 41 to 50 hours per week. Thirty-seven and six tenths percent fell between 51 and 60 hours, 20 percent indicated between 61 and 70 hours work week, and 7.5 percent reported working more than 70 hours.

TABLE XVIII

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESS AS TO METHOD OF PURCHASE ACCORDING
TO GROSS SALES CATEGORIES OF EIGHTY-SEVEN
PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS^{1/}

Gross Sales Category	Less than \$10,000	10,000 to 20,000	20,000 to 30,000	30,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 75,000	75,000 to 100,000	Over 100,000	Over- all Average
Number in Each Category	14	17	16	9	4	9	4	14	
Cash and Carry	16.07%	8.76	12.25	24.22	13.75	8.88	8.00	9.50	15.8
Personal Selection	16.76	12.05	7.58	9.55	11.25	7.44	10.50	9.78	11.7
Telephone	49.50	64.47	69.06	53.75	68.00	70.88	66.67	64.76	59.4
Wire Orders	5.00	13.76	12.87	11.42	17.50	12.22	11.66	13.07	12.0
Others	9.00	4.88	1.06	1.25	2.50	0.0	1.50	1.50	2.8

^{1/} Figures are non-additive since they are rounded and not all florists accounted for 100% of their sales.

TABLE XIX

AVERAGE PERCENT CASH AND CREDIT BUSINESS ACCORDING
TO GROSS SALES CATEGORIES OF NINETY-FOUR
PARTICIPATING RETAIL FLORISTS

Gross Sales Category	Percent Cash	Percent Credit
Less than \$10,000	45.06%	54.94%
10,000 to 20,000	23.76	76.24
20,000 to 30,000	19.22	80.78
30,000 to 40,000	33.33	66.67
40,000 to 50,000	22.00	78.00
50,000 to 75,000	15.66	84.34
75,000 to 100,000	15.00	85.00
Over 100,000	14.64	85.36
Over-all Average	25.52	74.48

The respondents reported that the average total number of hours that their shop was open each week was 54.77 hours. Eight and five-tenths percent reported that their shops were open 45 hours or less weekly. Fifty-five and four-tenths percent stated their shops were open between 46 to 55 hours, 24.4 percent were open between 56 to 65 hours each week, while 11.7 percent reported being open over 65 hours each week. Twenty-six and three-tenths percent of the 95 reporting florists indicated that they were regularly open on Sundays, while 66 percent reported that they were open on Sundays during rush periods. Table XX shows the estimated number of hours worked each week by the owner, the number of hours per week that the shop is open, and the Sunday opening of retail flower shops in the various gross sales categories.

The owners in the less than \$10,000 gross sales category had the lowest average number of hours in their work week, 41.5. The \$30,000 to \$40,000 category had the highest average work week, 60.5 hours. The \$75,000 to \$100,000 shops were open the fewest number of hours, 53, while the \$50,000 to \$75,000 category shops were open 58.1 hours. Conversely, 11.1 percent of the \$30,000 to \$40,000 and the \$50,000 to \$75,000 categories were open regularly on Sunday, while 40 percent of the shops in the \$40,000 to \$50,000 and \$75,000 to \$100,000 were open regularly on Sunday.

Seventy-nine florists indicated that they kept their own books, whereas 16 did not, yet thirty-one of these same florists indicated that they hired bookkeepers. Fifty-four businesses indicated that they employed an accountant, but only 2 of the 54 were hired full-time. Virtually all of the part-time bookkeepers and accountants were employed for income tax reporting purposes.

TABLE XX

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK OF SHOP OWNER, NUMBER
OF HOURS PER WEEK THAT SHOP IS OPEN, AND
SUNDAY OPENING OF RETAIL FLOWER
SHOPS IN THE VARIOUS GROSS
SALES CATEGORIES

Gross Sales Category	Average estimated no. of hours per week of owner	Average estimated no. of hours per week that shop is open	Average % of shops in each sales cate- gory <u>regularly</u> open on Sunday
Less than \$10,000	41.5	54.07	31.25%
10,000 to 20,000	50.3	58.38	31.57%
20,000 to 30,000	53.6	55.50	22.22%
30,000 to 40,000	60.5	54.50	11.11%
40,000 to 50,000	59.5	52.80	40.0%
50,000 to 75,000	60.4	58.11	11.11%
75,000 to 100,000	57.5	53.00	40.0%
Over 100,000	58.3	56.57	21.42%
Over-all Average	54.3	54.77	26.30

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study have shown retail florist businesses in Oklahoma to be very similar in their general business practices to florists in other states such as Texas (16) and Pennsylvania (41).

Regulations governing the establishment of a retail florist business in Oklahoma are not strict, and many variety stores and supermarkets purchase the Dealer's License Certificate (2) as do the florists.

The close similarity of distribution according to population of the participating florists and all florists in Oklahoma, (Table II), gives a good indication that the responding florists were relatively well distributed among the total number of florists in the state.

One fact must be remembered, that even though 17.7 percent of the 96 reporting florists had an annual gross sales volume of less than \$10,000, this group by no means makes up 17.7 percent of the total gross sales of the florists participating in this study. It is obvious that the 14.6 percent who annually grossed over \$100,000 account for far more than 14.6 percent of the total sales.

By the same token, neither do the florists reporting capital investments of \$5,000 or less account for a large portion of the total capital invested by all reporting florists.

The shops in lesser populated areas evidently are unable, through present merchandising methods to increase their gross sales above a certain point even though they have been in business for many years. It, then is evident, that the average per capita purchases of flowers

and related items need to be increased.

It may be that the lower volume shops need more special initiative and originality in increasing their sales volume through specials and cooperative advertising. It may prove to be practical for the smaller shops to cooperate in making wholesale purchases to reduce costs of merchandise in order to increase their profits.

Answers to certain questions varied greatly, even with shops in similar gross sales categories. For example, there was a great range of net incomes stated for each particular gross sales category, which may mean that there is a discrepancy in the florists' definition of net income. This, too, may be an indication that florists are either not in communication with each other, or that they disagree strongly, or they aren't actually keeping adequate records.

There appears to be a close similarity among the reporting Oklahoma florists as to the distribution of sales according to funeral, wedding, hospital, and holiday sales when compared to the Texas study (16). Funeral, hospital, holiday, and wedding sales for the Texas florists were 49.4, 20.2, 14.0, and 6.9 percent respectively, while the florists in this study indicated 49.5, 18.3, 14.8, and 7.3 percent respectively.

Present markup percentages for cut flowers and potted plants used by some florists may be too low when all packing, shipping, decorating, and designing costs are added to the actual cost of merchandise. A 300 percent markup on cut flowers and potted plants was used by a large majority of Texas florists (16). The average markups used by florists in this study, as shown in Table XIV, was 195 percent for cut flowers and 180 percent for potted plants. If a slight increase in markup were placed on each item sold in the shop it could help increase net income without greatly decreasing sales or sharply increasing prices.

As shown in this study and similar studies in other states, and across the nation, funeral work is still the major portion of the retail flower business. A strong effort should be made to increase the use - and thus the sales - of flowers to people for their homes and places of business on a daily basis. The relatively low percent of gross sales for all major holidays (14.8) indicates that even more advertising and promotion needs to be done to stimulate purchases at these times even though florists are extremely busy during holidays. Perhaps there should be "take home holiday specials" as well as "week-end specials" of cash and carry potted plants to increase these sales and become more competitive with supermarkets and variety stores. It would have to be made known to the customer that no delivery would be made on specials. Telephone sales account for approximately 60 percent of the total business. Some shops will have their greatest traffic into the shop during holiday periods, thus making it a desirable time, and perhaps the only possible time, to move more cash and carry items. Florists must recognize the importance of getting more people into the shop.

The questions of delivery charge limit and delivery distance limits appear to reflect disagreement among the responding florists. Forty-one reported the use of a delivery charge limit, whereas 56 indicated no use of a limit. Fifty-eight responding florists showed the use of a maximum delivery distance, yet 45 did not. In each instance, however, the florists reporting the use of a charge or distance limit were not in agreement as to what that limit should be. This situation indicates the need for additional study on the part of researchers and additional information on the part of the florists to determine how the matter of delivery should be handled.

The amount of money spent and the purpose for which it was spent for advertising by florists in the various gross sales categories indicates the need for some florists to consider the opportunities for additional advertising, possibly through more cooperative efforts.

The fact that over 80 percent of the florists kept their own books, while only 2 percent hired full-time accountants also indicates the need for additional emphasis on record-keeping.

There are some areas in which the reporting Oklahoma florists differ from other florists in the United States, but in few cases is this difference large enough to indicate that florists in this state fail to fit the pattern of florists across the country.

SUMMARY

The objectives of the study were to provide an analysis of: (1) a broad, general description of the nature of the retail florist industry in Oklahoma; (2) a study of business management practices followed by Oklahoma retail florists; and (3) special problems of Oklahoma retail florists which might be more intensively studied in the future.

A large number of sources of literature concerning the retail florist industry were studied. Studies conducted in Texas (16, 34) and Pennsylvania (41), and studies by the Florist Telegraph Delivery Association (4, 9), and by Krone (25, 26, 27, 28, & 29) were of particular benefit.

A mail questionnaire was developed and sent to over 420 retail florists in Oklahoma. One-hundred questionnaires that could be used in the study were returned.

The questions dealt with such areas as population, work week, business hours, income, wholesale purchases, gross sales, capital investment, number of sales personnel employed, wages paid, delivery practices, advertising expenses, record keeping, markup, distribution of sales as to method of purchase, type of purchase, purchases for certain occasions, and cash and credit sales.

The replies given by the responding florists indicated a wide range of variation in many of the areas listed above.

The returns which varied most widely included net income, capital investment, wages paid, markup, delivery policies, advertising, and business hours.

A typical or average retail business represented by the florists in this study would quite likely possess the following characteristics:

- (1) The florist would receive all, or nearly all of his income from the florist business.
- (2) The business would have 3 full-time employees.
- (3) The flower shop would be separate from the home.
- (4) The owner would work approximately 54 hours weekly in the business.
- (5) The business would have an annual gross sales volume within the range of \$20,000 to \$30,000.^{1/}
- (6) The annual wholesale purchases of the business would be between \$10,000 and \$20,000.^{1/}
- (7) No wholesale flowers would be produced.
- (8) The estimated annual net income would range between \$5,000 and \$6,000.^{1/}
- (9) The business would employ less than one full-time designer and pay him \$1.25 per hour.
- (10) The business would employ an average of 0.68 sales persons.
- (11) Markup on cut flowers would be 195 percent, potted plants 180 percent, and gifts and pottery 100 percent.
- (12) Fifty-four percent of the total sales would be cut flowers, 32 percent would be potted plants, and 14 percent gifts and pottery.
- (13) The owner would hire over 400 hours of labor for such peak periods as Easter and Christmas and pay \$1.02 per hour for this service.
- (14) Seventy-five percent of his business would be on credit.

^{1/} Values were given in categories. An average could not be obtained, so the median was used.

- (15) He would spend \$851.18 annually for advertising.
- (16) His shop would be open 55 hours weekly.
- (17) He would keep his own business records.
- (18) He would have been in the business nearly 18 years and have \$31,127 invested in his business.

(19) He would find that the population of his town or city would be very important in relation to his gross sales and net income.

It should be emphasized that the above are average or median figures and are not entirely indicative of the several large volume shops located in the large cities.

Some of the problems which would merit future study in detail are:

- (1) Record keeping methods which would be efficient, yet relatively simple for a businessman doing his own record keeping;
- (2) Methods to reduce operating expense, particularly for the shops in smaller towns where population seems to place a limit on gross sales potential;
- (3) Methods of effectively increasing sales for holidays, weddings, and frequent use without an undue increase in expenses, such as labor.
- (4) Methods to increase the percent of cash sales and also to induce prompt payment of credit accounts.
- (5) Methods of more effective advertising.
- (6) Methods of determining practicable markup for design work compared to markup on loose cut flowers.
- (7) Delivery charges and expenses.

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APPENDIX


OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER

Department of Horticulture
FRontier 2-6211, Ext. 302

January 14, 1963

Mr. John Doe
Doe Floral Company
Side Street
Somewhere, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Doe:

A cooperative effort by the Oklahoma State Florists' Association and Oklahoma State University is being made to aid the florist industry in Oklahoma by initiating a business analysis project.

A starting point is needed and instead of starting with a small group of florists in a detailed study as was originally planned, it was felt that a broad descriptive picture of the retail florist industry in the state should be obtained.

It is for this reason that we are requesting all florists to cooperate in completing the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible.

We assure you that under no circumstances will any names of firms or individuals be used or divulged, and that the confidence and trust offered by the participating florist by completing the questionnaire will be upheld to the utmost. Information published later will be in compiled form and no firms or individuals will be identified.

It is hoped that this initial effort, though modest in scope, will be the starting point in achieving much that will help each florist in Oklahoma in the more efficient operation of his business.

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in this worthwhile effort.

Respectfully yours,

W. R. Kays

R. N. Payne

Mac Irving

mjw

"CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RETAIL FLORISTS"

1. Is the flower business your sole source of business income? Yes _____
No _____.

a. If not, what percent of your total business income do you
estimate the floral part represents? _____%.

2. How many full-time personnel does your flower business employ?
_____.

3. Is your shop a separate building from your home? Yes _____ No _____.

4. How many hours do you estimate your personal work week in the flower
business to be? _____.

5. What do you estimate your gross sales from the flower business in
1961 to be?

_____ Below 10,000
_____ 10,000 - 20,000
_____ 20,000 - 30,000
_____ 30,000 - 40,000
_____ 40,000 - 50,000
_____ 50,000 - 75,000
_____ 75,000 - 100,000
_____ Over 100,000

6. What do you estimate your total wholesale purchases in 1961 to be?

_____ Below 10,000
_____ 10,000 - 20,000
_____ 20,000 - 30,000
_____ 30,000 - 40,000
_____ 40,000 - 50,000
_____ 50,000 - 75,000
_____ Over 75,000

7. Do you produce any flowers in a greenhouse to be sold in your retail flower shop? Yes _____ No _____.
- a. If so, what do you estimate the annual value of your wholesale greenhouse flower production to be \$_____.
8. What do you estimate your net income from your flower business in 1961 to be?

*Do not include interest on investment as an expense item.

_____ Below 3,000

_____ 3,000 - 4,000

_____ 4,000 - 5,000

_____ 5,000 - 6,000

_____ 6,000 - 7,000

_____ 7,000 - 8,000

_____ 8,000 - 9,000

_____ 9,000 - 10,000

_____ Over 10,000

9. Do you hire any floral designers? Yes _____ No _____. Number hired _____.
- a. If so, what is the wage rate? \$_____ per () hour () day () week () month. Check one.
10. Do you hire any sales people in your flower business? Yes _____ No _____.
11. What do you estimate your percent markup to be on: _____% cut flowers, _____% potted plants, _____% pottery and other gifts?

*If you buy a pot plant for \$1.50 and sell it for \$3.00, that is 100% markup, if sold \$4.50, that is 200% markup, etc.

12. What percent of your flower business do you estimate to be: _____% cut flowers, _____% potted plants, _____% gifts and pottery?
13. What percent of your total flower sales do you estimate to be for: _____% funeral work, _____% weddings, _____% hospital, _____% holidays, _____% others (such as everyday use)?

14. What do you estimate your total capital investment in the flower business to be? _____

*This includes investment on land, buildings, vehicles, etc.

15. Do you have a delivery charge limit? Yes _____ No _____.
How much? _____
- a. What do you estimate your average flower delivery charges to be? _____
- b. Do you have a maximum distance for delivery? Yes _____ No _____.
How far? _____

16. What do you estimate your total amount of extra hired help (in man hours) used to cover peak flower periods, such as Christmas and Easter, to be? _____.

- a. What is the estimate wage rate per hour for this extra help?

17. What percent of your flower business do you estimate to be:
_____ % cash and carry, _____ % personal selection (yet customer does not pay cash nor take with him), _____ % telephone, _____ % wire orders, _____ % others (specify) _____?

18. What percent of your flower business do you estimate to be:
_____ % cash, _____ % credit?

19. What do you estimate your yearly expense for flower advertising to be? \$ _____

- a. What percent is spent for: _____ % newspapers, _____ % radio, _____ % direct mail, _____ % TV, _____ % others (specify) _____?

20. What is the total number of hours that your flower shop is open each week? _____ Sundays? (a) Regularly _____. (b) Just for rush periods and special orders _____?

21. What method of record keeping do you use?

- a. Keep your own books? Yes _____ No _____
- b. Do you employ a bookkeeper? Yes _____ No _____
- c. Do you employ an accountant? Yes _____ No _____

Full-time _____ Part-time _____

(Specify % (such as for figuring income taxes).

22. What is the "approximate" population of your city or town? _____

23. What is the approximate population of your trade area? _____
24. How long have you been in the retail florist business? _____
25. Please include any comments or suggestions which you may have.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO SIGN YOUR NAME UNLESS YOU WISH TO!

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. You need not sign your name or even your address unless you wish to.
2. All information will be kept strictly confidential even if you do sign your name.
3. We recognize that you are extremely busy, but hope that you will take time to fill out this objective questionnaire.
4. We will share with you the findings of the study in a compiled form in a university publication. Also, a one-day business clinic is being planned at which time these findings can also be discussed.
5. Again we remind you that statistics will not be identified or coded.

AREAS IN WHICH FLORISTS INDICATED ADVERTISING
OTHER THAN RADIO, TELEVISION, NEWSPAPER,
AND DIRECT MAIL

Area	Number Reporting
Schools	18
Telephone Yellow Pages	13
Churches	9
Calendars	8
Cooperative Advertising	6
Other Clubs & Organizations	4
Gifts	4
Pens and Pencils	2
Bowling Teams	2
County Fair	1
Baby Books	1
Hotel Mats	1
Open House	1
Book to New Mothers	1
Trade Magazine Advertising	1
Window Decorations	1
Magazines for Hospitals	1
Litter Bags	1
Ink Blotter	1
New Residents	1

VITA

R. Mac Irving

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