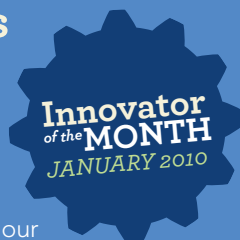


by Mike Pucci

# "GIFTING" COMES BACK TO YOU

**Ramona Christensen believes in leaving behind a little "gift cheer" from her shop**



**You might remember reading** in the December issue about our new "Innovator of the Month" program. We are excited to announce that our winning innovator for January 2010 is Ramona Christensen, Owner of Blossoms in Springfield, Missouri. Ramona has come up with a clever idea. Whenever she or her employees visit a restaurant or other businesses, they give a Blossoms gift certificate in lieu of or in addition to a traditional tip.

"We started thinking about ways we could drive people into our shop," says Ramona. "So we decided instead of giving tips, we would take the gift certificates with us and make it double what our tip would be." Ramona creates the gift certificates herself on her computer. Typically, the certificates are redeemable for \$10, \$15 or \$20 worth of Blossoms goods and they have a 60-day expiration date.

"When we go out to eat, we get the name of the server. I then write their name on the gift certificate and give it to them," says Ramona. To avoid duplication when the certificates are redeemed, she assigns a different code numbers. "Usually, depending on the service, we double the going tip rate. For example, instead of a \$10 cash tip on a \$50 bill, we might give the server a \$20 certificate."

The idea has been very popular, both with gift certificate recipients and with the Blossoms staff. "We have brought customers through our door who may not otherwise come to our shop or even know we exist," continues Ramona. As for employees, "they like that it makes a nice bonus for them in saving tip money."

Blossoms is now ready to take the idea further. "We're thinking about sending gift certificates to police officers and firefighters, thanking them for their wonderful service," explains Ramona. "A policeman might come in and get a beautiful bouquet for his wife, and then tell fellow officers about it...and we could get that business too."

*Many other florists gave us some great ideas to use, including offering centerpiece classes, going green, providing flowers for military personnel and family. To read more about these ideas check out our fan page on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bloomnet.net](http://www.facebook.com/bloomnet.net).*