

FabJob[®] GUIDE TO

Become a Florist



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1. Introduction

Floristry is an exciting and challenging business — one that is quite literally growing with potential and blooming with opportunity. As a florist, you'll be surrounded by an endless supply of **beauty**.

Whether it's an arrangement for someone's birthday, a vase of flowers for a coworker's desk, or a grandiose display for a gala party, you will be behind some of the most significant moments in people's lives. It's an honor that few other professions share. You will discover how to get started and succeed in this career in the **FabJob Guide to Become a Florist**.



As a floral designer, you'll find a world of creative **challenges**, artistic opportunities and personal relations that will keep you inspired and intrigued for years to come. In this chapter, you'll explore your role as a florist in people's everyday lives and discover some of the benefits of this fabulous career.

1.1 Welcome to the Florist Industry

Floristry is an unusual and rewarding profession in that it combines a diverse variety of skills and abilities. It offers daily challenges and a wide range of possibilities — from employment in a fast-paced, production-oriented store to running your own flower shop (or shops).

As a business, it combines stability with a wide range of exciting possibilities that run the gamut from fast cash-and-carry retail to intensive customer service as you work with clients to plan the flowers for their wedding or gala event.

You don't need any special training to get your first job in a flower shop, because many of the daily tasks required can be learned as you go, beginning with caring for customers and flowers. However, if you want to jump right in and be hired as a full-fledged **floral designer**, you'll want to get some training first, which we will cover in Chapter 2.

As a florist, you'll have a unique window into the cycles of life. No matter what the occasion, there are flowers to go with it. Florists make arrangements of delicate pink and blue flowers to help customers welcome new babies into the world. They make colorful table centerpieces for everything from birthdays and anniversaries to homecomings and holidays. Christmas wouldn't be the same without showy poinsettia plants or sweet-smelling pine wreaths, and a basket of flowers at Easter helps remind us that spring is near.

You'll help customers honor their mothers with flowers and plants at Mother's Day, and you'll prepare elegant boxes of long-stemmed roses for Valentine's gifts. You'll reflect a bride's personality and taste with custom-designed wedding bouquets, and help people honor their loved ones by creating beautiful floral funeral tributes.

1.2 Benefits of a Career in Floristry

Florists enjoy many benefits, but the first one you might notice when you walk into a flower shop is the incredible access to fresh flowers! Every day, you're surrounded by the beautiful colors and heady scents of fresh flowers, the shine of ribbons, the graceful lines of vases, and the lush foliage of tropical plants.

Here are more benefits you'll enjoy as a florist:

Outlet for Creativity

As a florist, you have the opportunity to use your creativity in marketing, display, and production. You will create stunning floral arrangements and window displays that catch customers' eyes. If you enjoy **crafts** – especially three-dimensional ones like papier-mâché or modeling – you will likely excel at floristry. You will have a hands-on job that gives you a sense of satisfaction with the product of your work.

Fast-Paced Environment

Being a florist requires excellent organization and a sharp sense of timing — after all, when someone needs a bouquet of roses to appear at the table when they're in the middle of a romantic dinner, there's no excuse for getting the flowers there after the check has already arrived. You will exercise your ability to **think fast**, respond to changing circumstances ("She's decided to wear blue instead! Quick, change the color of her flowers!"), and improvise solutions using your creative abilities and knowledge.

Variety

While the basics — flowers, plants, giftware, customer service — provide a stable framework for your days, the possible variations on these themes are endless. It's a job that changes from day to day, and season to season, always allowing you to test your fresh ideas and get excited about your new approach.

Making People Happy

Nothing is as satisfying as the smile on someone's face when they see the flowers you've arranged for them. Florists make people happy by providing them with something beautiful. Each customer who walks through the doors of a flower shop is there to fulfill a unique need to **brighten someone's day**. Your job will be to suggest the best arrangements that will please the lucky recipient.

Learning New Skills

While there are a variety of basic flower arrangements, there are always new arrangements to learn. You will have opportunities to focus on one set of skills (floral design is a highly regarded and easily transferable specialty that will allow you to find work in any professional florist shop) or to work on a range of abilities as you enter the exciting realm of running your own business.

Community Involvement

Being a florist allows you to participate in your community by providing clients with the products of your own creativity. You are among the first they turn to when they are happy, excited, or grieving — giving you a finger on the pulse of the community.

In my time as a florist, I've done flowers for the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia and sent an order that was to be delivered to Cuban president Fidel Castro. Being a florist helps you feel like **you're part of the world** at large and helping history along, one petal at a time.

Going New Places

You can take your skills far and wide and access worlds that would otherwise be closed to you. A florist I know has done work for Queen Juliana of the Netherlands and has made numerous trips to Europe to further her design studies. I have made arrangements for world-class athletes and seen my handiwork displayed in the hands of gold-medal winners on TV. I have delivered flowers to the room that would be the private chamber of Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II.

Meeting New People

Another former florist I know got a glimpse into a whole other world when she made the funeral sprays for a member of a motorcycle gang. His friends played tag in the parking lot on their motorcycles and picked up the black spray-painted arrangements while still playing tag in the flower shop. You'll meet many other **interesting** and **exciting** people at crucial points in their lives. You may witness a courtship through bouquets you prepare, and then provide the flower arrangements for the wedding. A few years later, you may find yourself making a bouquet for their new baby.

Ongoing Appreciation

In addition, knowing how to arrange flowers is a skill that will last you a lifetime and that has many applications outside your work as well. Your home will always look **pleasing**, thanks to your ability to make the simplest garden daisies – or the most elaborate holiday display of fir garlands and spicy carnations – look absolutely stunning. You'll be honored to make wedding bouquets for family, friends, and acquaintances. And you'll always have beauty on hand.

Financial Rewards

There are financial rewards to being a florist, too. If you choose to run your own business, you will find that the more effort you put in, the more you are rewarded with loyal customers, established accounts, and reciprocal orders from out-of-town florists. While a floral designer working at a flower shop is likely to make anywhere from **\$30,000** to **\$50,000** and more each year, a successful florist business can gross upwards of a million dollars annually.

1.3 Inside This Guide

This guide is meant to help you get started in the florist industry. After reading it thoroughly, you should have a good technical understanding of design, the functions of the florist industry, and the day-to-day workings of a typical flower shop. You will also gain the essential knowledge of how to start your own business and make it a success.

In Chapter 2 (“**Creating Floral Arrangements**”), we'll teach you how to create floral arrangements and describe the variety of services florists offer. We'll cover the basics of color and design. You'll learn about the essential equipment, tools, and supplies that florists use, and find out about flowers, greens and how to look after them in the

store. Plus, you'll find out about the most frequently used flower shop plants. Then – the best part – you'll learn step-by-step techniques for making a wide variety of flower arrangements. We'll also talk about providing flowers for weddings and funerals.

Chapter 3 (“**Preparing for Your Career**”) will lay out the skills you'll need as a florist. We'll talk about sales, organization, and creativity. We'll cover possible formal educational options, plus several informal ways to gain knowledge, like conducting information interviews or reading books and trade magazines. We'll also begin to look at ways for you to get your foot in the door at a flower shop as an intern, and what professional accreditations are available.

Once you've got some background in the industry, Chapter 4 (“**Getting Hired**”) will discuss ways of getting your first fabulous job as a florist, and the types of positions you might try. We'll talk about finding a position, preparing for your interview, and making a good impression when you meet with your future employer.

In Chapter 5 (“**Starting Your Own Flower Shop**”), we'll explore how to open your own floral business. You'll learn about how to get started, how to set up your shop, and how to keep track of your finances. We'll also look at creating in-store displays and maintaining your new florist shop. We'll also talk about dealing with wholesalers and suppliers and how to hire help.

Then, in Chapter 6 (“**Getting and Keeping Customers**”), we'll talk about how to make your own shop a success. Here you'll learn how to attract and keep consumer and corporate customers. We'll discuss how to market and promote your store, and explore several promotional tools you can use. And you'll learn about how florists send out-of-area orders to people around the world.

Finally, Chapter 7 (“**Resources**”) contains a list of professional associations and educational programs you can turn to for further information and ongoing learning opportunities.

So read on to get prepared for an exciting career as a florist!