

anything but doom and gloom

The term retail apocalypse describes the large number of brick-and-mortar stores closing since 2010 and continuing today. To me, apocalypse seemed like a rather strong word, calling to mind visions of world destruction more so than empty shopping malls.

As I write this, however, Gap, JCPenney, Victoria's Secret, Family Dollar, Tesla and more have announced within the last week that they're planning to close a large number of locations. Stan Pohmer comments on some of the possible reasons — and how to combat the same fate — in his column on page 50.

Some of you might say that you're not in a shopping mall, you're not nearly the size of these chains or you don't face the same problems. This may be true to an extent, but all of retail is no doubt changing. ShopTalk (www.shoptalk.com) released its "75 Ways Retail Will Change in the Next Decade," and these shifts will apply to retailers of all sizes.

Number eight in the report is: "Retail industry stalwarts will continue to go under, leaving opportunities for retailers that have invested and adapted to meet changing consumer demands." We're seeing this time and time again.

How do we make sure we're those retailers that continuously adapt and take advantage of these opportunities? Get ahead of some of the other changes.

Embrace a smaller footprint, encourage employees to move between departments to understand all aspects of the business, expand pickup and drive-through options for the convenience of your shoppers, and figure out how to make the seemingly standard aspects of the store (such as coolers and shopping carts) more intelligent. These are four more of the 75 things from ShopTalk.

On page 10 of this issue, John Johnston, retail education manager for Griffin, talks about "7 Steps to Better Store Penetration." We all know that getting people to stay in your store longer means they are more likely to make a purchase.

Last weekend, I walked into LOFT with my mother who had an issue with a return. She was talking to the saleswoman for an extremely long time, and guess who walked away with a necklace she didn't need? That would be me. I was in there for so long that I inevitably found something to buy.

Let's look at number 47 from the report: "Store success will be measured in experiences per square foot, as retailers leverage specific metrics like dwell time, engagement and social sharing."

How are we getting people to stay longer and engage with our products in the store, at home and in their digital lives?

The last change from the report I will address here is number six that says technologies to help shoppers visualize products in their gardens will be crucial.

I see you ...

You've put so much work into your spring displays that you have to show them off! As shoppers come in your doors and start snapping Instagram-worthy photos of your stellar merchandising skills, make sure you're doing the same.



That way you can send me your photos for the 2019 Merchandiser of the Year competition!

You have until June 13 to submit your entries for this year's competition. Send up to five photos of your favorite creative display or group of displays that appeared in your store this year to me at akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com. Make sure to include a short write-up with the purpose of the display, when it was featured, how you created it or what customers had to say. See page 11 for more details.

We'll feature the finalists as well as the winner in upcoming issues of the magazine. You could be the winner of bragging rights and some bottom-line-boosting prizes from our sponsors!

Need some inspiration? See the finalists and winners from the past eight years at www.lgrmag.com/merchandiser-of-year.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

L&GR (Lawn & Garden Retailer) magazine (ISSN 1540-9023) is published ten times a year in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September/October and November/December by Great American Media Services, 75 Applewood Dr., Suite A, Sparta, MI 49345, Telephone: 616.887.9008 Fax: 616.887.2666. Subscription rates in the U.S. are \$30 per year (Canada and Mexico are \$50 and all other countries are \$60 payable in U.S. currency). Periodical postage paid at Sparta, MI and at additional mailing offices. Reproduction of contents is forbidden. Copyright 2019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Department, Lawn & Garden Retailer, PO Box 128, Sparta, MI 49345. PRINTED IN USA.

Winner of 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017 and 2018 EDDIE awards for Best Full Issue

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