

STAYING POWER

magine if you will, a rough day at work, no traffic in the garden center but lots on the way home, a messy home and dinner yet to cook.

Now, imagine how much attention you give to yet another circular, advertisement or marketing piece that arrives that day in the mail. Little, none. What if it's from your favorite store? A few minutes — you'll



look it over later? Does later ever come? If so, how long does it take you to read the flyer and decide you don't have any money or time to drop to shop? Thirty seconds? One minute? Two?

Maybe your favorite store should take a different approach. What if the mailer was more than just an advertisement? What if it was something that brightened your day, made you smile or was otherwise worth hanging onto?

This is the approach taken at Metzler's Garden Centers, Columbia and Eldersburg, Md. Seeking a nice graphic that would catch people's attention, John Metzler, the company's Chairman, chose the above photo taken by a local photographer, but he got a lot more than he expected. Metzler, who endured strange looks from his staff for "wasting" valuable space with an image not directly related to

the industry, received rave reviews from customers pleased with the quality of the photo, the simple beauty of the shot and the unexpectedness of receiving something like this photo on the front of a direct mail piece. According to Metzler, customers were so pleased with the photo that several had it framed, and many more tacked it to their bulletin boards. Now what do you think they think about when they see that photo? If you said Metzler's pat yourself on the back.

From the 8,500 cards mailed, 1,000 azalea coupons were redeemed, accounting for one of the best weekends in Metzler's history, but more importantly, the unusual photo on the front of this mailer was a lasting reminder to many Metzler's customers. "Oh yeah, I wanted to pick up a couple of hanging baskets on the way home..." and the sales kept coming!



—Albert Szent-Gyorgi

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