

## TECH TALK



Our newly formed garden center social media panel will help you take your tech knowledge to the next level — and learn through their experience how to incorporate it into your business.

# Twitter and Facebook and iPhones...Oh, My!

After nearly 80 years in business, Pemberton Farms & Garden Center has really taken a leap in to the 21st century and added a heavy social media element to its marketing and promotion efforts. Adding a mobile device to the mix only made things easier.

By Mark Saidnawey

**S**tarted in 1930, Pemberton Farms & Garden Center is a third-generation family business located in the heart of Cambridge, Mass. Brothers Tom and Mark Saidnawey operate a gourmet food store, full-service garden center and online gift basket business.

Since the downturn in the economy, we've had to reduce our promotional spending. We slashed our marketing budget by 40 percent from the previous year. Areas like newspaper,

### Get Your Name Out There

The only challenge is getting people to know we're out there and to follow us. We have placed signs throughout our store inviting people to follow us on both Facebook and Twitter highlighting that they will receive special offers, on-line and in-store promotional discount codes and updates on upcoming events. We have signs on all the entrance and exit doors, at the checkout stations, on the deli counter and a large sign at our outdoor garden



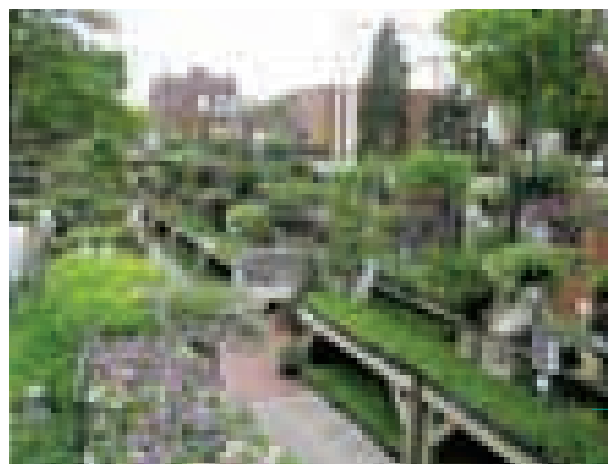
"Almost everyone has a Facebook account.

It has become such a great way to make our customers feel like part of our family."

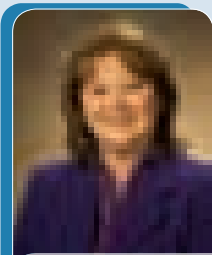
weekly flyers and radio were the first to go. Since then, we have continued to look for inexpensive alternative ways to promote our business. The most successful has been through the free social networking of Facebook and Twitter. These are easy to use, fun and a great way to connect with the community, friends and customers both new and old. We are using them to promote both our retail stores and on-line business to great success!

center kiosk. There are also links on our website inviting customers to follow us on both Facebook and Twitter as well.

Our customer base is wide because of the draw of both a gourmet food store and a garden center. I have found that most of the people that do end up following us on Facebook and Twitter are people aged 25 to 50, and almost 65 percent are women. Between parents who just want to monitor their kids and customers who have their own pages, almost everyone that walks through the door is

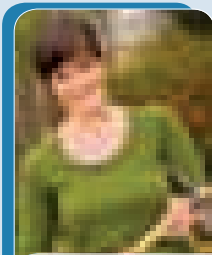


## the panelists



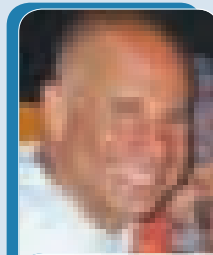
Kimberly Bird

Calloway's Nursery  
Dallas/Forth Worth  
and Houston, Texas  
mytexasgarden.com



Leslie Finical Halleck

North Haven Gardens  
Dallas, Texas  
nhg.com

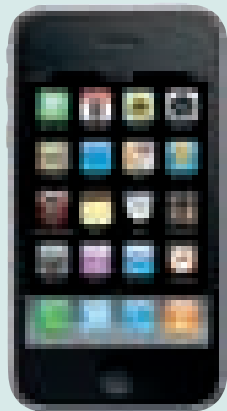


Mark Saidnawey

Pemberton Farms  
& Garden Center  
Cambridge, Mass.  
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\* TECH TALK

“There’s an App for That!”



Got an iPhone? If you do, you can use it to make navigating and interacting on social media sites even simpler!

**Facebook**

Facebook has a fully integrated iPhone application that lets you move throughout the service with speed and ease — often faster than the website allows, according to the Facebook for iPhone fan page. Among other features, you can take pictures with the iPhone and upload them instantly to your Mobile Uploads album, giving your customers immediate access to the newest merchandising displays, color in the greenhouse or even sneak event previews.

**Twitter**

In addition to twitter.com and texting updates from any mobile phone, there are roughly...48.3 million apps available for posting and reading tweets on the iPhone. But some stand out above the rest: Two tech-obsessed websites, Gizmodo and Mashable, named Tweetie the overall best application for Twitter in 2009. It’s not free, but it’s powerful and makes mobile interaction on Twitter a snap. This app really gets the picture: The whole idea of Twitter is quick, simple, instant communication. For more information, visit [www.atebits.com/tweetie-iphone](http://www.atebits.com/tweetie-iphone).

— Paige Worthy

using one or more social networks, and when they see that we are on there, they are happy to join our group.

**Facebook: Widespread Appeal**

We have found Facebook to be the more widely used and easier-to-use social networking site. Almost everyone has a Facebook account. It has become such a great way to make our customers feel like part of our family. Facebook users who visit, or join the Pemberton Farms group can read our family story, see photos and video tours of our store and garden center that I took with my iPhone, post information or comments on our wall, add photos of their gardens, watch our monthly TV gardening segment, read about upcoming events, and chat with one another. It’s like a free company website that is open to the public to contribute to. I post messages on our group page about once a week, usually quick notes that take only a few minutes.

“When I am working in the nursery or store and see something I think our followers would like to know about, I send a tweet. It takes all of 30 seconds!”

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## GROWING YOUR BUSINESS IN A TOUGH ECONOMY

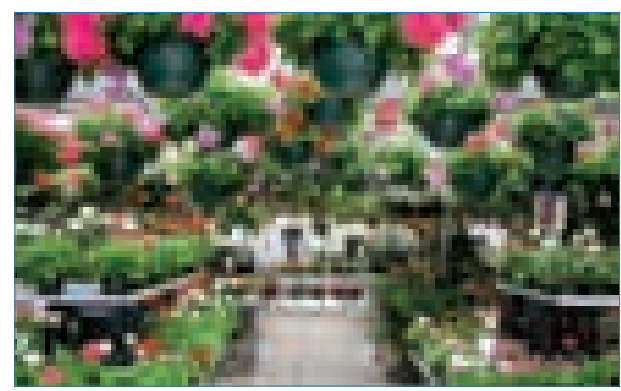
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### For more ideas, follow Pemberton Farms!

Facebook: Search for Pemberton Farms & Garden Center  
Twitter: [twitter.com/pembertonfarms](http://twitter.com/pembertonfarms)



Because I have my own personal Facebook page too, our group page is only a click away, making it easy to go post a quick note or promotional offer.

We recently used Facebook to announce our annual Customer Appreciation Day. The event message was sent to all our group members and even though it rained that day, the turnout and feedback from our group members was overwhelming.

Periodically, we will we will send out a message to our members telling them to print out the Pemberton Facebook page, show it to a cashier and save 10 percent. The last time we had more than 100 coupons redeemed by customers! For retailers who do not have a dynamic website, this is a great (free!) way to show off your business.

### Twitter: Quick and Convenient

We started with Twitter just a few months ago, and to date, we are having great success with that as well. Although not as many people seem to use Twitter, it too is free and it gets your message out to the community quickly. In season, I will post a couple messages a day. Gardeners love to know what's going on at our nursery, so I tweet each time we receive a new plant delivery and also about what's currently in bloom, our daily specials and weather updates such as frost advisories — anything we think will help our customers and bring them to our store, I send a tweet about it. What's great about it is that I can tweet from my iPhone; it's just like sending a text message. So when I am working in the nursery or store and see something I think our followers would like to know about, I send a tweet. It takes all of 30 seconds!

Overall using the social networking sites has been a great addition to our marketing plan. They're easy to use, fun and, most importantly, FREE. How can you not try them?

*Mark Saidnaway owns and operates Pemberton Farms & Garden Center in Cambridge, Mass., with his brother, Tom. He can be reached at [mark@pembertonfarms.com](mailto:mark@pembertonfarms.com).*

### LearnMore!

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