

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

RHS demonstrates how to attract millennials to flower shows

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RHS appeals to millennials for its Chatsworth Flower Show

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

As younger consumers become less interested in landscaping, flower shows such as those by the Royal Horticultural Society are adopting new strategies engrained in the events themselves.

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The RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, beginning June 9, is currently wielding a variety of tools to appeal to younger generations that are less likely to be interested in these types of events. Platforms such as Instagram and virtual reality, coupled with a focus on sustainability are a few themes organizations such as RHS are using.

"What the RHS Flower Show is doing at Chatsworth Estate is essentially making more of a community event than a traditional horticultural showcase," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at **Flugel Consulting**, Charleston, SC. "Yes, the floral component is front and center, but the society has chosen to expand beyond that in its offerings, giving the event greater meeting and resonance with any number of audiences, but especially the millennial market.

"Other flower shows and brands can look to this event to see how best to broaden an audience. It isn't strictly about the marketing strategy," he said. "Sometimes, a more foundational evolution is required to change the conversation among your audience and draw interest, something to give it meaning to the audience you're trying to reach."

Experiences and millennials

Millennials are now focused on experiences more than goods and products, which give event brands such as RHS an opportunity.

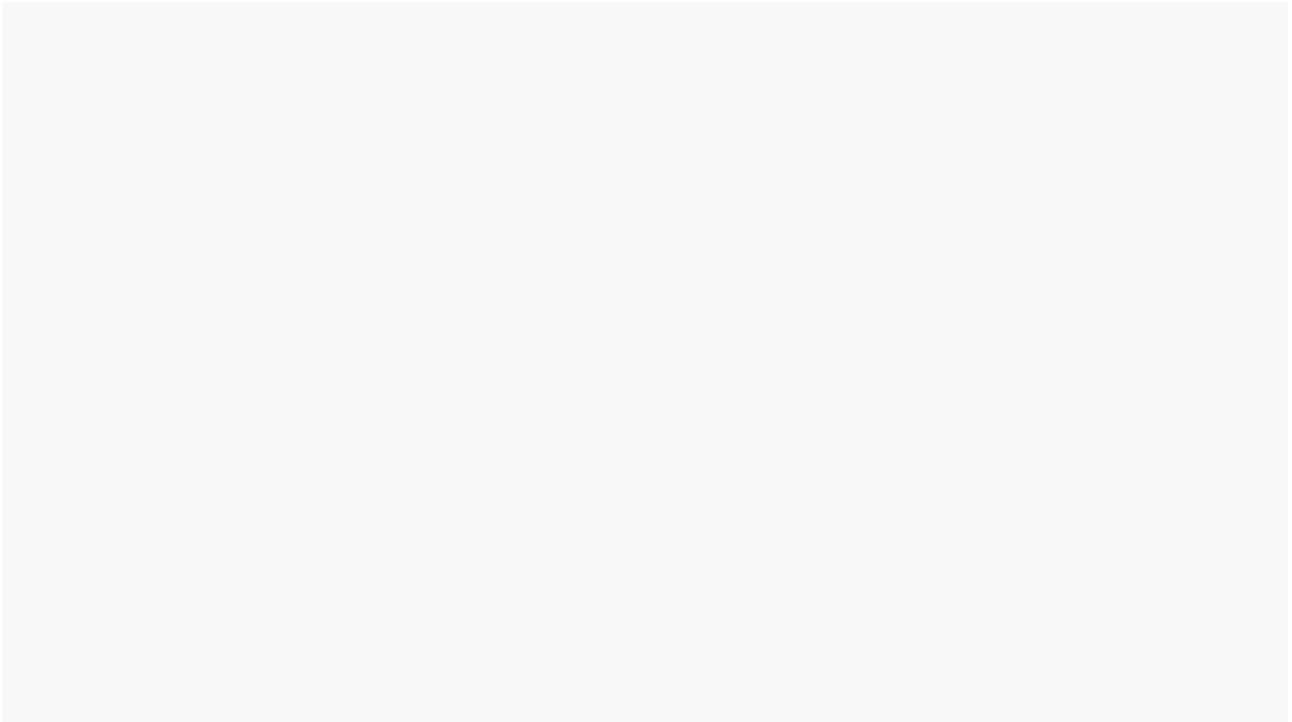
The 2016 U.S. Luxury Travel Report from Resonance showed a whopping 69 percent of one-percenters say that participating in a "once-in-a-lifetime" activity is something they would like to do regularly on vacations, significantly higher than any other group. The move to experiential luxury has been well documented, but this data suggests that hotels and events that offer such opportunities at each of their destinations will likely get a large chunk of the lucrative spenders.

Much of the conversation in the hospitality region revolves around attracting millennials, who will soon be the biggest luxury consumer ([see more](#)).

RHS has an opportunity to capture millennials' attentions with the only thing that seems to have their attention: social media.

Younger consumers enjoy experiencing new things, and documenting them as they go. While it may be the obvious choice, this makes the use of Instagram and social media much more important.

For its Chatsworth Flower Show, RHS is making its presence known on Instagram and encouraging visitors to follow suit. The organization is sharing a variety of beautiful images of its event using popular hashtags and has created its own, #RHSchatsworth.



The Great Conservatory at #RHSchatsworth is a real highlight, full of amazing plants, displays and a fantastic installation from @cityscapesuk. Find out more on our website #conservatory #exotic #architecture

A post shared by The RHS (@the_rhs) on Jun 8, 2017 at 10:14am PDT

Online users can also take a tour of some of the exhibits through a virtual reality experience.

In addition, RHS is incorporating an important cultural issue that often captures the attention of millennials and younger consumers. The event is hosting a main event to discuss climate change and its environmental impact.

Local and authentic products, which are also highly important to consumers, will be available throughout the event at an on-site shop. Local products with an emphasis on craftsmanship will be available to purchase.

Partnerships and events

Partnerships are also helpful in these events to make a larger impact. RHS is partnering with British luxury home and lifestyle brand Wedgwood, which is also sharing content related to the event on its own channels.

The Wedgwood Tea Conservatory is at @The_RHS this week! #WedgwoodSecretGarden #ChelseaFlowerShow pic.twitter.com/L6jG4BN4b0

Wedgwood (@Wedgwood) May 25, 2017

This year, Giorgio Armani and Smythson were among the retailers showcasing their green thumb in honor of the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show.

Feting the annual gardening affair in London, Cadogan Estates has launched its 12th annual Chelsea in Bloom event, with retailers, hotels and restaurants transforming their facades into botanical creations. Associated with the RHS, this event acts as an extension of the show, allowing luxury brands to get in on the action within their own boutiques ([see story](#)).

"There are two features included in the inaugural show at the Chatsworth Estate that are, by and large, considered major attractors for the millennial market," Flugel Consulting's Mr. Rains said. "The first of these is a headline event speaking to gardening and climate change.

"Younger generations are largely considered to be more concerned with social and environmental issues than their counterparts," he said. "Touting this and the other, more progressive, show features is a great point of entry for engaging a younger audience.

"The second show element sure to resonate with a younger market is the incorporation of a shop, featuring products curated from local craftsman. Authenticity and localness are consistently ranked as leading factors in millennial buying habits."

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