

FEBRUARY 22, 2012



fresher

WEEKLY
TOP
10



Tim's Top 10 Merchandising Tips

BY TIM PETERSON

Expand berries and asparagus as much as supplies will allow!

Continue with your winter produce sets through March. Remain aggressive with grapes, 5lb & 3lb Clementines, all oranges, all grapefruit, all apples (including Honeycrisp) and all pears. Add a supplemental asparagus display, make sure you're selling tote apples, Chilean soft fruit (including lemon plums and pluots), Cara Cara oranges, and Ugli fruit. This is a great time of year to get some deep cleaning done—plan for this now.

Only five weeks left until Easter sales! Continue staying tight during your slowest sales quarter of the year, keeping your turns high. Watch your profiles, two-deep should be your max, and remain tight on your backstock.

Expand:

- 1) **BERRIES, BERRIES, BERRIES:** The 2012 strawberry season has begun, so **expand your displays and go for sales!** Strawberry supplies are a bit tight due to cold, rainy weather. There are good supplies of raspberries, blueberries and blackberries, so make sure to display these. Only a few weeks left for pint blueberries, then 6 oz sizes will be available. Displays should remain up front in the lead rack position.
- 2) **ASPARAGUS:** Down markets from Mexico, with good supplies, so **expand your displays now. This is a great time to build a supplemental display to generate extra sales.** Asparagus looks great on its own, or tied in with supplemental vegetable displays.
- 3) **GRAPES:** Good supplies and quality, with lower markets, so **be aggressive with your displays now.** Be careful when purchasing what appears to be a great deal—there's lots of small fruit and old fruit on the market. Large fruit, fresh fruit, and the best varieties, cost more, but you'll make up for it with great sales and repeat business. Displays should remain up front in your highest traffic areas.
- 4) **CHILEAN BARTLETT:** Better quality, supplies, and costs, so **expand your displays now.** Make sure to sell Anjou's, Red pears, Bosc, and varieties like Comice, Forelle, and Seckels. Merchandise these on their own, near your tropical sections, or with hardfruit.

Add:

- 5) **CARA CARAS, MINNEOLA TANGELOS AND HONEY TANGERINES:** Cara Caras are a low acid, pink navel orange—include this info on signage for better sales. These display great with citrus, or in your tropical sections.
- 6) **CHILEAN SOFT FRUIT:** Lemon plums and pluots are now available—make sure to cut these in. Peaches, nectarines, and plums are all in stock. Don't get too aggressive here—for most stores, all you need is a split row. Display soft fruit on dry tables if possible, near pears or tropical sections.

Push for Sales:

- 7) **CLEMENTINES:** Push for sales—supplies are tightening up as this season comes to an end! Until then, promote these, I still recommend selling both 5lb boxes and 3lb bags—giving your customers options. Merchandise these up front in one of your highest-traffic areas—they're a great ring through mid-February.
- 8) **ORANGES:** Peak sales are here, so **push for sales now—there's strong demand and good supplies.** Make sure to add Cara Cara navels (low acid, pink navels) and Moro (blood oranges). Navels can be merchandised on their own or with hard fruit.
- 9) **APPLES:** Promote this category all winter long (bulk, totes, bags). The Honeycrisp season is winding down fast, but push for sales as long as supplies allow. **Give tote apples a try—they're great value!** Now is the time to expand new-crop Washington-state apples—there's great quality, variety and demand.
- 10) **GRAPEFRUIT:** Remain aggressive with your displays; Both Texas and Florida grapefruit are available, make sure you're selling both, along with white grapefruit (known for low acidity). Pummelos and Ugli fruit are available too.



Buyers' Top 10



- 1) **CANTALOUPE AND HONEYDEWS:** Cantaloupe markets are finally starting to come down as harvests from Honduras increase. Honeydew supplies continue to remain extremely tight but should increase in another week or so.
- 2) **GRAPES:** The Chilean crop of fresh grapes look and taste great! This includes beautiful Flame red seedless that taste crisp and sweet and huge Sugraone green seedless grapes. Black seedless and Red Globes are also available; so create beautiful displays with lots of variety!
- 3) **SOFT FRUIT:** Chilean peaches, nectarines, and red and black plums are now available with good supplies and steady pricing. We are also bringing in Chilean Lemon plums and Dapple Dandy Pluots. Chilean cherries are done for the season due to poor quality.
- 4) **STRAWBERRIES:** California strawberry volumes are tight, and the market is up. Imported blueberries are now available in full pints. We will transition back to 6 oz. blueberries at the end of February. Blackberries are a great value with volume to move! Raspberries are in better supply and quality is excellent.
- 5) **ORGANIC PRODUCE:** Still experiencing shortages on organic spinach salads due to quality issues.
- 6) **TOMATOES, CUKES, GREEN PEPPERS AND LOCAL PRODUCT:** Hydro-cukes are starting in Canada. HH peppers and HH tomatoes are arriving from Mexico. Cukes and peppers from Mexico as well as Florida beans and corn are in good supply. Bi-color is very tight.
- 7) **CITRUS:** The California Navel orange season has hit its stride! The fruit is luscious and naturally vibrant with excellent quality. For extra juicy freshness, we bag hand-selected (4lb or 5lb) oranges daily. The citrus category has plenty of variety available. Honeybell Tangelos, Honey Tangerines, Minneola Tangelos, Clementines from Morocco, Grapefruit from Florida or Texas, lemons and limes are all available. Cuties are back too! Murcott variety tangerines are available in the "Cutie" bags. They have more sugar and acid than the Clementine. They taste terrific! We've got citrus for every taste and occasion!
- 8) **BLUEBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES, RASPBERRIES:** Imported blueberries are available in 6 oz. packages and pints. Mexican blackberries are a great value with lots of availability. Expect proration on raspberries to continue. Ads not recommended.
- 9) **WEST COAST VEGGIES:** Most items are in good supply and priced to move. Tentative growing area transition dates are: mid-March for most items. Yuma will wrap up around the same time. It's a great time to promote asparagus!
- 10) **ONIONS, RUTABAGAS AND POTATOES:** White onions are increasing in price as the Northwest region is winding down; storage supplies and weather issues continue in Mexico. Continued rain is also affecting consistent supplies of Mexican 1015 Sweets. Small yellow onions from the Northwest are still very promotable. Potatoes and yams are steady.



About H. Brooks and Company . . .

H. Brooks was founded more than 100 years ago. Then, a produce cart served as its corporate headquarters. Today, while the size of the company has changed dramatically—its reputation as a friend and advisor with the unfailing ability to seek out and deliver unique, best available field-fresh produce has not. And never will.

For the freshest fruits and vegetables, insights, news and buys, contact your

H. Brooks salesperson now!

tel 651-635-0126

fax 651-746-2210

