



## Syndicate Sales Cutting a Path to the Top in the Floral Industry

**Company:** Syndicate Sales, Inc.

**Address:** 2025 North Wabash Street, Kokomo

**Telephone:** (765) 457-7277

**Web site:** [www.syndicatesales.com](http://www.syndicatesales.com)

**Management:** Del Demaree, CEO; David Hendrickson, president

**Employees:** 250-300 (number increases during busy time periods)

### Products, services:

Syndicate Sales is a leading manufacturer and supplier to the floral industry. Hendrickson: "Although we have competition in every product line, we're the only company in the U.S. floral industry that has all these products under one roof."

### History:

Del Demaree Sr. and his wife were salespeople, manufacturing representatives based in Chicago. They sold products to stores such as Ben Franklin, known as syndicate stores. Although a first attempt at selling his Aquapic™ (an anchor that serves as a water reservoir for the stem of cut flowers) failed, Demaree moved his family to the Kokomo area, where they began making the Aquapic themselves and realized success. Based on their past work, they called their company Syndicate Sales.

### Additional innovation:

Hendrickson gives another example of an early Demaree invention. While the family was sitting around the dinner table, the idea came for a three-pronged design to hold the card identifying the sender of flowers. The design resembled the candelabra above the table; thus, the name the candlelight cardette.

### Growth and expansion:

The original progression was to an entire line of plastic items. Glass products followed, designed by Syndicate Sales and produced by some of the leading manufacturers in the country. Worldwide sources for European and Asian products were next. Cleaning solutions, hydration chemicals and floral foam are just a few of the other items. Although the focus remains on the cut flower industry, Hendrickson says the company has "been in and out of a lot of different (product) lines in its 60-year history."

**Hitting the road:**

Syndicate Sales has operated its own trucking company, Hurryin' Hoosier Transport, since 1979. The flexibility is needed to serve approximately 1,000 wholesale florists in the United States and Canada.

"We talk to those florists weekly and take orders," Hendrickson explains. "Our trucks depart Kokomo for all 48 (continental) states and Canada almost every week of the year. There are eight to 10 orders on each truck. When they've finished the last run, they pick up freight and bring it back for us or some people we do work for."

**Busy season:**

The floral industry cycle is consistent. January is the busiest time of the year, in preparation for Valentine's Day. The next major peak comes before Mother's Day. June and July prove to be the slower months.

**Always changing:**

Asked whether updated offerings were typically part of the mix, Hendrickson revealed that 111 new products were introduced in the past year. That includes different colors, shapes and sizes of existing items. Syndicate Sales also features a wedding line. "You have to stay ahead of the trend," he reveals.

**Doctor on call:**

Not every organization has a Ph.D. on staff. Dr. Pawan Srivastava is recognized nationally and internationally for his floral research into preservatives and treatment products.

**All in the family:**

Syndicate Sales remains a private, family-owned business, just like the entire floral industry. Corporate entities are not in place. Most operations are in the hands of second or third-generation family members. Relationships become an even more important ingredient than in many other businesses, according to Hendrickson.

**New outlets:**

About 90% of all cut flowers used to be sold in retail shops. Grocery stores have become major players, along with online outlets. Syndicate Sales serves Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Meijer, Kroger and others – some directly and others through wholesalers.

"Wherever cut flowers are sold, that's where we want to be," Hendrickson declares.



Syndicate Sales President David Hendrickson points out the Single Anchor Aquapic™ that was essential to the formation of the company.

Company trucks are on the road to the 48 continental states and Canada.



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