Marketing Channels Used by Wholesale and Retail Nursery Companies

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Analysis of data collected from a questionnaire survey of randomly selected Tennessee nursery businesses revealed that wholesalers and retailers differed significantly in their stated reasons for attending and participating in industry trade shows. When controlled for business size (gross sales), wholesalers and retailers also differed significantly in their perception of the usefulness of catalogs, newspapers, trade journals, trade shows, and radio to advertise nursery products and services.

Key Words: advertising channels, business operation size, Chi-square tests of independence, nursery retail business, nursery wholesale business, strategic marketing, stratified random sample

A successful advertising campaign organized in the context of a strategic marketing plan is important for any business. Advertising by nursery companies exhibiting at industry trade shows is becoming increasingly important for companies wishing to establish their presence in the industry. In the United States, nurserymen spend an average of 4% of annual gross sales on advertising (Brooker and Witte, 1997), with a sizable portion of that budget allocated to advertising at industry trade shows. As noted by Daniel (1996), trade show marketing requires strategic planning which is "more than just showing up and working a booth" (p. 27). Trade show marketing is important due to its direct and indirect sales effects. Potential customers and casual visitors tour the booths of their choice and become familiarized with company products. These visits can impact on companies' sales (Kotabe and Helsen, 1998). Consequently, exhibiting at a trade show should be treated like any other component of a marketing and advertising plan with a focus on attracting potential customers (Daniel, 1996).

Research indicates that nursery businesses attend and participate in trade shows for many reasons (Ekanem et al., 1998; Grey, 1995, 1996, 1998; Haydu and Meerow, 1994; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Konopacki, 1987; McIvor, 1995). Based on a 1998 survey, Ekanem et al. found the three most important reasons for attending trade shows were making contacts for future sales, seeing what is new in the market, and promotion and display of products.

There are many channels commonly used in advertising and marketing of nursery products (Hinson, 1998; Ekanem et al., 1997; Ekanem et al., 1998). In a limited and exploratory survey of advertisement methods and amount of budget allocated to different advertising channels by woody ornamental plant producers in Louisiana, Hinson (1998) observed that yellow pages, trade journals, trade shows, newspapers, radio, catalogs, and newsletters were frequently used by Louisiana producers to advertise their products. His study showed that advertising budgets allocated to different advertising channels were related to the size of the firm. Ekanem et al. (1998) reported similar findings in a survey of Tennessee nursery producers, where respondents ranked word-of-mouth (79.4%), catalogs (34.6%), and trade shows (33.3%) as their three most important advertising channels.

An earlier nationwide survey conducted by *NMPRO* magazine and Tennessee State University's Cooperative Extension Program (Morgan and Butcher, 1995; Morgan, 1995) found that both small and large nursery growers used the following media to market their products: trade publications (16%), toll-free telephone numbers (16%), trade shows (15%), direct mailing (13%), brochures (11%), catalogs (8%), referrals (7%), telemarketing (7%), and other (7%). Few other national surveys have been used in establishing the importance of these channels to growers in marketing products and services.

Objectives

The selection of channels to be used in advertising nursery products is important to growers. While earlier studies have examined the differences in channels selected in terms of business size (e.g., Hinson, 1998), relatively few have analyzed wholesale-retail differences. The primary objectives of this study, therefore, were to analyze differences between wholesalers and retailers of nursery products in their selection of advertising channels, and to evaluate any differences between wholesalers and retailers in their reasons for attending and exhibiting at trade shows.

In addition, this investigation departs from previous studies reported in the literature by examining the effectiveness of channels used in advertising and marketing of nursery crops and reasons for attending trade shows within a wholesale-retail[1] context. Our analysis was extended by controlling for size of gross sales, as is commonly done in nursery marketing studies (Turner, Stegelin, and Cleland, 1996; Stegelin, 1995; Hinson, 1998).

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[1] Brooker and Witte (1997) examined how the percentage of wholesale and retail annual sales generated by Tennessee nurserymen differed according to a size classification of small, medium, and large.

Based on the above discussion, the specific objectives of this study were to: (*a*) analyze nursery businesses' perceptions of the usefulness of different channels employed in the advertising and marketing of nursery products, (*b*) evaluate the reasons given by nursery professionals for attending trade shows, and (*c*) compare perceptions between wholesalers and retailers of nursery products with regard to marketing channels and to their reported usefulness rankings of selected advertising channels.

Materials and Methods

In the spring of 1998, questionnaire surveys were mailed to a stratified random sample of 200 Tennessee nursery businesses drawn from a population of 354 nursery businesses listed in the Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association's 1997 active membership guide (Tennessee Nurserymen and Landscape Association, 1997). The membership listing included nursery retailers, wholesalers, and greenhouse growers. The population of nurserymen in the listing was stratified according to size (gross annual sales) and region (east, middle, and west Tennessee). The size classifications were small ($500,001–$999,999 gross annual sales) or large (in excess of $1 million gross annual sales). The stratified random sampling techniques described by Scheaffer, Mendenhall, and Ott (1996) were followed in the selection of the sample used in this study.

In order to accomplish the first objective of this study, chi-square (χ^2) tests of independence were used to investigate the differences between wholesaler and retailer perceptions of the usefulness of several advertising channels. Respondents were asked to assess the usefulness of 10 different advertising channels using a five-point Likert-type scale in which 1 = "very useful," 2 = "useful," 3 = "somewhat useful," 4 = "not useful," and 5 = "never used."

For purposes of our analysis, responses of 1, 2, and 3 were combined into the "useful" category, while responses of 4 and 5 were combined into another category labeled "not useful." This recategorization allowed all "very useful," "useful," and "somewhat useful" responses to be reclassified as "useful," and the "not useful" and "never used" responses to be reclassified as "not useful." The rationale behind classification of "never used" into the "not useful" category is predicated on the fact that if a channel has never been used for advertising, it is probably not considered useful.

The following null and alternative hypotheses were tested for each of the channels used (where *i* represents the marketing channel selected):

- H_{0i}: The advertising channel selected is independent of the type of business enterprise.
- H_{1i}: The advertising channel selected is dependent on the type of business enterprise.

To assess the importance of trade show attendance for wholesalers and retailers, participants were given five reasons for attending trade shows and asked to rank

them as 1 = "most important," 2 = "important," and 3 = "least important." Responses were again reclassified as follows: 1 = "important" for respondents selecting "most important" or "important," and 2 = "not important" for those selecting "least important."

The following null and alternative hypotheses were tested using χ^2 tests of independence (where *j* represents the different reasons for trade show attendance):

- H_{0j}: The reason for attending a trade show is independent of the type of business enterprise.
- H_{1j}: The reason for attending a trade show is dependent on the type of business enterprise.

Respondents were given six categories into which they were asked to classify themselves. Only those who classified their businesses as either wholesale or retail were used in the analysis reported in this study. Finally, since size of business operation has been shown to be an important variable in nursery industry studies (e.g., Brooker and Witte, 1997; Haydu and Meerow, 1994), this study investigated size effects on marketing channel selected and reasons for attending trade shows. The analysis was conducted using gross sales (as a proxy for size) for the immediately preceding year. This variable served as a control variable, which was assigned a value of zero for small companies with gross sales of less than $1 million, and a value of one for large companies with sales of over $1 million.

Results and Discussion

Seventy usable questionnaires (35% return rate) were analyzed for this study. The average time in the nursery business was 17 years for retailers and 18 years for wholesalers. Thirty (43%) of the respondents classified themselves as strictly wholesalers, while 14 (20%) indicated they were strictly retail businesses. Four (6%) of the respondents who classified themselves as retailer/other were combined with the retailer group, and another 4 (6%) of the companies that were identified as wholesaler/other were combined with the wholesaler group. This reclassification allowed for analysis using 34 (49%) wholesalers and 18 (26%) retailers. Sixteen (23%) of all survey respondents classified themselves as some combination of wholesaler, retailer, and other. Due to the ambiguity arising from this classification, this group was not used for analysis. Two (2%) of the respondents did not classify their companies.

Tennessee counties with the highest response rates were Warren (33%), followed by Coffee (7%), and Sumner (6%). The respondent distribution by region (table 1) was consistent with percentages for all certified nursery operations in the state (Singh, Osawaru, and Shrum, 1989; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999, pp. 512–513).

Reasons given by respondents for attending trade shows varied from promotion and display of products to making social contacts (table 2). Respondents were allowed the freedom of ranking or not ranking any particular reason for attending trade shows. This freedom led to the varying sample size for each reason analyzed.

Table 1. Survey Respondent Distribution by Tennessee Region (N = 70)

Tennessee Region	% of All Respondents [a]	% of All Nursery and Greenhouse Farms, 1997 [b]	% of All Nursery Farms, 1997 [b]
Middle	54.3	56.6	76.6
East	12.9	30.7	13.4
West	4.3	11.8	6.0
Other	28.5	0.9	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

[a] Actual percentage of survey participants from identified regions.

[b] USDA, *1997 Census of Agriculture*, "Tennessee: State and County Data" (table 33, pp. 508–514).

The final column in table 2 reports the number of survey participants opting not to rank each of the stated reasons. A majority of respondents (94.4%) indicated that making contacts for future sales was important, while 89.3% thought seeing what was new in the market was important. This result is consistent with findings reported by Brooker and Witte (1997) and Haydu and Meerow (1994) that considerations other than sales made at the show are important in nurserymen's decisions to participate in trade shows.

As shown in table 3, word-of-mouth (98.4%), trade shows (75%), and yellow pages (75%) received high evaluations of usefulness as advertising channels. Again, respondents were allowed the freedom to rank or not rank any particular advertising channel; consequently, information reported here will be from less than the 70 usable surveys returned by participants.

Chi-square^2 tests of independence were used to test if there was a relationship between advertising channel selected and the type of business enterprise (wholesale versus retail). Wholesalers and retailers differed in four of the 10 channels used in advertising (table 4): (*a*) catalogs ($\chi^2 = 16.63$, $p \leq 0.000$); (*b*) newspapers ($\chi^2 = 10.42$, $p \leq 0.001$); (*c*) trade journals ($\chi^2 = 7.80$, $p \leq 0.005$); and (*d*) radio ($\chi^2 = 7.80$, $p \leq 0.005$). These results suggest that advertising channel selected is not independent of the type of business. The null hypothesis (H_{0i}) was therefore rejected for catalogs, newspapers, trade journals, and radio.

The implication of this finding is that although nurserymen selected all listed channels for advertising, there were differences in how wholesalers and retailers perceived their usefulness. While more wholesalers than retailers considered brochures, catalogs, trade journals, trade shows, yellow pages, and word-of-mouth to be useful advertising channels, more retailers than wholesalers considered billboards, newspapers, and radio to be useful channels.

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^{2} $\chi^2 = \Sigma(O - E)^2/E$ is the test statistic used in the decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis using an $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. O = observed frequency, and E = expected frequency using data from constructed contingency tables (Bluman, 1997).

Table 2. Importance Ranking of Reasons for Trade Show Attendance, All Respondents (N = 70)

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
			IMPORTANCE RANKING STATISTICS [a]			
Reason for Attending Trade Show	Number of Respondents Considering Reason Important	% of Respondents Considering Reason Important $[A/(A+D)]*100$	Respondents' Importance Ranking [b]	Number of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant	% of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant $[D/(A+D)]*100$, or $[100-B]$	Number of Participants Who Did Not Respond to Question [c]
Promotion and display	30	76.9	3	9	23.1	31
Spot sales of merchandise	25	64.1	5	14	35.9	31
Making contacts for future sales	51	94.4	1	3	5.6	16
Finding out what is new in market	50	89.3	2	6	10.7	14
Making social contacts	35	76.1	4	11	23.9	24

[a] Importance based on respondents' assessment of reasons for attending trade show; row percentages total to 100%.

[b] Based on % responses, where 1 = highest rank.

[c] Respondents were allowed the freedom of ranking or not ranking a reason, thus explaining differences in the number of participants ranking each reason.

Table 3. Usefulness Ranking of the Different Advertising Channels Selected

Advertising Channel	(A) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Useful	(B) % of Respondents Considering Channel Useful [A/(A+D)]*100	(C) Respondents' Usefulness Ranking[b]	(D) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful	(E) % of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful [D/(A+D)]*100, or [100 − B]	(F) Number of Respondents Who Did Not Assess Channel[c]
Billboard	8	16.7	9	40	83.3	22
Brochure	37	72.5	3	14	27.5	19
Catalog	32	60.4	4	21	39.6	17
Internet	13	26.5	8	36	73.5	21
Newspaper	27	50.0	5	27	50.0	16
Trade Journal	21	40.4	6	31	59.6	18
Trade Show	42	75.0	2	14	25.0	14
Radio	18	34.6	7	34	65.4	18
Yellow Pages	42	75.0	2	14	25.0	14
Word-of-Mouth	62	98.4	1	1	1.6	7

USEFULNESS RANKING STATISTICS[a]

[a] Usefulness based on respondents' assessment of advertising method (channel) used; row percentages total to 100%.
[b] Based on % responses, where 1 = highest rank.
[c] Respondents were allowed the freedom of ranking or not ranking any advertising channel, thus explaining differences in the number of participants ranking each advertising choice.

Table 4. Advertising Channel Usefulness by Nursery Business Type (wholesale vs. retail)

NURSERY BUSINESS TYPE

Advertising Channel	Wholesale (N = 34)			Retail (N = 18)			(G) χ^2 Value [b]	(H) Number of Participants Who Responded [c] [N=(A+C+D+F)]
	(A) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Useful	(B) Respondents' Usefulness Ranking [a]	(C) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful	(D) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Useful	(E) Respondents' Usefulness Ranking [a]	(F) Number of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful		
Billboard	1	9	21	3	6	11	2.47	36
Brochure	15	5	11	11	3	2	2.83	39
Catalog	23	3	5	2	7	11	16.63*	41
Internet	7	7	16	2	7	12	0.52	37
Newspaper	7	7	17	13	2	3	10.42*	40
Trade Journal	14	6	12	1	8	12	7.80*	39
Trade Show	24	2	5	10	4	4	0.51	43
Radio	4	8	20	9	5	6	7.80*	39
Yellow Pages	18	4	7	13	2	4	0.31	42
Word-of-Mouth	31	1	1	16	1	0	0.42	48

[a] Based on % responses, where 1 = highest rank.

[b] Pearson χ^2 values were calculated separately for each advertising channel listed; an asterisk (*) denotes $p \leq 0.05$ (5% alpha level of significance).

[c] N varies depending on whether or not respondent ranked the advertising channels listed.

The reasons for attending trade shows were also analyzed for wholesale-type and retail-type business differences (table 5). A hypothesis-testing scheme similar to the one used for channel selection was employed for trade show attendance. Twenty-five (96%) of the wholesalers responded that it was important for them to find out what was new in the market, compared to 12 (80%) of the retailers. Nineteen (95%) of the wholesalers listed social contacts as an important reason for attending trade shows, compared to six (55%) retailers.

Chi-square tests of independence revealed there were no statistically significant differences in reasons given for attending trade shows between wholesalers and retailers, with the exception of making social contacts ($\chi^2 = 7.44, p \leq 0.006$), leading to a rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{0j}) for this reason for attending trade shows.

With regard to enterprise size, 52 (79%) of the respondents reported they had gross sales of less than $1 million, and 14 (21%) indicated they had more than $1 million in gross sales generated in the immediately preceding year. Controlling for size (table 6), further analysis of data showed that there were significant differences in perception of the usefulness of catalog marketing for small companies. Results for this advertising method were more significant for companies with less than $1 million in sales ($\chi^2 = 15.06, p \leq 0.000$) than for companies with more than $1 million in sales. Significant results were also obtained for newspaper advertisement for small ($\chi^2 = 6.15, p \leq 0.013$) and large ($\chi^2 = 4.44, p \leq 0.035$) companies, trade journals for small ($\chi^2 = 3.80, p \leq 0.051$) and large ($\chi^2 = 2.92, p \leq 0.088$) companies, and radio for small ($\chi^2 = 2.57, p \leq 0.109$) and large ($\chi^2 = 3.73, p \leq 0.053$) companies. Finally, word-of-mouth was found to be moderately significant for large companies ($\chi^2 = 3.43, p \leq 0.064$).

The reasons for attending and participating in trade shows for wholesalers and retailers were similarly controlled for size (table 7). Results indicated that wholesalers and retailers differed only in the "making social contacts" reason for attending trade shows for small companies ($\chi^2 = 4.05, p \leq 0.044$). This result showed that when type of business was controlled for, making contacts for future sales was selected as the most important reason for attending trade shows by wholesalers and retailers. Furthermore, when size was controlled for, this reason remained the most important for businesses generating less than $1 million in sales.

Most of the analyses reported in this study used the χ^2 test statistic to test the hypotheses of independence with a significance level that allows for a rejection or nonrejection of the null hypothesis. In applying this test, it is desirable that some assumptions be met. One such assumption is that "no cell" in the $\{n \times n\}$ table "has an expected value less than 1.0, and not more than 20% of the cells have expected values less than 5" (SPSS, Inc., 1997, p. 67). The requirements are stricter for a $\{2 \times 2\}$ contingency table. Since the χ^2 statistic measures the level of association between variables, a violation of this assumption may not provide enough justification to invalidate the results. When violations of the requirements occur, the associated probabilities, at worst, are "distorted or misleading" (SPSS, Inc., p. 67). For this study, where it was apparent that violations could lead to distorted or misleading probability values, the Fisher's exact test values (marginal

Table 5. Reasons for Attending Trade Show by Nursery Business Type (wholesale vs. retail)

Reason for Attending Trade Show	NURSERY BUSINESS TYPE				
	Wholesale[a]		Retail[a]		(E)
	(A) Number of Respondents Considering Reason Important	(B) Number of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant	(C) Number of Respondents Considering Reason Important	(D) Number of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant	χ^2 Value[b]
Promotion and display	17	4	5	2	0.28
Spot sales of merchandise	14	6	5	3	0.15
Making contacts for future sales	29	0	10	0	N/A[c]
Finding out what is new in market	25	1	12	3	2.82
Making social contacts	19	1	6	5	7.44*

[a] Numbers in these columns represent the number of respondents willing to assess the importance of the stated reason for attending trade show.
[b] Pearson χ^2 values were calculated separately for each reason listed; an asterisk (*) denotes $p \leq 0.05$ (5% alpha level of significance).
[c] N/A denotes statistic cannot be computed because of cell frequencies.

Table 6. Pearson χ^2 Values for Advertising Channel Usefulness by Business Type When Controlled for Size (gross sales)

	SIZE OF NURSERY BUSINESS (Gross Sales)									
	Less than $1 Million (N = 52)					Greater than $1 Million (N = 14)				
	% of Respondents Considering Channel Useful		% of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful			% of Respondents Considering Channel Useful		% of Respondents Considering Channel Not Useful		
Advertising Channel	(A) Wholesale	(B) Retail	(C) Wholesale	(D) Retail	(E) χ^2 Value[a]	(F) Wholesale	(G) Retail	(H) Wholesale	(I) Retail	(J) χ^2 Value[a]
Billboard	5.6	12.5	94.4	87.5	0.38	0.0	33.3	100.0	66.7	0.89
Brochure	57.1	87.5	42.9	12.5	2.36	50.0	80.0	50.0	20.0	0.63
Catalog	87.0	12.5	13.0	87.5	15.06**	50.0	20.0	50.0	80.0	0.63
Internet	33.3	11.1	66.7	88.9	1.54	0.0	20.0	100.0	80.0	0.47
Newspaper	31.6	80.0	68.4	20.0	6.15**	0.0	83.3	100.0	16.7	4.44**
Trade Journal	52.4	12.5	47.6	87.5	3.80**	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0	2.92*
Trade Show	87.5	75.0	12.5	25.0	0.71	100.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	0.89
Radio	21.1	50.0	78.9	50.0	2.57	0.0	80.0	100.0	20.0	3.73**
Yellow Pages	70.0	72.7	30.0	27.3	0.03	100.0	83.3	0.0	16.7	0.38
Word-of-Mouth	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	N/A[b]	50.0	100.0	50.0	0.0	3.43*

[a] Pearson χ^2 values were calculated separately for each advertising channel listed; * denotes $p \le 0.10$ (10% alpha level of significance), ** denotes $p \le 0.05$ (5% alpha level of significance).

[b] N/A denotes statistic cannot be computed because of cell frequencies.

Table 7. Pearson χ^2 Values for Reasons for Attending Trade Shows by Business Type When Controlled for Size (gross sales)

	SIZE OF NURSERY BUSINESS (Gross Sales)									
	Less than $1 Million (N = 52)					Greater than $1 Million (N = 14)				
	% of Respondents Considering Reason Important		% of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant			% of Respondents Considering Reason Important		% of Respondents Considering Reason Unimportant		
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E) χ^2 Value[a]	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J) χ^2 Value[a]
Reason for Attending Trade Show	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail		Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail	
Promotion and display	77.8	80.0	22.2	20.0	0.01	100.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.75
Spot sales of merchandise	75.0	66.7	25.0	33.3	0.15	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	0.00
Making contacts for future sales	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	N/A[b]	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	N/A[b]
Finding out what is new in market	95.5	80.0	4.5	20.0	1.93	100.0	80.0	0.0	20.0	0.47
Making social contacts	94.1	62.5	5.9	37.5	4.05*	100.0	33.3	0.0	66.7	1.33

[a] Pearson χ^2 values were calculated separately for each reason listed; an asterisk (*) denotes $p \leq 0.05$ (5% alpha level of significance).

[b] N/A denotes statistic cannot be computed because of cell frequencies.

counts fixed at their observed values) were computed. The values obtained from this test provided justification needed for accepting reported χ^2 values and calculated probabilities.

Our survey results show that the top four most useful advertising channels were ranked as follows: word-of-mouth = #1, trade shows (tied with yellow pages) = #2, and brochures = #3. When controlled for business type, however, word-of-mouth was ranked #1 by both retailers and wholesalers. While wholesalers ranked trade shows #2, followed by catalogs at #3, retailers ranked yellow pages (tied with newspapers) #2, and trade shows (tied with brochures) #3. Consequently, for both retailers and wholesalers, word-of-mouth receives the #1 ranking as the most useful channel for advertising.

This finding lends much needed empirical support to the commonly accepted notion that word-of-mouth is an effective way to advertise nursery products. This channel has been recognized as one of the most powerful marketing vehicles for nursery producers. It is effective for small roadside sellers as well as large-scale growers (Peerbolt, 1996). Making contacts for future sales was selected by survey respondents as the most important consideration for attending trade shows. This was followed by an interest in finding out what is new in the market, and finally, product promotion and display.

Conclusions

Two major conclusions can be derived from this study. First, wholesale businesses and retailers differed in their assessment of the usefulness of catalogs, newspapers, trade journals, and radio as channels for advertising nursery products. However, when size was controlled for, catalogs, newspapers, trade journals, radio, and word-of-mouth were the significant variables. This result demonstrates that whether or not size was controlled for, there were significant differences in perceived usefulness of catalogs, newspapers, trade journals, and radio as advertising methods. When size was controlled for, the perceived usefulness of word-of-mouth for advertising was different for wholesalers and retailers. The implication of this result is that the perceived effectiveness of the use of word-of-mouth to advertise may be more influenced by business size than by the type of business. Based on the results obtained from this study, there is, generally, a size effect that needs to be considered when evaluating channels used in advertising nursery products.

Second, wholesale nursery businesses and retailers differed in their reasons for attending trade shows. Specifically, significant differences between wholesalers and retailers were found for "making social contacts" (table 5; $\chi^2 = 7.44$, $p \leq 0.05$). When controlled for business size (table 7), the only significant differences between wholesalers and retailers were, again, for the "making social contacts" reason in attending trade shows. Regardless of whether size was controlled for or not, making social contacts remained an important and significant reason among survey respondents for attending trade shows.

Wholesalers and retailers seem to have better success when using different advertising channels to market their products. In spite of this result, it is important to consider the size of the business as an essential variable in determining wholesale-retail differences in channels chosen for advertising nursery products. Also, since our results suggest wholesalers and retailers differ significantly in their "making social contacts" motivation for attending trade shows, trade show planners should use different approaches in marketing attendance at trade shows to retailers and wholesalers. Again, any differences in marketing approaches or strategies should also take into consideration the size of the business.

Understanding the differences between wholesalers and retailers contributes to increased effectiveness of the advertising and marketing practices of businesses in the nursery industry. This research has shown that the type of nursery business (wholesale versus retail) as well as the size of the business (based on gross annual sales) are two important factors to be addressed when considering both the channels used to advertise nursery products and the reasons for attending trade shows for nursery businesses.

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