

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

New faces of luxury: Jennifer Grove, founder/CEO of Repeat Roses

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Repeat Roses delivers flowers to elderly

By **Kathryn Minckler**

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Repeat Roses is an eco-friendly company headquartered in New York that collects and repurposes florals from events and delivers them to nursing homes, hospitals, hospice care and pediatric cancer treatment facilities.

By collecting the flowers from various types of events that would otherwise end up in the trash, New York-based Repeat Roses rearranges the flowers into multiple, smaller arrangements and delivers the refreshed flowers to local organizations. Anything that cannot be repurposed is composted.

Once the flowers are enjoyed the second time around, they are reclaimed for composting and the vases are recycled to ensure a zero-waste, sustainable service experience.

By reclaiming the organic matter, **Repeat Roses** is helping divert significant waste from the landfill and helping to create supercharged soil amendments for flower growers, farmers, gardeners and landscapers. This extra step ensures a zero-waste service and better serves the environment.

Since the for-profit company's founding in 2014, it has provided services in 19 states and to events, including Town&Country magazine's Philanthropy Summit and VIP tent at the East Coast Polo Championship.

<http://www.repeatroses.com>

In this Q&A, Kathryn Minckler, founder and chairman of **The Luxury Marketing Council of Connecticut-Hudson Valley**, discusses with Repeat Roses founder/CEO Jennifer Grove her organization's philosophy, purpose and sustainability issues, among others. Please read on.

What does "luxury" mean to you?

Luxury to me is a state of mind. It's the authentic, soul-stirring pleasure you sense when you feel the labor of love that went into crafting a quality experience, product or service.

What was the inspiration for Repeat Roses?

After almost two decades of behind-the-scenes runway shows, product launches, hotel openings and weddings, I had become a fan of the flowers that were often the last to be seen and the first to be thrown away.

had seen my fair share of glamorous events and the waste each one produced.

It takes an enormous amount of creative talent and material resources to produce special events and the garbage left behind is often staggering.

I reached a pain point when I looked at the role flowers played in creating a major decor element only to see them enjoyed for a few short hours at a cocktail reception before getting tossed and was compelled to do change the single-use pipeline in a meaningful, purpose-driven way.



Jennifer Grove is founder/CEO of Repeat Roses

What does Repeat Roses do? Is it a charity or is it a business?

Repeat Roses is in the business of making money by providing services that are good for people and our planet.

Today, we combine social impact with sustainability and corporate responsibility in a unique luxury service.

Our clients pay a service fee for us to collect florals from any type of event and repurpose them for the benefit of the social good.

Florals are restyled into petite arrangements appropriate for bedside tables in cancer treatment, hospital, nursing home, women's shelter facilities and other venues where they are enjoyed for a few more days and create an emotional health boost for those who need it most.

Once the flowers are twice loved, we recover the organics for composting and the containers for recycling.

The zero-waste service means we're able to reduce our client's carbon footprint and minimize their impact on the environment, while simultaneously spreading a major spot of joy throughout local communities.

In most cases, our clients also receive a meaningful financial return on their floral investment in the form of a tax deduction.

Ours is business with a purpose, one that our partners and clients can support knowing the mission we are on and the immediate results we produce to benefit everyone in the value chain.

What is motivating the luxury market today to rethink and react to interest in protecting the environment, decreasing its carbon footprint and addressing other socially responsible issues? Do you see Repeat Roses as an activator in the green luxury movement?

If we continue to deplete and damage our natural resources, there will ultimately be nothing left from which to profit.

Leaders in the luxury market increasingly recognize that their brands need to communicate their values about the environment to their clients in order to provide both existing and prospective new clients a reason to engage beyond just the transaction.

Corporate social responsibility and protecting the planet are two very top-of-mind conversations, especially for millennials who seek employment and shop with a brand's social values and eco-responsibility in mind.

Taking action to reduce water, energy, waste and carbon output to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change should be an integral part of any company's strategy to court consumers and retain employees.

Repeat Roses can be part of that strategy since we activate a triple bottom line approach. By integrating the three Ps people, planet, profit into innovative valuable and impactful services, we're helping to open new markets, create new jobs and value, enhance corporate culture and communicate important values.

What are the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and how can Repeat Roses help its hotel and events venue partners to meet their goals and requirements?

The U.N. developed a list of 17 goals to transform the world and make significant progress protecting the planet.

When Repeat Roses completes a job, the company quantifies and reports the waste volume diverted from a landfill and the number of people that receive repurposed fresh flower deliveries, providing hotel and events venue partners with measurable results that serve as part of a 3BL strategy to meet stakeholders' sustainability benchmarks and the UN's global initiatives.

Our service helps reduce waste and over the course of time, becomes a source of cost savings by lowering the volume of waste removal and hauling fees.

It may interest you to know that the average wedding produces 400-600 pounds of garbage and 63 tons of CO2.

Said another way, the U.S. wedding market in 2016 was actually equivalent to 8.3 million cars driving on the road a year.

What are the company's biggest achievements to date and its plans for 2017?

Our team's biggest passion and sense of accomplishment comes from daring to create a new solution where people were unaware of or apathetic to the problem.

One of my favorite examples this year was partnering with the Downtown Louisville Marriott to collect the tens of thousands of roses from the hotel and its corporate client events in conjunction with the Kentucky Derby.

We took the iconic "Run for the Roses" annual classic and added the Repeat Roses twist. The ripple effect in the community lasted well beyond the fastest two minutes in sports.

By the end of 2017, we want to inspire more global businesses from luxury brands to the technology industry and the automobile industry to include Repeat Roses in their plans and set a precedent for even more acts of kindness and proactive green programming.

Who is the CEO in the luxury market whom you most admire and would like to work with in the future?

There are so many innovators in today's luxury market. I feel like it's a really exciting and transformative time.

I'm currently feeling inspired by the entire group of luxury market CEOs who are taking a calculated risk together by committing their brands as part of Related's Hudson Yards project.

I see Neiman Marcus fashion, Equinox health and Thomas Keller dining experiences colliding in an exciting way amidst artistic community space and residential living.

Whenever there is a floral component, I want us to collaborate with these brands to create new experiences that help to extend their social impact and sustainability philosophies beyond the confined real estate of a shopping center.

If you follow the flowers' journey through the Repeat Roses service loop, you'll discover we have the unique and highly visual storytelling opportunity to connect these brands and industries with communities that might not otherwise engage with one another and their customers.



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