

CORPORATE GIFT PROGRAM

neutral choices: job-related items, gourmet food, flowers and things that pertain to the recipient's outside hobbies.

If you're having trouble deciding on something, do a little research. Call the person's secretary or a co-worker and ask about favorite foods, special interests, collections, color preferences, favorite sports teams, authors or musicians. This strategy will certainly tell you what to avoid. The wrong gift is useless, and may even be offensive.

4 For group gifts, find out something about group members by identifying their:

- demographics
- jobs and income levels
- lifestyles and interests
- relationship to you and your business, product or service
- exposure to other business gifts
- expectations

4 Consider group gifts that can be enjoyed by all:

- a party, banquet or luncheon catered in the office or at an outside site
- special privileges (the use of an executive parking spot)
- free tickets to a special cultural or sporting event
- health club or museum memberships

4 Will the recipient feel comfortable accepting your gift?

Put yourself in a gift recipient's shoes. Would you feel comfortable receiving the gift you've chosen? If your answer is yes, send it. If it's no, choose again. Don't ignore the slightest hint that a gift might be offensive or mistaken for a bribe.

The Benefits of Business Gift Giving

Unlike direct mail campaigns that target specific markets, business gifts can be personally selected and sent to key accounts.

Because of its personal nature, a well-chosen business gift says we care about you and our business relationship with you.

Business gifts have a repeat effect. A gift from you is a constant reminder of you and your business.

The right gift makes more of an impact than almost anything else you do for your customer. Everyone likes to get presents.

Giving a gift most often creates a favorable impression. It is a subtle, soft-sell form of promotion that works well. A business gift is a positive, pleasant experience for both the giver and the recipient.

You can easily tie your business gift program in with promotional or advertising themes to increase synergy and multiply the frequency of your message.

Your gift positions you foremost in the mind of the customer, so that when he or she needs your product or service, you're the first one they think of, not the competition.

Step 5: Get Sentimental

Say something with a personal note that accompanies every gift, no matter the gift's value or the occasion. You won't get by with just a brief note on a business card. Include a separate note that conveys both thoughtfulness and sincerity.

The note should explain the purpose of the gift plainly and clearly. If you can't include a note with catalog orders, for instance you should send a separate note with your message that a gift is on the way. For other occasions such as a meeting or new product introduction where hundreds of gifts will be given and it's impossible to include a personal note, convey your sentiments in a speech, company newsletter article or letter