

## To Give or Not to Give ...that is the question

Don't contemplate too long. Now, as the holidays near, is the time to work on an effective gift giving program. There are lots of solid reasons why you should take advantage of this season to show your clients, employees and vendors that you really do appreciate all they do to contribute to your company's success.

Sometimes just a holiday card with a handwritten signature is enough to show that you're thinking about your important company contacts. If you want to be sure that these people, so vital to your success, know that you truly care and appreciate all that they do, then you should consider stacking the deck to insure that you convey that message.

**Clients:** I'm sure that you very much appreciate their business throughout the year. This time of year presents a great opportunity to show gratitude by giving them a holiday gift that will not only garner goodwill, but can also serve as a regular reminder to the recipient that you value their business. When selecting the right item to give, try to find something that the recipient can really use, such as a picture frame or a fine writing instrument. To ensure it is seen & used often, choose an item that will be placed in a prime location such as the desktop.

**Employees:** Many companies spend a lot on their holiday parties. Smart idea. Giving a tangible gift in conjunction with your party is even a smarter idea. Perhaps a portion of that budget can be allocated to a modest gift that will invoke fond memories of that event when seen in the future.

Another great strategy is to take a portion of the year-end bonus and give employees a branded polo or jacket that will be used long after the bonus money is spent. This could also be an opportunity to give employees a nice business tool, such as a padfolio or bag that may be useful in their day to day jobs. You will get the appreciation that goes with all thoughtful gift giving, and also have a better-equipped work force.

**Vendors:** Though often overlooked as a likely group to give gifts to, keep in mind that you often call on your vendors for a "special request". Why not make a modest investment by giving key vendors a token of your appreciation for all they do. Vendors, too, respond well to recognition, and who knows, perhaps your effort may improve their effort when you next need a favor.

Consumables, such as candy or nuts, make nice holiday gifts that often are a good way to convey your thanks to a group of people and can create a buzz upon receipt as people "dip in." Also, sweets in general, and chocolate specifically, will always win a big response from the recipient(s). Remember though that you are basically recognizing and rewarding good behavior. In doing so, you should try to use creative branded packaging that will outlast the actual consumable, such as a nice glass candy jar or a wooden nut box, and remind recipients of your appreciation. That said, consumables without special branding, are great ideas to give when making amends for a mistake. You don't want a lasting reminder in this case and want to make the evidence go away.

Keep in mind the golden rule of branding: the less expensive the gift, the greater the branding and the more expensive the item, the subtler you want to display your logo.

**BOTTOM LINE: *The more you give, the more you receive in return.***

Yours Sincerely,



Phil Grosse  
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