

Holiday Hints

Gift-Giving Tips In A Professional Environment

(NAPSA)—Smart gift-giving during the holidays can help keep a company busy all year long. It's a great way to show you appreciate your clients, contacts, employees or peers. It also helps to keep the sender top-of-mind throughout the year. Here are a few tips from Jeff Zbar, a small business authority and Office Depot's Gift Giving Expert, for selecting the right gift for business associates—and leaving a lasting impression all year long.

Tip #1: Ask the right questions. Find out what your recipient is interested in. Would your boss enjoy a basketball hoop that attaches to the trash can for stress relief or is he or she more of a golf fanatic and would appreciate an automatic return golf putter? For baskets of food or other edible treats, be sure to check on food allergies and religious or ethnic observances that might prohibit your recipient from eating the gift's contents. And with all gifts, make sure the recipient's employer doesn't forbid such generosity.

Tip #2: Make it a keepsake. You want your client to be reminded of your thoughtful gesture all year long—especially when additional business opportunities arise. Browse catalogs or Web sites for useful gifts or promotional items that say something about you. A direct mail consultant might consider giving a letter opener, or the owner of a graphic design firm could give a box of nicely designed business cards or stationery. Make the gift personal—and memorable. Many retailers, including Office Depot, have business-appropriate gifts in all price ranges that can meet your personal gift-giving needs.



Tip #3: Shop early, send early. The last thing you want during the holiday season is for your gift to get lost in the holiday shuffle. Many employees choose to take time off during the last two weeks of December and you don't want your gift sitting in their inbox until after the New Year. But, if you are a last minute shopper, don't worry. You can rush deliver your gifts so they arrive just before the holiday. Remember, a late gift is better than no gift at all.

Tip #4: Don't forget about your assistant or secretary. It's important to thank that one person who helps you to be successful on a daily basis. For example, a great gift idea is the Sharp YO-P20 Personal Organizer which comes in a sleek PDA style design, stores thousands of entries including three telephone/address books, a world clock, calculator and scheduler. Plus, it's sold at major office supply retailers for just under \$20.

Tip #5: Give thanks year-round. Remember: The ultimate goal of holiday gift-giving is to say thanks for someone's business and for them to remember you the next time they need your services. So don't relegate this to once a year. Remember your clients with thank you cards or notes on a regular basis.