



# GUIDE TO CORPORATE GIFTING

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH CORPORATE GIFTS

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### a. Why Corporate Gifts?

The giving of gifts is an important part of the human experience and connects us with family and friends. The act of giving helps define our relationships, strengthens our bonds and reinforces our feelings toward the recipient. When the right gift is given, it becomes more than just an item to the recipient. It becomes a tangible reminder of the relationship that exists between the giver and the recipient.

**Why is this important? Because relationships matter, and in business, relationships really matter.**

Remembering that longtime customer at the holidays or recognizing an employee that “goes above and beyond” lets them know just how much you value their relationship. The right gift can strengthen those bonds, increase loyalty and gain favor with the recipient while promoting the brand. The wrong gift can have the opposite effect, leaving the recipient wondering why you even bothered. A corporate gift strategy should be implemented to ensure you give an appropriate gift, at the right time to reach your objective and maintain your budget.

### b. A Few Words of Caution

Even if you mean well, giving the wrong gift – or any gift at all – can have a negative impact on your business relationships. Be sure to keep the following in mind.

#### Company Gift Policies

Many companies set a limit on the value of gifts their employees receive. It's good practice to check with the HR department before giving gifts.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH STRINGS ATTACHED ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS THE LAST GIFT.**

### **BUILD ON AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**

Your internal audiences such as your employees have an emotional investment in the promotion of your brand. These audiences are more likely to appreciate a branded gift. However, this doesn't mean employee gifts should be blatant advertisements for the brand.

### **Inappropriate Gifts**

It's the thought that counts, but gifts that may be considered inappropriate or unethical should definitely be avoided. Even though your recipient may appreciate the gesture, their HR department may take offense. It's best to be conservative than to potentially offend someone and ruin a relationship.

### **Gifts are Not Incentives**

Even though the end goal is to see a high ROI, don't think of gifts as incentives. Incentives are rewards for reaching a defined goal such as sales quota, safety improvements or good attendance. Gifts are more spontaneous; there is no set goal the recipient is actively trying to reach to receive a reward. If your gift giving strategy is to give with strings attached, then your relationships with recipients will be one of "quid pro quo" and will only be as strong as the last gift given.

## **c. Build a Strategy Before Shopping**

When it comes to gifting, it's easy to focus on the gift and immediately start shopping for an item that will "WOW" your recipients. This should actually be the last part of your gift giving process. Time spent defining the audience, the occasion, gift distribution and budget will shape your gift choices and help you to choose the right gift for your objectives.

### **Defining the Audience**

In order to give a memorable gift that meets your objectives you need to know and understand your audience. One way to begin is to determine if you are looking at an "internal" or "external" audience.

#### **Internal Audiences**

Your internal audience consists of employees, volunteers and your sales team. Anyone who regularly represents your brand is an "internal" audience member.

#### **External Audiences**

Your external audience generally includes current clients, prospects and donors. Anyone who is involved with your organization in some way but does not partake in helping the organization function is part of the "external" audience.

Internal audiences will likely have an existing emotional connection with your organization while external audiences tend to be less invested in promoting your brand. Knowing which audience your recipients belong to will help you make branding, packaging and budget choices.

**BENEFITS OF GIFTING:****Client Relations**

Sales people who give promotional gifts to their customers receive **22% more referrals** than Sales people who don't.\*

**Prospecting**

Including a gift with prospect interactions results in a **14.7% response rate**.\*

**Employee Appreciation**

77% of employees report that they would work harder if they felt better recognized.\*\*

**CELEBRATE  
A DAY  
UNIQUE  
TO YOUR  
COMPANY  
AND ITS  
CULTURE.**

*\*PPAI Study Confirms Effectiveness Of Promotional Products When Compared To Traditional Media*

*\*\*Globoforce Workforce Mood Tracker™ The Impact of Recognition on Employee Retention*

**Audience Demographics**

You've identified your general gift giving audience, but now it's time to dive into who they really are. Some people may appreciate a business gift such as an expensive leather padfolio much more than they would appreciate Nike® athletic gear —both make great gifts, just not necessarily for the same people.

Ask yourself the following questions about your target audience:

1. What is the average age?
2. Gender?
3. Occupation?
4. How are they acquainted with your business? (employees, sales reps and customers will all appreciate different types of gifts)

In understanding your audience persona, there are many questions you could ask yourself. The more you truly understand your target audience, the better your gifts will be. A little online research into your target demographic using social media may yield information about the brands they like and their general interests.

**Gift Giving Occasion**

When should you give a gift? That depends entirely on your objectives and audience. Gifts tend to be more meaningful when they celebrate a particular time, instance or event between the giver and recipient. By recognizing these occasions with a gift, you reinforce the significance of the occasion and reinforce the relationship between the recipient and the brand.

**Holiday and Seasonal**

Holiday gifts are typically given to celebrate the end of the year holiday season and are appropriate for internal and external audiences. These gifts help you to keep in touch, say thank you and spread holiday cheer. You may also choose to give gifts to your internal audience to celebrate national observances specific to your industry such as Nurses Day or a unique date to your organization and its culture or history.

**Milestones**

Milestone gifts celebrate an important point in the relationship between the recipient and the brand such as an anniversary or achievement. Milestone gifts are typically more expensive or have a higher perceived value.

**On-the-Spot**

On-the-spot gifts are typically kept on hand and are used to say thanks, introduce yourself to a new client or celebrate a special achievement.

**DROP SHIPPING GIFTS:**

Simplify your gift giving process by working with a promotional specialist who can organize distribution directly to recipients.

**ADDING  
CUSTOM  
BRANDED  
PACKAGING,  
WRAPPING  
AND CARDS  
INCREASES  
BRAND  
PERCEPTION.**

**Gift Distribution**

The experience of receiving a gift should create a memorable moment and increase the value of the gift to the recipient. Whether you're planning on shipping holiday gifts or presenting them at a ceremony, your gift choices may create unexpected logistical issues or budget increases if not taken into consideration.

**Shipping**

If your recipients are spread across the country be sure to choose a gift that is shipping friendly. Special packaging costs can be incurred to prevent fragile cargo from breaking and large box freight costs can quickly use up your gift budget.

**On Site**

Gifts given locally on site won't have transit requirements such as shipping and packaging, but may have storage requirements.

**Events**

Gifts that are given at events may need special packaging such as gift bags to help make them portable. You should also take into account how attendees arrived at the event. If your attendees had to fly to get there, their gifts should be travel friendly.

By adding custom branded packaging, wrapping and personalized cards to your gift presentation, you can increase the impact of the gift on the recipient.

**d. Let's Go Shopping**

A quick internet search of the term "Corporate Gifts" returns an impressive list of just about every product imaginable from the biggest retail names on the planet. The amount of choices can be overwhelming and leave you wondering where to start.

**Where to Shop?**

Choosing where to shop is a good place to start and in most corporate gifting situations you have two choices: retail or promotional products specialists like HALO Branded Solutions.

**Retail Store**

If you decided on a single or low quantity gift with no decoration, a retail store is a good option. You can walk in, purchase the item you need and walk out, or if you prefer, visit their online store from the comfort of your home or office. Remember, most retail stores will not offer custom wrapping or packaging, so you may need to look elsewhere for those services.

**THINK OF  
YOUR PRO-  
MOTIONAL  
SPECIALIST  
AS A  
PERSONAL  
SHOPPER.**

### **Promotional Products Specialist**

Utilizing a promotional products representative's services is a smart choice for ordering custom items in large quantities. Think of these specialists as a personal shopper for your organization. Supply them with information on your recipient demographic, gift quantity and budget and they will put together ideas and options for your holiday and event needs. They can also offer special packaging, drop shipping and better pricing (due to the large order).

### **Branding – To Decorate or Not?**

According to the 2015 Corporate Gift Giving Study by the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI), nearly half (46%) of all companies who gave corporate gifts decided to add their logo to everything they gave. They created a promotional product out of the gift. This could be a smart way to increase your ROI, however, branding is not always the way to go with corporate gifting. Before adding your logo to every gift, ask yourself the following questions:

### **BRAND IMPRINTING GUIDELINES:**

Some name brands have strict guidelines when it comes to decorating their products. Certain brands like Under Armour only allow approved decorators to imprint their products.

1. Can my logo be imprinted on this item? Some brands have strict guidelines that do not allow for other logos to be on the same item, require a certain amount of space around their logo, or only allow approved decorators to print on their products.
2. How many gifts do I need? When ordering promotional products and logoed gifts, there are often minimum purchase requirements and imprinting charges that may occur. If you are only looking for one or two gifts, adding your logo may not be worth the time and money.
3. Does my branding increase or decrease the gift's value to the recipient? Put yourself in the recipient's shoes. How does your brand affect the gift? Does your logo make the gift more or less attractive? Will adding your logo change how the recipient uses the product? When it comes to adding a logo to a sophisticated or expensive corporate gift, often subtlety is key.

If you decide against imprinting your gifts, there are other ways to include your branding in your corporate gifting. Add your logo to the packaging, use branded wrapping paper, use a custom sewn-in tag, or create a branded card.

### **Gifting Structure**

When choosing gifts for large groups you typically have two options: one-size-fits-all gift strategy where everyone gets the same thing or developing multi-tiered gift options. The information you learned by researching your audience demographics will help you decide which structure is right for you.

## CHOOSE A GIFT THAT IS VERSATILE ENOUGH FOR YOUR ENTIRE AUDIENCE.

### Everyone Gets the Same Gift

This option is less complicated and is easy to budget, but limits your gift choice to an item that is versatile for your entire audience. Choosing gifts that are specific to certain demographics, such as gender, can result in recipients receiving inappropriate gifts. If your gifts feel too generic, add customized notecards to give each one a personal touch.

### Multi-Tiered

This option can make the gift feel more personal and reward the recipient based on criteria such as tenure, sales, or dollars spent, but can complicate the budget and require more planning.

### Finding a Gift That Fits Your Budget

According to Lisa Pelzel, Business Development Manager at Beacon Promotions, a majority of corporate gifts range between \$25 to \$100 each. Pelzel attributes this to the fact that most people want to ensure that the recipients consider the gift to be valuable and memorable. This doesn't mean that a \$15, \$10 or even \$5 gift can't be memorable. It may be more work, but finding an inexpensive gift with a special significance to the audience with the right messaging or timing can have just as much of an impact.

Gifts fall into different tiers based on audience, objective and price. A promotional product specialist can give you product and decorating options to fit your budget. You may be surprised at the prices you'll see when ordering large quantities through a promotional products distributor.



Gift Set



Award

### Top Tier

Top tier gifts are typically more expensive and purchased in lower quantities. They are often given to high level clients and executive staff as holiday gifts or to staff for achieving milestones such as a 25th anniversary.

#### Retail:

Items from brands your audience knows and loves: Bulova®, Waterford Crystal®, Trek®, fitbit®, Weber®, Tumi®, Sony®, Stanley®, Oakley®, Hamilton Beach®, Swiss Army® are just a few of the brands available with and without imprint from a promotional specialist.

#### Sets:

High quality packages such as the Thermos® and coffee cup (set shown) or a tech set containing a Bluetooth speaker, powerbank and cables in a custom box, are a great way to give a high quality branded gift.

#### Awards:

High quality plaques, statues and awards can accompany milestone gifts and help to create a lasting impression.

**POPULAR  
GIFT CATEGORIES:**



**APPAREL**



**DRINKWARE**



**KITCHENWARE**



**OFFICE**



**FOOD  
GIFTS**



**TECH  
ITEMS**

**Medium Tier**

Medium tier gifts are moderately priced with a high perceived value. These gifts are used for holiday, on-the-spot, or event gifts for those internal and external audiences that your organization cannot do without.

**Apparel:**

If gifting apparel, it's important to choose something that the recipient will want to wear in their personal lives. Consider a popular brand-name jacket or sweatshirt from brand names like Nike, Calloway® or Under Armour®, with your logo added.

**Drinkware:**

From elegant etched wine glasses to trendy double-walled stainless steel tumblers, the right drinkware can make a lasting impression. Plus, it's something they can be used year-round.

**Kitchenware:**

Your brand can be a part of their daily lives with kitchenware. From kitchen sets like a Victorinox Swiss Army knife set to counter top appliances there's a range of options to fit various budgets and lifestyles.

**Office:**

Executive pens, desk clocks and leather padfolios are useful items that will be kept at desks year round.

**Food Gifts:**

Chocolate towers, nuts in logoed apothecary jars, sausage and cheese assortments on laser-engraved platters, wine carriers and accessories... the world of food gifts is vast, but whatever you choose is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Food gifts are a budget-friendly option when sending to offices; one gift will satisfy a large group of people.

**Tech Items:**

Bluetooth speakers, phone accessories, headphones and virtual reality glasses are useful items with a high perceived value that the audience might not purchase for themselves.

**Low Tier**

Low Tier gifts are inexpensive and purchased in high quantity. These gifts are used to keep-in-touch and let the large audiences know that you are thinking of them.

**Greeting Cards:**

With options for just about any occasion, multiple imprint possibilities and easy mailing opportunities, greeting cards are a versatile, simple way to let people know that they are on your mind.

**Calendars:**

Promotional calendars are a low cost option to keep-in-touch at the holidays and keep your message in front of your audience year round.

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**Time to Buy**

Once you’ve outlined your gift-giving strategy and determined exactly who you are shopping for and what you want to get, you’re ready to make the purchase. If you’re buying for the fall/winter holiday season, try to get your order in early to avoid rush shipping fees.

**e. Don't Stress Out**

With corporate gifting it’s easy to get overwhelmed with the amount of choices and decisions involved in finding the perfect gift for your audience. The most important part of the giving process is to make the decision to give. Don’t stress out. Develop a plan to help guide your choices and contact a HALO promotional specialist to help you find gift ideas to fit your audience and budget.

**About HALO Branded Solutions**

Headquartered in Sterling, Illinois, HALO Branded Solutions is centrally located in order to support a national client base. In addition to our 100,000 square foot, state-of-the-art distribution and processing center, we maintain regional sales offices in key corporate markets.

HALO employs 300 corporate service team members with decades of knowledge and experience who support the over 500 creative and resourceful Account Executives across the nation who focus on implementing effective marketing solutions for over 40,000 satisfied clients each year.

HALO is a global leader of promotional solutions, combining creativity, innovation and the most sophisticated technology for dynamic results. As a "full-service" promotional products distributor, we offer:

- Company stores and fulfillment services.
- Competitive pricing, including our popular Best Sellers and BrandED merchandise programs.
- Secure Source, HALO's comprehensive product safety and social compliance program.
- Award winning marketing support for your internal and external branding campaigns.
- Brand management expertise to create consistency in logo use throughout your organization.

With top-quality products, over six decades of branding expertise and efficient operational processes, HALO offers unmatched reliability and unique solutions for every client, on every project.