

Target Your Christmas Gifts

Written by Steve Marr

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When we select Christmas gifts for children, friends, and family, we usually give significant thought to them. My mom was a thoughtful gift giver on Christmas and special occasions. In business we should also target our gift giving whenever practical.

However, when we have a smaller group of customers to buy for; a targeted gift is a wise choice. We should already have significant rapport with our best prospects and customers as well as a good idea of an appropriate gift. Use your information effectively to pick out something meaningful.

One customer had a collection of dog carvings and sculptures. I had an old bronze casting of two dogs that had been gathering dust in a box for many years. I retrieved it and presented it to the delighted customer. When I returned to the office in the future, I saw the gift on display.

Another customer was a fishing enthusiast. I knew an all-time champion musky fisherman in the Detroit area. I contacted him and purchased one of the lures he designed. I arranged to have the box autographed for my customer which garnered lots of extra points.

A third example was a person with the last name See. This person had a small collection of delivery vehicles from "See's Candies." I went online and located a different type of delivery vehicle and presented it to my surprised and delighted friend.

In most situations, if we understand our customers well; we can think of some well targeted gifts which will not cost a fortune. King Solomon wrote, "A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great." (Proverbs 18:16, NIV)

We should never allow a gift be used as a bribe. We should also honor any business policy against receiving gifts. I've always had a perspective against doing anything that could be interpreted as trying to buy business, partly because somebody else could win the client next year by paying more.

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Taking time to target gift giving to each of your major customers will strengthen your connections and improve your business relationships. With today's Internet, finding the right gift should only take a few minutes; but it is time well spent when it hits the mark with customers.