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\$MSTAR 10:53 AM (EST) 3,160

3,152

3,143

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Morningstar -33 -1.1 3,126

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VOL. 126 | NO. 238 | Wednesday, December 07, 2011

Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

Business Gift Giving Guide

LORI TURNER Updated 4:27PM

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'Tis the season for showing appreciation for our clients that allow our businesses to operate.

What should be a fun activity can wind up being a chore, as finding a memorable gift that aligns with your clients' interests and fits within your budget is no small feat.

If you are in the fortunate position to be able to give holiday gifts in an economy such as this, it's vitally important you get the most from your investment. Follow these tips to ensure you do.

Inquire about your clients' gift-receipt policies. Some corporations allow gifts up to a certain dollar amount. Others specify that the gift cannot be cash or a cash equivalent such as a gift card.

When it comes to gift selection, focus on quality versus quantity. Your gift reflects on your brand. A small box of high-end truffles sends a stronger message than a large box of discount store chocolates.

Spend on packaging. Much like in the sales world, first impressions speak volumes. Make sure your client's first impression of your gift is a good one.

Consider your customers' interests. Wine and coffee are very specific tastes. If you're unsure of a customer's interests, try a gift with more universal appeal. Avoid the run-of-the-mill gift basket, however, if your goal is to communicate your brand is different.

A personalized business card case or iPad cover, personalized stationery or an engraved pen can make a lasting impression and remind customers you don't see them as one size fits all. Consider customizing your favorite business book with your company's logo and author's autograph (800CEORead.com).

Speaking of personalization, nothing trumps the long lost art of the handwritten note. Always include one.

If the budget is tight, consider a small bouquet of flowers or a potted plant, delivered by you. For the busy professional who says they want more time with the family, consider something as simple as movie tickets.

No matter the gift, always deliver it in person. A primary purpose of holiday gift giving is to strengthen relationships. Tell customers, face-to-face, how much they're appreciated. Ask about family and holiday plans, avoiding the temptation to sell.

Call ahead and schedule time to stop by when they'll be in the office so you don't feel compelled to leave your gift with a gatekeeper.

If you have no budget, consider an intangible that can be just as meaningful. Send a video testimonial or LinkedIn reference they can use to attract clients. Offer a 10-minute brainstorm by phone to better understand their targeted customer profile, allowing you to send referral business their way.



Lori Turner-Wilson

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RECORD TOTALS	DAY	WEEK	YEAR
PROPERTY SALES	53	204	14,273
MORTGAGES	101	304	21,386
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	70	9,038
BUILDING PERMITS	0	289	36,440
BANKRUPTCIES	67	239	17,417
BUSINESS LICENSES	17	51	5,455
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	79	337	25,613
MARRIAGE LICENSES	0	41	5,371

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If you're running late this holiday season, take your time and consider a New Year's gift instead. It'll make you stand out from the crowd. Plus, it's probably easier to get in to see your clients in January versus the busy holiday season.

[Lori Turner](#) is an award-winning columnist and managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, www.redrovercompany.com. You can follow RedRover on Twitter (@redrovercompany and @loriturner) and Facebook (facebook.com/redrovercompany).



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