



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

5 Bad Gift Ideas You Need to Avoid This Holiday Season

It may be better to give than receive--but not with these gifts. Sales expert Tom Searcy shares the five types of gifts you should avoid giving this holiday season.

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BY TOM SEARCY
@TOMSEARCY

When it comes to gift-giving this holiday season, remember that what you give says a lot about you and your business. To help make sure your gifts are giving off the right impression, I asked my go-to expert, John Ruhlin for his advice. I tapped him earlier this year to help me explain the rules of being memorable, and now I have asked him for his suggestions on which holiday gifts you should avoid. Here is what he said: "When most people tell me about their gifts, no matter what they give, they talk about how much people love them. But who is really rude enough to tell you that your gift was horrible and will never get used? Very few people are that candid. With that in mind, below are the five worst, along with a solution to help "fix" them. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself this simple question before giving your most important relationships a gift--Am I giving something that is world class and matches the quality and values that my company represents? If you can't give a Rolex, that's okay, just don't give a watch. Give the "Rolex" of another category.

5 worst high level business gifts and solutions to "fix" them.

1. **Food.** Look at the typical office conference table between Thanksgiving and Christmas and you will see mountains of candy, nuts, cookies, meats, etc. overflowing off the table. Most end up being "re-gifted" out to office staff faster than you can say "I'm a glutton!" Most execs this time of year don't even know who the gift is coming from as they don't have time to look at the cards. If you are giving food, make sure it is world class and pair it with a world class tool. If you send a ham or turkey, it needs to be paired with a nice set of carving tools in order to be remembered.

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2. **Alcohol.** Same as food but worse as it can easily offend and is consumed just as fast. Pair it with a custom wine opener or set of handmade tumblers to be lasting and memorable.

3. **Wreaths/plants.** Yes they last a little longer than food but they are also gone within 30 days and most people have specific tastes when it comes to decorating their house or office. Instead give a set of world class garden tools with the plants and have them arrive in the spring, when they will be a surprise and most useful.

4. **Gift Cards.** This is like lipstick on a pig. You are trying to cover up being lazy or lacking creativity. It's spending money to have a negative impact. It says, "You weren't important enough to take time and buy something thoughtful, so go buy your own gift at a store that I picked for you."

5. **Apple.** I love Apple but everyone in business has it and has received it as a gift. Multiple times. It's a guaranteed re-gift and no, re-gifting is not acceptable appreciation in a key business relationship. Don't be lazy. Find a world-class accessory that will outlive the iPad or iPhone. Think Hermes leather case or a Grain Audio wireless speaker.

For tips on how to give gifts that set you apart from the crowd, [click here](#).

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