

Corporate Gifts + Rewards

New gift offerings, industry trends and useful advice to maximize value on your reward spending.



SUPPLIER TIPS

You will survive! Grab these life rings and you'll float through the festive season.

Ask. Don't assume there isn't enough time.

Be open. Your original idea and colour selection may not be available; consider alternatives.

Get organized. Establish your budget, item requirements and the quantity needed so you can make a quick decision on available options.

Personalization. Consider possibilities like printed inserts. Many 24-hour printing services are open for quality printing.

A to B. Ship straight to the recipient or event location to save time.

Source: Rachel Ware, RWK Collection, rwcollection.com



Zero Hour

Last-minute gifts and rewards don't have to be lame. Promo experts and reward wizards offer solid strategies and gift concepts that are fun, useful and yes, meaningful. *By Thomp@Sales*

Over the last couple of years, the panic surrounding last-minute holiday gift shopping has become increasingly common—often to no fault of your own.

"In our current financial environment, corporate gifts and amenities are regularly the last item budgeted for," says Rachel Ware, founder and CEO, RWK Collection, a Montreal-based producer of fashionable leather accessories.

Fear not, options abound. Ware assures: Edward Thompson, president,

Dakville, Ont.-based Absolute Motivation, not only agrees, he says you have lots of surprisingly simple and incredibly meaningful choices.

Beyond the box. Think about your groups' personal needs. "Keep in mind that they too are struggling with the chaos around the holiday season, trying to find gifts for family and friends," Thompson says, adding, "What do you think would be more meaningful to them: a box of chocolates or a day off to go shopping?"

Execution. The act of giving the day off (or gift or card, for that matter) is a golden opportunity to convey recognition. "Have the senior manager make an announcement at a team meeting, something to the effect of: 'Thanks for your hard work this year. We are very pleased and want to recognize your contributions to the company by giving you a day off to go shopping.'"

Truckload of cherries. Make it a group outing to foster team-building and camaraderie. Tell-

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half the group they can go on Wednesday and the others will go on Friday. Rent a block of parking spots at the local mall for a few hot hours; we all know how frustrating it is scooping out a spot, stalking innocent shoppers with jingling keys in hand.

Online extravaganza. Here's one for companies with an online rewards program: "Leverage really good discounts from your supplier and then open up the 'store' for a set period of time during working hours," says Thompson. Pump up the fun factor with holiday music, and trays of festive snacks. Include complimentary gift-wrapping and shipping to the office. Ron Eliakim, CRP, director of sales, Rideau Recognition Solutions in Montreal, has another suggestion: provide staff with points to make their purchases.

Relationships matter. Eliakim also notes that strong supplier relationships are key to executing these last-minute strategies. He recalls a crunch moment where he was trying to fulfill a request for a client, a large American bank.

"I called my supplier and said, 'I'm waiting for you to say no, but I need a few hundred logos on gold coins in three days.' The result? Eliakim's request was leapfrogged to the front of the line.

Qui vive. As a supplier, Rachel Ware warns that last-minute can mean add-on expenses for expedited shipping. "Keep these to a minimum by ordering smaller, lighter gifts to reduce packaging and shipping costs associated with weight. Also ask for a detailed quote before placing your order." ❖

Off the hook

Here's a novel idea: just forget it. For now, anyway. Says Edward Thompson, "Make an announcement at the beginning of December that the holiday event will be delayed for a couple of months." Sacrilege you say? Thompson argues that February is a psychologically savvy time to party. "People can get quite done at this time of the year; they need something to look forward to." That, and most people's December are jammed packed and stressful.

Source: Edward Thompson, AbsoluteMotivation.com
absolutemotivation.com

2011

Plan now for 2011

Piggyback. When ordering gifts for other events during the year, add a few extra for holiday gifts. You'll benefit from higher volume pricing and save on shipping costs.

Installments. If the lump sum payment at year-end discourages holiday gifts, consider making installments to lessen the cash-flow hit.

Source: Rachel Ware, RW Collection, rwcollection.com