



THE ART OF GIFTING

Think back to when you were a kid on Christmas day. You opened two kinds of gifts—the toy you’ve been dreaming of and a pack of brand-spanking-new socks. Let’s be clear, most children are not excited to receive socks as a gift, even though they are a necessity. No matter your age or occasion, there is usually a clear difference between a thoughtful and a thoughtless gift.

Regardless of what the relationship looks like—child to parent, husband to wife, vendor to client—there is always a level of thought and effort that needs to be exuded to make sure the gift is fit for the recipient. Over time, you get to know what matters to people and what they would value as a gift. This sometimes takes years to master, if you’re able to master it at all.

But what if this person is a complete stranger? What if this recipient is someone you’re trying to convert into a customer? When it comes to business, gift giving can be arduous. While the task at hand may be daunting, it’s not impossible. Together we will walk through how to become the ultimate gift guru with strategies and tried-and-true gift-giving tactics used by the Keyser team.

CHOOSE YOUR TARGET CAREFULLY

Who do you want to connect with? Next, why do you want to connect with them? Vet your target to make sure their needs are fit with your services. No matter how great your communication strategies are, if your product doesn’t serve the end user, the efforts will not be effective.

ASK YOURSELF

Are you certain you want that company to be a part of your client list?

Can this relationship result in long term success for both parties?

Are there any red flags that show misalignment between you and the prospect?

THE RIGHT APPROACH

If you’re looking to add a new prospect to your client list, is giving a gift as an introduction truly the best way to reach out to them?

In most cases, while a gift is a great way to catch someone’s attention, it’s not usually the strongest way to make that initial connection. Nine times out of ten, prospects are more likely to trust you because of a warm introduction from someone they trust. If you’ve exhausted your contacts, are unable to find another way to connect, and have decided that giving a gift is your best and only option, be smart about who, when, why, and how to connect.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

What are you trying to achieve with this gift? If you’re trying to secure an in-person meeting with the VP of Marketing in a Fortune 500 company, are you targeting the right recipient? Better yet, are you certain the person you want to target is the one who will open the door for you? Sometimes, these answers are not always crystal clear, despite job titles.



Whether it's via email, print, gifts, social media, or direct messaging, decision makers constantly dodge pitches and promotions, making them both highly valuable and hard to reach. Not only that, decision makers often don't take the time to do research on pitched services because they simply don't have the spare time. No matter what your efforts may have been, if they don't have the time to evaluate your company, your efforts have already been dismissed.

Perhaps, in this situation a better target would be their trusty, right-hand man. Adjusting your target to this individual often provides less of a barrier for entry. If you're able to secure their attention, they can vet you and push you farther in the decision-making process.

Competition is everywhere, and it isn't limited to your direct competitors. Highly targeted connections receive hundreds of pitches a year in all regards, and you're competing with all of them for their attention. It goes without saying, if you want to be noticed, you need to be different, be better than all of the other pitches they receive—even if those pitches are for different services entirely. People only have so much patience and time to dedicate to things that are not directly related to their job role.

ASK YOURSELF

Does my true target have a gate keeper?

If I have to target the gate keeper, how can I encourage that person to pass on my information?

Are these efforts worthwhile for both myself and the recipient?

Where is the overlap between what they want and what I can provide?

TIMING IS KEY

It doesn't matter how amazing the gift is, if your timing isn't right, you're wasting your resources. How many times in the movies have you seen the love-struck man ask out his dream girl, just to be rejected because the timing wasn't right? Plenty—I have enough females in my life to know the plot line to any romantic comedy, even if it isn't my go-to genre.

Don't waste your time trying to woo your prospect who isn't in the right state to be wooed. To put this in a business sense, if your prospect is happily working with another competitor and they have a signed contract in place saying they will continue to use their services for three more years, that is not an ideal time to send a gift. Seems like common sense, right? You would think it would be, but I see companies all the time making this mistake. Do your research into the prospect and their situation before jumping into anything too quickly.

ASK YOURSELF

You can send something, but should you?
Is this person in a state to be wooed?

What factors could hold them back from wanting to work with me?

Is there a more opportune time in the near future that would assist my efforts?

DO THE DEED

Now that you've defined who you're targeting, why you're targeting them, and when is the best time to reach out, your next step is to define how to choose a gift that resonates with them. The purpose of giving this gift is to get someone to stop and listen. Go beyond a good gift and personalize it until it's something the prospect will actually keep and value. In order to catch their attention, you have to be authentic and think outside the box. A good gift is not giving a custom mug, t-shirt, or branded piece of swag—you can do better than that.

Do your research, there is always something that your prospect loves—put that love into physical form. Relate with them where you can; there is always something more important to the person than what happens in their day-to-day work life. Once you're able to tap into that idea, you're able to stop them in their tracks.

There is no one 'right way' to learn more about your prospect. Use your resources to learn as much as you can. We are in the digital era where lives are splashed across websites and social media, use those collections of data to learn more about your prospect. Be authentic by interacting like a human and giving anonymously.

POINT OF VIEW

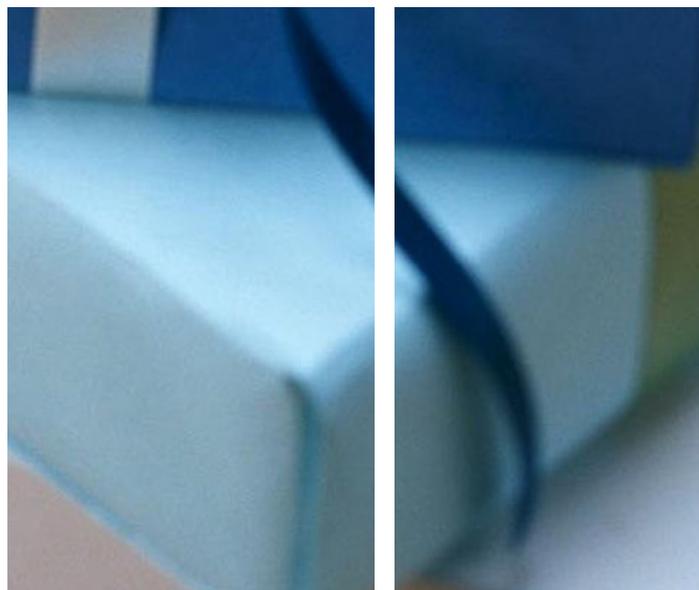
Depending on your audience, different gestures may be perceived differently. While there's no way for you to know how the gift will be received, you can be proactive to avoid common red flags. Getting personal is a good thing, but you want to make sure you're not crossing the line or offending the recipient. Many times, the line between great and too far can be fine. It takes a personal touch to resonate with someone, but knowing how to reach someone's heart can come off as too forward or in times, creepy.



PRO TIP

Give anonymously unless you already have a relationship with the recipient.

Include a card with your first names only so the recipient can recognize when you reach out at a later date. This level of anonymity makes the recipient think longer and harder about your gift, keeping you top of mind.



ASK YOURSELF

How is this gesture going to be viewed?

Is this gift personal enough to get their attention?

Is the gift too personal where it crosses the line?

FOLLOW UP

Let the situation breathe before answering questions. Make sure the follow up to your gift is timely, but not rushed. By letting the question, “who sent me this?” hang in the air for three to five days, you’re giving the prospect time to think about who could understand them so well and why they may have received the gift. Make sure your follow up is actually after the prospect opens the package. How do you know if the prospect is on vacation or is out of the office? Put on your detective hat—call the company’s front desk to ask.

Once some time has passed, send a simple, short email to the recipient revealing yourself and any other members that were on the card. Then ask for some time to meet with the person. Usually, when the prospect sees that you’ve made such an effort into understanding what they love, they will at least spend some time with you, even if they don’t buy your product.

Giving a gift doesn’t have to be limited to a simple transaction between two people. When it’s done right and executed with excellence, gift giving can become an experience. Putting together the puzzle of what to give can be a challenge; timing, targeting, and messaging needs to be aligned and thought out in order to win attention. While gifting right takes time, thought, and effort, the lasting impression on your prospect is worth going the extra mile.

