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Corporate gifts add that special, personal touch to a company's relationships with its clients and vendors that so many businesses no longer bother to nurture. They also prove that the company is serious about maintaining long-term relationships.

In fact, when you take the time and effort to offer carefully chosen gifts to those whose work is important to your company and to those who spend their money with your business, you show how much you value loyalty. In today's business climate, that can set you apart from the cold and impersonal treatment so many expect.

Whether you do business mostly in Cape Town, around South Africa or around the world, offering corporate gifts is a concept that lands just as well in Chicago as in Cape Town.

Vendors who feel valued are more likely to go the extra mile for their clients, and customers who understand how much they are appreciated are more likely to continue to spend money with you instead of a competitor.

Your vendors and clients may not be expecting a gift at all, but they aren't likely to turn down a well-chosen present. To make sure your corporate gift is well received, take these three actions:

1. Give a bit more than expected.

If you've given gifts in the past, you've already set up expectations. Are your customers and vendors expecting you to disappoint them again or to live up to your usual high standard? Whatever the case, giving more than before is always a good policy. Appearing to be cheap or seeming to cut back never is. When you prove that you're a better company than you've shown in the past, you're doing the right thing.

2. Give better quality than expected.

If you're certain nothing is expected of your company, perhaps you can depend on the element of surprise to impress your clients and suppliers. If the people with whom you do business are expecting something, however, you want to make sure you provide the best quality corporate gifts Cape Town has to offer. In fact, you should always give the best your company can reasonably afford based on the nature and quality of your relationship with the contact. Being a company known for the best benefits you in many ways.

3. Give at a time that isn't expected.

While your company may have a reputation for gift-giving during the holidays, don't forget the anniversary of your relationship with the individual and the customer's or account representative's birthday, for example. These and many other times are also appropriate occasions for giving a gift from your company. Gifts often land better when they come at a time that's completely unexpected.

Proving Yourself Never Hurts

You may not feel that your company has anything to prove by giving gifts. You might even be slightly perturbed that gift-giving is expected when you'd rather spend your budget on pay increases, equipment purchases or other business expenses. Ultimately, those feelings don't matter.

A company that is seen to be generous rather than grudging is positioned well for success, and corporate gifts are a sign of generosity.

Does your company have a reputation for generosity or unnecessarily harsh austerity? Whatever the case, exceed everyone's expectations by giving generous corporate gifts, and you will likely see results that exceed yours.

Guido Brouwers writes about the finest corporate gifts Cape Town or the world has ever seen because he believes in generosity in business and in life. Gift-giving may not be in fashion in every industry, but he thinks it should be -- and works to promote his cause.

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