When ‘tis the time of year to show your appreciation to clients, vendors and employees. Here are a few things to consider.

From the company:

- Tokens of appreciation: Make sure that gifts sporting your company’s logo meet a certain standard: well made, in tasteful colors and with the logo understated enough not to look like an advertisement.
- Charitable gifts: Many companies show their appreciation by giving a donation in the recipient’s name. This is a win-win solution: the recipient is glad to be recognized; the company making the donation makes its appreciation known; and both companies contribute to the greater good of society.

From individuals to customers and clients:

- Individuals in the company who give gifts to outsiders are usually at the executive to mid-manager level.
- Many companies forbid ANY corporate gift giving, or only allow employees to accept gifts valued less than $25.
- Be sure to follow your own company rules AND check with the HR department at the intended recipient’s company first. Sending a gift to a client who’s unable to keep it is awkward for both parties.
- Never give a gift to an outside business associate who is either currently involved in a bidding process with your firm or receiving a bid from you or your company.

Gifts from outside your company:

- Some companies have a ceiling for the cost of a gift received; others require that any gifts valued at more than $25 must be disclosed to management. This is a good way to keep tabs on what’s coming in from outside and seeing to it that everything stays aboveboard.
- Most companies allow employees to receive token gifts from customers and clients because sending them back could insult the giver, especially during the holidays.
- Some businesses require that any foodstuffs received from outside be divided up and

shared; this is because the usual recipients of such gifts tend to be those employees who have the advantage of dealing face-to-face with customers - whereas the people who work behind the scenes often go unrewarded.

Gifts for Bosses: Yes or No?

- Don't give a gift to your supervisor that's just from you. Other employees may resent what they see as an effort to curry favor with the boss.
- Get together with the others in your department and give a gift from the group.

Gifts for Assistants: Yes or No?

- Managers may want to reward their secretary or assistant personally. The gift choice depends on length of service: If it is less than five years, a gift valued at $25 is sufficient; with longer-term assistants, a more generous gift is appropriate.
- Make sure the gift is not too personal: Lingerie, perfume, and jewelry are out of the question.
- Books, CD's, personal organizers, fruit baskets, theater tickets and gift certificates are good possibilities.

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