

WHAT'S WORKING IN CORPORATE GIFTING IN 2024

Streamlining Processes
Through Tools & Tech





INTRODUCTION

In an era where personalized content and brand differentiation are critical, corporate gifting remains a potent tool within the B2B marketing arsenal. As gifting evolves from alma mater-branded swag and company t-shirts, practitioners are navigating the complex landscape of corporate gifting to elevate brand perception and foster enduring client relationships.

"Gifting isn't just for door openers anymore, which is originally how many companies deployed it," said Samantha Nohava, VP of Global Marketing for [Blue Yonder](#), a digital supply chain cloud provider. "Direct mail is now a full-funnel tactic that can be used across the entire buyer's journey, and it's also more focused on thoughtful gifts aligned to the buyers' specific relationships instead of just an iPad or fancy set of headphones. We're going many steps further to personalize how we approach gifting."

As B2B marketers strive to build meaningful connections and elevate their brand presence, understanding the intricacies of effective corporate gifting is no longer a luxury but a strategic imperative. From integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality to the strategic alignment of sustainability practices and nuanced use of personalized data analytics, practitioners are working to deliver top-notch gifting experiences.

This report will examine the fusion of experiential marketing and corporate gifting, showcasing innovative approaches that transcend traditional gift-giving and create memorable brand experiences for recipients by infusing technology with gifting. Specific topics of discussion will include:

- The integration of AI, machine learning and data analytics into the corporate gifting paradigm, with a focus on predictive modeling and personalized recommendation engines;
- The growing interest in gifting experiences that create lasting memories and foster stronger relationships;
- How practitioners are leveraging data and analytics to understand gifting preferences, track campaign performance and measure ROI to personalize gift choices and optimize spending; and
- Why practitioners are moving beyond just physical gifts and embracing a multi-faceted approach that mixes electronic delivery with tactical items.



CREATING EXCEPTIONAL GIFTING EXPERIENCES

While corporate gifting traditionally served as a door opener, modern practitioners are working to orchestrate the strategy across all stages of the buyer's journey. According to Nohava, incorporating gifting into the middle and late stages of the funnel helps create a consistent, unified experience.

"Corporate gifting is a full-funnel tactic," said Nohava. "As marketers try to inadvertently make direct mail the only touch or a siloed touch, they won't find the success or the appreciation for what a great tactic could be."

Though it might seem like more work to coordinate sending across the entire buyer's journey, modern tools and technology are helping ease practitioners' qualms about difficulty. According to Brittany Guidetti, Sr. Growth Marketing Manager at threat intelligence, investigation and protective DNS solutions [HYAS](#), the wide availability of buyer data helps marketers inform sends.

"Direct mail has become easier than ever to execute because it's no longer a research-intensive, manual ordering process," said Guidetti. "You don't even need a mailing address anymore — you can set up a triggered campaign that will ask for mailing address verification first via email from the contact, then will automatically ship upon verification."

The transformative shift in the execution process expands beyond data insights. Gretchen Swann, Principal Marketing Program Manager for human capital management platform [Paycor](#), noted at the [2023 B2B Marketing Exchange](#) that her company deploys a comprehensive approach to lead and account engagement, outlining the integration of direct mail into more facets of marketing strategies.

“When the lead or account enters a certain campaign, they’re dropped into a weekly email nurture program and we follow up with digital retargeting,” noted Swann. “But at the same time, the campaign can automatically target that nurture mailer. I use my direct mail provider to create a custom note to include in the mailer, which is populated automatically by the existing information in our CRM. Additionally, we chose a provider that offered address verification to ensure our data was up to date.”

Proof Point:

[Kajabi](#), an all-in-one platform for creating an online business, started ramping up its online community of users and developed a swag rewards program. The company made a dedicated Facebook user group and, when Kajabi noticed the group’s traction, it wanted to snowball that effort further. The company partnered with a swag management platform to sponsor its customers’ local meetups and send them swag for their events. Through the partnership, the Kajabi team saves an estimated 10 to 15 hours weekly.

“Corporate gifting is a full-funnel tactic.”

SAMANTHA NOHAVA, BLUE YONDER



EMBRACING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY & PLATFORMS

To orchestrate those coordinated sends, Nohava noted the power of tools and technologies. She continued that while direct mail has come a long way (she said she's no longer fulfilling sends from her home office), it's still not a "hands-off" process.

"Direct mail is still extremely time intensive and, if it's not fully integrated into marketing strategies, it's not successful," she continued. "Thankfully, with the techniques and technologies available today through direct mail platforms, a lot of that personal intervention is taken off our plates."

Nohava said that Blue Yonder leverages marketing automation platforms for intent-based direct mail campaigns, enabling the company to send E-gifts or physical gifts, depending on the target account. She continued that traditionally, the "data" for corporate gifting was a recipient's address for direct mail but modern corporate gifting strategies go far beyond addresses.

"The technology today allows us to have the right contacts in our database to understand the intent, topics or trends that they might be interested in and triangulate that with our offerings in the market to make sure we are sending the item(s) or package to the right account and the right contact," said Nohava. "We also leverage intent data platforms to put data at the core of decision-making."

Proof Point:

Coda, a document management solution that brings words, data and teams together, encountered several challenges when managing swag, such as expensive sourcing and a lack of logistical support. When Coda partnered with a swag management platform, it received support on swag selection and straightforward pricing. With the platform, the company noted that it's developing a greater sense of community and better customer retention.



UTILIZING DATA TO INFORM AUDIENCE RELEVANCE

Data plays a critical role in determining the success of each campaign, and Guidetti noted that data helps determine prospect and buyer interests to inform sends.

"You'll want to use data to segment your audience to ensure what you're sending is relevant, compelling and driving the results you're looking for," she explained. "You'll also want to reference data to determine the effort's success and how you might improve or optimize the campaign moving forward. It's critical to report on the right KPIs."

Swann expanded on Guidetti's insights and noted that Paycor monitors direct mail delivery and acceptance rates and, from there, analyzes the actions taken after the package is opened.

"We measure the success of direct mail by the kits that are delivered and then leverage a 90-day attribution window," Swann continued. "So, if an appointment is set within 90 days of delivery, we will give the campaign that credit. From there, we track bookings to see how many appointments turned into closed opportunities and actual dollars."

For Blue Yonder's part, Nohava added that while the company leverages digital and physical gifting, it tends to err on the side of physical mailers. She continued that this allows the team to better correlate to the campaign's theme and capture more attention.

Proof Point:

Endcrawl, a SaaS-based tool for creating, managing and outputting the scrolling end credits for film and television, used to order shirts online from a reputable company. To get the shirts out, Endcrawl's Co-founder, John "Pliny" Eremic, had to obtain hundreds of people's email addresses, ask them their size, print shipping labels and then go to the post office. Pliny implemented a swag management platform that automates the entire process. He explained he would stop sending corporate gifts if it weren't for an automation platform.



CONCLUSION

Through the strategic orchestration of sends across the entire marketing funnel, businesses are now equipped with unprecedented insights and capabilities to engage their audience meaningfully and personally. The infusion of data-driven decision-making streamlines the gifting process and enhances the overall effectiveness of corporate gifting initiatives.

As organizations leverage advanced tools and technologies to navigate the complexities of modern marketing, the synergy between analytics, automation and the orchestration of sends ensures a more targeted and impactful approach.

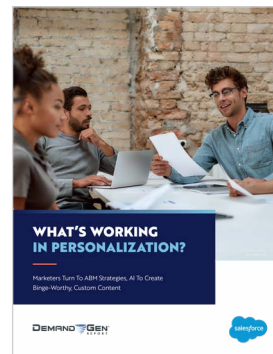
"It's all about sending small but thoughtful gifts aligned to buyers' specific position in the funnel to build relationships," said Nohava. "The direct mail market is so noisy, and those traditional 'spray-and-pray' campaigns won't cut it. Prospects want gifts that speak to their needs."



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201.257.8528

INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM



KELLY LINDENAU

is an editor and writer who loves covering the latest B2B marketing trends, research and industry insights. She's a New Jersey native, runner and reader who always has a GIF from *The Office* at the ready.

