

The background is a white field filled with various black line-art icons representing business and technology, such as lightbulbs, gears, dollar signs, charts, and documents. A large white rectangular box with a dark blue border is centered on the page. In the top-left corner, there are overlapping circles in magenta and dark blue. In the bottom-right corner, there is a large green circle containing a white heart icon.

TOP 20

Giftling Ideas

FOR 2020

How To Create
A Lasting Impression
With Every Client

BRITTANY
HODAK



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Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



Question:

WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE GIFT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

Think about it. Don't worry, I'll wait.

When I was about years old, my grandma gave me a GIANT box filled with every art supply imaginable: paint, markers, crayons, construction paper, glitter, glue — you name it, it was in the box. I'll never forget the happiness I felt digging through that seemingly-bottomless box of goodies.

For Valentine's Day my senior year, my then-boyfriend bought me a giant teddy bear and decked it out with a dozen or more gifts and trinkets for me to discover one by one: Teddy was wearing a jacket, a necklace, bracelets, one of those 90s-style backpack purses filled with more fun surprises... all in my size! It was incredible.

What do both gifts have in common? They were creative, thoughtful, and centered around ME. That's why, decades later, I still remember every detail. I bet the best gifts you've ever received share those same traits.

QUESTION #2: WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE GIFT YOU'VE EVER GIVEN A CLIENT?

Does it meet the same criteria of being creative, thoughtful, and *centered around your client*? What about the last client gift you gave?

Gift-giving is an artform that, when leveraged correctly, can elevate your relationships, referrals, and revenue. It's a business-building skill every sales and marketing executive should master.

I hope the 20+ suggestions that follow inspire you to get more mindful with your giving. Feel free to share this quick guide with anyone in your network as my gift to you. ;)

PERSONALIZED GIFTS



When you give a personalized gift, you're showing that a) you understand the person's interests and b) you appreciate and care about them as an individual.

1) COMMISSIONED PORTRAIT

Have an artist create a custom canvas portrait of your client's family, pets, new home, new car, etc., depending on their interests or the capacity in which you partnered. There are countless online (and local!) artisans who do amazing work that will be proudly displayed by your client (as a conversation piece) for years to come.

2) PERSONALIZED GUEST BOOK

Has your client just moved to or purchased a new home? Consider creating a monogrammed leather book and pen set so overnight guests can record their memories when visiting. In time, it will become a cherished record of life events and loved ones.

3) MONOGRAMMED TRAVEL ITEM

Does your client travel frequently for work or pleasure? Consider a nice travel item: a monogrammed toiletries bag, set of customized luggage tags and passport holder, or a high-end travel backpack. You could also opt for a personalized pair of socks or eye mask. Get creative and remember to incorporate your client's interests instead of your own.

4) ONE-OF-A-KIND HOME ITEM

When you create a unique, useful gift — like a personalized doormat, a photo candle, or a family-name coat rack — your client will think of you every they see it. Photos can be used to create almost anything for the home, from keys to clocks to shower curtains.

5) CUSTOM OFFICE ITEM

Looking for a personalized corporate gift? Add a custom spin to something your client will use or display every day, like a Yeti tumbler, candy jar, or office supplies organizer. Make it about *them*, not *you*. **REMEMBER: Something with your brand prominently displayed is a promotional item, not a gift.**

BONUS TIP: For a truly unique gifting experience, seek out local artisans in your area. You'll end up with a one-of-a-kind gift and you'll be supporting your local community: a win-win! Plus, working with local artists will give you the chance to get to know new people... which could increase your referral network in the future!

HIGHLIGHT ON HOBBIES



Be sure to make notes in your CRM about each client's hobbies as you work with them. That way, you'll have lots of great options when it's gifting time!

1) SUBSCRIPTION BOXES FOR EVERY INTEREST

There are literally *thousands* of subscription box offers online. Whether your client is a superfan of wine, knitting, sausages, or cigars, you can curate (or pay someone to curate!) boxes for anything. There are even subscription boxes that cater to kids and pets. Simply set the frequency (quarterly, monthly, etc.) and duration and you're good to go.

2) SPORTS FANATICS

When dealing with sports superfans, there are endless options for great gift ideas. You can go with a straightforward gift like an autographed jersey or visit a site like UncommonGoods.com to find special gifts made from remnants of used footballs, bases, stadium seats, and much more.

3) BOOK WORMS ONLY

For bibliophiles, consider a book-of-the-month club... or even a custom book that incorporates family photos and names. PutMeInTheStory.com is a great option for children's books to celebrate births, birthdays, and holidays.

4) THE GREEN THUMB CLUB

Gardening and flower enthusiasts will be thrilled with a pot that you fill yourself with fun items, like nice gloves, tools, seed packets and decorative stones. Kick it up a notch with a gift card to your favorite home or garden store.

5) MUSIC LOVERS

Artists can turn vinyl records and recreated concert tickets into just about *anything!* If you know your client's favorite artist, spend a few minutes on Etsy.com and you'll have a Greatest Hits list of pitch-perfect gift ideas.

BONUS TIP: When you're dealing with hobbies, it's important to have at least some knowledge in the subject area. If you don't, enlist the help of an expert who can help you avoid an embarrassing faux pas. Mixing up a specialized tool, sports team, or band will render your well-meaning gift useless... and make it look like you either weren't paying attention to your client or are clueless about an area that is important to them.

LOVE ON THEIR LOVED ONES



Showing someone you sincerely care about the people *they* care about is one of the quickest – and most effective – ways to build lasting relationships.

1) FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

If you're gifting someone who is used to receiving high-end swag, the best way to stand out without breaking the bank is to deliver fun for the entire family (whether that's two people or seven.) Think about the people closest to your client, and then plan a fun evening or experience they can share together: concert tickets, wine tasting, or a daytrip to a carnival... anything that will create a lasting memory.

2) GIFTS FOR KIDS

Does your client's daughter love soccer? Maybe their son loves swimming? Gifts for kids are always a hit with clients, because they make Mom or Dad look like a hero!

3) GIFTS FOR PETS

That goes for furry kiddos, too. People love spoiling their pets, so whether you're ordering a one-of-a-kind cat bed or turning your client's dog's photo into a custom water bowl, you can't go wrong with thoughtful, pet-centric presents.

4) SPOUSAL SUPPORT

One of my favorite examples of a spouse gift comes from my friend John Ruhlin, who (literally!) wrote the book on gifting, called *Gift-ology*. He routinely has the cars of his employees' spouses cleaned for Mother's Day and Father's Day. Talk about a cool perk! Any time you can come through for a client's (or employee's) spouse, you're going to score *major* brownie points.

5) SHARE SOME KUDOS

Sometimes the best gifts don't cost anything. When was the last time you sent a heartfelt, handwritten thank-you note? Have you ever sent one to a client's partner thanking them for the time you get to spend with the client? A well-written note can sometimes be even more meaningful than an expensive gift.

BONUS TIP: People love talking about their families and pets! Start asking casual questions early in your relationship and record the details in your CRM record under that person. You never know when it might come in handy to remember that someone's son is a superfan of Spider-Man, or that her husband has always wanted to play at Augusta.

CRAZY-COOL CONSUMABLES



Gift cards get a bad rap: while they can be impersonal if no thought is given, they can also be great tools when used correctly!

1) NOT-YOUR-AVERAGE BOUQUET

Think flowers are an old-school option reserved for Mother's Day? Not so! These days, floral artists can create *anything*, from bouquets that resemble pets to super-cool succulents. You can even have displays crafted to look like brand logos and people, practically guaranteeing some grateful social-media shout outs.

2) CANDY, CANDY, AND MORE CANDY

If your client has a sweet tooth, consider a candy gift. There are lots of fun candy-delivery services, including a handful (like Sugarwish.com) that let clients customize the option. Just be sure to include a note to contextualize the gift. Or, put together a custom selection of theater-style candy and popcorn with a gift card for Apple or Amazon so your client can enjoy an on-the-couch movie night.

3) FULL FRIDGE FOR THE WIN

Another fun idea for someone moving into a new place? Stock their fridge! Do some social-media snooping to get a gauge on their favorites, then surprise them with a fully-stocked supply of the food, drinks, and snacks they love.

4) INTENTIONAL GIFT CARDS

Can a \$100 Visa gift card with no context come across as impersonal? Of course. But, a \$100 gift card to a local hardware store with a print out of instructions for a DIY project your client posted about on social media the week before? Totally different story!

5) FANDOMS FOR EVERY ROOM

Star Wars bakeware? Yep. Beatles bath towels? You better believe it. NFL grill accessories? Obviously. If you've got a superfan client, curate a package of fun fan goodies and pair with them with other useful things: for example, a set of licensed golf club covers and a gift certificate for 18 holes at a local course.

BONUS TIP: If you opt for a food or drink gift, make sure you have all the information! Beware of common food allergies (especially nuts and tree nuts), dietary or cultural restrictions, and people who don't consume alcohol. When in doubt (read: if you're not absolutely, 100% sure), *always* opt for another option!



EXPERIENCES & SERVICES



Don't be afraid to celebrate fun milestones like half birthdays, work anniversaries, or even pop-culture-driven days like "National Donut Day" to create special, unexpected experiences for your clients.

1) CLASSES FOR EVERY OCCASION

Is your client itching to pick up a new hobby? Treat them to a creative series of classes: cooking, archery, gardening, or even computer coding! Choose a local purveyor or go with an online or virtual option like [Masterclass.com](https://www.masterclass.com) or [ClassPass.com](https://www.classpass.com).

2) CLEAN IT UP

Let's face it... most of us don't have time to prioritize cleaning and organizing. Help bring some zen to your client's world by hiring a professional organizer or maid service or treating them to a service like a car detailing or carpet deep-clean. *Only* opt for this option if your client has expressed distress about the subject, though, so you don't risk offending!

3) RELAX TO THE MAX

Has your client just been through a stressful experience? Consider relaxation gifts and services, like massages, salon and spa gift certificates, or — based on what your client considers relaxing — maybe a gift certificate to a cigar bar or shooting range.

4) DINNER (IN!) IS SERVED

Like the idea of custom cooking classes but doubt your client would go for it? How about a special night IN? You can hire a private chef for a few hours to create an intimate, memorable meal, either for two or an entire dinner party's worth, to be enjoyed at your client's leisure.

5) RECREATION NATION

If your client is moving to a new area, consider passes to a popular rec center or gym near their home. It's a great way to help them get to know the area *and* make some new acquaintances.

BONUS TIP: Is one of your clients having a baby? Don't just send a gift for the child: send something thoughtful for every member of the family... especially the often-overlooked older siblings. Custom "Big Brother!" or "Big Sister!" gifts are all the rage these days and will help you secure hero status.



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We make a living
by what we get.
We make a life
by what we give.

WINSTON CHURCHILL



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