



Gift Giving 101

The holidays are here and the economy is less than jolly.

You might think sending gifts to clients is a luxury you can't afford. Think again, says Najla Furgason, president of Creative Expressions of Tampa Bay, Inc., a Brandon-based company that specializes in corporate gifts. The company operates several gift-related Web sites, including www.acorporategift.com.

"In a time when other firms are cutting back, you'll be remembered for doing something special," Furgason says. Running to your local Sam's Club and "sending a generic, stale tin of sweets sends the message that you feel obligated to give some kind of gift but didn't have the time or inclination to put much thought into it."

Furgason advocates sending gourmet food gifts customized with your logo (of course, that is her business). To figure out what to send,

Custom-home Comeback?



HANNAH

Charley Hannah of Tampa's Hannah Bartoletta Homes, a luxury home builder, says change is in the air.

By the end of third quarter 2008, Hannah Bartoletta had already generated sales volume that exceeded all of 2007 from inventory and custom-built homes. It's the custom-home market that Hannah says is particularly ripe for a recovery.

"I really don't care about the overall housing market so much. I'm focused on two-and-a-half to three percent of the total market, the custom-home buyers," Hannah says. The reason for the sales uptick, he says, is simple supply and demand: Custom-home buyers are getting tired of waiting for what they want, but their options for custom-home sites are dwindling.

Hannah expects a flood of custom-home buyers when people in "mid-range" homes (\$300-\$500,000) are able to sell their homes.

"That list is deep and wide and frustrating as a builder," he says.

she offers the following five tips:

- 1. Take the Taste Test:** Ask the company's "promotional consultant" for a sample of the products you're considering.
- 2. Make Your Mark:** Your gift should delight the recipient and get your company name in front of them – via customized tins or ribbons.
- 3. Determine Gift Levels:** Make the most of your budget by tailoring gifts to client size or annual expenditures. Smaller versions of standard gift items – like cookies or boxes of candy – have been introduced in response to the economy.
- 4. Get Personal:** Send gifts with a holiday card or business card.
- 5. Remember the Packaging:** Look for the upscale, boutique styles fashioned after the famous Godiva brand.

For more gift ideas, see the cover story on page 20.

Imagemakers :: Helping Out a Buddy

Each year the Tampa Bay Advertising Federation (TBAF) takes on a pro-bono cause. This year the group, made up of more than 100 members in advertising and related businesses, picked Best Buddies of Tampa – out of more than 100 applications – to receive a free public service campaign.

Best Buddies is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities with one-on-one friendships and mainstream employment. The Tampa office opened in 2004.

"To say that we're thrilled is an understatement,"



says Sarah Combs, program supervisor of Best Buddies of Tampa (www.bestbuddies.org).

To spread the spirit of giving, the TBAF is trying something new this year. All non-profit organizations that applied for its public service campaign will be listed on the TBAF Web site (www.tbaf.org) so that advertising agencies throughout Tampa Bay are aware of the local non-profits requesting pro-bono campaigns to gain exposure and awareness.