

Avoiding Mistakes in Gift Giving : The Rules for the Perfect Gift

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Why do We Engage in Gift Giving

Gift giving has an influential role in present society. Imagine that in 2019 Americans expected to spend on average \$1,047 on gifts during the Christmas holiday season (McGinty, 2019), of which \$658 was spent on gifts for family, friends, and co-workers (McGinty, 2019). There are multiple reasons why people engage in this ritual; for example, it can be done with the intent of strengthening a relationship, to show love (Mauss et al., 2011), or to [find a mate](#) . Presents serve as a signal that the giver and the receiver have a close relationship, and gift-givers devote time, money, and energy to this transaction. The resources used to obtain a present act as social cues, indicating that gifts are more than just things meant to gratify

receivers (Prendergast & Stole, 2001). Although gifts are made with the best intentions, sometimes it can happen that we are not able to choose the best gift for our beloved person. Consequently, the receiver might misunderstand the original aim of the gift, which could weaken our relationship with the receiver. When it comes to the giver-receiver relationship, mistakes in gift-giving might be due to a lack of understanding of the receiver's needs and interests or to a difference of perspectives between the giver and the receiver. Despite givers' best intentions, the gift-giving literature has identified several impediments to effective gift-giving that arise from these different perspectives of the gift-giving process. It appears that many essential aspects should be taken into consideration when buying a gift for someone. This post will answer two main questions that would help you deliver the "perfect gift:"

- What are the mistakes you need to avoid during the gift-giving process?
- What are the rules that would help you find the "perfect gift"?

Wrong Assumptions about Gift giving

When it comes to gift-giving, there are three main aspects that you have to take into consideration:

- [Aspects of the gift.](#)
- [Aspects of the giver.](#)
- [Aspects of the recipient.](#)

Let's talk about the aspects of the gifts. Two attributes seem to play a significant role in predicting the success and failure of the gift. The first is desirability, which focuses on the quality of the gift's final state. The other attribute is feasibility, which focuses on the practicality or the utility of using the gift. It was demonstrated that givers prefer desirable gifts because they aim to surprise the recipients who, in contrast, seem to appreciate more

useful gifts. This happens because, during the decision-making process of buying a present for someone, the giver would not try to find a nice present according to their preferences. Instead, they would try to imagine how the receiver would look like with their gift. As a result, the giver would evaluate the gift from a great social distance.

On the contrary, when the receiver gets the gift, they would evaluate it from a close social distance. The receivers would imagine themselves with the present, instead of thinking about the giver buying it. This asymmetry can influence the process of thought behind the choice of the gift (Baskin et al., 2014).

Another mistake in which givers usually fall is to think that receivers would like to enjoy their presents as soon as possible. In reality, that is not the case. For example, givers would probably prefer buying a well-grown flowered plant, although it is not the recipient's most favorites, instead of a package of seeds of the plant they like the most. Although it might seem logical that the flowering plant would surprise the receiver far more than a bunch of seeds, research has shown that receivers would rather enjoy a high-quality present for which they would have to wait to see completed (Kupor et al., 2017). Furthermore, according to a [recent study](#), gift recipients would be happier if givers gave them precisely what they asked for rather than striving to be "thoughtful and kind" by purchasing items they did not desire. A final aspect of the gift, which the giver wrongly assumes, stands in the concept that the number of resources invested plays a role in the success of the gift. A study by Flynn and Adams (2009) found out that the amount of money spent on the gift was not taken into account by the receiver, who, as discussed before, is more concerned about the quality and the feasibility of the gift.

The Rules for the "Perfect Gift"

Ok, now you know what you absolutely shouldn't do when buying a gift for someone. But your journey to the "perfect gift" is only halfway through. That is why in this section, I am going to tell you three main rules to find the perfect gift for your loved ones. According to scientific research, there are three crucial points to take into consideration when choosing a gift:

- [Find a gift that contains some references to the giver.](#)
- [The gift should be unique and distinguishable from others.](#)
- [Always make sure that the gift fits the tastes of the receiver.](#)

Research shows that the best way to achieve all three points is through personalization because customers prefer items developed or customized by others for their ability to communicate affection (Fuchs et al., 2015). Personalization is the process of creating products or services that are uniquely tailored to each individual. Through this process, the giver can communicate parts of themselves to the receiver and at the same time provide them with something unique that anyone else owns. It is important to note that personalization is a necessary condition but not a satisfactory one to the success of the gift. Because as said in the previous paragraph, one aspect that the receiver also takes into account is the final quality of the product. As an outcome, a new wave of Mass-personalization platforms made their way into the market (e.g., GiftAFeeling). Platforms that allow for customization of their products appear ideal for surprising people with gifts: A step-by-step selection of product features allows for a better fit with the receiver's tastes, while the giver can personalize the gift to make it memorable for the desired person. Another way in which personalization helps the process of gift-giving is by reducing the divergent focus that the giver and the receiver have on desirable and feasible gifts because customization may enable givers to add a desirable touch to a useful gift or to improve the utility of an aesthetically appealing product (Pizzetti

& Gibbert, 2018). Finally, it is vital to keep in mind that gift personalization is not without danger. It may increase the likelihood of present failure (for example, the giver could be incorporating too much of their likes into the gift, ignoring the recipient's preferences). Due to their inability to identify their preferences, some consumers experience uncertainty, anxiety, and confusion during online personalization (Franke et al., 2009). Hopefully, thanks to what you have learned about the aspects of the gift, you will not have any problem with your gift personalization process!

An Example of Successful Personalization

In this article, the ritual of gift-giving was explored to find tips to follow and mistakes to avoid in order to deliver the "perfect gift." From the analysis of the present literature on this topic, differences between the points of view of givers and receivers are the significant causes of failure in gift-giving. Meanwhile, the concept of personalization was explored as a possible remedy to this divergence. Nevertheless, from the presented literature, it was clear that personalization has its limits and that sometimes the buyers should be guided through this process by Mass-personalizations companies. Let's take GiftAFeeling as an example. This company aims at helping customers in the research of the "perfect gift," it offers the possibility to customize clothes, watches, mugs, blankets, and much more. This incredible amount of choice creates various options for the giver that would have more chances to find something that fits the receiver's taste and needs.

Furthermore, GifAFeeling tries to create a guide for the customers to find the best gift for every type of receiver (friends, loved ones, parents, etc.). This company provides a great example of how these Mass-personalizations platforms can guide the customers through the arduous processes of personalization and gift-giving. Now that you learned what you should and should not do in gift-giving, why don't you try it yourself?

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