



## Make Her Holiday Wishes Come True!

by TJ

Invite your customers in to complete a wish list.

In my daughter's store she actually had a special champagne event to begin the gift-giving season and kick-off her wish list program, which made her wishes come true. Women browsed, turned in a list, and usually shopped, too.

This is how it's done: Give a gift to everyone attends, completes and turns in a wish list. It can be an item you purchase special such as a holiday tree ornament, or a tee shirt with your store name, a bottle of your store private label body and bath product, or any other promotional type item that your customer will appreciate. Some stores give \$5 or \$10 gift cards as a thank you for completing the list, but try to promote the store – not discount.

Wish lists are great selling tools, but can also be a contest. When the list is completed, have the shopper drop it into a bowl or box which will be used for a drawing on Christmas Eve at noon. At that time, you draw out one name and make her dream come true. You have the option of completing her entire list, or selecting the most expensive item you chose.

Sharon of Sharon's of Hyde Park in Canada says she wraps the item in her most expensive gift wrap, and delivers the gift herself on the way home from work. The customer is always surprised and thrilled over the personal attention from the owner at such a special time.



Now that is the contest part, but definitely not the sole reason for this wish program. The store now has down, on paper, what the customers wants, but also the name, email and phone number of her Santa. Be certain to have a second backup also, such as child, mother or sister who might be shopping for her.

Begin by contacting the first person on the list in the way you feel most effective. If you know them personally, give them a call or simply drop by the office to say, "Jim, you are going to love me today. I am holding in my hand what Betty wants for Christmas. Do you want me to wrap it up and bring it over? I know how you hate to shop, let me handle it all."

Making a call or sending an email is better than a card or letter, because there is less chance she will get the message or find out. Even though she completed a wish card knowing full well you are going to pursue this further, there is still a little mystery if she doesn't actually know if he came in or bought her gifts. Please do anything to help the spouse or giver keep their secret. (Some stores use ugly giftwrap or something she will not recognize, and know where it was purchased. Others store packages til the last minute for pickup or delivery. If this is the case, they will make a wonderful holiday display under your tree!)

Maybe it's not that simple and easy each time. If you can't use the phone or email, send a postcard or letter, saying the same thing adding, "No guessing this year. We know exactly what she wants – and we've got it!"

No reply? Wait a week after sending the card, and call again. Don't ever give up trying to reach that potential customer until near Christmas Eve. Most will appreciate the fact that you are there to help and that you DO know what she'll want and what size she wears. Shoppers (especially men) like anything that is simple and easy.

After the drawing and after Christmas, you can use those cards in another profitable way. Call her and say, "Mary, the jacket you wanted for Christmas is still here, and about to be reduced in our after-holiday sale. It's 25% off, would you like me to put it back for you?" She'll appreciate you thinking of her, and probably accept your offer.

What a multitude of uses from one little wish list card!

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## Bonnye at The Martha Foster Showroom #14745

in Dallas, has been one of my dearest friends in this industry for many years. So far back that I remember sitting across the table from her in the old building, buying *Misty Lane* dresses for my store. Anyway, I just had to brag on their advertisement in this issue. Do they know me or not? Annie, you did a fantastic job on the black and white, it is a "TJ" ad for sure.

