**CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST: TIPS FOR GIFT-GIVING**

**BEFORE YOU BUY**

* ***Crunch the numbers:*** Set a budget and draft a list of your family members, friends, and acquaintances.
* ***Ask them for their "wish lists":*** Encourage your loved ones to send you their hand-selected picks via an online registry at your favorite retail website. These lists work just like wedding registries; they can "register" for desired items, then tell you where they have registered.

**PEOPLE TO REMEMBER AND WHAT TO GIVE THEM:**

* ***Assistant***: The gift varies based on corporate culture and how long he's worked for you.
* ***Babysitter***: Give up to two nights' pay.
* ***Boss***: Give a small gift (if it's customary in your workplace) or a holiday card.
* ***Building*** ***superintendent***: Give $20 to $200 (ask around your building).
* ***Client***: Ask around your office to determine the appropriate amount to spend, or send a group gift such as a fruit basket.
* ***Coworker***: If you want to give a gift to one person in particular, do so outside the office; otherwise, you can give a small token to everyone, which can be created in homemade batches.
* ***Daycare*** ***worker***: Give a gift worth up to $75.
* ***Dentist/doctor***: Mail a holiday card.
* ***Dog*** ***groomer***: Give the cost of a visit.
* ***Dog*** ***walker***: Give one week's pay.
* ***Doorman***: Tip an extra $20 to $100 (ask around your building and tip those who help you the most more generously).
* ***Dry-cleaning*** ***deliverer***: Tip an extra $10 to $30.
* ***Elevator*** ***operator***: Tip an extra $15 to $40.
* ***Facialist***: Tip the cost of a visit.
* ***Gardener***: Tip the cost of one visit's pay.
* ***Hairstylist***: Tip the cost of a visit.
* ***Handyman***: Tip $15 to $40 (if employed by your building) or a gift (about one visit's pay).
* ***House*** ***cleaner***: Tip an extra one week's pay (if you use a service that sends a different person each time, skip the tip).
* ***Lawn-care*** ***worker***: Tip an extra one visit's pay.
* ***Mail*** ***carrier***: Give a gift worth up to $20.
* ***Maître d' (at favorite restaurant):*** Tip an extra $20 to $50.
* ***Manicurist/pedicurist***: Tip the cost of an extra visit.
* ***Massage*** ***therapist***: Tip the cost of an extra visit.
* ***Nanny/au pair***: Tip an extra one week's to one month's pay, based on length of tenure and regional customs.
* ***Newspaper*** ***deliverer***: Tip an extra $10 to $30.
* ***Nursing*** ***home*** ***worker***: Give a gift worth up to $50.
* ***Package*** ***deliverer***: FedEx workers can't take cash, but gifts under $75 are okay; UPS workers can accept cash.
* ***Parking*** ***attendant***: Tip an extra $20 to $30.
* ***Personal*** ***trainer***: Tip the cost of an extra session (if she's affiliated with your gym, you don't need to tip, but you could give a gift).
* ***Physical*** ***therapist***: Give a small gift or holiday card.
* ***Pool*** ***cleaner***: Tip the cost of an extra visit.
* ***School*** ***teacher***: Your child can lend a hand in making a heartfelt gift, including custom cards and desk supplies.

**MUST-KNOW TIPS**

* ***If you're giving cash: Offer crisp, large bills.*** Using the largest note possible indicates that you took time to prepare your gesture, rather than rooting around in your wallet (or between your couch cushions).
* ***If you're giving a check***: Provide a check for amounts greater than $100 or for tips that you send by mail.
* ***If you're mailing gifts***: Plan ahead so that your packages will reach their recipients in time. This year, Priority Mail parcels must be sent by December 20 and Express Mail items must be sent by December 23 in order for them to make it to their domestic destinations by Christmas Eve. If you prefer to use the services of a private carrier, such as UPS, consult their calendar module for exact shipping time and costs.
* ***If you're traveling with gifts***: You can easily lighten your load by opting for gift cards instead of bulky packages. If you do choose gift-wrapped presents, make sure that they can be easily inspected by airport security without mess. (We suggest a box in which the top and bottom are wrapped separately, with the card and the ribbon tucked inside.)
* ***If you're hosting a gift exchange***: Organize a Yankee swap, a Secret Santa exchange, or lucky bags with family members, friends, or coworkers.
* ***If you're caught without a gift***: Never be caught empty-handed -- even with impromptu visits from friends who bear gifts. You can easily avoid this awkward situation by wrapping smaller items like seasonal plants, candles, or a bottle of good wine.