



November 1, 2019

Published by The 912 Group, Ltd.

Ronda Watson Barber—Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

Volume 10—No. 19

Advocating, Informing and Promoting Small & Minority Owned Businesses

OhioMBE Awards honors excellence in business and community service



Honorees, Nominees and some of Ohio's Top Businesses were recognized at the 5th annual OhioMBE Awards, hosted by the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium on Oct. 24. More photos are online at OhioMBEAwards.com

Media's responsibility is to challenge government

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Lynn Stevens received the Frank W. Watson Advocacy Award

Lynn Stevens is a Regional Outreach Manager with the Division of Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ODI) at the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The Division is dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion opportunities for all stakeholders, including those seeking to do business with the department and those who seek employment with the department. Lynn is a liaison for stakeholders and coordinates many outreach events that help stakeholders learn how to do business with ODOT.



Prior to joining ODOT, Lynn served five years as the Director of Minority Affairs in the Office of Governor John Kasich where she served as a liaison to Ohio's minority and ethnic community and represented the Governor on various issues of concern. Prior to serving in Governor Kasich's office, Lynn served for twelve years as the Community Relations Coordinator in the Office of former U.S. Senator George Voinovich. She was a liaison to the minority community, as well as to children and family organizations throughout Ohio.

Lynn also served as a Constituent Liaison in the Office of U.S. Representative Steve Chabot of Cincinnati from 1994-1999, where she helped constituents cut

See Lynn on page 7

Support Black Businesses



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OhioMBE welcomes letters to the editor from readers. Typed letters of 200 words or less are preferred; all might be edited. Each letter must include name, home address and daytime phone number. Some letter may appear on our website.

The 912 Group is an Ohio certified Minority Owned and EDGE business. The 912 Group is a certified FBE with the City of Columbus.

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Seven Ways to Thank Your Customers This Thanksgiving

As the year approaches its end, now is the perfect time to thank your customers for their support all year long. Thanking your customers not only rewards them for patronizing your business, but also helps build strong customer relationships and enhances customer loyalty. The end result: Customers feel more connected with your business, spread the word to their friends and families, and spend more with you. Here are some creative ways to give thanks without breaking the bank.

1. Hold a party. Get in on the celebration early with a November party. A B2B business can host an event at the office; hold a holiday luncheon, dinner or cocktail celebration at a local restaurant; or invite customers to the company holiday party. A B2C business could host a party at the store or location or rent a local space. Make the party festive with contests, celebrations of top customers and goody bags for attendees.
2. Send greeting cards, notes or letters. Holiday greeting cards in December are expected and may get lost in a pile of mail. However, a Thanksgiving greeting card is more likely to stand out from the pack—plus, it’s a secular holiday you can feel comfortable all your customers celebrate. Or go beyond a store-bought greeting card to send a handwritten, personal note or letter. The personal touch is
3. Give a gift card for your business. Receiving a gift card for your business with no strings attached is an impressive reward, especially if it’s for a significant amount (no \$5 or \$10 gift cards). Of course, your motives aren’t completely altruistic. Gift cards get customers to buy from your business and most customers will spend more than the value of the gift card in doing so. If the gift card isn’t linked to a particular customer, customers can even give it away as a holiday gift. That might end up bringing a whole new customer to your store.
4. Spotlight your best customers. Make November Customer Appreciation Month and spotlight a different customer every week (or daily if you can manage it). Post a photo of the customer, a few quotes from them about why they appreciate your business, and a few words from you about why you appreciate their business. Interview the customer about their favorite product/service/employee at your business, how they first heard of your business, how long they’ve been customers—anything that tells a story. Depending on your industry, you can approach these in a serious or humorous way. Put your customer appreciation posts on your website and share them

See Customers on page 4

6 Ways to Increase Holiday Sales

’Tis the season for businesses across the world to see the bottom line on their income statements (profit and loss, or P&L) go from red to black! Black Friday is just around the corner, and this is a great time to review your sales forecast goals and develop a strategy to meet them through your holiday campaigns.

So what will your business do to make sure your products are top of mind as your customers make spending decisions from Black Friday and Cyber Monday through the end of the year?

Here are 6 ways your business can build holiday marketing campaigns that help you increase holiday sales this season!

1. **Offer special discounts to loyal customers.** Offer special discounts to your best or most loyal customers on the things they buy the most. Why not treat them to a holiday gift, from you to them? Offering deals they can’t refuse on the things they buy the most is a great way to say Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, or Happy Kwanzaa to your most loyal customers! Remember, it usually costs you a lot more to acquire brand new customers than to retain the ones you have. So if you only really reach out to your all-stars once a year, make sure it’s during the holiday season. One approach to increase holiday sales might be to offer

See Sales on page 4

Keep up-to-date at
OhioMBE.com

MBE Ohio ²⁰¹⁹ AWARDS

OhioMBE is pleased to recognize the following Family-Owned Businesses who were nominated for a 2019 OhioMBE Award

Tiger Mushroom Farms

Te'Lario Watkins
Blacklick

Resource International

Todd Majidzadeh
Columbus

Just Naturally Yummy Bakery And Catering Company

Brandi Muhammad—**WINNER**
Columbus

We are thankful for the service of military veterans. The following veterans have been nominated as Top Veteran Business at the OhioMBE Awards

Mutt's Sauce LLC

Charlynda Scales —**WINNER**
Dayton

Jose "Rafi" Rodriguez

Rodriguez Financial Strategies
Beavercreek



Support the Frank W. Watson Scholarship

Donate while you shop with Kroger. Register your shopping card at KrogerCommunityRewards.com
Our rewards number is YQ115

If you shop Amazon, consider Smile.Amazon.com. Select the Ohio Business Development Center as your charity.

Congratulations to the following businesses for being nominated a Top MBE business in Ohio at the 2019 OhioMBE Awards. Small business is good business!

A-Men Pest Control
Angel Soto—**WINNER**
Broadview Hts

Flairsoft Ltd.
Dheeraj Kulshreshtha
Columbus

K. Zulene Adams
Z Promotions
Columbus

Lao Volunteer Association
Columbus

Leia Love Hair and Nail Salon
Dr. Leia Love
Akron

Northeast Ohio Precast
Tony McCoy—**WINNER**
Salem

RRightNow Communications
Regina Carswell Russo
Cincinnati

Spotlight of Columbus
Patrice Morris
Columbus

Tra'bian Enterprises
TJ Johnson
Dublin

TrueChoicePack Corp.
Henna Rathore
Mason

Brown Girls Mentoring
Jamie Blunt—**WINNER**
Columbus

Phoenix Consulting Company
Toni Bell
Columbus

The following Women-Owned businesses are nominated for Top W/FBE at the 2019 OhioMBE Awards

TrueChoicePack
Henna Rathore
Mason—**WINNER**

City Apparel
Andrea Kramer
Findlay—**WINNER**

Ascension Construction Solutions
Jeanna Hondel—**WINNER**
Columbus

Essentia Strategy Group
Sarah Lee
Columbus

Enlightened Financial Group
Tia Johnson
Columbus

Cannell DPS
Nicole Moore
Columbus

Phoenix Consulting Company
Toni Bell
Columbus

Small business is good business!



Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country. —Franklin D. Roosevelt

business advocate

Simone Burley
Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator
Franklin County Engineer Office



Simone Burley has been selected as the new Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator for Franklin County Engineer Cornell R. Robertson's Office.

Simone is a seasoned analytical professional with over 25 years of experience. She brings her passion for people and public service to this position. She's a proponent of cultivating diversity in the workplace and in the communities of Franklin County. Having worked in the legal,

accounting, real estate, bankruptcy, and retail fields, Simone brings an entrepreneurial perspective that aligns with the goals and objectives of the Franklin County Engineer's Office.

She is an effective communicator and proven leader who has demonstrated her commitment to diversity and inclusion through her ability to build coalitions and motivate others to action.

Simone obtained an Associate of Arts Degree from Columbus State Community College and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from The Ohio State University.

She can be reached at:

Simone Y. Burley
Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator
970 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-525-5121
sburley@franklincountyengineer.org
www.franklincountyengineer.org

OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities



Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice, speak out, because this is your country. This is your democracy. Make it. Protect it.

Pass it on. ~Thurgood Marshall

Customers from page 2

on social media; that way, customers will share the posts, further promoting your business to their connections.

5. Schedule customer one-on-ones. A B2B business can schedule one-on-one meetings for coffee or lunch with top customers before the holidays get underway. Make it a time to chat, thank them for their business and ask how you can be even more helpful to them in the coming year. Customers will feel valued, and you'll learn useful information about their business needs that can help you provide better service and sell more to them in the future.
6. Surprise them with something extra. There's something about the element of surprise that makes everything more exciting and gives even little extras a big impact. Surprise your best customers by including a free gift with their purchase or giving them a free upgrade of your service. Let them know the surprise gift is a thank-you for their patronage all year.
7. Send a gift. Of course, holiday gifts are a long-standing tradition, but the key is to make them personal and thoughtful. Think about each customer's interests, quirks and hobbies and look for something they will really appreciate. That might be an assortment of cookies for one customer, travel accessories for another or a shirt with their alma mater's logo on it for a third. Better yet, give the gift of an experience you can enjoy together, such as tickets to a sporting event or an afternoon learning to sail.

Thanking your customers at this time of year can have a big impact on your relationship, helping to build ties that last all year long.

Source: sba.gov

Sales from page 2

these loyal customers an even bigger break when they refer your business to family or friends . . . and those referrals make a purchase.

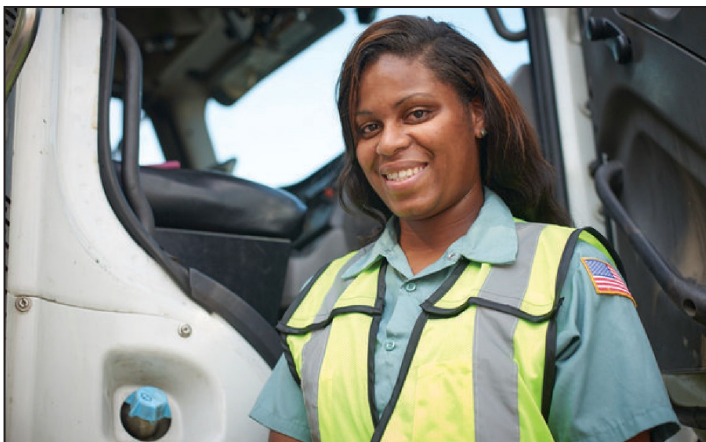
2. Personalize Emails to Your Customers. For online stores especially, but for any business that has email addresses and some basic information on their customer base's sales history, it's great to be able to personalize emails by including their name and a pertinent detail. Maybe they've been a customer for more than a year.

Maybe they always place a monthly order. If they always make the same order, personalize the email with a suggestion for an item you think they would like based on their order history, and tell them why.

See Sales on page 9



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bid opportunities

To post a bid notice, call 614-522-9122 or email news@ohiombe.com



Columbus City Schools issues solicitations on a regular basis for goods & services related to food, construction, technology, curriculum, & transportation. Interested vendors should periodically check our website at <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/rfp>



ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Development has contracting opportunities in the below areas. Please reach out for more information and bidding requirements.

- Graffiti Removal and Arborist Services. Contact Eric Voorhees (614-645-7934 or eavorhees@columbus.gov).
- Grass Cutting and Solid Waste Removal. Contact Mike Schwab (614-645-7122 or mfschwab@columbus.gov).
- Demolition and Asbestos Abatement. Contact Mike Farrenkopf (614- 679-5873 or mlfarrenkopf@columbus.gov) or Seth Brehm (614-645-5659 or swhbrehm@columbus.gov).
- Property Maintenance and Miscellaneous Services in November 2019. Contact Audrea Hickman (614-645-8907 or aehickman@columbus.gov).
- Construction trades including: General Construction, Home Improvement, Electrical, HVAC, and Plumbing. Contact Tim Tilton (614- 724-3009 or twilton@columbus.gov).
- Lead abatement. Contact Erica Hudson (614- 645-6739 or ejhudson@columbus.gov).

To register for notifications on upcoming bid opportunities, please visit <http://vendors.columbus.gov/sites/public>.

Get Bid Notices Delivered to your inbox

1. Visit www.OhioMBE.com
2. Click on the Advertise link
3. Add your email address
4. Select your desired list



“Attention DOT/SBA/
State Approved MBE/
WBE/SBRAs”

Kokosing Industrial, Inc. is preparing bids for the Newark Fourth Street Combined Sewer Separation project in Newark, Ohio which bids November 5, 2019. We are seeking quotes for any portion of the project listed that you are qualified to perform or provide supplies for which includes the following: Photographic Documentation, Demolition, Rebar, Misc. Metal Fabrications, Painting, Clearing and Grubbing, Excavation, Concrete Paving, Landscaping, Manholes, Jack and Bore, Bypass Pumping, Asphalt Paving, Aggregates, Signage, and Electrical. Bidding documents can be examined online by emailing Sonja Nichols at snichols@kokosing.biz for the link. Please have your quote to Kyle Kuhlman by 5:00 PM November 4, 2019: e-mail snichols@kokosing.biz or Fax 614-212-5711.

“Kokosing Industrial is an equal opportunity employer.



LEGAL NOTICE

OPERATION: FIX IT – FIRE ALARM PHASE 5
– DOMINION MIDDLE SCHOOL & JOHNSON PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sealed bids for the above-referenced project will be received by the BOARD OF EDUCATION, City School District of Columbus, Ohio, Office of Capital Improvements, 889 E. 17th Ave, Columbus OH 43211, until Friday, November 15, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. More information can be found on the District’s web site at <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/rfp>. The plans and specifications are on file with Franklin Imaging.

#bidnotices



Most people who are hating on you, they are not worried about where you are. They're worried about where you're going.

– Elijah Cummings

bid opportunities

To post a bid notice, call 614-522-9122 or email news@ohiombe.com



COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY. COMMITMENT. COLLABORATION.

Legal Notice: RFP 2019-011
Real Estate Brokerage Services

The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority is seeking Request for Proposal (RFP) for the procurement of Real Estate Brokerage Services. The response deadline is Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 11:00AM. A pre-proposal conference is scheduled for 11:00AM Thursday, November 7, 2019 at our corporate office. Specifications may be obtained by visiting our website, www.cmhanet.com or by contacting the Purchasing Department of the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority at 880 E. 11th Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43211 or by calling 614-421-4434, 8:00 AM–4:00 PM, Monday – Friday

Lynn from page 1

bureaucratic red tape and resolve problems they were experiencing with federal agencies.

Lynn is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati with a Master's degree and a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs and Political Science, respectively. Lynn is married and has two young adult children. Lynn volunteers as a *Surrogate Parent for children with disabilities* who do not have parents in their lives and need an advocate for their special education needs. Lynn is also a long-time, volunteer board member of the Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition (OGKC), a statewide organization that advocates for the needs and concerns of kinship caregivers / families. Lynn also volunteers with the food initiative outreach program of her church, Columbus Christian Center, where Dr. David C. Forbes Jr. is the pastor.



Columbus City Schools announces a Request for Qualifications for the following projects:

1. Professional criteria design services as required to complete mechanical system replacement at multiple locations. The total project budget is to be determined.

The lead firm will be a licensed engineer.

An informational meeting covering these projects will be held: Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 3:30 pm

The meeting will be held at Columbus City Schools, 889 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, OH 43211.

Submittals will be evaluated pursuant to ORC 153.65-691 based on the following criteria: professional qualifications of key members of design team, relevant past work of prospective firms, other applicable consultants, quality control procedures, response to CCS Community Inclusion Policy (Local Economically Disadvantaged Enterprise goal is 20% participation), and location of primary firm relative to project locations. Fees will be negotiated. The district reserves the right to reject any and all statements of qualifications and to waive any informality, irregularity, or failure to conform to the instructions contained in this public announcement. Firms are not to contact any schools. More information can be found at <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/rfp>

Responding firms are to submit three (3) paper copies and (1) electronic copy in PDF format of Parts I and II of the OFCC F110 -330 Statement of Qualifications form (most recent version). Part I is limited to 25 pages. EDGE requirements do not apply to this RFQ. Address submittals to Capital Improvements, Columbus City Schools, 889 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, OH 43211.

Deadline for submissions is November 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM.

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Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

FRANKLIN COUNTY ENGINEER



PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US:

Wednesday, November 20, 2019
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Franklin County Engineer's Office
4444 Fisher Road
Columbus, Ohio 43228

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR UPCOMING 2020 PROJECTS



RSVP by Friday, November 15th 5:00 p.m.
to Andrea Lossick at 614-525-3020 or
alossick@franklincountyengineer.org

Why you should get your business certified?

There are several reasons why you should get your business certified:

1. Some entities have purchasing goals. Only certified businesses can participate.
2. Certification adds legitimacy to your business. You have gone through a process that has determined that your business is owned and controlled by a minority, woman or disadvantaged business.
3. Certification can afford your loan and bonding opportunities. The State of Ohio has loan and bonding programs specifically for certified minority owned businesses.
4. Certification can be a marketing tool for your business. You can add your certifications to your marketing materials, business cards, website, etc. Many consumers like doing business with a veteran, minority or woman owned businesses.
5. Certification can be used in the private sector. Many companies don't have a certifying program but in an effort to have supplier diversity, will accept the certifications from some governmental agencies.



Attend a class at the City of Columbus Planroom, operated by OBDC and learn how.

Register at OHBDC.eventbrite.com

Class dates: Nov. 9, Nov. 23

Frank W. Watson
Scholarship 

Donate at OhioMBEAwards.com

Sales from page 4

Email segmentation based on your customers' history or personal details such as their birthdate, if you know it, is a powerful tool. This approach reminds your customers that you really do appreciate their loyalty. It works well for a holiday marketing campaign but is also a great strategy anytime.

3. Offer gift certificates. Maybe you're an automotive repair shop, a hairdresser, maid service, a professional organizer, or a web developer—how do you gift those things? With gift certificates, of course!

Who wouldn't love a free oil change and tire rotation, new hairstyle, or house cleaning!?! (*I know I would, hint, hint.*) Or maybe you have tons of products and services and choosing one is too difficult! Give the gift of choice. Gift certificates are great stocking stuffers *and* offer a great opportunity to cross-sell (see #2!).

Don't over complicate things, but don't discount the power of offering an online option for purchasing a gift certificate, even if ultimately, you're still snail-mailing a physical

copy. Try it out—promote them on your social media channels or to your email list.

Make a visually appealing sign near your cash register if you have a brick and mortar store. You might even run a sale on gift cards, offering a volume discount, or some other incentive (such as buy a gift certificate for a service and receive a service for free or at a discount) for your regular customers to purchase them as a gift.

4. Cross-sell! The months leading up to the holidays are a great time to suggest items to go with the products or services your customers are already purchasing. Maybe they bought a beautiful set of earrings last year for mom. This year, suggest the matching necklace. When you sell a spa package, offer the premium at-home spa kit to go with it as a carrier for the gift certificate!

Hairdressers can cross-sell a salon-quality shampoo and conditioner set. The auto repair store can offer jumper cables or fix-a-flat canisters—all as nice little carriers or stocking stuffers for the gift

See Sales on page 12

www.OhioMBE.com

Ohio Diversity Network

Get a weekly email from OhioDiversityNetwork.com notifying you of upcoming events. Sign up online!

Friday, November 8, 2019 at 11:30am
[ELFORD – Annual MBE/FBE/DBE/EDGE Subcontractor Lunch-
eon](#)
Columbus

Saturday, November 9, 2019 at 10:30am
[OBDC- Certification Saturday](#)
Columbus

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 2:30pm
[OBDC- How to Read the Dodge Report \(Webinar\)](#)
Columbus

Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 6:00pm
[NAACP- The Columbus Impact](#)
Columbus



Hosting a business event?

Did you know you can
post it on
OhioDiversityNetwork.com

Email: news@ohiombe.com
for login information

*OhioDiversityNetwork.com is
sponsored by:*

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COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION



The poster for the 35th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Breakfast features a large, stylized black and white illustration of Dr. King's face on the left. The background is a bright, sunlit landscape with a road leading into the distance. Text on the poster includes: "Plan to join us in January for the 35th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Breakfast theme: Keep Moving Forward", "Save the Date 01:20:2020", "Doors Open 7am | Program Begins 7:30am | Adjournment 10am At the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Exhibit Hall C", "Details to come. Be on the look out!", and "KEYNOTE SPEAKER U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN JOYCE BEATTY 3rd District of Ohio". At the bottom left is the MLK Breakfast Committee logo, and at the bottom right is a photograph of Joyce Beatty, a woman with short grey hair wearing a red jacket. Contact information at the bottom includes: "P.O. Box 83134 | Columbus, Ohio 43203", "MLKBreakfast@yahoo.com | 614 863-6442", and "www.MLKjrBREAKFAST.com".

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Ohio Business Development Center

OBDC

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11-9
10:30 am to noon
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Get certification and registration information from

- City of Columbus
- Franklin County
- Columbus City Schools
- State of Ohio



Women in Construction

How to Write a GREAT Capability Statement

Wednesday Nov, 20
11:30 am
City of Columbus Planroom
OHBC.org
Wisdom Wednesday at the City of Columbus Planroom

BLACK FRIDAY

Having a Black Friday Sale?
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Nov. 21
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THE COLUMBUS IMPACT

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6:00 – 8:00 PM

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 - Will Preparation, And More
- Identity Theft:** Monitoring & ID Restoration



I had reasoned this out in my mind, there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other. ~ Harriet Tubman

the other. ~ Harriet Tubman

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certificates! Cross-selling is a great way to add value to the client—and to increase holiday sales.

5. Send gift ideas. How many times have you been stumped on a gift for that hard-to-buy-for person on your list? We've all been there! So help your customers by sending an email full of gift ideas tailored to the people on their list with headings like: "gifts for mom," "great gifts for co-workers," "gifts for neighbors," or "gifts for the mail carriers."

What are your most popular items and who buys them? Share that info with the people on your mailing list and they'll be grateful for it!

6. Offer free shipping or special deliveries. Who doesn't love a surprise?!? Don't be afraid to think outside the box to increase holiday sales. What if that premium spa package and at-home spa kit were **hand-delivered** with a bouquet of fresh flowers or a box of chocolates?

What if the oil change was done on-site at the recipient's home? What if a gift basket with a few jars of local homemade jam and bakery-

fresh scones were delivered fresh on a Saturday morning? Wouldn't that make the gift extra special?

If you're running an ecommerce store, it's no secret that you're competing with giant retailers like Amazon that are offering more choices and fast, free shipping. What are you going to do to either make it worth the wait and worth paying more for, or to cut your losses if you do offer free shipping?

How you craft the customer experience around waiting for and receiving their purchase can make a big difference in how willing people are to shell out for shipping costs or wait longer than they'd have to if they bought from Amazon.

7. Send cards or gifts to current and past clients. Maybe staying in touch and top of mind is as simple as wishing your customers a Happy Holiday and thanking them for their business! Customers love to know they're appreciated. Send them a thank you card or a special gift that has nothing to do with trying to sell them anything—they'll love you for it!

Source: bplans.com

