

# gift BEAT™

Tracking the Pulse of the Gift Industry

## market BEAT

The Industry's Top-Selling Lines



Greeting card chart topper **Leanin' Tree** is bringing new designs to market including styles from humorist Shari Jenkins pictured here. The cards are embellished with foil stamps, glitter and die-cut corners, selling for \$4.59 to \$4.95 retail. ([www.leanintree.com](http://www.leanintree.com))

### GREETING CARDS

Last ran in April 2023

- #1 **LEANIN' TREE**: birthday, boxed, humor, various
- #2 **PICTURA**: birthday, humor, various
- #3 **AVANTI**: animal, birthday, various
- #4 **BLUE MOUNTAIN ARTS**: birthday, various
- #5 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY**: humor, various\*
- #6 **AMERICAN GREETINGS**: everyday, humor\*
- #7 **COMPENDIUM**: Positively Green, various
- #8 **PAPYRUS**: various
- #9 **SHANNON MARTIN**: birthday, various
- #10 **QUILLING CARD**: various

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**: Recycled Paper Greetings, Oatmeal Studios

**\*OF NOTE!**

**AMERICAN GREETINGS** ([www.americangreetings.com](http://www.americangreetings.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran, while **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY** ([www.primitivesbykathy.com](http://www.primitivesbykathy.com)) moved from an honorable mention onto the chart.

### ECO-FRIENDLY

Last ran in March 2023

- #1 **THE NAKED BEE**: lip balm, lotions
- #2 **MYRA BAGS**: recycled bags
- #3 **WET-IT!**: cleaning cloths
- #4 **SWAN CREEK**: candles
- #5 **CORKCICLE**: insulated drinkware
- #6 **SWIG**: insulated drinkware
- #7 **BRUMATE**: insulated drinkware
- #8 **FAHLO**: animal-tracking bracelets\*
- #9 **E-CLOTH**: window-cleaning cloths, various
- #10 **TYLER CANDLE**: candles, various

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**: Pura Vida, Demdaco, Vera Bradley

**\*OF NOTE!**

**FAHLO** ([www.myfahlo.com](http://www.myfahlo.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

*"All the bracelets from ENewton sell - the gold, silver and mixed metals. It's consistently my number one seller month after month."*

- Massachusetts retailer

### JEWELRY

Last ran in June 2023

- #1 **SILVER FOREST**: earrings
- #2 **BRIGHTON**: earrings, various
- #3 **CENTER COURT**: Layers, various
- #4 **ENEWTON**: bracelets, Hope Unwritten
- #5 **RAIN**: earrings, various
- #6 **PANDORA**: charms, various\*
- #7 **PERIWINKLE BY BARLOW**: earrings, various
- #8 **SCOUT CURATED WEARS**: bracelets, various
- #9 **LOLA & COMPANY**: pendants, chains, various\*
- #10 **HOWARD'S**: various\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**: Mulberry Studios, Katie Loxton

**\*OF NOTE!**

Since this chart last ran **PANDORA** ([us.pandora.net](http://us.pandora.net)), **LOLA & COMPANY** ([www.lolacompany.com](http://www.lolacompany.com)) and **HOWARD'S** ([wholesale.howardsinc.com](http://wholesale.howardsinc.com)) all moved from honorable mentions onto the chart.

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Eco-friendly chart topper **Wet-It!** is best known for its extensive selection of Swedish dishcloths, designed to absorb like a sponge but wipe like a cloth. A standard cloth wholesales for \$3.15. ([www.wetcloths.com](http://www.wetcloths.com))

### FAST FACT:

Retail sales declined year-over-year in August for

54% of independent gift retailers

**NOTE:** Rankings are based on August 2023 sales from Giftbeat's reporting stores.



Personal care chart topper **Greenwich Bay** is a perennial favorite on the personal care charts for its bestselling French-milled soaps. For the holidays they are offering two seasonal scents: Sparkling Cranberry and Winter Garden. 1.9-ounce bar, .75 cents cost; 6.35-ounce bar, \$1.80 cost. ([www.gbsoaps.com](http://www.gbsoaps.com))

*"We moved our Inis display and it has breathed new life into the line."  
- Montana retailer*



Wine caps from wine and alcohol-related chart topper **Capabunga** are a popular impulse item and a great stocking stuffer. The reusable silicone cap reseals a bottle of wine after the cork is removed and wholesales for \$2. ([www.capabunga.com](http://www.capabunga.com))

### PERSONAL CARE *Last ran in June 2023*

- #1 **INIS:** cologne, perfume, various
  - #2 **THE NAKED BEE:** lotions, lip balm, various
  - #3 **DM:** Lemon Lavender, pillowcases, various
  - #4 **MICHEL DESIGN WORKS:** foaming soap, various
  - #5 **GREENWICH BAY:** soaps
  - #6 **THYMES:** various
  - #7 **CAMILLE BECKMAN:** Hand Therapy, various
  - #8 **BEEKMAN:** lotions, various
  - #9 **CAPRI BLUE:** lotions, various
  - #10 **EUROPEAN SOAPS:** soap
- HONORABLE MENTION:** Caren

**\*OF NOTE!**

The same vendors are listed in the top 10 this month as when the chart last ran in June 2023.

### \$5 OR LESS COST *Last ran in October 2022*

- #1 **DM:** Lemon Lavender, various
- #2 **GANZ:** pocket tokens, various
- #3 **ABDALLAH CANDIES:** caramels, chocolates
- #4 **THE NAKED BEE:** lip balm, lotion
- #5 **LEANIN' TREE:** greeting cards
- #6 **JELLY BELLY:** jellybeans
- #7 **PURA VIDA:** bracelets
- #8 **KIKKERLAND:** various\*
- #9 **PICTURA:** greeting cards\*
- #10 **RAIN:** earrings, various\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Recycled Paper Greetings, Ty, Tyler Candle

**\*OF NOTE!**

**RAIN** ([www.rainjewelry.com](http://www.rainjewelry.com)), **KIKKERLAND** ([www.kikkerland.com](http://www.kikkerland.com)) and **PICTURA** ([www.picturaua.com](http://www.picturaua.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

### WINE & ALCOHOL-RELATED *Last ran in June 2023*

- #1 **DRINKS ON ME:** coasters, napkins
- #2 **BRUMATE:** insulated drinkware
- #3 **CORKCICLE:** insulated drinkware
- #4 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY:** signs, tea towels
- #5 **MUD PIE:** wine glasses, tea towels
- #6 **STONEWALL KITCHEN:** cocktail mixes, various
- #7 **ENESCO:** Lolita wine glasses
- #8 **DESIGN DESIGN:** cocktail napkins\*
- #9 **SUSQUEHANNA GLASS:** wine and beer glasses\*
- #10 **CAPABUNGA:** wine stoppers\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Swig, Wild Hare

**\*OF NOTE!**

Since this chart last ran, **DESIGN DESIGN** ([www.designdesign.us](http://www.designdesign.us)), **SUSQUEHANNA GLASS** ([www.susquehannaglass.com](http://www.susquehannaglass.com)) and **CAPABUNGA** ([www.capabunga.com](http://www.capabunga.com)) moved from honorable mentions onto the chart.

### FASHION ACCESSORIES *Last ran in July 2023*

- #1 **VERA BRADLEY:** handbags, various
- #2 **BRIGHTON:** sunglasses, jewelry, various
- #3 **JEN & CO.:** handbags, wristlets, wallets
- #4 **DM:** Kedzie, FitKicks, various
- #5 **JOY SUSAN:** handbags, wristlets, various
- #6 **MYRA BAGS:** handbags, various
- #7 **HOBO:** handbags, wallets, various
- #8 **SNOOZIES:** slippers\*
- #9 **CHALA:** crossbodies, various
- #10 **BAGGALLINI:** various

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Corky's Footwear, Simply Southern, World's Softest Socks

**\*OF NOTE!**

**SNOOZIES** ([www.snoozies.com](http://www.snoozies.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

### PET-THEMED *Last ran in June 2023*

- #1 **E&S: SOCKS,** tea towels, tumblers, various
- #2 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY:** mugs, tea towels, various
- #3 **TALL TAILS:** toys
- #4 **GANZ:** pocket tokens, various
- #5 **KAY DEE DESIGNS:** tea towels\*
- #6 **MUD PIE:** various
- #7 **ENESCO:** various
- #8 **DEMDACO:** Willow Tree, various
- #9 **KIKKERLAND:** toys, novelties
- #10 **CHALA:** handbags, wallets

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Compendium, P. Graham Dunn, Simply Southern

**\*OF NOTE!**

Since this chart last ran **KAY DEE DESIGNS** ([www.kaydeedesigns.com](http://www.kaydeedesigns.com)) moved from an honorable mention onto the chart.

### WALL DECOR *Last ran in June 2023*

- #1 **P. GRAHAM DUNN:** pallet signs, various
- #2 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY:** boxed signs, various
- #3 **SINCERE SURROUNDINGS:** signs
- #4 **MY WORD!:** porch boards, Skinnies
- #5 **DEMDACO:** various
- #6 **RAZ IMPORTS:** framed florals and botanicals
- #7 **GANZ:** various
- #8 **MUD PIE:** various
- #9 **EVERGREEN:** various\*
- #10 **GREENBOX ART:** mini canvases

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Gerson, Rustic Marlin

**\*OF NOTE!**

**EVERGREEN** ([www.myevergreenonline.com](http://www.myevergreenonline.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

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**ABOUT**

Giftbeat is owned and operated by Instore Magazine Inc. The newsletter was founded in 1992 and has been dedicated to reporting unbiased, factual market trends and business advice from the best and brightest independent store owners for 30 years. Giftbeat tracks the top 10 vendors in 50+ product categories, garnering this vital information from a stable of 300 reporting stores across the country. In addition, Giftbeat makes no warranty or guarantee, express or implied, regarding potential sales of any products referred to in the publication.

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# Staying the Course

Even though sales trends of late have not been overly positive, retailers are still hopeful the holiday season will be a merry one. Despite months of experiencing year-over-year sales declines, store owners are positive that consumers will come out to shop for the holidays, leading the majority (54 percent) of shop owners to tell us they will be staying the course, purchasing the same as they did last year.

Shipping issues are a thing

of the past, leaving retailers with one less thing to worry about during the crazy holiday season, although finding employees remains a challenge many business owners have yet to master.

While stores gear up for the make-it or break-it time of year, they're going into the season feeling, for the most part, optimistic, which bodes well for the industry overall. As a retailer from Colorado reports, "Although we never know what to expect, the



**ERICA KIRKLAND**  
PUBLISHER & EDITOR

fourth quarter always comes through." ☞

## chartMOVERS

A deep dive into the companies trending up and down in this issue's charts

### \$5 OR LESS

The last time this category was tracked was one year ago, yet the suppliers in the top four slots have remained the same, albeit **DM** ([www.247dm.com](http://www.247dm.com)) usurped **GANZ** ([www.ganz.com](http://www.ganz.com)) to become the number one selling line. **LEANIN' TREE** ([www.leanintree.com](http://www.leanintree.com)) moved up five spots on the chart, from 10th to fifth based on sales of its affordable greeting cards while **PICTURA** ([www.picturausa.com](http://www.picturausa.com)), another greeting card company, was new to the list.

### ECO-FRIENDLY

A mixture of product types is typical for the eco-friendly product chart, with top-selling items ranging from insulated drinkware and jewelry to personal care and purses. New to the chart this time around is **FAHLO** ([www.myfahlo.com](http://www.myfahlo.com)) for its animal-tracking bracelets. While **E-CLOTH** ([www.e-cloth.com](http://www.e-cloth.com)) ranked on the list, at number nine, there are some rumblings among retailers about the line. A store owner from Minnesota wrote, "Got a close-out on assorted cloths and sold them at reduced prices," while a Kansas store owner reported, "Sales have really slowed down but we're still selling window-cleaning wipes." Surprisingly, **PURA VIDA** ([www.puravidabracelets.com](http://www.puravidabracelets.com)), which ranked second in March was bumped down to an honorable mention.

### FASHION ACCESSORIES

**VERA BRADLEY** ([www.verabradley.com](http://www.verabradley.com)) held onto its top spot in this category while **BRIGHTON** ([www.brighton.com](http://www.brighton.com)) climbed from sixth to second place. **DM** also made a move upward from eighth to fourth spot. On the flip side, **CHALA** ([www.chalagroup.com](http://www.chalagroup.com)) dropped from fourth to ninth place while **MYRA BAG** ([www.myrabag.com](http://www.myrabag.com)) fell three spots from third to sixth. Products selling well in this category are varied, with store owners noting everything from handbags and sunglasses to shoes and socks are moving. Regarding trends, sling and belt bags are trending in the handbag category and wristlets remain endlessly popular, especially styles from chart toppers **JEN & CO.** ([www.jenandcowholesale.com](http://www.jenandcowholesale.com)) and **JOY SUSAN** ([www.joysusan.com](http://www.joysusan.com)). While it didn't place in the July chart, **SNOOZIES** ([www.snoozies.com](http://www.snoozies.com)) always places when the colder weather nears as sales of its slipper socks remain a top-selling item among reporting stores.

## SALESBEAT

### Sales Declines Continue into August

By Erica Kirkland

The majority (54 percent) of independent gift retailers experienced year-over-year sales declines in August, slightly improved from July when 57 percent witnessed sales drops.

The slump in August had some retailers confused including a store owner from Oregon who wrote, “I can’t quite figure it out. It’s been a very off summer.”

Other store owners put the lacklustre results down to general economic conditions combined with stagnant offerings among brands including an Ohio retailer whose sales were down for the month and a Utah store owner who wrote “Fewer people in the store, high gas prices and back-to-school expenses,” all contributed to year-over-year sales declines.

For others, the stifling heat continued to keep customers inside their air-conditioned homes. “I’m in South Carolina and the heat was terrible,” writes a store owner who says she thinks it was “the hottest summer we’ve ever had.”

Meanwhile, some store owners

in the Northeast and Midwest, where the temperatures were more moderate, reported healthy sales gains. “Each day, our sales were 10 to 30 percent better than last August,” says a store owner from Massachusetts while a Wisconsin store owner says, “We had good weather, and our store was in tiptop shape. We were in stock on all the important categories.”

#### AUGUST 2023 SALES (vs. July 2023)

↑ 10%+	16%
↑ 5-9%	7%
↑ 1-4%	14%
↔	9%
↓ 1-4%	9%
↓ 5-9%	22%
↓ 10%+	23%

## DISPLAYING JEWELRY

### Unique Way to Showcase Bling & Baubles

Independent store owners stand out from the crowd by offering product lines that can’t be found at mass merchants and by presenting those products in innovative and inspiring ways.

In Ohio a store owner has found a cool new use for a metal tree designed to showcase windchimes - she uses the tree to display necklaces instead. “I can hang tons of necklaces on it – far more than on busts,” she writes, plus, she places the tree on a table and uses the space underneath



to showcase a specific brand or look. “It’s worked out amazingly!”

## BACK TO SCHOOL SALES SLUMP

### Gift Retailers Experience Slower BTS Sales

While school supplies and clothing are high on the list of back-to-school (BTS) purchases, the types of products typically sold in independent gift shops aren’t, leading many stores to experience a sales slump at this time of year.

One solution is to add items that would attract BTS shoppers such as stationery supplies, lunch bags and backpacks, which was something two *Giftbeat* reporting stores did with success in prior years but due to supply issues this year, their sales were down.

“I did not have a back-to-school display this year like I have in past years with products from

Vera Bradley and it effected traffic this year,” says an Indiana store owner who recorded year-over-year sales declines of 10 percent or more in August. In Ohio a retailer writes, “We usually have higher sales in Vera Bradley. This year we didn’t have as many backpacks or lunch boxes.”

#### NO BTS SUPPLIES? NO PROBLEM!

Despite not having any BTS items for sale, a store owner in Tennessee attracted attention and boosted her sales during this time by placing her Halloween items on display during the second week of August. “Sales have boomed since!” she reports.

## COST-CUTTING IDEAS

### How to Save Money without Compromising Customer Service

All retailers are looking for ways to cut costs without compromising customer service levels, so we asked our cross-country panel of 300 reporting stores to share some of their savviest cost-cutting measures with us.

#### TECH TIPS

If you’re looking for technology applications to save you precious hours and pennies, a store owner from Wisconsin sings the praises of Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)) and ChatGPT ([chat.openai.com](http://chat.openai.com)).

“The Canva app has been a huge help with our social media,” she says. “I can find plenty of free images without paying for the service. Also, using free ChatGPT to spice up my emails and social media has been helpful.”

#### SAVE THE TREES

In South Carolina a retailer decided to start asking customers whether

they wanted a receipt with their purchase, a super easy yet effective method to save some money. “I would say about 75 percent of customers don’t care about the receipts,” she reports.

#### ANNUAL EXPENSE REVIEW

“Every January we review all our monthly expenses,” writes a multi-store owner from Michigan. She looks at expenses for everything from toilet paper to snow plowing. “You will find things you’re paying for that you don’t need or use anymore,” she says.

Simply switching banks can be worthwhile from an expense savings standpoint. “We recently changed banks,” writes a retailer from Oregon. “Our new bank made it simple and effortless. We are saving time and so much money all while receiving better customer service. We wish we had done this a decade ago, so don’t be afraid of change.”

## FOURTH-QUARTER OUTLOOK

### Store Owners Optimistic, Staying the Course

**W**hen it comes to holiday purchasing plans, most (54 percent) independent gift store owners have decided to stay the course, spending the same as they did last year for the holidays.

A small fraction – 15 percent – will be more aggressive while 31 percent plan to be more conservative. As far as outlook goes, most (62 percent) are somewhat optimistic the holiday season will be successful.

“It’s a fine line to walk between being too aggressive and too conservative,” says a Wisconsin retailer. “We’re trying to bulk up our everyday gift lines and bestsellers. That way, if something doesn’t sell, we can carry it over into the next season without marking it down.”

“We try to find a happy balance between having the right amount of inventory without being over inventoried,” says a California store owner. “We always try to stay on top of reordering and never go too deep in a line.”

#### HOPEFUL FOR HOLIDAYS

Even though sales trends of late have not been overly positive, retailers are still hopeful the holiday season will be a merry one.

“I’ve seen a downward trend for almost a year in sales,” writes another store owner from Wisconsin. “Not good, but I’m hoping the holidays will be better.”

In South Dakota a store owner writes, “We had a slow summer. We’re hoping that fall picks up significantly (so far so good) and that November and December are busy.”

“I was ordering pretty optimistically, but after two down months, I’m over stocked and a little worried about fourth quarter,” says a Utah store owner who plans to invest in more advertising and direct mail.



#### WATCHING MARGINS

“I’m definitely concerned about the economy and how it will impact my business this holiday season,” says a store owner from Massachusetts. As I purchased for Q4, I was very price sensitive and looking at items to get higher margins while still having good quality products and good pricing for my customers.”

A retailer in Ohio also took advantage of sales to give her fourth-quarter margins a boost. “I thought I was being conservative but after looking at my storage unit, I was aggressive!” she writes about her purchasing strategy for the season.

#### ONWARDS & UPWARDS

Among those retailers adopting a more aggressive approach is a Montana retailer who writes, “We have room to add three to four new

concepts and will be looking hard at fall shows, on Faire and with our reps to find new looks.”

An Indiana store owner writes, “Business YTD is up 4.4 percent so I plan to continue to grow five to 10 percent.”

“Although we never know what to expect I think the fourth quarter always comes through,” says a Colorado store owner. “It’s best to remain optimistic, but of course also to stay on top of inventory and not to go overboard with purchasing.”

#### 4Q BUYING STRATEGIES

NO CHANGES	54%
MORE CONSERVATIVE	31%
MORE AGGRESSIVE	15%

#### 4Q OUTLOOK



**VERY OPTIMISTIC**  
**18%**



**SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC**  
**62%**



**SOMEWHAT PESSIMISTIC**  
**15%**



**VERY PESSIMISTIC**  
**5%**

## TO GIVE OR NOT?

### How to Handle Donation Requests

**W**hether it's funding for local sports teams or support for a community event, there is no shortage of worthwhile causes looking to businesses for support. Yet it's financially impossible for independent store owners to say 'yes' to every request. When it comes to donations, it's best to have a policy in place to help guide your decision making.

#### RULES OF THUMB

Some retailers stick to strictly donating products, preferring this route over monetary gifts while others, including a Florida store owner opt to give gift cards. "Gift cards will get them into your store," the owner writes.

To keep things focused, some business narrow their donations to specific causes. For instance, a Minnesota retailer says, "Our focus is on groups that support youth - sports, arts, school groups, etc., and our area churches."

Another way to handle donation requests is to limit the number you give per year or quarter. "We are now moving to a three-request-per-quarter system," writes a store owner from Wisconsin who's being "constantly asked" for donations. "It's just too much when we're so small."

"We were so bombarded at one time, we kept a log and only donated to a cause or group one time per year," shares a store owner from South Carolina who always donates products. "I try to use something that looks nice, but that I got in a close-out."

"We now have a form that customers have to fill out and drop off or email back to us," says a Massachusetts retailer. "We require 30 days notice on all donation requests. On the form, we collect the contact's name, email, organization



name, event date, donation request type, etc."

A New Hampshire retailer also has a form system. "On the form it says donations are first come, first serve for our current customers. I think the only one I've ever turned down outright was when someone came in this summer asking for a \$500 cash donation to help fund their 50th class reunion. Really?"

Quite a few store owners limit their donations to causes that are supported by their customers. "I'm happy to donate goods (never money) to groups and people who shop with me," says an Arkansas retailer. "But if I've never seen them or heard of their group before, I simply say, 'I can't at this time' and refuse to feel guilty!"

#### WORTHWHILE CAUSES

"We want to be involved in our community and we feel this is a great way to do it," says a Maryland retailer of her store's mandate to be as generous as they can when charities come knocking. "Our

community supports us everyday and we do our best to support them! For a few special organizations we donate a private party shopping night. These are always so much fun and a great way to make deeper connections."

"One of the best forms of advertising you can have as a store owner is to support local groups," says a Massachusetts retailer. "We always donate to local schools and churches that request something. We have a donation form that we require them to fill out to ensure it's a real cause. We ask if they're a customer and most check 'yes,' even though our system says otherwise. We give out gift cards to most who ask from a legitimate charity. A \$25 gift card only costs me about \$10 in merchandise. Often the person who wins is not an existing customer, but the gift card brings them into the store. We'll vary the amount based on potential exposure and how good the customer is that is asking. Generally speaking, everyone is happy to get something."


#### IDEAS!

Many retailers are proactive in their approach to community requests for donations, keeping their eye on products they can buy on close-out and then in turn donate.

"When a company has a clearance sale, try to stock up on nice items that have good value," suggests a retailer from Wisconsin. "That way you have a few items ready to give that haven't cost much out of pocket."

In Texas a store owner writes, "We save and repair items which have arrived damaged or defective and which have been credited by the vendor."

A South Carolina store owner who has trouble saying no to donation requests writes, "Recently I've been asking my reps if they have any old samples they don't need." She received a giant bag full of stuffed animals which she has been donating.

"Don't be afraid to ask your reps!" she encourages other store owners. 

# Teamwork Is a Key Ingredient for Michigan Kitchenware Shop

By Jessica Harlan

**T**he Front Porch started — as you might have guessed — on the front porch of the then-owner's home 46 years ago. By the time Amy Peterson purchased the business in 2005, the kitchenware and lifestyle store had moved to a prime location on the main street of downtown Suttons Bay in Michigan. Amy, who moved to this resort community from Chicago to raise her kids, has stayed true to the store's tagline: 'Helpful housewares, fine foods, great gifts.'

## What makes your store special?

Our number-one reason for being is to carry kitchen and housewares, and we have a variety of products and departments in the store.

We're in one of those communities where people have vacationed here for years, so it's multi-generational and we get to know the families and the events in their lives. They count on us to know what's going on in housewares and kitchen, but we also carry great gifts and create some of our own products.

## How would you describe the atmosphere of your store?

It's a fun store, and you can always find something new here. I like to say, "We have the things you need and a whole bunch of things you never knew you did!" We recently did some renovations, putting in a concrete floor, raising the ceilings and updating the lighting. We have a combination of old rustic character pieces for our fixtures as well as stainless tables and classic kitchen fixtures.

## To what do you attribute your success?

I have incredible employees. We



just celebrated two that have been working here for 25 years. We also work hard to stay fresh and to carry excellent quality merchandise.

## How do you promote your store?

We primarily use traditional ways. We still do print ads in the local newspaper because it's important to our community. We run ads in the local lifestyle magazine and we might occasionally get a spot on a radio station. We also promote through social media.





**What has been your most successful recent event?**

We participate in a lot of our village's events. The most unique one is the Yeti Festival that's held in February. This area gets a little sleepy in the winter and this event brings people in from all over. As part of the festival, there's a chili cook-off and we always have someone participating in that. We'll do an in-store discount and often there's a scavenger hunt that brings people into businesses to get the answer to a question or find something specific.

**Do you have a favorite new product line?**

We've carried Geometry dish towels only for a little while, but it's become a great line for us and has quickly moved into our list of top 10 vendors. It's beautiful and functional. People love it and they tell their friends about it.

**What is your most successful retail strategy?**

Something I'm just learning after all this time is that it's good for business if the staff is incentivized as a team. We don't track sales by associate, but we set growth goals and reward the team as they're achieved. When you're more intentionally looking at things as a team, they participate and have their own ideas and strategies, and you can build on that together. It really changes how you look at what you're doing during the day. For example, what does a 10 percent increase mean on an average sale?

**Looking back, what's the biggest lesson you've learned?**

To count on my people. When I was first running the store I had three little kids, so I really had to lean on my employees. A knowledgeable staff makes all the difference.



**PROFILE**

**STORE:** The Front Porch

**LOCATION:** Suttons Bay, MI

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 3000

**EMPLOYEES:** Four full-time, two to five part-time

**WEB:** frontporchsuttonsbay.com

**INSTAGRAM**

@frontporchsuttonsbay

**TOP LINES:** OXO, Now Designs, Creative Co-Op, Cherry Republic, Stonewall Kitchen, Michel Design Works, Geometry, Nora Fleming, Drinks on Me, Jellycat, Recycled Paper Greetings



# Hot Finds & New Releases



## Double-Duty Eco Goods

Looking for a product that does double duty while looking great? Check out the double-sided eco-friendly tea towels and other sustainable home goods from **Buzzee**. Our editors found this brand in Atlanta's temporaries in July, attracted to the booth by the assortment's on-trend patterns.

The women-owned company is based in Georgia where they're focused on creating products for the home market, many of which are crafted from recycled components including cling wraps and milk cartons.

Buzzee got its start in 2018 with an assortment of colorful beeswax wraps. Four years later they're making waves for their innovative double-sided towels while taking pride in knowing they've diverted over 130 single-use plastics from landfills.

This company packs a lot of great attributes into the products they offer, making them deserving of a thorough review, especially if your customers are in the market for eco-friendly goods or your store is looking for a new tea towel line in time for the fourth quarter.

The dual-sided towels from Buzzee wholesale for \$8. ([www.buzzeewraps.com](http://www.buzzeewraps.com))

## Personalized Candle Offerings

Candle sales show no signs of slowing down especially as the fourth quarter draws near so consider following the lead of other savvy store owners by adding a custom candle line to your shelves. There are dozens and dozens of companies offering personalised candle programs, all of which are designed to help retailers offer products unique to their stores.

The collection from **Clark & June** is one of these programs. Based in Nashville, it's here that the women-owned company's staff create all their soy wax candles with custom labels and scents that celebrate the unique stories of towns across America. The line is further made distinctive by the fact that the candles are hand poured in small patches into reusable cocktail glasses with a gold foil image of the state printed on the face. The candles come packaged in an elegant, matte black tube with a customizable label perfect for gift-giving. Additionally, every candle sold provides a meal for a child in need. Glass-jar candle, \$16 cost; tin candle, \$7.50 cost. ([www.clarkandjune.com](http://www.clarkandjune.com))



## Accessories for Adult Men

Sourcing quality jewelry products that inspire and share messages of hope for men can be like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack, so when we came across Hold Fast from **Kerusso**, we stopped to take a closer look. If you're looking for a line that speaks to the rugged outdoorsman, then Hold Fast is a good brand to check out. Besides jewelry, the collection includes t-shirts, gifts, tumblers and hats meaning retailers can create a significant selection of items from this line alone. Jewelry pieces include various bracelet and necklace styles retailing from \$24.99 each. ([www.kerusso.com](http://www.kerusso.com))

### PRODUCT REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

The products and companies featured in *ProductBeat* are selected by *Giftbeat's* editorial team. *Giftbeat* does not accept advertorials, paid product placements or advertising of any kind.

The products are vetted and researched by our editorial team and presented with the sole purpose of helping store owners discover legitimate new products, brands and companies which are dedicated to the independent channel.



## Adventure Outdoor Blanket

The ultimate companion for outdoor adventures, this weatherproof and lightweight blanket wrap from **LuvBug** is great for fishing, tailgating and just chilling by the campfire. The cozy blanket combines style, comfort and practicality, coming with a convenient drawstring carrying case so customers can easily store or take the blanket on the go. This blanket boasts a water-resistant fabric that repels moisture, turning water into beads which wick right off the surface, leaving the wearer dry and snug. With its lined sherpa backing, the lightweight insulating materials trap heat effectively while the clips on the side allow the wearer to be hands-free. Available in four patterns. \$29.99 cost. ([www.luvbugcompany.com](http://www.luvbugcompany.com))

## Functionality Meets Fashion

**Maya J Jewelry** has introduced sleek phone wristlets onto the market which are poised to become bestsellers alongside the company's beautiful bracelet hair ties beloved by Oprah and others. The chains are easy to attach to most phone cases, and importantly don't block the charging port. A great way for customers to ensure their phone doesn't drop while still looking stylish, the wristlets are available in 14k yellow and white gold-plated brass. Store owners can choose from a variety of link styles including paperclip, Cuban, pearl and U link. \$9 cost. ([www.mayajnyc.com](http://www.mayajnyc.com))



## Standing at Attention

The Standing Stocking from **2 Saints Inc.** purports to be the first ever Christmas stocking that firmly stands. Available in two sizes – 24 inches and 30 inches, the stockings are individually boxed in a re-shippable carton making them easy to store. They also easily collapse so they can be stored compactly. The stockings are eye catching and look great in any home but are ideal for spaces without fireplaces and for warm climates where most homes don't have the need for a fireplace. Choose from more than a dozen styles for adults, kids and animals. \$59.99 to \$79.99 retail. 401-490-5500.

## Weighted Wellness

**Nodpod** is an award-winning female owned company specialising in weighted wellness, offering customers innovative ways to stress less and sleep better. In recent years customers have discovered that when gentle pressure is applied to the body, such as in the form of a weighted blanket, it can have an incredibly calming effect. Nodpod's weighted blanket for the eyes, one of their newest items, offers all the benefits of a weighted blanket in a mask. The strap-free design equally distributes the power of deep-touch pressure across key pressure points to help calm overactive minds, soothe headaches and help customers sink into a deep restful sleep. On one side the mask is made of a soft, cooling jersey cotton while the other side features cozy microfleece. \$34 retail. ([www.nodpod.com](http://www.nodpod.com))



## Supplier *Spotlight*



## Talking Out of Turn

Talking Out of Turn is a stationery and gift brand based out of Dallas, born in 2018 from a desire to create fun items that brighten the shopper and recipient's day. Their mugs have saucy sayings, there are pens in every color of the rainbow and the items are just plain inviting. Cheeky phrases, unexpected color combos and fun patterns are hallmarks of the collection.

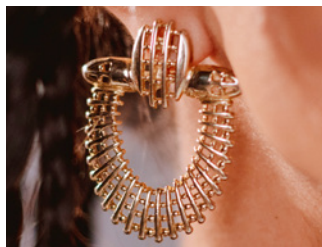
The current assortment includes products awash in trendy 1970s hues and patterns including daisies and geometric prints. If this is an aesthetic your customers dig, check out the wide assortment of items on offer from Talking Out of Turn. Pieces include packing cubes, reusable bags, puffy totes, wall hangings, makeup bags, key chains, tumblers, belt bags, sleep masks, self-care kits, planners, backpacks, mugs, glasses and much, much more. ([talkingoutofturn.com](http://talkingoutofturn.com))

# Whats HOT?

## Jewelry Sales are Strong

By Erica Kirkland

**W**e asked our panel of 300 reporting stores from coast to coast to give us the lowdown on what product categories are trending up and down and overwhelmingly respondents pointed to a hot jewelry market.



### THE EARS HAVE IT

“Statement earrings are huge for us,” says a Georgia store owner while a retailer in Wisconsin writes, “Earrings have been a strong seller.” In Oregon a shop owner reports, “Earrings and bracelets sell all day long - necklaces don’t.” Earrings are also where it’s at for a Minnesota retailer. “Statement earrings are a great seller,” she says.



### ALL EYES ON GOLD

“We’re doing very well with anything gold in the jewelry category,” reports a Massachusetts store owner. “We have been selling silver for many years, but now most people want gold. Enewton jewelry in particular has quickly become a top line in our store with the young girls seeing this jewelry line on TikTok.” A retailer in Ohio has also noticed the trend toward yellow metals, writing “Silver was always most popular. Now we’re seeing more gold being bought.”



### LONG IS GONE

“Longer necklaces are not in high demand, and anything chunky is definitely out,” says the store owner from Minnesota. Layering is a trend working in her store and her top-selling item is the Layer Me spinner program from Howard’s. “Simple chains and chains to layer are selling so fast! It’s has been a huge hit in a short amount of time.”



### THE LINE TO STOCK

As the aforementioned store owner from Massachusetts reported, Enewton ([www.ewtondesign.com](http://www.ewtondesign.com)) is currently selling like hotcakes. A retailer in Arkansas concurs writing, “Enewton is a phenomenon! Full speed ahead!” while a Tennessee shop owner says, “Enewton is hot, hot, hot. Before it was more teenagers that wanted multiple bracelets but now grown women are coming in and buying three to four bracelets because their friends are wearing them!”

#### ARTICLES OF NOTE:

- Sales Declines Continue
- BTS Shopping
- Cost-Cutting Ideas
- Innovative Jewelry Display
- Fourth-Quarter Outlook
- Handling Donation Requests

#### CATEGORIES TRACKED

- \$5 or Less Cost
- Eco-Friendly
- Fashion Accessories
- Greeting Cards
- Jewelry
- Personal Care
- Pet-themed
- Wall Decor
- Wine & Alcohol-Related

#### Top-selling vendors:

Email us for your top-selling vendor badge if you haven’t received one already.

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