

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Media Contacts:**

Lisa Horn  
214-674-8400  
lisa\_k\_horn@hotmail.com

Najla Furgason  
813-657-3530  
Najla@ACorporateGift.com

## **HOW TO THANK CUSTOMERS WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK**

*Customized gourmet food gifts are an affordable and memorable way to show appreciation during the holidays.*

BRANDON, FLORIDA (July 30, 2008) – While the dog days of summer are upon us, the holidays are just around the corner. And it's never too early to think about what business gifts you're going to give clients and prospects this year.

With all the talk of recession, you may think sending gifts this holiday season is a luxury you can't afford. But Najla Furgason, president of Creative Expressions of Tampa Bay, Inc. says there are many economical gift choices you can select to thank customers and recognize employees without breaking the bank. "And in a time when other firms are cutting back, you'll be remembered for doing something special," said Furgason.

Food gifts have broad appeal so they can easily be tied into marketing campaigns to further a company's branding message. And another appealing aspect of giving gourmet foods during the holidays is that they can be shared—stretching your dollars even further.

But this doesn't mean you should wait until after Thanksgiving to run down to the local big box retailer, where you'll find shelves full of cookies, chocolates and cakes that were made during the summer and then packed with preservatives so they last six months until eaten. "Sending a generic, stale tin of sweets sends the message that you felt obligated to give some kind of gift but didn't have the time or inclination to put much thought into it," states Furgason. "As a recipient, how would this make you feel?"

Break out of the retail rut and talk to your promotional products professional about what options are available. According to Furgason, "Sending gourmet food gifts that are not only fresh but also customized in some way with your corporate logo reinforces your branding message while showing appreciation for your customers. It's a win-win situation for you and your clients."

To select mouth-watering gourmet treats your customers will savor, Furgason offers the following five tips:

### **1. Take The Taste Test**

“Taste testing is essential. You wouldn’t recommend a restaurant without eating there first, so why would you send customers a food gift without trying it? Ask your promotional consultant for a sample of the products you are considering. In addition to taste, pay attention to other details. For example, are cookies soft, nuts not overly salty and brownies not too dry or too greasy?”

## **2. Make Your Mark**

“Successful holiday gift programs should delight recipients *and* get your company name in front of them. A popular way to make your mark is by customizing tins that contain cookies, nuts or popcorn. Some companies even offer ribbons that can be decorated with your logo, company name and/or message.

## **3. Determine Gift Levels**

“If you’re like most companies, your client mix ranges from occasional purchasers to big spenders. Tailor your holiday gifts to client size or annual expenditure to make the most of your budget. Also, smaller versions of standard gift items have been introduced in response to the economy. By using smaller tins of cookies, bags of nuts or boxes of candy, you can still thank customers during the holidays while keeping expenditures in check.

## **4. Get Personal**

“In addition to customizing the food gift with your logo, gifts can also be personalized by including a gift card with the presentations. Many companies offer a generic card and will hand sign your company name. If you have company holiday cards produced, they can be inserted for that personal message. Oftentimes, you can also send business cards to be included in the packaging.

## **5. Remember The Packaging**

“Packaging is the first thing gift recipients see, and you don’t have a second chance to make a first impression. Look for the upscale, boutique styles fashioned after the famous Godiva brand. Make sure the packaging sends the message you want and is a reflection of your company.”

Don’t wait until after Thanksgiving to think about your holiday gifts. Furgason recommends starting now. “Sample the items and work with your promotional consultant to make the right choice for your image and budget. You can always pre-order and set the delivery schedule for December,” she says.

And, she says to keep in mind that when purchasing custom gourmet food gifts, the product’s freshness can be guaranteed because the cookies aren’t baked, the chocolate isn’t poured and the popcorn isn’t popped until your order is scheduled to ship. “That’s right—most companies make your food and ship it the same day,” she says. “No retail establishment can say this.”

**About Creative Expressions of Tampa Bay:**

*Headquartered in Brandon, Florida, Creative Expressions of Tampa Bay specializes in high-end corporate gifts including recognition awards, leather goods, gourmet food items, and corporate and golf apparel. The company owns and operates four corporate gift websites and additional niche websites, the newest of which is [www.GourmetFoodGiftPeople.com](http://www.GourmetFoodGiftPeople.com), with more being added during the upcoming year.*

*Creative Expressions is a certified women's business enterprise through the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and is a member of the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI) and Promotional Products Association of Florida (PPAF). The company is a past recipient of the PPAF Distributor of the Year Award for its outstanding service and growth within the promotional products industry.*

**Interview and White Paper Information:**

To schedule an interview with Najla Furgason or to receive a review copy of the white paper "Don't Let Holiday Food Gifts Leave A Bad Taste In Your Mouth: Use these five tips to select mouth-watering gourmet treats your customers will savor," contact Lisa Horn at 214-674-8400 or [lisa\\_k\\_horn@hotmail.com](mailto:lisa_k_horn@hotmail.com).

###