

# 17 Tips to Ordering Incentive Travel Gifts



Corporate incentive travel is meant to be fun, memorable and a bit on the luxury side. As a corporate travel planner, you are likely always on the lookout for small, inexpensive ways to improve the experience of incentive travel winners, while still being able to easily stay within your predetermined budget.

1. **Offer gifts that are related to the destination.** Many gifts of this nature can be purchased affordably and can be as simple as a map of the local area or a guidebook listing attractions and information of interest to visitors, or they can be more extravagant, such as local artisan gifts.
2. **Consider gifts that are location-specific,** such as sun lotion and beach towels for beach destinations, that can be used during their trip.
3. **Consider items that are made in the destination;** not only to support local artisans, but because it helps keep shipping costs under control and clients are not paying duty or brokerage charges on imports.
4. **Order gifts well in advance.** Between shipping and customs, and longer production times, it is best to start planning gifts at least 45-60 days in advance when doing incentive travel programs. This ensures timely delivery, but also helps reduce any rush charges and allows for time for any necessary troubleshooting. In addition, people really can tell the difference between a well thought-out gift and one that was grabbed off the shelf at the last minute, so ensure there is time for creativity.
5. **Consider what gifts were given in previous year's trips.** As the same people may travel each year on a Sales Reward trip, it is important to be conscious of repeating gifts.
6. **What would you think if you received this product?** If you stare at it in disbelief it could be for one of two reasons. You're wondering: "what were they thinking" or you are absolutely thrilled with this product.
7. **Can another product be added as a necessary and useful compliment to the original incentive?** You gave away a tote bag so how about a travel wallet, sunscreen, and towels? Make sure the products work together instead of "isolated" products that don't see the light of day! A good indication is looking at the travel itinerary and figuring out what product may be useful during their trip. What do they need?
8. **Will the product be top of mind and appreciated?** You always want to be special to your client. Consideration goes a long way.
9. **Go for Quality:** Any business gift you send reflects on the image of your company. Avoid lower quality gifts that can impair your image. Purchase quality products without breaking your budget.
10. **Use Hand Written Cards:** It's far too easy in this Hallmark age to simply send a card with your gift and signature. For a more lasting impression, add a hand written note sharing your thoughts.
11. **Create a memorable presentation:** As important as choosing the right gift for your client is the packaging of the gift itself. Spend the time and money on the wrapping to reflect your value on client relationships. If you lack the talent for gift-wrapping or have no time, use gift-wrapping services.
12. **Deliver Personally:** If your business gift list isn't too large, consider having the CEO/President or someone high on the chain personally delivering the gift to the intended party. A personally delivered gift will keep you at the top-of-the-mind with your clients.
13. **Can this product be used instantly or will there be concerns about packing it in a suitcase?** This case is relevant to travel incentive guests that have to pack a gift like a heavy award. Elegant suggestion: spend the extra money and ship it to them if it is heavy or fragile. Most people like to travel light.
14. **If it a larger item, who is paying for shipping?** You might chuckle at this question but there have been situations where the recipient had a COD delivery charge! Do not under any circumstances go down this road.
15. **Check Corporate Policies:** Many companies and government offices will have a gift policy



limiting the dollar value of a gift or prohibiting certain gifts like alcohol. Be sure to check with your recipients to determine the limitations of gift giving so they don't have to return the item.

16. **Know IRS Deductions:** Business gifts in the U.S.A. are tax deductible up to \$25 per person for the tax year. This doesn't include incidentals such as packaging or mailing the gift. The type of business structure (i.e. partnership) you have can be subject to different rules. Be sure to review the IRS Publication 463.
17. **Does the program allow guests / couples?** Will the gift be given to the couple or just the award winner? If just the winner, it is important to consider how the winner may feel about their guest being 'excluded'.



## Worksheet for Brainstorming Ideas for your Incentive Travel Gifts

1. How many times/nights are you giving gifts during your program?
2. Will the gifts be given at registration or will you give them as room drops? Bell staff delivery charges may apply.
3. What is the budget per person per gift?
4. What are the Group Characteristics? Are they fun-loving and spontaneous? Well-traveled? Younger or older?
5. Who are the recipients? Employees, Vendors, or Prospects?
6. What type of meeting are you planning? Is it a reward incentive or meetings?
7. What gifts were given in previous years? As the same people may travel each year on a Sales Reward trip, it is important to be conscious of repeating gifts.
8. Does the program allow guests / couples? Will the gift be given to the couple or just the award winner? If just the winner, it is important to consider how the winner may feel about their guest being 'excluded'.
9. Are Logo'ing items important to you? If so, what look are you trying to accomplish: subtle or brash; elegant or fun?
10. What is the Spirit of the Gift, i.e. fun, local, unique, logo'd, useful, etc ?
11. Are you allowed to give alcohol? Are there any prohibited gift items?

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