



Valentine's Day Tips – Part 1

- ♥ Valentine's Day is a Thursday!

A Valentine's Day landing on a Thursday is a challenge for merchants. Thursday is just one day away from being the best day to land on, but that doesn't make Thursday a good day. The theory goes this way: a holiday on or shortly after the traditional pay day of Friday is the best for retailers and gift receivers. The farthest day away, not so much. It is going to be critical that you have signs throughout the store reminding customers when Valentine's Day is this year. Simple sign: *Valentine's Day is Thursday! Shop now!!* Here is the good news - it only gets better from here on. Valentine 2014 is on a FRIDAY, yippee. In 2015, it is on the best day of them all....Saturday. For this reason, keep in mind that the notes you prepare for 2013 will be important, but next year's Valentine's Day will require a different way of preparing.

Here are a few insights offered **by popular social media sites** Pinterest and Etsy:

- Expected to be on the rise this year for Valentine's are dinner out, dark chocolate, heart-shaped cookies, red, pink and white candles, jewelry featuring the color red, heart-shaped pins, red nail polish, his and her mugs with hearts, red and pink scarfs, heart-shaped necklaces, and small gift bags of premium candy and chocolate (we are not talking Hershey here). Owl motifs with hearts are getting a lot of exposure, but I'm not sure if it will be around next year. I'm thinking not.
 - For this year and especially for next year, look into carrying heart-shaped cookie cutters, boost your red jewelry offerings, purchase more heart-shaped jewelry, and bring in a counter display of pink and red nail polish. I'm not sure how much longer we should rely on scarfs - Front-End Overhaul will keep an eye out for you.
 - When buying new product for Valentine's Day, take a lesson from the Ghost of Christmas Past. Practicality and the economy will play a major part in gift-giving decisions. For example, flowers and big boxes of chocolates will take a hit, and clothing, dinner out and movie tickets will see a rise. Check your inventory for affordable luxuries, things like candles, bath and shower gels, premium photo frames, coffee mugs, jewelry and wearables.
- ♥ Each year the collectable category in the gift industry has witnessed rapidly declining sales and 2012 was no exception.

Here are a few stats to help understand what is being reported for this Valentine season:

- Men do most of the spending for Valentine's Day! 66% of men compared to 34% of women. Are you merchandising to catch the male eye?
- **TIP! Be prepared to offer gift wrapping. Men, (some) especially, are apt to buy more if they do not have to figure out how to wrap something. (Me being one of those somes.)**
- People between 45 and 54 years old spend the most money on Valentine's Day.
- Typically, 60% of purchases for Valentine's Day are on February 12, 13, and 14. This may change with the holiday landing on a Thursday. **TIP! Create a countdown calendar to instill a sense of urgency in people looking to buy for their valentines.**
- 17.2% of consumers purchase Valentine gifts for their pets. **Tip! Stores offering Valentine gifts for pets have to be rare. Why not be one!**

- ♥ Chocolate remains a Valentine's Day favorite
 - **Tip! Premium chocolate, truffles and dark chocolate are becoming more popular each year**
 - Inventory often and become a better buyer for next year
 - Offer to wrap expensive boxes of chocolates
 - Consider buying fewer heart-shaped boxes as they have to be discounted on the 15th
 - Replace heart-shaped boxes with regular box chocolates, wrapped in hearts motif or pink wrap
 - **Inform all employees what candy needs to be discounted after Valentine's Day and what needs to be unwrapped and not discounted**
 - Always place your high retail and specialty candy at eye level
 - 2 lbs or larger boxes of chocolate are not as nearly as popular as they were once were. Smaller gift boxes of premium chocolate are in
 - **Tip! DO NOT discount any candy or gifts before February 15! Do not train your customers to sit back and wait for your sale**
 - Be sure to feature a sugar-free candy for Valentine's Day
 - Keep a close eye on how your candy sells this year. Buy accordingly for next year, but remember, next year should be better for you

- ♥ This is the time where photo frames and digital photo processing tend to spike in sales. Consider offering a discount for digital photo printing with 50 or more prints in the month of February.

- ♥ **TIP!** *"If you like it, then you should a put a bow on it. Wha-oh-oh-oh-oh-oo-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh."* **If you want to make a gift item more of a Valentine gift then put a bow on it - pink or red will do just fine.**

Valentine's Day Tips – Part 2 – Coming Soon