

Tips on Selling Boxed Holiday Cards

Traditionally, you will see boxed cards start to sell earlier in the season than single cards as people who purchase a boxed card assortment tend to plan ahead. Conversely, boxed cards will slow in sales later in the season; single cards will sell right up until closing time the night before the actual holiday.

Buy Carefully

Boxed holiday cards are typically wholesaled as assortments and many times sold and shipped in a floor display. This can lead to buying too few; one display is not quite enough, and two is too many. More than likely, stores end up overbuying and staring at a nearly full display of boxed cards five days before Christmas. If your store falls in that category, inspect your inventory before you make any discounting decisions. If the boxed cards are about to celebrate their second holiday in your store (meaning they were brought up from storage from last year), then yes, it's time to bite the bullet and give them the heave ho. You should entice your customers to have them store the cards for next year instead of you. Offer a special sale: buy one box of cards and get the second box free. This gets rid of two boxes instead of one. If that isn't working fast enough, then discount the cards at 50 percent off three days before Christmas and for one week after (only for the cards two years old or older).



Assess Why Leftover Cards Did Not Sell

Check your single card inventory: is it time to open up a few boxes of cards and start selling them as single cards? Before you do any discounting, examine the two-year-old cards. What's not selling? Inventory the cards by category: religious themed, Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday, whimsical, Santa, snowman, reindeer, Christmas tree, gold foil, or embellished. Take a look at the retail; what seems to be discouraging sales? Are you looking at slew of cards priced at \$19.99? Numbers don't lie; cut back or eliminate where needed.

Tips for Single Card Sales:

- Keep some red envelopes at the register, just in case someone can't find a matching envelope (do this for Valentine's Day as well). Believe it or not, some people do not put the card back exactly where they found it!
- Display a store gift certificate along with a free money holder. It's the equivalent of free gift wrapping for the gift certificate.
- Are customers asking for \$1 holiday cards? Crack open some of the well-seasoned boxed cards.
- For a final push, offer a free USPS Forever stamp with all single cards \$3 and over for a LIMITED time.
- Offer a Buy One Get One deal: Purchase a gift certificate for \$50 and receive a \$5 certificate for vitamins and a free money holder.
- Did you know you can now purchase, at wholesale prices, African American Expressions greeting cards and calendars at frontendmarketplace.com? Check out their beautiful designs.

-- Gabe Trahan, NCPA Senior Director of Store Operations and Marketing
NCPA's Front-End Overhaul