

## Generations

# Most-returned Christmas presents

An article by Kendall McCormick on [www.bestlifeonline.com](http://www.bestlifeonline.com) caught my eye to see if perhaps one (or more) of the past gifts that I sent to family and friends may have made her compiled list of most returned items.

Clothes was No. 1 on the list because, according to a poll conducted by MarketTools, a market research company, clothing and shoes make up a whopping 62 percent of holiday gift returns because there is plenty of information you need before making the purchase to get it right, such as color, size and style preference.

As an example, a couple of days ago, I took Claire, my granddaughter who turned 9 in October, to the Belk store for her holiday dress. We found two awesome dresses, but we didn't have enough time to look for shoes. So, I turned to my trusty friend Amazon and sent her mother, Jamie, a link to all sorts of girls' dress flats in winter white. Jamie sent me back something I was unprepared for: a pair of black, small-heeled shoes, with rhinestones covering both sides of the shoe. OK, I concede, perhaps Grandma is a little behind the times.

The shoes should be here in a day or so. I have a feeling she will have no trouble walking in them. Things move fast these days.

The next was men's dress shirts, which wasn't on my shopping list (I can handle flannel shirts just fine for my husband of almost 20 years). However, according to figures from GiftNow, the e-commerce platform, the single-most-exchanged gift for men in 2016 was dress shirts due to purchasing the wrong size (neck, sleeve length). I haven't got a clue as to what size neck or sleeve my husband is.

Why anyone would gift someone with makeup,

other than a gift certificate to Sephora, is beyond me. According to StyleCaster, people do it, and Sephora's most-returned products are foundations and primers (makeup, not paint).

Kitchen appliances are gifted all too often, leading them to be one of the most-returned holiday gifts, according to the MarketTools poll. However, I have to take issue with this one because my daughter-in-law, Jamie, was dying for a KitchenAid mixer a year or two ago and she was excited to unwrap her dream kitchen helper (second only to David, my son).

And last year, my husband received his own black Keurig coffee maker, which is on his side of the counter across from my red Keurig. Two Keurigs helps make for a happy marriage.

*Newsweek* reported that when shopping for any cocktail-loving people in your life, forget about a new set of martini glasses and go straight for a bottle of alcohol or wine. No doubt they'll find their own glassware to share it with you, even if in a paper cup.

According to the MarketTools report, 22 percent of men's gifts are exchanged, while only 19 percent of women's gifts are exchanged, and tools comes out way ahead for men. When it comes to a new drill set or multi-purpose screwdriver, this is another case where, unless explicitly requested, it's best to steer clear.

If you're still purchasing DVDs and giving them out as holiday gifts, your presents are outdated and will probably be returned. With Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video and all of the streaming services out there, people don't

watch DVDs anymore.

I guess I'm over the hill because I still have VCR tapes plus a collection of DVDs that I treasure. The article suggests sending an Amazon gift card or something to stream movies on instead, but I think you have to have a smart TV. My TV is in the same time warp as me, which includes swearing at the remote after a power outage.

According to the MarketTools report, candy, chocolate and gum — and pretty much any other edible gift — have ranked among the most-returned presents in previous years. Whether this has something to do with people trying to resist temptation in the name of good health, or the fact that people already consume plenty of sweets during the holiday season, it's probably best to stay far away from the candy aisle while doing your holiday shopping.

Perfume? Unless you know that the person has worn the same fragrance for 20-plus years, it might be wise to steer clear of the perfume aisle. I'm just about ready to open my Christmas gift of two years ago, White Diamonds, so yes, I'm one of those creatures of habit when it comes to perfume.

Candles also were on the list, but those three-wick candles are just too hard to resist, and I love them. Plus, the scents these days put you in a field of fir trees — hard to resist when you only have a ceramic Christmas tree on your counter.

There's one gift that can't be returned, and that is love, so give your gifts with love and they'll be precious to those most important to you. Love never makes the returned-gift list.



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