

> giftables



A The Gratitude Box is a collection of 24 coordinated, prompted letters and matching envelopes, packaged in a keepsake box. Featuring eight designs by the company's emerging artists. Shown here, Girlfriend art is by Tiffany Stout; Honey Bee Collection is by Debbie-Taylor-Kerman. Made in the U.S.A. \$20. Gratitude. 800.GRATFUL. gratitudealways.com
CIRCLE #732



B Soy blend candles are infused with artisan scents derived from essential oils. 7 oz. 15 hours burn time. Available in 24 designs in four artisan scents. This version features the artwork of Debbie Taylor-Kerman. Made in the U.S.A. \$13. Gratitude.
CIRCLE #731

License to Sell

Licensed artists can bring in good business. The trick is knowing how to sell them.

BY BESSIE NESTORAS KNOBLAUCH

“Customers feel attached to what they buy,” said Laura Pagley, senior product manager, C.R. Gibson. This is one reason products that feature licensed artwork continue to be popular in the market. These artists, more often than not, already have a following on social media, so consumers are already looking for products designed by their favorite online star.

“Emerging artists become rock stars on social media,” Pagley pointed out. “They may sell on Etsy, and they get a following. We tap into that and go in with a marketing plan,” added Penny Black, director of sales—specialty, C.R. Gibson. Consumers also like to feel like they’re in the know, so when they buy something from a popular online artist, it gives them validation.

“Consumers connect with a brand that speaks to them. When an artist is truly ‘inspired,’ the inspiration carries all the way through when product is executed well.”

—Molly Kinney, president, Enesco Gift/Dept. 56

“We as consumers like to know that we’re cool,” explained Pagley. “Consumers connect with a brand that speaks to them. When an artist is truly ‘inspired,’ the inspiration carries all the way through when product is executed well,” agreed Molly Kinney, president, Enesco Gift/Department 56.

Carrying a licensed artist’s work in store can give a shop validation. When a consumer sees that a retailer is carrying an artist’s work they admire, it can confirm that the store is the place to shop because they, too, are in the know.

Gift vendors are certainly doing



C Disney by Britto Minnie Mouse figurine. 6¼”x4½”x4”. \$54.99. Enesco. 800.436.3726. enescobusiness.com
CIRCLE #735



D Mug designed by artist Suzy Toronto reads: “Three Wise Women...now that makes sense!” \$12.99. Enesco.
CIRCLE #736

their part to help put artists on to store shelves. Licensing is vital to Gratitude’s business plan, said Art Mandelbaum, CEO. “Part of our mission is to work with artists who want their artwork to get to retail,” he explained. While many of these artists may already have a following, they often do not know or have the means to go beyond the Internet. “Our purpose is to mentor the artists on how they can finish their licensing arrangement with us and move on to being a brand of their own. So, without artists licensing their work to us, our business purpose would not be able to be accomplished,” he related.

It’s All About Sell-Through

What’s important to note when bringing in a licensed artist—or any new line for that matter—is whether or not it will sell. “With a retailer it’s all about

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sell-through,” stressed C.R. Gibson’s Black. “If I bring Lolita in, it’s my bread and butter. But a retailer won’t buy deep with a new artist. They’ll take the risk though,” she pointed out. For a line to be successful in store, especially a new line, retailers need to know where it’s going to live, Black advised. “Most successful retailers know before they buy it if this is a stand-alone category or if it will be on their spring table,” she offered. “Sometimes they’ll take the collection and break it up. If you’re deciding, you need to know how it’s going to live in your store. You have to have a plan for it,” she said.

Once that is determined, how a licensed artist’s product is going to be displayed is the next important step in promoting the collection. “We like our

product displayed in a presentation that has all of the Gratitude products in an area, to make an impact. Within that area, we suggest that each artist’s work they choose to place in their stores be put in small groups within the larger Gratitude display,” explained Mandelbaum. Gratitude, he said, offers point of sale signage that describes the brand story, as well as individual signs that tell the story of each artist, complete with poster art featuring the different artists and the brand. The company also offers two tabletop display fixtures.

“From our reps to our marketing staff to the brand managers, everyone contributes to display solutions for our retailers,” Enesco Gift/Department 56’s Kinney said. “It’s so important to retail today.” When bringing in a line,