

# GREETINGS etc.

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The Business of Greeting Cards, Stationery Products and Party Goods



## The OUTLOOK for 2007



- PLUS:**
- Sympathy Cards
  - Engraved Stationery
  - Fashion-Themed Items



The Official Publication of the Greeting Card Association

# The OUTLOOK



"Gift Card Pop-Up" (\$2.99) is a greeting card plus gift-card holder from Vida Valencia (866/482-2327)

The members of Greetings etc.'s 2007-2008 new year's 25 most important trends in product,

## 1. GIFT-CARD ADD-ONS

Gift-card sales totaled an estimated \$24.81 billion this past holiday season – up from \$18.48 billion in 2005, according to the National Retail Federation. The huge increase in popularity of gift cards has spurred a rise in creative cards and envelopes in which to present them, such as the pop-up gift-card holders from Vida Valencia.

## 2. PLANET SAVERS

Al Gore's documentary film, "An Inconvenient Truth," has helped to spur greater concern for our environment – and a renewed interest in eco-friendly items, such as recycled-paper stationery and recycled-plastic partyware. "Anything organic and green" is popular, according to retailer Linda Heidinger, owner of Alphabets in New York City.

## 3. POLITICAL HUMOR

With the approaching presidential election next year, expect an increase in

humorous, politically oriented items, including greeting cards, calendars and novelties. "Edgy political humor is selling very well, and we expect that to continue for the next several years," confirms Cynthia Shevel, owner of the Ann Arbor, MI-based shop Middle Earth.

## 4. TROOP SUPPORT

With many Americans currently serving in the military, more products are addressing that fact. Pioneer Albums, for example, has introduced "Military Medallions": two-inch, metal medallion embellishments with a self-adhesive backing for use in scrapbooks, photo albums, cards, journals and more.

## 5. TEEN THINGS

If you've stepped foot in a shopping mall recently, you've seen the numerous stores that are successfully targeting tweens and teens: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Eagle, Aeropostale, etc. This demographic continues to drive retail sales, which is why products reflecting youth culture will be prevalent in '07.

## 6. LICENSED DRIVERS

Continuing to drive sales are licensed properties – particularly on children's products. "We are predicting that licensed party goods will continue to be VERY strong in the marketplace in 2007," comments Carole Masters, president of Majic Touch. Among top partyware licenses she mentions are Cars, Spider-Man, Batman, Disney Princesses, Power Rangers, Barbie and Winnie-the-Pooh. On the stationery end, "licenses of big names – such as Vera Wang, Kate Spade and Vera Bradley – are more important than ever to differentiate a product," asserts Kim Duncan, principal of Erik Hahn & Associates.

## 7. GOING HOME

"The trend in paper is moving more and more in the direction of home accessories," asserts Debbie White, owner of It's Our Niche, LLC/D.W. Specialties. "From handmade cards, to wrapping paper and ribbon, to tableware and napkin patterns – everything is about home décor. You see it in the products, and you see it now in much of the merchandising and displays in the stores."

## 8. BIRDS TAKE FLIGHT

Bird motifs are landing on numerous stationery-related items. "The most significant trend by far is all things birds and nests," remarks Mindy Carpenter,

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creative director at Cavallini & Co. "I think it's due to their approachable imagery and the obvious connection between an actual nest and our instinctive need to nest," she says.

## 9. BOLD STATEMENTS

Message-driven merchandise is still making its mark at retail. Heidinger at Alphabets is noticing more "neo-hippie messages about peace and about violence oppression (guns, handcuffs)." Adds Jen Bilik, owner/founder/creative director of Knock Knock: "Repeating words is replacing the trend of using giant words, especially on cards."

## 10. BLACK AND WHITE

Following the fashion industry's lead, black-and-white patterns are proving

popular on a variety of stationery and party products. Notes Shevel of Middle Earth: "Customers are responding to black-and-white designs in both gift bags and wrapping paper." This trend also ties in with a direction toward more sophisticated looks for bags and wrap, which Shevel also mentions.

## 11. BRIGHT HUES

Bright colors are attracting customers' attention. Joy Watanabe, co-owner of Nobbies Party Superstore, believes a primary driver behind the growth of her store's paper-tableware sales is the "introduction of fresh, bright colors such as hot pink, as well as citrus colors including key lime and tangerine orange. The higher-end napkins are similarly reflecting brighter, contrasting colors and patterns." Lynn Mitchell, owner of Lynn Mitchell Group,



From Anne Taintor, Inc. (505/638-5919) comes this greeted, double-sided air freshener (\$4), available in various sentiments and scents.

believes that shades of purple are also becoming more popular on stationery products, mentioning "anything from a royal purple to lighter hues of violet, lavender and orchid."

## 12. DISCO REDUX

Parties in 2007 might more resemble those from 30 years ago. Shares Don Sandlin, owner of Let's Party: "An era probably best forgotten, but here come the '70s and '80s: polyester leisure suits, platform shoes and disco balls. The 'Saturday Night Fever' party is coming back."

## 13. RETRO PATTERNS

Another blast from the past are patterns from the mod and disco eras. "I've seen a lot of retro designs from the '60s and '70s featuring paisleys and plaids with new color combinations that really didn't exist in that era," says Mitchell of Lynn Mitchell Group, adding, "I remember when you didn't mix colors that didn't match, or plaids and stripes for that matter. I think today's fashions and trends push the envelope on such previously unlikely combinations."



Retro patterns such as plaids, paisleys and houndstooth are featured on giftwrap (\$4.25-\$5.95) from Design Design, Inc. (800/334-3348).