

# giftBEAT™

Tracking the Pulse of the Gift Industry

## marketBEAT

The Industry's Top-Selling Lines



Placing at number five on the pillows and throws chart, retailers ranked **Little Birdie** for its destination-themed pillows which can be name-dropped with any location. The pillows are handmade in the United States by a predominantly female work force. \$33.99 to \$37.99 retail. ([www.littlebirdiehome.com](http://www.littlebirdiehome.com))

### PILLOWS & THROWS

Last ran in March 2022

- =====
- #1 **VERA BRADLEY**: various
  - #2 **CREATIVE CO-OP**: various
  - #3 **MUD PIE**: seasonal, various
  - #4 **DEMDACO**: various
  - #5 **LITTLE BIRDIE**: destination, name-drop
  - #6 **PEKING HANDICRAFTS**: various
  - #7 **CARSTENS**: sherpa
  - #8 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY**: various\*
  - #9 **DUKE IMPORTS**: hooded throws, various\*
  - #10 **CATSTUDIO**: state pillows\*

HONORABLE MENTION: Opportunities

#### \*OF NOTE!

**DUKE IMPORTS** ([www.dukeimports.com](http://www.dukeimports.com)) and **CATSTUDIO** ([www.catstudio.com](http://www.catstudio.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran, while **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY** ([www.primitivesbykathy.com](http://www.primitivesbykathy.com)) moved from an honorable mention onto the chart.

### PURSES & BAGS

Last ran in November 2022

- =====
- #1 **JEN & CO.**: various
  - #2 **HOB0**: various
  - #3 **VERA BRADLEY**: crossbody, various
  - #4 **MYRA BAG**: various
  - #5 **CHALA**: crossbody, various
  - #6 **JOY SUSAN**: hobo, various
  - #7 **DM**: Kedzie
  - #8 **BAGGALLINI**: various
  - #9 **HAUTE SHORE**: crossbody\*
  - #10 **BOGG BAG**: Bogg Bags
- HONORABLE MENTIONS: Brighton, Accessorize Me, Consuela

#### \*OF NOTE!

**HAUTE SHORE** ([www.hauteshore.com](http://www.hauteshore.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

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The spring collection from purses and bags chart-topper **Joy Susan** is selling very well for reporting stores across the country. Styles include a new canvas collection available in solids and stripes. \$65 retail for piece shown. ([www.joysusan.com](http://www.joysusan.com))

### TEA TOWELS

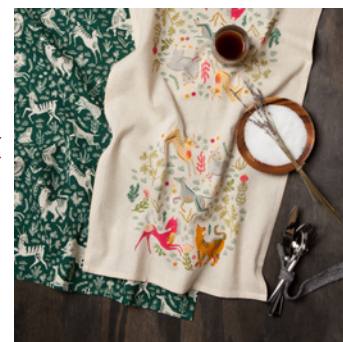
Last ran in September 2022

- =====
- #1 **PRIMITIVES BY KATHY**: humor, pets, alcohol-related
  - #2 **KAY DEE DESIGNS**: lodge, seasonal, various
  - #3 **MUD PIE**: seasonal, various
  - #4 **C&F HOME**: seasonal, various
  - #5 **WILD HARE**: humor, various
  - #6 **DANICA**: everyday, various\*
  - #7 **MARIASCH STUDIOS**: name-drop
  - #8 **BLUE Q**: humor\*
  - #9 **ELLEMREE**: humor, various
  - #10 **MARY LAKE THOMPSON**: various

HONORABLE MENTIONS: Design Imports, Tina Labadini, Wildwood Landing

#### \*OF NOTE!

Since this chart last ran, **DANICA** ([www.danicabrands.com](http://www.danicabrands.com)) and **BLUE Q** ([www.blueq.com](http://www.blueq.com)) moved from honorable mentions onto the chart.



**Danica** made an impressive leap on the tea towel chart, climbing from an honorable mention to the sixth spot. Pictured here are tea towel sets from their Danica Studios brand. ([www.danicabrands.com](http://www.danicabrands.com))

**NOTE:** Rankings are based on **January 2023** sales from Giftbeat's reporting stores.



New biodegradable dishcloths from **Demdaco** are selling well for reporting stores, earning the company an honorable mention on the eco-friendly chart. ([www.demdaco.com](http://www.demdaco.com))

*"I sell the mini posts from Brighton very well because of the price point."*  
— Indiana retailer



**Caren's** Tootsies foot care line continues to sell very well for many reporting stores earning the company a new spot on the personal care chart. ([www.carenproducts.com](http://www.carenproducts.com))

### ECO-FRIENDLY *Last ran in October 2022*

- #1 **THE NAKED BEE:** lip balm, hand cream, body lotion
- #2 **PURA VIDA:** bracelets
- #3 **BRUMATE:** insulated drinkware
- #4 **CORKCICLE:** insulated drinkware
- #5 **SWAN CREEK:** candles
- #6 **WET-IT!:** dishcloths
- #7 **MYRA BAGS:** purses and bags
- #8 **E-CLOTH:** cleaning products
- #9 **TYLER CANDLE:** candles
- #10 **SWIG:** insulated drinkware

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Demdaco, Tervis, Vera Bradley

#### \*OF NOTE!

The same vendors are listed in the top 10 this month as when the chart last ran in October 2022.

### EARRINGS *Last ran in September 2022*

- #1 **SILVER FOREST:** various
- #2 **BRIGHTON:** hoops, posts, various
- #3 **RAIN:** various
- #4 **GOLDEN STELLA:** beaded, hoops, acrylic, various
- #5 **PERIWINKLE BY BARLOW:** various
- #6 **CENTER COURT:** Layers, various
- #7 **JUDSON & COMPANY:** beaded, various
- #8 **ENEWTON:** hoops, various
- #9 **KENDRA SCOTT:** studs, various\*
- #10 **PANDORA:** sterling silver, various\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Uno de 50, Howard's

#### \*OF NOTE!

**KENDRA SCOTT** ([www.kendrascott.com](http://www.kendrascott.com)) and **PANDORA** ([www.pandora.net](http://www.pandora.net)) moved from honorable mentions onto the chart.

### PERSONAL CARE *Last ran in June 2022*

- #1 **THE NAKED BEE:** hand and body lotions, various
- #2 **MICHEL DESIGN WORKS:** foaming soaps, various
- #3 **INIS:** cologne, body lotion, various
- #4 **DM:** Lemon Lavender, Hello Mello, various
- #5 **GREENWICH BAY:** soaps, lotions
- #6 **SPONGELLE:** soap sponges, various
- #7 **CAMILLE BECKMAN:** Hand Therapy, various
- #8 **BEEKMAN:** hand cream, soap, various
- #9 **THYMES:** lotion, various
- #10 **CAREN:** soap sponges, foot care, various\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** European Soaps

#### \*OF NOTE!

**CAREN** ([www.carenproducts.com](http://www.carenproducts.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

### TEENS & TWEENS *Last ran in June 2022*

- #1 **PURA VIDA:** bracelets
- #2 **DM:** Kedzie, various
- #3 **TELETIES:** hair ties
- #4 **MULBERRY STUDIOS:** Lumiela
- #5 **VERA BRADLEY:** backpacks, various
- #6 **KELLY TOY:** Squishmallows
- #7 **CENTER COURT:** Layers, various
- #8 **NATURAL LIFE:** various
- #9 **TY:** plush
- #10 **ENEWTON:** Hope Unwritten bracelets\*

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Kendra Scott, Scout

#### \*OF NOTE!

**ENEWTON** ([www.ewtondesign.com](http://www.ewtondesign.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

### HOME FRAGRANCE *Last ran in July 2022*

- #1 **SWAN CREEK:** wax melts, jar candles, various
- #2 **MICHEL DESIGN WORKS:** foaming soap, room spray
- #3 **INIS:** diffusers, candles, various
- #4 **AROMATIQUE:** potpourri, various
- #5 **THYMES:** Frasier Fir, various\*
- #6 **GREENLEAF:** room sprays, sachets, various
- #7 **CAPRI BLUE:** Volcano, various
- #8 **WOODWICK:** large jars, various
- #9 **TYLER CANDLE:** Diva, various
- #10 **MAISON BERGER:** fuels, various

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Bridgewater, Yankee

#### \*OF NOTE!

**THYMES** ([www.thymes.com](http://www.thymes.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran.

### SOCKS *Last ran in December 2022*

- #1 **WORLD'S SOFTEST SOCKS:** various
- #2 **BLUE Q:** humor
- #3 **SNOOZIES:** slipper socks
- #4 **DM:** aloe, various
- #5 **OPPORTUNITIES:** sherpa
- #6 **SOCKSMITH:** men's\*
- #7 **E&S:** pet, animal-themed
- #8 **SOLMATE SOCKS:** various
- #9 **BAREFOOT DREAMS:** various\*
- #10 **HOT SOX:** various

**HONORABLE MENTIONS:** Simply Southern, Fabdaz, Foozy

#### \*OF NOTE!

**BAREFOOT DREAMS** ([www.barefootdreams.com](http://www.barefootdreams.com)) did not rank when this chart last ran, while **SOCKSMITH** ([www.socksmith.com](http://www.socksmith.com)) moved from an honorable mention onto the chart.

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**ABOUT**

Giftbeat is owned and operated by Instore Magazine Inc. The newsletter was founded in 1992 and has been dedicated to reporting unbiased, factual market trends and business advice from the best and brightest independent store owners for 30 years. Giftbeat tracks the top 10 vendors in 50+ product categories, garnering this vital information from a stable of 300 reporting stores across the country. In addition, Giftbeat makes no warranty or guarantee, express or implied, regarding potential sales of any products referred to in the publication.

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# Extra, Extra!

This edition of *Giftbeat* is our first expanded edition, offering you an additional five pages of content. Our new digital format means we don't need to cut or trim copy to fit onto a page. We can add another page easily.

If it's product you're after, our expanded ProductBeat section includes four pages with over a dozen fresh and fun finds to stock.

In the advice department we expanded RetailBeat by two pages so we could


include even more insights from our reporting stores.

Being digital also shaves off the time we would have waited for the issue to be printed and mailed. That means *Giftbeat* is arriving on your desk two weeks earlier than normal, filled with more insights and market intelligence than ever before all while remaining the only industry publication that is ad-free and unbiased, meaning you can enjoy untainted insights into the products that are selling in today's current



**ERICA KIRKLAND**  
PUBLISHER & EDITOR

retail climate.

We hope you enjoy our first expanded edition! 

## chartMOVERS

A deep dive into the companies trending up and down in this issue's charts

### EARRINGS

There's a lot of buzz among store owners about how well earrings from **Enewton** ([www.enewtondesign.com](http://www.enewtondesign.com)) are selling. Also of note is that **Golden Stella** ([www.goldenstella.com](http://www.goldenstella.com)) climbed to fourth place from ninth. Reporting stores say bold styles are resonating with consumers right now. "Big earrings in fun, bright colors," from Golden Stella are selling well for an Ohio retailer. While they didn't make the chart, **Judson & Co.** ([www.judson.biz](http://www.judson.biz)) was noted by many retailers as a top-selling line. According to an Illinois store owner, "The larger trendy styles – beads, metallic, etc.," are selling well from the company. Overall, hoops and mini posts are the top sellers across supply lines.

### ECO-FRIENDLY

**The Naked Bee** ([www.nakedbee.com](http://www.nakedbee.com)) shot up to the number one spot from fifth place in the fall. Also climbing after a bit of a sales slump is **Pura Vida** ([www.puravidabracclets.com](http://www.puravidabracclets.com)) which is number two. While it didn't make the chart, a number of store owners commented that the biodegradable dishcloths from **Demdaco** ([www.demdaco.com](http://www.demdaco.com)) are selling well in this category.

### PURSES & BAGS

New to the list is **Haute Shore** ([www.hauteshore.com](http://www.hauteshore.com)). The company sells a variety of bags including styles featuring removable guitar straps. **Joy Susan** ([www.joysusan.com](http://www.joysusan.com)), number six on the list, has hit it out of the park with its spring collection. "We received a restock the first week in January and they flew out the door," says a Tennessee store owner while a retailer from New Hampshire says, "The new spring colors arrived and began selling immediately."

### SOCKS

New to the chart is **Barefoot Dreams** ([www.barefootdreams.com](http://www.barefootdreams.com)), a company which has been popping up all over our charts in the past 12 months. The line is pricey, so not for all stores, but a sell-through success at the boutiques carrying this upmarket line. If you're looking for a high sell-through sock, try **Living Royal** ([www.livingroyal.com](http://www.livingroyal.com)). An Ohio store owner says, "We continue to blow out of their no-show socks." If a custom sock is more up your alley, check out the assortment from **Gumball Poodle** ([www.gumballpoodle.com](http://www.gumballpoodle.com)). A South Carolina retailer had the company create a custom sock for their small town.



MARKETING MATTERS

Where Retailers Will Be Spending Marketing Dollars in 2023

The current top marketing method among independent gift retailers is social media with 44 percent of owners reporting they intend to direct most of their marketing dollars into this medium in 2023. Social media was followed by print advertising (12 percent), direct mail (11 percent) and online advertising (nine percent). Very few independent retailers are investing in radio (three percent) or television (under two percent).

Beyond these measures, retailers from coast to coast employ a variety of other mediums to promote their businesses. Coupons and bag stuffers remain popular, and depending on your business type, more unique means may be needed. As a business owner from Ohio writes, “We’re located along the interstate, so billboards are our most effective marketing tool.”

Another retailer from Ohio is putting a more personal touch into her marketing this year. “We’re going to send handwritten thank you notes every day! My team will



write to people who came in for the first time, those that purchased a lot and those we haven’t seen for a while.”

There are also retailers who

still rely solely on word of mouth including a retailer from Wisconsin who writes, “About 15 years ago we decided to stop most of our external advertising and focus on

updating our building exterior, upgrading our floors and displays, offering nicer bags and bringing in a higher level of product - and it worked!”

SALESBEAT January Sales Soar By Erica Kirkland

Year-over-year sales in January were up for 68 percent of independent gift retailers. Many store owners reported that either good weather or a clearance sale helped to increase traffic and boost sales while others noted that consumer confidence is on the upswing, resulting in brisker sales.

An Illinois store owner held her first-ever January clearance sale, putting everything at 30 percent off. It worked super well and she now plans to hold the sale every January. “We cleared out some old inventory,

increased our traffic and sales were up considerably!” she says.

Warm temps in cold-weather destinations led to sales for store owners in these areas. As a retailer from New Hampshire says, “No snow equals no skiing for visitors which means they go shopping.”

A store owner in New York noted that January offered very favorable weather. “We weren’t closed for snow days” and “People seemed to be open to spending money.”

In Tennessee a boutique owner said that mild weather definitely helped her increase her sales year

over year. She also notes, “We kept Christmas out and on sale the entire month. Don’t pack it up! Keep it out - customers still buy it in January!”

“We even closed to do a small renovation for five days and still made more in sales than last year,” reported a store owner from Arizona who says, “Shoppers were still shopping after Christmas!”

“Customers were spending a little more than they did last year,” says a Colorado retailer who noted that his traffic wasn’t up but customer spending was.

JANUARY 2023 SALES (vs. January 2022)

10%+	39%
5-9%	15%
1-4%	14%
	4%
1-4%	12%
5-9%	3%
10%+	13%

## PROFIT MARGINS

Retailers React to Price Increases

Just 26 percent of store owners are very confident they will be able to maintain profit margins in the coming year in the face of inflation. The majority of store owners (58 percent) are somewhat confident while the remaining 16 percent aren't confident at all. The vast majority of independent gift retailers – 93 percent – have increased their prices of late to offset the increased costs of goods.

### EXPERIENCES

"It's definitely challenging to maintain high profit margins with the costs of products rising," says a Wisconsin store owner. "Some items which we had a high margin on, we've had to take a smaller margin to avoid raising the cost for the customer."

In Ohio a store owner writes, "We have to look at each item very

closely. Where we can take more of a markup we do and where we can't, we hope it will average out."

### COUNTERACTIONS

"We have been reviewing every line in the store for increased markup possibilities for the past year," says a store owner from New York who now reports selling several lines at above MSRP.

In California a buyer with multiple locations says, "We do a 2.5 to 2.8 percent markup on most items. With fashion, we can get three to four times markup."

"I'm adding at least \$1 to \$2 on smaller items and going 2.5 to three times markup for other things," writes a store owner from Ohio.

"If I can't maintain margins with careful price increases and strategic ordering, like taking advantage of freight specials, we will close up and go home!" says a Florida

store owner. "However, I believe our consumers will pay the increases even if we have to adjust our purchasing to reflect new spending habits."

In Indiana a store owner writes, "Vendors need to understand that stores can't be profitable with a 50 percent markup. I carry brands that have high margin or allow me to markup to be able to maintain a 55 percent plus margin."


To avoid customer complaints about increased prices a retailer in Tennessee reports, "I'm always bringing in new things. That way they don't notice if an item's price has increased."

For a Wisconsin retailer, working specials and promotions has helped her to maintain profit margins. "We've tried to take advantage of show specials and promotions when we can which has helped keep our costs and retail prices lower."

"The cost of everything associated with being a small business has increased," says a store owner from Ohio. "You cannot be successful if you eat the increasing prices in the supply line."

An Oregon retailer concurs saying, "I've passed on all price increases and freight surcharges to my customers. I can't afford not too."

There are signs that the barrage of price increases and freight surcharges may be levelling out.

A store owner from New Mexico notes, "We saw some price decreases at the Las Vegas market which was very encouraging," while the aforementioned Oregon retailer says, "It's nice to see some pricing is coming down slightly and most freight surcharges are going away. That will help." 





## SETTING SALES GOALS *A Roadmap for Success* By Claire Sykes

Sales goals serve as definitive marks you can aim towards in order to reach your desired profits. You can expect to achieve the numbers you need only when you and your sales staff set sales goals that are specific, realistic and measurable. No successful retailer would dream of doing business without them.

Sales goals also provide you with a budgeting structure and set performance standards and other goals for employees. When people know what's expected of them and they attain their goals, they tend to be happier and less stressed, resulting in a store that attracts more traffic. Working for a

goal-setting company with robust revenues and room for raises benefits your store and your customers.

### TYPES OF SALES GOALS

To successfully hit the mark, begin by recognizing the three types of sales goals, as defined by Joe Milevsky, president of JRM Sales & Management:

- **Corporate goals.** These reflect the financial level of performance that you, as the owner, seek to achieve to consider your business successful.
- **Sales staff goals.** These drive all your employees toward the

total gross sales that will help you reach your corporate goals.

- **Personal goals.** Whether it's a second location or saving for a house, these goals help determine the level of corporate and sales staff goals.

### GETTING STARTED

With these general goals in mind, aim accurately by following these five steps:

- **Study your company's history.** Compare your sales figures over the past five years to identify trends and inconsistencies. What contributed to these? Apply this knowledge to future goal-setting tasks.

- **Decide what you want.** Write down your personal and corporate goals and encourage staff to do the same. This crystallizes your thinking and gives you something concrete to look at and evaluate.
- **Break down your goals.** Divide your annual corporate goal by the month, basing each on historical percentages within the last five years. Apply those same percentages to individual sales goals for each month. Then, break down the monthly figure by the day, based on the number of days the person works in a given month.
- **Establish a timeline.** Give



yourself a date to begin working towards sales goals and dates during the year that you want to reach certain dollar amounts. Imposing deadlines on yourself and others keeps you motivated to achieve your goals.

- **Monitor your progress.** Keep records that track the number of customers who came in, number of sales and dollar amounts of sales, etc. by the day, week and month, so you can evaluate how well you're doing and where you need to make changes to your goals.

## SETTING YOUR SIGHTS ON AN ACTUAL NUMBER

Everyone's goals are different. Know how high to set them when you:

- **Know your budget.** To set a corporate sales goal, produce a budget with your desired bottom line in mind. Forecast annual revenues, cost of goods and expenses. If your expenses are in line and your gross margin maximized, and the bottom line is not acceptable to you, then you'll need to raise your sales goal accordingly.
- **Determine sales staff standards.** The combined goals of all your salespeople should be 10 to 15 percent higher than your corporate goal, or you won't consistently achieve that goal. Expect most of your salespeople to perform at a level that is 75 to 80 percent comparable to your top associate's sales.
- **Make goals reasonable.** Don't set your goals too high or too low or you'll feel discouraged, stressed or unmotivated. Shoot for somewhere in between, at just beyond your comfort zone. People with reasonably high expectations tend to rise to the level of those expectations.

## THE 10 MUST-HAVE INGREDIENTS

Along with your ambition and sense of purpose, setting successful goals requires these 10 things:

- **Compatible goals.** Tie sales staff's personal goals to their professional goals — ones they set themselves, so they feel invested in them. Make sure they relate these to your corporate goals.
- **Imagination.** Goals based on a personal vision are fueled by the imagination that fires them into action. Clearly imagine yourself reaching your goals, and then galvanize your efforts with positive, present-tense self-talk and written affirmations.
- **Motivation and commitment.** The drive to succeed demands desire and determination. While you can't teach these, you can encourage them, with corporate-level support, appropriately set goals, and incentives and rewards.
- **Incentives.** Along with sales commission, give spiffs and hold contests and games for your salespeople. These create fun and excitement and encourage staff to work even harder to achieve their goals.
- **Positive reinforcement.** Catch your staff doing things right. Acknowledge their successes with cash bonuses, dinners out or days off. Give public recognition with praise during staff meetings or a special pin.
- **Good organisation.** Successful goal-setters monitor their numbers and manage their time wisely. It helps when you run your store systematically and orderly.
- **Independence and confidence.** Do you and your sales staff possess self-direction and self-assurance? That's what it takes to maintain the resolve to pursue and reach goals, especially when the going gets rough.
- **Flexibility.** If you're poised

for change, you can adjust your sales goals in response to uncontrollable obstacles and unexpected opportunities, such as a weak economy or large-volume customer.

- **Perspective.** When you can manage and respond to the smallest details while maintaining a focused view of the big picture, both within and outside of your store, you have the vantage point from which to better achieve your goals.
- **Resilience.** After all this, what if you don't reach your sales goals? This is when you take a good look at your mishaps or misfortunes and reassess your strategy and tack, attitude and knowledge. Then get back up and try again.

## WHEN EMPLOYEES CAN'T REACH THEIR GOALS

You do your best to hire the most experienced, motivated and intelligent salespeople for your store. You provide training, coaching and plenty of one-on-one communication.

And still, at some point there likely will be someone who is not reaching their sales goals. What now?

Work closely with this person. Get out on the sales floor and observe them, examining all aspects of the way they sell. How do they approach a customer and inspire them toward a purchase? Is your sales employee a good listener? Are they able to develop a relationship of trust with the customer? Are they able to present your company's products in a way that's meaningful to the customer? Can the salesperson ask for the sale? How do they handle the customer's objections? What about customer follow-up? Give the employee feedback on their selling behavior. Ask about any barriers they face and how you can help.

If your salesperson continues to evade your expectations and the goals you both set, Milevsky suggests a formal write-up consisting of the person's substandard sales results, problems met on the sales floor and a summary of coaching. You still want to help, not lose, your employee.

Continue to observe, monitor and coach the person. If they show no progress, there are only two reasons. They can't do it, as in they simply don't have the ability, or they won't because they're not motivated enough. In either case, you must let your employee go.

That doesn't necessarily mean firing the person, however. The last thing you want to do is terminate anyone. Take note of their talents and strengths and consider where else this employee could be happier and more successful. If they aren't cut out for sales, perhaps your marketing and advertising department would be a better fit.

## IN THE END

You and everyone else must determine for yourselves your own personal definitions of success, and the terms all of you require to achieve your goals. Just before or after you accomplish those, set new ones for yourself, so you always have something to work toward. Once you've reached your destination, don't forget to reward yourself. Then sit down with your computer or paper and pencil and figure out exactly how you got there.

Typically, people don't ask why they were successful, only why they weren't. It's just as important to understand the factors that contributed to your achievement. Look at your expectations and evaluate the results, so you can set the bar even higher for next year. ☐

# At Under One Roof, Shoppers Find It All

By Jessica Harlan

**W**hen Diane Leggett was a little girl, she'd shop at Minter's Department Store in downtown Abilene for everything from Easter dresses to Brownie uniforms. Minter's closed in the 1970s, and little did Diane know that one day she'd be spending her days inside the beautiful historic building overseeing a collection of consignment gift shops and participating in the rejuvenation of her beloved city's downtown.

## What makes your store unique?

The heritage of the store. So many of our customers remember coming in here as a child and shopping with their mom. Much is the same in the building today and we try to capitalize on that. People also love the variety of products we offer. When you have 10 different women with 10 different design styles represented in a space you provide customers with a lot of options! We have everything from well-known brands like Trapp Candles to unique items like handmade

charcuterie boards.

## How would you describe the atmosphere of your store?

The store celebrates the heritage of the building. When you walk in, it's the original Minter's counter. We try to incorporate things we found from the original department store. For instance, we're going to use a book of old advertisements we found to wallpaper the bathroom, and we use old Christmas decorations in our windows. The second-floor mezzanine has a café and restaurant called Catie Pies, so we get a lot of lunchtime traffic. Our vendors each have their own little boutiques, a shop within a shop concept, and then we'll have displays that we'll all do together to cross promote items.

## To what do you attribute your success?

I have a passion for retail, a passion for people and a desire to make sure that we're a destination and a fun place to shop. I try to make this a place where people want to come



and spend time. The store is like our home and we're inviting people into it. We want people to enjoy it as much as we do.

## How do you promote your store?

We mainly do Facebook and Instagram advertising, and we've done some billboards. A lot of our business comes from word of mouth. You treat your customers right, and they come back.

## What has been your most successful recent event?


Downtown Abilene has a Mimosa Walk that we are a part of. Shoppers go into participating stores and get a mimosa to sip while they shop. We did a lot of food samples and great displays for the event.

## Do you have a favorite new product line?

We picked up Rain Jewelry at a recent market because we saw it in *Giftbeat*. We think it's going to do really well for us. It's just so pretty and unique.

## Looking back, what's the biggest lesson you've learned?

You can't just buy what you like for yourself. You have to keep the customer in mind. You must be willing to step outside of your comfort zone. It takes a lot of study,

reading up on publications and seeing what other retailers are doing. It's not always intuitive and it's a lot of work. But it's a lot of fun too! 

## PROFILE

**STORE:** Under One Roof

**LOCATION:** Abilene, Texas

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 6000

**EMPLOYEES:** two full-time, two part-time

**WEBSITE:** [www.facebook.com/TheShopsatUnderOneRoof](http://www.facebook.com/TheShopsatUnderOneRoof)

**TOP LINES:** Farmhouse Fresh, Top It Off, Megan Brown Jewelry, Nora Fleming, Andree by Unit, Savanna Jane





# Hot Finds & New Releases

## TREND Alert

### Side Slides

Claw clips have dominated the fashion accessory scene for the last few months, but they might just get bumped from the spotlight by side slides – also known as dolphin clips. The difference between a dolphin clip and a claw clip is that a dolphin clip lays flat, so it doesn't poke the wearer in the back of the head. We love the cute styles from hair accessory company **Banded** for their stylishness and functionality, but also because for every product purchased, your customer is providing three meals for children in need. One equals three is their motto and to date they've provided over 13 million meals. The women-owned and operated company is based in Nashville. A two-pack of the skinny side clips costs \$6 and retails for \$14 while a two-pack of the standard size is \$8 cost and \$18 retail. ([www.banded2gether.com](http://www.banded2gether.com))



### PopTails

A cross between a cocktail and a popsicle, **Pop-Tails** are the latest cocktail craze to hit the nation. Good Times is a product line created by retailers for retailers which includes innovative and on-trend products like cocktail slushie mixes and slightly spicy cracker blends. New this season are Pop-Tail kits. Each kit contains 18 sleeves, a collapsible funnel and two pouches of frozen cocktail mix. Consumers fill the Ziplock-like sleeves with the included liquid mix, add alcohol and pop them into the freezer. Available in six flavors, retailing from \$19.99 per kit with a cost price of \$9.50. Pop-Tails and the company's other cocktail and snack products can be private labelled. ([www.somanygoodtimes.com](http://www.somanygoodtimes.com))



### Serve Up Style

Designed for tailgating, potlucks and picnics, **Fancy Panz** recently expanded its assortment of food storage/serving products to include vessels for taking charcuterie on the go. Fancy Panz's product line consists of sturdy insulated bases which keep food hot or cold while in transport. Consumers simply place hot or cold packs into the base, insert a foil pan and pop on the lid to carry food dishes safely and stylishly. The bases are available in a variety of colors and shapes designed to fit standard foil pan sizes, and the clear covers can be repurposed as trivets. For stores that offer vinyl lettering, this is another item that can be customized. From \$16 retail. ([www.fancypanz.com](http://www.fancypanz.com))



### Scratch Sauces

Made from scratch in Denver, Colorado, **Cooper's Small Batch's** unique hot sauces are not meant to be the hottest sauces your customer has tried, but rather sauces that add complementary spices and flavors to dishes without overpowering the food. One of their tag lines reads, "Our hot sauces won't make you cry, but they'll make you want more." The company's food-focused hot sauces pair well with lots of recipes, and are low in sodium, so consumers can add a lot of flavor without adding too much salt. \$7.99 to \$9.99 retail. ([www.cooperssmallbatch.com](http://www.cooperssmallbatch.com))







## Delish Delights

During the winter markets buyers were obsessed with the apt-named cracker snack treat **Legally Addictive**. Company founder Laura Shafferman spent over a decade selling real estate in New York City before redirecting her energy to turning her favorite childhood cookie – crackers covered in chocolate and homemade toffee – into a shelf-stable product she could sell to stores. Available in a variety of flavors, including concoctions for the holidays, the treats retail in the range of \$10.99 and are \$5.50 cost. ([www.legallyaddictivefoods.com](http://www.legallyaddictivefoods.com))



## The Darling Effect

The Darling Effect, created by owner and designer Elsa Vos, is a gift collection notable for its adult fidget toys, beverage coolers and keychains in beautiful colors and patterns. Store owners were delighted with the newest offerings for spring, including the Take Me Everywhere Tumblers (\$22 cost) and the new wristlets (\$13 cost), both pictured here. ([www.thedarlingeffect.com](http://www.thedarlingeffect.com))



## Backpack Coolers

As the popularity of outdoor adventures and activities increases so does the need for gear that helps us enjoy these activities. Enter the plethora of products for keeping drinks cool while on the go including the **IceMule**, a cooler that carries ice and drinks comfortably and easily. The lightweight coolers are designed to be durable, functional and affordable. A variety of styles, colors and sizes are available, making it easy to color coordinate and cross merchandise IceMules with existing lines and within outdoor adventure, beach and travel-themed displays. The coolers retail from \$64.99 to \$374.95. ([www.icemulecoolers.com](http://www.icemulecoolers.com))







## Oprah Pick

When Oprah puts her seal of approval on a product the chances are you'll sell a few skus even with the availability of the items on Amazon. New to Oprah's fave list last year are trendy bracelet hair ties from **Maya Jewelry** which have received considerable national consumer press. The product combines two things people love to wear on their wrists, hair ties and trendy bracelets, into one fashionable jewelry accessory. The pieces are carded and available in three designs retailing from \$18 for a set of three. ([www.mayajnc.com](http://www.mayajnc.com))

## PopPucks

The latest viral game gadget comes from the creators of the popular **PopSocket** for your phone. The product's designers describe the PopPuck as a skate park for your thumbs. You can flick, stack and flip the pucks to perform tricks just like skateboarders. There are apparently a lot of tricks to be mastered. Booster packs of extra pucks are also available and can be added for an additional degree of difficulty. PopPucks retail for \$19.99 and cost \$10. ([www.popsockets.com](http://www.popsockets.com))



## Candle Love

A deliciously fragranced and beautifully packaged candle line, **Jack Baker** takes chandlery to the next level with ethically-sourced ingredients and thoughtfully designed vessels that complement many different styles. The business is also veteran owned and the products are handcrafted in small batches. The two top-selling fragrances are Audrey and Hot Mom Sh!t, however, there are a multitude of scents to choose from in five distinct collections. Retail prices range from \$29.50 to \$74.50. ([www.jackbakercandleco.com](http://www.jackbakercandleco.com))



## Trendy Threads

Known for their sweet and simple jewelry assortment, **Splendid Iris's** new Threads clothing collection was on fire at recent markets. The linen items are affordable, make the wearer feel fantastic and make a statement. Buyers were thrilled with the initial assortment which includes classic tanks, capris, dresses, pants and more in eight different colors. Prices range from \$25 to \$42 cost. ([www.splendidiris.com](http://www.splendidiris.com))



## Tea Towel Time

Offering a range of Victorian-style cotton women's sleepwear, **Mahogany's** pajamas are typically a top seller for the company but at recent markets buyers were wowed by the company's latest tea towel assortments. With beautiful colors and textures, and a great price point (\$6 cost for two), retailers were buying up top-selling styles including Chicken Coop, Honey Bee (pictured) and Citrus Kitchen. ([www.themahoganystore.com](http://www.themahoganystore.com))



# Readers' *Pick*



# Pickleball Mania

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in America. It's been on the uprise for the past five or more years, but at the last round of gift markets wholesalers were visibly onboard the bandwagon offering a range of items for this popular pastime.



## Mariasch Studios

After seeing the amount of products available, a reporting store from California was inspired to create a pickleball department. She purchased pickleball paddles for \$15 cost from **P. Graham Dunn** ([www.pgrahamdunn.com](http://www.pgrahamdunn.com)) with fun sayings. A wide selection of items was available through **Creative Brands** ([www.cb-gift.com](http://www.cb-gift.com)) including unisex pickleball sports bags, mugs and keychains. Next, she found cotton flower sack tea towels for \$5.50 each from **Mariasch Studios** ([www.mariaschstudios.com](http://www.mariaschstudios.com)) with great funny sayings. To round things out, she added skorts, tank tops, hats and fanny packs from **DM** ([www.247dm.com](http://www.247dm.com)).

*"Pickleball is a fast-growing, fun sport that is very popular in San Diego," says the retailer. "I was amazed at how much product was available. We skipped a lot of companies to keep our purchasing tight. We have 11 stores and I'm testing this in five."*



DM



**P. Graham Dunn**



## Mariasch Studios

# Supplier *Spotlight*

# Eric & Christopher

In 2012, Eric and Christopher began photographing farm animals and screen printing the photos onto pillows. The pair entered the wholesale arena in 2013 and expanded their product line to include totes, tea towels, aprons, ornaments, pouches and various bags. The products are fully produced in the United States from the cutting and sewing of the fabrics to the screen printing. Beyond their own Eric & Christopher designs, the company has collaborated with select artists to create co-branded collectives in order for stores to always have something fresh and new to buy and offer. Their newest collab is with artist Laura Morrish, also known as Central. The collection is called Central & Gus and includes hand-drawn, whimsical animal drawings, each with its own charming backstory. The character's stories are interwoven together to create an overall theme which serves to underline the worth and value in everyone. Pillow, \$45 to \$50 retail; large tote, \$32 to \$36 retail. ([www.ericandchristopher.com](http://www.ericandchristopher.com))



## CURRENT OUTLOOK

Retailers are Cautiously Optimistic

By Erica Kirkland



**M**ost independent gift retailers (55 percent) describe their current outlook as “cautiously optimistic” while 29 percent note they’re “a bit concerned.”

“With increasing talk of a recession on the horizon and Covid-based savings accounts largely depleted, I’m concerned that people will start cutting back on discretionary spending,” says a store owner from New York.

A Wisconsin retailer is cautiously optimistic about the direction of

her business even though her sales have been flat or slightly down. “We’re bringing in more product, introducing more customers to our rewards program and planning more events for 2023,” she says.

“Ups and downs in the economy are natural,” reports a Montana store owner. “We’ve had such an amazing last three years, that we were expecting a pull back.”

A Vermont retailer isn’t feeling so charitable. “We were down in December 2022, which was very disappointing. January sales were

okay, considering we were closed for a week, but we just feel a bit off.”

A number of store owners noted that the traffic and energy at recent trade shows gave them a more confident business outlook.

“I’ve not seen that many buyers in Atlanta these past few years as this past January,” writes a store owner with multiple locations in California. “Every showroom was packed and people were buying and writing orders – not just looking.”

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### ARTICLES OF NOTE:

- January Sales Soar
- Marketing Matters
- Retailers React to Price Increases

### CATEGORIES TRACKED

Earrings  
Eco-Friendly  
Home Fragrance  
Personal Care  
Pillows & Throws  
Purses & Bags  
Socks  
Tea Towels  
Teens & Tweens

### Top-selling vendors:

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