

QUALITATIVE MARKET RESEARCH UNCOVERS

# HOW SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS GIFTS FORM DEEPER CONNECTIONS



**January 2024**  
**KNow Research**

# How Socially Conscious Gifts Form Deeper Connections

## Laying The Groundwork For Richer Insights



In today's media-rich environment, consumers want to be reached with the right message at the right time from brands. And as a marketer, getting the message "right" is a critical component of a successful communications campaign. So, how do marketers make sure they are serving up the most relevant and timely information? They ask them! This is where the role of a trusted qualitative research partner can serve you well. Your strategists and qual researcher team can uncover your audiences' truths, aka, their motivations, their beliefs, their pain points, and their aspirations in online or in-person settings. These new, rich insights can become the foundation of a communications strategy and campaign that authentically connect with your audiences.

By leveraging a thoughtful qualitative approach with mixed audiences and methodologies we can unlock a unifying 360-perspective. By connecting with key audience groups, including business decision-makers and consumers, we can identify similarities and differences across demographics, psychographics, behaviors, and attitudes. The goal is to inspire our client teams with insights from a mosaic of perspectives that can ultimately help them address their business needs.

KNow recently had the opportunity to help a client uncover important audience insights that set the course for their next year of marketing and communications strategies.

## Do Socially Conscious Gifts Create Impact Among Employee Recipients?

The corporate gifting industry is booming. Since the pandemic's shift to remote work, the market has grown significantly in the US surpassing \$242B at the end of 2021 and is continuing to grow at a rate that may surpass \$300B by the end of 2024. ([Coresight](#)

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[Research](#)) Given that corporate gifting is not only during the holiday time period, gift purchasers and recipients alike have more opportunities to engage and evaluate the type of gift they give or receive respectively.

As a mission-based organization, [Peace By Piece International](#) is dedicated to creating second chances for underserved women and disenfranchised communities through corporate gifting.

**Research Questions:** How do corporate gifts resonate with employees both personally and professionally? How do employees feel about the gifts they receive, do they make an impact on the perception of their employers and what would the potential impact of socially conscious gifts be?

The brand had indicators that a socially conscious gift – one that was handmade by underserved women or communities of makers – was more valuable than a branded tchotchke. The research needed to help bolster their position as a socially conscious corporate gifting option in a crowded market.

## Mixed Audiences and Methodologies

To reveal the full story, we set out with a robust approach to connect with both corporate gifting decision makers and gift recipients; a 4-phased research design that allowing us the opportunity to first gather insights with the decision-makers, then reconvene and workshop the interim learnings as a combined team, and then engage with gift recipients.

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## Phase 1: Buyer Interviews

Hosting online interviews is a great option when connecting with a wide scope of individuals nationwide, especially business decision-makers. Our 1-on-1 conversations with corporate gift buyers provided insight into not both what they must consider from an **emotional** (*gifting is important to showing my employees and clients I care about them*) and **rational** (*gifting requires both time and budgetary investments*) perspective. We also gleaned important communications nuances that the Peace By Piece marketing team could leverage to strengthen and clarify their positioning with a greater emphasis on the makers and their unique stories.

**Takeaway:** Virtual interviews are the optimal way to connect with B2B participants

## Phase 2: Interim Workshop

In an ideal world, internal stakeholders would connect with the research team for an [Insights Workshop](#). This is a living, breathing opportunity to dig deeper into learnings

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following a qualitative investigation. Whether it's mid-stream or after the consumer discussions have concluded, the richness a workshop can lend to a project is vast. This is the opportunity to bring stakeholders together who may have differing priorities, needs or deliverables that they must execute against. Coming together to dive into results allows opportunities for the analysis and reporting to focus on the most critical and valuable components. **Bonus: enrich engagement and communication across teams.**

In this instance, the teams reviewed the insights gained from corporate gift purchasers and used the results to adjust and build out the discussion guide for the next two phases of research; conversations with gift recipients, helping us create more impactful sessions with employees.

**Takeaway:** Interim Workshops allow for connection, communication, iteration, and engagement

## Phase 3: Digital Booth® Insights

KNow Research's signature Pop-Up Booth® let's brands meet their consumers authentically, organically and efficiently. When clients choose Booth® insights, they can be sure to be wowed with quality of participants and speed of results.

In one afternoon, we connect with nearly 20 individuals online for 10-20 minutes each to understand their current experiences receiving gifts from their employers, what makes a gift great (and not so great)! We then turned the conversation to the potential impact a socially conscious gift – like the ones Peace By Piece offers – could have on employees both personally and professionally.



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**Takeaway:** Right-size your research. With a finite set of questions and a quick turnaround time, consider qualitative digital intercept approaches like KNow's Booth®

## Phase 4: In-Person Booth® Insights



Interested in increasing our opportunity to connect with corporate gift recipients, KNow Research ventured into the wilds of IRL to speak directly to gift recipients with an in-person Booth®. This time we met gift employees who'd recently received a gift at a [PRSA](#) event. The added benefit of this location for the Booth was the chance to connect with PR industry professionals to understand what they recommend to their clients when it comes to gifting.

**Takeaway:** Consider other uses of popping up in-person, e.g., teams looking to understand customer-journeys, in-store signage, or creative displays by being in the right place at the right time

In both sets of intercept interviews, feedback on current gift options varied from disappointing and forgettable to personalized and memorable. Our analysis of all 4 phases produced valuable and actionable insights that illuminated areas of opportunity to improve the marketing communications strategy and ways the brand can enhance their strengths online.

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Most importantly, we answered the Peace By Piece's team core question, do socially conscious gifts impact employees personally and professionally with a resounding **YES**.

## 3 Key Insights:

- 1. A gift with social impact is a better gift.** Recipients appreciate the unique and meaningful maker story, artisan qualities of the product and making an impact in communities in need.
- 2. Social impact gifts can improve employer perception.** Gifts that demonstrate the company's corporate values lift employee engagement and connection.
- 3. Thoughtful gifting creates connections.** The story cards Peace by Piece include create additional emotional connection with buyers and recipients, resulting in higher gift satisfaction and company pride

**your gift changed lives at:**



**Ocean Bottle**  
Ocean Bottle is a social and environmental impact company that funds plastic collection through the sale of reusable bottles. By 2040, the amount of plastic in our oceans is expected to quadruple. Every Ocean Bottle bought funds the collection of 1,000 plastic bottles in weight. This is achieved through a partnership with Plastic Bank, a global organization with ethical recycling ecosystems that are traceable through IBM-Blockchain. Plastic is collected by locals from some of the worst affected coastal communities such as Haiti, the Philippines, Brazil, and Indonesia. Plastic collectors can then exchange plastic for money or receive digital credit to swap for tuition, tech goods, healthcare, and micro-finance.

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**meet Kuntari**



**Kuntari**  
Bali, Indonesia

Kuntari is a wife, mother, plastic entrepreneur, and ocean hero in Bali, Indonesia, where 40,000 tons of plastic leak into waterways each year. Kuntari is doing her part to protect the environment and make Bali a cleaner place for herself and her family. She collects over 600 bottles a day and takes them to Sanur Branch to be processed by Ocean Bottle and their partner, Plastic Bank.

Kuntari receives a UN living wage in money or digital tokens that she can exchange for healthcare, food, and education.



## Applied Results

As a result of the learnings brought forward in the 4-phased research methodology, Peace By Piece made strategic and bold moves to match their audiences needs with clearer communications strategies.

1. Redesigned the website landing page with more direct calls to action and a greater emphasis on the makers and their unique stories.

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2. Created an interface to allow employees to choose their favorite gift or support a cause most dear to their hearts.
3. Budget prioritization toward marketing communications to reach more people.

## Ready To Get Creative Uncovering Your Audiences' Truths?

*The team at KNow is ready to meet your audiences in person or online. KNow Research approaches every project with a custom lens to offer the most valuable methodology to maximize actionable insights. Connect to discuss how your business needs could benefit from group discussions, interviews, or our proprietary Booth® Insights - now available as a subscription – all in service of better understanding your audiences' truths. For more information visit [knowresearch.com](http://knowresearch.com) or email [admin@knowresearch.com](mailto:admin@knowresearch.com)*