

is always a product people come back to. It's very easy, very approachable," said Jones. "We looked at the price points, we looked at the packaging, and we wanted to make sure these are products that retailers feel comfortable buying and that the customer feels comfortable buying. For \$10 to \$20, you have a nice gift package for a trainer or a stable master. And they're great for kids, too!" The 24 Carrot Gourmet line includes chocolate bars, tins of popcorn and trail mix that come in packaging with an equestrian flair and sport the tag line "Whoa ... that's good!" Jones says she also does private labeling on the popcorn tins, which come in one and two-gallon sizes.

Wild West Company has expanded its line of consumables in recent months with the acquisition of Wild West Spices and Divine West. Its diverse product assortment includes salsa, dip mixes, candy and chocolate bars, spices and rubs, lip balm, candles and scented soaps.

"Most gift buyers are women," said owner Eric Wagner. "They love to find matching items. So we have, for example, note cards that match, body soaps that match, and candles tins. So if they're buying something for a friend's birthday, they can pick up a candle tin that has the same image as a card and a body soap, and it can actually go in a gift bag that has that same image."



Wild West offers matching gift bags in 22 designs. Wagner believes that it's the unique, Western-themed packaging that sells his company's products, along with the attractive assortment of high-quality, hand-crafted displays available to vendors.

"The displays meet the quality of their stores, and they're something that they'd be happy to put right next to the cash register," he said. "If a retailer displays their products in a desirable way, that helps move more product." Wagner added that it's important for retailers to keep their displays stocked. "Even a display that's missing 25 percent of its products doesn't look as attractive as a full display." He also suggests placing consumable items, which are often an impulse buy, near the checkout area.

"Retailers are always attempting to increase their sales ticket on a per-order basis, and putting consumables in a check-

out area is critical to making that happen. A \$2.00 chocolate bar times 400 over a month—that adds up."

If your store is located in an area that's frequented by tourists, make sure to stock up on consumables that are indigenous to your region. Shoppers from out of town are more likely to buy items that your area is famous for. For instance, Texas, St. Louis and Kansas City are all famous for barbecued ribs. Barbecue sauces are a logical addition to stores in these locals. The Southwest is famous for its chili cook-offs and hot peppers, so it stands to reason that a store might carry dry chili mixes and salsas as part of its consumable inventory.

Of course, people aren't the only ones that consume products. Your customer's four-legged friends love getting treats too, and these kinds of products can just as easily encourage horse owners to buy at the drop of a hat when placed in the right area. Treats are a great gift buy for those with horse lovers in their lives. And what dog doesn't love to tear into a rawhide treat every now and then? Some treats even come dressed for the season, making them perfect holiday gifts. Paddock Cakes offers treats with a sweet peppermint candy surprise in the center. And Mrs. Pastures packages its treats in a plush holiday horse container that is sure to delight young and old riders alike.

Even though point-of-purchase displays are the most common place retailers choose to present these items, don't limit yourself to just the cash register area. Cross-merchandising consumables in displays throughout your store is an effective way to catch the eye of your customers, and even draw them into departments that they might not normally visit. If you have a gift department, make sure to put your entire selection of consumables there as well. Have some employees get creative making gift baskets that include several consumable items to make it easy for those who want to grab and go. That idea also has the potential of increasing per-purchase sales tickets, as people are usually willing to pay a little more for a nicely made gift basket that is already assembled, wrapped and ready to go.

