



GRACE IN GRANDEUR

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The most important thing to keep in mind for retirement or years-of-service gifts is what the occasion symbolizes to each recipient: years of hard work, dedication and loyalty to one company. The reward you choose — and the way in which it is presented — should reflect how much you value that commitment and service. This notion may lead you back to some of the retirement classics, like clocks and watches or plaques and crystal, but remember, they're classics for a reason. If these rewards haven't had the desired impact for you in the past, then you may need to reexamine the way in which they're presented. Creating a keepsake all comes down to the emphasis and grandeur that goes into the giving.

Collectibles are another option for years-of-service awards. Your presentation could allude to how the one-of-a-kind reward will keep gaining in value, just as the recipient's years of knowledge, professionalism or dependability added to your company's overall worth. In your line of business, the collectible might be anything from uncirculated U.S. currency for a salesperson, to a miniature replica of your company trucks or generators for drivers and engineers. You could also make a collectible out of the materials or tools used to build your equipment. Something taken from the "last one off the line" could have major impact on an employee whose career was devoted to the manufacturing process.

Custom books provide another unique keepsake. Especially when you employ the "yearbook" method when creating it — letting peers, co-workers and management include their own well-wishing and stories about the employee. You could also provide a company timeline, plus major historical facts for added interest.

If you think these ideas are worth a second look, never hesitate to ask for honest opinions from your employees. It's easy to forget that your best sounding board for any type of reward and recognition program is sitting right outside your door.