

● **Allie Walker Designs** (206) 729-4988:

“Hip Grips” are decorative, insulated cup sleeves that make it easy to hold a hot beverage. Made from 100% cotton and machine washable, Hip Grips are reversible and feature an elastic band for compact storage. Each sleeve is presented on a card that reads



“The Cool Sleeve for a Hot Cup.” Display box includes a cup riser that explains the concept. Cost: \$6 (myhipgrip.com).

● **Coynes** (800) 336-8666: Featuring charming images of puppies and kittens,

“Best of Friends” includes travel bags, coin purses, cell phone holders, lipstick cases, shoulder bags, handbags and more. The black-and-white images get a “bling”

boost from added jewels. Cost range: \$4.25–\$42.50 (coynes.com).

● **Gift Link** (800) 632-0702: “Faithful Friends” expands with the addition of playing cards. Featuring the artwork of animal artist Robert J. May, the breed-specific cards are high-

lighted by animal artwork not only on the front of each card, but also as the faces on the face cards, aces and jokers. With 24 breeds in the collection, a countertop display holds 48 decks. Cost: \$2.50 (giftlinkcollection.com).

● **Ellesca** (888) 565-0666: From its upscale packaging to its distinctive scents, this bath and body care line is inspired by the Mediterranean region. The line uses only essential oils and natural botanicals in



its bath salts, body milk, bubble bath, hand cream, shower gel and more. The four fragrances—Renew, Relax, Sensual and Energy—feature grape seed oil, shea butter and algae extract. Cost range: \$5–\$15 (ellesca.com).

Trend: Baby. Mud Pie (800) 998-1633 brings more fun to the baby category as it launches “Giggles.” With an eye on making an older sibling part of the new baby’s life, the company debuts big sister/big brother sibling clothing sets, which feature a tee (for 2-4 years) and a onesie (for 0-6 months). The shirts say phrases such as “Big Sis+Lil Brother=♥.” Cost per set: \$12.50. The company also offers



individual onesies in pink or blue, packaged in acetate crinkle-filled gift boxes finished with bows. In addition to the design shown at left, other phrases include “Let’s Do Lunch It’s On Me” and “Hitting the Bottle Again.” Cost: \$7.50 (mud-pie.com).

Trend: Retirement. With more than 16,000 baby boomers exiting the work force every day for the next 18 years, **The Retirement Gift Company** (800) 815-8414 looks to capitalize on the trend. Started by a gift retailer who saw a growing need for this niche, the broad line includes everything from guest books and invitations to gift bags, greeting cards, memo pads, boxed mugs, photo albums and the signature plate (shown here). Packaged with a permanent marker, the gift-boxed plate features the words “Thanks for the Great Memories.” Cost: \$12.50. Point-of-purchase signs help with display (theretirementgiftcompany.com).



4 ‘Must’ Words For Web Marketers

You know better than to put your faith in magic bullets when it comes to marketing: successful marketing is more complex than that. But a handful of words, listed below, will make a difference if you include them on your Web site and in your online newsletters.

- ◆ **Free.** It’s a powerful word in any marketing effort, but “free” resonates even more online, so don’t shy away from using the word in online marketing. Offer free downloads, free subscriptions, free reports, free trials, free shipping.
- ◆ **Sign up.** It’s unrealistic to hope that first-time visitors will make immediate purchases. And once they leave your site, memories of your products and

services quickly fade. That’s why you should invite every visitor to sign up or subscribe to an e-mail program or newsletter.

- ◆ **Buy.** Make purchasing an easy option. Create an easy-to-use “buy” link, and feature it prominently.
 - ◆ **Now.** Mention the Web and the first thing most people think of is browsing. If people don’t act immediately, you may have lost them for good. So ask for something now: Sign up now. Buy now. Tell a friend now.
- Source: From “The 5 Most Important Words on Your Web Site,” nickusborne.com, *Communication Briefings*, August 2006 (800) 722-9221, briefings.com.

Trend-Spotting In Atlanta

◆ **Car decor:** We noticed several companies offering decorative magnets for the car, but our favorite source was **Instant Carma** (800) 706-4322, whose magnet sets come with two identical magnetic sheets with up to 48 magnets in one package. Cost per package: \$6.50. Themes include special occasions (birthday, wedding), everyday (polka dots, flower power, etc.) and holiday. The company makes display easy with a two-tiered spinner floor stand (instantcarma.com).



◆ **Aprons:** The category appears to be gaining speed in the market, as more manufacturers join the trend. **Design Imports India’s** (800) 344-4115 retro aprons bring nostalgic fun to the kitchen (designimports.com), while **Cedar Mountain Studios** (877) 537-5776 offers humorous phrases such as “If At First You Don’t Succeed Order Pizza” and “Will Cook For Chocolate.”

◆ **Pierced surfaces:** From candle accessories to decorative vases, the trend is toward pierced looks and unique cutouts that give texture and added visual interest to products. **Waxcessories** (888) 520-6655 brings the look to its “Glowing Candle Vases,” finished in a satin glaze and featuring a tea light holder base. Colors include mocha, blue, sage and latte (waxcessories.com).



Product Beat...Boston Warehouse (888) 923-

2982 brings fun and function together in its “Animal House” line. Each distinctive kitchen tool is shaped like the animal it’s named for, from a shark bottle opener and parakeet garlic press to the toucan can opener, monkey peeler (shown here), woodpecker scissors, crocodile tongs, hippo chip clips and more. Cost range: \$2.50–\$10. The company makes merchandising easy with countertop units that hold 6–16 pieces of a single animal (depending on the size), and clearly explain what the item does (bwtc.com).



Most-Requested Phone Numbers/Web Sites

Abdallah Candies (abdallahcandies.com)	(800) 348-7328
Amia (blaircedar.com)	(800) 325-3943
Brighton (brighton.com)	(800) 235-8748
Counter Art (counterart.net)	(877) 395-3473
Crazy Mountain (crazymountainimports.com)	(877) 216-5456
Cypress Home (myevergreen.com)	(800) 774-3837
Danielson Designs (danielsondesigns.com)	(800) 746-4149
Joan Baker (joanbaker.com)	(800) 248-1983
Kay Berry (kayberry.com)	(800) 426-1932
Lang (langgraphics.com)	(800) 262-2611
Mainstreet Collection (gowhimsey.com)	(252) 946-3359
Malden (maldenframe.com)	(800) 426-3578
Mary Meyer (marymeyer.com)	(800) 451-4387
Mud Pie (mud-pie.com)	(800) 998-1633
Mullins Square (mullinssquare.com)	(800) 538-0043

Northern Lights (northernlightscandles.com)	(800) 836-8797
Old Virginia Candle Co. (virginiacandle.com)	(800) 827-2231
Park Designs (parkdesigns.net)	(800) 326-3382
Pavilion Gift (paviliongift.com)	(888) 762-4457
Precious Moments, Inc. (preciousmoments.com)	(888) 878-8148
Propac (propacimages.com)	(800) 977-6722
Raz Imports (razimports.com)	(800) 443-3540
Somerset (somerasetent.com)	(800) 788-6543
Soy Basics (soybasics.com)	(866) 394-6313
Stephan Baby (stephanenterprises.com)	(800) 359-2917
Tag (tagltd.com)	(800) 621-8350
Taggies (taggies.com)	(877) 482-4443
Tatutina (tatutina.com)	(800) 257-0471
Tervis Tumbler (tervis.com)	(800) 237-6688
The Thymes (thymes.com)	(800) 366-4071
Wellspring (wellspringgift.com)	(800) 533-3561
Westland (westlandgiftware.com)	(888) 888-8750
Yankee (wholesale.yankeecandle.com)	(800) 792-6180