# Arthur’s executive gift guide

**How do you pick out a gift at birthday time for those VIPs who already have everything? Don’t crack up your brains too much over it. Here are some useful tips on how you can do it.**

It’s everybody’s birthday these days. I thought we had done with gift giving for June brides and bridegrooms. There’s still this parade of birthdays and particularly of those who matter. So I have to think of a different kettle of fish and a different strategy, when we must provide manifestations of regard for those who already have everything. I’m not talking of spouses, children and aged parental units, for whom choosing gifts need not be an actual cerebral effort, because they take it for granted and never expect anything like a gesture made with aplomb. I’m referring to key business associates, some of whom like the theatricality of it all. And they make it a point to let you know in subtle ways when they were born, if not how old they re- ally are. Worse still, they own all that is possible to accumulate in a lifetime, yet desire little that any one but our business tycoons at the very top could afford.

Making things more difficult is the fact that a business gift must be (a) witty, displaying knowledge of the recipient; (b) not very squishy, whatever that means, or

not invasively personal; (e) related in some way to business, if possible; and (d) not so expensive – a classy tobacco pouch for instance which implies that you are not baiting for some kind of incremental compensation.

If this delicate and complicated web seems too tough to untangle or handle, you don’t have to do the rounds at ‘Majestic City’, the ‘Liberty Plaza’, the fashion parlors, handicrafts or the assorted gift salons visible all over Colombo city. Allow me to suggest some tokens of affection that I Arthur Hadley- the quintessential recipient – would enjoy getting, if you care enough to send one in. (Don’t hesitate by the way).

**I’ve got to get my measurements right.**

I’ve been reading “The Food Pharmacy’ which tells you just the right kind of food to eat to get your body’s immune systems ticking and build up your resistance against a host of diseases, the list never seems to end.

But there’s one I’m up against, quite helpless. I’m beginning to have a paunch. What do I do? Against the possibility of baldness and my having to join the World




Baldies Club recently started up in France, I have a solution in the ‘sorciere’ treatment hair grower. I’ve got to have the spruce board- room looks. I’ve hit on just the right idea work outs at the Taj gym and health spa. Membership’s anything from 15,000 to 20,000. I’d appreciate that. There’s everything from workout machines – bicycles, swings, dumbbells, hand bars and what not badminton, squash, a large swimming pool and a sauna where you can sweat out your business cares, cool off and feel refreshed.

Don’t keep the membership card waiting! Whoever gets it can match wits with the best vice presidents in the big business brackets!

**All right, the next thing’s all about water draw the water that’s good for you.**

Now that bottles and bottles and varied assortments of mineral water, Dom Perrier, has replaced coffee and soda water as the power drink, executives everywhere find them- selves quaffing it at high-level meetings. Some, show up at gatherings with as much as a gallon of distilled water in a plastic jug, which they then tap surreptitiously throughout budget reviews. Our Human Re- sources Man perhaps needs more than most others, what with Sri Lanka’s labor force having a free run these days, with strikes and all.

**A fix for all life’s problems company problems too! Heard of it? A certain top politico of ours has it**

the fix for every problem, not the Harmotex I am thinking of. It's the rage these days. Have you seen these ads? Take a teaspoonful after meals (or is it before bedtime) and wave your worries away. There's no looking back. You know, I can't help wondering if some of these perky execs in our outfit have been sipping it on the sly! Fills them with verve, vigor and vitality I suspect. I've been asking at pharmacies, but the best they can come up with in place of Harmotex, is Wincarnis. Never mind, it may be second best, but in a pretty wrapper, it should make a good birthday gift. Remember to send one around-on my birthday or the boss's. It can be a winner!

I'm not a cook. But like a lot of people, I like to feel like one. I don't think I am alone. A surprising number of power munchers enjoy decompressing over a hot stove, takes the stress off I am told. Fortunately, there are a number of gizmotic appliances these days to choose from. I don't need all that. All I need to have is the very latest in Microwave ovens and a Wok pan. You don't have to step outside your home to have Japanese sashimi, sushi, tempura and other gourmet's delights-or Chinese or Thai for that matter. With a little help from my chef friend, I, Arthur, can deliver.

But then if you are the true-to- type executive who adds up to his status by being seen in the right places, then the caviar bar at the Hilton can be the right place for you. Pricey? Not with a gift voucher for two, you can regale yourself here for a whole evening and be seen too!

**Brightening up as we get on in years.**

As we all get older and straighter a commensurate longing for the trappings of youthful happiness washes over those of us young enough to remember a time when we were never without our smart Ranson gas lighters there were in those days a wide range to select from at the Cargills tobacco counter. Pipes too of various shapes, lengths and makes were the thing for the imposing executives who wanted to cut a figure. Such fads are catching up again with the smarter young executives moving to the top on the corporate ladder. To abet such longings as these, colleagues attuned to their associate's tastes can choose from a variety of items at the city's luxury shopping arcades. Are you ready?

Top of the list would be individual clip-on-earrings-made-to- order diamond studded pair if you prefer that. Then there are the sleek, new, Zippo lighters unbeatable for style, said to be originally used by the Navy. And for the more staid stockbroker

executive type designer bow-ties, braces and a classy briar pipe and tobacco to go with it. For the younger set, of course, the in-thing today appears to be cigarette paper, roller and the tobacco for it. You don’t believe me? Look around carefully at your next big office bash to see if I’m right.

**Ultimate downtime.**

When the 16-hour tour of duty is done, what harried, austere executive wouldn’t like to kick off the shell of acquired maturity and transform once again into the role of the needy, sometimes frightened 6-year-old who resides within. From my closest professional friend, I know I’d appreciate a pair of one-piece pajamas from ‘Barefoot’ or any other trendy clothes shops around. A pair of soft bedroom slippers to set off the attire would be an asset. I have for long been used to my colorful, functional batik sarongs ones in which I can even walk down into the neighborhood kade- but pajamas are not out for me, they make me feel different, a child again. If you give them to me, I’ll wear them. Maybe they’ll help me forget my promise to build 8% revenues in an economy that’s barely. showing promise despite all the hype.

**But if you’re giving me only one gift I’ll give you a choice between two to pick from.**

Let me have a Hewlett Packard Deskjet 690C color printer with which one can dabble in a host of colors to produce the most magically dazzling designs. Or craft my own brochures, banners, newsletters, stickers, personal invitations and much else. Wow! an expensive toy but simply wonderful! If it’s not in the market, it will soon be. Or a Motorola a130 that can store upto 30 telephone digits with the contactees’ names. It has nine ringing tones! What else? Best of all the celltell provides a hands-free kit with mouth piece and ear plug which lets you speak while driving with both hands firmly on the steering wheel. To hell with the police, I will be moving ahead, on the move!”