

What do you give the boss who is retiring?

Question: "I have worked with my boss for 20 years, and he will retire in June after 33 years with the organization. He is moving out of state. He will receive a clock as the traditional retirement gift from the organization. I would personally like to give him a gift, but I have no idea what is appropriate. A gift certificate would have to be from a national chain, and a present would have to be small enough to transport to his new home and not become clutter. Any suggestions?" — *Anonymous*

Ana March 18, 2014 at 4:39 pm

I have a boss that is retiring. I have only been working with him for 7 years, but he has been here about 37 years. I wanted to buy him a lovely men's watch. He over heard me and told me cash is king. He is a horse gambler and loves to play the ponies. So I made his theme for his party Casino. Since he always goes to gamble. I even got a roulette wheel, cards, casino themed things that he can keep and use these items when he is involved in his church carnivals. Great idea. Find out his favorite hobbies and use that theme and then he will have souvenirs.. of his favorite things.

JOANN JERMANUS March 22, 2013 at 9:04 am

HI, I HAVE WORK FOR MY BOSS FOR 33 YEARS AND HE HAS BEEN WITH THE COMPANY FOR 43 YEARS. I AM REALLY HAVING A HARD TIME PICKING SOME THING OUT. THIS MAN IS SPECIAL AND HE HAS BEEN IN MY LIFE SINCE I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL. AND I DO WANT TO DO SOME THING NICE. A SCRAP BOOK IS GOOD, BUT I WOULD LIKE SOME THING DIFFERENT. ANY IDEAS WOULD HELP
THANKS

Patty February 2, 2009 at 9:45 am

Personal items are always good. The scrapbook idea is great – my sister got one on her retirement with photos over the years of her and her coworkers (including some who had passed away, so those were especially meaningful). I also like the photo idea with comments written on the matting. I got one when I left one workplace and it's my favorite picture; I always have space on a wall for that one.

For one boss who left, I took a plaque for a national award that her department had received (before my time) and mounted it in a shadowbox. I then had everyone sign a frame mat and put that in the shadowbox around the plaque. (I put pieces of foam behind the mat so it would sit flush with the front of the plaque.) When it was presented to her at our department's farewell picnic, she was so moved to tears that she wouldn't take off her sunglasses! What made it especially meaningful was that it was the plaque from the first time she and her department got the award, and by the time she left we had received our 17th consecutive award. Not only was it a great memento of her coworkers, it was also a reminder of a huge professional accomplishment that she

worked so hard to achieve. For her gift from the whole organization, we gave her a leather desk set and engraved pen with stand.

For another boss, we recorded pictures and messages from everyone onto a dvd and gave her a prepaid Visa card. Since she had already moved her household goods, she could just carry those in her purse. If your boss isn't moving his household goods until after he retires, you have more leeway in the size of the gift.

Gift cards are nice if the boss is moving and could use the money (couldn't we all?), but they are very impersonal for someone who has been there for 33 years.

Teresa January 30, 2009 at 5:07 pm

A scrapbook is always great. Or something pertaining to a hobby this person may be able to entertain now upon retirement – golf equipment; fishing gear or a gift cert to Cabelas or online golf.

Donna January 30, 2009 at 5:00 pm

Depending on how close I feel to the person or if I know something the person would specifically like; I like to give a pen/pencil set engraved with their name. It's something that would be used often, not take up too much room, and also remind them of their time with you and the company when they use it.

Miriam January 30, 2009 at 3:16 pm

You are in a unique position because you have known this person personally and intimately (not in the traditional sense), but when we work with someone closely there is some intimacy involved. So, you know this person very well after 20 years. A good gift would be something personal.

I once pretended I was a reporter and I wrote an article of someone and their achievements and some of the funny things that we experienced and the journey to get where she was (she was graduating from Medical School) and I went and got it made into a plaque and gave it to her. She was so thrilled she still has it up in her office today. She has moved many times since then but she never leaves it. She says she still take it down and read it from time to time.

After a year of being away the memories will go dim and the contacts may dry up but at least your boss will have something to go back to from time to time and appreciate the impact he/she had on your life.

Cindy Clinton January 30, 2009 at 3:08 pm

A talking photo book would make a great gift. Pictures from people in your organization can be inserted into the sleeves with each of the people leaving a personal audio message. Your boss would push a button on each page that would give him the audio message.

Louise January 30, 2009 at 2:40 pm

A few years ago I was involved with planning a retirement dinner for the general manager of a major retail store. I purchased a small photo album and on my breaks and lunch (with help) walked around the store taking pictures of each employee in their respectful departments. Once the pics were developed and placed in the album we passed it around for all to sign with well wishes or any little funny incident they remembered on the page opposite their photo. Prior to the dinner a friend and I changed the words to the oldies song, "I Want To Be Bobby's Girl" (his name was Bob). We recruited 8 other female employees, wore funny clothes and sang the now personalized song to him, his wife and the rest of the dinner goers. Of course we had various nice gifts too, but the song was a big hit and loads of fun.

Anon January 30, 2009 at 2:27 pm

We presented a boss who was retiring with a scrapbook of photos of company parties, events, milestones, etc. We also included pages where the employees could write messages of farewell to him. In just one of our offices, we collected 17 pages of employee messages! His wife told me he was really moved by this gift.

Diane Beaulieu January 30, 2009 at 1:44 pm

Perhaps a framed picture of you and he together as a remembrance would be nice. Or a picture of him with his "team" including you...

Karen January 30, 2009 at 1:44 pm

I think a DVD movie/slide show made up of photos with everyone in the company wishing him well in his retirement would be great. Fun pictures of the past activities, funny stories, much of what might be put in a scrapbook but now on a DVD. With 5 months to prepare, this shouldn't be too difficult. Have everyone that works with him send in their favorite stories or pictures. Videotape a message from everyone to be included. The time you take to put this together will show your boss how much you care.

Marcia January 30, 2009 at 1:36 pm

There are various things that could be engraved with his initials like a money clip or key ring. You could also make up a calendar with a pictures of people or past activities from the company & possibly have people sign the parts of the calendar their well wishes.

Peg January 30, 2009 at 1:33 pm

We gave our retiring Director a gift certificate from her favorite airline, as she would now have time to travel.

Heather January 30, 2009 at 1:32 pm

I was going to first suggest a picture of the building, however, that is usually more appropriately hung in a future office. One of the other items that my boss and board really liked were cufflinks that you can get with the company logo on them. They are small, easy to pack and good conversation pieces for later in life.

doris January 30, 2009 at 1:01 pm

A PayPal gift certificate might be appropriate if the person is computer savvy. That way it is not tied to a national chain store.

Holly January 30, 2009 at 12:45 pm

One boss I had we did a scrap book of well-wishes, funny stories, and pictures and did it as a surprise gift. She loved it. Start many weeks in advance. We even included people who used to work for the company. It was quite an effort, but well worth it. Another idea that I just did for someone was a group gift from Successories. They have framed art with the wide-margined mat that everyone can sign. It's a nice motivational picture/verse but personalized by signatures.

annie January 30, 2009 at 12:39 pm

While other people can give all kinds of objects and gift cards, you are in a great position to prepare a unique retirement gift. Consider putting together a scrapbook with letters of appreciation from the many people who have worked with your boss over the years. the letters can be emails printed out nicely. You just send out requests by email and may make it a surprise. Of course your own letter of appreciation is a big part of this gift. Another possibility is a picture of your work team or the facility, to be framed with a wide margin mat. Ask people to stop by and sign the mat with their best wishes, before the picture goes in the glass and frame. You may need to collect a few \$ if this is too costly to do on your own for a large framed picture. A personal gift of clothing is really not appropriate in many work settings.

Diana January 30, 2009 at 12:37 pm

My CEO boss just retired. I think a great idea is an Amazon or Borders gift certificate. My boss loves to read and this was a great idea for him. I wanted to make sure that he got gifts he would really like instead of traditional things that sit on a bookshelf.... so following are some other gifts that he got from "groups" of people were: GPS, camera, fly-fishing gear, i-phone, and laptop bag ideal for travel.

Train Em January 30, 2009 at 12:37 pm

I bought my boss a webcam. He was never very technically savvy but it was a simple one & not very expensive. He was tickled that I had not given up hope that he might one day accomplish a computer enhancement without my help!

THOMAS January 30, 2009 at 12:35 pm

We had someone retire from our company and we gave them a photo album with pictures of the office parties, etc that had been taken over the years. Also, if you know what their hobbies are you can give a gift they can use to continue it or a gift card from a store they can go to for supplies for their hobby.

DRengler January 30, 2009 at 12:30 pm

Give him a visa gift card that he can use for restaurant stops and while moving. By giving him a visa card, he can use it anywhere and it will be very convenient at whatever restaurant they come across during their move.

Debra January 30, 2009 at 12:30 pm

I've had this happen twice.

Once I took a black & white photo of everyone in the department together, had it enlarged to 8 x 10, framed it in a white matboard and had everyone sign the matboard with their well wishes, then framed it in a nice black shiny frame with UV protective glass.

The other gift was a little more time consuming, but she LOVED IT. I took a photo of each person in the company (we were small – about 30-40 folks) and after I had them developed, I put each photo on a photo album page (the white magnetic, 3-hole punched ones) and let each person write their well wishes next to their photo. I then put the pages into a white 3-ring view-binder with a photo of the company building (or sign) slipped into the outside cover. Everyone loved the idea and were so happy to participate.

Freda January 30, 2009 at 12:26 pm

He probably has a nice pen/pencil set and nice leather portfolio. I would choose something personal: if he likes golf, a really nice shirt, jacket, etc. If he likes wine, a really nice bottle that he can drink before he moves. Or a creative present is a “wine of the month” club or “cheese of the month”, etc. You can start delivery at his new home when he moves and perhaps make up a nice gift certificate to present now. :)