

In addition, these are gift prizes and consumer premiums which are intended for those who buy products, as well as grand opening prizes which are distributed to all with no purchase condition. Important factors influencing the selection of consumer incentive goods are how interesting, current, witty, or useful the items are. Recently pen sets (one ball point, one pencil and one autograph pen in a case), disposable fountain pens, brand name polo and T-shirts, scarves, belts, and portable cassette players have been popular as incentive gifts. Products ranging in price between 300 and 3000 yen are common. Grand opening prizes can range from the items already mentioned to overseas trips, fur coats, precious metals and cars.

The gift market in Japan is estimated between 8 and 13 trillion yen but due to the unregulated nature of consumer purchases it is difficult to determine the exact yen value of this market. Individual gifts account for 60% and corporate gifts account for 40% of the market. Incentive gifts account for more than 20% of the corporate market. Continued growth is expected in the Japanese gift market. An increasing trend of giving gifts which reflect the buyers personality combined with an increase in gift giving "just for fun" are expected to increase the personal, greeting and incentive gift markets. Seasonal gifts are shifting from the dictates of custom allowing consumers to choose products more freely. This diversification and expansion of gift markets provides a possible market opportunity for imported goods.

The following lists of marketing trends for the two main Japanese gift giving periods (*Oseibo*, *Ochugen*) were presented at the Japanese Gift Food Market Seminar held in 1993 by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

OSEIBO TRENDS

1. Ready to use/eat-particle.
2. Quality-step-up (eg. coffee, move from instant to regular).
3. Original packaging and container design (eg. use famous designer, famous picture).
4. Down sizing (eg. from traditional big ham to smaller sizes of top quality).
5. Refinement (Ito ham-perfumed ham-2 piece set for @5,000 ¥).
6. Key word-ecology, healthy (eg. specialty producers-salmon, wakame, crackers).
7. Ready to eat pot meals or sets (eg. fresh crab nabe, salmon nabe, seafood barbecue set).
8. Customized gifts (eg. gift coupon, recipient can choose food gift from catalog or list).

OCHUGEN TRENDS

1. Can use quickly (particle-ready to eat).
2. Gifts from high image shops in local area.
3. 100% pure juices are growing fast in popularity.
4. Beer sales have been levelling off.
5. For 3,000 ¥, min-can juice sets are very popular.
6. Whiskey which retails for 7,500-10,000 ¥.
7. 20% increase in sales of original set products.
8. 10,000 ¥ original fresh food sets are increasing in sales (local specialties).
9. Gift flowers are growing fast in popularity, increases of 50%.
10. Beautiful packaging for "on the table" baskets etc.
11. Fresh products with pictures of the grower, or farm, a personal touch.