



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Trade Commission**

## Giftware to the USA.

### Trends and opportunities

#### The market

The line between general gifts and decorative accessories is slowly disappearing, with **home furnishings still the dominant category**. The home furnishings segment (includes candles, picture frames, tabletop accessories and vases) was valued at US\$17 billion.

The most important **emerging trend in the general giftware sector is the move away from gifts purchased for another person**, to purchases increasingly being for the individuals themselves. Important product segments for self-purchases include: home furnishings, aromatherapy products, art candles, Christmas decorations, lamps, linens/throws and plush toys.

Seemingly unlimited access and exposure to new products, materials and resource markets has made US consumers impatient. As a result, **Australian suppliers need to have a steady supply of new designs, concepts and/or products** available for their distributors and buyers.

**American consumers are increasingly using the Internet for purchases**. More importantly, consumers are using it as part of their process for learning about and identifying products for purchases made in retail environments. The existence and accessibility of the Internet to consumers becomes a source of legitimacy for the manufacturer. It also becomes an opportunity to communicate information to receptive consumers. The website should be user friendly, providing easy navigation to product information.

**Jewellery in particular has sold well over the Internet**. Online sellers are often able to sell at lower prices due to fewer middlemen, lower overheads and a 24-hour store front. A search for the keyword 'jewellery' on eBay reveals close to 40,000 items.

**US gift convention organisers are the most experienced intermediaries between buyers and wholesalers**, and several have launched B2B websites (ie. [Americas Mart](#) and [Dallas Market Center](#)) designed to capitalise on their existing relationships and expertise.

While most B2B gift industry sites market product on behalf of suppliers, the web is also producing a cyber version of the **wholesale distributor** — a company in the US that will take ownership of the product and resell it to the retailers. Examples include [Farcountries.com](#) and [Whereoware](#).

#### Opportunities

The giftware category includes:

- ✦ **Art/prints, including fine art and ceramics** - Crossing the line between collectibles, investments and home decorative accessories, wall art is a growing sector.
- ✦ **Collectibles** - Companies providing corporate gifts, jewellery and sculptures are expected to experience good continued growth.
- ✦ **Greeting cards and stationery** - Greeting card sales are flat, due to the availability of e-cards on the Internet, but sales of gift wrap paper, ribbons and bags continue to rise. This industry is characterised by low margins and high competition, especially from key players Hallmark and American Greetings.
- ✦ **Lamps and lighting accessories**
- ✦ **Linen (also pillows, throws and rugs)** - Rapidly increasing in sales, as the market looks toward luxurious home furnishings.
- ✦ **Picture frames** - Steadily the most popular of the category, reflected by the family and home focus.
- ✦ **Tableware** - Growth products are white fine china with metallic trim, bridal gifts and children's dinnerware.
- ✦ **General gifts** — Includes aromatherapy products, candles, vases, etc.

#### More information

For further information please contact Austrade on 13 28 78 or email [info@austrade.gov.au](mailto:info@austrade.gov.au)

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