

TheStreet

5 Gifts Almost as Good as Cash -- And Way More Thoughtful

By Simon Constable | 12/15/15 - 08:17 AM EST

It's that holiday time again, when many of us rush out at the proverbial last minute to buy gifts for friends and family.

Or we opt for a simpler alternative that involves no crowded stores or long checkout lines: Cash.

Unfortunately, that doesn't go over well with everyone: Cash gifts have been criticized as showing a lack of both imagination and care. Money-themed gifts, however, are a different matter: Here are five that will suit budgets from small to large.

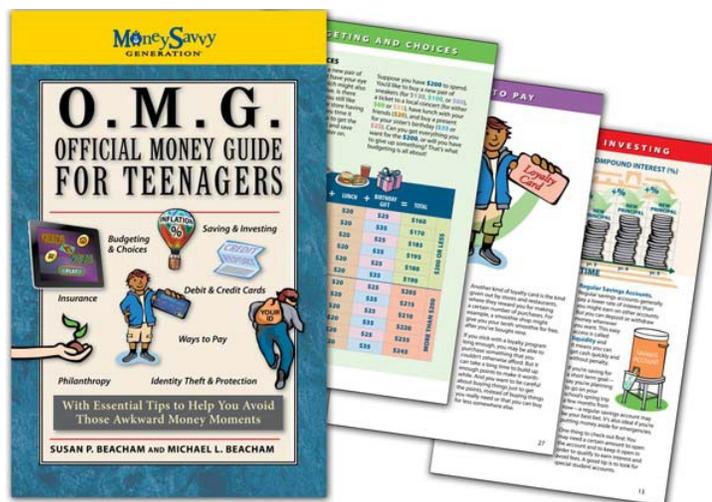


The Venezuelan bolivares pictured above may not be worth much, given the current state of the South American country's economy, but they're beautifully designed.

And they aren't nearly as expensive as the official exchange rate of \$1 to 6.3 Bolivares would suggest, that rate being something of a fiction.

Skyrocketing inflation means that, as of early December, \$1 would get you around 900 Bolivares on the black market, according to press reports. That makes the stash I own worth about 14 cents.

Get some, either at the official rate or from you friends when they return from Caracas, then put the bills in a picture frame.



If it's hard to talk about money with family, then doing so with teens is tougher still.

Susan Beacham has a solution with her **O.M.G. (Official Money Guide) for Teenagers**, around \$13 on **Amazon** ([AMZN](#) - [Get Report](#)). The real beauty with this book is its simplicity and brevity.

That combination makes it more likely to be read and, as such, more useful than any book on the subject that remains unread.



The more we use cash, the more change we have. And the more coins, the bigger the problem of what to do with them. That's where a piggy bank comes in.

But just because a gift is functional doesn't mean it has to be unattractive. Try this pretty little number from Dot and Bo, which will run you less than \$40.

Whoever you give this to may actually end up saving much more than the purchase price just because they have a designated place for all those pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. Believe it or not, they do add up -- and quite quickly.



The bull and the bear have long been symbols of Wall Street investors, so why not splurge and get your favorite financier a sculpture of both?

Since you don't want your gift to depress the recipient, try this solid bronze statue of a bull (which symbolizes a growing market) mauling a bear (which symbolizes the reverse) from the Large Art Company in Maryland. Prices are from \$445 to \$725 depending on the size; the smaller is 8 inches tall and the larger is 14 inches.

If that's too pricey, try Bull Bear bookends from online retailer Wayfair.com for about \$154.



For that very special someone, how about some stock? If the paperwork doesn't look impressive in a gift box, the money it generates is sure to go over well.

Eddy Elfenbein, who writes the Crossing Wall Street blog, recommends Disney (DIS - Get Report), the home of cartoon character Mickey Mouse (above) and the studio bringing the latest installment of the Star Wars franchise to movie theaters this month.

"The company has one of the strongest brand names in the world," he says. Performance over the past three decades has been insanely good, up 4600% not including dividends, which will add even more.

He warns that past performance may not indicate future results. But even if the stock does a fraction of that in the future, it would mean stellar gains for the owner.

One hundred shares of Disney will cost you a touch more than \$11,400 at the time of writing. If that's too much, just adjust the size to something that fits your budget.