PPB

The Magazine For Empowering Promotional Professionals

BUILD LOYALTY AND REVENUE WITH COMPANY STORES

PAGE 22

POSITIONING YOUR COMPANY FOR SALE

PAGE 69

THE YEAR OF THE LARGE DISTRIBUTOR

How big company revenues alone pushed 2015 sales to nearly $21 billion

PAGE 46

2015 PPAI DISTRIBUTOR SALES VOLUME REPORT

THE POWER OF BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

PAGE 42

CPSC: GOOD INTENTIONS DON'T COUNT

PAGE 65

JULY 2016 pubs.ppai.org

PPB

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS BUSINESS

2015 PPAI DISTRIBUTOR SALES REPORT • COMPANY STORES • OUTERWEAR • CALENDARS • FAIRS & FESTIVALS

JULY 2016

BEL PROMO

ASI 39552 PPAI 362224 SAGE 67337

All New Items

AST41

Low as **$4.05** (c)

11 oz Harbor Stainless Steel Stemless Wine Glasses

AKEY155

Low as **$2.05** (c)

AKEY154

Low as **$1.75** (c)

ABP909

Low as **$0.65** (c)

ABP911

Low as **$0.65** (c)

ALUN01

Low as **$2.08** (c)

7w x 5 h 6 Pk Cooler Lunch Bags

ABPK62

Low as **$2.65** (c)

ACAP64

Low as **$2.09** (c)

APG231

Low as **$7.15** (c)

18oz Brittania Glass Water Bottles
with Solid Silicone Sleeves

ASHB03

Low as **$3.49** (c)

24 oz. Atlas Plastic Shaker Bottles

54 oz.

ACAN10

Low as **$3.99** (c)

41 oz.

ACAN09

Low as **$3.49** (c)

Shop Our New Items: www.belpromo.com

SAGE | Web

More Features, More Freedom

SAGE Web™ is the solution for SAGE users who want to access SAGE data on any device, including Mac computers and Windows smartphones and tablets. With SAGE Web 2.0, you can search for products, look up customer information, manage orders, create presentations and access other SAGE Online information from any device with internet access!

SAGE Web is included with your Total Access subscription.

See more of the new features at
go.sageworld.com/SAGEWEB2.0

SAGE
800.925.7243
www.sageworld.com

One-Click Wonders

By Jen Alexander

COMPANY STORES CAN BE a valuable source of long-term revenue, so passing on the opportunity to build and maintain one for a client could keep you from maximizing your earning potential.
PAGE 22

From Ordinary To Extaordinary: The Year Of The Large Distributor

By Michaela Mora and Tina Berres Filipski

FOR THE FIRST TIME, large company sales revenues made the difference between a flat year and a record-breaking one—at nearly $21 billion. **PAGE 46**

ON THE COVER ILLUSTRATION BY LIGHTSPRING

4 **Perspectives**
Strength In Numbers
8 **Feedback**

11 INNOVATE
12 **Profile**
Wizard Creations
14 **Eye On Apparel**
Outerwear
20 **Question**

29 GROW
30 **Market To Market**
Fairs and Festivals
36 **Editor's Picks**
Calendars
42 **Sales**
The Power Of Business Etiquette

59 THINK
60 **Fast Forward**
65 **Product Responsibility**
Sometimes Good Intentions Are Not Enough
69 **Management**
Positioning Your Company For Sale
74 **Technology**
Cloud Computing

77 CONNECT
78 **Inside PPAI**
85 **Close Up**
Beth Lybrook
88 **Day In The Life**
David Hawes, MAS+
90 **Snapshots**
94 **People News**
96 **Datebook**
101 **New PPAI Members**

110 **The Creative Calendar**

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Joseph Landeros
PPAI GOVERNMENT RELATIONS MANAGER

30. 81. 250. 1,000. THESE NUMBERS are not just data points or talking points of a job well done. They tell a broader story of leadership, commitment, tenacity and creativity. These characteristics and more define the type of LEADers who participated in PPAI's annual Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.) in May (see the report on page 78). These LEADers were able to achieve these numbers with little more than hard work and commitment to their industry and their profession.

It's sometimes easy to get lost in the larger picture. 2015 was a record year for the promotional products industry, which reached $20.8 billion in sales. It's an amazing accomplishment, and certainly a worthwhile number to share, but behind that number are the people driving an industry to reach new heights. You may not realize it, but every day-to-day transaction you're making is advocating for the promotional products industry.

For **30** percent who attended L.E.A.D. this year, it was their first time to participate—myself included. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little bit nervous. But while new experiences can sometimes be intimidating, it was a relief to see all the attendees' excitement and commitment to advocacy while sharing the issues that matter most to the promotional products industry with their elected officials.

Seeing the **81** individuals who participated in L.E.A.D. reminded me of my previous work in the Texas Legislature. One of the many hats I wore involved partnering with individuals, businesses and associations to support the elected official or build support for a particular piece of legislation. The best part of this work was the people behind these coalitions who were willing to volunteer their time and resources to achieve a common goal. This undoubtedly was my favorite part of L.E.A.D. and a great introduction to the many committed individuals behind such a creative and versatile industry.

With approximately **250** meetings completed with senators, representatives and their staffs, our LEADers maximized the number of opportunities to advocate for the promotional products industry. This hard work and commitment was matched only by those who participated in the virtual fly-ins to echo the message our LEADers were sharing on Capitol Hill.

Throughout L.E.A.D., held during Promotional Products Work! Week, members participating in the virtual fly-in sent approximately **1,000** emails to their legislators, which gave those who didn't attend L.E.A.D. an opportunity to echo our message and maximize our presence on Capitol Hill. Calls to action, whether during L.E.A.D. or at any other time, show the versatility of advocacy while at the same time limiting our excuses for not engaging with our elected officials whom we sometimes deem inaccessible.

While L.E.A.D. may be over for this year, the need for continued advocacy still remains. Minimal progress at the federal level creates perfect opportunities for state-based legislative initiatives to come into the fold. With this comes the need for our industry to be proactive in sharing the importance of the promotional products industry with our local elected officials.

Continued engagement with our elected officials, whether local or federal, is paramount to the success of our message of the importance of the promotional products industry. July 15 marks the summer recess for Congress and an opportunity to invite your federal and local representative to visit your office or tour your warehouse, all in an effort to share your story.

PPAI has already made great strides though the L.E.A.D. Local initiative in an effort to share the importance of the promotional products industry at the state level. This important advocacy tool is something I hope to build on and empower our regional leadership to effectively execute in the near future.

For me, advocacy takes on more of a meaning than just its dictionary definition. To support a cause or issue, you have to understand not just the issue, but the people affected by it. I just recently began my new role here at PPAI and it wasn't until L.E.A.D. that I had the opportunity to meet the individuals with whom I had been communicating to truly get a sense of who I was advocating for.

L.E.A.D. involved just a fraction of the people who make up the promotional products industry but represented the thousands of individuals I will take pride in working for through my role as PPAI's government relations manager. PPB

Reach him at JosephL@ppai.org or 972-258-3015. Find details on legislative advocacy at www.ppai.org/inside-ppai/ppai-law/august-recess-advocacy

The Best Exit Strategy IN THE INDUSTRY

Getting into the Specialty Advertising/Promotional Marketing Industry is pretty easy today – it's getting out that is a lot harder! Without a great strategy and the best help, you will never get the full value from your distributorship.

We have the best Exit Strategy bringing you the most value and it has worked for many others for years and years. Don't get fooled by ads pretending to want to buy your business. If they have to trick you by hiding behind made up business names, why would you trust them?

We are Kaeser & Blair, the Original, the very first promotional distributor. We are the largest organization of independent business owners in the industry.

Let us show you how you can get substantially more for your business, receive additional bonus revenue from K&B and have fun while you are making the transition.

If you want to exit soon or simply plan for the next few years, get full information now.

KAESER & BLAIR INCORPORATED
Promotional Advertising Specialties

1-888-698-1684
www.kaeser-blair.com

Contact us in complete confidence to learn how lucrative our exit strategy will be for you. Our experienced executives welcome the opportunity to speak to you. Personal private meetings are available at all major industry shows. Complete confidentiality is always maintained.

PPB

PPAI
The Mark of a Professional®

EDITOR

Tina Berres Filipski
972-258-3084
TinaF@ppai.org

NEWS EDITOR
James Khattak
972-258-3052
JamesK@ppai.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Jen Alexander
972-258-3046
JenA@ppai.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Julie Richie
972-258-3091
JulieR@ppai.org

ART DIRECTION

YO!MEDIA, INC.
www.yomediainc.com
info@yomediainc.com
866-640-5733

ADVERTISING MANAGEMENT

MANAGER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Ellen Tucker
972-258-3095
EllenT@ppai.org

MAJOR ACCOUNT MANAGER - EAST
Joel Baker
972-258-3021
JoelB@ppai.org

MAJOR ACCOUNT MANAGER - WEST
Melissa Massey
972-258-3029
MelissaM@ppai.org

ACCOUNT MANAGER, A-D
Jeff Rogers
972-258-3090
JeffR@ppai.org

ACCOUNT MANAGER, E-K
Lameshia Haynes-Gilbert
972-258-3067
LameshiaHG@ppai.org

ACCOUNT MANAGER L-R, NUMBERS 0-9
Connie Brazil
972-258-3064
ConnieB@ppai.org

ACCOUNT MANAGER, S-Z
Kristi Pullen
972-258-3079
KristiP@ppai.org

ADVERTISING SPECIALIST
Lydia Gonzales
972-258-3076
LydiaG@ppai.org

PRESIDENT/CEO

Paul Bellantone, CAE
972-258-3050
PaulB@ppai.org

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Robert I. McLean Jr.
972-258-3085
BobM@ppai.org

VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Alan Peterson
972-258-3048
AlanP@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF EXPOSITIONS AND MEETINGS
Darel Cook
972-258-3075
DarelC@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
AJ Hunter
972-258-3086
AJH@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Paul Elfstrom
972-258-3071
PaulE@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND REGIONAL RELATIONS
Carol Gauger, MAS
972-258-3088
CarolG@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Anne Stone
972-258-3041
AnneL@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Rachel Robichaud
972-258-3030
RachelR@ppai.org

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
Keith Vincent
972-258-3040
KeithV@ppai.org

BOARD OFFICERS

CHAIR OF THE BOARD
Tom Goos, MAS
Image Source, Inc.
Tom@imagesourceteam.com

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Rick Brenner, MAS+
RFBrenner, LLC
RickB@rickbrenner.com

CHAIR-ELECT OF THE BOARD
Mary Jo Tomasini, MAS
CE Competitive Edge, LLC
mjtomasini@competitive-edge.net

BOARD MEMBERS

TERMS EXPIRING 2017
Tom Goos, MAS
Image Source, Inc.
Tom@imagesourceteam.com

Kim Newell
World Wide Lines, Inc.
kim.newell@worldwideline.com

TERMS EXPIRING 2018
Mary Jo Tomasini, MAS
CE Competitive Edge, LLC
mjtomasini@competitive-edge.net

TERMS EXPIRING 2019
Dale T. Denham, MAS+
Geiger
dale.denham@geiger.com

Norm Hullinger
alphabroder
nhullinger@alphabroder.com

TERMS EXPIRING 2020
Brittany David, CAS
SnugZ USA
brittany@snugzusa.com

Perry Wehrle
PAW Marketing, Inc.
perry@pawmarketing.com

MEMBER-AT-LARGE
Larry Cohen
Axis Promotions
larry@axispromotions.com

REGIONAL ASSOCIATION COUNCIL DELEGATE TERM EXPIRING 2017
Scott Hareid, Hareid Marketing, shareid@promo-connections.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Debbie Abergel, Jack Nadel International; Jeffrey Batson, CAS, Next Products, Inc.; Suzan Bolski, MAS, Anything Goes Promotions, Inc.; Craig Dickens, Suntex Industries; Jeff Mockbee, Theinfopeople LLC; Joe Nguyen, Better Life Industries, LLC; Kim Reinecker, MAS, Starline USA, Inc.; Carrie Sabo, MAS, American Ad Bag Co.; Jeff Schmitt, MAS, Cedric Spring & Associates; Bill Petrie, Brandivate; Kate Plummer, CAS, Clearmount Plastics Limited; Andrea Smith, MAS, The Vernon Company; Lance Stier, Chocolate Inn/Taylor & Grant; Chris Stumpf, CAS, Doulos Threads; Michael Wolaver, Magellan Promotions, LLC. PPAI Board Liaison: Norm Hullinger

PPAI HEADQUARTERS
3125 Skyway Circle North, Irving, Texas 75038-3526 Phone: 888-IAM-PPAI (426-7724) www.ppai.org, pubs.ppai.org

READER RESOURCES

SUBSCRIBE TO *PPB*: Subscribe online at pubs.ppai.org or send your name, title, company name and mailing address, along with phone and fax, to *PPB* Subscriptions, 3125 Skyway Circle North, Irving, Texas 75038. Or phone in your subscription to 972-258-3044. Include payment with your order. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted, along with checks. Additional member subscriptions are $58 for PPAI member companies (U.S.), $70 (Canada and Mexico) and $75 (international). Nonmember subscriptions are $72 (U.S.), $82 (Canada and Mexico) and $92 (international). Please allow four to six weeks for start of subscription.
ADVERTISE IN *PPB*: Download a media kit with rates and specs for all PPAI print and digital publications at pubs.ppai.org or call 888-444-6627 or e-mail mediasales@ppai.org.
WRITE FOR *PPB*: The magazine regularly accepts articles from both professional writers and industry experts—like yourself. Find out everything you need to know about submitting an article or an idea by requesting a copy of *PPB*'s Writer's Guidelines at 972-258-3084 or ppb@ppai.org.

BPA WORLDWIDE BUSINESS

BEST SELLER!

Custom Coolie®

#CC61. Patented!

- Available in 5 New Solid Colors: Texas Orange, Mauve, Pastel Pink, Pastel Blue & Pastel Green
- Durable polyester covered scuba foam
- Holds 12-16 aluminum cans, long necks & water bottles

Pastel PinkPastel GreenMauve

Texas OrangePastel Blue

New Colors!

$.49 (c) Min. 250

Foam Insulators

#BI800 Polar Pal All Foam Insulator

#PC3000 Chiller® Foam w/Coaster

- Closed Cell Foam
- Holds 12-16oz Cans/Bottles

$.89 (c) Min. 200

Party Cup #PC16

- 16oz Plastic Cup w/White Interior
- Available in 8 Colors
- Available w/ optional thumb-slide lid

NEW!

MADE IN USA

$1.85 (c) Min. 100

Bike Bottle #BB20

MADE IN USA

- Available with white, red, blue or black push-pull lid
- White 20oz Bottle
- Hand Wash only

$.89 (c) Min. 100

Igloo® Beverage Jug #LT70

- 1/2 Gallon Jug
- Swing Carry Handle
- Pour Spout & Screw-On Lid
- Available in 7 Colors

MADE IN USA

$8.99 (d) Min. 36

Custom Coolie® #CC61C

- 4-Color Process
- Durable polyester covered scuba foam
- Holds cans & bottles
- Folds flat

4 COLOR PROCESS

$1.19 (c) Min. 250

Deposit Bag #N21CT

MADE IN USA

- Free Setup (1 Color 1 Location)
- Available in 21 Tex-O-Leather Colors
- Measures w10-1/2" x 5-1/2"

$1.65 (c) Min. 150

Canvas Tote #CT402N

MADE IN USA

- Available in 12-18" handle colors
- Screen print up 5 colors
- Measures w14" x 11" x 3"

$2.49 (d) Min. 150

Stadium Cushion #SC1011

MADE IN USA

- Closed-Cell Foam Cushion
- Available in 7 Colors
- FREE KEY FLOAT
- Measures w11" x 15" x 3/4"

$3.99 (c) Min. 96

Shown w/portrait imprint

Pricing effective through 8/31/16. Screen Charge: $50(g) per color (where available) on all items. $50(g) per layout on 4-color process.
These products are intended for use by individuals 16 years of age or older.

CPI Custom Printing

CUSTOM CREST

amaco igloo LASER CREST

ASI 47971 PPAI 113674 SAGE 50836 UPIC CUSTOMCR

Contact Us:

customer@customcrest.com or
1-800-234-5740

www.customcrest.com

twitter @CPI47971

Scan code for more promtional products

Like Us On facebook
Search: Custom Printing II

L.E.A.D. Brings The Industry Together

PPAI took the industry's message to Capitol Hill May 25–26 for the seventh annual Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.). More than 80 member volunteers and staff took part, holding nearly 250 visits with legislators and their aides from 30 states to discuss the industry's interests, while members participating through the virtual fly-in contributed nearly 1,000 emails to their legislators to voice their concerns.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Send feedback on articles in *PPB* or opinions on industry issues to JamesK@ppai.org.

I DON'T SAY "GOOD JOB" TOO OFTEN, but good job this year getting the word out about the specific federal issues that affect us all in our industry. Also, the daily calls for action [PPAI's L.E.A.D. Virtual Fly-In] were well done. In only a few minutes, we were able to participate and show our congressmen the issues important to *lots* of their constituents.

David A. Katseff, MAS
President
MasterCast and Marken Industries
Pawtucket, Rhode Island
UPIC: MastMark

SEEING AN ARTICLE IN ASI's *Promogram* on PPAI's L.E.A.D. made me reflect on changes in the industry over the past few years. I feel that both organizations are more interested in moving forward than rehashing past events. And we're focused on positive energy and activity, not the negatives of either group. It feels good, and it's better for everyone.

Steven Meyer
Vice President of Sales
RiteLine, LLC
Dallas, Texas
UPIC: RiteLine PPB

"The daily calls for action were well done. In only a few minutes, we were able to participate and show our congressmen the issues important to *lots* of their constituents."

SHOW YOUR TEAM ALLEGIANCE WITH

PORT & COMPANY®

FAN FAVORITE TEES

32 COLLEGIATE & PRO TEAM COLORS

AVAILABLE IN ADULT, LADIES AND YOUTH SIZING, THESE 4.5-OUNCE, 100% RING SPUN COTTON TEES ARE EXCEPTIONALLY SOFT AND GENUINELY MATCH YOUR FAVORITE COLLEGIATE AND PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAM COLORS.

FAMILY OWNED • CUSTOMER FOCUSED • SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE • AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTS • DEEP ON-HAND INVENTORY • SALES-BOOSTING MARKETING TOOLS

CATALOGS • ONLINE 800.426.6399 • SANMAR.COM

SANMAR 45 years

UPIC: Pioneer
ASI 78200
SAGE 56460

Epic Win

Balloons • Table Covers • Banner Displays
Event Tents • Flags • Balls

Visit **pioneerline.com** today for complete ordering information.

pioneer LINE

USA ©2016 PBC BM-PPB1602001

INNOVATE

BLAZE A TRAIL IN BUSINESS

12 Magic Touch // **PROFILE**
14 Outerwear // **EYE ON APPAREL**
20 Supplier Surprise // **QUESTION**
22 One-Click Wonders // **FEATURE STORY**

STORE FRONT AND CENTER

Company stores can be a valuable source of long-term revenue, so passing on the opportunity to build and maintain one for a client could keep you from maximizing your earning potential. Find out how on page 22.

MAGIC TOUCH

LUKE FREEMAN PULLS CREATIVE BRANDING SOLUTIONS OUT OF HIS COMPANY'S HAT

By Julie Richie

SOME OF THE WORLD'S most renowned companies were started in a garage–among them, Apple Computer and Disney. Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based distributor Wizard Creations (UPIC: Wizard2), shares this origin story as well. Luke Freeman, the company's founder and president, began his promotional career helping out in his parents' garage-based screen-printing business while growing up in Bloomington, Illinois. His father, an art teacher, and his mother, a stay-at-home mom, started the side business to generate more income.

"My earliest memory of helping the business was when I was about three years old," Freeman says. "My dad handed me a squeegee and said, 'Let's print some shirts!'" Along with his two brothers, he helped his parents print and sell t-shirts to local high schools, clubs and other student organizations.

Freeman's parents sold their business just before he graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a business and marketing degree, and Freeman entered the corporate world. Within a few years he was managing a large sales team at a national apparel company, but the pull of entrepreneurship and the promotional industry was strong.

"I saw an opportunity to start my own business, taking the small-business experience I gained from watching my parents in their garage and mirroring it with my corporate experience. The combination of having a diverse background in small business and large corporate business is what has made Wizard Creations so successful today," Freeman says.

The company's name honors Freeman's father, an amateur magician who often performed magic tricks to entertain Freeman and his friends while he was growing up.

The Golden Rule

Everyone knows the Golden Rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated. But how many businesses use that as a guiding principle of customer service? Wizard Creations does. "We are currently celebrating our 10th year in business. Over the past 10 years

we have doubled in size year over year because we run our business by following the Golden Rule," Freeman says. "No matter the size of the client, we treat everyone exactly the same by delivering the highest quality products at the lowest possible pricing."

The company's approach to customer service is innovative and proactive. "Every one of our sales reps out in the field has two personal administrative support employees, called client development managers, because we never want our clients waiting on a quote, art proof or tracking number," Freeman explains. "We have a two-hour guarantee across the board. If you send in a request for a quote or an art proof, you will receive it back within two hours. This is unheard of in the industry and what truly sets us apart from our competition."

Full-Service Solutions

Freeman has made one-stop marketing and branding solutions his company's mission. "We offer in-house design and production as well as warehousing and fulfillment. These solutions are tied directly into our proprietary online company webstores we run for our clients. Many of the country's largest and most recognized brands trust Wizard Creations to manage their marketing programs because they know that the process will be handled for them without the worry of poor quality or missed deadlines." The company's clients include ADT, Carnival Cruise Lines, Zaxby's, State Farm, Tire Kingdom and Wonder Bread, and professional sports organizations including the Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, Florida Panthers, Miami Marlins and the NBA.

The biggest part of the company's business is its professional and collegiate license division, called For The Fans™, which focuses on creating custom sports merchandise for professional, collegiate and high school team fans.

Overseas sourcing has become the fastest growing part of Freeman's business. "The promotional products industry has become very commoditized," Freeman says. "In an effort to compete against this, we want to source products that are completely unique in nature for our clients' brands and corporate initiatives."

Overcoming Obstacles

In 2014, a private equity firm bought the company's single largest client and dismantled it, shocking Freeman and the rest of his team. "The hardest lesson to learn as an entrepreneur is that not everything is under your control," he says.

"This was a multimillion-dollar, multi-year agreement encompassing over 80 locations nationally. We provided this client with every aspect of their marketing collateral from uniforms to promotional products and printing. To lose this account through no fault of our own was incredibly devastating."

But, Freeman adds, there was a silver lining. "We took this hardship and turned it into a positive outcome. We focused on restructuring our sales department, changing from individual goals to team-based goals, so that the more the company sold, the better everyone did. It created a team environment around winning."

While some companies might implement a hiring freeze or even lay off people after such a setback, Freeman did the opposite. "The extra bodies were tough to absorb at first, but ultimately it helped us perfect our sales process and allowed our other core sales professionals and me to spend more time in the field with our existing business. This led to growth in our existing client base to new product lines, and it also led to referrals," Freeman says. In 2015, not only did the company make up for all the business it lost, but also increased its business by 30 percent. In 2016, business is up more than 40 percent in the first quarter. "It feels so rewarding to overcome obstacles, especially when you have an incredible team backing you up," he adds. PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

Wizard Creations' Founder and President **Luke Freeman** (center) and wife Mara (center right) with the rest of the Wizard Creations team at the company's headquarters in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Not Just Jackets

THE LATEST PROMOTIONAL OUTERWEAR HAS YOU COVERED, FROM HEAD TO … FINGERS.

By Julie Richie

THOUGH CURRENT TEMPERATURES MAKE it hard to believe, it won't be long before frost appears on the lawn and you have to throw on a jacket and sweatpants to take the dog on its morning jaunt. In fact, many weather experts predict that La Niña, a widespread cooling of ocean water in the equatorial Pacific, will bring colder temperatures to much of the Northern Plains, Midwest, Northeast and West Coast this winter. Given the memory of frigid temperatures from the winter of 2013, which led to a whopping $6.9 billion in retail spending on outerwear and outdoor footwear and accessories according to market research firm The NPD Group, it's always better to be prepared for the cold.

Knowing the probability of impending colder-than-normal weather in much of the country this winter, you can already anticipate the opportunity for promotional outerwear to keep brands visible. There's no doubt that people will remember the name of the company that kept them warm. Start pitching ideas to clients and potential clients now and jump ahead of the competition. Here are some great items to get you started.

Outerwear With Flair

This classic leather **bomber jacket** not only looks great with dress slacks, jeans or khakis, it also blocks out the wind and cold. It features a soft satin quilted lining with leather cuffs and waistband. Two interior pockets hold personal items. It comes in black and sizes S-XL. Tall sizes are available in XL-4XL. **Beacon Promotions** *UPIC: BEACONP www.beacon-promotions.com*

The **Alpental jacket** can keep up with those who prefer extreme adventure. The 100-percent nylon plain weave style is fully insulated and lined with soft fleece. The jacket is fully seam-sealed, waterproof and breathable. The stand collar conceals a hood, adjustable cuffs provide added comfort and Cutter & Buck pennant embroidery at the back collar finishes the look. **Cutter & Buck** // *UPIC: CUTT0001* // *www.cutterbuck.com*

The wooly mammoth of sweatshirts, this **full-zip sweatshirt jacket** is lined with the insulating warmth of 5.5-ounce Sherpa fleece and has a generous fit for layering. Colors include army/natural, cocoa/natural and navy/natural, and it comes in sizes XS-3XL. Black/natural goes up to 4XL. **Independent Trading** // *UPIC: Trading* // *www.independenttrading.com*

Take a stroll—or a jog—in the **Run Away Jacket**. This water-resistant, woven full-zip jacket protects you from the elements, while its secure side zipper pockets and headphone loophole offer additional convenience and functionality. Other features include a reflective zipper chest pocket and center back for visibility in low light, a drop tail for extra coverage and antimicrobials to keep you clean and fresh. It's available in sizes S-2XL.
Expert Brand // *UPIC: Exper698* // *www.expertbrand.com*

Stay warm while texting with these 100-percent acrylic three finger activation **text gloves**. Conducting fiber located in three fingertips makes these gloves fully compatible with touch screen devices. Each glove is decorated with a Fusion Embroidery patch or Fusion DigiPrint patch up to 1 ¼-inch square. Available in eight different colors. **SunTex Industries** // *UPIC: SUNTEX* // *www.mainstsun.com*

RELEVANT RETAIL TRENDS

WHEN CONSULTING WITH CLIENTS ON PROMOTIONAL OUTERWEAR CHOICES, TAKE YOUR CUE FROM WHAT'S POPULAR AT RETAIL. HERE ARE THREE OUTERWEAR TRENDS TO CONSIDER:

1 Dessert-inspired colors

New fall and winter colors are inspired by sherbet flavors like orange, lime and strawberry.

With a 100-percent polyester shell, this sleek, water-resistant wind **vortex jacket** has side welt pockets, a contrast full-zipper front and a contrast zipper on the right chest pocket as well as elastic cuffs. Choose from size S-XL. Colors include black, granite and navy. **Heritage Sportswear/Virginia T's** // *UPIC: HERI0002* // *www.heritagesportswear.com*

Lightweight quilting adds warmth without weight, while stretch bonded fabric adds extra mobility to this **hybrid jacket**. The jacket is water repellent and has an elasticized draw cord at the bottom for fit flexibility. It's available in men's and women's sizes S-3XL. **Vantage Apparel** // *UPIC: vantage* // *www.vantageapparel.com*

2 Technology friendly

Outerwear that has pockets for smartphones, or even better, charging capacity, is highly desired by today's tech-obsessed end users.

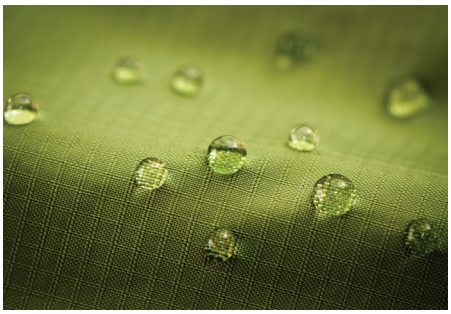
3 Easy on the earth

If it's made from recycled or renewable materials, people, especially Millennials, want to wear it.

Made in part with recycled polyester from plastic bottles, the **Champion® Double Dry Eco® Pullover Hood** includes eight color-block options. These optimized color pairings are ideal for practice squads, booster clubs and student organizations. This nine-ounce, 50/50 cotton-polyester fleece is comfortable, durable and environmentally conscious.
Hanes/Champion // *UPIC: HBIINC* // *www.hanesbullseye.com*

Innovations In Outerwear

SOLAR POWERED Solar energy has been around long enough that rooftop solar panels barely register a passing look these days. But now outerwear is harnessing the power of the sun. The ThermalTech jacket, made with strong yet lightweight stainless steel mesh fabric, uses solar power rather than capturing body heat to warm the wearer. According to its website, "ThermalTech is designed to capture the sun's ultraviolet rays and energy from artificial light sources to convert and store as heat—increasing the in-clothing temperature by 18°F in only two minutes!"



WATERPROOF BREATHABILITY Voormi, a small Colorado-based company, has produced a technology that can create a waterproof, breathable textile with only a single layer of material. *WIRED* magazine called it "the most significant advancement in outdoor clothing since the first Gore-Tex jacket with a waterproof-breathable membrane debuted in the mid-1970s." Foul weather gear, sleeping bags and other outdoor items just might get a little lighter.

BETTER BACTERIA Spider silk has been the envy of manmade fiber for years, given its natural durability and elasticity. Now outerwear brand The North Face has partnered with a Japanese company named Spiber to create the Moon Parka, which is made out of QMONOS (the name is derived from the Japanese term for spiderweb), an all-new fiber created from bioengineered bacteria that has the same look and feel as spider silk, which is considered the toughest material in the world.

Keep off the chill with this 52-inch USA-made custom **elite scarf** with contrasting or single-side designs. **Cap America** // *UPIC: CAPAMRCA* // *www.capamerica.com*

Stay warm and comfy wearing this **camo knit cap**. The 12-inch knit is a mix of cotton and polyester. (The Oilfield camo is a cotton twill, and the blaze orange is 100-percent polyester.) An acrylic lining ensures a warm, snug fit. It's available in one size and 13 patterns, including Realtree® All Purpose in brown, tan, white, pink/brown, blaze/black; Mossy Oak® Breakup/black; and Realtree Max 5. **Kati Sportcap & Bag** // *UPIC: KATI* // *www.katisportcap.com*

With a classic fit, this fleece-lined **all-season vest** has a 100-percent polyester shell with water-repellent finish. The anti-pilling microfleece liner and full-length storm flap combine with zippered pockets and a drop tail back to make for a comfortable jacket for cool fall days or warmer winter days. **Landway International Corp.** // *UPIC: landway* // *www.landway.com* PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

SUPPLIER SURPRISE

Q:

A DISTRIBUTOR ASKS: I had a meeting with a newer contact at an established client. This person was new to the role of business line marketing manager, so we were discussing additional opportunities to work together. I knew that her department did Lucite® awards and that there could be an opportunity for our company, since we have been doing Lucite for other departments as well as for other clients. The client was open to it but said it would have to be down the road as they had just signed a contract with a supplier for the year. The name was one that rang a bell for me. When I returned to the office, I looked up the name and confirmed that it was a promotional product supplier that we have used. I contacted them and received the explanation that the supplier did not sell direct to the end user but they did have a division that did. Is that different? Should that matter to me as a distributor? In some years we did $100,000 in business with this supplier and now they are my competitor. What would you do?

A:

IF A SUPPLIER HAS A DIVISION that sells direct, then they are a distributor's competitor to watch. There is not much you can do after the fact. The question to ask is, how did this supplier-distributor get to this client? Maybe distributors need to market their businesses more proactively and be a step ahead.

Gloria Lafont
President/Owner
Action Marketing Co.
UPIC: A656637

ALTHOUGH ANNOYED UPFRONT with the information presented, I would merely turn the tables on your client and ask what they might do if one of their competitors was doing this to them. Remain calm and further explain your identification with their firm for all these years and ask what you might do to assist them

in their new capacity. Be frank, yet calm. Maybe ask another longtime, trusted confidant/friend in this firm about your relationship with them and how to secure more business with the new decision maker. Again, remain calm, and don't ever complain to someone who can't help you. Reach out with pride and professionalism 24/7.

Gary M. Murphy, CAS
President
IMAGE WEST
UPIC: IMAG0007

THERE ARE MULTIPLE LUCITE award manufacturers. It's time to find one of the many who are trustworthy. Reporting this supplier on an industry scorecard and executing a proactive outreach to Lucite clients are appropriate actions.

Kevin McHargue
Director of Business Development
PromoPlacement, Inc.
UPIC: P629267

WE DO NOT DO BUSINESS with folks that do business directly with the clients in our industry. On occasion a client has asked for something that I had to get from another vendor, and that is when I might find a vendor that will go directly to the client.

So many steps are taken to ensure that all is invisible when we do our orders with most PPAI companies, and then to have one actually tell me that they do business with the clients? I am not in the habit of competing with myself for business. Why would it be necessary to go to all the expense and time to have a PPAI number, or an ASI number, or a SAGE number if anyone can go right around you and get the same pricing? It wouldn't. I also hesitate to provide companies with logos to do presentations; I prefer to do that in-house. That way if the client doesn't purchase that item, the vendor won't be either giving the company's name and logo to someone in their circle that will go after your client, or going after them on their own.

Business can be nasty. It can be tasteless. So you have to protect your interests. We use only the top companies and they must have a five-star rating. I think this protects our interests. But then again, you will always have someone trying to go around the company or individual who really worked hard for the account.

If someone will do this for you (meaning they'll give you leads), then they will do it to you. Simple as it seems, it is up to all of us to police those situations.

Debi Hendrix
Vice President
Graphics Network, Inc

I WOULD DEVOTE MY VALUABLE time, energy and resources to developing mutually beneficial relationships with people I trust and enjoy doing business with. Trying to change the behavior of others, whether they are unethical or just uncooperative, is frustrating and futile. Put them in the rear-view mirror where they belong and focus on the future. PPB

David J. Hawes, MAS+
Brand Architect
Geiger
UPIC: Geiger

DO YOU HAVE AN ANSWER?

A DISTRIBUTOR ASKS:
We are in the midst of planning our annual end-user showcase and were wondering if anyone has some interesting twists or ideas to make it more appealing to our clients. We currently ask our best suppliers to exhibit, and we don't charge the suppliers; also, we provide lunch for everyone—attendees and suppliers. We try to have it at a venue that is centrally located, has good parking and easy access. Our goal is to increase the number of vendors and attendees 25 percent each year and at the same time offer something unique to clients. Although we have had great success in the past, we are always looking for ways to improve and get better attendance. I would love to hear what others have been successful with.

WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER? Email answers along with your name, title and company name to Question@ppai.org by **July 22** for possible inclusion in an upcoming issue of *PPB* magazine.

ONE-CLICK WONDERS

Company stores build long-term business for distributors

By Jen Alexander

LIKE A DUCK IN THE WATER, successful company stores on the surface appear to operate effortlessly, while underneath an intricate, well-timed series of steps is carried out to maintain the store's profitable momentum. Company stores can be a valuable source of long-term revenue, so passing on the opportunity to build and maintain one for a client could keep you from maximizing your earning potential.

"In today's world, ecommerce is in almost everyone's lives," says Dan Halama, president and founder of supplier Bright Stores, Inc., in Denver, Colorado. "Ecommerce is influencing our daily lives, and because of that clients expect to be able to order online. That requires a company store of some kind, and not having one makes a distributor look behind the times."

In Halama's view, the company store "has effectively replaced the order form. I can remember, in the 1990s, sending and receiving order forms by fax. Now the order form better be [accessible] on their mobile phone," he says.

Bobby Lehew, CAS, believes the primary reason—and subsequently the most profitable one—a distributor should want to offer company stores is because they can secure long-term accounts with residual sales and lifetime values into the millions.

"Traditional statistics in the industry place average client turnover (for clients without a store) at about two years; clients with a store, on average, well exceed this number and can climb into several years or more of loyalty," says Lehew, chief branding officer for distributor ROBYN in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. "A $250,000 store represents a lifetime value of $1.7 million. A well-run store will last through multiple buyer transitions and provide stability for both you and the client."

Few distributors would argue that launching a company store is a laborious task requiring a great deal of manpower and capital—financial and technical, and the steps involved can seem daunting, especially to smaller firms.

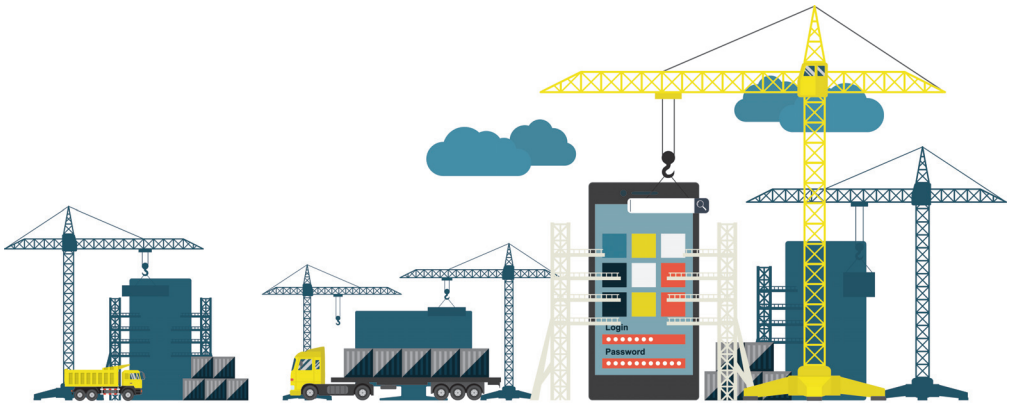
DISMISS MISCONCEPTIONS

Distributors might believe that company stores are only for large clients, but this is no longer the case, says Halama. "Fifteen years ago when we started, company stores were reserved for large companies. Now they are more popular among medium-sized and small clients. It helps them control their brand and spend."

Your client may be a 500-person corporation, or it may be a mom-and-pop diner with a fan base that spans generations. Either way, a company store can help ensure an ongoing source of revenue for both distributor and client. "If you want to compete, even for a small business, with $30,000 to $50,000 in annual spend … it's kind of low, but they qualify. Even if they're only spending $30,000, the margin is $10,000," says Halama.

Lehew says after 25 years of experience and 10 years educating fellow distributors on company stores, he has drawn this conclusion: "They are complex, take a lot of work, and, surprisingly, can even be contentious (while still profitable), but moreover, they can be fruitful—if you are selective about taking on customers who value your service.

"Clients who value your merchandising skills and full-service offerings are purchasing convenience as well as your skillfulness in resolving complex workflows. Any time there is complexity, there is room for profit. Any time you are reducing their labor costs or saving them in opportunity costs, there is room for profit," he says. "The golden rule of company stores is profit. Gross



BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY STORE

Does your client want a company store? Start by asking these questions:

- What products or types of products do they want?
- What minimums will be listed?
- Will individuals be placing orders or will one person be ordering for everyone?
- Will items be shipped to a set business address or individual addresses?
- What payment methods will be used?
- How quickly will the customer expect to receive the product after placing an order?
- Will the customer require a specific domain name for the store?
- What are the customer's expectations for order volume?

Complex, custom company stores may include several or all of these elements:

- Custom site design
- Complicated products with many variants
- Variable data print products
- Approval rules
- Spending accounts and promotions
- Third-party software integrations
- Digital asset management
- Dynamic imaging and document creation
- User groups
- Custom order workflows

sales tell you who you work for, gross profit tells you who works for you, but net profit tells you what works—period."

John Campbell, director of corporate solutions for distributor HALO Branded Solutions in Sterling, Illinois, says his firm's clients are most often looking for stores that can fulfill B2B requests for employee giveaways, clients and trade shows, personal purchases by employees, and awards and incentives for employees or sales teams.

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Distributors who do offer company store opportunities to clients are most likely going to either manage back-end operations themselves, or work with providers that specialize in setting up and managing company stores on their behalf.

"Our most complicated stores have many hundreds of hours of development time into them and are continually evolving as the needs of our more demanding clients warrant. In terms of maintenance, your day-to-day operations may include catalog management, order processing, user management and spending account management," says Eric Granata, ecommerce director at ROBYN. "There are ways to automate or simplify each of these tasks, which will depend on what ecommerce platform your store is built on."

Campbell says his company's clients often want to know if PCI compliance for processing credit card payments is available, and what costs are associated with website development and hosting, and fulfillment services. Distributors, therefore, should at least understand how to integrate with a client's procurement system to maximize single-sign-on and punch-out shopping cart capabilities.

Many clients don't speak to Granata's team in technical terms; rather, they share pain points and ask ROBYN staff to educate them on a solution. "For this reason we spend a lot of time educating the client and managing their expectations before we begin the building process.

"For the distributor, a basic understanding of HTML, CSS and JS, while helpful, is not necessary if you are using one of the many company store solutions on the market," he adds. "Many technology providers will provide custom development and integration services as well. If you're after larger and more complex programs, then you want someone on your team with more technical prowess."

TAKE OWNERSHIP

When it comes to deciding who will shoulder the responsi-

bility for the myriad elements of a company store, a detailed service agreement is crucial. "Written agreements are effective when inventory is part of a store program as it relates to ownership of inventory and payment for product," says Halama.

With SAGE's company stores, the distributor is responsible for working with the customer to identify the products they want on the store, building the store and handling fulfillment," says Ryan Hanchey, distributor sales manager for Dallas, Texas-based business service provider SAGE. "The client is responsible for picking out products and placing the orders."

Lehew cautions against setting up employee stores for large firms that don't want to subsidize the cost of items, but rather want employees to pay out of pocket the full price of products such as branded apparel. "Less than five percent of a company's employees will pay for branded merchandise out of their own pocket," he says.

"Often, a store will look promising because they have 1,000 employees. But apply the five-percent rule and multiply that by one reasonably priced shirt, and you see that instead of a six-figure program, you have a $1,000 program. In this industry, that's an order, not a store."

Hanchey encourages distributors to set and manage expectations with customers, especially where timelines are concerned. "Until you have done a store or two, don't promise the world until you fully understand your personal limits as well as the store's limits," he says.

ONE OF THE KEYS TO BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY STORE IS TO **DIG DEEP INTO YOUR CUSTOMERS' MINDS**.

KNOW THE 'WHY' BEHIND THE 'WHAT'

One of the keys to building and maintaining a successful company store is to dig deep into your customers' minds, learn their goals and offer a store that's custom-tailored to the client and the client's end user.

"The primary reason … a company wants a store is to make the handling of branded merchandise easier: to broaden the offering to multiple locations (divisions, employees, etc) while simultaneously controlling the branding and the purchasing," says Lehew. "It's more about convenience, simplicity and control than it is about merchandising—though each is crucial."

Whether they come to life as general promotional products stores, inventoried fulfillment sites, uniform stores, employee recognition stores or affiliate marketing stores, successful company stores are built on the driving purposes of order efficiencies, spending controls and brand management, says Halama.

"The B2C space is still influencing the expectations of our clients. This translates into demand for a well-designed, mobile responsive 'shopping' experience with robust search features, lots of images and product information, and a fast checkout process," Granata adds.

"One danger in launching a new company store is the fact that neither you nor the customer may know [initially] how a store will actually need to work in order to be effective,"

Lehew notes. "Often, a customer will come to you with a need for a store—usually, they are trying to resolve one particular pain point—and not fully understanding the entire organization's demand (hidden within all store requests are not simply one pain point but multiple pain points).

"This is normal, but it's also why a store is an organic process. [It is] a sapling that, if nurtured correctly, will grow into a large oak, but it requires cooperation with the customer," he says.

HALO shares a similar nurturing approach to its clients' company stores, says Campbell, believing that support entails more than facilitating traditional dropship sales. "Our model is much more than adding to the bottom line directly from a single program. Greater benefits are gained by supporting the client's programs in order to become the preferred or exclusive distributor. This brings additional value to our account executives as well as to HALO," he says.

Granata says most of his company's clients are looking to control purchasing without adding friction for the end buyer. "This is typically accomplished with payment methods such as purchase orders, P-cards and, in some cases, cost centers and approval rules."

Campbell adds that HALO store clients often want to know whether inventory can be stored and made available on demand to end users, whether products can be changed, and what costs are associated with fulfillment services, website creation and hosting.

"The most important thing is to do a thorough needs analysis and investigate the opportunity," says Halama. "It's important for distributors to qualify their company store opportunities. Not all are profitable, because if the client is too stringent, the distributor won't make money."

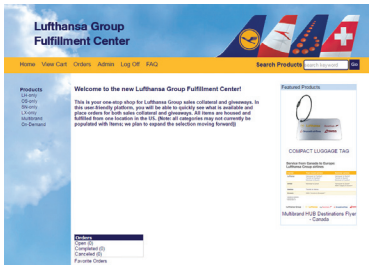
Hanchey agrees. "It all comes down to asking the right questions from the start. Find out as much information as you can so you can determine if a company store is going to be mutually beneficial," he says. PPB

COMPANY STORES: A DISTRIBUTOR'S TALE

PERRY WEHRLE, PRESIDENT OF PAW Marketing, Inc. in Des Moines, Iowa, and a member of the PPAI Board of Directors, shares his experience providing company stores to clients.

PPB **Describe your early experiences with company stores. What type of store(s) were you helping develop for clients, and what industry or industries did those first clients operate in?**

Wehrle Early on we relied on and partnered with third-party vendors who worked within our industry and were well versed in what was needed to have an entry-level online store. Our primary client was an insurance company that embraced the co-op business model in which the client paid for half of the cost of the item and the end user—an insurance agent—paid for the other half. This model allowed for very robust sales. After all, who would not like to pay for just half of any promotional item?



PPB **What sorts of challenges or trial-and-error moments can you recall, and how did you remedy them going forward?**

Wehrle Our biggest challenge is dealing with tight deadlines. When an end user places an order at 3 pm and believes that the order will be shipped at 3:05, this just won't happen. We are being pushed daily by our client to provide a quicker turnaround time and, in reality, it does take a few hours to accommodate standard orders. Sure, we get those rush orders, and we do everything possible to make those events. But in the end, communication is what we tell our clients is important all the time.

PPB **What are clients' most common concerns about company store management and maintenance, and how do you alleviate those concerns?**

Wehrle The first conversation we have is all about the costs, here are some of the key points we cover:

1. Who owns the product?
2. What are the hosting fees?
3. What are the development costs?
4. Any monthly maintenance fees?
5. What are the pick and pack charges?

These points get the conversation started, and from there we can get a better idea of how to build the store as well as the costs which are involved. Transparency is critical for a successful store. Nobody likes surprises.

PPB **What are your company's most common responsibilities to clients regarding store maintenance?**

Wehrle We provide our clients with monthly, quarterly and annual reports. We track trends to assure adequate inventory so we can be proactive rather than reactive. Another major report we use is called the "dusty carton" report. In this report, we can see what is not selling and address this with the client so we can develop a solution to assist in marketing items that are not selling successfully. PPB

Jen Alexander is associate editor for PPB.

ELEMENTS OF A SERVICE-LEVEL AGREEMENT

TO HELP ENSURE A PRODUCTIVE relationship with company store clients, distributors should consider including the following elements into their service level agreement (SLA):

- A detailed plan and timeline for site development and launch
- Each party's financial commitment to the development, launch and maintenance of the site
- Each party's financial commitment to establishing and maintaining product inventory
- Who will be responsible for site maintenance and security
- Who will be responsible for overseeing order processing
- Who will be responsible for reviewing and responding to user comments, questions or feedback
- Who will be responsible for site-related marketing and communication

Do you want to sell your distributorship?

We can help you sell your distributorship quickly and easily.

"This type of business transaction was completely foreign to me so it was invaluable to have The Distributor Exchange take us through the process step by step. They went above and beyond in all regards. I couldn't be happier with their efforts to make this a win win for all parties involved." – Cindy Gibbs - Big Fish Branding

DX SM
DISTRIBUTOR EXCHANGE

www.TheDistributorExchange.com • 844-251-8544 (toll free)

All inquiries are strictly confidential.

COMING AUGUST 2016

PROMO MARKETING POWER MEETINGS

CO-LOCATED WITH PPAI'S NORTH AMERICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA

North American Leadership Conference & Power Meeting

AUGUST 14-18, 2016

- ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS
- NETWORKING WITH THE INDUSTRY'S ELITE
- HIGH END ACCOMMODATIONS
- AIRFARE REIMBURSEMENT UP TO $500

For more information and to check availability about this event, contact us at powermeetings@promomarketing.com

GROW

30 Fairs and Festivals // **MARKET TO MARKET**
36 Day By Day: Calendars // **EDITOR'S PICKS**
42 The Power Of Business Etiquette // **SALES**
46 PPAI 2015 Distributor Sales Volume Report // **FEATURE**

FERTILIZE YOUR ENTERPRISE

FESTIVE OCCASIONS

Promotional products make fairs and festivals more memorable for everyone. Discover how wide and deep the market goes, and get inspiration from some amazing products beginning on page 30. PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN BERTRAND / SHUTTERSTOCK

STEP RIGHT UP TO PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS MAKE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS MORE MEMORABLE FOR EVERYONE. **By Jen Alexander**

THE SMELL OF CORNDOGS, the sound of calliope music and the sight of colorful booths conjure up happy childhood memories. Free-spirited music lovers and thoughtful film buffs make the most of festival season. Fairs and festivals are a rite of passage, and a tradition, for so many, that promoting these events to those who populate them shouldn't be too difficult, right?

Of course not, especially if you follow a few simple guidelines. Whether you're working on behalf of the event organizer or to help on-site sellers get the word out about their wares, promotional marketing strategies should focus on attendees and, of course, the vendors themselves.

Music and film festivals are among the most popular events in the U.S.—roughly 32 million Americans, mostly Millennials, attend music festivals each year, according to *Billboard* magazine. Food vendors are among the biggest draws at fairs and festivals, as well as artisans selling handcrafted items and businesses looking to build a client base.

Crystal Wiebe is the founder of Kansas City, Missouri-based Beer Paws, a company whose target audience is beer drinkers who also love dogs. Beer Paws sells treats, candles, apparel and even "doggy beer" among other unique items. The company has connected with audiences at events such as the Westport Roots Festival in Kansas City, and Benson Beer Fest in Omaha, Nebraska. The Beer Paws team provides giveaways and opportunities to purchase its items at booths on-site.

"Whether offered as giveaways or items for purchase, customized products are the best way to draw attention to your brand," says Wiebe. "Providing your customer with something they can take home makes their experience engaging with your brand more memorable and meaningful."

Wiebe says products need to be relevant to a vendor's offerings and brand culture. "For example, Beer Paws gives away logoed coasters, and we sell branded Koozies, bottle openers and other merchandise that our customers—dog lovers and beer connoisseurs—can appreciate and use.

"One of the biggest compliments we can receive from our customers is for them to show up at our next event wearing something they purchased or received from us in the past. We make all of our products available at every event. When we set up at beer festivals, we also make sure to have some co-branded dog treats available that were made in partnership with breweries pouring at the event."

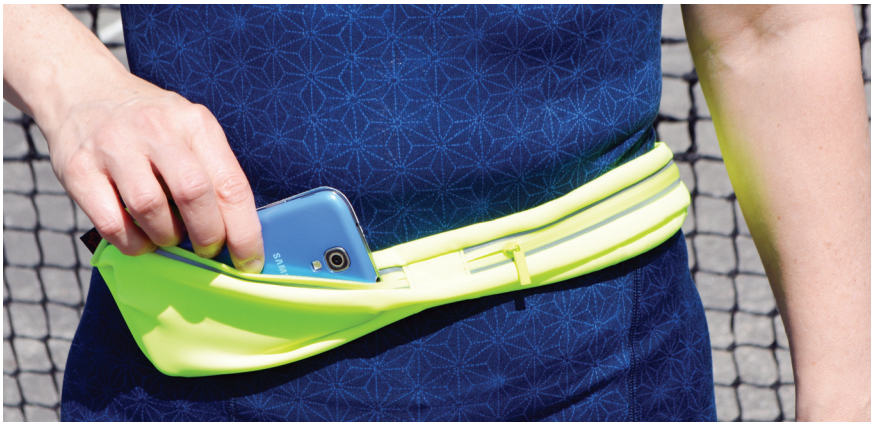
So what can you do to help clients make the most of their festival or fair presence? Help them choose promotional items that will make a lasting impact long after the event is over. "Understand your client's brand and make sure you're pitching ideas that are relevant to what that brand stands for," says Wiebe.

Products Like These Win A Blue Ribbon Every Time

Fairgoers can carry their goodies in a **canvas tote** like this six-ounce number from the Liberty Bags collection. It comes in black, natural, navy, red and royal, and it's washable and reusable. **Heritage Sportswear/ Virginia T's** // *UPIC: HERI0002* // *www.heritagesportswear.com*

Donors will appreciate a stylish thank-you gift like this **hair-on-calfskin stadium handbag**. The bag features a removable cross body shoulder strap, an interior zip pocket and three credit card slots. **Scully Leather** // *UPIC: S174962* // *www.scullyleather.com*

Keep keys, coupons and money close at hand without bulky wallets or keyrings, by using the **Tempo sports fitness pouch**. Featuring two neon yellow expandable zipper pockets, it sits securely against your body to eliminate bouncing and shifting. The pouch features reflective striping, waterproof material and an adjustable elastic belt with clip closure to ensure a comfortable fit. **Starline USA, Inc.** // *UPIC: STAR0009* // *www.starline.com*



Tips For Marketing At Fairs And Festivals

DO research events in the area where target audiences live and work. Build a content marketing calendar if you want to reach out to multiple audiences.

DO get the event details from event organizers; ask about sponsorships, booth space and selling opportunities

DON'T skimp on planning. Send out advance promotions to select audience members to encourage attendance. If you know an event's average attendance, keep that number in mind when stocking giveaways or saleable promotional items such as branded souvenirs.

DON'T forget to track results. Record visits to the booth, the number of items handed out or sold, and the number of contacts who requested a follow-up.

Stay cool on hot days at the midway with a **2-in-1 Smart Fan** plugged into your Android or iPhone. The fan creates a cool breeze with its 100-percent safe TPE blades, and offers quiet operation with low power consumption. **Global Tech Branding Group, LLC** // *UPIC: gtbgroup* // *www.ikyp.com*

Get attendees to your event faster with a **full-color pole banner** that stands out in a crowd. Customize it by size and design, and see how its durable material withstands days of festival fun. **Tru Art Advertising Calendars** // *UPIC: TRUART* // *www.truart.com*

County Fairs Help Consumers Learn More About Agriculture

IT'S ALMOST A GIVEN THAT the county fair will feature prize steers alongside pie-eating contests. But the parade of chickens, rabbits and other farm and ranch residents is more than just a showcase. Since less than two percent of the population in the U.S. provides food for the remaining 98 percent, fairs are an opportunity for the agriculture industry to help city slickers learn where much of their food, fuel and textiles come from.

Ag producers who want to make the most of on-site education should begin by getting event organizers involved, according to Nancy Thelen, the Agricultural Literacy Extension Educator at Michigan State University. Additionally, volunteers from local groups such as 4H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) can assist with demonstrations, interactive exhibits and information booths. Printed handouts, ag-themed giveaways and other memorable items help visitors recall the message and education provided at fairs and festivals.

America's Top 10 State Fairs

1. Minnesota State Fair *(founded 1859)*
Primary focus: Agriculture, art and Industry
Attendance: 1.8 million
Notable: Art Deco buildings and gardens

2. Iowa State Fair *(founded 1854)*
Primary focus: Agriculture and industry
Attendance: More than one million
Notable: Inspired a Broadway musical and three movies

3. Eastern States Exposition *(founded 1917)*
Primary focus: Agriculture, heritage and creativity
Attendance: More than one million
Notable: Home to one of the oldest horse shows in the U.S.

4. State Fair Of Texas *(founded 1886)*
Primary focus: Agriculture, community and education
Attendance: Roughly three million
Notable: Fair Park is a National Historic Landmark

5. Great New York State Fair *(founded 1832)*
Primary focus: Live entertainment, consumer competitions
Attendance: More than one million
Notable: One of the Northeast's biggest gatherings of Baby Boomers

6. California State Fair *(founded 1855)*
Primary focus: Agriculture, commerce, state pride
Attendance: 780,000
Notable: Home to largest food festival in Northern California

7. Indiana State Fair *(founded 1852)*
Primary focus: Agriculture, live entertainment
Attendance: 955,000
Notable: Glass barn where farm work is demonstrated

8. Ohio State Fair *(founded 1850)*
Primary focus: Food, agriculture
Attendance: Nearly one million
Notable: Home to one of the world's longest portable sky rides

9. Arizona State Fair *(founded 1885)*
Primary focus: Live entertainment and fair activities
Attendance: One million
Notable: Spirit dancers and a bear show are top attractions

10. North Carolina State Fair *(founded 1853)*
Primary focus: Agriculture and commerce
Attendance: More than one million
Notable: Fair artists weave rugs, carve wooden bowls and form hand-coiled pottery

Source: USA Today

Highest Grossing Festivals In The World (2015)

- **Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival** Indio, California **$84.26 million**
- **Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival** San Francisco, California **$24.31 million**
- **Stagecoach Country Music Festival** Indio, California **$21.88 million**
- **Pinkpop Festival** Landgraaf, Netherlands **$15.32 million**
- **Rock am Ring Rock Festival** Mendig, Germany **$15.22 million**

Taylor Swift performs at the Stagecoach Country Music Festival.

Clients will give off good vibes when they give away **shades** from the Cool Vibes collection. These sunglasses offer a full-color imprint option for bows and lenses, and feature a trendy bamboo-material earpiece with laser engraving for an upscale look. **BIC Graphic USA** // *UPIC: BIC* // *www.bicgraphic.com*

Keep the heat off your neck with a **CoolFiber towel**. Simply wet, wave and wear the 100-percent all-natural towel, which can be decorated in full color with water-based ink. **Cloth Promotions Plus** // *UPIC: CPP* // *www.clothpromotions.com*

The hot summer months are the time of year for cool ice cream. Dairy farmers will love giving out this durable plastic **ice cream scoop** made with FDA-safe materials. Choose from blue and lime green. **Beacon Promotions** // *UPIC: BEACONP* // *www.beaconpromotions.com*

CASE STUDIES

REAL-WORLD SOLUTIONS

TAKE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT FROM THESE INDUSTRY CASE STUDIES:

AS THE SPONSOR OF NEWLY created Picklesburgh, food producer Heinz wanted a creative way to promote itself in its hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The event was created to celebrate the city's roots and a resurgence in the popularity of home pickling and canning.

Distributor The Callard Company of New Albany, Ohio (UPIC: CALL0001), revisited Heinz's longtime tradition of handing out commemorative pickle pins by curating a collection of branded t-shirts, gifts and collectibles. The merchandise proved extremely popular during Picklesburgh, and several items from the event were made available on Heinz's online store. *Source: The Callard Company*

THE TRUTH CAMPAIGN, AN ANTI-SMOKING campaign aimed at preventing youth tobacco use, wanted to create a presence at SXSW Music Festival and The Aspen Ideas Festival. Atlanta, Georgia, distributor The IceBox, LLC (UPIC: TheIc516), constructed and delivered an on-site screen printing press, for which festival attendees lined up to print their own limited-edition t-shirts.

AN ACCOUNTING FIRM THAT was sponsoring a UK folk festival sought event-related promotional items that would act as an effective marketing tool for their services. UK-based distributor The Promotion Company, a member of the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA), supplied the firm with ponchos and reusable cups to distribute to festival attendees. The attendees were seen wearing the ponchos and drinking their tea and coffee from the cups throughout the event. *Source: The Promotions Company* PPB

DAY BY DAY

IT'S HARD TO BEAT THE PROMOTIONAL VALUE OF ADVERTISING CALENDARS **By Julie Richie**

WITH THE UBIQUITY OF SMARTPHONES and cloud technology, you might assume that printed calendars are becoming a promotional advertising tool of the past. However, research shows just the opposite. Not only are printed advertising calendars still used in homes and offices today, they are highly valued.

A 2010 study of calendar usage in the workplace, co-sponsored by PPAI and The Calendar Advertising Council, shows that 79 percent of respondents enjoy receiving calendars as a complimentary gift and that eight out of 10 respondents report having a printed calendar at work. When asked what type of calendars they used at work, 48 percent said they used a wall calendar while one third referred to a desk calendar. With one of the lowest cost per impressions in the industry, printed calendars are still very much up to date.

"Now, digital technology advances mean that it's easy and affordable to create fully customized calendars that are even more powerful company branding tools," says Jerome Hoxton, president of Tru Art Advertising Calendars (UPIC: TRUART). Custom calendar design is a consistently and rapidly growing segment of the calendar business because uniqueness, along with clear messaging, is key to making any business stand out in today's crowded marketplace.

"Custom calendars address this need by combining images with copy content that specifically defines what the business does and the benefits they provide to customers and potential customers," Hoxton says. Effectively, calendars provide another vehicle for content marketing, which is about telling and showing customers not only what you make, do and sell, but also who you are as a company.

"Calendars deliver text and image content in a highly effective way, not the 'hard sell', intrusive marketing we've all come to guard against. Giving a calendar is personal—that's how business relationships build and grow," Hoxton adds.

Hoxton sees demand for calendar advertising steadily growing. "Advertisers know that calendars are used, appreciated and maintain daily contact in a way no other media matches for the investment."

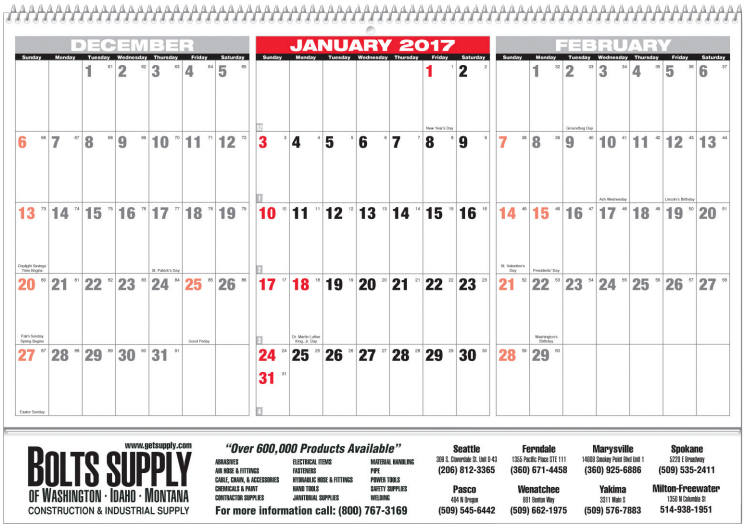
COMPELLING CALENDAR CHOICES

With proprietary light sensor technology and patent-pending design, this **video calendar** is a unique marketing tool for companies with the ability to provide 12 months of customizable video branding. A new video plays when the user turns the calendar page to the next month. A replay button lets the user play it again if desired. **Global Tech Branding Group LLC** // *UPIC: gtbgroup* // *www.ikyp.com*

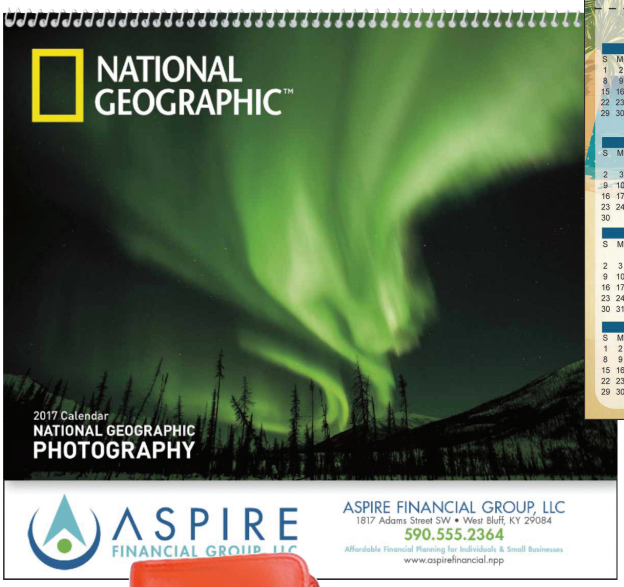
Make your next calendar extra special with this **USA-made custom calendar** featuring 12 monthly photos and one cover photo that you provide. **ADG Promotional Products** // *UPIC: ADGPROMO* // *www.adgpromo.com*

These personalized promotional **desk calendars** prominently display a client or employee's name in each month's image. Plus, your full-color logo is printed on each calendar sheet. Submit your list of names and receive a unique, personalized calendar for each person. The pre-scored back folds into an easel to set on a desk. **Drum-Line, Inc.** // *UPIC: ABGH1356* // *www.drum-line.com*

EDITOR'S PICKS



When you need to see three months at a time but have a small amount of wall space, this **horizontal calendar** is a great choice and provides all the necessary features for effective time-keeping, advanced planning and reference. It offers a generous imprint area for conveying important business information. **Tru Art Advertising Calendars** // *UPIC: TRUART* // *www.truart.com*



Promote your business alongside beautiful National Geographic images with this collection of seven ***National Geographic* calendars** offered under the Triumph® by BIC Graphic line. The calendars feature iconic images centered around popular themes such as Wildlife of the World, World Scenes and Rural Scenes. **BIC Graphic** // *UPIC: BIC* // *www.bicgraphic.com*

Who doesn't love the beach and the feel of an ocean breeze? Give the gift of stress reduction or promote a travel-related business or tropical location with a **beach-themed calendar magnet**. **Magna-Tel** // *UPIC: MAGNATEL* // *www.magna-tel.com*

Go old school with this **Italian leather pocket weekly planner**, which makes a nice gift for clients or employees. It's available in nine colors. **Scully Leather** // *UPIC: S174962* // *www.scullyleather.com*

For a unique, lasting and creative gift, give this **perpetual MoMA calendar** that shows month, date and day with colorful polystyrene cubes. Simply rotate the cubes to show correct date.

International Merchandise Concepts // *UPIC: IMC1* // *www. Imc-miracles.com*

The next best thing to going on a wine country tour is the **wine country tour calendar**. Recipients enjoy a visual tour of scenic vineyards from around the world matched with helpful information about wines and suggested foods that pair well with them. Printed on recycled gloss stock paper, this 13-month calendar is environmentally friendly as well as informative.

Hotline Products // *UPIC: HOYL0001* // *www.hotlineproducts.com*

Choosing Effective Calendar Images

A STUDY ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT of image streams by Rider University photography professor John Suler, published in the *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* in March 2012, reveals that certain types of photos are more memorable than others, which has important implications for image selection in custom calendars.

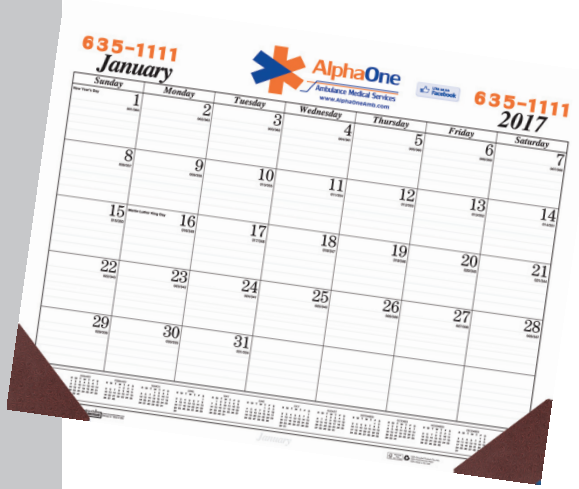
Suler showed 200 photographs to students and then asked them to close their eyes and allow one of the images they saw to surface into their awareness and write down what they remembered about the photo and how it made them feel.

The study's results showed that the most memorable images were ones that evoked feelings of peacefulness, joy, contentment, love, relaxation, comfort, security, oneness, rejuvenation, synchronization, immersion and pure tranquility.

"Paradoxically, contemporary media continually bombard us with a neverending stream of fantastic, supercharged and exciting images, when what really attracts people is simply a return to a state of oneness and tranquility," says Suler. To increase memorability, associating a company's brand with an image that evokes these positive feelings is a psychologically smart strategy.

PROMOTIONAL CALENDARS + DIRECT MAIL SERVICE = YOU'RE HIRED

PROVIDING YOUR CLIENTS WITH COMPLETE and easy direct mail distribution services is worth considering as a way to stand out from your competitors. "Direct mail ensures that advertisers reach every key customer, plus it enlarges the opportunity to expand market influence to wanted prospects and into new geographic areas," says Tru Art's Hoxton. Your clients will love the ease and added value of your company providing packaging, addressing and the best methods of delivery at the lowest cost. "Today, mailboxes are far less cluttered than email inboxes so a direct-mailed calendar stands out," Hoxton adds.



Always handy and effective, this **traditional calendar desk pad** stays in front of customers 365 days a year to help them keep organized while conveying your message.
House of Doolittle // *UPIC: HOD* // *www.houseofdoolittle.com*

A **full-color desk calendar pad** with plenty of room to plan your week and create your to-do list is twice as useful as a simple calendar. With 10 stock layouts or a custom design, the calendar pads include premium reinforced leatherette corners in a choice of six different colors.
Bebco // *UPIC: BEBCO* // *www.bebco.ocm*

Beautiful American scenic landscapes are featured on this **13-month appointment calendar**. A great item for insurance agents, brokers, financial consultants, healthcare, manufacturing, construction, real estate and more, it can be ordered stapled or spiraled.
Beacon Promotions // *UPIC: BEACONP* // *www.beaconpromotions.com* PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

CUSTOM PRINTED T-SHIRTS

ARTWORK
SHIRTS &
PRINTING

IN JUST 3 DAYS*!

* CALL FOR DETAILS

Visage Screen Print and Apparel

847-813-5552

www.visagescreenprint.com

The Power Of Business Etiquette

GOOD BUSINESS BEHAVIOR MAKES EVERYONE FEEL MORE ASSURED **By Adrienne Barker, MAS**

YOU MAY HAVE READ or heard about manners in the workplace, but what does that mean to most business people? Many of us use good manners daily; we say thank you, please, excuse me and other terms as we behave politely toward each other.

This article is not about manners—it's about business etiquette and protocol. Manners are polite or well-bred social behaviors. Etiquette is a standard code of conduct and procedures within a particular group. It tends to follow rules inherent to specific situations. Business protocol guides us in understanding cultural differences and can make or break an important meeting, influence a first impression or impress a potential client.

The need for cultural awareness is critical to suppliers as they work with overseas factories, and to distributors who work in close collaboration with client companies in different parts of the world.

You must know the business protocol when working in other countries and it is crucial to understand the differences in concept and importance of people's rank and status. The correct definition of the word *protocol* includes principles that are defined and widely accepted, and

includes everything from behavior and dress to task execution. Protocol is observed in government, diplomacy and the military, and protocol executives are becoming more common in university settings and Fortune 500 businesses. In some organizations, protocol executives are often also responsible for purchasing promotional products; it's a great niche market. Protocol also specifies the treatment of particular people with roles in an established hierarchy as it relates to precedence, seating, courtesy and application of rank and honors.

Introductions

Making an introduction may seem easy, but doing it correctly means you must understand the hierarchies in each country in which you are working. While forms of address are more flexible in the U.S., don't break the rules of protocol when working outside the U.S. Instant familiarity is not appreciated in most countries, and you must use appropriate titles and last names.

Introducing others is a skill that many people have not yet learned. The simple thing to remember is to first recognize the most important person and to introduce lesser-ranking people to that person. In a business introduction, the most important person would be the client. Within a company, that person would be the senior executive. Remember to look at the most important person and speak to him or her first, and then turn to the lesser important person or others in the group as you complete the introduction. For example, if your client is Mrs. Smith and you are introducing your sales assistant, Joe Jones, to her, the correct introduction would be "Mrs. Smith, may I introduce Joe Jones?" Speak clearly and use courteous language.

Here are a few additional tips:

- Don't call an international visitor by his or her first name unless you are invited to do so.
- In Europe and Asia, executives who work together for years may still use titles and last names.
- Middle Easterners with whom you are on a first-name basis may prefer Mr./Mrs./Ms. and then their *first* name.
- North Americans are uncomfortable with class distinction. We don't like it when others act superior or try to pull rank. The most influential people often make an effort to appear approachable and may ask you to call them by their first name. However, you are always safe when using Mr. or Ms. with the last name until invited to do otherwise.
- Internationally, titles, ranks and honorifics are considered necessary when greeting or introducing someone, so always include the complete name string. If someone has a title, use it correctly.

MINDING MANNERS

YOUR PERSONAL BRAND IS highly dependent on your use of proper etiquette and protocol. *PPB* spoke with Adrienne Barker about her recent certification in corporate etiquette and international protocol, and her subsequent business expansion to provide training in these areas.

***PPB*: What does this certification signify?**
Barker: I graduated from the Protocol School of Washington with the ability to teach licensed programs created exclusively by the school. I have been trained by the only nationally accredited school in this field.

***PPB*: What was required to earn it? How long did it take?**
Barker: The class was six days long and there were 18 students from all over the world. We learned and studied all day and had some work in the evening. There are approximately 4,500 alumni of this program throughout the world.

***PPB*: What kinds of new skills and knowledge do you now have?**
Barker: I now can teach business etiquette and international protocol. I have always enjoyed speaking and this gives me a platform that I find engaging and exciting. This field is always changing and now more than ever we need to understand that business etiquette makes a difference in your success and that of your business.

***PPB*: How will it help you better serve your clients as a distributor?**
Barker: Our clients often need to work with their customers overseas and I can offer not only gift-giving protocol but also tips and ways to help their business support offshore staff. We can also offer our clients workshops and seminars for their clients or internal staff.

***PPB*: In what ways will you be expanding your customer base and the types of clients you serve?**
Barker: Our industry is always changing and it is important to create different niches. Protocol officers purchase promotional products, and connecting with them is now easier since I graduated from a school they recognize. I can quickly Google protocol officers and find a nice list of new prospects.

When you are culturally aware, you will establish productive relationships and work better in teams. That knowledge will allow you to better handle disagreements, motivate others who cooperate with you, and make decisions and build agreements.

Communications

We have all heard that you only have one chance to make a good first impression. This saying has never been truer than when you are working within a different country and culture. During meetings with international visitors, we are ambassadors for the firms we represent and must understand the business and social customs of the person with whom we are negotiating. The first step is to make sure that what is visible is appropriate—your attire, behavior and language— while your values, assumptions and beliefs are less visible.

When you are culturally aware, you will establish productive relationships and work better in teams. That knowledge will allow you to better handle disagreements, motivate others who cooperate with you, and make decisions and build agreements. You must make sure that your preconceived cultural impressions are not in play, and only collaborate with the accurate data you've learned. Be careful not to stereotype a group, or generalize cultures or nationalities. Once you understand the beliefs in another country and how people there do business, you will be able to separate intentions vs. perceptions.

A few key points to improve cross-cultural communications include:

- Share information about your culture, look for similarities and use this to create a foundation.
- Always show respect and flexibility. Be prepared for higher levels of ambiguity.
- Make sure you focus on building trust and always assume positive intentions.
- Learn a few words of greeting and appreciation in the other person's language.

It's easy to say that you do this all correctly, but I attend many events and see behaviors that need to be learned to be successful. For the next event or meeting you attend in your own country or in another, remember these tips:

- Think about what kind of entrance you will make.
- Check your appearance in a mirror before entering a room.
- Check your hair, teeth and clothing—it all matters.
- Eat a snack before a networking event, so you don't appear hungry.
- Walk into the room, survey the room and spot key persons you want to meet.
- Let others see you have arrived as almost everyone watches the entrance to a room.
- Create an impression of confidence and maintain good posture.
- When you meet people in a business setting, look at their upper face, eyes, brows and forehead. That is professional.
- Maintain eye contact when conversing with others.
- Are you comfortable with small talk and do you know when to approach a group of individuals already in a discussion? If you see a group that is heavily engaged in a conversation, find someone else or another group. Also, networking events or meetings are not the best time to create a conversation that is not inviting to everyone. The best time to have a longer or a more in-depth discussion may be after the meeting or on another occasion.
- Always ask permission to join a group and make your way into the conversation.

Handshakes

Practice shaking hands. In the U.S., shake from the elbow, not the wrist or shoulder. Two smooth pumps are all you need. Don't be the bone crusher in the crowd or the fingertip holder. Handshake greetings are different in every country. In Australia, use a firm grip and two pumps; in France use a light grip and one brisk pump. If you are meeting with someone from the Middle East, note the handshake is likely to be a limp and lingering grip with only a slight up and down movement, never a pump. The person who extends a hand first has an advantage. That person will have established control and shown that they take the initiative. The woman who extends her hand first eliminates any hesitation. Remember, every meeting, business or social introduction, begins and ends with a handshake.

Being A Host And Guest

There is a lot to learn about being a good host and a great guest. For example, practiced din-

ing skills are crucial for feeling comfortable during meals with business associates and being able to make a good impression while conducting business at the table. There are a number of rules about dining including sitting, using your napkin, excusing yourself and even eating difficult foods. Here are a few key points:

- If you are hosting a meal, consider your guest's likes and dislikes, and choose the restaurant in advance.
- Let your guest know the purpose of the invitation and be precise about the time and where you will meet.
- Approach the right side of your dining chair and enter it from your left side. By doing this you will avoid the collision that happens when everyone approaches the table at the same time. When the meal is over, push your chair back from the table, rise and exit from the right side and push your chair back under the table. Note that during a business meal a woman never should expect a man to pull out her chair. However, if a man offers it is polite to accept with a nice thank-you.
- The placement of dinnerware on the dining table is easy to remember with this trick: all your solids (bread plate, napkin) are on the left and anything liquid (water goblet, wine glass, coffee cup) is on the right.
- When hosting a dinner, precedence determines the seating priority. Did you know that square tables are preferred to round tables for negotiations? Always allow the leader of the host group to approve seating.

There are many more dining suggestions, and I would suggest a local class to make sure that you not only learn what's correct but are able to practice with others so you are comfortable during a business meal.

As promotional products professionals we are always learning new industry-related skills but having knowledge of these soft skills will allow you to more deftly navigate the international business world. PPB

***Adrienne Barker, MAS**, is vice president of distributor Barker Specialty Company in Celebration, Florida. She recently earned her certification as a corporate etiquette and international protocol consultant and has subsequently launched Professional Global Etiquette to provide training in business etiquette and protocol. Reach her at adrienne@barkerorlando.com.*

Do you want to sell your distributorship?

We can help you sell your distributorship quickly and easily.

"You have exceeded my expectations regarding this process. Thanks for being so efficient, attentive and supportive. What else can I say . . . a dream come true!" – Barb Feyka - Capstone Promotions

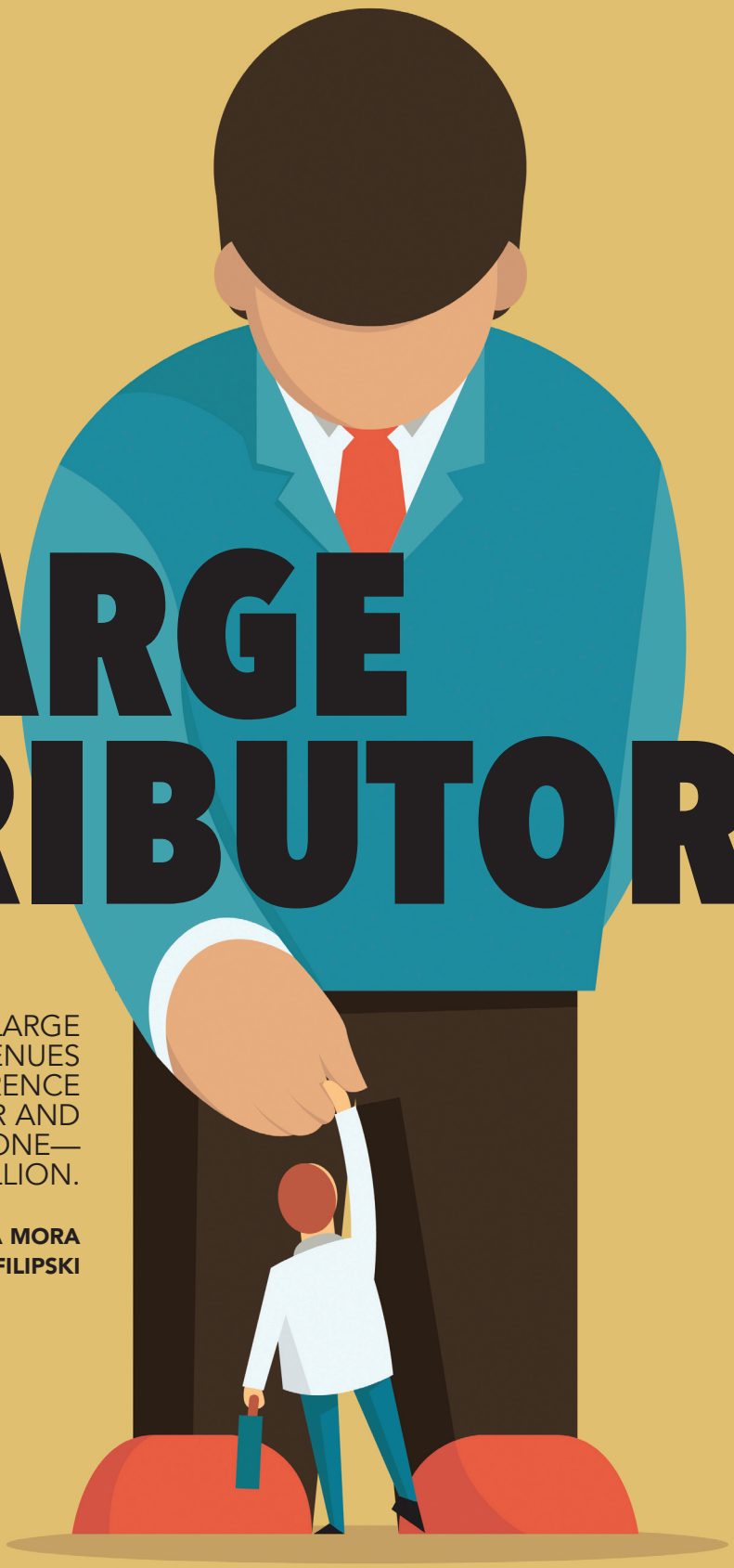
DX SM
DISTRIBUTOR EXCHANGE

www.TheDistributorExchange.com • 844-251-8544 (toll free)

All inquiries are strictly confidential.

2015 PPAI **DISTRIBUTOR SALES VOLUME REPORT**

FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY: THE YEAR OF THE LARGE DISTRIBUTOR



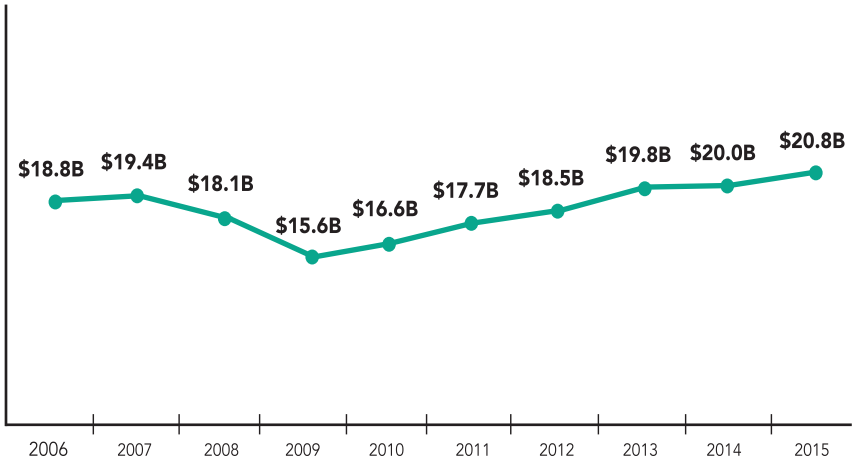
FOR THE FIRST TIME, LARGE COMPANY SALES REVENUES MADE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FLAT YEAR AND A RECORD-BREAKING ONE—AT NEARLY $21 BILLION.

BY MICHAELA MORA AND TINA BERRES FILIPSKI

IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES for some, it was the worst of times for others. Then again, maybe that's too extreme on both ends of the spectrum. While there were both huge gains and lackluster sales among industry companies in 2015, in general it was a year of average positive growth for promotional product distributors. It was also a year in which the gap between small and large distributors widened enough to change the balance between both groups in the total sales volume figures for the industry. Overall, 2015 was the year of the large distributor.

Total industry sales by distributors increased by 3.82 percent to nearly $21 billion ($20,808,170,722)—breaking the record set in 2014.

FIG. 1 // Distributor Sales: A Ten-Year Snapshot



While sales continued the upward trend started in 2009, the net positive result is due solely to a significant increase in revenue among large distributor companies. In contrast, small distributors' revenue declined further compared to 2014. Small distributors, those with sales of less than $2.5 million, experienced a 6.63-percent decline over 2014, while larger companies saw a 14.05-percent increase.

The other big news in 2015 is that promotional products' percentage of growth was greater than any other traditional advertising media (see page 53), except for broadcast TV at four percent and billboards at 4.3 percent. With a growth rate of 3.82 percent over 2014 sales, promotional products beat out direct mail at three percent growth, consumer magazines at two percent, business magazines, which were flat, and radio, which plummeted by 18.2 percent. However, it's interesting to note that print advertising shows signs of stabilizing with business magazines remaining steady year over year, consumer magazine revenue actually growing last year and newspapers down only three percent compared to -3.5 percent in 2014.

"The results of the 2015 Annual Distributor Sales Report reflect year-over-year growth for the promotional products industry in a relatively flat year for non-digital advertising in general," says Paul Bellantone, CAE, president and

CEO of PPAI. "Our growth speaks to the power and effectiveness of promotional products as a stand-alone marketing tool as well as part of integrated campaigns where building strong customer relationships is key. While many of our larger distributor respondents fared best with significant double-digit growth, segments of the small distributor community were flat and down year over year. I think these results are reflective of the investments companies will continue to make to deliver an omni-channel approach to serving the marketplace. Overall, I am pleased to see our industry continue to show its strength and value in an uncertain economy."

The prediction in recent years that large companies would keep getting bigger and small companies would decline gained more of a toehold in 2015. The overall number of companies with sales less than $2.5 million that report promotional products sales declined to 22,153 from 23,025 in 2014. However, the number of large companies with sales of more than $2.5 million reporting sales remained relatively stable at 868 compared to 872 in 2014. In addition, the total number of U.S. distributor companies reporting sales in 2015 was 23,021, slightly down from 23,896 in 2014.

In terms of market share, the 868 firms representing large companies (sales of $2.5 million or more) captured $11,551,799,373 of the business—a 55.5-percent share. It should be noted that the large-company grouping included franchisors like Adventures in Advertising, Proforma and iPROMOTEu, and these firms report for their franchisees. Sales for the smaller distributors as a group amounted to $9,256,371,349, or 44.5 percent.

For the first time in many years, large distributors accounted for a larger proportion of the total sales volume than smaller firms, carving out five additional percentage points of the total sales performance.

As in 2014, only large companies had positive results by year-end. Distributors in the $2.5 million-plus bracket recorded sales of $11.5 billion, showing significant gains at a 14.05 per-

FIG. 2 // Market Share By Distributor Size 2005-2015

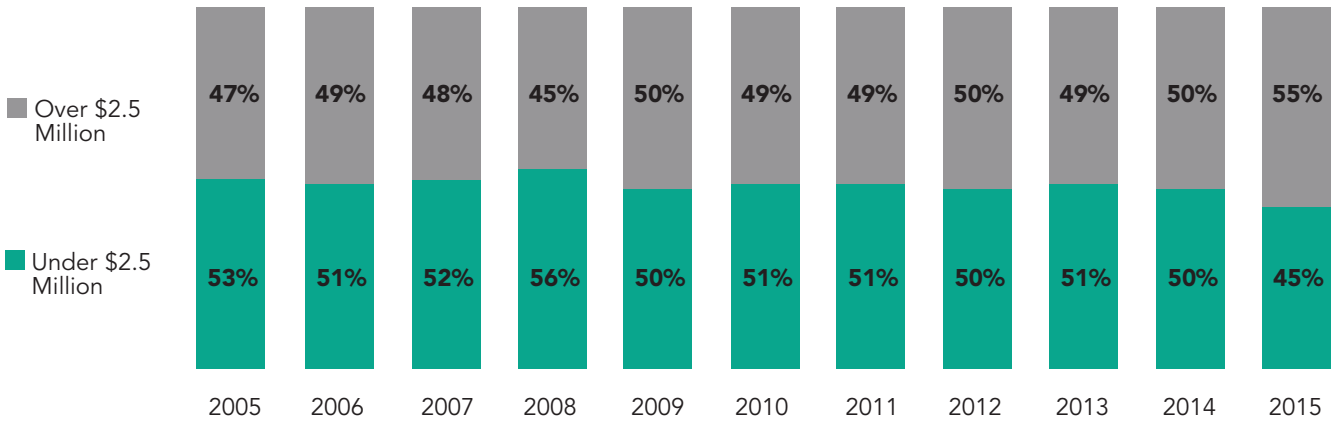


FIG. 3 // Annual Estimate Of U.S. Distributor Sales In 2015 Vs. 2014

Distributor Company Size	Number Of Distributor Companies	2015 Sales Volume	2014 Sales Volume	Total Difference	% Increase/ Decrease In Sales Volume Over 2014
Under $2.5 million	22,153	$9,256,371,349	$9,913,592,681	-$657,221,332	-6.63%
$2.5 million or over	868	$11,551,799,373	$10,128,636,250	$1,423,163,123	14.05%
Total	23,021	$20,808,170,722	$20,042,228,931	$765,941,791	3.82%

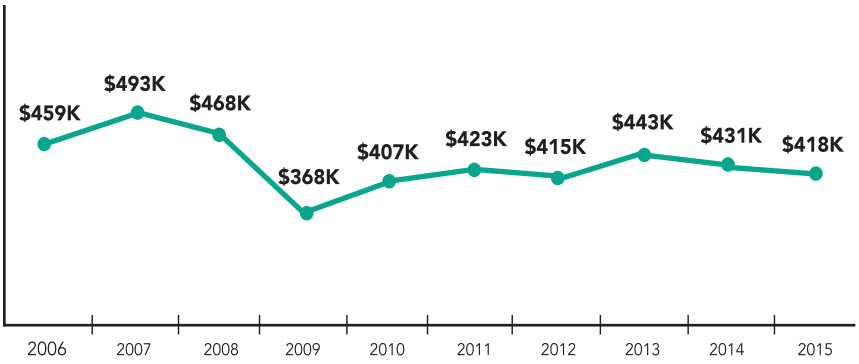
cent increase over 2014. On the contrary, the smaller-company segment saw a greater decline of -6.63 percent, with total orders of approximately $9.3 billion.

A look by sub-segment reveals that most of the small-company categories saw a decrease in sales in 2015. The only sub-segment that experienced positive growth included companies with sales of $500,000 to $1 million (16.07 percent). Companies with sales of more than $1 million to $2.5 million had the biggest decline in sales among all sub-segments at -20.50 percent.

What About Profits?

Much like 2014, nearly 60 percent (57 percent) of all distributors saw greater profits over the previous year, but large distributors saw the biggest wins in profits. In this group, 78 percent indicated they enjoyed higher profits in 2015, compared to 62 percent in 2014, while only 57 percent of the small distributors did so, remaining at the same level as 2014 (57 percent in 2014). One in five small distributors saw lower profit levels than in 2014, while a quarter experienced the same profit level.

FIG. 4 // Sales Average (Mean) By Small Distributors (Less Than $2.5 Million), 2006 - 2015



The Continued Rise Of Online Sales

Online sales are defined as buys resulting from orders placed through an online store or website. Web sales (not to be confused with salespeople transmitting orders online) are estimated to be $3,944,881,904, or 19 percent of the industry total sales.

This category of promotional products sales continued to grow, representing 19 percent of the sales volume in 2015, up two percentage points from 17.9 percent in 2014. Total online sales grew by 10 percent over 2014 to $3,944,881,904, solely due to an increase in online sales among large distributors.

However, compared to 2014, the rate of growth in online sales slowed down significantly in 2015, mainly due to a significant decline in online sales by small distributors (-39.5 percent).

FIG. 5 // U.S. Distributors' Profit Experience, Comparing 2014 To 2015

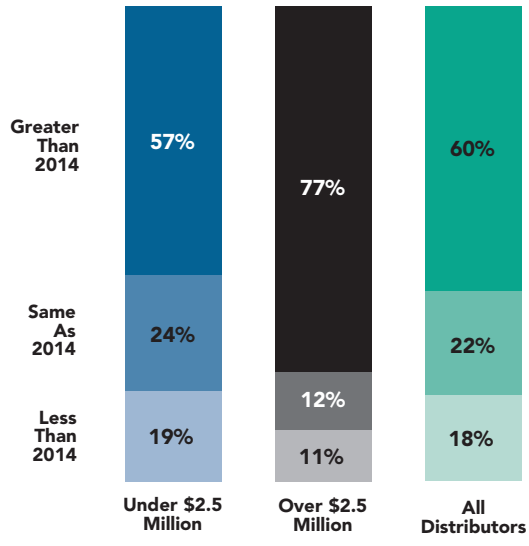
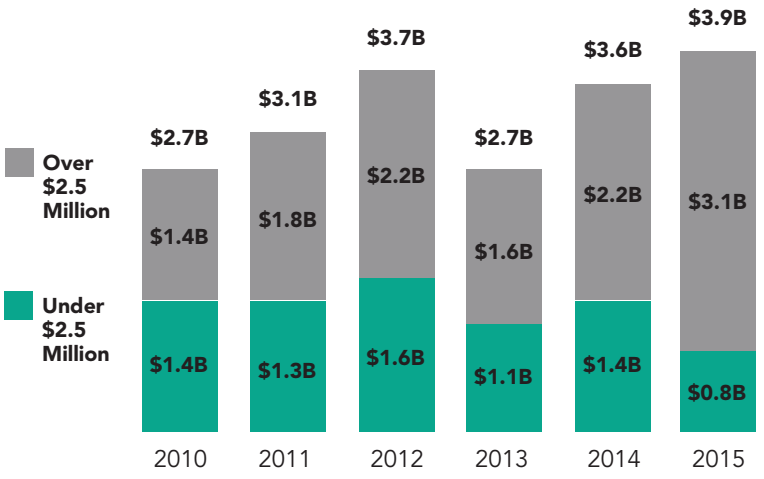


FIG. 6 // Online Sales Contributions To Distributor Business, 2010-2015



2015 Sales By Products And Programs

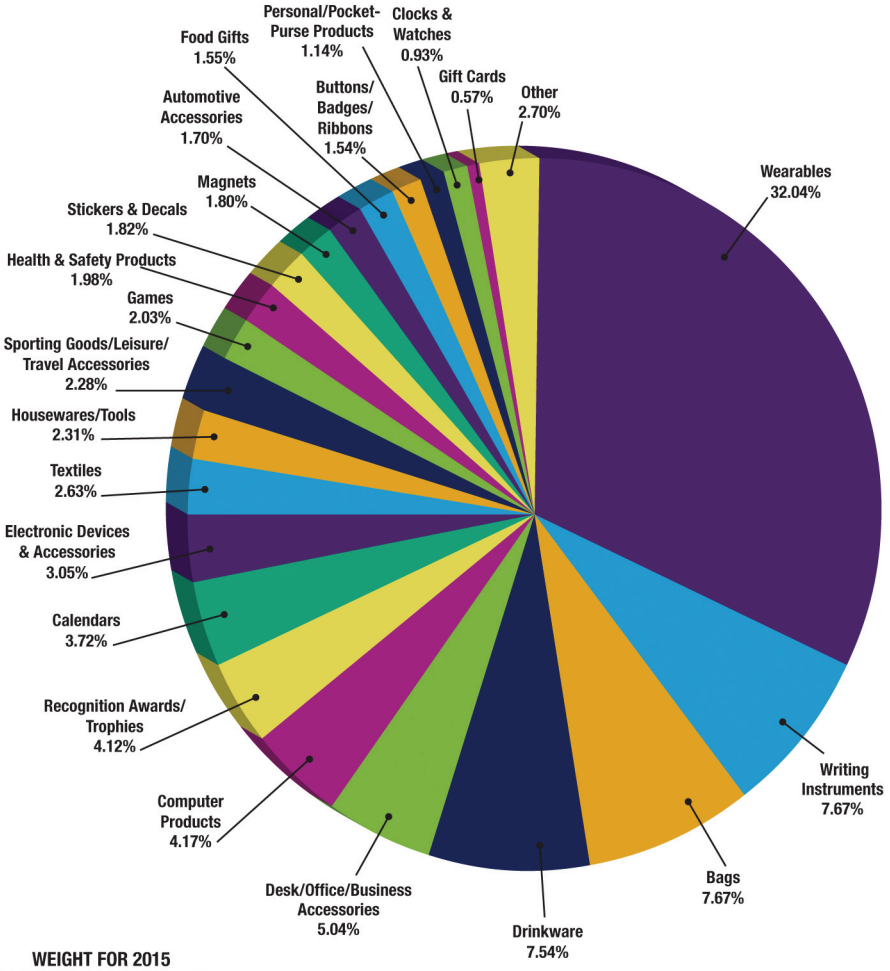
T-SHIRTS, GOLF SHIRTS, APRONS, UNIFORMS, caps, jackets, neckwear and footwear continued to be the biggest category of promotional products from a sales point of view with total wearables sales up again last year over 2014, capturing 32 percent of the market.

Historically, the second, third and fourth best-selling categories jockey for position every year with writing instruments and bags tying for the second spot in 2015 with 7.67 percent of sales each, followed by drinkware at 7.54 percent, desk and office at five percent and the remaining product categories following at a strong pace.

In 2015, sales in almost every product category rose slightly with some of the biggest gains in desk and office products and sporting goods, leisure and travel accessories.

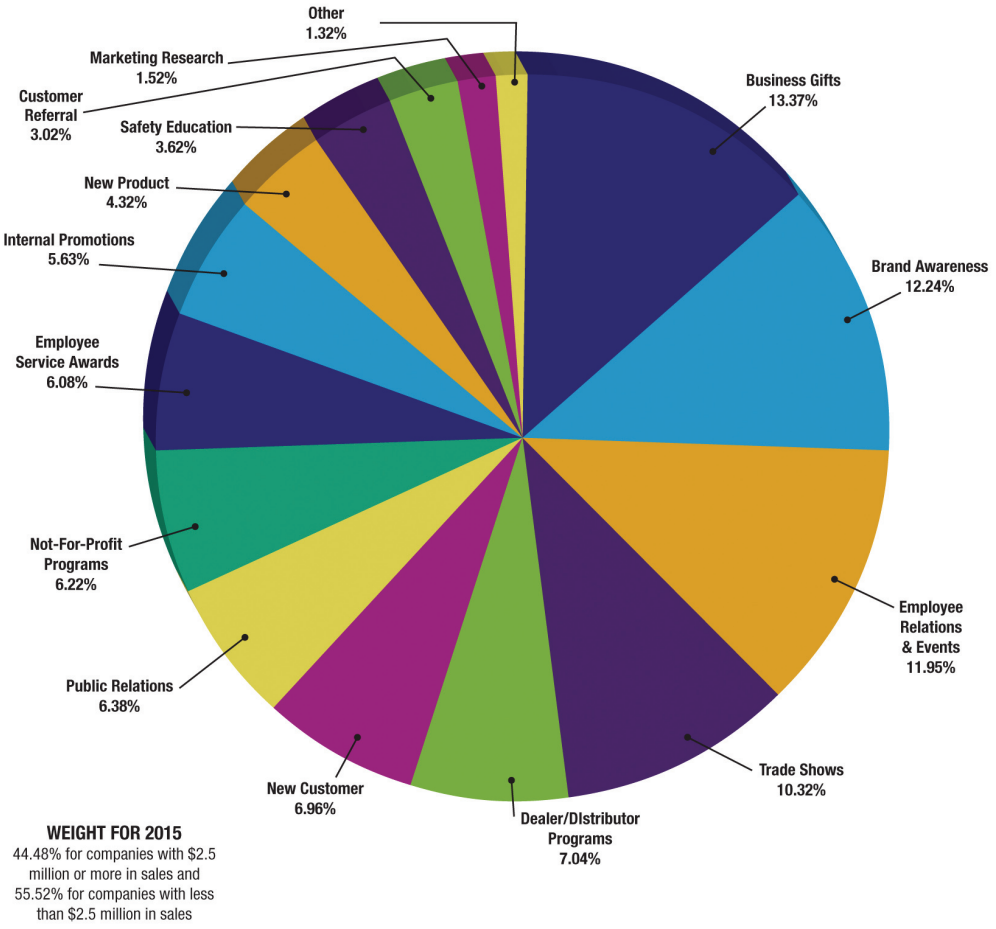
In sales by program category, the big winner in 2015 was business gifts at 13.37 percent followed by brand awareness at 12.24 percent, which held the lead in 2014 at 14.43 percent. Employee relations and events rose last year to 11.95 percent of sales, a 2.27-percent increase over 2014. In addition to business gifts, sales for public relations programs was the big gainer in 2015, rising from just under five percent to 6.38 percent.

FIG. 7 // 2015 Sales By Product Category



WEIGHT FOR 2015
44.48% for companies with $2.5 million or more in sales and 55.52% for companies with less than $2.5 million in sales

FIG. 8 // 2015 Sales By Program Category



Responses to questions about product and program categories continue to be a challenge as many distributors do not keep track of their sales by these categories. In order to continue building on the established research, PPAI urges new entrants to the industry and established distributors to keep track of their sales by PPAI's product and program categories shown in this summary.

INSIDE THE RESEARCH

PPAI'S 2015 ANNUAL DISTRIBUTOR SALES Summary resulted from an independent email/mail survey of industry distributors (including both PPAI members and nonmembers) conducted during March – April 2016, by Relevant Insights LLC, an independent market research firm. In addition, a census of the largest firms was also undertaken. Combining the samples from the different data collection methods used resulted in a total of 23,021 (22,153 small firms and 868 large firms) distributor surveys covering the entire U.S. industry. Responses projected across the entire distributor population combine sales for small distributors (under $2.5 million) and large distributor firms (over $2.5 million) to determine the total promotional products dollar volume.

TAKE A DEEPER DIVE The full report, containing 41 years of historical data, sales by company size and more predictions for 2016, is free to PPAI members at www.ppai.org. Click on Inside PPAI and then on Research. PPB

Michaela Mora is principal of Relevant Insights, LLC. Tina Berres Filipski is editor of PPB.

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS SPEND IN 2015 RANKED SIXTH AMONG ALL MEDIA

By Richard Alan Nelson, Ph.D. and Rick Ebel

ALTHOUGH NOT A BANNER YEAR for advertising revenue, in 2015 most media kept pace with what nowadays passes for inflation—but the digital platforms were booming.

Broadcast TV had a reasonably decent year with a four-percent gain (see table below), prompting CBS chief Leslie Moonves to crow and throw a dig at the rising digital opposition. "Everyone is now coming to the same conclusion that we came to a long time ago. Broadcast television remains the single best and most effective medium for advertising," he claimed in an Advertising Age report. "Digital advertising sometimes lacks accuracy and credibility. As a result, there is a clear shift in advertising back to network television."

But then, broadcast TV does have some special, crowd-pleasing assets working for it—like the Super Bowl. Back in 1978 you could buy a 30-second spot during the biggest game of the year for only $185,000. Well, those same 30 seconds at Super Bowl 50 earlier this year cost Anheuser-Busch a cool $5 million to convince viewers to try Michelob Ultra.

Sydney Ember, writing in *The New York Times* this spring, had an interesting take on digital advertising. Ember wrote: "The explosion of online ads, however, has led to the rising use of ad blockers and turned 'advertising' into something like a dirty word. So advertisers and publishers are now looking for ways to make online ads less like ads. Many in the industry are even changing the way they talk about ads."

Seismic shifts in the media landscape have forced a sea change among media organizations resulting in mergers, and some organizations eliminating research departments and getting out of ad spend measurement entirely.

Some, like cable TV, an industry with modestly rising revenues, have merged with video. The decline in point-of-purchase business has eliminated the standalone trade group POPAI and created a merged group—A.R.E./POPAI, a new association dedicated to enhancing the total shopper experience. And you may have noticed skinnier Yellow Pages directories lately, if you use them at all. Reading the writing on the wall, the old Yellow Pages publishers' group paired itself with digital to become a new entity, Local Search, and revenues are up almost six percent.

This year's total ad spend is expected to rise, thanks to the summer Olympics and the U.S. presidential election, forecasts London-based ZenithOptimedia, and just about everyone else in that business. With electioneering requiring a lot of yard signs and bumper stickers, look for the presidential election to add $11.4 billion to 2016 ad revenues, predicts Virginia-based media consultant Borrell Associates. That's 20 percent more than in the 2012 presidential race. Borrell reports that nearly half of the 2016 political dollars—$5.5 billion—will be spent on local and state elections. That can buy a lot of hot air. PPB

Dr. Richard Nelson, *RnelsonLV@gmail.com, is adjunct professor of integrated marketing communications at the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Rick Ebel, glenrichbiz@gmail.com, is the former PPAI marketing communications director and now principal of Glenrich Business Studies, a business writing and research firm in Corvallis, Oregon.*

FIG. 9 // 2015 Ad Revenues For Selected Media And Methods

Figures shown in billions of dollars

Media/Method	2014 (000)	2015 (000)	% Changed
Internet Advertising	$49,500,000	$59,600,000	20.0%
Broadcast TV	$49,094,786	$51,058,577	4.0%
Direct Mail	$46,009,600	$47,389,989	3.0%
Video/Cable TV	$27,901,367	$30,691,583	10.0%
Experiential/Event Marketing	$19,289,000	$21,500,000	11.5%
Promotional Products	**$20,042,229**	**$20,808,170**	**3.82%**
Mobile (phone) Advertising**	$12,453,000	$20,677,000	66.0%
Newspaper Advertising	$16,700,000	$16,199,100	-3.0%
Consumer Magazines	$14,222,000	$14,506,440	2.0%
Radio Advertising *	$17,509,000	$14,317,000	-18.2%
Point-of-Purchase Advertising	$12,500,000	$12,200,000	-2.4%
Local Search***	$ 7,780,000	$ 8,230,000	5.8%
Out-of-Home (Billboards)	$ 7,000,000	$ 7,300,000	4.3%
Business Magazines	$ 6,800,000	$ 6,800,000	0.0%
Product Placement (Film, TV)	$ 6,010,000	$ 6,500,000	8.2%
Cinema ****	$ 705,000	$ 800,000	13.5%

**Spot and network radio only*
***A subset of Internet Advertising*
****Yellow Pages and Digital Search*
*****Ads on theater screens*

Expenditures for selected advertising and promotional methods were compiled for Promotional Products Association International by Richard Alan Nelson PhD, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and Rick Ebel, Glenrich Business Studies, Corvallis, Oregon. Sources include Advertising Age, *BIA/Kelsey, Borrell Associates,* The New York Times, *Outdoor Advertising Association of America, PQ Media, Radio Advertising Bureau, Video Advertising Bureau and ZenithOptimedia.*

How's Business In 2016?

Most Distributors Anticipate Finishing Strong

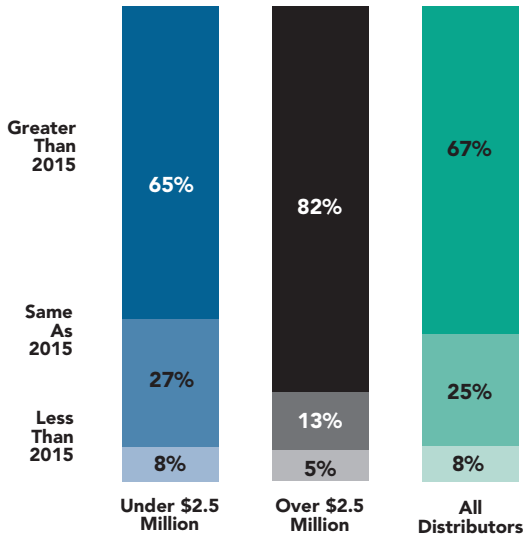
ALTHOUGH MANY DISTRIBUTORS ARE OPTIMISTIC about their company's growth in 2016, there are fewer who expect increased profit margins (62 percent) in 2016 compared to the expectations for 2015 (66 percent), especially among small distributors. Fewer in this group have a positive outlook regarding sales (65 percent) or profit (60 percent) for 2016 in comparison to 2015 (68 percent and 65 percent, respectively). The downturn in the oil and gas industry is expected to continue having a negative impact on many distributors, particularly in Texas.

However, companies that participated in the 2015 survey remain optimistic both about sales and profits for 2016, especially large distributors. More than three-quarters of large distributors feel confident about their sales (85 percent) and profit (76 percent) forecast for 2016.

Although, historically, large distributors are more likely to predict higher sales and profits for the upcoming year than smaller companies, there are significantly more large distributors who predict higher sales and profit margins for 2016 compared to their predictions for 2015, while smaller firms' predictions remain relatively unchanged.

PPB spoke with the principals at eight small, mid-sized and large distributor companies to see what they are expecting economically for 2016 and to ask about the challenges and concerns that are keeping them up at night.

FIG. 10 // Distributors' 2016 Sales Predictions



Anita Emoff

CEO and Majority Owner
Shumsky/Boost Rewards
(UPIC: SHUMSKY)
Dayton, Ohio

Company: Shumsky was founded in 1953 by Hy and Elsie Shumsky, grandparents of owner Michael Emoff. In 1984, Michael and his mother, Jayne Miller, took over the company. Since then Shumsky has expanded into brand verticals including recognition (Boost Rewards) and medical recovery pillows (Shumsky Therapeutic Pillows). Anita joined the company in 2006 and in 2009 became president of Boost Rewards. In 2013, Boost and Shumsky were merged into one entity with Anita named CEO and majority owner of the Shumsky and Boost brands. The combined companies continue to grow with a focus on differentiation (including traditional and custom promotional products, promotional e-commerce, fulfillment and point-of-sale) to define their space in the market verticals they serve, which includes technology, healthcare, automotive/transportation and retail/consumer packaged goods.

Economic Outlook: "Our bookings are up 16 percent YTD and our billings are up seven percent," says Emoff. "We expect to end the year up around 10 percent. Our

FIG. 11 // Top 10 Reasons To Expect Profit Increase In 2016

recognition solutions are growing faster than our promotional solutions, but we are driven by more larger opportunities in promotional, which could spike us up quickly over recognition. We experienced a similar situation last year with recognition growing faster."

Biggest Concerns: "Our biggest concerns for promotional are safety and compliance demands from our larger clients. We must adapt our supply chain to match this demand and [we] find it challenging."

Marc Katz

CEO
CustomInk (UPIC: C594384)
McLean, Virginia

Company: CustomInk was founded 16 years ago to help people design and order custom t-shirts online. Since then, CustomInk has grown to be a leader in custom apparel for groups and communities, and has helped its customers create more than 75 million custom shirts. It serves hundreds of thousands of schools, teams, clubs, charities and businesses large and small, in addition to families and friends for all sorts of special occasions. The company employs more than 1,600 people across multiple facilities nationwide. The company uses state-of-the-art screen printing, digital printing and embroidery for most of its production.

Economic Outlook: "We've had robust growth over the past few years, having tripled sales since 2012 to over $300,000, and we've continued to grow at a healthy pace this year, led by strong customer loyalty and strength in the business category, one of our fastest-growing segments. As a private company, we don't provide financial forecasts, but we expect to continue growing our historical business, while also expanding newer business lines, such as Booster, a grassroots fundraising platform that helps raise awareness and money for charity through custom apparel sales, and Pear, a sponsorship platform that helps connect brands with national and local groups to fund their custom gear and other needs. This April, we completed the acquisition of Represent, a Los Angeles-based social commerce startup that helps celebrity influencers like actors, athletes, musicians and thought leaders create and sell limited-run t-shirts and merchandise to their supporters.

Biggest Concerns: "This is such a dynamic market with lots of opportunity, so our biggest challenge is generally prioritization and execution. This is particularly true online, where mobile and social trends have fundamentally changed what's possible, while also upping the ante for what it takes to succeed."

Bob Lilly, Jr.

CEO/President
Bob Lilly Promotions, LLC.
(UPIC: BOBL8430)
Dallas, Texas

Company: Bob Lilly Promotions is an industry-leading integrated marketing solutions agency with offices in Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, Texas. It offers customers solutions for promotional products, awards and apparel as well as distribution, fulfillment, printing, packaging, creative design and technology platforms to support program sales.

Economic Outlook: Lilly reports the company is down Q1 year over year by 10 percent but Q2 is slightly up year over year by five percent. "Our pipeline has improved

"This is such a dynamic market with lots of opportunity, so our biggest challenge is generally prioritization and execution. This is particularly true online, where mobile and social trends have fundamentally changed what's possible, while also upping the ante for what it takes to succeed."

due to new business onboarding as well as higher oil prices. We should finish flat to slightly up YOY," he says.

Biggest Concerns: "We are focused on creating a company that attracts young, talented people. We recognize the buyers are getting younger and their needs are changing. We want to remain relevant in the way we think about and serve the needs of our customers."

Jeff Becker

President
Kotis Design
(UPIC: kotis752)
Seattle, Washington

Company: Jeff Becker began selling t-shirts to fraternities and sororities at the University of Washington in 2003. After graduation, many of the same reasons students bought from him applied to the corporate world. Since then, the company has brought decoration in house, opened two distribution centers, greatly expanded its technology and now sells to clients across the country. Key markets served include college, beverage and corporate, with services including in-house decoration, warehouse and fulfillment, web platforms and talents of a full creative team.

Economic Outlook: "2016 started strong, but we have seen a slow down since the middle of Q1. Clients are being cautious and conservative with their spending, much of which I'd attribute to their uncertainty in the market (election, retails sales down, gas prices low, international unrest, etc.). We have averaged over 30-percent growth since our inception, and even though sales will definitely be up compared to 2015, we may not hit that 30-percent mark."

Biggest Concerns: "The biggest concern I have right now is what our economy has in store for us. I see the average American spending less (i.e.: general retail sales down, not upgrading to the new iPhone, spending a higher percentage of wages on rent, etc.). The loss, tightening or delay of budgets may be out of our control. However, if we do our jobs effectively, we should be able to show our clients that the use promotional products will drive sales to combat the decrease. We'll just have to fight more and get better in all aspects of our business."

"Year-over-year growth is good but is 'good' ever enough? We have added a few account executives so far this year with intentions to carefully add more by the end of the year. While never content, our outlook for the long term remains enthusiastic."

Brian Grall

General Manager
LogoMyBiz.com
(UPIC: LogoMy)
Evergreen, Colorado

Company: Just launched in 2015 in Oregon and relocated to Colorado this year, it serves mostly small-business clients, with a smattering of corporate America, as well as entities in the beverage industry, education/government and nonprofits.

Economic Outlook: "Year-over-year growth is good, but is 'good' ever enough? We have added a few account executives so far this year with intentions to carefully add more by the end of the year. While never content, our outlook for the long term remains enthusiastic."

Biggest Concerns: "Big-picture-wise, staying relevant in a consolidating industry is our biggest challenge. We are racing against the industry consolidation clock to make sure LogoMyBiz.com becomes established as a relevant long-term player. On a more local basis, the commercial real estate market is a challenge presently, delaying our preference for investment property for an office/conference/showroom. Otherwise it is the typical startup—juggling many balls while developing sales."

Tim Hennessy, Sr.

President
Concepts & Associates
(UPIC: 6971)
Birmingham, Alabama

Company: The 33-year-old company was built on service with an outstanding group of employees, and offers a full range of products and brands, online company store programs, an embroidery operation and global sourcing. It serves markets in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Europe.

Economic Outlook: Hennessy reports the company is doing well, having had its best year ever in 2015. "We expect a moderate gain in 2016, but with some good luck and fortune, Concepts again could end having our best year ever. There are a number of projects we've worked on for a while that came to fruition and we are picking up speed on some things we've invested in. You pay your dues and hopefully you get something out of it." He's also noticed that the spend level has come back in our industry. "It's not yet to the '07 or '08 level yet but people seem to have some money and they realize they need to spend it to take care of their people. They are doing more with less and have to reward their people and clients. Client retention is paramount—it's the lifeblood of a company."

Biggest Concerns: He notes two key areas: Online offering of products from com-

panies outside our industry and the ease of entry into the promotional products industry.

Joe Walkup

President
Innovative Business Products, LLC
(UPIC: ibp459)
Nashville, Tennessee

Company: Founded as a print company in 2004, it has expanded offerings to provide promotional products, apparel, warehousing, fulfillment and online storefronts to clients in the banking, healthcare and transportation industries.

Economic Outlook: "We are currently up for 2016. Our business has been up for the past three years and I don't see it slowing down. IBP is in a growth mode right now. We are looking at new sales reps along with potential acquisitions."

Biggest Concerns: "I think that consolidation is changing the industry. For the most part I think it is good, but it can make it challenging in other ways. That being said I am looking at doing the same thing."

Stephanie Zafarana

President
Pica Marketing Group
(UPIC: ezgreen)
Dearborn, Michigan

Company: PMG was established in 2008 during the depths of the recession. During those years of tight budgets, Zafarana noticed a profound need to help marketing executives track and report their ROI and ROO. Services offered today include employee incentive programs, safety programs, company stores, fundraising programs, direct mail and packaging. Key markets served are healthcare, not-for-profit, technology and retail.

Economic Outlook: "As of April 30, we're up just about 50 percent in gross sales with our average order size up 38 percent. We are not anticipating a slowdown in our business from its current trajectory."

Biggest Concerns: "Our most difficult challenge right now is growing our business smartly. We are struggling with the idea of hiring a person to help with the administration, research, quotes and orders. Two of our biggest concerns are the sustainability of the role and do we have enough work to fill a fulltime employee? More importantly, [how do we] not sacrifice the client experience as we scale the business. Therefore, in the short run, we are using new technologies to help manage some of the processes and follow up." PPB

—Tina Berres Filipski

WE MAKE MILLIONAIRES™

Proforma is the $500 million leading network of print and promotional products distributors.

The Proforma Million Dollar Club includes more than 140 Members with new members inducted annually ...
You could be next.

Visit OnlyProforma.com/PPAI or call 1-800-658-2967 to schedule your free, confidential consultation.

PROforma®

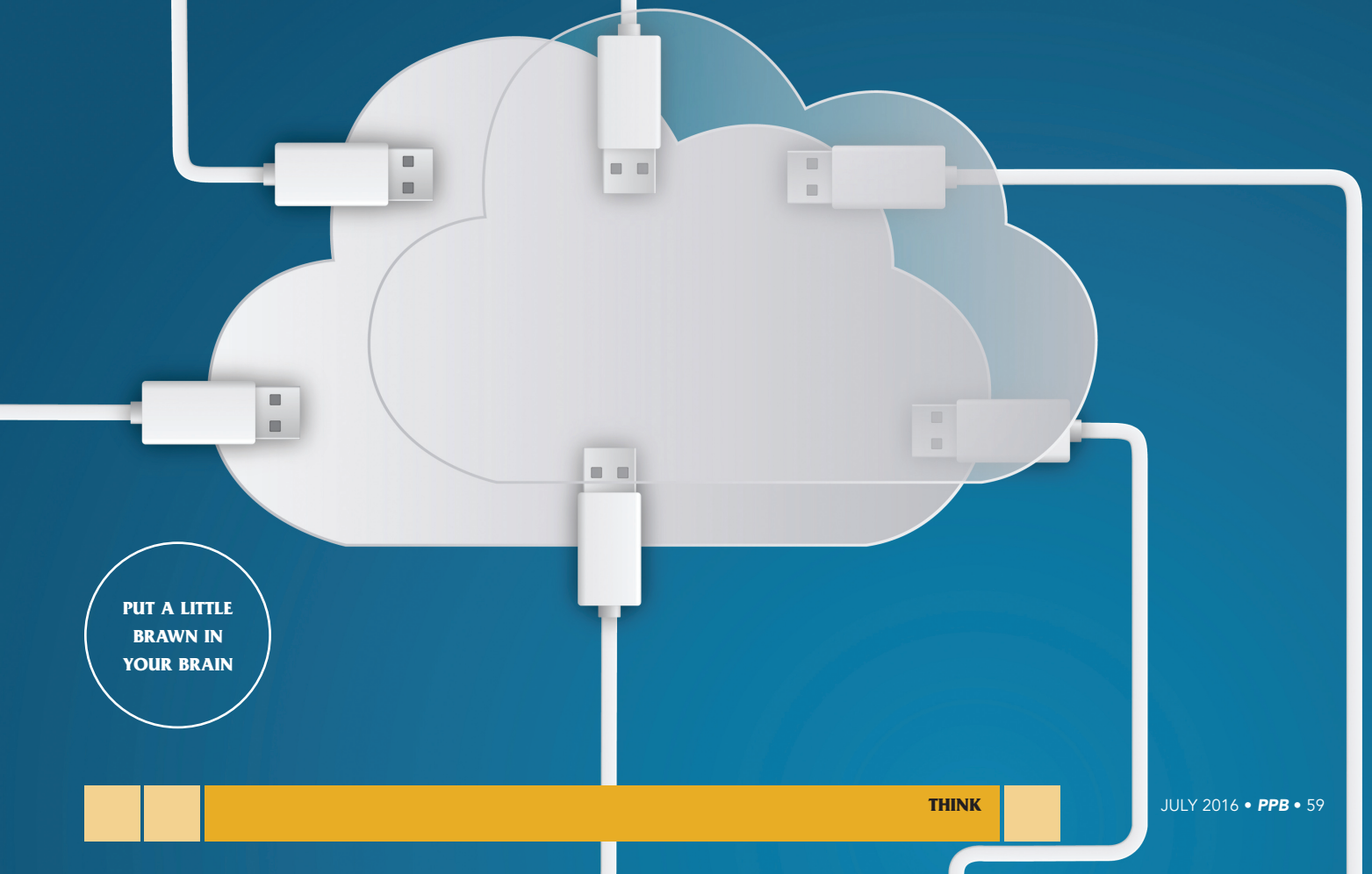
This advertisement does not constitute an offer of a franchise and is not directed to residents of any particular state or other jurisdiction. No offer or sale of a franchise will be made to the residents of any state except by a franchise disclosure document that, if required, has been registered with appropriate state authorities. An offering can only be made through the delivery of an FDD. NY Residents: An offering can only be made by a prospectus filed first with the Department of Law of the State of NY. Such filing does not constitute approval by the Dept. of Law. MN Reg. No. F-2918.If you have any questions concerning the registration status of franchises in your jurisdiction, please contact the franchise development department at 800-825-1525; 8800 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, OH 44131.

THINK

60 Selling Sales To Millennials // **FAST FORWARD**
65 Sometimes Good Intentions Aren't Enough // **PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY**
69 Positioning Your Company For Sale // **MANAGEMENT**
74 Cloud Computing // **TECHNOLOGY**

CLOUD AND CLEAR

The rise of cloud computing has created an opportunity for companies to access advanced technology on a small-business budget. See how it can help boost your business on page 74.



PUT A LITTLE BRAWN IN YOUR BRAIN

WATER COOLER

Selling Sales To Millennials

By Jen Alexander

THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION has so much to offer the workforce—and not simply its sheer number of employable individuals. Uniquely adapted to working in the digital space and speedily perfecting that elusive work-life balance, it's easy to see how Millennials could boost the success of your sales force. But why don't they want the job? Because too many sales forces remain entrenched in 20th-century tactics.

To get Millennials in the door, consider these strategies:

- **Adjust compensation packages.** Millennials seek financial stability, so a higher base pay with lower commission might be more appealing.
- **Don't make sales a desk job.** Selling isn't 9-to-5 anymore, so Millennials want the physical flexibility to meet their prospects where—and when—they happen to be at any opportunity.
- **Let them network outside your prospect list.** Millennials have buying power, to the tune of roughly $1.3 trillion a year, so they likely know who among their friends could be a potential new client for you.
- **Meet them on their turf.** The youngest of the Millennials are hitting the job fairs hard, so make an appointment to be one of those recruiters on college campuses near you.

Five Minutes With **Jonathan Isaacson**

LET'S GET Digital

PPB **While the debate over print vs. online catalogs has continued to crop up among promotional products companies, Gemline took the leap to doing away with catalogs. What prompted this decision?**

Isaacson We were hearing from a rapidly increasing number of customers that they no longer wanted us to send them a reference catalog. The main reason given to us was that they preferred to search for product solutions online. As a result, we began to re-evaluate our go-to-market strategy in terms of product marketing, which helped to frame some questions: What would be the reason to keep producing a reference catalog in 2016 and beyond? Are there any other successful industries outside of promotional products that are still using a reference catalog? In the end, we could not come up with another industry that still uses reference catalogs, and the reasons to move online were compelling.

We looked around us and saw that virtually every industry has adapted to the digital world. The benefit of being more focused online is clear; our new website provides a better, faster and much easier way for our customers and their end users to do business. We still send our customers our printed style guides every other month, which feature both new and existing products. This gives our customers a powerful tool to proactively drive their own sales and makes Gemline more relevant and timely.

PPB **What concerns or doubts about the transition did members of the Gemline team express, and how were they addressed during the decision making process?**

Isaacson Change is almost always challenging, so when we presented the new go-to-market strategy, we expected a varied response. However, the team embraced the new direction the company was embarking on as they evaluated their own work environments and how they interacted with customers.

Of course, there were a number of tactical issues that came up during and after the transition. This was to be expected. We have made quick adjustments and, as a part of the process, will continue working to provide customers with the best possible experience.

PPB **How did you communicate the change to your customers, and what has been their response?**

Isaacson We communicated with our customers in a variety of ways and explained our new marketing approach. For the customers that were already firmly ensconced in the digital world, this has been a welcomed change. They have better tools at their fingertips and this fits neatly into their world. For some customers who like to use paper on occasion, they can continue to use the myriad of marketing tools we deploy, including our style guides. For others, this may take some getting used to or need more explanation.

PPB **You've mentioned the need to approach other industry practices in light of advancing technologies, globalization and changes in demographics. When did Gemline start discussing the evolution of its business strategy in the context of these changes, and what other advancements or changes has your team recently put into practice?**

Isaacson The reality is that our end-user customers have been changing for some time now. It stands to reason that the industry will continue to evolve as our world does around us. We are not going to be immune. We are simply trying to stay relevant in the world of Google, Amazon and Uber.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

With this in mind, we have completely rebuilt our website and will continue to roll out improvements in the future. With our new site, using better, more intuitive search tools we can provide our customers with an easier way to find the solution that fits their needs.

***PPB* What business practices do you feel suppliers should begin phasing out?**

Isaacson We are not smart enough to be able to tell somebody else how to run their business. We try to do what we believe is best for our customers and others will have to decide what they think is best.

***PPB* What are some of the less obvious benefits to staying ahead of the curve as a promotional products business?**

Isaacson I have been running Gemline since 1994 and have seen most of our competitors from that time disappear. For the remaining competitors, they have survived through a form of natural selection. They are well-run companies with significant resources. When the world is changing, especially as fundamentally as it is today, sometimes you have to take a chance or try to do something different in order to be successful in the future.

BRANDABLE

You Say Goodbye, Brands Say Hello

BYE

HI

Custom device cases catch consumers on the flipside

WE CAN'T SEEM TO put our phones and tablets down for more than a few minutes a day, but when we do, what do we see? The brains behind Portland, Oregon-based Toast hope it will be laser-etched logos, brand names or other custom images on its wood and leather device covers. In addition to tablets, laptops and smartphones, Toast makes face frames for Pebble Smartwatch.

Launched with the help of a Kickstarter campaign, Toast laser-cuts ultra-thin covers from responsibly sourced wood and bamboo, which are paired with a 3M adhesive to adhere them to devices rather than being snapped on. Customer-submitted high-res images and vector files become the templates for designs that make each cover unique to its recipient or, in the case of branding, the gift-giver. Big-name brands that have graced Toast covers include American Airlines, Nike and Nexus by LG.

Toast products are laser-cut from **wood veneers and leather.**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOAST

TECH TALK

Did Your **Bowtie** Just **Change Colors**?

WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY MOVES BEYOND FITNESS TRACKERS

FORGET FITBIT—THE FUTURE OF wearable technology is leaving simple fitness trackers behind and focusing on smart clothing and jewelry. UK-based Juniper Research is predicting these two fields will bring in as much as $265 million in revenues in the next five years–the majority being spent in North America.

What's different about these newest additions to the wearable-tech sector? According to Juniper, "eTextiles" are the foundation of wearable technology; material or parts of a finished garment are made conductive to activate certain components within a piece. This smart clothing may be created with 3D-printed fabrics, and textiles consisting of stainless steel and silver yarn.

Instead of measuring heart rate or calories burned, eTextiles are being crafted to detect changes in the wearer's mood and to track athletes' positions in real time during play or practice; other styles may employ motion sensors to activate design patterns and light elements.

Smart jewelry is ripe for use with notification apps. Necklaces and rings can be programmed to send GPS alerts or make an automatic call to preset numbers in case of emergency. Other wearables, such as the Netatmo JUNE smart bracelet, provide an app-driven UV-sensing device to help wearers avoid overexposure and sun damage.

And that bowtie? Produced by Sony using ePaper, the bowtie is crafted from electronic paper that's programmed to change designs on a whim. The ePaper is also the basis for Sony's minimalist FES watch, which became available at retail late last year. Though it has none of the capabilities of a smartwatch, the FES's clean design and clever motion sensor earned it enough backing from a Japanese crowdfunding site to bring the project to fruition. The watch is being sold through a handful of Japanese online stores for just under $250.

MARKET SHARE

Marketing In A Virtual World

EARLY ADOPTERS OF advanced personal technology scrambled to get their hands on virtual reality (VR) devices like Oculus Rift, which offer users an immersive experience, when they were finally released in March. Savvy brands such as soft-drink giant Coca Cola were among the first to see VR as a platform for more effective brand exposure among consumers through unique storytelling. The company developed the Coca Cola Packaging Viewer—packaging that can be converted to a VR viewer—to engage with teen consumers while increasing sales of products among that age group.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COCA COLA

Navigating a new marketing field holds endless possibilities but also can lead to huge missteps. Guido Rosales, former integrated marking director for The Coca Cola Company Europe and a guest speaker at the Virtual Reality for Global Brands Conference in June, shared these tips for making virtual reality marketing more successful:

1. **Focus on the brand message** and story, then decide how VR can enhance it.
2. **Create buzz** around the message, not the technology.
3. **Earn additional media** by connecting the brand story with other consumer touch points, and rely on VR to maximize brand exposure. PPB

Don't bury your head in the sand! Greater China delivers far more than a typical importer... Make Greater China your direct manufacturing partner.

• 20+ Years Experience • Creativity - Custom OEM Our Specialty • 30-Day Product Guarantee • Quotes Within 24 Hours
• Complete Project Management • Product Safety Compliance • C-TPAT Certified • Global Logistics

Seattle | Philadelphia | San Diego | Shanghai

GREATER CHINA™

The Ultimate Manufacturing Experience™

888.424.6847 | GREATERCHINA-USA.COM | ASI #58135 | PPAI #191353

Product Safety Compliance

SOMETIMES GOOD INTENTIONS AREN'T ENOUGH **By David P. Callet**

In his "State of Product Safety" speech at the 2015 ICPHSO Annual Meeting, CPSC Chairman Elliot Kaye stated that the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) increase in permissible civil penalties for violations of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) demonstrates Congress' intent to punish, deter and make sure that civil penalties are not just the "cost of doing business." He further noted, "I don't think … that we are seeing civil penalties that are reflective of what Congress expected and demanded of us in the CPSIA."

Confirming last year's theme that increasing penalties are on the horizon, Kaye's remarks at this year's meeting delved further into the CPSC's position on the size of potential civil penalty settlements, particularly for companies that fail to file timely Section 15(b) reports with the CPSC. He stated that, when justified, he would like to see "double digits" (i.e. at least $10 million) in civil penalties. Sure enough, three weeks later, the CPSC announced a record $15.45 million civil penalty settlement with a company.

Kaye also noted the CPSC would give greater scrutiny to the "bad actors," and said there will be increased repercussions for these companies when there are problems. "The CPSC will weed out the 'bad actors' and direct enforcement efforts against them," he stated.

Whoa! Exactly who is a "bad actor" in the eyes of the CPSC? Surely companies that deliberately flaunt reporting and other product safety requirements, and produce unsafe or dangerous products would be in this category. Right now you're probably thinking, "Oh, good, my company is safe. We are not bad actors."

What might surprise you is that companies like yours that do make good-faith efforts to comply with all product safety regulations can still wind up being perceived by the CPSC as "bad actors." If and when your

What might surprise you is that companies like yours that do make good-faith efforts to comply with all product safety regulations can still wind up being perceived by the CPSC as "bad actors."

company becomes the focus of a CPSC investigation, you risk being perceived as a bad actor. This does not mean a single communication with the CPSC puts you in danger. If your company's products and your reactions—or failure to react appropriately—have created sufficient CPSC product safety violations, this is when you may run into the bad actor perception. Maybe your product developed a problem and you failed to fix it, or you failed to report timely when required under Section 15(b) to do so—these are the kinds of matters that would motivate the CPSC to investigate. Unfortunately, this can cause the CPSC to take a "we-versus-they" approach, featuring your company as the bad guy.

What Do You Do Next?

How should your company proceed if you find yourself in this difficult situation? Your company will now need to demonstrate that it really is a good guy. It is important to remember that you still can and should shape how your company is perceived by getting into a putting-on-our-best-face mode. This includes:

- figuring out what the CPSC representative wants and providing it to the furthest extent possible;
- gaining control over internal and external communications, as inconsistency can be lethal;
- being respectful in all communications—maintain a friendly but professional demeanor, and, most importantly, don't argue—support your position with facts and logic;
- responding timely to government requests;
- being honest—whatever you say must be true. Do not conceal the truth, and never knowingly make an incorrect statement; and
- being truthful and thorough in all communications. But never overlook the opportunity to say nothing.

How To Stay Out Of The Limelight

How can companies avoid appearing on the CPSC's radar screen in the first place? The best way is to preemptively develop and implement an effective CPSC product safety compliance program. It is important to understand that the protection your compliance program will afford you is only as strong as your commitment to making it truly effective and functional.

Your CPSC compliance program should establish compliance policies in writing. This will enable you to document your company's efforts to comply and provide a blueprint for employees to follow. Development and implementation of the program will require the support of the management team, so that appropriate internal controls and procedures can be established and enforced. Internal company communications should be examined and structured to enable your company's management to quickly be informed of product safety deficiencies and determine how to respond. If reporting to the CPSC is required, the compliance program should facilitate rapid internal action so that CPSC reporting can be timely and thorough. Your compliance program should provide a mechanism to make use of feedback from multiple internal and external sources regarding the safety of your products.

If your company is importing or selling children's products, the compliance program should encompass your company's product testing and certification program so that compliance with all applicable children's product safety standards is ensured.

The existence of your product safety compliance program will help protect you by minimizing product safety problems—thereby keeping your company out of sight of the CPSC—and, in the event of a problem, by demonstrating to the CPSC that you have been proactive in attempting to ensure product safety. PPB

David P. Callet *is the principal at CalletLaw in Washington, D.C., and provides comprehensive client representation on all aspects of consumer product safety compliance. Reach him at dcallet@calletlaw.com.*

PPAI PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY™ SUMMIT

TAKE YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

JOIN YOUR INDUSTRY COLLEAGUES for the annual PPAI Product Responsibility Summit, September 18-20, 2016, in National Harbor, Maryland. The Summit is one and half days of education focused on the most pressing product safety issues, as well as the business implications, challenges and opportunities associated with compliance. Facilitated by industry thought leaders, representatives from product safety labs and product certification groups, this eye-opening event will explore the latest developments, as well as best practices. Register today to secure your seat at www.ppai.org/prs

Do Something New for Your Customers

Get 20% off and free shipping with your first order!

Custom Full Length Sleeves
As low as $5.00 PER PAIR

Custom Forearm Length Shiver Sleeves
As low as $2.50 PER PAIR

Custom Socks
As low as $3.00 PER PAIR

- **Full Color**
- **No Design or Setup Fees**
- **Low Minimums**

- Business promotions
- Sporting events
- Team building
- Races/Tournaments
- Grand openings
- School fundraisers
- Charities
- Corporate events

E-mail Ray at:
ray@linmfg.com

Or call:
435-787-8888

THE SPIRIT SLEEVE™

www. spiritsleeve.com

Take your customers by the hand...

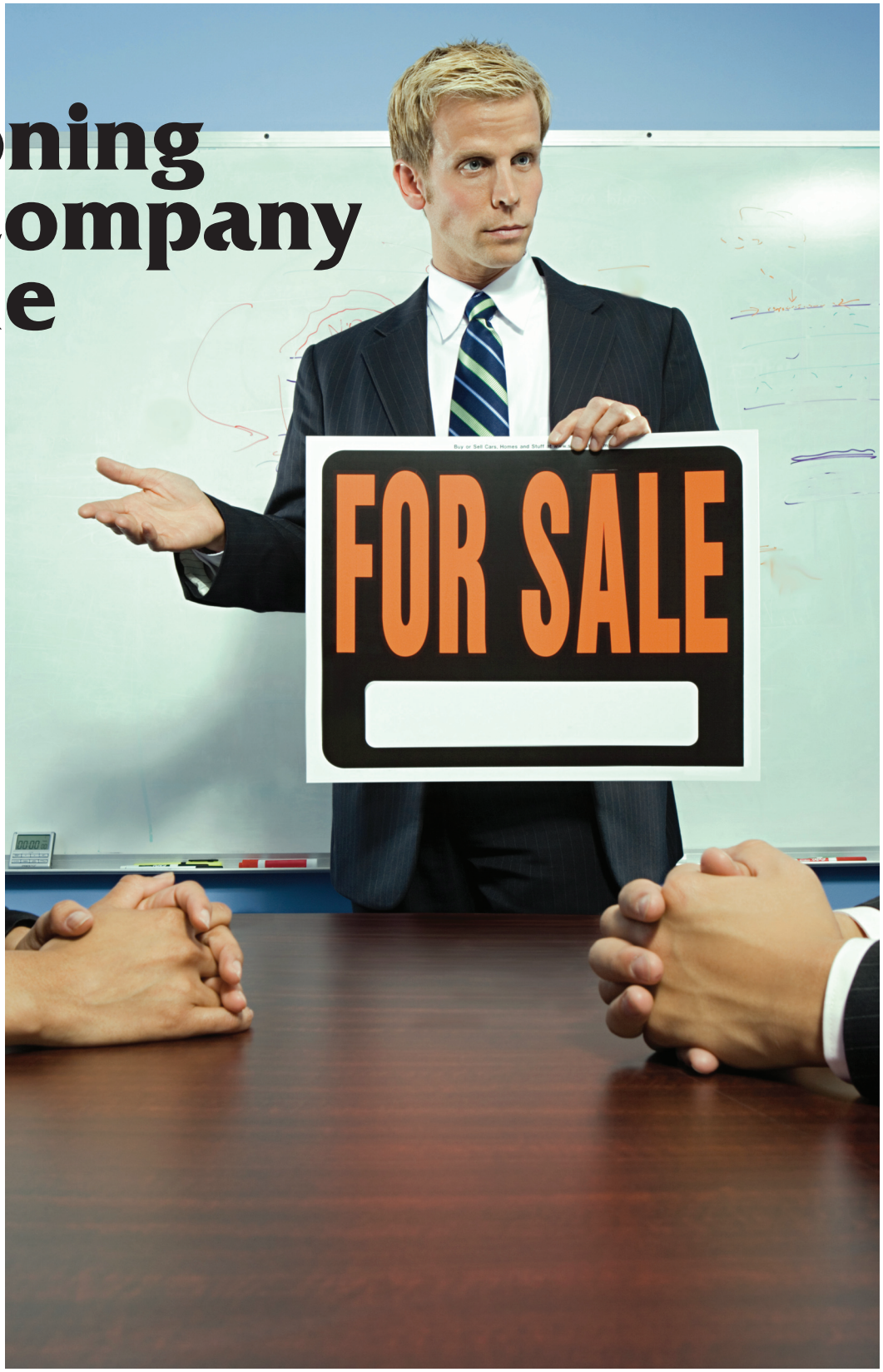
...and lead them to success with visually stunning souvenir cups from Visstun.

Call (800) 873-9133
or visit www.visstun.com

CUSTOM CUPS & CONTAINERS
♻REUSABLE PLASTIC • PAPER HOT - COLD - MICROWAVE

VISSTUN®
Visually Stunning Cups & Containers

Positioning Your Company For Sale



MAKE YOUR COMPANY RIPE FOR AN ACQUISITION BY KNOWING WHAT MAKES IT AN ATTRACTIVE BUY.

First in a series on acquisition preparedness

By Jeffry C. Meyer, MAS, CPA

INDUSTRY CONSOLIDATION MAY MEAN good things to our industry for a number of reasons as discussed in the May issue of *PPB* (Consolidation: Will We Be Better Off?) but what does it mean to companies who want (or need) to sell? How do responsible owners of promotional products companies position their companies for sale in such a way that they achieve their personal goals and realize the maximum value for their companies? What do buyers look for in an acquisition?

These are questions for which every owner should have answers and a corresponding strategy. The questions also imply that owners should take different actions than they ordinarily would if they are planning to sell—but that's not so. The vast majority of the actions should be taken whether a

SIX THINGS THAT DON'T HELP SELL A COMPANY

1 **New investments that will take time to increase profit and cash flow.** Buyers won't pay for unproven future benefits.

2 **Long-term leases.** Buyers base the value of an acquisition partially on reductions in expenses that they can implement, like facility costs. Long-term leases can tie their hands, reducing the amount they will offer for a company.

3 **Excess commissions.** If commissions paid are in excess of industry standards, buyers will balk at buying such companies because the rates are not sustainable.

4 **Owners paying themselves less than what their efforts are worth.** By all means, owners should pay themselves at least market value. Buyers are not going to be fooled into thinking the company is more profitable if owners don't pay themselves appropriately.

5 **Reducing expenses below sustainable levels,** especially sales and marketing expenses. This may result in short-term increased profit, but buyers will sniff out this strategy in a heartbeat and instead become concerned that future sales will suffer from lack of marketing.

6 **Minority Ownership Certification.** Certifications can be valuable door openers, but if substantial revenue is dependent upon certifications, it will require that a buyer has that certification. This creates a very restricted buyer list.

potential sale is imminent or not. That said, many company owners are not following through on all the necessary actions—and they should be.

What do buyers look for in a company they want to acquire? The answer is short and to the point. They are looking for evidence and assurance of continued future profit in the form of positive cash flow. While sales for the past decade may be impressive, they are not necessarily indicative of future profitability. There are a number of factors that contribute to the satisfaction of a potential buyer.

ACCURATE AND TIMELY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: Nothing kills the enthusiasm of buyers more than error-filled financial statements. How can a potential buyer possibly project future profit from bad historical statements? I know potential deals that have been terminated because the financial statements were junk.

Monthly financial statements are important because they help buyers understand seasonality. They also serve as the basis for trailing 12-month financial results. If negotiations are taking place in June, buyers want to know what current trends look like for the past 12 months. Sales and profit may have been good for 2015, but what are current trends? Trailing 12-month financial results provide that information and an accountant can easily compute this. It is also important to finalize last month's financial statements before the current month is over. We have had several clients who only run financial statements once per year. It takes others two to three months to complete monthly statements. Any delay in financial reporting puts transactions at risk.

Buyers will use the financial statements to analyze trends: sales, gross margin percentage, changes in individual expense levels, etc. Owners should be knowledgeable enough and prepared to answer these questions.

Buyers wonder if the owners don't have the discipline to complete accurate and timely financial statements, what other shortfalls might there be in the operation?

OWNER INVOLVEMENT: How dependent is the company on the owner's involvement. If a company can't operate without the owner, that is a risk to future profits. Owners should transition their companies so they can operate substantially without them, lowering the risk to buyers.

CUSTOMER AND SALESPERSON DIVERSIFICATION: Another risk to continued earnings that buyers evaluate is how much the company depends on the sales from individual customers or salespeople. Sales to one customer representing 10 percent or more of a company's total sales raises the risk to the company should that customer be lost for whatever reason. The same principle applies to a salesperson with 20 percent or more of the sales, especially if the salespeople are independent contractors. Effort should be

made to transition the customer relationships to company personnel through a customer retention strategy in order to reduce dependence on individual salespeople.

SALESPERSON RELATIONSHIP: Continuity of salespeople from owners to buyers is a critical issue that buyers must become comfortable with. Several tools can help mitigate buyers' concern:

- **Employees or independent contractors.** Employee salespeople tend to be more likely to remain engaged after an acquisition than independent contractors who are free to move on. The burden falls on buyers to influence whether independent contractors remain with the company after the sale.
- **Contracts with customers help assure future sales.**
- **Non-compete Agreements.** This topic always stimulates conversation about how "enforceable" such agreements might be. Each state is different and this article is not meant to be a legal analysis. However, without a doubt, it is better to have reasonable non-compete agreements than not. All employees should sign them on the date they begin employment whether they are salespeople or work in the office.
- **Commission Policy.** Commissions must be paid at a sensible level and consistent between all salespeople; no special deals. Buyers insist that all commissions are paid under the same terms and are reluctant to change excess commission rates for fear of alienating salespeople who have been spoiled by owners.
- **Policy & Procedures Manual.** Buyers want to be sure they understand how salespeople obtain and process orders, under what credit terms, from what suppliers, etc. Unfortunately, salespeople tend to function their way if no formal policies exist. That creates another potential future conflict between buyers and the sellers' salespeople.

BUSINESS PLAN: Many owners do not complete a business plan for their companies. However, to the extent that owners have a business plan and can demonstrate how the plan is working, it can build confidence in buyers that the employees and salespeople are focused on a plan that is working well.

The Next Steps

In addition to preparing the information buyers are looking for, there are a number of actions owners should take in the years before they plan to sell their companies.

1 **Business Valuation:** Owners often decide they want to sell their companies, but have no idea what they are worth. They probably have a portfolio on which they check the value daily and a house for which they have a pretty good idea of worth. However, their companies are probably their most valuable assets. A valuation

FOUR THINGS THAT DON'T ADD VALUE TO A POTENTIAL SALE

1 **The owners' tenure in the industry.** This can actually be an indictment of owners whose companies aren't prospering despite "30 years in the industry."

2 **Higher sales levels two or three years ago.** Only sales in the past year/12 months are relevant. This is one reason a succession plan is important; to sell when revenues are up, not two years later.

3 **Investments the buyer will make.** "If a buyer provides capital, the company will grow substantially." That may be true, but buyers are not going to pay value to sellers for positive results that buyers expect to realize from their efforts and capital.

4 **Intellectual properties, customer industry niche, industry awards, proprietary products and services.** Such qualities may increase the confidence buyers have in investments, but their actual value is determined by the companies' sales and profit performance.

with periodic updates provides a number of benefits:

- Benchmark for improvement in profitability and value
- Realistic expectations when negotiating a sale
- Estate planning

2 **Tax Planning:** Owners should work with financial advisors to develop a plan to minimize the tax consequences of selling their companies. For instance, C-Corps have substantial negative tax consequences when they are sold. They should be converted to S-Corps as soon as possible because there is a waiting period to realize the tax savings of an S-Corp.

3 **Succession Plan:** In order to maximize the ultimate value of their companies, owners should develop succession plans that identify the time and circumstances that will trigger their efforts to sell their companies. A plan doesn't have to be carved into stone, but should be thoughtfully prepared. Otherwise the disposition of companies is determined by outside circumstances, health or financial issues. Excellent opportunities will be lost or overlooked.

As you can see, none of the actions in this article are difficult or onerous. They all have benefits to owners and their companies irrespective of whether they are sold. They do require effort and discipline to implement, but once done, they will not be difficult to maintain and will result in the maximization of value if and when owners decide to sell. PPB

***Jeffry Meyer, MAS, CPA**, is CEO of Huntertown, Indiana-based Certified Marketing Consultants, Ltd., a PPAI business services member. He has been active in the promotional products industry for more than 35 years. He and his two partners serve companies exclusively in the promotional products industry with services including mergers and acquisitions, business valuations, strategic planning, business plans, marketing plans and general consulting.*

WIN AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WANT. THE BIGGER THE ORDER THE BIGGER THE PRIZE.

$5000 - $9999 orders (Product Only)

- $100 AMEX gift card

OR

- $300 of SWEDA product (1 total order)

Includes setup / run charges. Does not include freight. May not exceed award amount, and may not be used as a credit against orders shipped. Self promo at standard EQP net price.

$10,000 - $19,999 orders (Product Only)

- $150 AMEX gift card

OR

- $600 of SWEDA product (1 total order)

Includes setup / run charges. Does not include freight. May not exceed award amount, and may not be used as a credit against orders shipped. Self promo at standard EQP net price.

$20,000 - $49,999 orders (Product Only)

- $250 AMEX gift card

OR

- $1200 of SWEDA product (1 total order)

Includes setup / run charges. Does not include freight. May not exceed award amount, and may not be used as a credit against orders shipped. Self promo at standard EQP net price.

$50,000 + orders (Product Only)

- $300 AMEX gift card

OR

- $2000 of SWEDA product (1 total order)

Includes setup / run charges. Does not include freight. May not exceed award amount, and may not be used as a credit against orders shipped. Self promo at standard EQP net price.

BUT THERE'S MORE!

FOR EVERY QUALIFYING ORDER YOU PLACE DURING THE CONTEST PERIOD, YOU'RE ENTERED TO WIN ONE OF THESE AMAZING PRIZES:

WEEKEND EXCURSION OF YOUR CHOICE BELOW:
TORREY PINES RESORT OR SKYDIVING IN LA JOLLA, CA

MACBOOK

You must specify on the order your name, email address, mailing address, and prize choice.
We'll send your prize within 10 days of when your order ships.
Award will be directly mailed. Orders without the promo code when submitted will not be deemed retroactive after submission. Carefully review purchase orders prior to submission.

TO QUALIFY, YOU MUST ADD PROMO CODE "SWEDACOOL" TO YOUR ORDER

TO SEE FULL DETAILS ON THIS PROMOTION GO TO SWEDAUSA.COM/SWEDACOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION

PPAI 113914

Cloud Computing

READY TO WORK ANYWHERE? LOOK TO THE CLOUD.

By Dan Rochette

IS YOUR BUSINESS USING any cloud-based programs or services? From online email service to much more advanced applications, over the past few years cloud computing has provided solutions for businesses of all sizes. Cloud, or internet, computing gives you access to web-based applications and an IT infrastructure as a service, rather than installing a program on your computer or office server. This can offer a long list of advantages—chief among them are cost savings and ease of use.

The rise of cloud computing has created an opportunity for companies to access advanced technology on a small-business budget. They have a much smaller capital outlay for web-based software and a more efficient and streamlined business model.

Reduced Costs

Lower capital expenses are one of the biggest advantages for small businesses to use cloud computing. Subscription-based software can eliminate the need for hardware such as servers as well as large upfront expenditures for software purchases and

Because most cloud-based solutions work in real time, business intelligence is easy to gather. Rather than wait for weekly or monthly updates, many systems offer business analysis tools and reporting that can provide up-to-the-minute data.

licenses, and can reduce desk costs by lowering overall overhead cost.

Cloud-based software can also slash IT expenses, as the software provider's staff can handle implementation, maintenance and troubleshooting should problems arise. It's hosted remotely, so no additional server hardware is needed and updates are automatic. Plus, your solution provider shares the risk and accountability in this long-term, pay-as-you-go relationship. It's in the provider's best interest to provide a great product and experience.

Reputable cloud-based solution providers will ensure your data is safe and secure. They should meet or exceed standards for security, business continuity and disaster recovery. Businesses should not need to spend their time or resources on these vital contingency plans as their solutions provider will cover it as a part of their subscription.

Streamlined Business

As cloud computing only requires an internet connection, it provides you with a truly mobile workstation. As long as the web is available, which is easily accomplished with mobile hotspots, staff can work from any location. There's no longer a need to run back to the office to update a contact, send a proposal or enter an order.

Increased mobility reduces business overhead costs related to desk, infrastructure, and security costs. With staff able to work on the go, or stationed in various territories, it can improve business reach.

Subscription-based software is also scalable, enabling new staff to be added quickly. There's no waiting for software to install, activate and integrate—all it takes is a login. Many of these systems are end-to-end programs that (while robust) have been developed for simplicity and ease of use—which makes for much quicker training. With reduced overhead and quick training, onboarding new employees becomes less expensive and drains fewer resources.

Because most cloud-based solutions work in real time, business intelligence is easy to gather. Rather than wait for weekly or monthly updates, many systems offer business analysis tools and reporting that can provide up-to-the-minute data. Such information is powerful in helping businesses meet their goals.

It's clear that cloud computing can provide a host of benefits to small businesses. Companies that want to be more quick, agile and streamlined should consider if cloud-based software can provide them with an opportunity for growth. PPB

Dan Rochette *is chief technology officer at industry business services company Facilisgroup.*

GET YOUR TECH ON

LEARN MORE ABOUT technology and its applications to your business at the PPAI Technology Summit, August 16-18, 2016 in San Francisco, California. Over the course of two and a half days, this program brings together technology leaders and practitioners from across the industry to tackle the challenges facing this critical aspect of business. See the speaker lineup, get details and register at www.ppai.org/techsummit.

PPAI TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS THAT MAKE A **LASTING IMPRESSION!**

Lufkin®

Perfect for professionals and do-it-yourselfers alike!

1" X 25' POWER TAPE in CAMO
#CMOH625C

- English scale - 1" blade graduated consecutive inches to 16ths
- Case fits comfortably in hand with its round shape and flat base
- Clear coat blade markings for durability and longevity

As Low as **$13.80 (R)**

1/4" X 6' DIAMETER TAPE
#W906PC

- English scale
- Blank space before zero
- Chrome plated metal case

As Low as **$13.95 (R)**

1" X 25' POWER TAPE
#CL525C

- Lightweight, high strength, contour grip case
- Unique slide lock design
- Removable belt clip

As Low as **$12.40 (R)**

Kidde
United Technologies

The world's largest manufacturer of fire safety products.

10 YEAR LIFE BATTERY SMOKE ALARM
#21010067C

- Voice alarm clearly announces danger
- Hush® button - quickly silences nuisance alarms
- 10 year limited warranty

As Low as **$47.90 (R)**

REMOTELYNC™
#21026465C

- One RemoteLync™ unit covers the entire home
- This device plugs into a standard 120V outlet
- RemoteLync™ works using a free app for iPhone and iPad or Android devices
- 1 year limited warranty

As Low as **$123.60 (R)**

FULL HOME EXTINGUISHER
#466142C

- Powder coated cylinder for corrosion protection
- 2.5 lbs. of fire extinguishing agent
- Effective on paper, flammable liquids and electrical fires
- 6 year limited warranty

As Low as **$30.95 (R)**

EST. 1902
BUCK®
KNIVES

Each Buck knife comes with the industry leading FOREVER WARRANTY.

CLEARWATER™ FILLET
#023RDSC

Incorporating cutting edge technology into reliability with this flexible and comfortable USA made fillet knife .

As Low as **$41.00 (R)**

BANTAM® BBW
#284BKC

Easy handling and lightweight. It has a mid-lockback design, ridges at the top for added grip and lanyard hole for easy attachment.

As Low as **$19.25 (R)**

FOLDING HUNTER®
#110C

This knife offers a functionality that was way ahead of its time, yet still performs without complaint in this day and age. Simply put, they were meant to last.

As Low as **$63.25 (R)**

TBI Top Brands Inc.

www.top-brands.com 800.431.2127 sales@top-brands.com

UPIC TOPBRAND PPAI 113144 SAGE 53923 asi 91455

CONNECT

PEOPLE, FACES & THINGS TO DO

CAPITOL IDEA

PPAI took the industry's message to Capitol Hill on May 25 and 26 as part of the seventh annual Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.). More than 80 member volunteers and staff held nearly 250 visits over two days with legislators and their aides from 30 states to discuss the industry's interests. Read about it on page 78.

78 Association News // **INSIDE PPAI** **85** Beth Lybrook, LIZard Apparel & Promotions // **CLOSE UP**
88 David Hawes, MAS+ // **DAY IN THE LIFE** **90** Capturing Events // **SNAPSHOTS**
94 Movers & Shakers // **PEOPLE NEWS** **96** Industry Events // **DATEBOOK**
101 New To PPAI // **NEW MEMBERS**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The seventh annual L.E.A.D. drew more than 80 participants from across the promotional products industry. • Mark Shinn, Incentives West; Dan Reading, In The Bag Promotions, Inc.; and PPAI Chair Tom Goos, MAS, Image Source (right), visit with Jim Risch (R-IA), second from right. • Anne Stone, PPAI director of public affairs; Perry Werhle, PAW Marketing, Inc.; Dale Denham, MAS+, Geiger; Brian Porter, Pro Towels; Scott Hareid, Hareid Marketing and Mitch Rhodus, HALO Branded Solutions.

Loud and **Clear**

THE INDUSTRY'S VOICE IS HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL **By James Khattak**

PPAI TOOK THE INDUSTRY'S MESSAGE to Capitol Hill on May 25 and 26 as part of the seventh annual Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.). More than 80 member volunteers and staff held nearly 250 visits over two days with legislators and their aides from 30 states to discuss the industry's interests. In addition to the hundreds of personal visits, members from across the country participated in the virtual fly-in, sending nearly 1,000 emails to their legislators to voice their concerns about legislation that affects their businesses and the industry overall.

"L.E.A.D. is a powerful way to take our industry's message to Washington, D.C., and again this year our group more than 80 strong made a compelling and memorable impression on legislators," says PPAI Chair Tom Goos, MAS, president of Image Source, Inc., who met with a number of his legislators. "Our voices are definitely being heard. I'm very proud of what our members have accomplished on behalf of the industry. I came away inspired by the passion our industry colleagues convey for the promotional products industry."

L.E.A.D. 2016 brought together both experienced and first-time "L.E.A.D.ers." Mary Jo Tomasini, MAS, CEO of distributor CE Competitive Edge, LLC in Stevensville, Michigan, chair of PPAI's Government Relations Advisory Committee and chair-elect of the PPAI Board, joined her colleagues on Capitol Hill this year for the second time. "I participate in L.E.A.D. because I know I am making a difference," she says. "I am able to meet face-to-face with legislators to share the importance of our industry and why 'Promotional Products Work!' I am able to represent our profession and bring awareness of the overall size and impact our industry has in not

only my individual state but the U.S. economy as a whole."

First-timer Daniel Roso, vice president of sales and marketing for Travelchair, was thrilled with the opportunity to talk with his legislators. "The coolest part of this experience is it's really empowering to get to speak on behalf of our entire industry—to get that trust and that weight behind what you are saying, it's quite an honor," he says. "If you are considering doing something like this or have some skepticism about how our government works, this is really empowering. Just to get that experience and see that there is something you can do about it motivates you to believe in the government, try to drive change and get behind something that matters."

As part of L.E.A.D., the Association recognized Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR) as its 2016 Legislators of the Year. The PPAI Legislator of the Year Award recognizes members of Congress who have shown a commitment to small-business interests and success, a willingness to meet with industry professionals and who have given their support to issues critical to the promotional products industry. Past recipients of the PPAI Legislator of the Year award are Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA), 2012; Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-MN), 2013; Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC), 2014; and Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), 2015.

Conversations during L.E.A.D. focused on important national and state issues, including the Department of Labor's overtime rule; the Safe Harbor Rule of the Revenue Act of 1978 regarding independent contractors; deductibility for business advertising expenditures and legislation to modify the tax code to support incentives for wellness programs, among other issues.

"The meetings I was involved in were right on task," says Brad Ness, president of Fargo, North Dakota's S & S Promotional Group. "We had some good conversations about independent contractors and the overtime rules, and they remembered us from last year as well as some of the things I told them in those visits. One of the aides I visited with thanked me for the hand sanitizer I gave her last year—she remembered it. The word is getting out about our industry."

Continued on next page

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Andrew Spellman (left), Victorniox Swiss Army and Nicholas D'Eramo (right), Triple Stitch with Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT) • Bob Levitt, right, Bob Levitt Company, and Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA • Ryan Small, Blue Dog Merch (left), Joe Walkup, Innovative Business Products, LLC (right) and Rep. Jim Collins (D-TN) • L.E.A.D. drew participants from 30 states. Its Texas delegation included (from left) Peter Hirsch, MAS; D'Anna Zimmer; Matt Storlien; Dana Floyd; Leslie Roark, CAS, and Sean Roark, CPIM.

"Our voices are definitely being heard. I'm very proud of what our members have accomplished on behalf of the industry."

Continued from previous page

While visiting the office of Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio, HALO Branded Solutions' Regional Vice President, Mid-Atlantic, Eric Ekstrand, MAS+, and Vice President of Sales Dale Limes, MAS, pulled out a one-piece baby sleeper with "THIS SIDE UP" printed on the front and explained how the garment helped decrease infant mortality rates in Columbus, Ohio.

"The staffer's eyes got big when we told her this case story," says Ekstrand. "She told us that Rep. Ryan was going to be in a committee meeting to request continued funding to prevent infant mortality. She saw the garment and said, 'That's so perfect! I'm going to use this visual to get our point across.'"

Devin Martin, key account manager for Advance Corporation, was part of the Upper Midwest Association of Promotional Professionals delegation. "This was such an enriching event," she says. "I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to attend. It was awesome to see the people of our industry come together for a common cause. I encourage everyone in this industry to ensure their future success by getting involved on the local, state or national level to make sure that we have a continued presence and influence on the issues that directly affect this great industry. Every voice counts and together, we can make a real impact."

PPAI Updates Mission And Strategic Plan

A FEW DAYS AHEAD OF L.E.A.D., the PPAI Board of Directors, PPAI executives and staff directors convened in Washington, D.C. to discuss and update PPAI's Strategic Plan. The session, which was the culmination of several months of preparation, was led by Seth Kahan, a Washington-based executive strategy consultant.

Over the two-day discussion, Association leaders worked together to determine and discuss current and potential disrupters, and think strategically about how PPAI needs to prepare to meet the future and best serve its members and the industry. The result is a new PPAI mission statement, and a fresh set of goals supported by a number of strategies. PPAI's current strategic plan was developed in 2012; the Association's practice is to update its plan every three years.

Among the new goals is one that focuses specifically on strategic foresight. "With the velocity of change coming at our members, the industry and our Association, the board made a strategic commitment to this goal to help us stay on top of emerging trends, constantly scan

The **PPAI Board of Directors, executives and staff directors**, and executive strategy consultant Seth Kahan met in Washington, D.C., ahead of L.E.A.D. to discuss and update the Association's strategic plan.

TOP PPAI President and CEO Paul Bellantone, CAE, opens the strategic planning session.
BOTTOM The process to develop **PPAI's Strategic Plan** included a number of small-group exercises involving board and staff members.

our environment, monitor opportunities, and help our members prepare for and stay ahead of dramatic changes," says PPAI Chair Tom Goos, MAS.

Goos says he's thrilled with the meeting's process and its ultimate outcome. "We set out on a journey," he says of the four months of meeting preparation and the two days of intense discussion, "and emerged with an exceptionally strong three-year vision and strategic direction for PPAI."

The mission and strategic plan will be fine-tuned over the next several months and presented to the PPAI membership in fall 2016.

SPRING Forward

PPAI BOARD SPRING MEETING FOCUSES ON KEY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

THE PPAI BOARD OF DIRECTORS held its spring meeting in Washington, D.C. in late May following a two-day strategic planning meeting and in advance of the PPAI Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.). PPAI Board Chair Tom Goos, MAS, presided.

Following are highlights from the meeting:

Board Chair TOM GOOS, MAS, examined key outcomes of the recent strategic planning meeting. He reviewed the mission and vision statements as well as the goals identified by the board and challenged them to identify additional strategies to support each of the four goals: drive meaningful member value and engagement, advocate for the industry, develop and leverage strategic foresight and manage an efficient and progressive organization.

AJ HUNTER, director of finance, announced that the Association's audit firm, BDO, completed its annual audit of PPAI's 2015 financials and, as expected, identified no major changes or issues. PPAI received an unqualified audit opinion. The board unanimously voted to accept the 2015 audit report, management letter and financial statements as presented by BDO and approved BDO to audit PPAI's 2016 financials.

ANNE STONE, director of public affairs, reviewed the progress of PPAI's public affairs program including government relations outreach, the process for identifying, addressing and escalating issues, and (in broad terms) what success looks like. She also shared the PPAI legislative agenda and various issues on the table for discussion during L.E.A.D.

CAROL GAUGER, MAS, director of member engagement and regional relations, reported activity related to member engagement and diversity efforts including delivery of educational content to the regional community, networking with other organizations in the DFW area, establishing a job board, internship and scholarship models, and publishing blogs and articles on the topic.

RACHEL ROBICHAUD, director of professional development, reviewed progress on PPAI live events, reporting that all programs are on-target with registration goals and that the Women's Leadership Conference is sold out. She also provided an update on a new young leaders conference planned for the fall.

KEITH VINCENT, director of marketing, reported on progress to update two PPAI websites: promotionalproductswork.org and PPAI.org. PPW.org is currently in development with a soft launch expected this summer. PPAI.org is in early discussion with completion tentatively set for December.

The board was also updated on the **2016 board election period** that will open August 29 and close September 19. The period has been shortened by one week and will allow new directors to attend an orientation held during PPAI's Leadership Development Week in October.

Getting To Work

PPW!W BRINGS INDUSTRY TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE, PROMOTE THE POWER OF PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

THE INDUSTRY STEPPED UP for the fourth annual Promotional Products Work! Week (PPW!W) held May 23-27. Companies and associations across the industry joined PPAI's five-day international event aimed at raising awareness of promotional products' role in advertising and marketing. Retooled and rebranded this year, PPW!W delivers the message that promotional products work to advertisers, marketers and media buyers.

The week-long event brings together the entire industry –-large and small companies, regional associations, distributors and suppliers, business services providers and multi-line representatives–-in support of demonstrating the power, value and effectiveness of promotional products to those who are making and influencing buying decisions. Industry companies and organizations across the country are finding creative, innovative ways to participate in PPW!W through a variety of programs and events. The industry's regional associations also turned out in support of PPW!W, holding events and reaching out to their communities throughout the week.

Every year, industry professionals find new and unique ways to get the message of PPW!W out to their communities. On May 24, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors declared May 22-27 the 2016 Promotional Products Work! Week. Michael Antonovich, county supervisor for the Fifth District, presented HALO's Stephen Ropfogel, MAS, with the proclamation.

"The Promotional Products Association International was founded in 1903. And since then, many small, family owned and operated businesses have contributed to Los Angeles County through workforce, volunteerism, revenue and community partnership," Antonovich says. "Small businesses form the backbone of our local economy, generating jobs and improving the quality of life for Los Angeles County."

Ropfogel adds, "Promotional products work because they are the only form of advertising where the recipient thanks you for giving them your ad, and after you leave it, it remains to be seen to remind your client of your brand."

Events and tours organized by industry companies and associations in conjunction with PPW!W included:

- **Supplier Artistic Toy hosted an open house at its Allentown, Pennsylvania, facility.** The event drew more than 80 people, including high school students, college professors, promotional product suppliers and distributors, and end buyers, and featured booths from 16 industry suppliers. Artistic Toy also welcomed a visit from U.S. Rep. Charlie

ABOVE LEFT Artistic Toy President **Jim Socci, CAS** (right) and guests at his company's open house, (from left) PPAI Diversity and Engagement Manager **Seth Barnett** and **U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent**. **ABOVE RIGHT** Michael Antonovich, county supervisor for the LA County's Fifth District, with HALO's **Stephen Ropfogel, MAS**, reads the proclamation declaring May 22-27 the 2016 Promotional Products Work! Week.

Artistic Toy's open house included booths from 16 exhibiting suppliers.

Dent. As part of its education component, the open house featured a presentation from Artistic Toy President Jim Socci, CAS, on face-to-face networking, and PPAI Diversity Development and Engagement Manager Seth Barnett spoke on attracting and engaging the Millennial workforce.

- **The Promotional Professionals Association of Chicago (PPAChicago) scheduled a number of events throughout PPW!W.** Association members toured the facilities of suppliers Dard and Sharp Print, and Shockwaves Apparel's factory. PPAI hosted an education seminar with PPAI Product Responsibility Manager Tim Brown, MAS, on establishing a corporate responsibility program. PPAChicago closed out its PPW!W activities with a member appreciation lunch and charity drive.

- **The Specialty Advertising Association of California (SAAC) partnered with FreePromoTips.com to hold a PPW!W fun run/walk and happy hour in Calabasas, California.** Sponsored by Logomark, PrintGear and Pro Towels, the event's $25 entrance donation benefited the Foundation for SAAC, SAAC's 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit, and the Independent Living Resource Center.

The **Specialty Advertising Association of California (SAAC)** partnered with FreePromoTips.com to hold a PPW!W fun run/walk event.

- **The Upper Midwest Association of Promotional Professionals (UMAPP) partnered with Advance Corporation for a factory tour, giving UMAPP members an up-close look at its facilities and operations.**

- **HALO Branded Solutions in Sterling, Illinois, reached out to 12 businesses in its community to share its "Random Acts of Promo" message.** The distributor assembled and delivered goody bags with 10 promotional items, along with a card highlighting the value of promotional products in the marketing mix. It also encouraged recipients to share the gifts and the message through social media.

- **The Virginia Promotional Products Association's (VAPPA) celebration of PPW!W included an "Eat. Learn. VAPPA." event with multi-line rep Mark Chipchase.**

- **The Specialty Advertising Association of Greater New York (SAAGNY) scheduled factory tours for its members during PPW!W.** SAAGNY members visited Vantage Apparel's factory in Avenel, New Jersey, and also toured Tekweld's Hauppauge, New York, facility.

The **Specialty Advertising Association of Greater New York (SAAGNY)** scheduled factory tours for its members during PPW!W, including Tekweld's facility in Hauppauge, New York.

- **The Caribbean Advertising Specialties Association (CASA) hosted a lunch-and-learn event in San Juan, Puerto Rico.** The afternoon event focused on how businesses can differentiate themselves from their competition.

- **The Georgia Association of Promotional Products Professionals (GAPPP) brought in Daniel Webb of the Webb Company and Jon Jackson of Gemline for a lunch-and-learn in Sand Springs, Georgia.**

- **The Promotional Products Association of Florida (PPAF) brought its members together for a lunch-and-learn in Winter Park.** PPB

Advance Corporation National Sales Manager **Rena Ashfeld, CAS** (center), shows her guests from UMAPP around the supplier's facility during the factory tour.

YOU CAN'T COVER UP A GREAT PROMOTION

Over 200 apron style and color combinations in stock and ready to ship.

PPAI #273997

Factory direct pricing starting as low as $2.25!
Order today: 877-631-3200
See our full line of chef apparel at uncommonthreadschefapparel.com

The Plunge That Paid Off

BETH LYBROOK'S PROMOTIONAL PRODUCT EXPERIENCE FUELS HER COMPANY'S GROWTH **By Julie Richie**

IN THEORY, EVERYONE KNOWS that if you choose a job you love, you'll never have to work a day in your life (Confucius). But how many people are fortunate enough to make a living doing what they love?

Beth Lybrook, owner of Dayton, Ohio-based distributor LIZard Apparel & Promotions (UPIC: L576440) is one of those people. Like many in the promotional products industry, she "fell" into the business.

"I used to be on the other side of the table as a marketing manager for a Fortune 500 company," Lybrook says. "I always loved the part of my job where I got to purchase premium and promotional items for my department."

One day she posted an ad in the newspaper for a position she was hiring and went to the newspaper's office to make sure the ad was correct. While there, she saw an ad for a salesperson at a local promotional company, ESKCO, Inc. "I remember saying to myself, 'That's a real job? It sounds fun!' I could shop and be creative for people all day long. I applied and have been happy in this industry ever since," she says. Eventually, she decided to use the experience she'd gained at ESKCO, which was acquired by HALO Branded Solutions in 2008, and open her own business.

After starting LIZard in her home in 2013 with two employees, Lybrook had to move into a larger space in 2014. Now, the company is expanding again to a 6,500 square-foot office space and warehouse, with more space next door when needed. Lybrook's staff has grown as well; she currently employs 12 people in multiple states across the country. With its broad array of services in addition to its popular online, on-demand uniform and apparel program, "LIZard's growth tripled from year one to two, and we are projecting about the same between years three and four. It's so exciting," she says.

Lybrook's older daughter, 27-year-old Kelly, works with her as the sales and program manager. Her younger daughter, 23-year-old Courtney, works in the hospitality industry. Lybrook is first and foremost a proud mom. "I'm so blessed with two great, successful women. They are my world!"

Beth Lybrook with daughters Kelly (right) and Courtney.

BETH LYBROOK'S FIVE SECRETS TO DISTRIBUTOR SUCCESS

1 **Create a relationship with the client.** Truly be interested in getting to know them.

2 **Call back when you say you will.** It's not that hard but you would be amazed at how many people just don't do this.

3 **Keep the customer in the loop at all times.** Be honest and own up to mistakes if you make them. They really appreciate that and will have a better respect for you.

4 **Really want to help your clients** find the best solution for their needs, not what money you can make off of the sale.

5 **Don't give up**—it's a challenging industry to learn and it takes a while to get things going in a groove. But look out when the groove gets going! You will be busy.

Where did your company name come from?

My name is Elizabeth, but I go by Beth. My dad, Ron Duncan, is the only one who calls me Liz. I wanted to make my company name meaningful to me, so I named it after my dad's name for me and my dad's name by using the following letters: ARD, for According to Ron Duncan.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

I enjoy attending and watching sporting events—especially football and basketball. (Go Ohio State Buckeyes and University of Dayton Flyers!) I also like playing cards and entertaining guests. I love to travel to new places, but lately I have not had much time for that.

Who or what has had the greatest influence on your career and why?

My parents and three older brothers had the greatest influence on me. They taught me to have a great work ethic, to always be honest and deliver on your word, and to never be afraid to ask others for help.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I believe the part I like the most about my work is that every day is different. There is never a normal routine, and I love working with and meeting new people.

What was your first job and what lessons did you learn?

My first job was working as a caterer for a catering company. I loved this job for the customer service skills I learned and I enjoyed serving people, especially during joyous occasions. But in another position I had I learned that even though two or more people may have the same job, some give 100 percent and some don't. I was frustrated because I was the hardest worker but was still paid the same. This is how I ended up in sales. I liked knowing that the harder I worked, the more money I could earn.

"I want to make a difference to the people I meet as well as be a help to them in achieving their personal and business goals. I love coming up with new ideas and helping resolve their business challenges."

What motivates you in business and in life?

I always want to be a positive light in others' lives. I want to make a difference to the people I meet as well as be a help to them in achieving their personal and business goals. I love coming up with new ideas and helping resolve their business challenges. I also have had so many people help me along the way and I want to pay it forward to others.

What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

I would have to say taking the risk of starting my own business. It was rather easy because I am so passionate about this industry and have never felt like it has been a job, but more of a great hobby. I can't wait to get up in the morning and begin the work day. That's when you know you are doing the right thing. PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

VIRTUAL SAMPLES BUILT INTO YOUR WEBSITE

WITH ARTIFI INTEGRATED IN YOUR SITE, CUSTOMERS CAN VISUALLY PERSONALIZE YOUR PRODUCTS AND PLACE AN ORDER. INCREASE CONVERSIONS AND STREAMLINE YOUR SALES PROCESS

- UPLOAD LOGOS, INCLUDING VECTOR
- ADD OR EDIT TEXT
- CHANGE PRODUCT COLORS
- COMPARE AND SHARE DESIGNS
- ADD TO CART OR REQUEST A QUOTE
- PRODUCTION-READY OUTPUT

artifi labs

SAAS-BASED PRODUCT CUSTOMIZATION

www.artifilabs.com | 855-927-8434 | info@artifilabs.com

Crafting Promotions With A Clear Purpose

DAVID HAWES, MAS+, SHARES A DAY IN HIS LIFE AS A BRAND ARCHITECT FOR GEIGER. **By Jen Alexander**

DAVID HAWES MAY WORK from his home office in suburban Minneapolis, Minnesota, but the longtime Geiger employee maintains thriving relationships with colleagues and clients throughout the country. "I average six to eight business-related trips per year, and I try to devote eight hours of my week to volunteer work, for our industry and for the MS Society," says Hawes.

David Hawes, MAS+

When he isn't providing excellent service on behalf of the Lewiston, Maine, distributor, Hawes and his wife spend time with their three children and six grandchildren, and enjoy walking, traveling and watching classic movies. Hawes also writes and sends a daily column, "Mind Matters," to a select audience. Read on to learn more about Hawes and his work with Geiger.

What was your first job in the industry, and where?

My first industry experience was with a distributor in Chicago, Illinois. I was working as a corporate consultant for NordicTrack, and we collaborated on a financial fitness program for United Airlines.

How long have you been with Geiger, and what are your primary duties as a brand architect?

I started with Geiger in 2008. As a brand architect I focus on helping my clients recruit and retain their customers and employees. We try to start every promotion by asking, "How will this help expand the demand for our client's brand?" Without a clear purpose, we can't select the most effective promotional products.

What do you love about your company?

What I love about Geiger is that they are a company that cares. Three years ago our daughter was diagnosed with colon cancer. The outpouring of support from my colleagues at Geiger was overwhelming. I am very grateful to be with Geiger.

Describe your typical day.

I work primarily in my home office in Minneapolis. By far, my two most valuable habits are to start early, and take brisk walks to recharge my body and mind. While no two days are identical, I have found that this schedule works:

5:30-7:30: I do everything that is important enough to be completed before normal business hours. It's also a prime time for calling decision makers.
7:30-8: A brisk walk clears my mind and energizes me.
8:30-11: I follow up with clients, and attend meetings and presentations.
11:30-1: I have lunch, typically with a client, prospect or a colleague.

1:00-1:30: I take another brisk walk, which makes dessert guilt-free!

1:30-3:30: I conduct more follow-up with clients, or attend meetings and presentations.

What kinds of projects or tasks might you tackle on a given day?

I am currently focusing on a project for auto dealers to reduce distracted driving. I'm also developing WalkStars, a health and wellness program for companies and associations.

How do you collaborate with co-workers?

Collaboration by phone and online is always available to me with our technology support team, marketing department, and Laura Holt, MAS, Geiger's regional vice president. We also meet during regional shows, Geiger Galleria and The PPAI Expo.

How does this job challenge you?

My colleagues raise the bar pretty high, and I don't want to disappoint them. Whether it's helping a client grow their business or serving as a volunteer on PPAI's Government Relations Advisory Council or their Public Relations Advisory Group, there's always room for improvement.

What changes or improvements have you recently implemented, or are you planning to make in the future?

I will start to use Geiger's new time-saving order entry system. I'm also looking forward to implementing WalkStars—the concept for it was actually inspired by a Geiger promotion that won a PPAI Pyramid Award.

What makes Geiger a valuable member of the promotional products community?

As the pacesetter in professional development, product responsibility, creative achievement awards and innovative technology, Geiger has elevated the level of professionalism and performance for the promotional products industry. Since 1878, they have been creating a culture of giving back that is truly remarkable. PPB

Capturing events & people in the promotional world.

By James Khattak

MLR Alliance's Tony Pinto, Tony Tuso, Julia McDonald-Ward, Bill Reisack and Drew Ward show off the red cruiser bike donated by SOLÉ Bicycles as a door prize at the May 11 event.

Tony Pinto (center) explains the features of a BEST Promotions USA product to a group of buyers and their distributors at the MLR Alliance event.

MLR Alliance Event Draws Distributors, Buyers To AT&T Stadium

MLR Alliance, a cooperative effort of three North Texas-based multi-line rep groups—Tuso Marketing, Pinto Marketing and Reisack Sales and Marketing—pulled out all the stops for its annual invitation-only tabletop show by holding the May 11 event at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, home of the Dallas Cowboys. The event drew more than 200 distributors and their clients to a window-filled, field-level space where they could view the playing field and see, touch and learn about promotional products from 20 exhibiting suppliers.

Kristen Dowling and Trey Norris, both of Bob Lilly Promotions, attended the MLR Alliance event with their buyers.

Crystal D Employees Turn Out For Blood Drive

At a blood drive on May 9, employees of supplier **Crystal D** donated 16 units of blood. Each unit will help save three lives in the community. Chuck Dahlgren, president of the St. Paul, Minnesota, company, says, "Every year we look forward to participating in this event. Our staff recognizes the importance of this cause and enjoys getting involved to help the community."

Crystal D's 10th annual blood drive took place on-site at its headquarters through the American Red Cross Bloodmobile.

SAGE Seminar Series Returns With A PPAI Education Component

The **SAGE** Seminar Series is back in 2016 and is bringing a free day of SAGE product training to distributors in nine cities across the U.S. Along with training on SAGE Online, order management, SAGE's website development tools and other products, the program includes a 30-minute PPAI overview to help attendees learn how to maximize their membership in the industry's trade association. Tina Berres Filipski, director of publications/editor, traveled to Baltimore for the May 3 program, arriving a day early to meet with industry companies in the area.

HALO Branded Solutions' Susan Heneson Kornblatt (far left) gathered her Baltimore teammates to meet PPAI's Director of Publications/Editor Tina Berres Filipski (third from left) who was in for a visit in advance of the SAGE Seminar Series.

Filipski (left) was treated to a factory tour and a quick lesson in towel decorating from Lisa Shaffer, eastern regional sales director at Baltimore-based supplier Towel Specialties.

YOUR PHOTOS HERE Send us your company or industry organization photos for possible inclusion in Snapshots in an upcoming issue. Email high-resolution images to *PPB*'s News Editor James Khattak at JamesK@ppai.org and be sure to include a description, plus your name and contact information.

Vernon's three-day event brought together 100 Vernon account executives and over 75 supplier partners.

Vernon Company Recognizes Industry Standouts At Sales Meeting

The Vernon Company (UPIC: Vernon) hosted its annual national sales meeting, Vernon University, April 19-20, at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown in Des Moines, Iowa. This was the first time in almost 50 years that the Newton, Iowa-based distributor held a national event in Iowa. Vernon University included a trade show featuring the company's preferred vendors and a luncheon honoring Vernon's Million Dollar Club members. It concluded with a formal awards banquet recognizing the company's top producers, rising stars and supplier partners. At the awards banquet, the distributor also recognized SanMar as its 2015 Supplier of the Year, and Rick Buckley, who represents Tri-Mountain, as Supplier Account Manager of the Year. PPB

(From left) Christina Hamilton, account executive at SanMar and Susan Rye, director of strategic accounts at SanMar, receive the Supplier of the Year trophy alongside Vicki Palm, director of marketing at The Vernon Company.

Rick Buckley, The Vernon Company's Supplier Account Manager of the Year, with Vicki Palm, director of marketing for The Vernon Company.

STAINLESS STEEL PRODUCTS

ISOSTEEL®

TableLine

The exclusive product line for each stylish laid table at home or in the office. The double-walled stainless steel coffee pots with brushed finish and high quality vacuum keep coffee or tea hot or milk and creamer cold for hours.

18/8 Stainless Steel

1.5 L
VA-9331K

1.0 L
VA-9330K

1.3 L
VA-9346K

1.0 L
VA-9345K

BPA FREE

5 Jahre Years Ans Anni Garantie Warranty Garanzia

isosteelus.com

DELIVERY PROGRAM

Big Show Products, Inc. · phone 800 471 7883 · sales@isosteelus.com · isosteelus.com
TJ Trading LCC · PPAI Member No. 607274

Nolan Cowsert

Walt Greene

Monique Nigorizawa

Will Cropper

Amy Roller

Paul Tomiuk

See who has moved in—and up—in the promotional world.

By James Khattak

DISTRIBUTOR

HALO Branded Solutions (UPIC: HBS)—**Amy Roller**, sales support supervisor, and **Tommy Lewis**, vice president, enterprise and program sales

SUPPLIERS

Charles River Apparel (UPIC: CRA)—**Will Cropper**, vice president of sales operations and business development

Discount Labels (UPIC: DISC0002)—**Rob Koller**, director of marketing

IDProductsource (UPIC: idpaspin)—**Nolan Cowsert**, promoted to senior customer service representative

Pinnacle Designs (UPIC: Pinnacle)—**Monique Nigorizawa**, director of sales and marketing

Quinn Flags (UPIC: Quinn)—**Walt Greene**, new product development specialist.

RiteLine (UPIC: RiteLine)—**Kim Lehere**, vice president of marketing; **Lori Arrigunaga**, director of marketing; **Carol McCullough**, customer service supervisor; and **Tonya Moore**, customer service specialist

Sonoma Promotional Solutions (UPIC: SONOMA)—**Jacob Powell**, business development manager

Spector & Co. (UPIC: SPEC0038)—**Paul Tomiuk**, account manager for Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico and Tennessee

Vantage Apparel (UPIC: vantage)—**Ben Roberson**, regional sales representative for the Carolinas, Tennessee, and West and southern Virginia territories

IN MEMORIAM

On May 25, **David Engel, MAS**, a longtime industry volunteer and past president of supplier Greystone International Products, passed away in New Haven, Connecticut. He was 71.

Engel was an active volunteer in the industry and for PPAI. At the Association, he served on the Government Relations Advisory Council, the Leadership Advisory Committee, the Suppliers Committee and the International Committee, which he chaired. Engel also took part in a number of PPAI Legislative Education and Action Day (L.E.A.D.) events in Washington, D.C.

Engel is survived by his wife, Sharon; son, Jonathan, and daughter-in-law, Jessica; daughter, Joanna Engel, and fiancé, Dana Finer; brother, Rafael Engel, and granddaughter, Miriam Engel.

Bill Gassett

Services were held May 27 at the Robert E. Shure Funeral Home in New Haven, followed by interment at Beth Sholom Cemetery in Hamden. Memorial contributions can be made to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Dr., Wallingford, Connecticut 06492.

Bill Gassett, a customer service representative for Hub Pen (UPIC: HUBPEN) passed away in May. Gassett joined the Braintree, Massachusetts, supplier in April 2010.

In a statement, the company says, "[Gassett] made an immediate impact with his casual professionalism and ability to put the customer's need above all else. Bill knew the meaning of teamwork and practiced the concept daily as those who worked with him will vouch for. Our prayers are with Bill's wife, Janet, and his children, Andrew and Alison, at this difficult time. Bill will be remembered for his easy smile, warm personality and willingness to help anyone."

Jim Harmon, a past board member and executive director of the Philadelphia Promotional Products Association, passed away on May 23.

Harmon is survived by his wife, Joyce, and family. A viewing and funeral was held May 27 at Downingtown United Methodist Church in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. PPB

GOT NEWS?

We'll share it. Send your people news, including high-resolution images, to *PPB* News Editor James Khattak at JamesK@ppai.org.

The important events shaping the promotional industry.

By James Khattak

JULY

July 12-14
ASI Chicago
Advertising Specialty Institute
Chicago, Illinois
www.asicentral.com

July 14-16
The NBM Show
National Business Media
Long Beach, California
www.thenbmshow.com

AUGUST

August 4
SAGE Lunch & Learn
Addison, Texas
http://sageworld.com/lunch-and-learn.php

August 10-11
SAAC Show
Specialty Advertising Association of California
Long Beach, California
www.saac.net

August 14-16
PPAI North American Leadership Conference
Promotional Products Association International
San Francisco, California
www.ppai.org

August 16-18
PPAMS Road Show
Promotional Products Association of the Mid-South
Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee
www.ppams.org

August 16-18
Promo Marketing Power Meeting
Promo Marketing
San Francisco, California
www.pmpowermeetings.com

August 17-18
PPAI Tech Summit
Promotional Products Association International
San Francisco, California
www.ppai.org

August 18-20
The NBM Show
National Business Media
Baltimore, Maryland
www.thenbmshow.com

AUGUST 14-16
PPAI North American Leadership Conference
Promotional Products Association International
San Francisco, California
www.ppai.org

PUT IT ON THE SCHEDULE
To scope out other events, visit www.ppai.org and click on the industry calendar

August 29-30
PPAF Expo
Promotional Products Association of Florida
Orlando, Florida
www.ppaf.com

August 30
AzPPA Expo
Arizona Promotional Products Association
Phoenix, Arizona
www.azppa.net

August 30
TSPPA Fall Showcase
Tri-State Promotional Professionals Association
Cincinnati, Ohio
www.tsppa.org

August 30-31
HPPA Hot Stuff Expo
Houston Promotional Products Association
Houston, Texas
www.houstonppa.org

August 30-31
TRASA Fall Showcase & Client Show
Three Rivers Advertising Specialty Association
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
www.trasa.net

August 31-September 1
SAGE Show 2016
SAGE
Irving, Texas
www.sageworld.com/sageshow

SEPTEMBER

September 7-9
SPPA Fall Showcase
Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Jackson, Mississippi, and Birmingham, Alabama
www.sunbeltppa.org

September 12-13
PAPPA Fall End-User Promotions Expo
Philadelphia Area Promotional Products Association
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
www.mypappa.org

September 13
GAPPP Holiday Showcase
Georgia Association of Promotional Products Professionals
Atlanta, Georgia
www.gappp.org

September 13-14
OPPA Holiday Client Showcase
Ohio Promotional Professionals Association
Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio
www.oppagroup.com

September 14
PPAW Fall Flavor End User Tradeshow
Promotional Products Association of Wisconsin
Kimberly, Wisconsin
www.ppaw.org

September 15
CPPA Fall Expo
Chesapeake Promotional

your
Professional
BENCHMARK

Rise Above The Rest
Learn how to earn your certification today.

PPAI CERTIFICATION™ PROGRAM SINCE 1961
tas ▸ cas ▸ mas ▸ mas+

ppai.org/certification

Products Association
Rockville, Maryland
www.cppa.biz

September 15-16
NWPMA Fall Showcase
Northwest Promotional Marketing Association
Bellevue, Washington
www.nwpma.org

September 18-20
PPAI Product Responsibility Summit
Promotional Products Association International
Washington, D.C.
www.ppai.org/education/productresponsibilitysummit

September 20
SAAGNY Fall Showcase
Specialty Advertising Association of Greater New York
Newark, New Jersey
www.saagny.org

September 20-22
CAAMP Traveling Holiday Showcase
Carolinas Association of Advertising and Marketing Professionals
Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina, and Columbia, South Carolina
www.caampers.org

September 20-23
PPAS Holiday Review
Promotional Products Association Southwest
Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Grapevine and Austin, Texas
www.ppasw.com

September 21-22
NEPPA Fall Expo
New England Promotional Products Association
Providence, Rhode Island
www.neppa.org

September 21-22 (Tentative dates)
RMRPPA Mile High Expo
Rocky Mountain Region Promotional Products Association
Denver, Colorado
www.rmrppa.org

September 23
PPAS Holiday Review
Promotional Products Association Southwest
Austin, Texas
www.ppasw.com

September 27, 29
PPAM Fall Holiday Showcase
Promotional Products Association of the Midwest
St. Louis, Missouri, and Lenexa, Kansas
www.ppam.org

September 27-28
VAPPA Fall Showcase
Virginia Promotional Products Association
Hampton Roads and Richmond, Virginia
www.whymappa.org

September 28
MiPPA Promotions That Roar!
Michigan Promotional Professionals Association
Detroit, Michigan
www.mippa.org

OCTOBER

October 6
GCPPA Fall Holiday Harvest Show
Gold Coast Promotional Products Association
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
www.gcppa.org

October 14
PPAW Fall End User Show
Promotional Products Association of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
www.ppaw.org

October 17-21
PPAI Leadership Week
Promotional Products Association International
Grapevine, Texas
www.ppai.org

October 18
Regional Boot Camp
Promotional Products Association International
Grapevine, Texas
www.ppai.org

October 18-20
PPAI RAC Leadership Development Workshop
Promotional Products Association International
Grapevine, Texas
www.ppai.org

October 19
SPPA Holiday Showcase
Sunbelt Promotional Products Association
Pensacola Beach, Florida
www.sunbeltppa.org PPB

September 20-23
PPAS Holiday Review
Promotional Products Association Southwest
Austin, Texas
www.ppasw.com

Essent® One™

Everything modern distributors, decorators and suppliers need to thrive. Anywhere. On any device.†

- Complete CRM
- Product Research
- Quoting & Ordering
- Electronic Trading Through OrderTrax®
- Performance Dashboards
- Operations & Accounting Integration
- Team Collaboration

"We selected Essent because they are the proven solution and industry leader."

Mark Johnson, President
Top 50 Distributor EmbroidMe

EssentOne.com
800-559-9959

EmbroidMe
Your Promotional Marketing Partner

† Requires computer, tablet, or smartphone with a modern, supported browser with internet access. Product images are for illustrative purposes only.

© 2016 Essent. Essent, The Essent Logo and OrderTrax are registered trademarks and EssentOne, Compass, and SiteBuilder, are trademarks of Essent Corporation. All other marks are held by their respective owners.

This Is WHY I EXPO

My Weekends are now STRESS-FREE

While others are at the office scrambling to meet client shipping deadlines, the supplier connections I built at The PPAI Expo guarantee my clients' campaigns will arrive on time. This gives me peace of mind while I am out doing the things I love. The PPAI Expo helps me explore my adventurous side.

– This is WHY I EXPO

Kaettie, Specialty Incentives
#WhyIExpo

PPAI EXPO®

January 8-12, 2017 • Education January 8-9 • Exhibits January 10-12 – Mandalay Bay Convention Center • Las Vegas

New PPAI Members Joining In April 2016

DISTRIBUTORS

P007 Marketing
PPAI# 670539 UPIC: 0670539

2Win Phase
PPAI# 670889 UPIC: 2670889

3 Dimensional Creations
PPAI# 670855 UPIC: 3670855

A & G Design MD
PPAI# 671280 UPIC: A671280

Absolute Promotional Products of New Orleans
PPAI# 670519 UPIC: A670519

AC Promotionals Plus
PPAI# 671057 UPIC: A671057

Adform Specialties, Inc.
PPAI# 543865 UPIC: 543865EE

AdSource
PPAI# 578512 UPIC: bearskin

Advanced Custom Embroidery
PPAI# 670494 UPIC: A670494

AKTIV8 Promotionals
PPAI# 358915 UPIC: AKTIV8

ALEDO BRANDING CO.
PPAI# 669421 UPIC: A669421

All Branded, Inc.
PPAI# 539382 UPIC: ABRANDED

AlphaGraphics
PPAI# 669220 UPIC: A669220

American Solution for Business
PPAI# 671327 UPIC: A671327

American Solutions for Business
PPAI# 671239 UPIC: A671239

American Solutions for Business
PPAI# 670730 UPIC: A670730

American Youth Enterprise
PPAI# 315552 UPIC: amyouth

Annie & De
PPAI# 668716 UPIC: AD21012

AWA Printing, LLC
PPAI# 671189 UPIC: A671189

B Designed
PPAI# 670649 UPIC: B670649

Better Branding Company
PPAI# 670647 UPIC: BBCBBC

Blazing Visuals
PPAI# 670772 UPIC: B670772

Bold Ink Fine Prints
PPAI# 670701 UPIC: B670701

Branding Plus
PPAI# 667792 UPIC: B667792

BRC Design and Print
PPAI# 671496 UPIC: B671496

Bullseye Activewear
PPAI# 670645 UPIC: B670645

Busy Bee Embroidery
PPAI# 670834 UPIC: B670834

Campaign America
PPAI# 670777 UPIC: C670777

Caribbean Media Marketing
PPAI# 670722 UPIC: C670722

Carolina Blue Sky Promotions
PPAI# 670713 UPIC: C670713

Celtic Shirts, Inc.
PPAI# 670893 UPIC: C670893

Central 4 Marketing
PPAI# 670676 UPIC: C670676

Classic Trim Embroidery
PPAI# 276640 UPIC: 8147

CO Custom Screenprinting
PPAI# 671406 UPIC: C671406

Command Prints
PPAI# 666676 UPIC: C666676

Corporate Golf Resources
PPAI# 489694 UPIC: CGR

Corporate Promotions Ltd.
PPAI# 164654 UPIC: CORP0037

Corporate Specialty Insignia
PPAI# 671332 UPIC: C671332

Country Lane Design
PPAI# 670498 UPIC: C670498

Customizzed Promotional Products
PPAI# 671307 UPIC: C671307

Smartie USB Flash Drive Bracelet offered by new PPAI member distributor **Bold Ink Fine Prints**

Therm-O-Backpack offered by new PPAI member distributor **Corporate Specialty Insignia**

CONTACT SANDY MENDOZA at 972-258-3019 or SandyM@ppai.org with any changes. PPAI members can download a Word or Excel file complete with contact information at www.ppai.org. Find it under the Members/Members Only tab.

NEW MEMBERS

Seward Swim Club Ultra T offered by PPAI member distributor **Dan's Custom Works**

Ceramic Cookie Jar offered by PPAI member distributor **Kaiko Studios**

CW GIFTS AND CREATIONS
PPAI# 668421 UPIC: C668421

Dan's Custom Works
PPAI# 670535 UPIC: D670535

Direct Promotions
PPAI# 670603 UPIC: D670603

Distinctive Promotional Products
PPAI# 656848 UPIC: D656848

Divine Equation
PPAI# 661444 UPIC: deshirts

DNJ Specialties
PPAI# 670568 UPIC: D670568

Donna Dixon Promos
PPAI# 671520 UPIC: D671520

Dream Graphics
PPAI# 313749 UPIC: mommy

Eagle Promotions
PPAI# 671269 UPIC: E671269

Edge Graphics, Inc.
PPAI# 670479 UPIC: E670479

Embroidme / Cape Breton
PPAI# 671518 UPIC: E671518

Embroidme / Escondido
PPAI# 670818 UPIC: E670818

Embroidme / Riverside
PPAI# 670751 UPIC: E670751

Embroidme / Salem
PPAI# 671358 UPIC: E671358

Every Stitch Counts
PPAI# 671342 UPIC: E671342

Fastsigns
PPAI# 671271 UPIC: F671271

First Works, Inc.
PPAI# 670797 UPIC: F670797

Gatorcrafts & Graphics
PPAI# 263985 UPIC: gator

Go Big Promotions & Apparel
PPAI# 670512 UPIC: 109355go

Grade A Branding
PPAI# 616327 UPIC: G616327

Haines Marketing Group, LLC
PPAI# 670605 UPIC: H670605

HALO
PPAI# 670542 UPIC: H670542

Hannigan's Tees and Promos
PPAI# 670724 UPIC: H670724

Hometown Embroidery
PPAI# 670546 UPIC: H670546

Infinite Signs & Graphics
PPAI# 671441 UPIC: I671441

Inklings Custom Screen Printing
PPAI# 670734 UPIC: I670734

Instant Imprints
PPAI# 671197 UPIC: I671197

International Minute Press
PPAI# 670577 UPIC: I670577

iPROMOTEu – KICKSHAW
PPAI# 670742 UPIC: i670742

iPROMOTEu – On Point Promotional Team
PPAI# 670706 UPIC: i670706

iPROMOTEu – PH Media
PPAI# 670587 UPIC: i670587

IPROMOTEu/Red Zone Promos
PPAI# 670484 UPIC: i670484

IRepPromo
PPAI# 671165 UPIC: I671165

JC Custom Vinyl
PPAI# 670678 UPIC: J670678

JM Creative Marketing Solutions, LLC
PPAI# 671143 UPIC: J671143

Kaiko Studios
PPAI# 670887 UPIC: kaikos

Kelley/FMC
PPAI# 670575 UPIC: K670575

Lawrenceburg Printing
PPAI# 438727 UPIC: customlp

LCI Global
PPAI# 670490 UPIC: L670490

Litchinut Studios, LLC
PPAI# 282558 UPIC: litchi

Lock Down Logo
PPAI# 668601 UPIC: L668601

Logorama
PPAI# 522528 UPIC: L522528

Logoworx Design, LLC
PPAI# 670682 UPIC: L670682

M.A.S Screenprinting
PPAI# 671338 UPIC: M671338

Mango Branding
PPAI# 670531 UPIC: mango

Manshel Marketing LLC
PPAI# 670896 UPIC: M670896

MDX
PPAI# 670684 UPIC: M670684

Millstone Company
PPAI# 670745 UPIC: M670745

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 670525 UPIC: M670525

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 671096 UPIC: M671096

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 670944 UPIC: M670944

Shape Your Business.

with PPAI

PPAI
ppai.org

LEARN

INFLUENCE

GROW

SAVE

CONNECT

ppai.org/join
888-I-AM-PPAI
Membership@ppai.org

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

DRYVE DESIGN™ · ets express™ · Journalbooks® · RiteLine® rite for your business · SANMAR 45 years · TERRY TOWN Expect Quality

NEW MEMBERS

Premium Heavyweight Cotton Boat Tote Bag offered by PPAI member distributor **Nugogo Store**

Spirit Clakker™ Gloves offered by PPAI member distributor **SMP Graphic Design, Inc.**

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 670548 UPIC: M670548

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 670697 UPIC: M670697

Minuteman Press
PPAI# 670768 UPIC: M670768

Mountain Star Designs
PPAI# 670596 UPIC: M670596

New Image, Inc.
PPAI# 670838 UPIC: 1TShirts

Nix Graphix
PPAI# 668968 UPIC: N668968

Northern Kentucky Silk Screening, Inc.
PPAI# 670492 UPIC: N670492

Nugogo Store
PPAI# 671100 UPIC: N671100

Onit Promo
PPAI# 632299 UPIC: onit

Painted Oaks, LLC
PPAI# 613819 UPIC: P613819

PDQ Printing, Inc.
PPAI# 264467 UPIC: PDQPr282

Personalized Threadz
PPAI# 671201 UPIC: P671201

Print Dynamix, LLC
PPAI# 671388 UPIC: P671388

Print4mat, LLC
PPAI# 671385 UPIC: P671385

Printing Plus of Roselle, Inc.
PPAI# 284494 UPIC: PRINP079

Pro Advertising
PPAI# 670718 UPIC: P670718

Proforma M3 Promotions, Inc.
PPAI# 262629 UPIC: m3promo

Promo A-R-C
PPAI# 284720 UPIC: promoid

Promo Image Group
PPAI# 671243 UPIC: P671243

RG Graphics, Inc.
PPAI# 671067 UPIC: R671067

Royal Graffix
PPAI# 671070 UPIC: RG1030

S & R Promotions
PPAI# 313140 UPIC: red

S2S Marketing
PPAI# 285419 UPIC: s2sbiz

Sir Speedy of Elume
PPAI# 671390 UPIC: S671390

SloganStuff
PPAI# 671052 UPIC: S671052

SMP Graphic Design, Inc.
PPAI# 670748 UPIC: S670748

Southwest Advertising Supply
PPAI# 286378 UPIC: swadvs

SP Designs & Mfg.
PPAI# 670550 UPIC: S670550

St. Louis Sportwear, Inc.
PPAI# 670571 UPIC: StlSptWr

Star Quality Imprinting
PPAI# 520935 UPIC: Star30

Stitchworks
PPAI# 671276 UPIC: S671276

Stumpies Marketing Group
PPAI# 654377 UPIC: stumpies

Sugar Rock
PPAI# 670947 UPIC: S670947

SUPER SCREEN, INC.
PPAI# 653761 UPIC: SSI1

Tampa T-Shirts
PPAI# 670561 UPIC: T670561

Taylor Promotional Products
PPAI# 671236 UPIC: T671236

Tee Rex Custom Screen Printing
PPAI# 670900 UPIC: T670900

Terrific Gifts
PPAI# 331555 UPIC: Terrific

Threads In Motion
PPAI# 670544 UPIC: T670544

TOTAL IDENTITY SOLUTIONS
PPAI# 472972 UPIC: T472972

Tote Bags Depot
PPAI# 670537 UPIC: T670537

Trophy Factory & Advertising Specialties
PPAI# 154421 UPIC: TROP0009

United Sign Advertising, LLC
PPAI# 102384 UPIC: ZFUN

Western Trophy & Engraving
PPAI# 312278 UPIC: WTrophy

Wet Paint Printing & Design
PPAI# 669556 UPIC: W669556

Wolfpack Promotionals, LLC
PPAI# 669602 UPIC: W669602

Wright Business Systems
PPAI# 670781 UPIC: W670781

X5 Print, LLC
PPAI# 670514 UPIC: X670514

X-trem Graphix Solutions, Inc.
PPAI# 671061 UPIC: X671061

Product Safety Awareness • Product Safety Awareness • Product Safety Awareness • Product Safety

How Are *You* Dealing With PRODUCT SAFETY?

Becoming aware is easier than you think.

We Are™ Product Safety Aware PPAI

Product Safety Awareness • Product Safety Awareness • ppai.org • Product Safety Awareness

PPAI, SAGE Expand Enrollment In Power Of Two Benefits

IN APRIL, PPAI AND INDUSTRY technology provider SAGE rolled out a new process for distributors to automatically receive the combined benefits of a PPAI membership and a SAGE Total Access subscription through the Power of Two alliance. Effective April 1, eligible SAGE Total Access subscribers automatically received a membership to PPAI and, in turn, PPAI members received a subscription to SAGE Total Access, giving them access to SAGE Online, SAGE Web and SAGE Mobile, SAGE's premier suite of product research, presentation, CRM, order management and virtual sampling tools. **For a full list of SAGE Total Access subscribers who joined PPAI in April, visit pubs.ppai.org**

YOO Marketing
PPAI# 670611 UPIC: Y670611

Z-man Direct
PPAI# 552901 UPIC: Z552901

SUPPLIERS

Billy Bob Products
PPAI# 668057 UPIC: B668057

California Delicious Promotional
PPAI# 670533 UPIC: C670533

Dalco Athletic
PPAI# 373852 UPIC: dal3719

ECC Promotions, Inc.
PPAI# 671304 UPIC: E671304

In Time Promotions, LLC
PPAI# 671231 UPIC: INTIME

Laga Sports
PPAI# 670486 UPIC: L670486

Product Creations Group, LLC
PPAI# 655027 UPIC: P655027

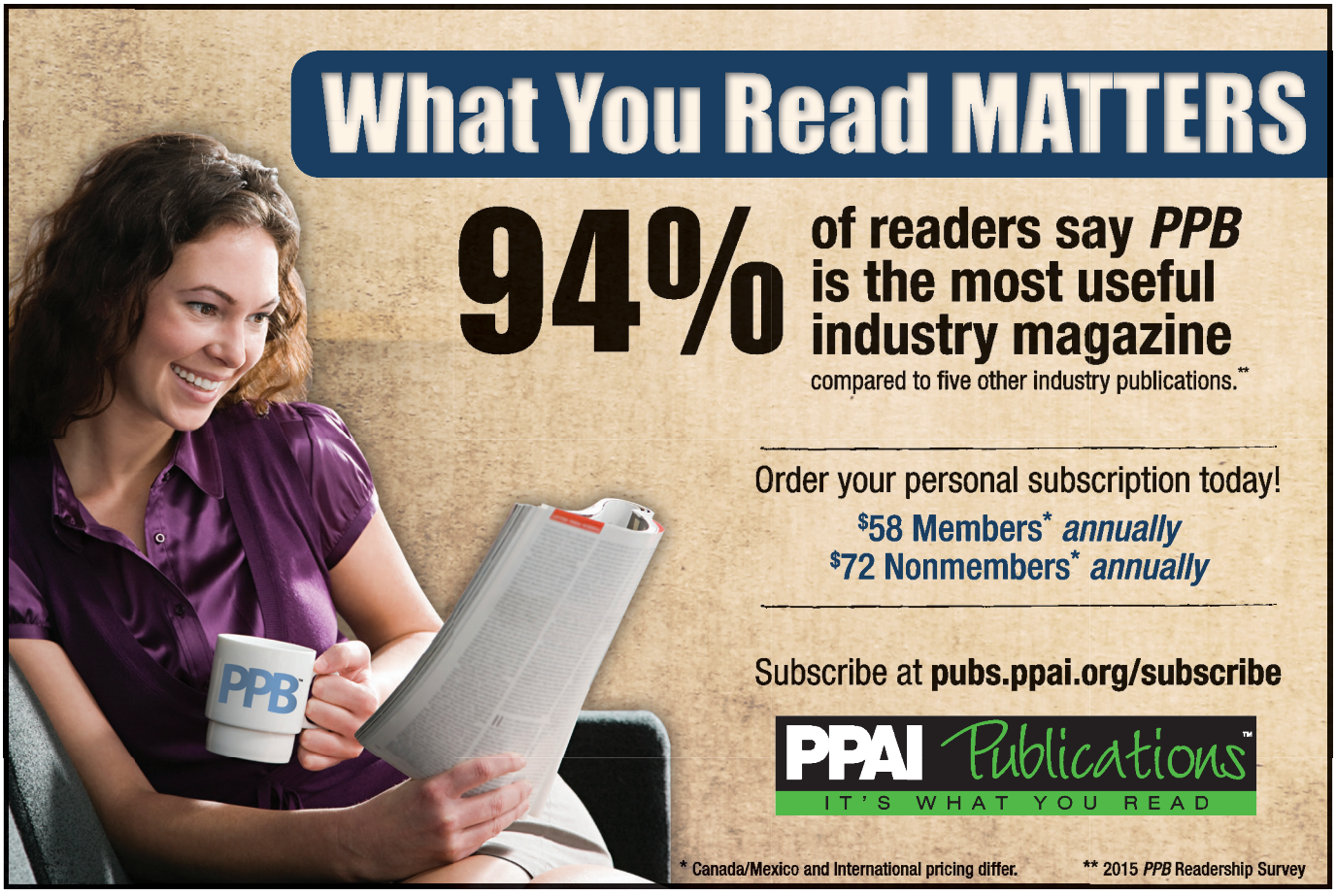
SamSonic Trading Co. Inc.
PPAI# 670916 UPIC: S670916

SHOLDIT
PPAI# 670909 UPIC: SHOLDIT

UGOBAGS
PPAI# 669133 UPIC: U669133

Universal Printing Company
PPAI# 455481 UPIC: mugs

Wholesale Banners Online
PPAI# 455623 UPIC: WSB PPB



Divot Tool With Built-In Brush.

Flips open to reveal brush

Have a Brush on the Course When You Need It

Covered Brush Protects You From Bristles & Dirt

Holds Any Shape and Size Ball Marker

Use as a Club Rest to Keep Club Grip Dry

Design is Sleek & Lightweight

Choose One of Four Ways to Mark Your Golf Ball

Patent Pending

770-429-1844
1-866-782-9748
golfgifts4u.com

BE THE BALL 4U

AD INDEX

Artifi Labs.....87
855-927-8434 www.artifilabs.com

Be The Ball 4 U.....107
604-718-4002 www.boardroomclothing.com

Bel Promo.....IFC, 1
305-593-8728 x305 www.belpromo.com

BIC.....109
888-446-5242 www.bicgraphic.com

Big Show.....93
800-471-7883 www.isosteelus.com

Custom Printing II Ltd......7
800-234-5740 www.customcrest.com

Essent.....99
800-559-9959 www.essent.com

Evans.....BC
800-745-3826 www.evans-mfg.com

EXPO.....100
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

Greater China.....64
877-773-6762 www.greaterchina-usa.com

Hit Promotional Products.....112, IBC
800-237-6305 x2525 www.hitpromo.net

Kaeser & Blair.....5
888-698-1684 www.comparekaeser.com

Next Products.....72
877-851-9595 www.nextpromotions.com

Pioneer Balloon.....10
316-685-2266 www.pioneerline.com

PPAI BeMore.....95
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

PPAI Certification.....97
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

PPAI Membership.....103
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

PPAI PSA.....105
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

PPB Subscription.....106
888-I-AM-PPAI www.PPAI.org

Proforma.....58
800-658-2967 www.onlyproforma.com/ppai

PromoMarketing.....28
215-238-5286 www.pmpowermeetings.com

SAGE.....2,111
800-925-7245 www.sageworld.com

SanMar.....9
800-426-6399 www.sanmar.com

Stahl's ID Direct.....89
800-478-2457 www.stahls.com

Sweda Company.....73
800-848-8417 www.swedausa.com

The Distributor Exchange.....37,45
844-251-8544 www.thedistributorexchange.com

The Spirit Sleeve.....67
888-430-9888 www.spiritsleeve.com

Top Brands, Inc......76
800-431-2127 www.top-brands.com

Visage Screen Print.....41
847-813-5552 www.visagescreenprint.com

Visstun.....68
800-331-8405 www.visstun.com

V-Tex Uncommon Threads.....84
877-631-3200 www.uncommonthreadschefapparel.com

Zoo Printing.....57
310-253-775 1x353 www.zooprinting.com

The Advertisers' Index is published for reader convenience. Every effort is made to list information correctly. The publisher is not responsible for errors or omissions.

Statements of fact and opinion within *PPB* are made on the responsibility of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect official opinions on the part of Promotional Products Association International nor an endorsement of products and services described therein. Advertisers and advertising agencies assume liability for all content of advertisements printed and assume responsibility for any claims which may arise against publisher for their advertising.

PPB (ISSN 1072-3293) Volume 40, Issue 7 is published monthly by Promotional Products Association International, 3125 Skyway Circle North, Irving, Texas 75038-3526. Periodicals postage paid at Irving, Texas, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *PPB*, 3125 Skyway Circle North, Irving, Texas 75038.

PPAI members receive *PPB* as a membership benefit paid for by membership dues. $48 of dues is allotted to *PPB* and is nondeductible therefrom. Nonmembers may subscribe to the publication for $72 annually. To order subscriptions, reprints and to request advertising rates, call 972-258-3044.

Copyright ©2016 Promotional Products Association International. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

BIC graphic

LIVE USA PROUD

LIVE BIC graphic

INDEPENDENCE DAY IS THE PERFECT TIME TO CELEBRATE ALL THE FREEDOM AND LIBERTIES OUR GREAT NATION OFFERS.

Good Value

46073 | Full Color Ringed Tumbler - 18 oz
As low as $6.69(C)

MADE IN USA

NEW

TRIUMPH CALENDARS

1452 | I Love America
As low as $2.40(D)

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

PRINTED IN USA

BIC

CSCM | BIC® Clic Stic® ColorMax™
As low as $.63(C)

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

ASSEMBLED IN USA

BIC

SND4A25 | BIC® Sticky Note™ 4" x 3" Adhesive Die Cut Notepad, 25 sheet.
Shape: USA | As low as $.53(C)

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

MADE IN USA

Good Value

40069 | Custom-Printed White Bandages
As low as $.25(C)

MADE IN USA

July 4 Independence Day

August 7 Purple Heart Day

September 11 Patriot Day

Visit bicgraphic.com

#LIVEBICGRAPHIC

Over 200 products have been selected from the BIC Graphic family of brands to support WWP. From January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016, BIC Graphic will donate $2 per order on specially marked products.

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

BIC®, the BIC Graphic logo, bicgraphic.com, Good Value® (logo), Triumph® Calendars and all related trademarks, logos, and trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of BIC Graphic and/or its affiliates or licensors in the United States and other countries and may not be used without written permission. ©2016 BIC Graphic USA, Clearwater, FL 33760. All prices in USD.

The *Creative* Calendar

Special observances call for exceptional promotions. Use these designated months and dates to ignite your imagination for relevant and distinctive client promotions.

AUGUST 21 // Immunization Awareness Month

SEPTEMBER 11 // Patriot Day

SEPTEMBER // Healthy Aging Month

OCTOBER // National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

August

August 19 National Aviation Day

August 21 Senior Citizens Day

September

Skin Care Awareness Month

September 28 National Good Neighbor Day

October

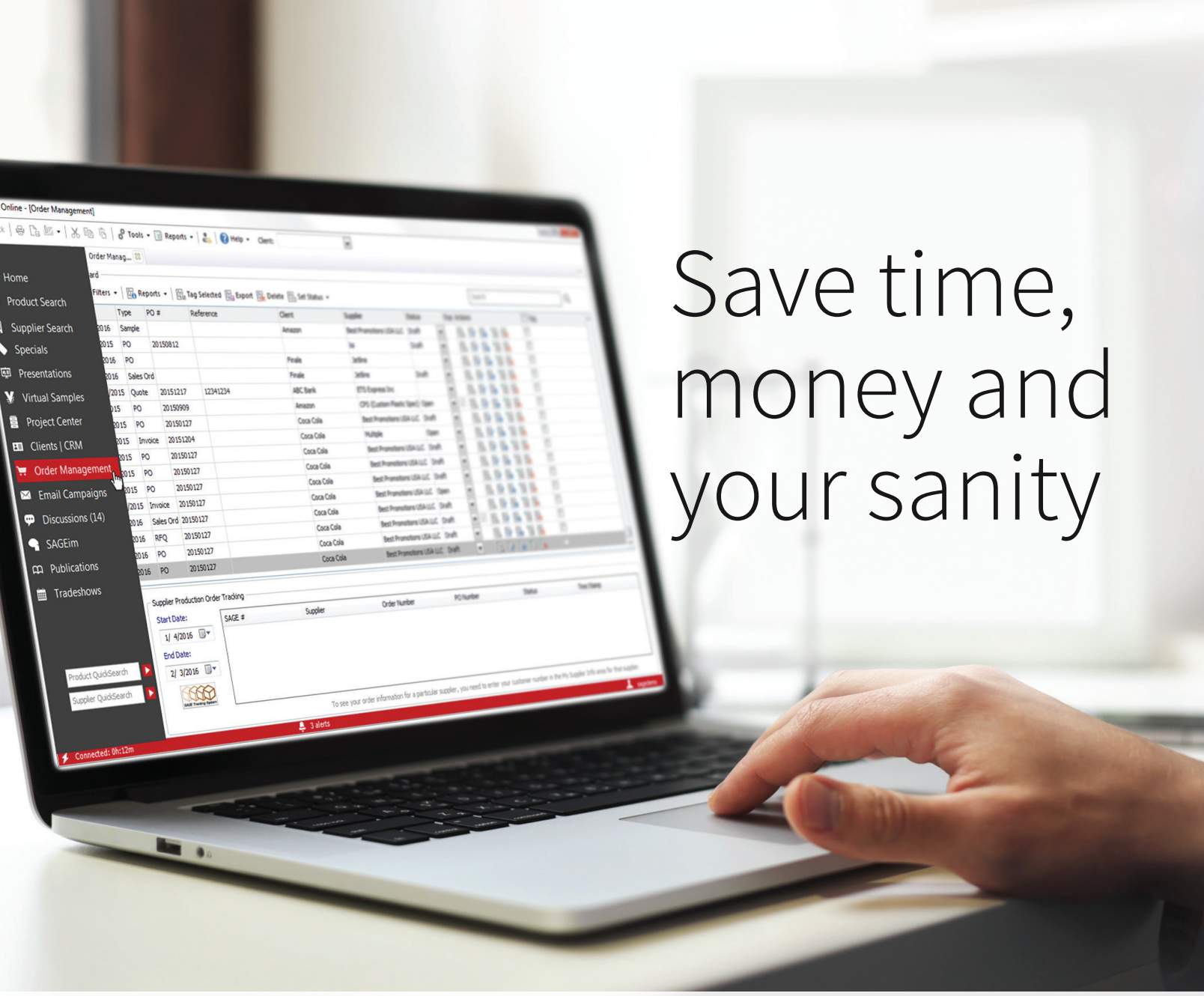
October 17 Boss's Day

Car Care Month

Crime Prevention Month PPB

OCTOBER // National Energy Awareness Month

If this calendar is helpful or if you have ideas for how we can more effectively share this information, email the editors at PPB@ppai.org.



Save time, money and your sanity

Create and send an order form in SAGE Online in only two clicks of your mouse!

Now you can focus your time on what's most important to you (like making more sales.)

All PPAI members receive a SAGE Total Access subscription through the Power of Two relationship.

power of two
PPAI
SAGE
power to you

To learn more about SAGE Online, visit
go.sageworld.com/LEARNMORE

SAGE®
800.925.7243
www.sageworld.com

Show You Care...

#HG1D Port & Company® T-Shirt And Sunglasses Combo Set With Custom Box

As Low As $7.99c

#7855 Sport Towel In Plastic Case

As Low As $4.99c

#9437 Plush Small Round Gel Beads Hot/Cold Pack

As Low As $2.19c

#3065 Hit Sports Pack With Front Zipper

As Low As $1.95c

#32 Bling Kan-Tastic

As Low As $1.55c

asi-61125

Hit®

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

www.hitpromo.net

ASI•61125 PPAI #113910

COUNSELOR DISTRIBUTOR CHOICE AWARDS

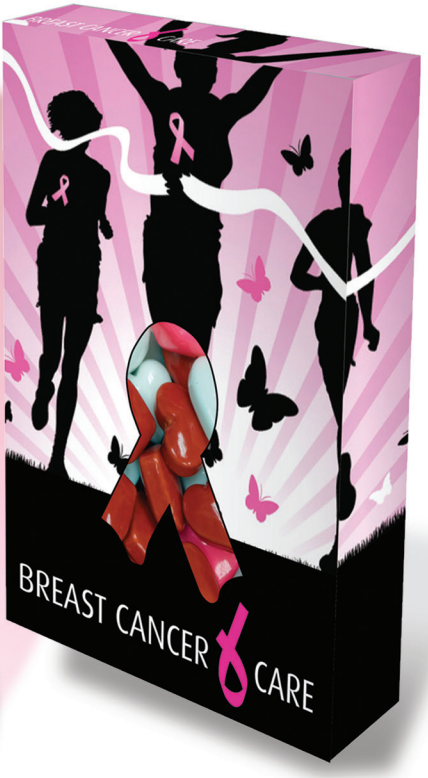
COUNSELOR TOP 40 2015 SUPPLIER

Delivering Design on a Budget

And Be Aware!

ZS5 - Zagasnacks
w/Corporate Color Jelly Beans

As Low As $1.41r



ZCBOX Ribbon – Custom Ribbon
Die Cut Box w/Candy Hearts

As Low As $3.00r

STICKER-RIB35 – Ribbon Sticker

As Low As $0.65r

Z Fan Heart - Handheld Heart Fan

As Low As $0.89r

EOS-LIPB-ST -
Strawberry Sorbet Lip Moisturizer

As Low As $3.42v

SST15 – Snap Top Tin
w/Signature Peppermints

As Low As $1.43r

Powered by: Hit PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

ADMINTS
ZAGABOR
SO MUCH MORE THAN MINTS

www.admints.com

ON SPECIAL!

REFERENCE
PROMO CODE: 5682

EXPIRES
09.30.16

DOUBLE THE DEAL!

TWO GREAT HOUSEHOLD PROUDCTS

From Evans

BETTER THAN EQP PRICING

1305 Silicone Basting Brush
$2.28(R) Min. 500
Die/Set-up: $55(V) per color/position

1309 Silicone Spatula
$1.84(R) Min. 500
Die/Set-up: $55(V) per color/position

GET SOCIAL WITH EVANS!
Get to know us! Check out our hot new items, exclusive promotions and interact with our team through social media.

EVANS

www.evans-mfg.com

ASI 52840 • **PPAI** 110747 • **UPIC** EVANS • **SAGE** 50018