Promotional Products Business
PPB

BUILT FOR LIFE

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Tina Berres Filipski
Editor

Eight Ways To Invest In Yourself

What you learn in Vegas, you definitely won't want to leave behind

If you are like most industry professionals, you've worked pretty hard this year. You've spent a lot of hours on projects for your clients, following up on orders, traveling to meet with clients, vendors and factories, brainstorming ways to grow your company and working with your team to reach its goals. You've kept your head down and continued ticking off items on your to-do list while trying your best to keep up with new opportunities, resources, compliance issues and technology.

Time out!

How about doing something to invest in your most important asset—yourself?

When The PPAI Expo opens at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas next month it brings the largest collection of promotional products under one roof. Nearly 3,200 booths will showcase the latest introductions and top sellers in every category from awards to zipper pulls. You can also indulge in your choice of 100-plus education classes (most of them are free) to help you hone your skills, freshen your perspective and broaden your knowledge about the business.

So consider taking a few days away from your day-to-day business and immerse yourself in the best your profession has to offer. What you learn in Vegas, you definitely won't want to leave behind.

Here are eight ways you can reward and empower yourself to begin a fresh year of business:

1. Register for The PPAI Expo at www.ppai.org/expo. It's quick and easy—and you can make your hotel reservations online as well through PPAI's housing partner.
2. Download the free SAGE Mobile™ app to create your walk list for the show, view an interactive floor plan and check off booths as you visit them. You can also add notes, photos and video and audio recordings on products and companies that interest you for after-show reference. The app also includes a link to a daily *PPB Newslink@Expo* to keep you up to speed on what's happening inside and outside Expo. Download the app at go.sageworld.com/planexpo.
3. Arrive in Las Vegas in time to fully participate in Education Day starting at 8 am on Monday, January 9. This is the core piece of the investment in yourself. Dozens of free sessions in eight topic tracks are available all day long, with the general session Power Keynotes from 3 to 5 pm. There's also an optional keynote luncheon at 11:30 am. See page 100 for details. New this year is the aspect of crowdsourcing—a technique PPAI staff used to let show-goers vote on their three most wanted session topics. At press time, voters were whittling down the most popular topics from five to three, with the winning sessions to be presented at Expo.
4. Relax and breathe. A new, Monday morning yoga class taught by the industry's own Roni Wright, MAS, will help you do just that. Register for the free 6:30-7:15 am class when you register for the show. Namaste.
5. Get an early-bird look at all the products and ideas on display in five Product Pavilions: New Products, Green Products, Made In The USA and Express Ship, and—new this year—the First Time Exhibitor pavilion where new Expo suppliers will showcase their best. Beat the crowds by arriving for the Sneak Peek at 8 am on Tuesday, January 10.
6. Hear America's No. 1 young entrepreneur, Johnny Earle, founder of Johnny Cupcakes, at Tuesday's opening general session starting at 8:30 am. In his entertaining style, Earle will share how he's grown his company from what he calls "a joke" to a multimillion-dollar, highly exclusive t-shirt brand driven by a community of worldwide collectors.
7. Power through the show floor on Tuesday and then get in some valuable networking at the PPAI Block Party starting at 5:30 pm in the convention center. It's a revolutionary concept for this show that includes food and drink, visits with featured exhibitors and the presentation of PPAI supplier and distributor awards in four categories. Then we turn up the dance music for Expo After Dark. Treat yourself to a little social engagement by getting your ticket to this event when you register for the show.
8. Stop by the newly designed PPAI booth #2451 to rest your feet and listen in. We'll be conducting live interviews with PPAI award winners, Expo speakers and subject matter experts on the Expo Live stage throughout the show. You never know who you might see there or what revolutionary ideas you might pick up.

I hope you'll plan to treat yourself to Expo—and I'll look for you there. PPB

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feedback

Send feedback on articles in *PPB* or opinions on industry issues to JamesK@ppai.org.

Leaders from volunteer committees and the industry's regional associations met in Grapevine, Texas, in October for the 17th annual Leadership Development Workshop (LDW), hosted by PPAI and the Regional Association Council (RAC).

Praise For 17th Annual Leadership Development Workshop

In October, PPAI and the Regional Association Council (RAC) hosted board members and executive directors from regional associations throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico in Grapevine, Texas, for the 17th annual Leadership Development Workshop (LDW). The week-long event featured training and planning for PPAI committee and advisory group chairs, and an extensive, multi-day curriculum designed to provide learning opportunities for regional association leadership through general sessions, breakout discussions and sharing activities.

Thank you for a very good week at LDW. The VAPPA [Virginia Promotional Products Association] team appreciates PPAI and our relationship with each of you. I have attended several LDWs, but this week was a homerun for me, and I know our entire group is very excited about our future and implementing the ideas and knowledge we gained.

CRAIG DICKENS
Vice President/Sales Manager
Suntex Industries
Winston Salem, North Carolina
UPIC: SUNTEX

Thanks for a great event! As a first-time attendee and new PPAM [Promotional Products Association Midwest] volunteer, I felt like it was a great way to kick off my regional board "career." The sessions were informative and motivational and I enjoyed all the engaging discussions with the other regionals.

DAVID SHULTZ
Vice President, Operations
DistributorCentral, LLC
Gardner, Kansas
UPIC: DC

More than 190 regional volunteers representing 27 regional associations attended LDW to participate in their choice of 25 education sessions.

I thought this was the best Regional Boot Camp ever and LDW was improved as well. Kudos! Thanks for listening and acting. I know Paul [Zafarana, MiPPA's incoming 2017 board president] and I have a better understanding on how to work together along with our aspirations, mutual goals and vision for the future. Our board members are revved up and ready to hit the ground running too.

PAUL KIEWIET, MAS+
Executive Director
Michigan Promotional Professionals Association
Grand Rapids, Michigan
UPIC: mippa

I want to personally thank everyone on behalf of myself and PMANC [Promotional Marketing Association of Northern California] for a wonderful conference. The organization the team put together, the content and all that had to do with the week was top-notch.

Thank you for getting us prepared so we could get the best of the conference. We were able to not only have a wonderful time but also learn a great deal.

IVONNE LAHLOUH
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UPIC: IDEA0018

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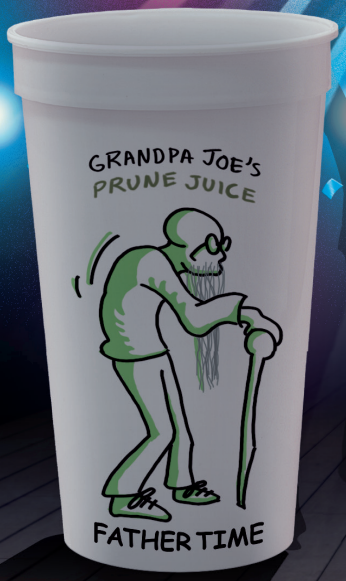

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+ Success Starts With A Strong Brand

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by Julie Richie

Can You Hear Me Now?

Q **A DISTRIBUTOR ASKS:** What are some creative ways to break through the never-ending nightmare of unreturned calls and emails in today's busy electronic society?

Rediscover Direct Mail

What would you tell a client who asked the same question of you? Use promotional products, of course! Create a clever direct-mail campaign. Research the intended recipients to confirm you have the correct contacts. Consider sending to multiple contacts in the same company. When the campaign is strong and the merchandise of value, you'll create a buzz. Choose creative packaging or delivery methods that make the recipient want to open your mailing. Select product that's timely, clever and interesting. Just as you teach your clients, the enclosed promotional items must coordinate with your message or theme. The purpose of the product is to communicate your capabilities and creativity. How much better will that ultimate appointment be when you don't have to tell the client what you can do, because he will have already experienced it?

MARSHA LONDE
Co-Owner
Tango Partners
UPIC: TangoP

If people aren't returning your calls or emails, you simply haven't captivated their attention to the point where they feel it's in their best interest to respond. Instead, dazzle them with something you sell—a promotional product. By utilizing physical advertising through the vehicle of direct mail, you show them that you value what you are trying to get them to purchase and use. For example, you could send them a mousepad in the shape and design of a pizza in a similar-sized pizza box. In the box, you could have a page describing the "menu" of services you provide. When you get their attention through promotional merchandise, you've already shown them they can replicate the same results with their target audience.

BILL PETRIE
CEO
brandivate
UPIC: BVATE

This is one technique that I have heard many people use, although it's not strictly electronic. It's really simple. Along with a handwritten letter asking for further communication, send:

1. a wine glass, and tell your contact you'll bring the wine for their meeting, or vice versa.
2. a pen, and tell them you'll bring the paper.
3. an inexpensive time piece, and ask them to pick a time to call.

JEFFREY BATSON, CAS
President
Next Products, Inc.
UPIC: nextpro

Ask yourself this: "Have I done enough to earn a callback? Have I done anything to separate myself from competitors?" Guilt is an awesome motivator. If you have impressed the person with a string of spec samples (once every month, once a quarter), or if you sent any "thank you for your business" appreciation gifts (maybe with their logo so as to not classify it as a bribe) then most decent people would feel really bad not returning your call or email. Those who still don't are probably not the ones you want to do business with anyway.

NIV BEN-HAIM
President
DgroupTrevelyan
UPIC: dgroup

Nobody has time to weed through a long email or listen to a rambling voicemail. Streamline your message and make it easy for the recipient to respond quickly by incorporating the following techniques:

- **Be strategic about the subject line**: Use the subject line to make your request or need clear and help the recipient prioritize. Some examples: Need Your Feedback, or Please Respond by Tuesday.
- **Get straight to the point**: Don't put a lot of non-relevant information in the email or message but make sure to be friendly and cordial.
- **Give deadlines**: To prevent your email or message from dropping down the recipient's inbox list, provide a specific timeline for when you need a response.
- **Provide your recommendation**: If you are looking for a resolution to a problem and need the recipient's decision, provide a few different options plus your recommendation so they can quickly act upon the information.

CHRIS STUMPF
CEO & Managing Partner
Stumpies Marketing Group
UPIC: stumpies

In an age where it seems that everyone carries multiple devices (smart phones, iPads/tablets etc.), compounded with the heavy volume of emails, texts, voicemails, etc. and the possibility of human error, there is no one answer. We all have multiple projects going on at all times so keeping a list of project communications is a must. On my list I keep track of names, projects and all communication along with the dates noted. Everyone seems to have their own preference of communication. Whereas my preference is email, it is important to find out my customer's preferred method and stick to that method with them. Understandably, things can get accidentally deleted or an email address may be incorrect, so following up using alternative methods is important. Regardless of if you are a supplier or distributor, continual communication is critical. Even if there is nothing to report, appropriate communication is absolutely necessary.

SHELLEY BEDNARSKI
Southeast Region Sales Manager
Chocolate Inn/Taylor & Grant
UPIC: CHOCINN

I have used texting when possible to be less intrusive as they can read and response at their convenience. And we know those texts are never discarded quickly.

JOE NGUYEN
Senior Vice President of Marketing/Product Development
Fields Manufacturing
UPIC: FIELDS

In today's environment of unreturned phone calls and never-ending emails, it is more important than ever to build solid relationships with your customers, suppliers and even prospects. It is so easy to delete an email and never look back. The key is developing your relationship so the recipient of your call or email understands the value you bring to the relationship. A creative introduction or other gimmick may work on occasion, but relationships drive long term success.

JEFF GILFAND
President
Corporate Imaging Concepts, LLC
UPIC: CORP8803

Physically walking into the client's or prospect's office with a unique "challenge" item has worked very well for some of my customers. For instance, the company I represent encourages our distributors to fill one of our vacuum drinkware pieces with ice and leave it behind with the client/prospect. They ask the client to call or email them when the ice has melted. The idea is to a) illustrate the quality of the drinkware heat and/or cold retention and b) create a touch point that compels the client to *want* to respond to that vendor.

KIM REINECKER, MAS
Regional Sales Manager, Texas and Oklahoma
Starline USA
UPIC: STAR0009

With voicemail messages I try to be very brief, clear, and I sandwich my contact information at the beginning and the end. It is also very important to be enthusiastic. Then, I follow up with an email, or when appropriate a written note. With emails, I get the best response by sending them early in the morning. I try to keep them simple with only one topic, very short, and I use a unique subject line if possible. For example, this weekend I sent an email with the subject line: Sticky Gum Guy. The email went to an interesting person I sat next to on my flight home from New York City. I promised to follow up. Because I mentioned that there was sticky gum on my seat when I sat down, I knew the subject line would work. I got a response early Monday morning.

DAVID J. HAWES, MAS+
Brand Architect
Geiger
UPIC: geiger

Do You Have An Answer?

A Distributor asks:

Recently I quoted a potential client on a product and was told they had received a lower price from another vendor. What do I do in this situation? If I'm not willing to lower my price, should I ask what that price was? Can I ask who the vendor is? It would be very helpful to know how far off my quote was and what my competitors are charging. What do other distributors do when faced with this scenario?

What's Your Answer? Email answers along with your name, title and company name by **December 22** to Question@ppai.org for possible inclusion in an upcoming issue of *PPB* magazine.

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

by Julie Richie

Mom, Where's My Favorite Shirt?

Winning characteristics of the best promotional apparel for kids

Many children have one special go-to piece of clothing that they wear constantly, even waiting by the dryer for it to be ready to wear again. If you're lucky, that t-shirt or sweatshirt has your client's branded message on it. Over several months or even years, the cost per impression of that message can decline dramatically to virtually nothing.

So how can you possibly predict what could be a child's favorite thing to wear? First, says, Erica Norton, marketing manager for

Togs For Tots To Teens

Charles River Apparel (UPIC: CRA), it has to be comfortable. "From a consumer standpoint, functionality is key. Children's apparel should be constructed to move the way children move."

Second, you need to be able to remove the grime of childhood play easily. "A mom or dad should be able to pop apparel into the washer rather than having to dry clean," Norton adds.

She predicts that bold and bright colors will continue to reign supreme for children looking to show off their fun personalities. And she says that matching parent/child looks are ever-popular. "Many of our top styles, including the Space Dye Performance Pullover and the New Englander® rain jacket have a mini-me version for children looking to dress just like mom or dad," Norton says.

When ordering apparel for children, Norton emphasizes, "Distributors should always check to ensure that pieces adhere to strict safety rules, including, but not limited to, fire-retardant laws and lead-free laws. Children's apparel pieces should also be free of all drawstrings as they are a choking hazard."

See sidebar on page 16 for more information about product safety considerations in children's apparel.

The **Original CVC** ¾ raglan is a great look for boys and girls. Made from 60-percent combed ring spun cotton and 40-percent polyester, this shirt is available in eight contrasting color combinations and sizes XS-XL with a tear-away label.

Next Level Apparel
UPIC: NextL178
www.nextlevelapparel.com

Insect Shield® Dri- Balance™ tees are revolutionary and designed to provide long-lasting, effective and convenient personal insect protection. Insect Shield is a proprietary formulation resulting in effective, odorless insect protection that lasts the expected lifetime of the product. Made from 70-percent cotton/30-percent polyester, these tees feature moisture management, UPF 30+ sun protection and are snag- and pill-resistant. Choose from seven colors and sizes YXS-YL.

OMNi Apparel, Inc. / UPIC: zorrel / **www.zorrel.com**

Perfect for youth sports teams and spirit wear, this 7.8-ounce 50/50 cotton/polyester blend **Hanes® Youth EcoSmart® Pant** is made with up to five-percent recycled polyester from plastic bottles. It comes in sizes XS-XL and is available in five colors. Youth pullover hood, full-zip hood and crew styles are also available.

Hanes/Champion / UPIC: HBIINC
www.hanesbullseye.com

The screen-printed 100-percent cotton **colored t-shirt** (heather grey is 90-percent cotton/10-percent polyester) is a high-quality choice for kids of all ages and is available in 17 colors. It is CPSIA compliant.

ADG Promotional Products
UPIC: ADGPROMO
www.adgpromo.com

With a relaxed fit for all-day comfort, the **Hooded Pom Pom Jersey** is crafted from 6.6-ounce, 100-percent cotton jersey. Featuring a heather gray top and sleeves, and a solid color bottom with matching athletic stripes, this loose-fitting shirt provides excellent contrast in a standout look for kids. It is available in 14 different colors.

Boxercraft / UPIC: BOXER
www.boxercraft.com

Decorating Children's Apparel

Four ways to comply with children's product standards

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (CPSIA) requires all children's products to undergo third-party testing for certain requirements. Assuming the garment itself complies with all regulation, embroidery thread and any other decoration applied by industry decorators must also comply. Additionally, regulations require that tracking labels be applied by the decorator so any problem garments can be tracked to the source, date and production batch.

Here are some options for complying with children's product standards when applying decoration to youth-size apparel:

1. **Test the ink**. Get a sample of the ink to be used and have a CPSC-accredited test lab perform the necessary tests.

2. **Use ink makers' tests**. Use ink manufacturers who test their inks annually and send you test reports. You can rely on the component testing rule if you make sure you have an internal system to pair the ink test reports to the garments produced to prove compliance.

3. **Use trusted decorators.** Decorators who have strong compliance programs in place will ensure inks are tested and proper tracking labels are applied. Be sure to request CPCs and test reports to ensure compliance and make sure you have an internal system to manage the technical documents.

4. **Perform third-party tests on the finished product.** If you cannot prove that the components of a garment including the fabric, decoration and hard attachments are compliant, third-party tests to applicable standards should be performed on samples of the final product.

Source: PPAI

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#T2G-A 2 Gallon Popcorn Tins - Three Way - Butter, Caramel and Cheese

• The two gallon tin is filled with freshly popped corn in three exceptional flavors; Caramel, Butter and Cheese. Popcorn is bagged inside to maintain freshness and does not ship loose like the picture • 8" H x 10.25" D

As Low As $25.65(r)

#GT2-G The Royal Brownies Tin

• The Royal Cookie Tin is packed with Large Chocolate Chip cookies or chocolate fudge brownies.
• All of our cookies are all natural with no preservatives and sealed in foil bags to lock in freshness. Comes with a 1-color direct imprint on the lid (solid-color tins) or a greeting card (designer tins). You can also add a 4-color process decal to the lid of any of our solid-color tins.
• 2.625" H x 7.1875" D

As Low As $19.25(r)

#THE OVATION-BOX ATC
The Ovation Box

• Includes your logo and a bow of your choice
• Choose from these single fills: almond tea cookies, cocoa-dusted chocolate truffles, creamy sea salt caramels, almond butter crunch, fancy mixed nuts, jumbo cashews or gooey caramel turtles.
• 7.125"H x 4"W x 2"D

As Low As $4.99(r)

#GB2-I The Executive Box with Almond Tea Cookies & Mini Chocolate Pretzels

• This Executive Gift Box is filled with gourmet Almond Tea Cookies & Mini Chocolate Pretzels. Make your mark with our elegant gift boxes. • Choose a smart box, select from our decadent delights and wrap it with a luxurious ribbon.
• Hot stamp your logo on the box or ribbon for a gift clients will never forget.
• 2" H x 8"W x 4" D

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#TT4-B Gold Decadence Four-Tier Tower

• Give our richest gifts in this shining tower!
• These irresistible gold and white boxes are laden with cocoa-dusted chocolate truffles, almond tea cookies, rich chocolate chip cookies and fancy mixed nuts.
• The printed ribbon completes the package
• 8"H x 7.25"W x 4.25"D

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EYE ON APPAREL
children's apparel

Made from 50/50 cotton and polyester, this CPSIA-compliant, 5.6-ounce pre-shrunk **Dri-Power Active Youth T-Shirt** features advanced moisture management performance to help kids stay drier while they play. A tear-away label, shoulder-to-shoulder taping, and two-needle hemmed sleeves and bottom, make this shirt durable enough for rough and tumble play.

Jerzees / UPIC: CROS0002
www.jerzees.com

The **Sport-Tek® Youth Sport-Wick® color block hooded pullover** combines color print accents with Sport-Wick moisture-wicking technology. In addition to a cordless hood, taped neck, self-fabric cuffs and hem and a front pouch pocket, it features a sublimated digital CamoHex pattern on the inner sleeves, side panels and hood lining for extra style. Made of eight-ounce, 100-percent polyester, the hoodie can be machine washed cold, tumble dried low and decorated as directed for polyester performance fabrics. It comes in five color combinations and in youth sizes XS-XL.

Transfer Express
www.TransferExpress.com.

The **Youth Glitter French Terry Hoodie** is constructed of eight-ounce, 55-percent cotton, 25-percent Lurex, 20-percent polyester French terry fabric. Perfect for cheer, dance, team, spirit, resort and casual wear, the hoodie has glitter thread that is knit and cover stitched throughout the fabric for extra bling. This unique fashion hoodie is available in four colors: black, Maui blue, wildberry and oxford, and in youth sizes S-L.

J. America (Wholesale Blanks Division)
UPIC: Blanks
www.jamericablanks.com

PPAI Webinars

Take The Next Step

Learn more about important product safety considerations when selling children's apparel by accessing one or more of the following webinars. These are free to PPAI members and nonmembers.

PRODUCT SAFETY

Focus On Tracking Labels

Speakers: Anne Stone, *Director of Public Affairs, PPAI*; **Susan DeRagon**, *Senior Technical Consultant, UL*

Webinar Overview: Learn what your obligations are and what information needs to be included in order to comply with federal regulations. This webinar will discuss tracking label requirements, recordkeeping requirements, and how a distributor becomes a manufacturer.

PRODUCT SAFETY

Ink Testing Protocols

Speakers: Anne Stone, *Director of Public Affairs, PPAI*; **Andrew Farhat,** *Vice President of Product Integrity, Kids II*

Webinar Overview: To mitigate the costs associated with third-party testing the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) introduced the Component Part Testing Rule. Learn how this rule allows domestic manufacturers and importers to certify that the inks they are using to comply with CPSIA regulations.

Register at www.ppai.org and click on Education and E-Learning.

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PPAI/114154 SAGE/57590 UPIC: WARWICK

What's cuter than promotional basics such as **baby sleep gowns, wearable baby blankets and baby and toddler dresses**? Hospitals, day cares and pediatricians' offices are some possible markets.

Kids Blanks By Zoe / UPIC: KidsB293
www.kidsblanks.com

Available in 12 colors, this **youth training short** offers permanent moisture wicking to keep dry and comfortable, as well as a BodyFreshé treatment to inhibit the growth of odor causing bacteria. This short has a seven-inch inseam with a full athletic cut, as well as a wider covered elastic waistband with continuous draw cord for additional comfort.

Expert Brand / UPIC: Exper698 / **www.expertbrand.com.**

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

Now See This!

Alisha Zavadil, marketing consultant for American Solutions for Business, created a kids' coloring book and t-shirt series targeting the eye care industry. Zavadil initially planned to sell the t-shirts and books to retail stores, but after growing up in and working in the promotional product industry, it seemed natural to her to market it within this industry instead.

"Providers will be offered the option to purchase tees with or without their logo added to the back neckline. They can merchandise the tees paired with their customized book or use them for additional giveaways and exposure," says Zavadil, who is the mother of a toddler. The book is setup with variable text to include the business's name in the beginning of the story and allows for a custom back page, which can include the recipients' logo, contact info, etc. It's the perfect gift for young patients ages three and older who get their eyes examined, as a waiting room distraction or a gift with their new glasses. And matching adult styles are available to reinforce the popular "mommy and me" styles at retail. For more information, visit www.SPEC-TACULAR.com. PPB

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Rick Beard in his home office with a selection of his company's USA-made products.

Next Step

How a pair of flip-flops gave Navy veteran Rick Beard the idea for his golf accessory business.

by Julie Richie

It was 1985. Rick Beard, founder of Hat Trick Openers (UPIC: hatt), had just graduated from high school in rural Portland, Michigan, and like many of the men in the town, he had gone to work in a local steel factory.

"I was working the midnight shift," Beard says. "There was bellowing, black smoke and rodents running around. One day I looked around at all these guys who had been there for years and thought, I gotta get out of here. I joined the Navy and two weeks later I was in boot camp."

Beard, whose grandfather had been in the Navy during World War II and then in the Merchant Marines, grew up with a fascination for sailing and lobstermen and lobster boats, so when the time came to choose where he would be stationed, he chose a ship that was in Portland, Maine, being worked on. "It was the first ship to be outfitted with the Tomahawk missile," he says.

From 1985 to 1989, Beard circled the world. "Because of the missile system we were never in port. We were sent to defend places all over the world where there was something going on. I was an operations specialist, and then I was asked to be an intelligence specialist and I was sent to school for that. I did intelligence reporting on other ships in the area. We were over in the Red Sea and also the Strait of Hormuz close to the area where Iraq and Iran meet. It was during the reflagged Kuwaiti tanker deal [the reflagged Kuwaiti tanker, the MV *Bridgeton*, struck an Iranian naval mine near Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf in July 1987] during the Iran-Iraq War, so we were protecting all the ships coming out of the Persian Gulf

with oil from Kuwait," he says.

Beard received the Navy Achievement Medal for his success in consolidating the existing reporting system so intelligence specialists could get information more quickly into the Naval Tactical Data System. "It was not combat and it's nothing dangerous like so many veterans have gone through and are still going through today. By no means am I [a] hero. I just did my part and that's all."

The Navy wanted Beard to stay, but when his commitment was up in 1989, Beard—who was married to his wife, Joan, and had a young son, Rory—decided he wanted the opportunity to be a hands-on dad, so the family settled in Portland (Maine). "I wanted to be the Little League coach and all that kind of stuff," he says. Their daughter Chelsey was born shortly after he left the Navy. The kids grew up playing multiple sports, especially hockey, and Beard became a hockey dad. "I used to build the hockey rink in the back yard and all the neighborhood kids would come over."

One day his teenage son came home from traveling with his junior hockey team with a pair of flip-flops that had a bottle opener built into the bottom of them. "He was like, 'Dad, check these out, they are so cool but don't tell mom because they cost $45!'" Beard was skeptical of the bottle opener being on the sole of the flip-flop given the potential for stepping in something unpleasant and then transferring it to the top of your bottle. It got him thinking about another, more hygienic way to have a bottle opener as part of a product.

"I came up with the original Hat Trick bottle opener, which attaches to the strap on the back of a baseball cap. It has a magnet that automatically sticks to the bottle cap when in use. It keeps the bottle cap from falling to the ground and makes people think twice about littering. It also had a can tab opener on the back," says Beard. At the time Beard was a manager at the post office, so inventions were just a part-time gig.

"Then I just started to add products: I took that opener and said, why not add it to a can and bottle cooler? And why not add it to a sunglass strap?" At the time he was having the products made in China. "It got to be a real hassle for me, getting up in the middle of the night to talk to someone in China who didn't understand or speak English, and I didn't understand or speak Chinese. And then I'd get a shipment in and I just never knew what I was going to find. It was just a brutal experience."

Ideas kept coming to him, especially when he took up playing golf. That's when he saw a need and created his 6 in 1 Divot Tool, which features a bottle opener, can opener, cigar holder, divot tool, club rest and ball marker. He looked for two and a half years all over New England for a manufacturer, but the tooling costs and minimums were prohibitive. He started manufacturing it in China but wasn't happy with the quality and he really wanted to make his product in the U.S. "It's not like I'm this big company and I have people over on the ground in China," he says.

Beard persisted in looking for a U.S. manufacturer and finally he found the right facility to produce the product at a reasonable cost. "All of my golf accessories, which is what I'm focusing on now, are made in the USA," he says. The manufacturing facilities he works with are in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. "I can control inventory so much better. I know what I'm getting because I visit these places every few weeks. They know my expectations. It's worked out extremely well," he says.

"I get so many positive responses and feedback about the fact that my product is made in the U.S.," he adds. "Between Canada and the U.S., there are about 425,000 golf tournaments per year. Almost every company, it seems, has a golf outing. They give out goodie bags at every golf tournament. I get a lot of repeat orders from distributors. They initially start out wanting them for a golf tournament and they end up loving them so much that they get them for another outing or for a trade show or to hand out at the office to their customers and employees." His products are also in several large corporations' company stores. "It's great for me because it's repeat business," he adds.

As Beard reflects on his many careers, he says, "It's all been great. One thing leads to another. That's life." PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

Hat Trick Openers is a corporate sponsor of Folds of Honor, an organization that raises money to provide educational scholarships to children and spouses of those killed or disabled while serving the nation. The organization's Patriot Golf Day is a nationwide fundraising effort held at golf courses every year during Labor Day week. For more information, go to foldsofhonor.org.

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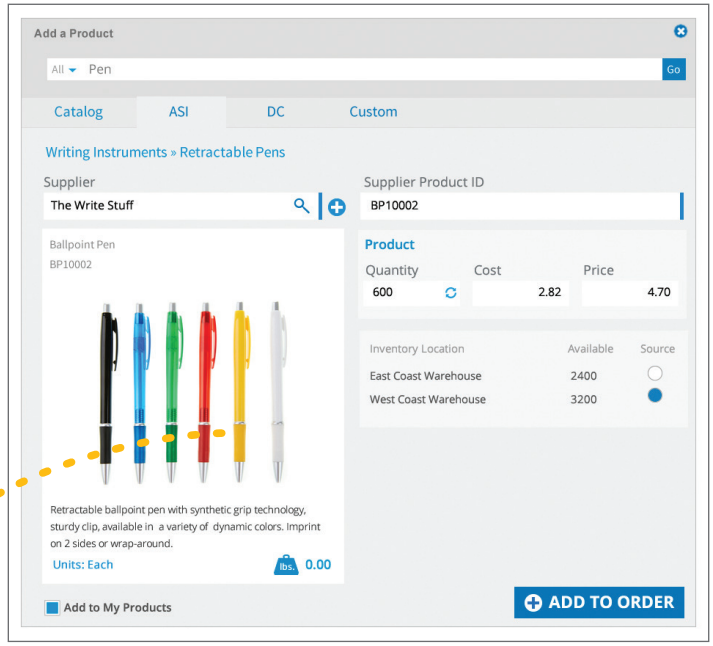

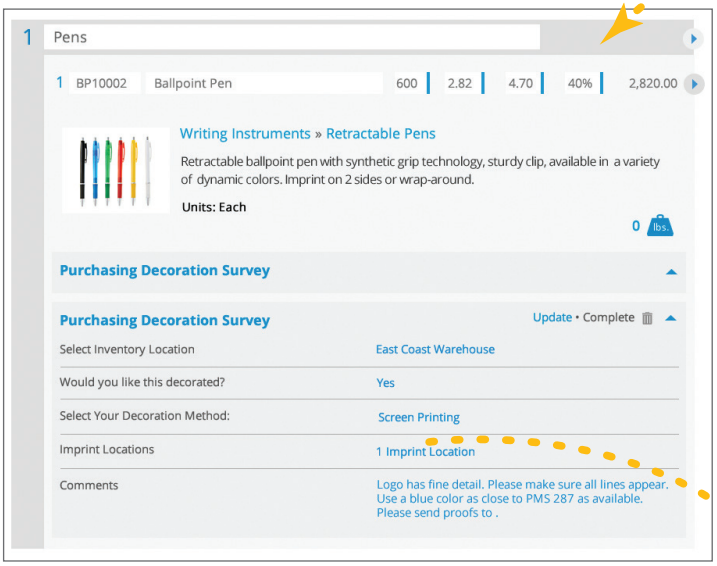

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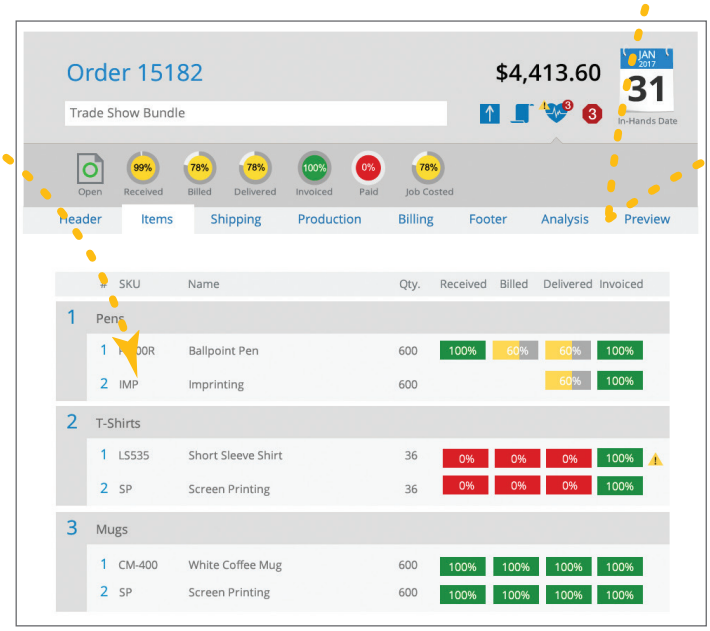

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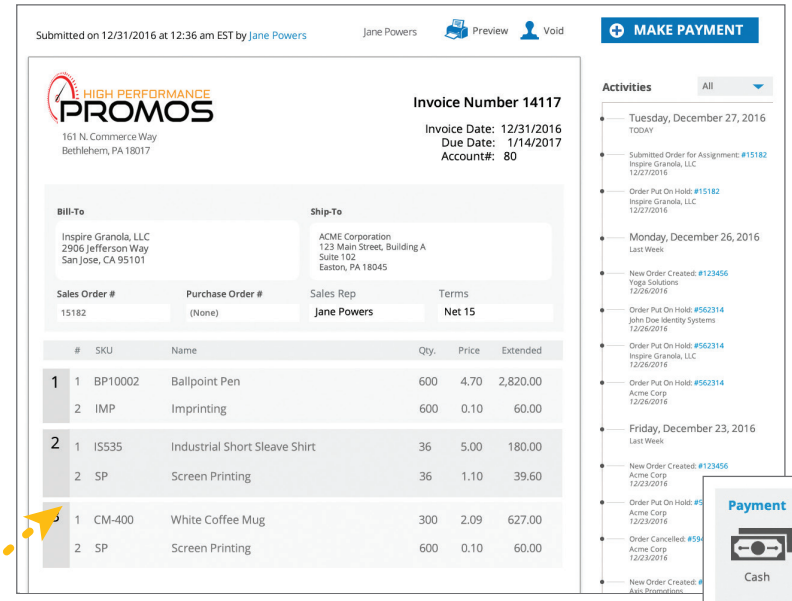

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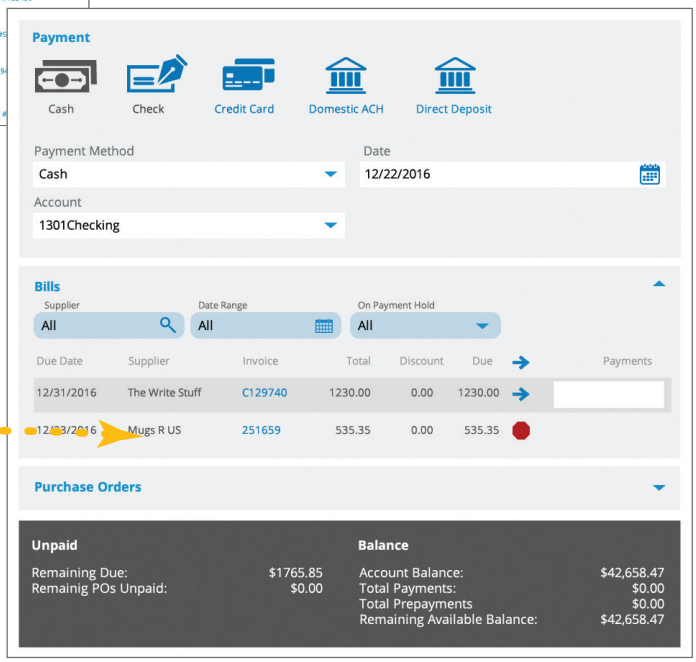

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Success Starts With A Strong Brand

What Does Your Company's Brand Say To Prospects?

by Abigail Tiefenthaler

Second in a five-part series

The first article in this series spoke to the ways business owners can prepare for success. For example, every morning we must take steps to proactively recommit to our business. Every day we must do things that work *on* our business, not just *in* our business. Every day we must focus on moving people along a customer continuum that gets them one step closer to saying, "Yes!"

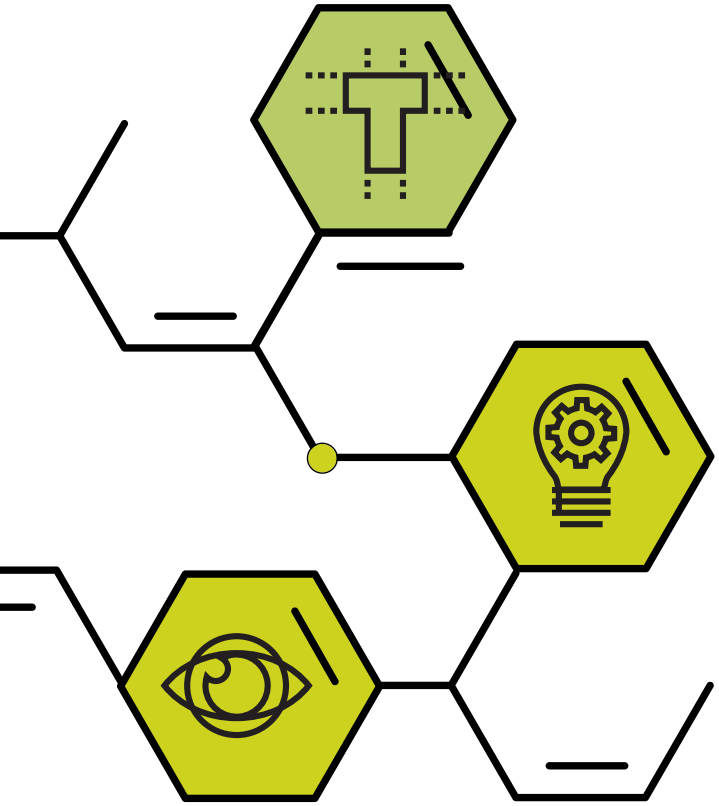
So what happens next?

Most business owners start selling. Pushing. Convincing. Educating. Hoping. And praying for business. It doesn't matter what industry you're in, business owners notoriously want to go from concept to selling because that's where the action is. It's where the money is. And, if you're a promotional products distributor like me, it's where we feel successful.

The problem is that when you skip steps you miss critical pieces of the business success puzzle. You may be able to skip them initially but trust me, you cannot eliminate them. Without these essential steps, chances are your business will fail.

The truth is that getting sales is easy. Most business owners can get immediate sales. They can get transactional business. But building a thriving and enduring business, while simple, is not that easy.

What are these missing pieces to the success puzzle? What are the steps you can skip, but not eliminate? The first is marketing. Marketing is everything. It's the people mover of your business. Take a look at any successful business and you will find that they understand and practice marketing. Good marketing.



Savvy marketing. Marketing that builds a community. Marketing that creates a movement.

And, how do they develop marketing that works? They start by creating a strong brand.

What is a brand? So many business owners think it's a logo or graphic identity, but it's so much more. Your brand is what your business represents. It's who you are, who you serve and the solution you provide within your competitive marketplace. It's the essence of your company.

What does your brand stand for? Low cost? Customer service? Innovation? First to market? A one-stop solution?

Do you know what your brand stands for? Does your customer know? Does your marketplace know?

Your brand is *the* foundational element of your business. It is the piece that gives you a reason to have a business, market that business and sell your products. Every business has a brand. The question is, "Who created it?" The bigger question is, "Who controls it?" If the answer to either question is, "Not me," then you are not in control of your business because your brand is where it all starts. A brand is *that* important.

Your brand is what your business represents. It's who you are, who you serve and the solution you provide within your competitive marketplace. It's the essence of your company.

Without a clearly defined brand it is hard to build a business that thrives and endures. Without a clearly defined brand it is difficult to position your business for success. And, without a clearly defined brand it is impossible for your marketing to be effective—and without effective marketing your dollars, time and effort are wasted.

What are the key elements of a good brand? First and foremost, a good brand is clearly defined and focused. You cannot be all things to all people. It simply doesn't work that way. How does a good brand get created? It starts when a business owner decides that creating a strong brand image is a priority. It starts when a business owner wants to understand their competitive marketplace so they can identify how they're different and can solve a customer's problem in a unique and comprehensive way. And, it starts when a business owner decides to be customer-centric and understand his customer's specific challenges so the business owner can offer truly unique solutions.

In the promotional products marketplace, knowing how you're different can be your secret to success. Let's be real, most of the bigger promotional products buyers use multiple suppliers. They do it to keep pricing competitive. They do it so they have access to greater creativity and innovation. They even do it because they know that not all promotional products distributors, or suppliers, are created equal.

I learned this lesson a long time ago. I worked with a big corporation that purchased hundreds of thousands of dollars of promotional items each year. Some items were quoted for best price. Others were put out to quote to see how and what types of innovative solutions could be presented. And other projects were quoted from a certain source because they knew the company could deliver on time and on budget. I understood why the purchasing agent had her three preferred suppliers, and I understood where I fit into the equation. The reason I worked with that client for as many years as I did was because I continued being the best at what I did and didn't try to be something else. In the end, it was knowing what my brand stood for that helped me with this customer, as well as other customers I picked up along the way.

If the purpose of marketing is to get a prospect to go down their own decision-making path to choose you, it's important that you show up unique and different. Your uniqueness and difference are your best brand elements. Branding is crucial to helping you create a positioning that clearly sets your business apart from the other businesses in your competitive space. And with promotional products, the competitive marketplace is pretty fierce. But, how do you find your uniqueness and difference? You investigate these points during a company branding exercise.

Your brand is your best business asset because if you spend time answering the important questions in the three areas of You, Your Customer and Your Marketplace, you will find that when it's time to hire a qualified graphic artist to create your logo and graphic approach, the process should go more smoothly.

A good branding exercise considers the following areas:

1 **You.** This part of a branding exercise addresses your vision, mission, values and goals. During a branding exercise you address your backstory and reason for starting your business. Then, you look at your process and structure to understand how you do what you do. These elements get to the "you" in the brand story and answer the questions: Who are you? Why did you start your business? What do you want to be known for? What do you really love to do?

2 **Your customer.** This part of the branding exercise identifies the character traits of your ideal client. In addition to demographics, a good branding expert will work with you on the psychographics of your ideal client as well. Not every client is a good client for your business, but understanding the type of client that is can make all the difference. Then, it's important to understand what your customer's problem actually is so you can see how you can best solve it. This way you start looking at your solutions through the lens of your ideal client. You answer questions such as: What is your customer's problem and how can you solve it? What does the customer want? What does the customer need? Why does the customer need help? How much information does that customer need to make a decision?

3 **Your marketplace.** It's really important to understand what's going on in your marketplace now, and why it's happening. The best way to understand your marketplace is to do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis or a Market Mapping exercise. Both of these methods can help you identify the gaps in the marketplace as they stand now. It can also show you what voids are potential market opportunities. Questions you ask now include: Why does your marketplace need you specifically? What solutions exist already? How can you position yourself in a way that is unique and targets the greatest group of potential buyers?

Spending time answering these questions gets you thinking about your business and what you want. What your customer needs. And, why your marketplace is ready for your solution. These pieces of information are critical to positioning your brand for success.

Most people think their brand is the graphic representation of their business such as the Nike Swoosh, the McDonald's golden arches or some identifying icon such as Tiffany's iconic blue box. But getting a brand to where these examples are today took years of perfecting the brand and working on what the ideal customer needs. It also took a lot of work to understand what their ideal clients were willing to do to get it. What does your graphic identity say about your business?

Your brand is your best business asset because if you spend time answering the important questions in the three areas of You, Your Customer and Your Marketplace, you will find that when it's time to hire a qualified graphic artist to create your logo and graphic approach, the process should go more smoothly. And as anyone who has worked with a graphic artist or designer already knows, the more information you provide upfront, the better the result.

Now, what do you think your company's brand says about you? What would your client say your brand says about you? It's never too late to take control of your brand and make it represent the promotional products business you really want to have. PPB

Read Part 3 of this series in the January issue on marketing your business.

Abigail Tiefenthaler is the founder of Aiken, South Carolina-based distributor Sweetspot Strategies, Inc. She is passionate about helping entrepreneurs run the business they really want to run. With 30-plus years of business experience, including 15 years in corporate America working in a variety of marketing capacities, and 19 years running an award-winning promotional products business that put her in the top five percent of the industry, Tiefenthaler understands how critical it is to play full out, and use marketing for the heavy lifting it is designed to do. Her goal is simple: simplify the marketing process and eliminate confusion. Reach her at spmi@mindspring.com.

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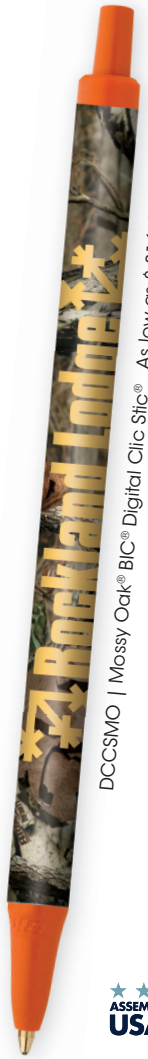

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Know The Red Flags Of A Fraudulent Order Before It's Too Late

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52 SALES
SMART IDEAS TO PUT MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

by Julie Richie

Variety Show

Drinkware choices abound for better branding options.

Health experts often say you should drink eight glasses of water per day to avoid the unpleasant effects of dehydration and reduce hunger pangs. Unless you're drinking straight out of the faucet or garden hose, you're using some sort of vessel to hold all the liquid you consume, even if you never quite make it to eight glasses. But with the endless choice of drinkware available these days, it's easier than ever to provide your clients with distinctive options to enhance any brand's message.

"Drinkware in hand is a fashion accessory with the ad message in plain view—a company's brand around the world for all to see," says Tami Wainscott, national sales manager for The Allen Company (UPIC: ALLEN).

Wainscott says distributors always need to take into account their market and budget when suggesting drinkware to clients. She says to ask, "Who is the client and what is the purpose of their custom imprinted drinkware purchase?" Then you can make educated suggestions.

As for drinkware trends, Paula Dzik, marketing director at Gold Bond Worldwide, Inc. (UPIC: WORLDWID), says to think in threes. "Our product analysis shows that drinkware has a three-year trend. Materials and colors change according to this pattern. Right now, stainless steel is incredibly popular, and with good reason: it's the second-safest material that a drinkware vessel can be made of." Glass is considered the safest choice.

Product safety is of utmost importance in drinkware, emphasizes Wainscott. "We are asked more and more by our promotional products [distributors] questions about drinkware compliance because their savvy clients are asking. We are prepared and have completed, upon request, factual information we can share with [distributors] which they, in turn, can share with their clients. Our partnerships with our vendors over many years in business make it a seamless added value in doing business with us."

For more information on product safety, visit www.ppai.org and click on Inside PPAI and Product Responsibility.

Now Starring: Stainless Steel

Prevent the outside temperature from affecting your drink with this double-wall vacuum-insulated stainless steel **Tekeya Thermoflask**. It has an easy-to-drink leak-proof lid and a wide opening for ice cubes. The insulation prevents condensation for a dripless drinking experience. Take the Thermoflask on your daily commute, to the gym, to the lake or an outdoor event.

The Allen Company / UPIC: ALLEN
www.allenmugs.com

Customize this unique **14-ounce stainless steel mug** with a leather-like band that slides off for easy washing. The band is available in 27 in-house colors and over 100 additional colors upon request.

Choose the thread color of the top and bottom stitching for a two-color effect.

DgroupTrevelyan / UPIC: dgroup / **www.dgrouptrevelyan.com**

Take your favorite beverage, hot or cold, with you when you're on the go with the 12-ounce **Arctix™ 3-in-1 Insulator**. This insulated tumbler comes with a see-through twist-on lid, perfect for drinking coffee or enjoying iced tea. Featuring 18/8 stainless steel dual wall construction, the tumbler has a deep draw liner and is copper-lined and vacuum-insulated with a sweat-free design. The bottom of the tumbler is designed to hold either the rubber ring or clear lid when not in use. Upgrade your order with TruColor multicolor imprint. This product is made with FDA-compliant materials.

Starline USA, Inc. / UPIC: STAR0009
www.starline.com

Awesome Accesories

Looking for a refreshing twist on Neoprene can coolers? The unique **Home and Away reversible can cooler** uses a four-color process sublimated imprint on both the inside and outside. Designed to fit most beer and soda cans, these coolers are fully customizable on both sides and have excellent insulating properties to keep beverages cool and refreshing in the hottest temperatures. All styles easily fit into a pocket or purse to ensure your promotion will travel wherever people appreciate cool beverages.

AZX Sport / UPIC: AZXS9472 / **www.azxpromotions.com**

Colorful **beverage or luncheon napkins** can liven up any event. With 22 napkin colors and 63 ink and foil imprint choices, the creative possibilities are endless. These napkins bring a splash of color to all of life's occasions.

Carlson Craft
UPIC: CARLSONC
www.carlsoncraft.com

Protect your furniture in style with a **leather coaster set**. This four-piece set of four-inch-square coasters comes with a convenient storage box. Constructed using genuine top-grain leather, each coaster also has a soft felt backing. Logo debossing is available.

Dacasso / UPIC: dacasso
www.daccaso.com

A great product for enthusiasts of outdoor activities such as paddleboarding, kayaking or boating, the **Amazing L'il Sucker** is made from a special type of Neoprene that, when attached to the base of a can, cup or bottle, creates a seal and when placed on a flat, non-porous surface creates a vacuum that keeps the drink in place, preventing spills. Now you never have to leave your drink behind.

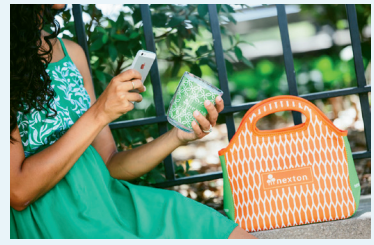
Best Promotions USA, LLC / UPIC: bestusa / **www.bestpromotionsusa.com**

Case Studies

Marry The Message

A large regional transportation carrier bought 5,000 Kong stainless steel tumblers. The company is giving them to potential customers and connecting the tumbler's cold-retention feature to the sales message: 'Stay cool and relaxed because we've got this handled.'

Source: Gold Bond



Bring It To (Virtual) Life

NEXT Products (UPIC: nextpro) collaborated with Charleston, South Carolina-based Karst, Inc. (KARST) on a product for a client company that developed the first gigabit (100 times faster than an ordinary internet connection) community in the state. The client wanted an out-of-the-box technology item to match the progressive nature of their brand with a big "wow" factor for an event. NEXT's 12-ounce Shelby tumbler with a lifetime guarantee gave them a solid piece, and an augmented reality (AR) feature was embedded into the design for the "wow" factor. When the tumbler is scanned with an AR app, the decorated image comes to life and offers a menu of choices tied to the event theme.

Source: NEXT Products

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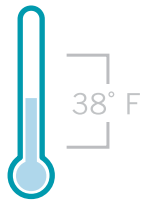
Behind The Beverage

Temperature

42% of Americans consider buying their beverages cold as **highly important**

24% say that buying their beverages cold is at least **somewhat important**



53% say that **environmentally friendly packaging** is of some importance

49% say that **single-serve packaging** is at least somewhat important

Packaging

73% say that packaging options that are **easy to carry** are important to them

*** And all of these factors are even more highly important to younger, Millennial legal-aged drinkers. ***

Source: Nielson

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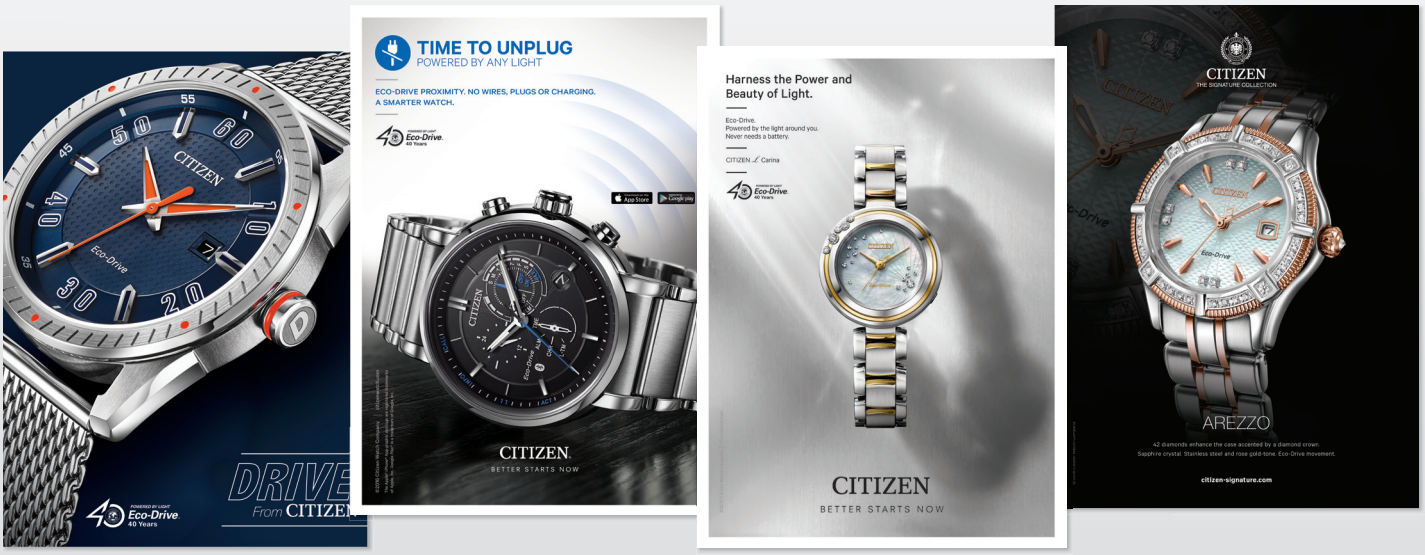

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Sales Showroom 1120 Avenue of the Americas | New York, NY 10036 | www.citizenpremium.com

Mix It Up

An ideal gift for health-conscious clients, this USA-made 25-ounce **PET sports water bottle** features a fruit infuser that's easy to use. Designed to make delicious, natural fruit-flavored beverages, the liquid flows around and through the fruit to flavor the drink; simply add your favorite fruit to the inner basket.

Makana Line / UPIC: MAKANA / **www.makanaline.com**

The 18-ounce **LED Mason jar travel cup** is perfect for events ranging from weddings to fundraisers to birthday parties. With all the style of a traditional Mason jar, plus illuminating LED lights, a double-walled body for durability and a lid and straw combo, this cup is ideal for sipping on the go with minimal spills. This product has been tested and confirmed BPA-free.

Alight Promos, Inc. / UPIC: ALIGHT
www.alightpromos.com

An on-the-go workhorse, **The Stanley Classic One Hand Vac Mug** is a 16-ounce insulated mug that brings the thermal performance of a vacuum-insulated bottle into a portable mug. Drink morning coffee on the go, one handed and with no spills. The vacuum insulation keeps drinks hot or cold for seven hours, or keeps ice frozen for 30 hours. It won't rust since it is crafted of 18/8 stainless steel, and it's naturally BPA-free. It's dishwasher safe and available in three colors.

Beacon Promotions, Inc.
UPIC: BEACONP
www.beaconpromotions.com

With unlimited personalization capability at a low cost, this **HDI Tumbler** features a full-color, full-wrap imprint. It's sweat resistant, BPA-free and reusable with a soft plastic, flexible and color-coordinated straw.

ADG Promotional Products
UPIC: ADGPROMO
www.adgpromo.com

These **12-ounce Aluminum Mint Julep Cups** come in eight standard colors, including red, blue, green, gold, orange, purple, lime and silver. PMS color matching is offered at no extra charge. When engraved, the cup's silver base shows through. They are FDA and California Prop 65 approved.

Payne Manufacturing
UPIC: P209947 / **www.paynemfg.com**

Fun and different, these **Paint Drip mugs and cover/coasters** are sure to stand out from the drinkware crowd. The mug comes in three colors and the lids come in six colors. The lids are sold separately because they fit a variety of the company's ceramic and glass drinkware offerings. These mugs are ideal for art studios, paint companies, pool companies, water utilities or companies and even blood banks. Custom colors can be made for a 3,000-piece order.

Sabina / UPIC: SABINA / **www.sabinaonline.com**

pubWARE® Stemless Wine glasses look like glass, but they're more durable and impact-resistant. The glasses are comfortable in the hand and keep wine chilled longer than regular glass does. They will not crack, cloud or discolor. Great for outdoor or indoor events.

BIC Graphic / UPIC: BIC / **www.bicgraphic.com**

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

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by Jen Alexander

Youthful Pursuits

Empower the next generation with fun and functional promotional ideas.

A place to belong. That's what all young people want, and youth organizations help fill that need for kids and teens around the world. To solidify the bond and help youth share their stories with others, many organizations rely on promotional products to spread the message and boost the brand.

Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) helps connect young adults with community service opportunities, and promotional products play a vital role in the Kansas City, Missouri-based group's mission, says Lacey Helmig, communications and media coordinator.

"Our most important product is t-shirts," says Helmig. "We print thousands of shirts each year, including those that we give out to all youth who volunteer with our summer service-learning programs. At the national level, we offer our 40-plus YVC Affiliates (located in communities throughout the U.S. and Canada) the opportunity to buy t-shirts through us twice a year. Many local programs also print their own materials locally so that they can accommodate their host organization's brand in addition to the YVC brand."

YVC also seizes opportunities to promote its brand and mission through pop-up stores and giveaways at trade shows and conferences. "We hold an annual summit each fall where we gather youth and staff representatives from throughout the U.S. and Canada for a weekend of learning and sharing ideas," says Helmig. "We set up a YVC Store at this event where we offer attendees the chance to purchase t-shirts, hoodies, polos and other products like mugs, water bottles, bumper stickers, temporary tattoos, etc. This is a great way for us to get the YVC logo out there while also bringing in a little income."

Additionally, when YVC exhibits at trade conferences, staff bring along items such as pens, stickers and notepads to draw attendees to the group's booth.

Michael Kogutt, MAS, has worked with Boy Scouts of America and other youth organizations, and says many of the promotional items purchased are for use by the organization itself as well as gifts for donors. "They like anything that can be used for the outdoors," says Kogutt, director of sales-promotional products for Outdoor Cap Co. "Watertight storage cases to wear, water bottles, sportswear—caps, too, are huge with the youth market."

Kogutt says youth organizations that sell branded merchandise to participants and supporters want a good value for their money. He cites National Football League branded knit caps, which cost roughly $8 to produce but sell for as much as $29.95, as an example. "For fundraising efforts that's a good value," he says. "Those are the kind of margins you want to have."

To help groups select the right products, Kogutt says consultants need to understand what they're trying to accomplish. "Find out what a big win would look like with promotional products."

Investing In Our Future

In the U.S. alone, nearly 37,000 nonprofit organizations and charities exist to serve the nation's youth. Many are local chapters of nationwide groups such as 100 Black Men of America, a mentoring organization founded in 1963 in New York that now boasts 110 chapters and more than 10,000 total members.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America is comprised of 1,140 independent organizations in addition to the national entity. BGCA is the largest youth development provider to Native American youth, with 170 clubs on Native lands. In 2015, nearly four million teens and children were served—36 percent are between six and nine years old.

The Y (formerly the YMCA), was founded in London in 1844 and today continues as a nonprofit dedicated to serving families and young children, with a focus on health and fitness, community service and youth development. The Y serves more than 45 million people in 119 nations. In the U.S., a team of nearly 20,000 full-time employees and 600,000 volunteers serves nine million youth and 13 million adults each year.

Giving Students A Boost

Texas Wesleyan University's Upward Bound programs serve economically disadvantaged high school students, many of whom may be the first in their family to pursue a college education.

"These programs provide youth with motivation, preparation and support for college entrance after their high school graduation," says Brian Jolin, principal of Fort Worth, Texas-based distributor Jolin Promo. "One of their most popular and meaningful programs is a six-week summer instructional component that is designed to simulate a college-going experience that includes daily coursework and other activities."

To support the program's efforts, Jolin Promo helped source high-quality, affordable products for students, instructors and administrators. "Of particular importance was finding water bottles that were top-rack dishwasher safe, and lanyards that had safety break-aways," adds Jolin.

Additionally, the program selected backpacks and t-shirts to add to its roster of items for the 2016 program. "The products help students build identity and feel like they are part of something bigger," says Jolin.

Games Young People Play

Among children ages 6 to 12, more than half played a sport in 2015; the percentage of kids who played on a regular basis hovered around 40 percent. Family income plays a significant role in who plays youth sports—only one in five children from homes with incomes less than $25,000 were active in sports.

Source: The Aspen Institute's Project Play

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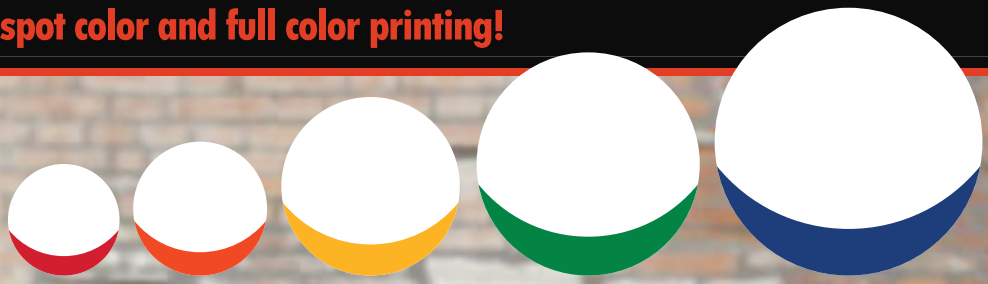

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Rectangular

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*Send us a copy of any industry supplier's football invoice for the same end user and take 15% off a basketball order for that customer. Offer expires February 28th 2017. Cannot be used in conjunction with program pricing.

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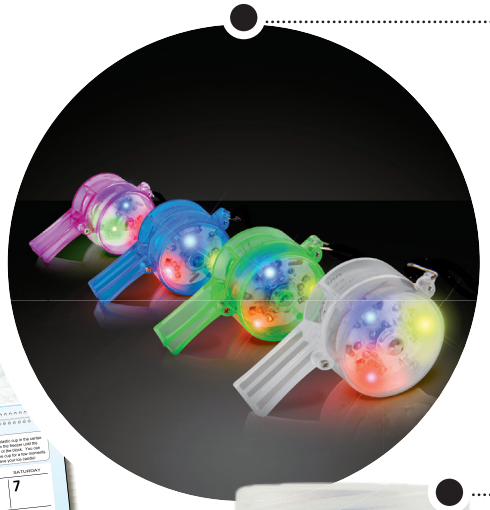
Youth organizations will appreciate products like these

Don't just count the days until school's out—make them fly by with activities in the **Active Kids themed calendar**, which provides practical and inventive ideas for indoor and outdoor activities that keep youngsters active, learning and having fun.

TruArt Advertising Calendars
UPIC: TRUART
www.truart.com



Make a joyful noise with a **flashing party whistle** in assorted colors. The whistle comes with a 32-inch lanyard for portability and wearability, and it can be customized with a logo.

AlightPromos.com
UPIC: ALIGHT
www.alightpromos.com

Highlight your organization's benefits with a **fun mini highlighter set**. This unique set of five colored highlighters comes packaged in a plastic bubble jar. The markers feature chisel tips and pocket clips on the caps.

Makana Line LLC
UPIC: MAKANA
www.makanaline.com

Give accomplishments a trendy vibe with this cleverly crafted **thumbs-up acrylic award** from the Jaffa Collection.

BIC Graphic USA
UPIC: BIC
www.bicgraphic.com

Cap any summer program with a **low-profile, six-panel structured youth cap** in lightweight brushed cotton twill. The cap secures with a two-piece Velcro® hook-and-loop fastener fabric strap. Choose from black, khaki, navy, pink, red, royal blue and white. For ages 13 and older.

Cap America, Inc. / UPIC: CAPAMRCA / **www.capamerica.com**

Show appreciation for supporters of youth programs with a set of **gold-trimmed white alabaster bowls**. Both beautiful and functional, these hand-washable bowls are food safe and can serve as tea-light holders as well as treat bowls.

Badash Crystal / UPIC: Badash / **www.badashcrystal.com**

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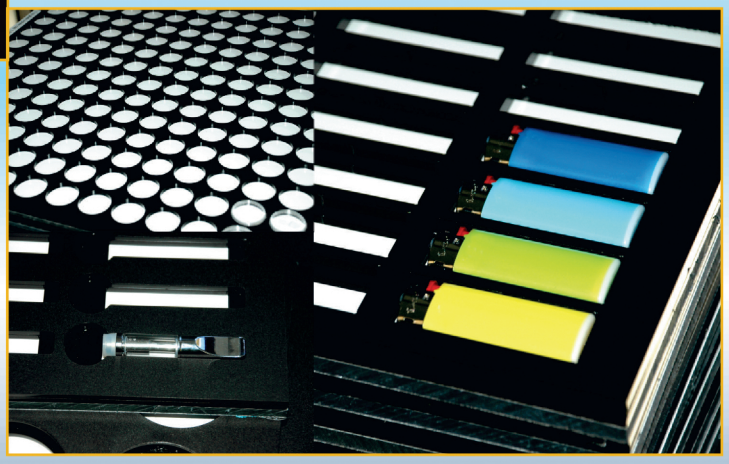
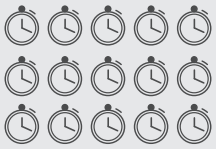


R. B. Fabrication, Inc. 2296-B Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92865 Phone: (714) 998-2700 Fax: (714) 998-2701

Helping Hands

Despite the rumors, kids and teens are not entirely self-absorbed. An estimated 15.5 million youth (that's 55 percent of all youth ages 12 to 18) engage in volunteer activities, while just 29 percent of U.S. adults volunteer.

Here's a breakdown of their contributions:



1.3 billion hours
of community service per year

29 hours
per person, per year

39%
VOLUNTEER at least
12 weeks
per year

64%
VOLUNTEER THROUGH FAITH-BASED (34%), school-based (18%) and youth leadership (12%) organizations.

Source: Corporation for National and Community Service

Youth organizations will appreciate products like these

Get the message out with a **youth messenger bag** in royal blue 300 denier nylon with an adjustable shoulder strap. The Velcro® hook-and-loop fastener flap-over reveals a zippered main compartment and an internal organizer. Customize the bag with an imprint on the front pocket in spot-color screen print, full-color transfer or embroidery.

Ad Products Bazaar Inc.
UPIC: BAZAAR
www.bazaarline.com

Keep kids warm and cozy in a youth **Cosmic fleece contrast pullover hoodie**. Choose from eight trendy color combinations and coordinate youth sizes with adult companion styles. Youth sizes run from small to large.

J. America / UPIC: Blanks / **www.jamericablanks.com**

Case Studies From The Industry

Real-World Solutions

A Leg Up On Fundraising

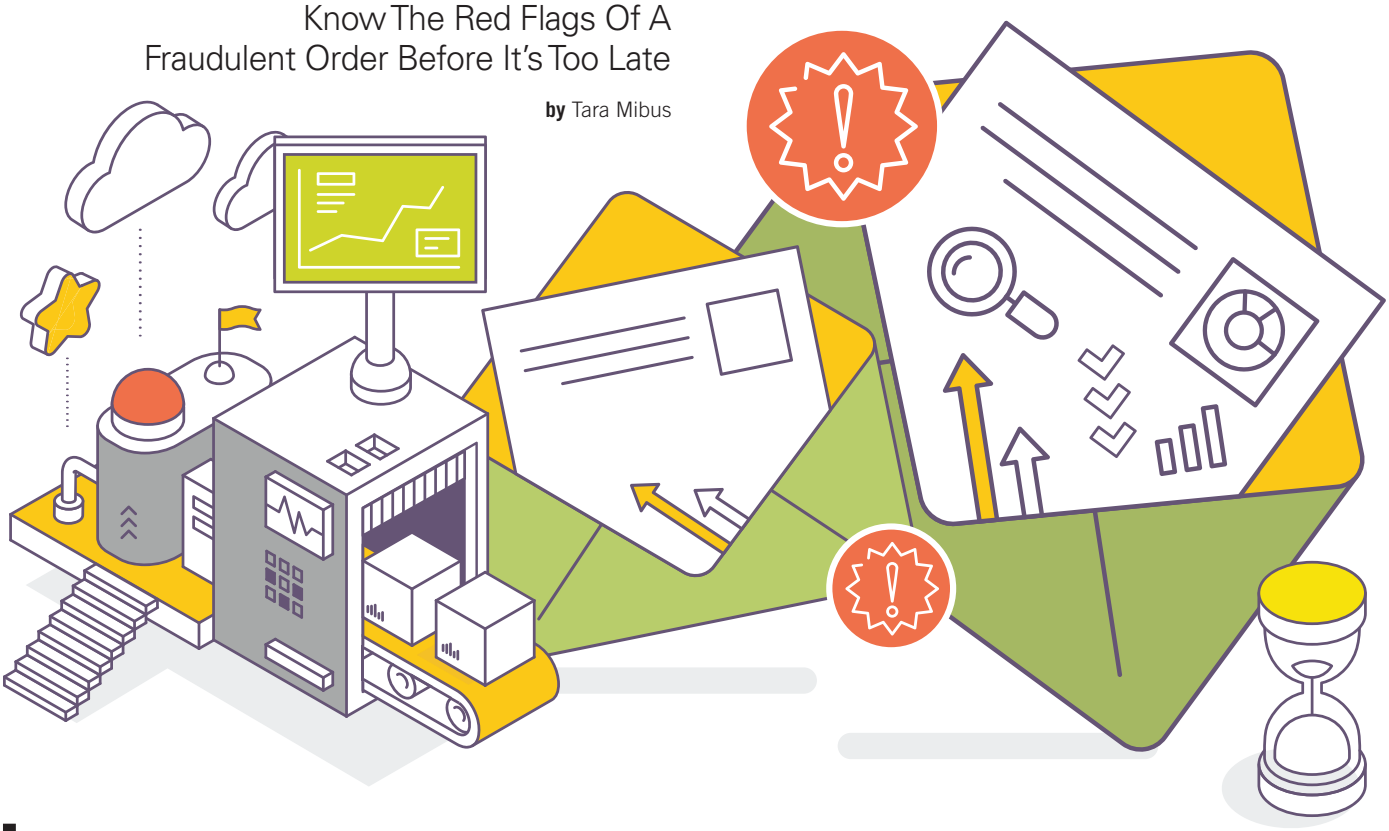
A youth soccer association was looking for a fundraising item to be sold at its annual soccer tournament, and chose custom unisex socks with a full-color imprint on two sides. The socks were a fun souvenir for tournament players and fans, as well as a significant source of revenue for the association. The group plans to make the socks an annual item at its tournament.

Source: Beacon Promotions

You've Been Scammed!

Know The Red Flags Of A Fraudulent Order Before It's Too Late

by Tara Mibus



Like death and taxes, you can count on scammers. They are present in every industry. Where there is opportunity, there will be always be opportunists, ready to take advantage of lax security and the increasing anonymity provided by digital commerce.

There are a few common scams in the promotional products industry. One of the most frequent scams involves fraudulent orders that are placed with a stolen credit card. The payment will appear to be valid and the distributor fulfills the order, but when the actual credit card holder notices the charge and initiates a charge-back, the distributor loses the payment.

Another type of scam involves identify theft of the distributor or supplier. In some states, scammers may easily access and change company information, such as a mailing address, and use it for their own ends. In one case, a distributor ended up having to fight over $4,000 in phone line charges due to the scam.

How To Identify Scams

While it may be difficult to identify scammers after the deed, let alone prosecute them, there are some consistent giveaways that can tip you off to a potential scam before you become a victim.

Use these tips from Brian Pritchard, director of IT at SAGE, as best practices for every order. If you see multiple characteristics in an order, it becomes even more important to investigate further.

1. **Look for poor spelling or grammar.** "Usually something will just look strange about the email," says Pritchard. "Poor English or grammar is a dead giveaway."
2. **Notice whether they ask for personal details in an email.** "Your bank will never ask for security information or account information in an email."
3. **Don't open attachments or click links if it's from someone you don't know or if you are not expecting it.** Pritchard cautions, "Even if the email looks like it might be legitimate, contact the business or institution directly from their site. Scammers usually pose as large companies, banks, airlines, shipping companies and large retailers. They may also pose as a customer saying a payment or invoice is attached. Contact the client separately to verify what they are sending."
4. **Be wary of orders from new customers submitted through your website.** "Popular scams often start with asking for a quote on a large quantity of items. It could be anything, but USB drives and blank shirts are particularly popular."

5 **Do not reply to spam.** Educate your staff on this practice. "In general, the weakest link in security is the human operator, so vigilance is key."

6 **Practice good security measures.** He says, "Use a strong password and do not reuse your email password on other services. Enable encryption in your email settings (any email SAGE hosts requires this). Use antivirus and keep it updated, and set Windows to automatically update or install all security updates. Use a reputable company to host your email and e-commerce site like SAGE, which is PCI compliant."

Here are some of the red flags to look for:

- When shipping offshore, be wary of a shipping address that is a private residence. Research the address on Google Maps, which often provides snapshots of what a building looks like. Sometimes this step can help filter out fraudulent orders.
- Check the company's website to ensure that the address and phone match those on the order.
- Scammers almost always pay by credit card. Before you establish open credit for an unfamiliar company, look it up in Dun & Bradstreet.
- Be sure the company is legitimate by checking it out on Google and then calling to check.
- Be wary if you get an order from an unknown customer for promotional products that are normally decorated. Products with a high retail value such as undecorated t-shirts, USBs and other electronics are the products most often ordered in scams.
- Generic domain email addresses such as @hotmail.com are often tip-offs to a scam. Check it out.
- Use caution if the requester offers to pay immediately by credit card or requests immediate shipment. This is often a red flag of a scam.
- If you don't know the person or company placing the order, find someone who does.

How To Avoid Promotional Products Scams

Look For Red Flags in Emails

- Look for poor spelling or grammar.
- Never provide personal details, security or account information in an email. Contact the business or institution directly to verify what they are sending.
- Don't open attachments or click links if it's from someone you don't know or if you are not expecting it.

Practice Strong Digital Security

- Use a strong password. Do not reuse passwords.
- Enable encryption in your email settings.
- Use antivirus and keep it updated.
- Set Windows to automatically update or install all security updates.
- Use a reputable company to host your email and e-commerce site.
- Do not reply to spam.

Check Shipping Details

- When shipping offshore, be wary of a residential shipping address.
- Research the address on Google Maps. Look at snapshots of the building.
- Check that the "ship to" and "bill to" addresses are the same.
- Use caution if requester offers to pay immediately by credit card or requests immediate shipment.
- Ask for a signature upon delivery of products.

Verify Credit Cards

- When you establish open credit for an unfamiliar company, look it up in Dun & Bradstreet.
- If the name on the card is different from the person placing the order, ask to speak to the person on the card to verbally confirm the order.
- Ask for the front and back copy of the client's driver's license and credit card.
- Use a credit card authorization form requiring a signature.
- Require Address Verification System (AVS) and Card Verification Value (CVV) matches.

Research Company Identity

- Make sure the address and phone number on the order match the information on the company's website.
- Google the name of the company and call it to make sure it's genuine.
- If the email address is a "generic" domain (hotmail.com, google.com; msn.com), check out the order thoroughly.
- Know the person or company to whom you are selling. If you do not know them, find someone who does.
- Be wary of orders from new customers submitted through your website, especially for products that are normally decorated. Products with a high retail value, such as undecorated t-shirts, USBs, and other electronics, are the products most often ordered in scams.

Sources: SAGE IT Director Brian Pritchard; PPAI (pubs.ppai.org/2015/04/are-you-the-next-victim); Merchant Focus

GIVE THEM A TASTE OF YOUR NAME

UPIC: SOLIDDIM
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While it may be difficult to identify scammers after the deed, let alone prosecute them, there are some consistent giveaways that can tip you off to a potential scam before you become a victim.

Finally, SAGE payment processing partner Merchant Focus shares some helpful recommendations to better identify suspicious cards and prevent fraudulent orders.

1. Check that the "ship to" and "bill to" addresses are the same.
2. If the name on a card is different from the person placing the order, ask to speak to the person on the card to verbally confirm the order.
3. Ask for a signature upon delivery of products.
4. Ask for a front and back copy of the client's driver's license and credit card.
5. Use a credit card authorization form requiring a signature.
6. Require Address Verification System (AVS) and Card Verification Value (CVV) matches.

What To Do If You're A Victim

If you do fall victim to a scammer, there are several steps you should take.

After notifying your bank, credit card company, credit reporting agencies and any other necessary service providers, report the scam to the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov and report identity theft at www.consumer.ftc.gov/identity-theft.

Next, alert PPAI at PPB@ppai.org. Sharing your experience will help reduce scams for all members.

You can also stay up-to-date on the latest scams at www.usa.gov/scams-and-frauds and www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts.

Finally, take steps to educate yourself and your staff. Copy and post the tips sheet on page 49 to keep the red flags top of mind for everyone.

Scammers are a threat that will never go away, but with vigilance and knowledge of some simple checks, you can pull a fast one of your own—and leave the scammers out to dry. PPB

Tara Mibus is a marketing communications coordinator for SAGE, where she blogs and writes other fun copy (because all copy is fun copy). She believes that owl puns are good puns and has no egrets.

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Sales Are Great But Profitability Is King

Smart Ideas To Put More Money In Your Pocket

by Cliff Quicksell, Jr., MAS+

Some time ago I attended a National Speakers Association convention and heard a speaker share insights on the importance of profitability. The speaker was a CPA and, while his name and the details of his presentation escape me, a comment he made during his presentation stuck in my head. Now, some 20 years later, it still resonates with me. *"Sales feed egos, profits feed families."* This has become my mantra as I speak, train and consult with small businesses internationally.

As you look at various education programs offered in the industry, you'll see topics such as:

- "How to Become a Million-Dollar Salesperson."
- "How I Sold a Million Dollars in My First Three Years."
- "How to Be a Million-Dollar Producer."

Now I will agree that selling $1 million in one year is impressive, but it's only impressive if the profitability is equally impressive. I remember hearing someone at a show bragging to a friend about his sales from the previous year. It went something like this: "Yeah, last year was great, we did $1.2 million in sales." His buddy responded, "... Wow! What were your profits?" Ignoring the question, the first man continued, "Can you believe we crested $1 million in sales?"

It makes me laugh and really drives the CPA's quote home when I hear this type of response. People are so driven by the sales side that they forget about the profit. Let me say again: I am all for people selling a million dollars and more *but it must be profitable.*

Industry Average

If you dig a bit you can find some interesting industry statistics. For example, the average gross profit in our industry is between 32 and 34 percent. Why is this? I contend it's because that range is the average margin published in supplier catalogs, and because we price and sell the products based on the catalog's suggested price. Nowhere has it ever been stated that you must sell at those margins; they are merely guidelines.

What Are You Worth An Hour?

If I were to ask, "What is your time worth per hour?" what would you say? I have heard ranges from $10 an hour (seriously) to $300 an hour. If you are unable to answer that question, let me set the record straight. What if I told you that your time is worth a minimum of $100 per hour? How would that change your next quote? If you had to earn $100 per hour what would you do differently? What steps would you take to ensure that you meet that quota? Unfortunately, most promotional consultants don't see the amazing value they bring to the table and therefore give away their most precious commodities—their time, ideas and creativity. You need to get paid for those things.

Unfortunately, most promotional consultants don't see the amazing value they bring to the table and therefore give away their most precious commodities—their time, ideas and creativity. You need to get paid for those things.

Selling At Higher Margins

Some time back, in a similar article on increasing profits by upselling, I shared the four things I always do when selling high-end jackets:

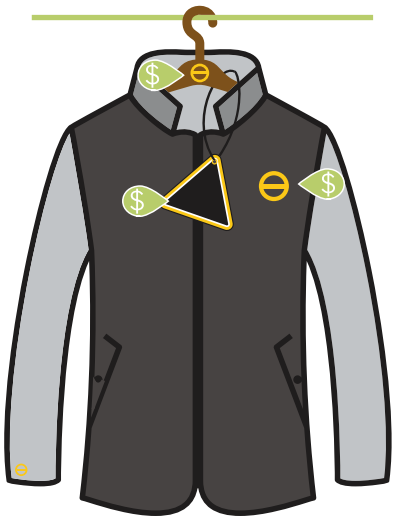
- Have the client's logo engraved on a wooden hanger and place the jacket on the hanger for the presentation.
- Attach a custom hang-tag on the jacket.
- Consider placing the client's logo on the jacket.
- Place the jacket in a logoed hang bag.

Each of these touches creates an opportunity to upsell. I cannot tell you the number of times clients have commented on the logoed hangers and garment hangtags, but each of these is a touchpoint for me to sell the value of why it's important, such as: it gives the item a higher perceived value, makes it look more like a gift and it gives it a retail appearance and appeal.

The client usually loves these upselling ideas and orders the jackets along with logoed hangers. My cost for the logoed hangers is $2 but I sell them for $15. When I mentioned this in a previous article, a gentleman called me and told me I should be ashamed of myself for ripping off my customers. Really? I have never used a handgun during a sales presentation. I show, tell a story, sell the value and clients agree that the value is there; then they can freely purchase—or not.

I always sell on value, and I always upsell. For those of you who think selling way above an "A" discount code is impossible, think again. I have coached and mentored a number of folks who routinely sell this way.

I remember a conversation with the late Marvin Spike from ASI (he was amazing by the way) about this very subject and he said, "Cliff, always remember,



Increase Profits By Upselling

- Have the client's logo engraved on a wooden hanger and place the jacket on the hanger for the presentation.
- Attach a custom hang-tag on the jacket.
- Consider placing the client's logo on the jacket.
- Place the jacket in a logoed hang bag.

profit is not a four-letter word." So true. It is imperative that we, as business people, show a profit.

Marketing At Lower Costs

Another way to increase your profitability is to look for ways to lower your costs—especially on self-promotions. For example, when you speak with your suppliers find out what products they have on close-out. Look at what they are offering, determine the client audience you want to target with the product, and develop a theme, copy and

Learn More Tips To Small-Business Profitability

Cliff Quicksell, MAS+, will present "Ten Small Secrets To Small-Business Success And Profitability" during The PPAI Expo in Las Vegas. In this one-hour session, you'll discover how to get out from under the A-B-C pricing stigma, learn to reevaluate your brand's current look, feel and positioning, and understand how to move your business upward with increased sales and profits. Add the free session to your show schedule on Thursday, January 12 from 9-10 am at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

distribution method. Reach out to our industry's great packaging suppliers and share your vision with them. They can be amazing resources to help you package your campaign.

I developed a program some time back where I purchased some pizza cutters at a substantial discount because the supplier was discontinuing the item. I packaged a pizza cutter in a pizza box (also discounted by the vendor because it was a self-promotion) and targeted 12 potential buyers whom I wanted to reach. If I had not told the supplier it was a self-promotion and had not used a closeout item, the piece would have cost me about $25; instead my cost was about $7. The results of the campaign generated $27,000 in initial business at a 54-percent gross profit. The long-term value of that inexpensive campaign was approximately $175,000 at more than 50-percent gross profit.

Think about how you can parlay this example into profit when creating marketing campaigns for your clients; it is the same principle as a self-promotion. For example, I developed a campaign for a foot doctor who was trying to increase referrals. He had a $2,000 budget. We used a plush bear on closeout decorated with a hangtag and materials bought at a hobby shop. My cost, using closeout merchandise and the efforts of some great vendors, cost me $350. I charged $1,945 and realized a profit margin of 64.8 percent. The best thing was the result: the client showed a 45-percent increase in referrals the next quarter as a direct result of the campaign.

Your Ultimate Exposure

All of this said, keep in mind that everyone is going to have a different idea of what being "profitable" is to them. I ask you to think before you provide a quote to a client. Be sure you have included all the value-add items and remember your exposure. Your exposure is your cost of goods; you are responsible for that. For example, if you sell a $1,000 order and your profit is 25 percent, your exposure is $750. On the contrary, if you sell it at 50-percent profit, your exposure is only $500.

Also consider what would happen to your profits if you sold exactly the same dollar amount as you did last year but with different margins. Look at the potential incremental effect on your bottom line. For every $100,000 in sales:

- A five-percent increase in margin puts an additional $5,000 in your pocket
- A 10-percent increase in margin gives you $10,000 more in profit
- A 15-percent increase nets you $15,000

By adding value and selling solutions, along with selling products, you can see amazing jumps in your profits. What could you do with an additional $500, $1,000 or even $2,000 in your pocket?

Thumping your chest and bragging about what you sold definitely feeds the ego, but selling profitably at every opportunity, by selling your creativity, value and innovation … that feeds families. PPB

Potential Incremental Effect On Your Bottom Line

For every $100,000 in sales:

5%
increase in margin
$5,000
in your pocket

10%
increase in margin
$10,000
in your pocket

15%
increase in margin
$15,000
in your pocket

Cliff Quicksell, Jr., MAS+, serves both as a consultant and acting director of marketing for distributor iPROMOTEu. He has been in the promotional industry for more than 30 years in various capacities. Additionally, Quicksell is president of his own international speaking and consulting company, speaking, coaching and consulting on ways and methods that companies can grow, expand and prosper. He has helped and spoken to audiences in more than eight countries and has published two books and more than 800 articles on sales, marketing and creativity. He can be reached at 301-717-0615, via email at cliff@quicksellspeaks.com or on his LinkedIn profile.

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Better

Together

by Tina Berres Filipski

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A POWERFUL PARTNER

"Partner" may be the most potent word in the English language. One person may be able to accomplish quite a bit, but he or she is still just one person. Add a second person—a partner who shares the same goals—and the strength of that force doubles. Whether you call this person a partner, collaborator, comrade or colleague, he or she takes on an active role, especially in business, and shares in the risk of a venture and also in the outcome and success. Together, strong partners can make for a heady combination.

This month, *PPB* showcases six individuals who have so strongly succeeded with that critical partner connection that they were nominated and selected as some of the best examples of how suppliers, distributors, business services companies and consultants can work together as powerful partners.

What do these six do (or not do) that makes their partnerships so valuable? Turn the page to hear it directly from this year's standouts and their nominators.

Randy CONLEY

Vice President
New Business Development
Facilisgroup
Breckenridge, Colorado

Nominators and distributor partners: *Ron Baellow, president, Bright Ideas LLC; Peter Bunker, business development, Shads Advertising Co.; Jules Fabbri, president, South Paw Canada; Tim O'Neill, president/CEO, Image Masters; Rick Bowman, president, ProCorp Images, Inc.; Pat Hughes, president, Custom Specialties; Geoffrey Patack, partner, Broadway Marketing Ltd.; Tom Wagner, owner, Quality Concepts, Inc.; Scott Moscow, owner, Booke Promotions; James Greaves, CEO, Brand Makers*

Working in true partnership with his distributor clients is a goal Randy Conley takes seriously—and the qualities and practices he brings to the role have made a lasting impression on his clients. Facilisgroup is an industry business services company focused on providing distributor clients with industry expertise, practical leading-edge technology and efficient processes through an integrated end-to-end model that includes software, business automation, buying leverage and more. Conley has been with the company for eight years and in that time has sharply honed his skills and forged lasting relationships with a number of clients.

"Partnering with Randy, along with the whole Facilis team, has been a game changer for our company," says James Greaves, CEO of Brand Makers, who joined Facilis in 2012. "We have had one good experience after another. He is genuinely interested in our success and is extremely responsive to even our most difficult challenges. He is there in good times and bad times."

Quality Concepts, Inc. Owner Tom Wagner says he's been working with Conley for the past five years and in that time Conley has been instrumental in providing business analysis and suggestions on how to improve the bottom line. "He has been able to digest my company's economic data and provide concrete suggestions on streamlining my business practices to increase profitability." He adds that Conley has not only been someone he can turn to for industry guidance but he's become a friend as well.

Geoffrey Patack, partner with Broadway Marketing Ltd., says Conley provides great advice from experience, not opinions, and he's always available and responsive. Pat Hughes, president of Custom Specialties, also likes Conley's diligent follow-up and follow-throughs—and something else. "Randy will never cross lines of confidentiality of supplier or distributor information," says Hughes. "I had an issue with a competitor a few years ago and Randy skillfully provided his opinion on the matter without crossing any ethical lines."

Tim O'Neill, president/CEO of Image Masters, is another who salutes Randy's effective style. "Randy truly models professional sales behavior," he says, adding that when Conley was recruiting O'Neill's company to join Facilis he was respectful of his prospect's time. South Paw Canada President Jules Fabbri calls Conley a constant mentor. "He never turns away from assisting or providing advice when called upon. He didn't just sell us on the system and walk away. He is with us every step of the way to ensure we meet my expectations."

RANDY CONLEY ON PARTNERSHIPS

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
Trust (you can't be a partner without this), respect (their time, knowledge and success); listen (this is how you learn); value (you have to add it in every conversation).

What do you do that sets you apart from others in the way you work with clients?
I tell them what I think and not what they want to hear. For distributor owners, it can be lonely at the top. They often need a sounding board when dealing with management challenges and can't go to staff, and don't always want to take the work issues home with them. So they can call me and have a conversation with someone who has been in their shoes and understands the issues.

But they don't want to be pandered to—they want to know what I think even if it goes against what they were thinking. This type of relationship is what true business partnership is all about. I get them thinking and then get out of the way. My job is to add value by making them think about their options. They know their business the best and are very successful but often they want to be challenged to either confirm their thoughts or to consider another direction. So I tell them what I think, review what others have done in the past and often refer them to other Facilisgroup distributors to get different opinions and discuss the topic further.

At the end of the day, it's their business and they get to make the decisions. Hopefully I have helped them make better decisions more often by getting them to think about their options.

Is there something your clients do that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
They understand the areas where I can help them and add value (strategy, management, technology) so our conversations tend to focus on the right topics. They know I travel for a living so they often send me outlines of the discussion topics via email and then we schedule a call to discuss. This gives me time to research the topic a bit and be prepared for the call. They share ideas and don't mind me sharing them with others. I learn a lot from them, and the Facilisgroup community is all about the sharing of information to help everyone be more successful.

What advice do you have for others who want to achieve a true partnership with their clients?
Trust and respect have to be earned, and that takes time. So be patient, ask lots of questions, listen and then add value where appropriate. It's a lot easier if they feel like you understand them and their challenges, and it really helps to have been in their shoes. You need to be able to relate to them on their level if you want a true partnership to blossom.

Aaron KUCHERAWY

Manager of Customer Success
commonsku
Toronto, Ontario

Nominator and distributor partner: *Mitch Silver, vice president marketing, Printable Promotions*

When Aaron Kucherawy joined industry business services company commonsku, he brought to the job several years of serving internal customers at consumer brand companies including Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Coca Cola Bottling Company United. Those skills, combined with his tech expertise and youthful exuberance and curiosity, have proven to be the magic mix for Kucherawy.

"Whenever we have a question about the commonsku platform, Aaron not only answers the question, but asks us *why* we want to know, and takes the time to understand specifically what we are trying to accomplish," says Mitch Silver, vice president of marketing for Printable Promotions. "Aaron is super responsive and specific with his answers to questions. If he doesn't know the answer, he gets back to me quickly." Silver also likes some other traits Kucherawy brings to the table as a partner. "Aaron's creative problem-solving abilities were instrumental in adapting our business processes to the commonsku platform, and his upbeat, friendly personality and sense of humor helped us stay relaxed and positive during a tough software transition."

AARON KUCHERAWY ON PARTNERSHIPS

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
When I think of a good business partner there are three qualities: honesty, great communication and being supportive. A partner is someone who wants to be successful *with* you. In any relationship, being upfront with each other always helps, talking openly and not shying away from conversation all lead to being successful. Helping each other be successful and celebrating when they are successful also helps.

What do you do that sets you apart from others in the way you work with clients?
Not to say others don't do it, but I really am myself when I work with clients. Talking to clients on the phone or in person, what they see or hear is what I am like inside and outside the office.

Is there something your client does that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
Absolutely! Working with Mitch has allowed me to set expectations and help guide his team as they moved over to our system. He is never afraid to ask a question or ask for my opinion, and is always receptive of my feedback. Plus, we trade the occasional hilarious email.

What advice do you have for others who want to achieve a true partnership with their clients?
Be yourself. Talk to people you partner with, get to know them and let them get to know you. Partnerships are about working together, and the results get better the more you care about the other person's success.

Marsha LONDE

CEO / Tango Partners / Atlanta, Georgia

***Nominated by** Jay Nathanson, CEO, Target Marketing*

Before starting Tango Partners, an industry consultancy firm, in 2005, Marsha Londe spent 25 years in distributor sales and management. Those decades as a distributor gave her a unique perspective and clear appreciation for the challenges distributors face—and proved invaluable when she moved to the other side of the desk as a consultant. Today, she helps distributors respond to requests for proposals, and assists in solving their challenges and improving their performance in sales, marketing, training and business development.

Among her clients is Jay Nathanson, CEO of Target Marketing, who calls Londe "… one of the smartest and most enthusiastic professionals in our industry." He says his company has retained her for many years to provide strategic assistance on complex RFPs ("Many of which we have won."), creative copy for ad campaigns ("For which we have also won awards.") and overall marketing strategy and campaign development.

"This year, Marsha and I worked closely together to develop a strategy to attract new customers in the event planning niche. Our brainstorming sessions were exciting, and always ended with great ideas, and her follow-up included notes and action items. Her communication is always timely and to the point."

Most important for Nathanson is the trust factor. "I trust Marsha with the most sensitive strategies that we develop and deploy," he adds. "I wish all my partners were this powerful."

MARSHA LONDE ON PARTNERING

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
The most important quality is honesty. Everything else is secondary. Integrity, candor and openness make it easier to identify and address both issues and opportunities. The business person who is candid about a company's challenges, as well as potential, is more receptive to a frank exchange of ideas.

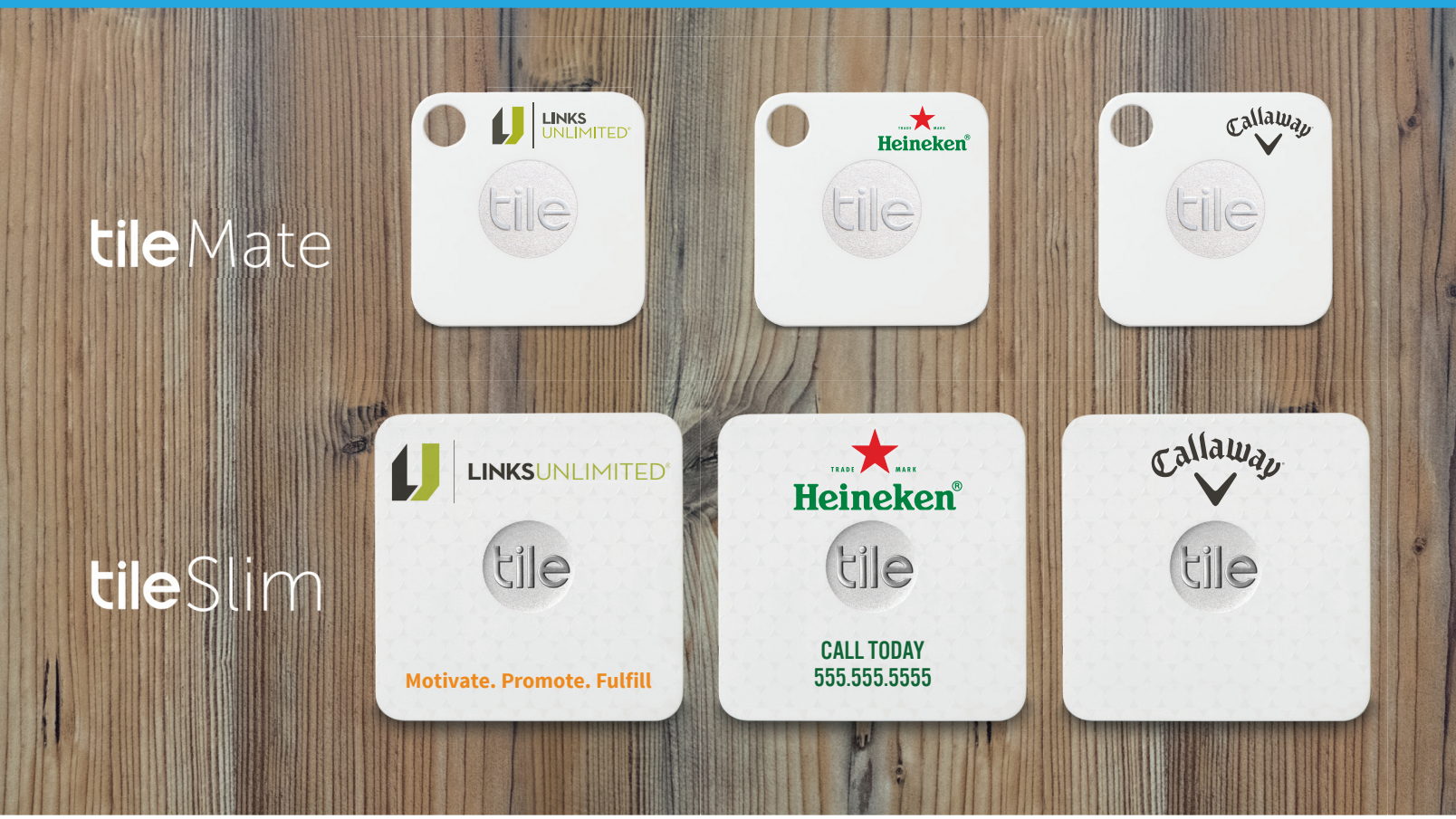
What do you do that sets you apart from others in the way you work with clients?
This question makes me smile. My approach was novel when I started in sales over 35 years ago, but now it's routine advice. I'm an engaged listener. First, I ask questions. Then I listen as the client responds, taking notes to recall the details and so that I don't interrupt the thought process. Of course more questions follow, and through this progression, we identify problems, solutions, goals and opportunities.

Is there something Jay does that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
Partnering with Jay is fun! He is an insightful thinker, open to recommendations and clear when he's ready to conclude a topic. He's committed to ongoing improvements and training, and fiercely dedicated to delivering exceptional service. Because Jay is honest with himself about any circumstance, he can process clearly to address complex situations. Though he can reach his best conclusions on his own, he values our exchanges as an opportunity for feedback, pushback, perspective and a periodic dose of insight. I thoroughly enjoy our time together.

What advice do you have for others who want to achieve a true partnership with their clients?
Love what you do! Care about your clients. Genuinely want to share the information garnered over years in the industry or in whatever area you're expert. Be understanding of client pressures, whether internal business concerns or that request for proposal their largest client just issued. Be excited with them when the news is good. Be part of their team, not just when working on a specific project but ongoing when you note something that's of interest or a benefit to them.

tile

Never Lose Anything Again!



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Jonathan BEYER

Strategic Account Manager
alphabroder
Trevose, Pennsylvania

Nominator and distributor partner: *Linda Jones, MAS, partnership assurance manager, Geiger*

A 10-year veteran of supplier alphabroder, Jonathan Beyer has spent the past three years in the customer-centric role of strategic account manager. His ability to cultivate relationships and grow the business of alphabroder's customers have made him a well-respected leader in the industry.

Linda Jones, MAS, partnership assurance manager at distributor Geiger, has relied on Beyer's expertise for a number of years and singled him out for recognition because of three key qualities he brings to the relationship. "He's very quick with responses, helps with projects from start to finish and always sends other suggestions when an item is out of stock," says Jones. "He also provides ideas, keeps an eye on the order and follows up after the order has shipped." She points to a recent example. "When we asked Jon for ideas and pricing on a 10,000-piece order, he provided lots of details and at least five different item suggestions, plus pricing, production time, full descriptions of the items, free samples and virtuals. He thought of everything," she says. "We got the order and everything ran smoothly. Jon is great! Love working with him!"

JONATHAN BEYER ON PARTNERSHIPS

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
Trust. Honesty. Humor. My partners know that they can trust me to access every resource alphabroder has available to achieve their goals. I am always honest about how I can help, what we can do and how we can do it. And, just as importantly, I try to connect in a humorous way. A bit of humor can go a long way.

One of the keys to success is great communication. Good business partners work together to find out-of-the-box strategies. By asking the right questions and having all of the necessary information, you are able to present solutions that work.

What do you do that sets you apart from others in the way you work with clients?
As a supplier, I listen to my clients and work with them to fill their needs. Having access to alphabroder's complete assortment of promotional apparel products and our full array of value-added tools makes us stand out in a crowd and is unlike anything in the industry. Our goal is to make sure we can satisfy the customer's needs in a timely manner to facilitate growth.

I always make a keen effort to listen. As a supplier, it's important to hear what my clients have to say. I'm always striving to build lasting relationships and find creative solutions that work. Basically, my number one goal is to help my partners grow their businesses. It's a win-win.

Is there something your client does that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
Linda is great at supplying all of the information needed to complete a project. She is always available to answer questions and discuss all options that might be available. We are able to work together and come up with the solutions needed. We are both there for each other and use each other as a resource.

What advice do you have for others who want to achieve a true partnership with their clients?
Contact, communication and follow-up. Make sure you reach out to your partners, find out their needs and follow up in a timely manner. Become their "rock"—that reliable resource they can count on to help them succeed.

Your Message....Written On Stone

Alpi introduces a new line of gifts for office or home use that adds a touch of class to your promotional message. The colors of the agates look great with any décor and the glassy finish of the polished stone makes any imprint appear shiny and more vibrant. These stones have a high perceived value, provide an unforgettable base for your message and will last forever.

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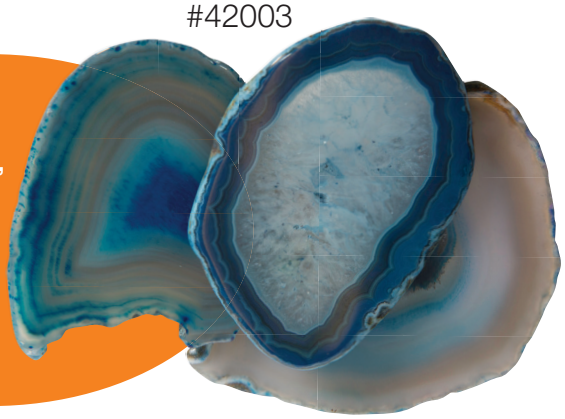

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Ira NEAMAN

President / Vantage Apparel
Avenel, New Jersey

Nominated by: *Steve Lipic, president, Lipic's Engagement*

Few industry professionals have the historic vantage point of Ira Neaman, who opened his apparel company in New York City in 1977 and has witnessed the fashion and apparel trends that have influenced wearables and decorating techniques over nearly four decades. Although he didn't set out to sell within the promotional products industry distribution channel, once he discovered it, the industry was a perfect fit for his business.

As the company grew so did Neaman's network of industry professionals who sought out his expertise, advice, services, products and friendship. Among them was Steve Lipic, president of Lipic's Engagement, a privately-held St. Louis, Missouri-based distributor founded in 1863. "Ira and Vantage have been our partner on all of our major programs," explains Lipic, who has led his family-owned marketing and promotions company for the past 21 years. "We work extremely closely with all areas of our organizations to bring exceptional value to our clients."

Like most partnerships, this one comes down to trust. Because Lipic trusts Neaman and his team at Vantage, it handles the distributor's service award program as well as a uniform program that has gone through many custom iterations and changes over the past 20 years. "Ira has demonstrated that he will stand with me to resolve any issue that arises," says Lipic. "We work together to make sure all challenges are a win for all involved. This program would not be possible without his partnership."

Lipic values Neaman as not only a partner in business but as a personal mentor as well. "Without his advice, guidance and friendship, I would not have enjoyed the success that has come our way," he says. "I don't know another person in this industry who has a greater love for the industry than Ira. He has personally helped me and many others learn more than I ever would have."

IRA NEAMAN ON PARTNERING

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
Trust.

What do you do that sets you apart from others in the way you work with clients?
I enjoy collaborating with customers and in-house teams to find new and exciting ways to use apparel for branding. With an intimate knowledge of both the apparel manufacturing/design process as well as extensive hands-on experience with decoration, I look to make the sales process easier for our customers.

Is there something Steve does that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
Steve is an excellent communicator and always makes happen what he says.

What advice do you have for others who want to achieve a true partnership with their clients?
Understand the value of collaborating with your partners right from the beginning of a project or opportunity. Listen closely and be responsive.

The Eight Elements Of Strong Partnerships

1 Trust.
Good partners have confidence that the other looks out for their best interests—even when the other is not watching. One must truly care about the other's success.

2 Dedication.
When both partners are equally committed to an outcome and willing to give whatever it takes, there's much less chance of failure.

3 Collaboration.
The old saying that two heads are better than one plays out here as well, especially when partners bring expertise from different sides of the industry.

4 Honesty.
A partner who is not authentic, scrupulous and of highest moral character can bring down the best laid plans.

5 Shared goals.
Working in tandem with someone else who is equally dedicated can make the quickest work in solving a problem or reaching a goal.

6 Integrity.
Powerful partnerships rely on honor, truthfulness and reliability in all dealings.

7 Candor.
When there is a problem in a partnership, it's best to be forthright and open about it so the situation can be resolved. Learn how to clear the air without negatively affecting your business relationship.

8 Communication.
The key here is timeliness, follow-through and follow-up. Any distributor who is left wondering where their order is, or a supplier who is still waiting for artwork approval days later, knows the importance of prompt and thorough communication.

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Cory REESE

Senior Program Director
Amplifii Marketing Solutions
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Nominated by: *Ryan Lester, CAS, Inside Sales, Showdown Displays*

Cory Reese spent three years honing his business development acumen at Palmetto Sports Fundraising before joining distributor Amplifii in 2013. The company was founded 30 years ago as a pre-sort mail company, but over the years found its niche in providing solution-based project management—including promotional products, print, mail services and online company stores. Today it's a full-service marketing solutions provider. Amplifii's website states that the company's most consistent trait is its " …dedication to love and serve our people and our customers."

It's an aspiration that has molded the company's culture and is reflected daily by Reese in his work with his clients. Also among those on the receiving end of that dedicated service is Ryan Lester, who works in inside sales for supplier Showdown Displays. While it may seem non-traditional for Reese to be providing service to Lester, the two know that give and take on both sides is the way true partnerships are built.

"Cory is very forthcoming with information and gives me his expectations so we can partner together to meet his clients' needs," says Lester, adding that this way no time is wasted. "He responds quickly to questions I have and presents as much info as he can in the beginning so I'm sure we are quoting on the right products from the start."

The two have worked together since Reese joined the company on countless projects for some of Reese's retail clients who use Showdown Display's table covers and other products in store openings and new product rollouts.

"We have a program with Cory that we were hoping would renew," says Lester. "He let us know where we need to be to win this project. He is up front with us and he is willing to give and take. He realizes there are less expensive options available, but [he knows] we offer a great value. He lets his customer know that quality trumps price."

In addition to efficient communication and the high energy level Reese brings to the projects, Lester also likes the distributor's laid-back personality. "He's very successful, but he keeps things light."

CORY REESE ON PARTNERING

What are the most important qualities in a good business partner?
When choosing a business support partner, I look for someone who values communication and follow-through above all else. If the person I am working on a project with can give me the attention necessary to get the right information to my customer, we can typically find a mutually beneficial price that works for both parties.

What do you do that sets you apart from other distributors in the way you work with suppliers?
I always try to understand that as much as I am trying to work hard and achieve results for my end user, my chosen suppliers are trying to work just as hard for me. It creates an understanding that they really do have my interest in mind and aren't just focused on achieving high profits for their companies all the time.

Is there something Ryan does that makes it easy for you to provide exemplary service?
Ryan always goes to the next level to give me the opportunity to compete in tight turnaround and lower margin situations. His communication ability and quick follow-through makes him a go-to whenever a need arises in his area of focus. He is always willing to ask if there is more he can do to help me win the bid and that goes a long way.

What advice do you have for other distributors who want to achieve a true partnership with their suppliers?
Remember that, at the end of the day, the person on the other end of the phone has a life and a family just like you do. It's easy to get caught up in achieving results and trying to earn business but it starts with realizing that I can't do my job without my supplier doing theirs. I need them just as much as they need me. I always try to take a moment to let my suppliers know how thankful I am for their willingness to work hard and get me the best price and quality that my customers are looking for. I don't want to be the distributor that suppliers dread hearing from. I always seek to be a great partner and advocate in the industry for suppliers who are willing to do a little bit more to make sure my customers are always well pleased. PPB

Tina Berres Filipski is editor of PPB.

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Safe And Sound
New app lets users post emergency notifications, find help and stay safe **page 74**.

The Cost Of Social Noncompliance

When Factory Working Conditions Suffer, We All Pay The Price

page 72

by Jen Alexander

AD-ITIVES

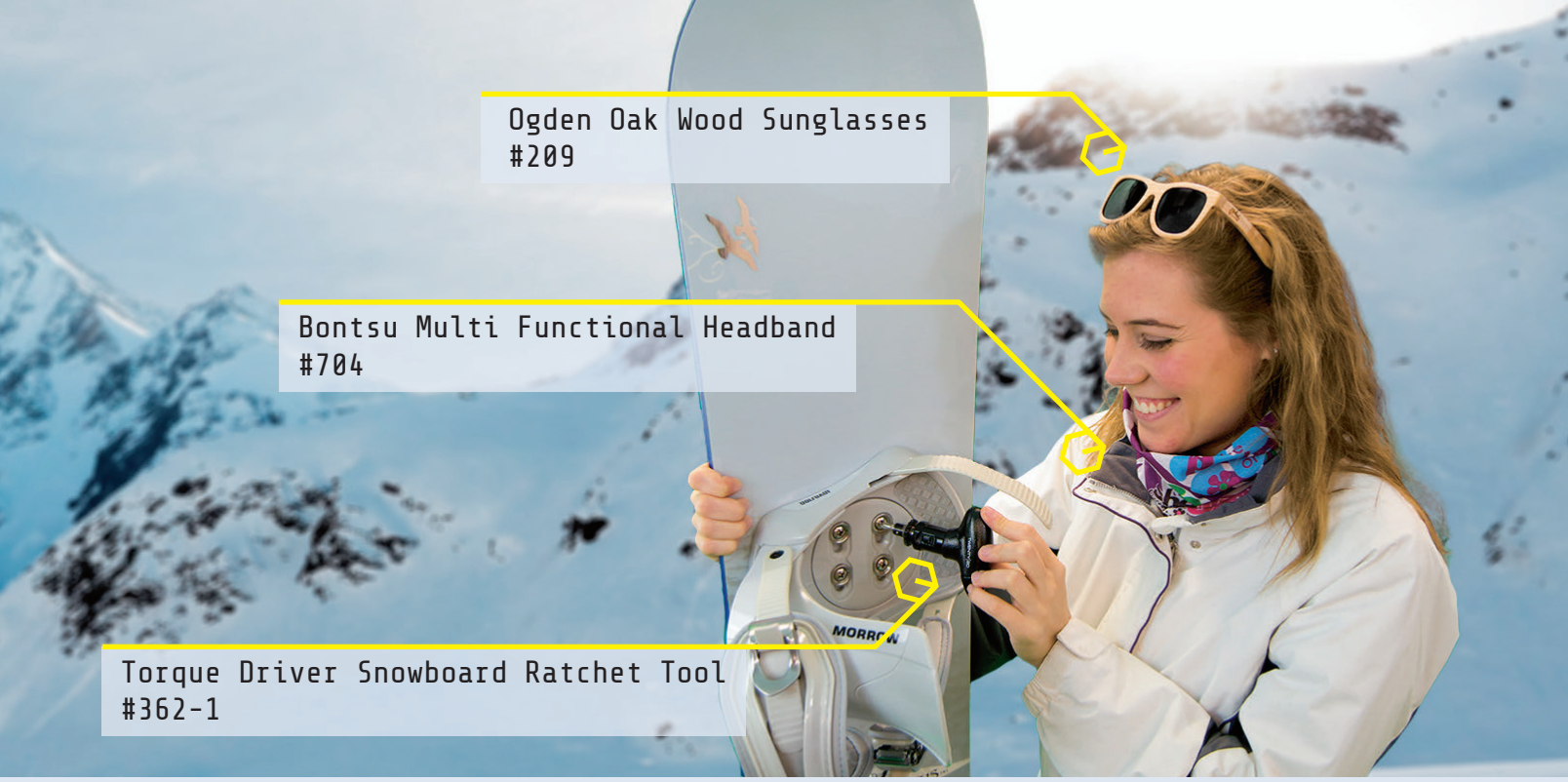
Just Dropping In

Uber sends drones into Mexico City for a promotional fly-by

How do you get the attention of solo drivers in a smog-filled metropolis? Drop a drone in their laps—or at least, in the case of Uber, into the air right over traffic. In October, the ride-sharing company flew drones into Mexico City traffic (the Central American city is the company's busiest location) holding signs that said, "Are you going alone? For that reason you'll never see the volcanoes #UberPOOL."

The note is a subtle dig at the smog created by traffic congestion, which obscures the view of neighboring volcano Popocatépetl, and urges drivers to instead take advantage of the company's carpooling service.

The drones themselves were used as a one-time stunt, and the company did not measure the results, but UberPOOL is the latest offering. Uber has previously offered UberYacht and UberChopper, and there are whispers of plans to launch UberBalloon in China. Up, up and away!



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5

FIVE MINUTES WITH
Lisa Terry
SanMar Communications Manager

Back To School

Suppliers spend every day getting up close and personal with promotional products, so when it comes to generating ideas for how to use those products, this segment of the industry can be a gold mine for ideas. SanMar has mined its own knowledge to create SanMar U, an online sales 'school' to help distributor clients make the most of the supplier's apparel offerings, and Communications Manager Lisa Terry has been at the forefront of getting SanMar U up and running.

PPB **What conversations or events led to the development of SanMar U? Who are your target audiences?**

Terry SanMar has been wanting to create an educational website for customers for a few years. The idea stemmed from conversations with customers and their need for shareable, easy-to-access information about apparel, trends, product education and decoration. SanMar U is meant not only to help educate those new to apparel but also to give decorators and salespeople in the industry the expert knowledge and inspiration they need to best help their clients.

PPB **How did you begin promoting SanMar U to your audiences and team, and what has been the response so far?**

Terry We quietly launched SanMar U this past spring through mailings and emails to our customers. We have also worked with our internal training team to educate our own sales team about how the site can help them and their customers. So far, the response has been great. People appreciate the variety of content and the ease of sharing the blog, videos, trend reports, webcasts and case studies. They also appreciate that we are developing content for both new and seasoned people in our industry.

PPB **Have you made any adjustments or modifications to the program, or are you planning any changes, based on feedback?**

Terry SanMar U is definitely evolving. We take the feedback we receive to heart and are working to develop more content as quickly as we can. Currently, we're working on expanding the information in our Decoration section—look for more videos, logo placement charts and more for that. We're also looking at the possibility of creating courses for those who need to train new staff. There's a lot we want to do!

PPB **What resources (people or otherwise) have you relied upon to develop the content for SanMar U?**

Terry We rely a lot on the experts we have here at SanMar. From our trend experts and product designers to our internal training and decorator relations teams. It is definitely a team effort to create content for the site. We are also working with partners like Stahls' ID to help us cover their areas of expertise.

PPB **Are you aware of any other resources in the industry like SanMar U?**

Terry To my knowledge, SanMar U is unique in the industry. There are some really good sites out there that speak to certain decoration techniques and some great publications that cover specific aspects of the industry, but nothing quite like SanMar U: a one-stop-shop for apparel-related information.

PPB **If another supplier is interested in following your lead to create education resources for its clients, what best practices or do's and don'ts could you recommend?**

Terry The best thing you can do is talk with your customers and ask them what they want and start with that. You may think that you know what your customers need, but you may be surprised what you find when you start talking with them—I know that I was. The worst thing you could do is hurry to create a resource just to have one. Take the time necessary to create something that both you and your customers can be proud of.

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TECH TALK

Safe And Sound

New app lets users post emergency notifications, find help and stay safe.

Mobile technology might have its drawbacks, such as taking our attention from the world around us, but it can also be a lifesaver. A new, free app called MyPanda is latching onto the latter by allowing users to not only report and identify the location of suspicious or dangerous activity, but it also allows them to locate nearby law enforcement agencies and notify friends and family via social media once they are in a safe location.

MyPanda founders Cyril and Guillaume Assentio worked with a team of researchers and computer engineers for a year and a half to develop an app that would provide single-click access to local police, quick routes to safety, news updates and the ability to report and respond to suspicious activity. MyPanda was launched in June and is available for both Apple and Android devices. It is usable in the world's largest cities, including New York, Paris, Los Angeles, Hong Kong and others.

WATER COOLER

Engineer Your Behavior To Ensure Success

MIT mentor shares six ways to achieve entrepreneurial goals

When eight out of 10 businesses are failing within the first year, and 96 percent are doomed to close within a decade, the idea of building a lasting venture can seem daunting to many entrepreneurs. But Inga Stasiulionyte, a mentor at the MIT Global Entrepreneurship boot camp, has a handful of tips for business owners who aim for longevity, all focused on developing behaviors that will lead to success.

1 **Challenge Everything You Know.**
Want to think outside the box? Hack your knowledge base. Challenging what we know, why we do things and how we do them is at the core of what drives change and innovation, says Stasiulionyte. But hacking isn't about flying in blind or working from gut instinct. You've got to understand the rules by which systems and businesses have been built in order to break them.

2 **Condense Your Timeline For Achieving Goals.**
You may have been taught that life is a marathon, not a sprint. But when it's time to crank out a new idea or product, it behooves you to put everything you've got into reaching or completing a goal successfully in a short amount of time. At the elite level, says Stasiulionyte, quality and speed exist side by side rather than working against one another. To achieve success in a set amount of time, you must master your thoughts, actions, discipline and planning.

3 **Collaborate With Experts.**
To achieve the best, you must work with the best. Finding subject matter experts and field experts helps you challenge your limits as you learn how they break through theirs. Collaborate on a project that may not be in your wheelhouse, and you'll likely discover hacks and strategies that can be applied to your own challenges and goals by watching others address their own.

4 **Work On Your Weaknesses.**
Pushing your limits and learning new behaviors is one way to strengthen personal and professional weaknesses. Put effort into mastering the skills you've never been "good" at. If selling is your strength but budgets are your weakness, take a finance class. Every skill can use a tune-up, and exercising weak muscles only helps strong muscles get stronger.

5 **Pursue Your Purpose.**
Do you take a goal-oriented approach to your professional and personal endeavors? Shift your focus to purpose first, and you may see the solutions fall into place. Ask yourself *why* you're spending every waking hour bringing an idea to fruition, and you'll start to see *how* it can best be achieved. Ask yourself *why* you only take one hour a week to exercise or tune into nature, and you may discover *how* to make the most of that time.

6 **Test Every Idea.**
An idea is only profitable if it becomes a marketable, usable product or service. To ensure ideas come to fruition, you've got to test them out in the real world—your customers and your market. If audiences don't respond well, take the idea back to the drawing board.

MARKET SHARE

Try Before You Buy

Sample subscriptions build yarn makers' business

We love free samples, and we love getting them on the regular. In the vein of beauty-sample subscription companies like Ipsy and BirchBox, a couple of former software engineers have bolstered a loyal following for their online yarn business by shipping samples and patterns on a prepaid subscription basis.

For $10 a month, subscribers receive Beanie Bags from Reno, Nevada-based Jimmy Beans Wool that contain curated samples of yarns and expert tips as well as knitting notions or accessories. In addition to gaining new customers, the subscription service has allowed Laura and Doug Zander, the owners of Jimmy Beans Wool, to collect valuable data on consumer preferences that help them curate customer-centric samples.

Of course, with growth comes growing pains. Doug Zander was tasked with developing software to manage customer data and employees worked overtime to fill subscription orders, but the result has been a steadily growing bottom line. Jimmy Beans also has embraced social media marketing, relying heavily on Instagram and on Facebook advertising. The company won a Facebook advertising award in the Small Business category this year for its work on a promotion for the 2016 movie *Eddie the Eagle.* PPB

GUEST VIEWPOINT

Taking The Long View Of Compliance Programs

Why Our Industry Shouldn't Be Satisfied With Self-Regulation

by Bill Mahre

A recent invitation to a panel discussion, which included four top industry suppliers discussing the "State of the Industry" in front of more than 800 key distributors and suppliers, was a terrific opportunity to review key challenges and opportunities we will all face in the future. Initially, the panel participants covered a number of typical subjects such as describing the industry, the greatest challenges, technology needs, etc. Then the discussion touched on compliance and product safety, and it became much more passionate—which probably surprised many in the audience.

One fairly straightforward comment that sparked a strong response from a founding member of the Quality Certification Alliance (QCA) was mine: "Long term there is little positive outcome for any industry to find it acceptable or be satisfied with self-regulation."

Using the pharmacy industry as an example, I continued with a question: "Would we feel safe if Pfizer, Squibb and Johnson & Johnson decided drug safety standards instead of a legitimate, independent third party? It's not likely any of us believe this is a good idea for the health care of our families and friends. Recent examples of the mortgage industry policing itself, or Volkswagen leadership deciding that EPA regulations were not necessary for their vehicles, shows how these misadventures can change an industry or brand quickly."

Would we feel safe if Pfizer, Squibb and Johnson & Johnson decided drug safety standards instead of a legitimate, independent third party?

After the session, numerous distributors and suppliers connected with me to gain more understanding on my comments and the subject of compliance. I don't pretend to be an expert in product safety and compliance since there are too many moving parts, from state guidelines and laws to national and international regulations, for any of us to fully understand everything. This subject is so vast, changing and complicated that it makes more sense to focus on fundamentals, establish agreed-upon processes and work to do the right things every day to make our industry more compliant and disciplined.

My business background has been in industries including consumer products, health care, professional sports and nonprofits. Like everyone, our past experiences and learning opportunities help shape our thinking and perspective on certain subjects like compliance and product safety. While at Procter & Gamble, it became engrained in my thought process that following regulations and laws, and making sure every product met top-level performance and quality standards, was a required outcome. At ADG Promotional Products we have developed similarly solid processes for compliance as part of a much larger multi billion-

dollar international printing organization that has many diverse product lines.

QCA is a reasonable starting point for our industry, but is made up of only 38 suppliers (less than one percent of the industry). While these companies are relatively large entities, there is limited rationale for a single group of for-profit entities establishing protocols on their own and then marketing them as standards for a broader industry. During the aforementioned panel discussion, it was stated that QCA is a nonprofit entity, which is supposed to sound like a benefit, but that point is of no relevance and is probably more a critique of our tax code system. How does a group of for-profit companies create a 501(c)3 to market themselves and end up with a financial business advantage? Another topic for a different day.

Having a small group of suppliers position self-regulating efforts as a base standard is not appropriate for an industry of our size.

Has QCA brought some discipline, process and visibility to compliance? Absolutely! Hopefully this effort will continue to evolve and be shared to benefit the entire promotional products industry. However, having a small group of suppliers position self-regulating efforts as a base standard is not appropriate for an industry of our size. We recently had another founding QCA member comment to us that ADG's standards were higher than they needed to be on a particular product. That is okay at this time and we will continue to maintain that effort until more detailed independent industry standards are established.

It is important to recognize that there are other suppliers, like ADG, that have excellent compliance and product safety standards in place, and we can all learn from each other to get better. Some recent op-ed, marketing and advertising pieces in industry publications have had a few non-industry people question the quality of "non-QCA" items. It's an approach that is, unfortunately, self-serving and inaccurate due to an absence of facts. This type of miscommunication is also damaging long-term to our industry's reputation. The focus should be on bigger challenges, strategies and questions such as these:

1. **Which independent entity is best positioned to lead our industry compliance effort?** We need PPAI's leadership. If we ask our end-user clients whether they are more interested in product quality and compliance, or lobbying efforts and brand positioning of the industry, it is a safe bet where their answers would lie and where we should spend our resources.

2. **How do we best manage components of a compliance testing process?** For an industry already challenged with its profitability model, figuring out how to efficiently test relatively low-cost items is critical. Suppliers often share overseas production facilities so it makes sense to insist that the supply chain cycle start there. For example, recent industry battery charger recalls included a number of suppliers (including a QCA-member company) but has anyone really identified whether the issue was caused by a common overseas facility? Let's start at the beginning, establish sound fundamental processes and constantly challenge ourselves to improve. (Full disclosure: ADG does not carry electronic items such as battery chargers.)

Our end-user clients will continue to demand that the promotional products industry establishes and maintains an independent, high-quality and long-term compliance program. Proactive leadership is needed by everyone to establish industry standards. This is not the responsibility of just a few entities. PPB

Send your comments on this Guest Viewpoint or your idea for a future column to PPB@ppai.org.

Bill Mahre, president of supplier ADG Promotional Products, has been in the promotional products industry for nearly nine years with experience on both the distributor and supplier sides. Previously, he held leadership roles with Procter & Gamble, Minnesota Twins Baseball Club, HealthEast Care System and Minnesota Diversified Industries. He currently serves on the PPAI Product Responsibility Advisory Group.

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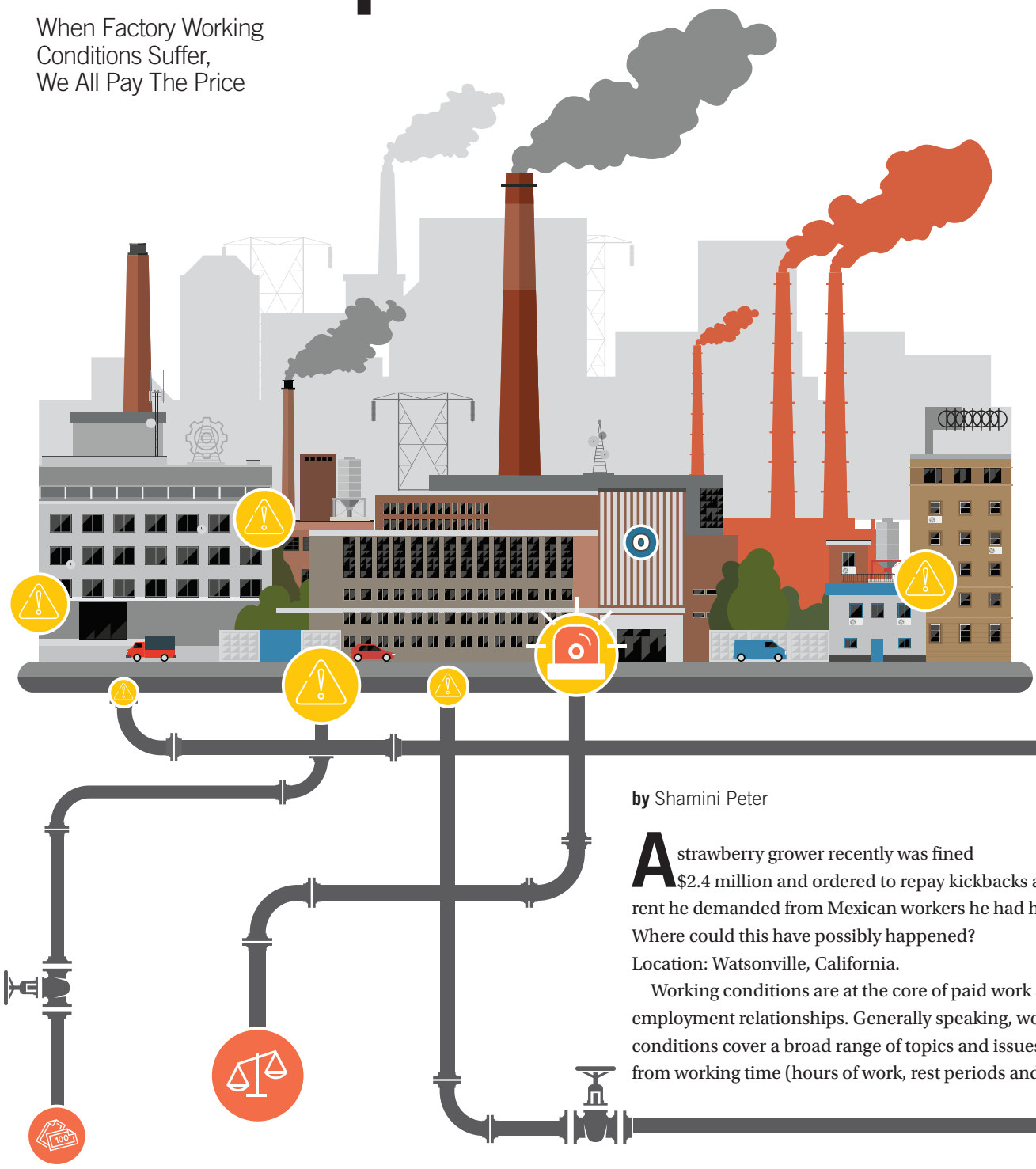
The Cost Of Social Noncompliance

When Factory Working Conditions Suffer, We All Pay The Price



by Shamini Peter

A strawberry grower recently was fined $2.4 million and ordered to repay kickbacks and rent he demanded from Mexican workers he had hired. Where could this have possibly happened? Location: Watsonville, California.

Working conditions are at the core of paid work and employment relationships. Generally speaking, working conditions cover a broad range of topics and issues, from working time (hours of work, rest periods and work

schedules) to remuneration, as well as the physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the workplace.

For more than a century, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been plagued by regional conflict and a deadly scramble for its vast natural resources. In fact, greed for the Congo's natural resources has been a principal driver of atrocities and conflict throughout the Congo's tortured history.

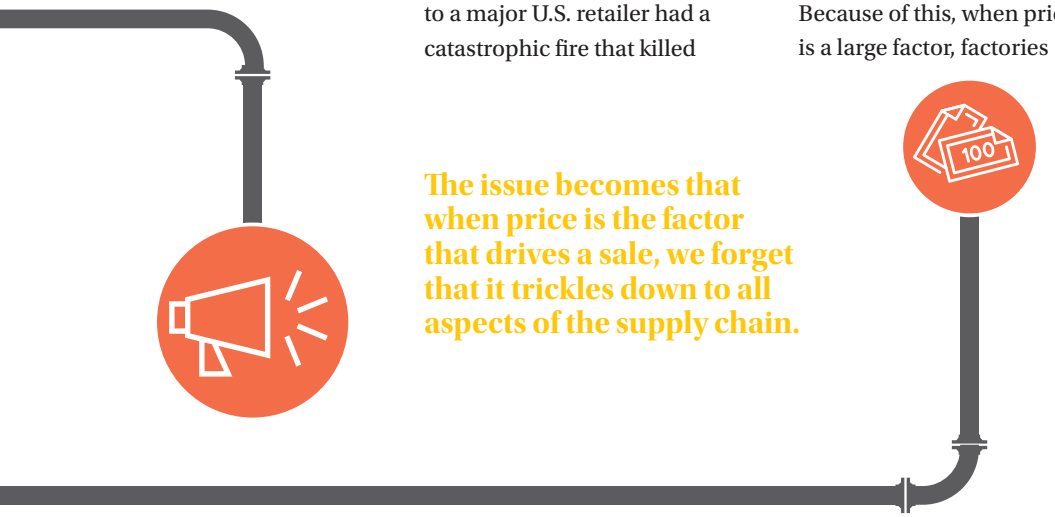
The International Labour Organization estimates that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labor globally and their labor is estimated to generate $150 billion in profits per year.

The four most commonly mined conflict minerals (known as 3TGs, from their initials) are cassiterite (for tin), wolframite (for tungsten), coltan (for tantalum) and gold ore, which are extracted from Eastern Congo, and passed through a variety of intermediaries before being purchased by multinational companies for products including electronics, like cellphones, or as solder for use in buttons, zippers and other fasteners or as composite material in shoelace grommets.

A couple years ago, an apparel factory in Bangladesh supplying to a major U.S. retailer had a catastrophic fire that killed more than 100 people. The cause of the fire was attributed to poor working conditions. Unfortunately, stories such as these are not uncommon.

People respond predictably to positive and negative incentives. Acting as consumers, producers, workers and investors, people respond to incentives in order to allocate their scarce resources in ways that provide the highest possible returns to them.

When we as distributors or suppliers are presented with a project with limited spending capacity by the client, we try to find ways to drive the price down so we can win projects and maintain decent profitability. The issue becomes that when price is the factor that drives a sale, we forget that it trickles down to all aspects of the supply chain. Every company within a supply chain has different goals and faces different rules and constraints. These goals, rules and constraints influence the benefits and costs of those who work with or for those companies and, therefore, affects their behavior. Because of this, when price is a large factor, factories look at their investments and allocate their scarce resources in ways that provide the best return on investment. Unfortunately, in cases such as this, companies don't make investments to benefit their workers or to improve the conditions the workers have to endure to produce these price-driven products.



The issue becomes that when price is the factor that drives a sale, we forget that it trickles down to all aspects of the supply chain.

In the promotional industry in particular, price is a huge factor that drives how suppliers behave when they source products. The larger suppliers have greater buying power so they may be able to make up in volume in order to drive down price, but the smaller companies, unfortunately, are often not in the same position. They cannot drive price reductions because their factories are unable to invest in all aspects of supply chain, especially working conditions.

The danger here is that you move to factories that are able to meet price by compromising working conditions. The International Labour Organization estimates that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labor globally and their labor is estimated to generate $150 billion in profits per year. Larger corporations are more likely to have factory audit policies in place to monitor and minimize their brands being caught up in any social compliance issues. Even then, transparency down the supply chain remains a big challenge especially when it comes to raw materials suppliers and other subcontractors that work with primary factories.

Actions You Can Take

When you are bidding on a project, the first question you should ask yourself or the supplier is this: Is the factory capable of manufacturing my product at the capacity at a given schedule? Understand how and where the product is being manufactured and whether or not that work is being subcontracted. If so, are those subcontractors compliant and what is their relationship with your initial supplier? Understand how and where the products are being manufactured, whether the work is being subcontracted and, if so, whether those factories are compliant and how that relationship works.

Even the most progressive of approaches to auditing will not suffice if auditing is all you do—social compliance is a two-way street. Building partnerships and ensuring continuous improvements, ongoing training and educating factories about your company's specific tolerances to working conditions at factory levels are all investments that need to be made. The message has to be consistent throughout the process and there should be no disconnect between sourcing and compliance. What can you do when sourcing to ensure social compliance? Supplier vetting is by far one of the most important tools in supplier management. Knowing a supplier's sourcing criteria is something every distributor should take the time to understand. Following are eight key questions to ask:

1. How long has the factory been in business?
2. When was the supplier's last order with this factory?
3. Does the factory have any social compliance accreditation such as SMETA 4 pillar, BSCI, SA8000 SEDEX, etc.?
4. Does your supplier visit the factory prior to making a decision to work with them?
5. Does the supplier perform a capability audit to verify if the factory can handle production, or does it subcontract out to other parties that may operate under questionable working conditions?
6. Does the supplier use a third-party accredited agency or have an internal auditor who verifies information pertaining to working conditions at the factory?
7. Does the supplier belong to a third-party organization that validates their sourcing practices and processes?
8. Are audits the only tool that the supplier uses to verify factory conditions?

Social compliance is always evolving so continuously engage your suppliers in open dialogue about their practices in regards to onboarding factories. The responsibility is not only on suppliers but on every party benefiting financially throughout the supply chain. PPB

Shamini Peter is director of product safety and compliance for New York, New York-based distributor Axis Promotions. She serves on the PPAI Product Responsibility Action Group and was named a PPB *Rising Star in 2013.*

Best Practices And Case Studies

PPAI provides a number of resources to help member companies maintain transparency in supply chain management. These are available at www.ppai.org under the Inside PPAI tab. Click on Social Responsibility and see the link on the right.

Distributor Best Practices

- Social Responsibility Policy for Distributors
- Social Responsibility Audits of Suppliers by Distributors

Supplier Best Practices

- Social Responsibility Policy for Suppliers
- Social Responsibility Audits of Vendors/Factories by Suppliers

Industry Best Practices for Both Distributors and Suppliers

- California Supply Chain Transparency
- Foreign Corrupt Practices
- Principles of Social Responsibility
- Code of Conduct
- Implementing A Social Responsibility Program
- Pre-Qualifying Assessment of Vendors/Factories/Suppliers
- Social Compliance Basic Factory Audit Checklist
- Corrective Action Plans (CAP)
- Social Responsibility Metrics and Tracking
- Social Responsibility Monitoring
- Sustainability Reporting
- Tariff Act of 1930
- Understanding Code of Conduct Content
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Consumers *like* promotional products. Consumers *keep* promotional products. Consumers have spoken and they *praise* promotional products as the leading advertising vehicle for brands.

Those are some of the key messages coming out of PPAI's latest groundbreaking study of consumers, conducted in September 2016 and fielded through Survey Sampling International with more than 1,000 consumers participating.

In 2015, promotional products shared almost seven percent of the advertising market in the U.S. alone, at $21 billion; however, the medium is ranked highest by consumers across all generations as the most effective advertising vehicle. These findings also reinforced the results of previous consumer surveys by pointing out that promotional products innately possess the qualities consumers value and are built to succeed across the board in reach, recall, resonance and reaction performance metrics.

The Five R's Of Promotional Products

In 1992, PPAI launched a pioneering series of consumer studies as the industry's first assessment of the role of promotional products within consumer lifestyle and behavior. While previous studies are commonly identified as airport intercepts, the 2016 Consumer Study is the first quantitative analysis of its kind. This new methodology expands upon previous findings and is designed to better measure the performance of promotional products among consumers to enhance our understanding of their role as an advertising channel. Five key metrics were used to assess the value and weight of options used by survey respondents to respond to each promotional product component: Reach, Recall, Resonance, Reaction and Relativity.

Who Took The Survey?

- **43%** Millennials
- **35%** Gen Xers
- **19%** Baby Boomers
- **3%** Silent Generation
- **50%** Men | **50%** Women

PPAI's 2016 Consumer Study Reinforces The Influence, Clout And Muscle Of Promotional Products

By Moumita Das

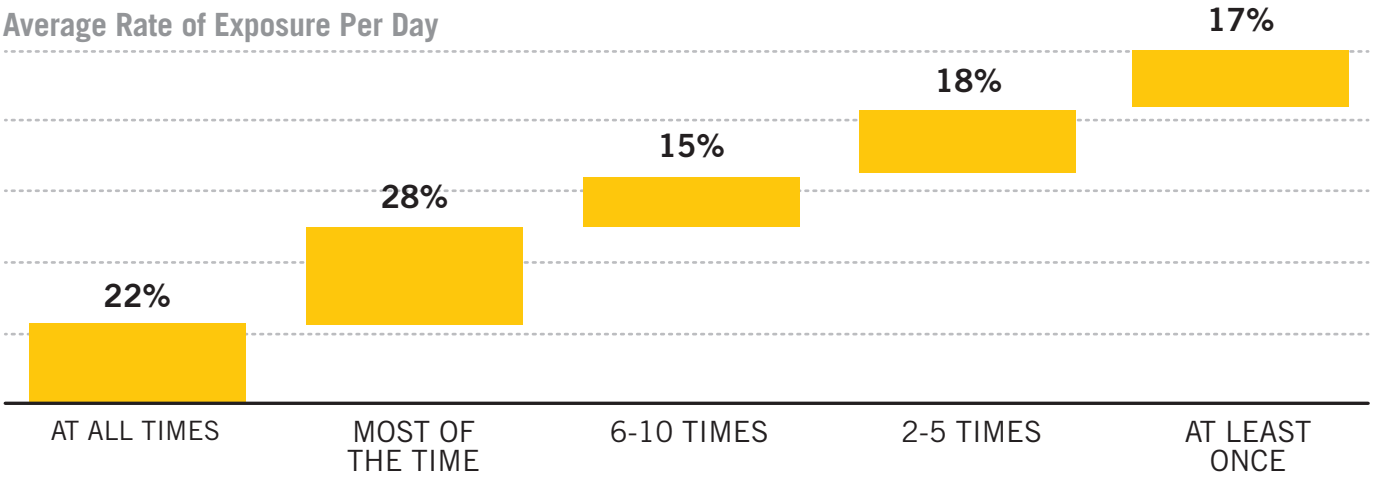
1. **Reach** - Do promotional products elevate brand reach to deliver adequate exposure to recipients?
2. **Recall** – Do promotional products produce high brand recall to generate recipient awareness of the brand?
3. **Resonance** – Do promotional products enhance brand resonance to transfer a favorable attitude to recipients?
4. **Reaction** – Do promotional products stimulate reaction to influence change in recipient buying behavior?
5. **Relativity** – Do promotional products gain relativity against other advertising channels to satisfy recipients?

Key Study Highlights

- Eighty-nine percent of consumers surveyed had received a promotional product in the past six months, which indicates an upward trend over previous years when a consumer study was conducted: 2012, 73 percent; 2004, 71 percent; 1999, 72 percent; 1992, 62 percent.
- Promotional products have the highest advertising reach above any other form of advertising providing exposure each day. In fact, five in 10 consumers polled stated they come in contact with promotional products most of the time or at all times per day.
- Nearly nine in 10 recipients are able to remember the branding and eight in 10 can recall messaging from at least one promotional product they received.
- Eight in 10 consumers revealed that their impression of a brand positively changed directly as a result of receiving a promotional product from the brand.
- Roughly eight in 10 admit to looking up the brand after receiving a promotional product and 83 percent said they are more likely to do business with brands from which they've received promotional products than with brands they have not.
- When asked to rate which advertising vehicles provide consumers with an incentive to take action, promotional products were regarded as most effective by all generations.

REACH

Average Rate of Exposure Per Day



The power of promotional products cannot be underestimated as it drives an undisputed level of brand exposure. Promotional products not only reach their target audience, but they also provide opportunities to reinforce branding and messaging with increased frequency across multiple measurement platforms.

Frequency Of Exposure

The majority of consumers are exposed to promotional products most of the time each day; however, one third of Millennials said they are in contact with a promotional product at all times.

Length Of Exposure

The longer a promotional product is kept, the more impressions it makes on the recipient and anyone else who is exposed to the recipient using the product. The majority of consumers keep a promotional product between one and five years. Women may keep a promotional product up to 10 years, whereas men may keep a promotional product for 11 or more years.

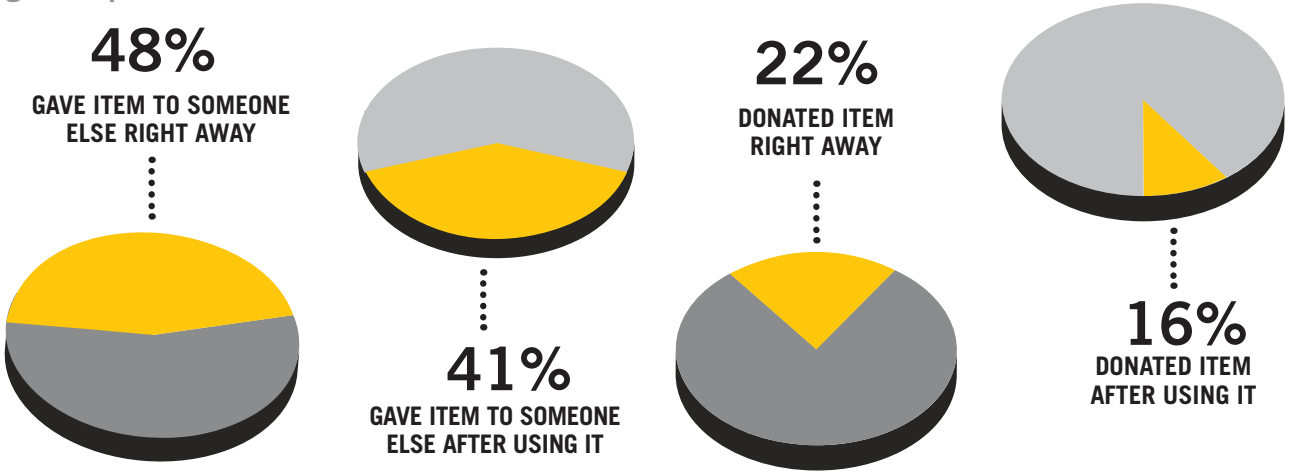
Range Of Exposure

Eight in 10 consumers choose to pass along a promotional product if they don't keep it for themselves, which ultimately furthers the brand's reach. On average, five in 10 will pass on a promotional product to someone else. Roughly four in 10 will pass promotional products on when they are finished using them.

Length of Exposure

	♂ MEN	♀ WOMEN
<MONTH	3%	7%
<YEAR	14%	15%
1-5 YRS	38%	43%
6-10 YRS	22%	22%
11+ YRS	23%	13%

Range of Exposure



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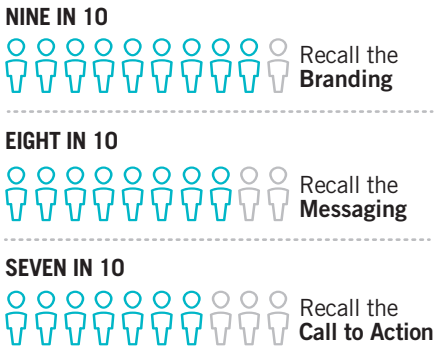
RECALL

When prompted with an unaided question, 83 percent said they recalled at least one brand and 23 percent recalled at least one message from a promotional product they received; however, if aided (or given options), nine in 10 on average correctly recalled branding, and eight in 10 recalled messaging characteristics, which indicates that consumers are not always aware they are being advertised to when given promotional products.

Attention to Detail



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Attention To Detail

Branding has everything to do with identity: who you are and what kind of products and services you represent. Successful messaging then creates a voice for brands to connect with their target audiences and create a memorable consumer experience. The call to action then directs recipients to take action, thus enabling brands to directly interact and engage with consumers, capturing a response rate and measuring quantifiable results. Promotional products effectively deliver high recall between all three strategic advertising objectives.

So what type of 'call' best resonates with each generation? Millennials best recalled social media, and Generation Xers best recalled directional calls to action, or statements with definitive instructions. Baby Boomers best recalled points of reference such as website domains or contact information.

The Staying Power Of Promotional Products

Promotional products allow brands to directly affect consumer lifestyles and maximize recall by organically integrating into everyday routines at work, home or play. Where promotional products are kept also indicates emerging product trends for brands to consider. Promotional products used in the kitchen and carried on one's person are ideal for promoting to a general audience. However, if the target audience is gender-specific, one might consider particular product categories within that segment. For example, one might consider promotional products used in vehicles for men (e.g. car charger) versus a product generally kept in the bathroom for women (e.g. nail file). Interestingly, one in two respondents said they walk around with a promotional product such as a wearable item or a pocket product.

Staying Power of Promotional Products

	♂ MEN	♀ WOMEN
ON SELF	50%	46%
KITCHEN	45%	52%
VEHICLE	38%	30%
OFFICE	28%	33%
BATHROOM	27%	37%
BEDROOM	27%	23%
PORTABLE CARRIER	27%	31%
STORAGE	26%	27%
SHARED SPACE	16%	14%
OUTDOOR SPACE	14%	13%

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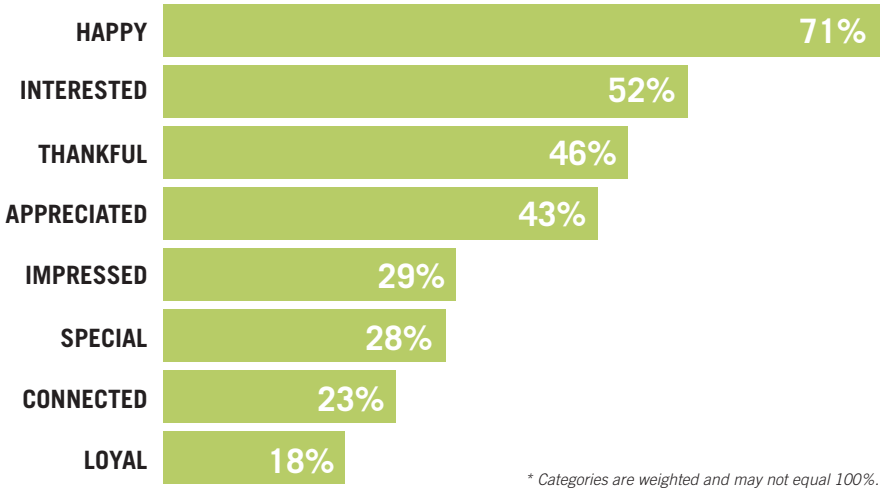
Emotional Connection to Promotional Products



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RESONANCE

Master marketer Seth Godin recently remarked, "It is impossible to market *at* people any more. The only choice is to market *with* them." Advertising that creates resonance helps consumers to identify with the brand on a personal level and provides the foundation for an enduring brand relationship. Promotional products are proven vehicles for brands to generate a more favorable impression across all consumer audiences.

Emotions are at the heart of the relationship between brands and consumers as they steer conscious

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decisions and drive unconscious decisions. In fact, according to a 2015 Nielsen Consumer Neuroscience Internal Study, advertising that produced the best emotional response generated a 23-percent lift in sales volume. These study findings magnify promotional products' capacity to elicit a strong emotional connection.

Understanding why an individual chooses to keep a promotional product received provides key insight into which features are most valued by recipients. Unlike traditional advertising vehicles whose sole purpose is to communicate a message, promotional products not only bring value to brands by effectively connecting with recipients but they also play a functional role within recipients' lifestyles.

10 Reasons Recipients Own Promotional Products

Promotional products prominently display advertising, but they are found to be useful to a majority of consumers including a stunning 92 percent of the Silent Generation. Among Millennials, 48 percent said they kept promotional products because the design fit their style and/or personality, and both Generation X (42 percent) and Baby Boomers (48 percent) said the product was enjoyable to have.

Advertising is designed to challenge consumer perceptions of a brand, and 82 percent of consumers agreed that their impression of a brand positively changed as a direct result of receiving a promotional product.

10 Reasons Recipients Own Promotional Products

FUNCTIONALITY	useful to have	85%
ENTERTAINMENT	enjoyable to have	44%
DESIGN	fits style/personality	43%
EXPERIENCE	memorable value	28%
CONTENT	favorable message	27%
INFORMATION	easy to reference	24%
LOYALTY	supports brand	22%
LUXURY	extraneous to have	19%
SYMBOL	cause alignment	17%
SOCIAL	conversation starter	10%

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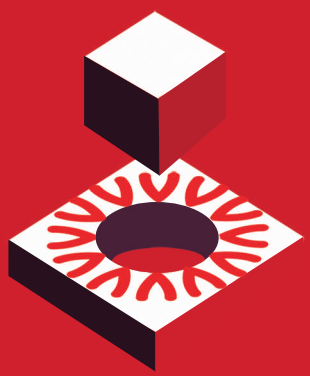

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REACTION

"We don't want people to buy a brand, we want people to buy into a brand, to make it part of their lives," Stan Richards, founder of The Richards Group, once said. Advertising channels are the most important tool used by brands to reach a targeted audience, ensure that it resonates positively so that, most importantly, it generates the desired reaction. Promotional products are the optimal source to elicit a strong connection with recipients, spark interest, inspire action and effectively gain and retain consumers, ultimately enhancing brand loyalty.

Brand Allure

Roughly eight in 10 consumers said they have looked up a brand after receiving a promotional product. Promotional products drove the most interest among Millennial recipients, 87 percent of whom were curious enough to take further action.

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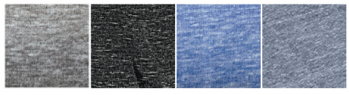

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Brand Loyalty

Brand Favorability

With the overwhelming selection of brands today's marketplace offers, the average consumer might appear more elusive or erratic than ever in their decision-making. However, one might argue that the right advertising vehicle has the power to shift brand favorability and ultimately influence a consumer's buying decisions—and that's exactly the case. In fact, 88 percent of Millennials said they are more likely to do business with brands from which they received promotional products over other brands.

Brand Loyalty

Results indicate that consumers who receive promotional products are *more likely* to increase loyalty to the brand.

RELATIVITY

Brands are presented with an endless stream of opportunities to deliver their message, so how each option compares becomes essential when marketers are weighing where to invest advertising dollars. Compared with more traditional advertising vehicles, consumers confirm promotional products as the leading choice for brands.

Most Effective Advertising Channel

	MILLENNIALS	GEN Xers	BABY BOOMERS	SILENT GENERATION
1	Promotional Products	Promotional Products	Promotional Products	Promotional Products
2	Broadcast	Broadcast	Broadcast	Print
3	Online	Online	Print	Broadcast
4	Mobile	Print	Online	Online
5	Print	Mobile	Mobile	Mobile

Ideal Advertising Qualities

It is important to understand the wants and needs of a consumer in order for an advertising vehicle to be successfully received. When asked what advertising qualities (not limited to promotional products) were important to them, the majority of survey respondents preferred visually appealing ads that clearly deliver a message. Promotional products are built to do just that with their physical and tangible features.

Most Effective Advertising Channel

When asked to rate which advertising vehicles provide consumers with an incentive to take action, promotional products were regarded as most effective by all generations.

Best Received Advertising Vehicle

Today's consumers are exposed to an expanding, fragmented array of touch points; however, there's a growing

Ideal Advertising Qualities

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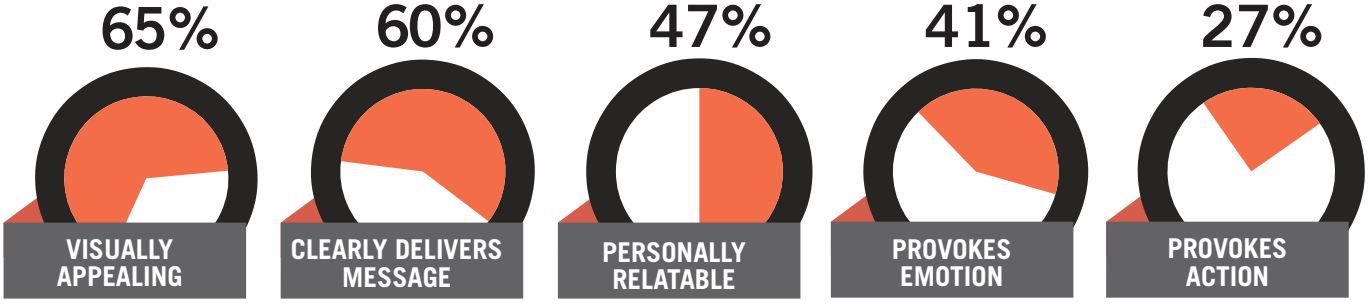

sensitivity to the idea that consumers are trained to be blind to advertising. The market for consumer awareness has become so competitive that attention can be regarded as a currency in the world of advertising. The rising cost of this element is reason enough for brands to consider their return on investment, such as which ad vehicles have a higher probability of being received by consumers. Data show that promotional products are the least avoided by consumers than any other advertising vehicle. PPB

Moumita Das is market research coordinator for PPAI.

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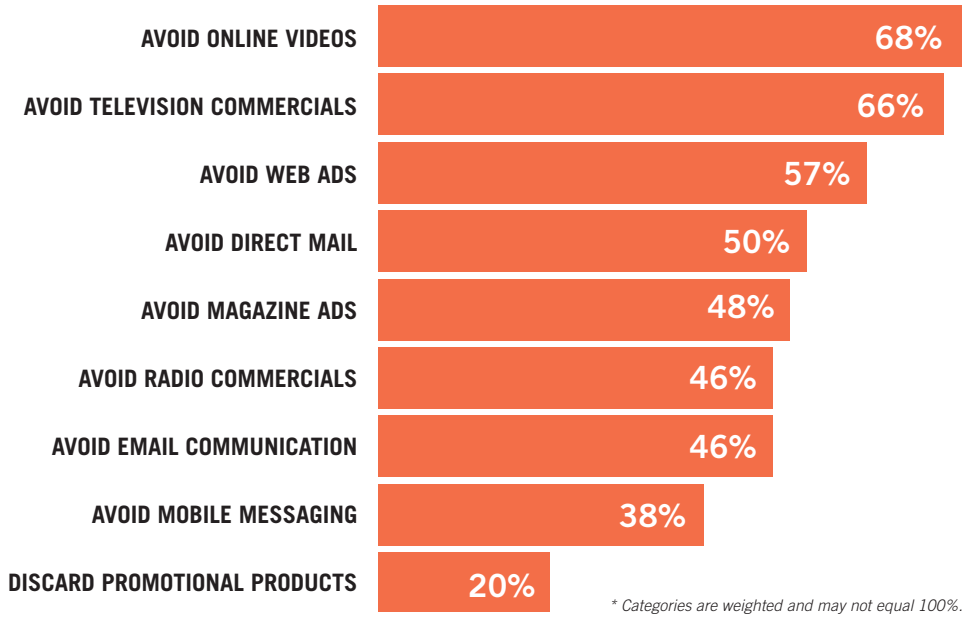
Best Received Advertising Vehicle Based On Percentage Of People Who:



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Close Up
Neal Gondran's first career choice didn't work out, but maybe that was for the best
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License to Chill

Taiga ups the custom cooler game with patented technology

page 108

2016 PPAI RAC Volunteers of the Year Ted Dennison, MAS (second from left), with RAC Board President Ryan Small, CAS, and George Jackson (second from right), with his nominator, TRASA Executive Director Patti Ward, were recognized at a dinner reception.

2016 LDW Draws Nearly 200 Volunteers For Annual Training And Idea Sharing

Board members and executive directors from regional associations throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico traveled to Grapevine, Texas, in October for the 17th annual Leadership Development Workshop (LDW). Hosted by PPAI and the Regional Association Council (RAC), the week-long event featured a PPAI Board of Directors meeting, a full-day training and planning session for PPAI committee and advisory group chairs, and an extensive, multi-day curriculum designed to provide regional association leadership with numerous learning opportunities through general sessions, breakout discussions and sharing activities.

SanMar's Mike Knapick, incoming chair of the PPAI Technology Committee, was one of the incoming committee chairs who participated. "The committee chair training was a valuable opportunity to share ideas with other committee chairs and PPAI Liaisons to address challenges and facilitate meaningful committee meetings," he says.

The next day, more than 190 regional volunteers representing 27 regional associations attended LDW to participate in their choice of 25 education sessions with speakers and panelists from PPAI staff and from within and outside the promotional products industry. Shelley Row, a professional engineer and former senior executive, delivered a keynote breakfast presentation on October 19 exploring cognition, intuition and striking the right balance in the modern business environment. Row also taught two education sessions later that afternoon.

"I look forward to LDW each year because it brings together the country's best and brightest volunteers to learn, collaborate and strategize for what's ahead," says Ryan Small, CAS, RAC board president. "These folks make great things happen on the local level in their own communities and work to educate and grow our industry. PPAI does this on the national level, and the regional associations are the grassroots teams giving their time and energy to make us all better."

LDW's education lineup included a breakfast session with Shelley Row, professional engineer and former senior executive.

Bill Petrie, District 2's RAC board representative and PPAMS incoming board president, calls the event a great way to learn from each other. "As an incoming board president, the ability to truly engage with both the executive director and fellow board members on a granular level to create the best possible experience for our members has been invaluable."

In reflecting on the regional event, Bob McLean, PPAI executive vice president, adds, "The new session format delivered a new level of interactivity. This event's vital peer-to-peer involvement also really upped the game."

The associated Regional Boot Camp brought together regional association leaders for an intensive, hands-on training session designed for their specific needs. It featured two separate tracks—one for executive directors and one for incoming and current presidents—as well as opportunities for the two groups to work together.

LDW attendees also honored some of the regional community's most accomplished members during

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a reception and dinner. Ted Dennison, MAS, of Houston, Texas, distributor TMJ Enterprises, and George Jackson, owner of distributor George Jackson Promotions in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were formally recognized as the 2016 PPAI RAC Volunteers of the Year in acknowledgement of their volunteerism, leadership and contributions to their regional associations. Jonathan Riegel, MAS, SAAGNY's executive director, was presented with the 2016 Donna Hall Memorial Grant, which provides regional association executive directors the opportunity to advance their education and careers by providing financial support to attend education conferences and events. The night also included quick and insightful presentations from leaders with PPAChicago, SAAGNY, SAAC, PPAW and SPPA, highlighting some of their events and best practices.

"RAC has done an outstanding job putting this event together," says PMANC Board Member Kenny Ved. "Everything has been flawless! The education sessions and content are extremely helpful in developing a strategic plan for the future of PMANC."

Donte Shannon, CAE, joined SAAC as executive director earlier this year. He says, "As a first-time attendee to LDW, I am inspired and motivated by the amount of professional development and quality of content provided at this conference. Specifically, LDW has allowed me to gain new industry knowledge, expand my network and exchange career experiences with like-minded colleagues. The harmony exhibited by the PPAI staff is evident in every aspect of the conference from logistics to programming. As the conference comes to a close, I leave looking forward to attending next year."

Janet McMaster, MAS, is moving into the RAC president's seat in 2017. She says she found plenty like about the new tools and features LDW introduced this year. "The new app worked incredibly well and having the presentations embedded in it for future reference adds so much value. The IGNITE format during the opening dinner, allowing regionals to share success stories in a concise and visual manner, was well received. And modifying the sessions to be more conversational as opposed to being monologue style was a welcomed format change as well. Our 2016 LDW isn't over yet and I'm already looking forward to 2017."

LDW attendees picked from 25 education sessions featuring speakers and panelists from PPAI staff and from within and outside the promotional products industry.

Brian Solis

Colette Carlson

David Avrin

Ryan Estis

Johnny Earle

Mark Graham

Norm Hullinger

The PPAI Expo 2017 Features World-Class Education And Speakers

The PPAI Expo 2017 is set to deliver another high-level lineup of exciting speakers and an extensive professional development schedule in Las Vegas next month. Expo's education programming at the industry's largest and longest running trade show will motivate audiences, feed them new ideas, develop their professional skills and advance their careers.

Attendees will have more than 100 education sessions from which to choose starting on Sunday, January 8, and running throughout the week, within one of eight tracks including Incentives & Recognition, Corporate Responsibility, Industry Essentials, Marketing & Advertising, Decorate, Sales & Service, Strategies & Solutions and Technology. And attendees can earn credits toward MAS or CAS certifications. The SAGE conference also runs concurrently on Monday, January 9, offering 12 sessions for suppliers and distributors about SAGE technology.

Expo 2017 keynote and general session speakers are prepared to expand their audiences' outlook on relationships, boost idea building and help them manage their creative impulses. Here's a snapshot of what to expect.

It's Not Who You Know, It's Who Knows You!—
How To Build Your Business By Building Your Brand

David Avrin, former CEO-group leader, business speaker and president of The Visibility Coach, joins Monday's keynote luncheon with insights on recognizing and promoting a true competitive advantage while building a category-leading brand identity. Drawn from his book, *It's Not Who You Know, It's Who Knows You!*, Avrin's eye-opening, energetic and entertaining business marketing

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presentation will leave his audience with a new perspective on what it takes to stand out and deliver a head full of new ideas and actionable strategies to become top-of-mind with top prospects.

Keynote Luncheon
Monday, January 9, 2017
11:45 am – 1:15 pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom J, Level 2
Session Fees: $55 Members/$110 Nonmembers

The Power Keynotes

The PPAI Expo 2016's popular Power Keynotes return in 2017 with three engaging speakers—Colette Carlson, Ryan Estis and Brian Solis—who will give audiences a sneak peek into their Power Keynote presentations. Audience members can then choose which Power Keynote to attend.

General Session – Power Keynote Preview
Monday, January 9, 2017
3 – 3:45 pm
Location: Mandalay Bay Ballroom J, Level 2

Colette Carlson: The founder of Speak Your Truth, Inc., human behavior expert Colette Carlson shares how to stay connected to what really matters while being surrounded by challenges, conflict and change in her Power Keynote, "Stress Less, Connect More." Carlson's session focuses on training her audience to stay cool, calm and collected, eliminate unrealistic expectations and overcome the stresses of everyday life.

Monday, January 9, 2017
4 – 5 pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom H, Level 2

Ryan Estis: In his session "Rock Star Selling: Selling Value In The New Economy," Ryan Estis, the former chief strategy officer for McCann Worldgroup advertising agency NAS, will examine the dramatic evolution of professional sales, and how the best sales organizations are leveraging their elevated capabilities to meet the expectations of sophisticated and demanding customers. His session provides a demonstration of how the best sales professionals are using their expertise to offer customers a compelling value proposition.

Monday, January 9, 2017
4 – 5 pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom F, Level 2

Brian Solis: As principal analyst at Altimeter Group, Brian Solis studies disruptive technology's effects on business and society. His Expo session, "From Brand Experience (BX) + Customer Experience (CX) + User Experience (UX) = X: How Digital Is Inspiring A New Era Of Experience Design," explores the relationship between digital technology and the evolution of customer expectations, behaviors and preferences.

Monday, January 9, 2017
4 – 5 pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom J, Level 2

The Recipe For Brand Loyalty

In the Tuesday, January 10, opening general session, Expo 2017 attendees will take a deep dive into brand loyalty with Johnny Cupcakes founder and CEO **Johnny Earle**. Earle founded what has become a multimillion-dollar t-shirt brand at age 19 out of the trunk of his car. He will open the show with the story of how his success stems from the power of details, experience and loyalty. His journey highlights the fundamental connection between the persona and the brand, and his session delivers comprehensive blueprints for getting a small business, passion or idea off the ground, while also expanding the way existing creators think.

Opening General Session
Tuesday, January 10, 2017
8:30 – 9:50 am
Level 2, Mandalay Bay Ballroom J

A Look Inside The Industry's First Billion-Dollar Company

Mark Graham, founder of distributor RIGHTSLEEVE, CEO of commonsku and co-founder of industry group blog PromoKitchen, will sit down with alphabroder CEO **Norm Hullinger** during Tuesday's keynote luncheon for a look at the ups and downs of running the industry's largest company. Their conversation is expected to explore a wide range of themes, from the state of the apparel sector, industry consolidation, and how Alibaba and Amazon are changing how consumers buy wearables, to Hullinger's rituals and routines for managing an organization that spans the globe with thousands of partners and employees. The discussion will get at what's really at stake for the industry as seen through the eyes of one of its most influential companies.

Keynote Luncheon
Tuesday, January 10, 2017
11:45 am – 1:15 pm
Mandalay Bay Ballroom J, Level 2
Session Fees: $55.00 Members/$110 Nonmembers

To learn more about The PPAI Expo 2017 and to register, visit expo.ppai.org.

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PPAI's Get In Touch! Industry Branding Campaign Launches At Advertising Week

PPAI's Get In Touch! industry branding initiative kicked off in September at Advertising Week in New York City. As part of the program's launch, the Association joined author, blogger and master marketer Seth Godin for "Getting In Touch With The Work That Matters." Introduced by PPAI President and CEO Paul Bellantone, CAE, the keynote explored business, management, marketing, storytelling, changing everything and doing the work that matters. Bellantone also joined Godin onstage for a Q&A session with the audience.

During his 50-minute live-streamed address at the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, Godin used real-life examples, humorous slides and his personal stories to drive home his message that the ad industry is in a revolution, and what worked in the 1950s of simply pushing an ad message out again and again until people bought is now outdated. "People have been branded to death," he told his audience. "No one cares about ads; they care about remarkable experiences. We are living in an economy based on choice—unlimited choice." He urged listeners to deliver personalized messages to become the choice customers would miss if it were gone.

Originally introduced at The PPAI Expo 2016 as the Industry Branding Initiative (IBI), the Get In Touch! campaign targets advertising buyers with a five-year, multimillion-dollar branding initiative designed to increase awareness and improve the overall perception of the promotional products industry while communicating the importance of the promotional consultant, resulting in a larger share of advertising dollars for the promotional products industry.

Seth Godin presents PPAI's live-streamed session during Advertising Week.

Complementing the launch of the initiative, PPAI introduced the newly redesigned PromotionalProductsWork.org, a website targeted at advertising buyers that tells a two-part story about the power of promotional products and the importance of using a promotional consultant.

Industry members can get involved in the Get In Touch! campaign by providing case studies, a key component of the initiative. For more information or to provide a case study, contact PPAI Public Relations Manager Kim Todora at kimt@ppai.org. PPB

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Gondran and his wife, Erica, celebrating their wedding in Mexico.

The Courage To Change Course

Neal Gondran's first career choice didn't work out, but maybe that was for the best.

by Julie Richie

Sometimes when the best laid plans go awry, you realize that maybe they weren't the best for you anyway. Or maybe you just weren't able to see other possibilities at the time.

That's what happened to Texas native Neal Gondran, national sales manager for BEST Promotions USA, LLC (UPIC: bestusa). Born and raised in Austin and Corpus Christi, he grew up hunting and fishing with a deep love for the outdoors and a desire to protect wildlife.

"I received a degree in criminology from Texas A&M at Corpus Christi and wanted to stay in the region as I pursued the job I really wanted, as a game warden for Texas Parks and Wildlife," Gondran says. However, getting a job as a game warden proved difficult and he settled for doing investigative work for Child Protective Services (CPS) while waiting for an opportunity.

"One of the most important lessons I learned was that, regardless of how good you are at your job, if you don't love it, you will never be satisfied," says Gondran. "I got a lot of satisfaction protecting children and putting a handful of people in prison who egregiously violated said children, but the work was taking a significant toll on my mind and body. I was detailed and thorough in my work, which led me to climb the ranks quickly. I was very good, but I did not love the work I was doing, even though I was doing a lot of people a lot of good."

After a couple years of being unsuccessful in getting hired as a game warden, Gondran acknowledged that CPS was not a long-term career option for him and it was time to make a change. "At the time, I was dating a girl in the Dallas area who was a family friend of Mike Hicks, owner of BEST Promotions [in nearby Balch Springs, Texas].

I met Mike in 2011 when I was visiting. We got to talking and a couple weeks later, I had a job offer that I figured would get me by until I found a job in my degree field."

While the relationship with the girlfriend ended, Hicks saw Gondran's potential and offered him a salaried position. "I took it and haven't looked back," Gondran adds.

In the beginning, he was doing basic grunt work. "I unloaded containers of materials, helped with burning and washing screens, and pulled material from the shelves for orders. I didn't find it very intriguing, but it was a paying job with 50-plus hours a week so I couldn't complain." Over time, as the business grew, Gondran worked in customer service, art, shipping, accounting and inside sales. He's been the national sales manager for about two years.

In July, Gondran married 10th grade English teacher Erica Berry. While his life has turned out nothing like he planned, he now couldn't picture it any other way.

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

I enjoy being outdoors either hunting or fishing. If I must be inside, it sure is hard to beat watching some Rangers baseball, any college football game, and the Dallas Cowboys. One day I would like to be part of a program where I could teach inner city children about the outdoors. Something like "Take a Kid Fishing" or other similar programs. The outdoors is so peaceful and a great way to spend time with yourself and others. It's perfect to take time for personal reflection and to remember that we are but a small part of this world, so we need to make the best impact we can.

The couple enjoy a recent hunting outing. An avid duck hunter, Gondran avoids shaving or getting a haircut between August and December 19 (his birthday) to better camouflage himself, a tradition he started with a group of hunting buddies in college.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoy not doing the same thing day in and day out. At BEST there is no such thing as "that's not my job." If something needs to be done, you just do it. So every day is different, which keeps things interesting.

Who has had the biggest influence on your professional career and why?

Mike Hicks. Since day one, Mike has encouraged a fun work environment and is never too busy for anything. It didn't take long after being hired to tell that Mike had the respect of every employee in the building, and the entire company had a "bring it on" attitude. I really liked the culture. I recognized that this was such a positive environment, completely opposite of my previous job where it was all about numbers. Mike has molded me and built me up from the very bottom. It has taken years, but he was there for me every step of the way.

The other person who has had the biggest influence on my professional career would be my late grandfather, Edwin Johansson. From a very young age, he made sure that I knew it doesn't matter what you are doing, just do it the best you can. Give it your all. It doesn't matter if your job is to lick and seal envelopes at the post office, just be the best in the world at what you do. I try to live by that every day.

What motivates you in business and in life?

Fear. Fear of failing. Fear of becoming stagnant. Fear of not living up to my potential. Many people view fear as a negative thing or as a weakness. I use my fears to push myself forward. Fear drives me every day. It can be healthy to be fearful.

What is your greatest professional accomplishment?

Getting out of my own way. I was my own biggest enemy for a very long time. Instead of executing a good plan today, I would be hesitant to act until the plan was perfect. Too often the time of opportunity passed by the time the plan was perfect. So, instead of making sure everything is just right, now I have the ability to say this is a good plan, and execute it.

This is definitely my greatest professional accomplishment.

What advice would you give to an industry newcomer?

Be genuine and transparent. Building relationships is key to being successful in this industry. PPB

Julie Richie is associate editor for PPB.

Licensed To Chill

Taiga ups the custom cooler game with patented technology

by Jen Alexander

Whether you're camped out in a deer blind or cruising on the lake, hard-sided coolers with incredible ice retention are a hot commodity that's become an even hotter trend. Dallas, Texas-based, veteran-owned supplier Taiga Coolers has turned up the heat on the competition by introducing coolers with a patented twist on customization.

The cooler craze was in full effect when John Hohenshelt and Adam Artho met through a mutual friend in 2013. Though each was pursuing a career in other industries, the two came together to launch Taiga officially in 2014, determined to offer a unique version of a popular product.

"We are a custom cooler company with a standard product line," says Hohenshelt. The product range is limited—coolers and tumblers are the supplier's bread and butter—but there's a good reason for that.

"While everyone else is doing rotational molding [for hard-sided coolers], we have patented a method of injection molding, putting the logos into the plastic," he says. "In the promotional products industry, everyone wants a 'Brand Y' product—but they are getting very little long-term branding from a very expensive item" when the name-brand coolers aren't customized with a client's logo, color or name.

Taiga's main product differentiator, says Hohenshelt, is the ability to mold customer logos into the front of coolers using the customer's company colors. "All of this is permanent

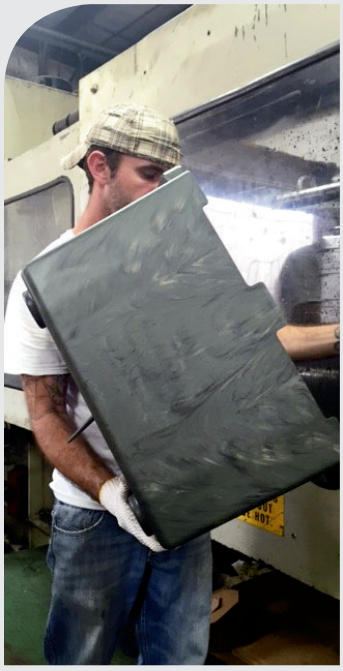
John Hohenshelt, left, and co-owner Adam Artho are leaving their mark on the custom cooler business.

on the cooler, so the logo is seen every time a person goes into the cooler for a beverage."

The development process—including the development and manufacture of injection molding equipment—took roughly eight months, says Hohenshelt. Taiga's hard-sided coolers come in standard white and tan and in camouflage shades, but the company has plans to include more styles,

Read on to learn how Taiga's custom coolers are created.

1 A machine operator waits for the custom injection molding machine to finish before releasing the cooler.



2 Taiga's injection molding process allows for images such as logos and brand names to be incorporated directly into the cooler's plastic shell.

3 Cooler shells bearing Taiga's company logo are stacked in preparation for assembly.

particularly for collegiate fans. "We are in the process of acquiring collegiate licensing," says Artho.

"We'd like to create collegiate camouflage designs."

The stainless steel tumblers that are proving just as popular weren't initially on the owners' radar, says Hohenshelt. But on a lark they purchased a container-load of the drinkware, and approached decorating with the same desire to be unique in the industry.

"We laser etch and powdercoat the tumblers, and we also designed a lid for ease-of-use," says Hohenshelt. "Many customers don't know the difference between laser etching and pad printing. Laser etching lasts for the life of the product, whereas pad printing will eventually wear off. We will also powdercoat tumblers in custom colors and then laser etch logos so the stainless steel shows through." PPB

About Taiga Coolers

Principals: John Hohenshelt, Adam Artho

Founding Date: 2013

Facility Size: 15,000 combined square feet between three facilities: one in East Texas, and two in the DFW Metroplex

Notable Achievements: Taiga, which is veteran-owned and produces its custom products in the U.S. (Texas), has provided custom coolers and tumblers for the Chris Kyle Memorial Benefit.

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PPEF Executive Committee Visits PPAI For 2017 Planning Meeting

In October, PPAI hosted a visit from the Promotional Products Education Foundation's (PPEF) executive committee. Members of both PPEF's 2016 and newly-elected 2017 executive committees met at the Association's Irving, Texas, headquarters to develop plans and budgets for 2017 as well as conduct longer-term strategic planning on the future direction of PPEF. The final plans from the two-day session will go to the PPEF Board of Trustees for approval.

PPAI President and CEO Paul Bellantone, CAE, (second from left) PPEF Foundation Manager Sara Besly (third from left) and the Association's staff hosted members of PPEF's 2016 and newly-elected 2017 executive committees in October at its offices in Irving, Texas. Visitors included (from left) Immediate Past Chair Pat Dugan, MAS; 2016 Vice Chair–Scholarship Carol de Ville, MAS; 2016 Immediate Past Chair Kippie Helzel, MAS; Vice Chair–Strategic Planning & Budget Drew Davis, MAS; Chair Lori Bauer; Vice Chair–Scholarships Brian Porter; Vice Chair–Fundraising Paula Shulman, CAS; 2016 Vice Chair–Strategic Planning/Budget David Tate; and Vice Chair–Marketing & Recognition Stephanie Preston.

Imagine Promotional Group Raises Funds To Fight Alzheimer's

On October 15, a team of 25 from Imagine Promotional Group, Inc. participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Petaluma, California. They raised more than $4,000 to increase awareness and fund research to fight Alzheimer's disease. Part of the distributor's fundraising efforts included raffling off a "Big Bad Beer Lovers Basket" containing craft beer tours, craft beer, gift certificates and promotional items donated by key suppliers including PCNA, PicnicTime, Peerless Umbrella, ETS Express and AdNArt.

Distributor Imagine Promotional Group's team joined the Walk to End Alzheimer's and raised $4,000 to fight the disease.

SAAGNY Educates New Jersey's Legislators At Its Fall Showcase

At its September 20 Fall Showcase in Teaneck, New Jersey, the Specialty Advertising Association of Greater New York (SAAGNY) hosted visitors from the offices of New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and Rep. Scott Garrett. Mike Schenker, MAS, principal at Newton, New Jersey's Mike Schenker Consulting (UPIC: SCHENKER), escorted Dinesh Suryawanshi, a projects specialist for Sen. Booker, and Rob Pettet, a district director for Rep. Garrett, around the show, and introduced them to a number of the show's exhibitors and attendees to learn about their respective businesses.

Schenker says, "In each case, our guests 'got it.' They certainly understood promotional products in the most general sense, but they never imagined an industry of $22 billion. At the risk of putting words in their mouths, I believe they left with a better understanding about our industry as a whole and, more importantly, the people behind it."

Mike Schenker, MAS, (right) introduces Michele Jennrich, MAS, to (from left) Rob Pettet, district director for Rep. Scott Garrett, and Dinesh Suryawanshi, a projects specialist for Sen. Cory Booker, on the SAAGNY Fall Showcase show floor.

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MiPPA's Promotions That Roar! Show Hits New High

MiPPA's current and incoming board members were recognized during the show, including (from left, back row) MiPPA President-Elect Paul Zafarana; Jim McCollough, Edwards Garment; Sue Kinch, Kitchen Happy; RAC Delegate Valerie Hayman Sklar, Corporate Specialties; Immediate Past President Dave DeWitt, Advanced Marketing Partners; Patrick Kelleher, Headfirst Printing; MiPPA Executive Director Paul Kiewiet, MAS+ (from left, front row) Lisa Bascom, Amerifoam; Board Secretary Sarah Merrill, Mercury Promotions and Fulfillment; and Marci Schwartz Taran, The Bradley Company.

The Michigan Promotional Professionals Association (MiPPA) brought industry distributors and suppliers together September 28 at its Promotions That Roar! Show. The annual members-only, end-buyer fall booth show was held at Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions, in downtown Detroit. The show featured a trade show with 112 booths and a record 1,200 attendees, education opportunities, and visitors including Detroit Lions cheerleaders, the team's mascot, ROARY, and former Detroit Lions players Scott Conover and George Jamison.

Cody Miller and Stefanie Poe from SAGE get a photo with Detroit Lions' cheerleaders and the team's mascot, ROARY.

PPAI's Carol Gauger Connects With PPAM And Industry Companies In Kansas

PPAI Director of Member Engagement and Regional Relations Carol Gauger, MAS, was on the road this fall, meeting with the Promotional Products Association of The Midwest (PPAM) and industry companies in the region. She joined PPAM's Fall Showcase in St. Louis, Missouri, and Lenexa, Kansas, where she met with the regional association's board for a member recruitment and retainment strategy session. While in the area, Gauger attended a Rotary/Chamber of Commerce breakfast at the offices of TradeNet Publishing (UPIC: TRADENET), where Tom Mertz, CEO and president of TradeNet, was honored for 30 years of business and community service in Gardner, Kansas, and she visited industry service provider DistributorCentral, headquartered in Gardner, and its president, Jason Nokes.

Tom Mertz, CEO and president of TradeNet (right), leads a tour of the supplier's factory.

PPAI Director of Member Engagement and Regional Relations Carol Gauger, MAS, visits with DistributorCentral President Jason Nokes during a trip to the service provider's offices.

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* News Editor James Khattak at JamesK@ppai.org and be sure to include a description, plus your name and contact information.

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PEOPLE NEWS

compiled by James Khattak

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

Matthew T. Gresge

Nancy Bercovitz

Tessa Tumble

Kelly O'Brien, MAS

Courtney Doyle Vokovich

GOT NEWS?

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

BUSINESS SERVICES

ComplyBox (UPIC: L678943)—**Leeton Lee**, principal

DISTRIBUTORS

AIA Corporation (UPIC: advinadv)—**Matthew T. Gresge**, chief executive officer

Sonic Promos (UPIC: sonicpro)—**Jay Shaplin**, senior brand manager and vendor relations manager

SUPPLIERS

BAG MAKERS, Inc. (UPIC: BAGMAKRS)—**Nancy Bercovitz**, regional business development manager in the Northeast region—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island

Ennis, Inc. (UPIC: Ennis)—**Wade Brewer**, **Steve Reifel** and **Kevin Johnston**, promoted to business unit directors

Evans Manufacturing (UPIC: EVANS)—**Tessa Trumble**, upper Midwest senior account manager covering Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin

Heritage Sportswear (UPIC: HERI0002)—**Kelly O'Brien, MAS**, to manage accounts in Michigan and Northwest Ohio; and **Courtney Doyle Vokovich**, to manage accounts in Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida

Imagen Brands, parent company of suppliers **Crown Products** (UPIC: CROWNPRO) and **Vitronic** (UPIC: ACHIEVER)—**Jenny Staub**, promoted to senior director of marketing and product development

PWS (UPIC: pws)—**John Short**, Midwest/South regional sales manager

Spector & Co. (UPIC: SPEC0038)—**Shashi Singam**, director of digital media

IN MEMORIAM
John Barrett

John Barrett, a sales executive for Denver, Colorado-based distributor Specialty Incentives, passed away at his home on October 5. He was 62.

Born in Golden, Colorado, Barrett was the second-generation owner and operator of distributor L.W. Barrett Company. Specialty Incentives acquired L.W. Barrett in 2010.

Barrett is survived by his former wife Connie Barrett; daughter Mindy Levens and her husband Hans; son Aaron and his wife Kiley; two half-sisters, four grandchildren, two nieces, two nephews and five cousins.

A memorial service for Barrett was held at Tabor-Rice Funeral Home in Brighton, Colorado.

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Carleen Gray

Jason Ziga

Jennifer Joseph

Greg Peirce

Mike Sellers

Sandy Nichols, MAS

Paola Soler

Jorge Saez

Stahls' (UPIC: STAH0001)—**Carleen Gray**, promoted to vice president of commercial sales and marketing; **Jason Ziga**, promoted to vice president, screen print transfer technology; **Jennifer Joseph**, promoted to vice president of U.S. regional sales; and **Greg Peirce**, promoted to vice president, chief technology officer

Sterling Cut Glass (UPIC: STERL881)—**Mike Sellers**, director of sales.

Storm Creek (UPIC: StormCrk)—**Sandy Nichols, MAS**, national/key account sales role

World Emblem (UPIC: WORLP003)—**Paola Soler**, promoted to territory account managers for the Southeast region; and **Jorge Saez**, promoted to territory account manager for the Northeast region

IN MEMORIAM / Marcy Lazarus

Marcy Lazarus, president of Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based distributor Promotional Breezes (UPIC: breezes), passed away on September 27 in Boynton Beach. She was 64.

While Lazarus' career began in special education, her husband, Bill, introduced her to the promotional products industry. They worked together at Promotional Images in Emerson, New Jersey, which Bill started in 1985. He sold the company to Allied Office Products in 1999. They returned to the industry in 2004 with the launch of Promotional Breezes.

"She was very supportive of my father," says her son, Steven Lazarus, MAS, who has been running the company for the past three years. He says his mother will be remembered for her pink lipstick, sweet and sour meatballs, and her passion for bringing people of different backgrounds together.

At Lazarus' funeral on September 29, about 600 people came to pay their respects. Steven adds, "She was very, very loved."

Lazarus is survived by her husband Bill; her son Steven and daughter Alli; sister-in-law and brother-in-law Jayne and Ed Hollander; her nieces, cousins and many friends.

Memorial contributions honoring Lazarus can be made to the American Heart Association, 2300 Centrepark West Drive, West Palm Beach, Florida 33409 or Temple Sinai of Palm Beach County, 2475 W. Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33445.

IN MEMORIAM
Graham Bennington

Graham Bennington, former CEO of BemroseBooth in Hull, UK, passed away on October 20 after a short battle with cancer. He was 66.

Bennington joined what was then known as the Bemrose Corporation in 1977. Over the years he held a number of positions within the company before becoming CEO in 2000.

Martin Varley, CEO of industry business services provider Customer Focus, credits Bennington for getting him into the promotional products industry. In a LinkedIn post he writes, "He was so talented as a business leader it was impossible to hold him in anything but the highest of esteems, he was an expert negotiator, HR guru (he called it personnel) and leader. He took a company that was just a supplier of car park and rail tickets to the number one company for promo products in the world. He knew when to invest and when to divest, he shared his skills widely, encouraged enthusiastically, and every now and again very elegantly gave you that look and you knew you had not quite done your best.

"He supported me when I didn't deserve it, he had my back, front and side and we laughed and we laughed and we laughed."

Bennington passed away at the Butterfly Hospice in Boston, Lincolnshire. He is survived by his wife Sandie, and children Suzy and Ian.

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Datebook

compiled by James Khattak

The important events shaping the promotional industry.

JANUARY

January 8-12
PPAI Expo 2017
Promotional Products Association International
Las Vegas, Nevada / expo.ppai.org

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

January 10-12
The PSI Trade Fair
Promotional Product Service Institute
Düsseldorf, Germany
www.psi-network.org

January 18-20
ASI Orlando
Advertising Specialty Institute
Orlando, Florida
www.asicentral.com

January 23-27
Southern Showcase
LDK Marketing
Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston, Texas
www.LDKmarketing.com/southernshowcase

January 24
TSPAA "The TOM Show"
Tri-State Promotional Professionals Association
Cincinnati, Ohio
www.tsppa.org

January 25-26
Promotional Products Expo
Customer Focus
Coventry, UK
www.ppexpo.co.uk

January 25-26
OPPA "The TOM Show"
Ohio Promotional Professionals Association
Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio
www.oppagroup.com

January 27
MiPPA "The TOM Show"
Michigan Promotional Professionals Association
Troy, Michigan
www.mippa.org

January 31
GAPPP Expo 2017
Georgia Association of Promotional Products Professionals
Atlanta, Georgia
www.gappp.org

January 31
PAPPA Winter Showcase
Philadelphia Area Promotional Products Association
Springfield, Pennsylvania
www.mypappa.org

January 31-February 2
PPAM "The TOM Show"
Promotional Products Association Midwest
St. Louis, Missouri; Lenexa, Kansas; and Omaha, Nebraska
www.ppam.org

FEBRUARY

February 1 (Tentative)
CPPA Winter Expo
Chesapeake Promotional Products Association
Baltimore, Maryland
www.cppa.biz

February 1-3
ASI Dallas
Advertising Specialty Institute
Dallas, Texas
www.asicentral.com

February 2
SAAGNY Winter Showcase
Specialty Advertising Association of Greater New York
Suffern, New York
www.saagny.org

February 10-14
PPPC National Convention 2016
Promotional Product Professionals of Canada
Toronto, Ontario
www.promocan.com

February 13-17
Southern Showcase
LDK Marketing
Baton Rouge and Shreveport, Louisiana; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
www.LDKmarketing.com/southernshowcase

February 27-28
NEPPA Season Opener Expo
New England Promotional Products Association
Foxboro, Massachusetts
www.neppa.com

MARCH

March 7
TRASA Expo
Three Rivers Advertising Specialty Association
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
www.trasa.net

March 7
UMAPP Fire & Ice Show
Upper Midwest Association of Promotional Professionals
Shakopee, Minnesota
www.umapp.org

March 22-23
NWPMA Brandlandia
Northwest Promotional Marketing Association
Portland, Oregon
www.nwpma.org

March 28-30
VAPPA Road Show
Virginia Promotional Products Association
Roanoke, Richmond and Chesapeake, Virginia
www.whymappa.org

March 20-21
CAAMP Carolinas Connection
Carolinas Association of Advertising and Marketing Professionals
Concord, North Carolinas
www.caampers.org

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1 One Stop Printing Solutions
PPAI# 679313 UPIC: 1679313

5 Dollar School Tees
PPAI# 668489 UPIC: 5DST

76 Ink Screenprinting
PPAI# 689359 UPIC: 7689359

A Banners, Signs & Specialties
PPAI# 198348 UPIC: ABSS

Ad Infin Item
PPAI# 276897 UPIC: ADINP001

AdLipps, LLC
PPAI# 615143 UPIC: ADLIPPS

Advanced Promotional Services
PPAI# 264799 UPIC: Advan318

Adventures in Advertising - Marketing Solutions Promotional Products
PPAI# 689491 UPIC: A689491

Advertising Concepts, Inc.
PPAI# 510138 UPIC: A510138

All About Sports And Awards
PPAI# 533896 UPIC: A533896

All Things Branded
PPAI# 524863 UPIC: ALTHBR

ARC Printing
PPAI# 683470 UPIC: A683470

Aspen Imaging, LLC
PPAI# 532565 UPIC: S532565

A-Z OFFICE RESOURCE
PPAI# 681495 UPIC: AZORINC

Barbed Cotton
PPAI# 673967 UPIC: B673967

BAY IMPRINT
PPAI# 553791 UPIC: B553791

Biltmore Marketing
PPAI# 412508 UPIC: B412508

Blue Moss Gift Company
PPAI# 676620 UPIC: B676620

Business Diversity, Inc.
PPAI# 689432 UPIC: B689432

Business Solutions
PPAI# 689831 UPIC: B689831

Caligraphix
PPAI# 638293 UPIC: C638293

Carpe Dm
PPAI# 652214 UPIC: C652214

CCI Graphics, Inc.
PPAI# 258126 UPIC: CCIGr620

Cherottie Investments & Holdings Ltd.
PPAI# 431209 UPIC: C431209

ChiefMart.com
PPAI# 638039 UPIC: chiefmar

Chris Lausier Corp.
PPAI# 689497 UPIC: C689497

Command Business Products
PPAI# 452203 UPIC: C452203

Computer Ink
PPAI# 455538 UPIC: Compuink

CorpLogoMart
PPAI# 676699 UPIC: C676699

Creating Brand Legacy, Worldwide, LLC
PPAI# 689330 UPIC: C689330

CZS Marketing & Promotions
PPAI# 651525 UPIC: CZSPROMO

Darco Services
PPAI# 667264 UPIC: D667264

Davis Embroidery, Inc.
PPAI# 258163 UPIC: D258163

DBR Unique Promotions
PPAI# 679147 UPIC: D679147

DCL Productions, Inc.
PPAI# 367833 UPIC: DCLPROD

dhl Business Solutions
PPAI# 689407 UPIC: D689407

DigiThread Art
PPAI# 689405 UPIC: D689405

D-Media Group
PPAI# 659056 UPIC: D659056

Dream City Promotional Products
PPAI# 681287 UPIC: D681287

Dynamic Products
PPAI# 372951 UPIC: D372951

Embroidme / Doral
PPAI# 681346 UPIC: E681346

Embroidme / Lexington
PPAI# 682093 UPIC: E682093

Embroidme / New Tampa
PPAI# 678524 UPIC: E678524

EmbroidMe of Columbia Northwest
PPAI# 455066 UPIC: E455066

EmbroidMe/Chillicothe
PPAI# 619916 UPIC: E619916

Embroidme-Davenport
PPAI# 455194 UPIC: E455194

Embroidme-Hialeah
PPAI# 455058 UPIC: E455058

Emerald City Apparel
PPAI# 272573 UPIC: AJLogos

ESP Promos
PPAI# 682446 UPIC: E682446

Exemplar Design
PPAI# 689263 UPIC: E689263

EXPERIENCE MARKETING
PPAI# 619014 UPIC: E619014

Express !T /RANDY FUHRMAN DESIGNS
PPAI# 690274 UPIC: Press1t

Expressway Printing
PPAI# 682488 UPIC: E682488

F3E Marketing
PPAI# 682321 UPIC: F682321

Fastsigns
PPAI# 682614 UPIC: F682614

FM Advertising
PPAI# 623001 UPIC: FMAD

Freedom Awards
PPAI# 620741 UPIC: F620741

FrontRunner Promotions
PPAI# 538736 UPIC: F538736

G1 Concept
PPAI# 657935 UPIC: G657935

Geiger
PPAI# 679015 UPIC: G679015

Geiger
PPAI# 679204 UPIC: G679204

General Graphics
PPAI# 581523 UPIC: GenGra1

Giraphics Type & Design
PPAI# 682303 UPIC: G682303

Given Consulting
PPAI# 689393 UPIC: Given

Global Product Solutions
PPAI# 455551 UPIC: G455551

Goats Graphics
PPAI# 689690 UPIC: G689690

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.

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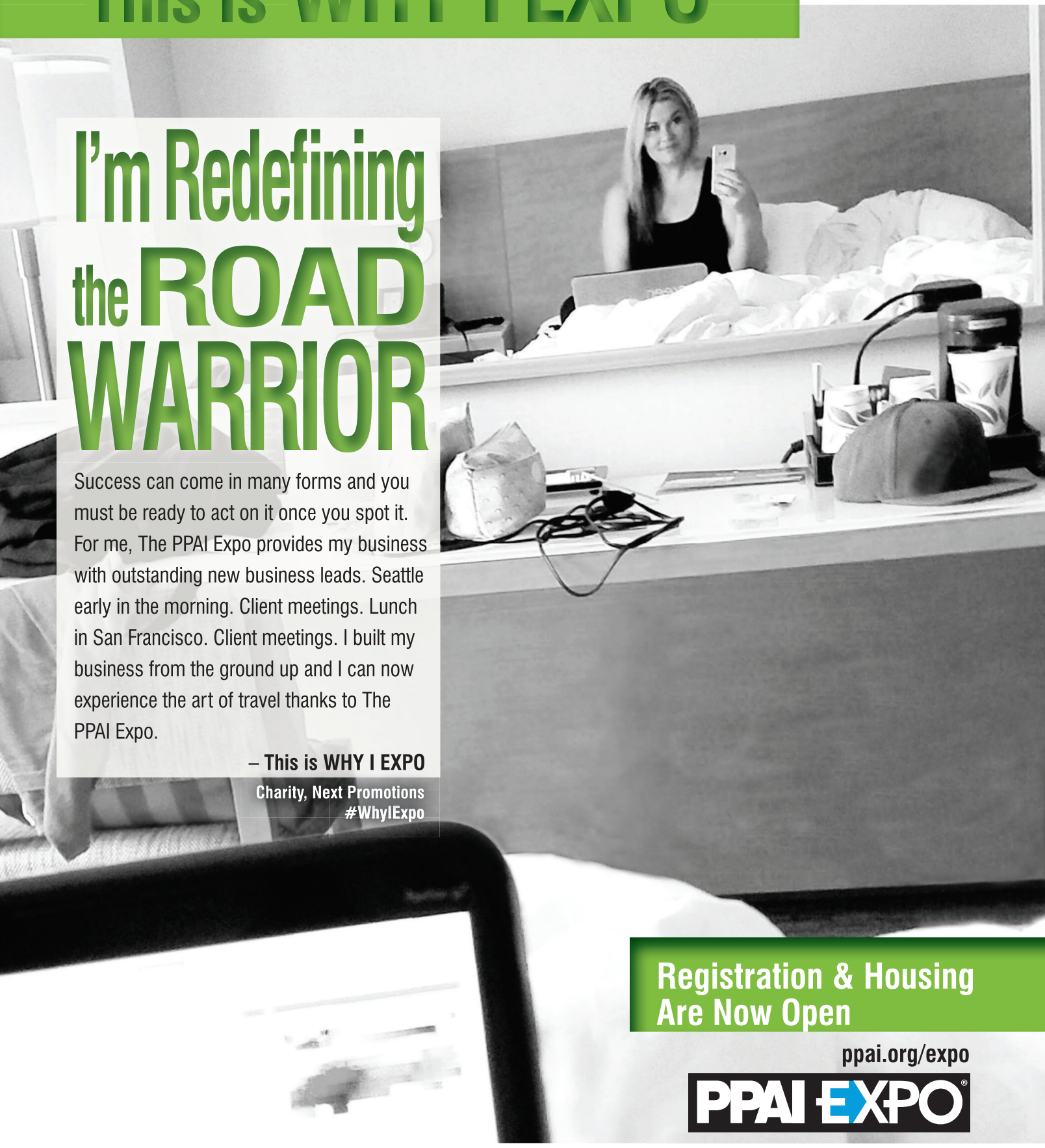
This Is WHY I EXPO



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HALO
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HALO
PPAI# 691261 UPIC: H691261

Heavenly Enterprises Midwest
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I Design Tshirts
PPAI# 625957 UPIC: I625957

IDM, Inc.
PPAI# 669244 UPIC: I669244

Impact Specialties & Promotions, LLC
PPAI# 683290 UPIC: I683290

Impeccable Productions
PPAI# 556713 UPIC: ImpecPro

Impress DC Media
PPAI# 689861 UPIC: I689861

Infinite Productions
PPAI# 683267 UPIC: I683267

Innovative Inks
PPAI# 438641 UPIC: ININKS

Internetwork Media
PPAI# 668016 UPIC: I668016

iPROMOTEu - ORION Promotional Group, LLC
PPAI# 682243 UPIC: I682243

ISLAND IMPRINTS
PPAI# 552851 UPIC: I552851

J B M Technology
PPAI# 638558 UPIC: J638558

J Freez Print and Design
PPAI# 689385 UPIC: J689385

J. Ryder Group
PPAI# 491486 UPIC: JRyder

JA-COR International, Inc.
PPAI# 411567 UPIC: JACOR

Jrc Shirts N More
PPAI# 531755 UPIC: J531755

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Suzie Chemel

Co-Owner
Foxy Originals
Toronto, Ontario
PPAI# 642034 UPIC: F642034

Suzie Chemel (left) and Jennifer Ger are co-owners of Foxy Originals.

How did your company get its start? Jennifer Ger and I have been designing and manufacturing jewelry and accessories for over 18 years. We in college and began our jewelry business out of our dorm room. We've always had a knack for designing what people really want in terms of accessories. Between our ideas and my family's background in the jewelry business it was a winning combination from the start.

After obtaining a formal business education, we began attending trade shows and selling to boutique buyers around the U.S. and Canada. Once we established our brand, Foxy Originals, as a leading accessories producer in North America, distributors started approaching us to do work for their big brand clients like Nike, Smashbox, Benefit and Mattel. That was when we began our love affair with the promotional products industry.

What led your company to enter the promotional products market? We always associated the promotional products industry with pens and hats but then we started noticing that people wanted something more—and that's where we could offer our strength. The kinds of things we produce, like jewelry and scarves, are keepsakes that people really use in their daily lives. They are personal and really resonate with people. Our designs are always on trend, which ensures that they are really wearable and work into an outfit. For example, we worked with a large drugstore chain to create necklaces for their staff. Two years later when I pop into their stores, the staff are often wearing the jewelry.

What's your favorite thing about being in the promotional products industry? We love the variety that comes with working on a custom program for a client, as no two projects are alike. Whether it's designing the perfect custom box for a bangle set or creating a beautiful scarf pattern out of the elements of a client's corporate logo it's so exciting to create gifts that are totally unique each time. We love how our clients tell us that when the delivery arrives with a client prototype they all rush to open it.

Why did you join PPAI? We attended our first PPAI show in January and were amazed at the interest in our product offering and also at the quality of the clients that the distributors represent. To name drop just a little, we've already worked with Instagram and Facebook on custom projects through the distributors we've met through PPAI. Our booth was so crowded last time that next year we're doubling our booth size.

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PPAI# 641223 UPIC: J641223

KABRIC'S
PPAI# 681735 UPIC: K681735

Kerry Mackan Marshall
PPAI# 689249 UPIC: K689249

Kerusso
PPAI# 621714 UPIC: pgn1987

Keynote Images, LLC
PPAI# 582712 UPIC: K582712

KNS Promotions, Inc.
PPAI# 642103 UPIC: K642103

Largo Ad Specialties
PPAI# 689636 UPIC: L689636

Life Impressions
PPAI# 682594 UPIC: L682594

Lime Biscuit
PPAI# 689537 UPIC: L689537

LOGO IMPRINTS
PPAI# 669361 UPIC: L669361

Logomotive Promotions
PPAI# 635415 UPIC: L635415

Lonestar Promo Products
PPAI# 461615 UPIC: L461615

Lulu's Printing and More
PPAI# 503328 UPIC: HCPM68

Manuel Screen Printing
PPAI# 656190 UPIC: M656190

Maximum Exposure, Inc.
PPAI# 345920 UPIC: me4mrkt

MBK Corporate Promotions, LLC
PPAI# 349088 UPIC: mbkcorp

Merge Marketing & PR
PPAI# 618480 UPIC: M618480

Metro Pins, Inc.
PPAI# 511155 UPIC: METROPIN

Mid South Engravers Plus
PPAI# 682305 UPIC: M682305

MILE HIGH LASER ENGRAVING
PPAI# 650786 UPIC: M650786

MJK Marketing Solutions
PPAI# 683243 UPIC: M683243

MORENO SIGN FACTORY
PPAI# 646062 UPIC: M646062

New Viison, Inc.
PPAI# 689692 UPIC: N689692

Northern Printing & Syst
PPAI# 283638 UPIC: NORTP019

Northstar Promotions, Inc.
PPAI# 205815 UPIC: NPI

OneUp Promos
PPAI# 682124 UPIC: 0682124

Oui Print Limited
PPAI# 303851 UPIC: OUIPP001

Out of the Box Promotions
PPAI# 689479 UPIC: 0689479

Photo Booth Talk
PPAI# 634633 UPIC: PBT

Pledge Promotional Agency
PPAI# 689291 UPIC: P689291

Potomac Engraving, Inc.
PPAI# 531111 UPIC: P531111

Premier Advertising, Inc.
PPAI# 594439 UPIC: P594439

Premier Printing, LLC
PPAI# 682132 UPIC: P682132

Primal Marketing Group
PPAI# 689463 UPIC: P689463

Printerator Promotional Products
PPAI# 382167 UPIC: Print101

Professional Paraphenerlia Ltd.
PPAI# 682237 UPIC: P682237

Proforma XTI
PPAI# 439149 UPIC: XTI

Promo World, LLC
PPAI# 690216 UPIC: P690216

Prototypes
PPAI# 689339 UPIC: P689339

Pyramid Sign, LLC
PPAI# 689423 UPIC: P689423

RDA Graphics
PPAI# 682221 UPIC: R682221

Rise Marketing
PPAI# 691270 UPIC: R691270

Rivmedia Group
PPAI# 683466 UPIC: R683466

RW-Associates
PPAI# 689717 UPIC: R689717

Safeguard Safeguard
PPAI# 688027 UPIC: 17EX2273

SC Print and Promo
PPAI# 690013 UPIC: S690013

Schneider-Hence
PPAI# 263514 UPIC: SHence

Seasons Best
PPAI# 350650 UPIC: Seasons

See Joe Print
PPAI# 681360 UPIC: S681360

Sew Spor-Tee
PPAI# 536983 UPIC: S536983

Sherwood Group, Inc.
PPAI# 689974 UPIC: S689974

Shirts Galore & More
PPAI# 682339 UPIC: S682339

SignDog Media
PPAI# 679133 UPIC: S679133

Simple Sourcing, LLC
PPAI# 690105 UPIC: S690105

SMW Enterprizes
PPAI# 108620 UPIC: S108620

Souders Promotions
PPAI# 285908 UPIC: SOUDP001

SourceGoodwill.com
PPAI# 689700 UPIC: S689700

SPEEDCRAFT
PPAI# 590323 UPIC: S590323

SS Comm
PPAI# 678721 UPIC: S678721

Publisher's Statement

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Tina Berres Filipski, Editor

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Total Copies	14,785	14,587
Mail Subscriptions	14,419	14,322
Total Paid Circulation	14,419	14,322
Other Distribution	349	245
Total Distribution	14,768	14,567
Copies Not Distributed	17	20
Total	14,785	14,587

I certify the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Tina Berres Filipski, Editor

Steve's Custom Signs, Inc.
PPAI# 449147 UPIC: S449147

Stockwise Solutions
PPAI# 682168 UPIC: S682168

Suitup, LLC
PPAI# 433554 UPIC: S433554

Sunlure, Inc.
PPAI# 531153 UPIC: Sunlure

The Intercorp Group
PPAI# 262421 UPIC: intercor

The Picture Spa
PPAI# 595412 UPIC: T595412

The Premium 1 Package, Inc.
PPAI# 469450 UPIC: P1Pinc

THE STITCHGUYZ
PPAI# 641873 UPIC: T641873

Tower One Promotions
PPAI# 682217 UPIC: T682217

Tritex Logistics Limited
PPAI# 682091 UPIC: T682091

T-Shirts Plus Color
PPAI# 398204 UPIC: T398204

Turtle Creek Traders, LLC
PPAI# 689504 UPIC: 3689504

Twenty Ink
PPAI# 594664 UPIC: T594664

Uncle Joes Graphics
PPAI# 534416 UPIC: U534416

Union Services Alliance
PPAI# 689265 UPIC: U689265

Vac Marketing
PPAI# 526488 UPIC: V526488

Varidoc
PPAI# 689421 UPIC: V689421

Watermark Group
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