

# PROMOSOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS FOR INTEGRATING PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS INTO MARKETING PROGRAMS

## The Distributor Advantage:

BOTTOMLINE REASONS FOR USING A PROMOTIONAL CONSULTANT



business accessories and more.

Of course, with today's internet search tools, a buyer can "google" a product and make the purchase with a click of a mouse. With these capabilities, why is it still a smart, strategic move to support the traditional distributor-supplier supply chain model that is the backbone of this century-old business? The answer is simple. Buyers who use distributors—or promotional consultants—to purchase promotional products will save both time and money, as well as receive a stronger impression and return for their investment. Below are seven critical reasons to use a promotional consultant.

### PROMOTIONAL FACT:

**Your promotional consultant can help you measure ROI for your marketing campaign.**

- 1. You are dealing with a recognized business professional.** Like many industries, promotional products consultants adhere to professional standards that protect both the industry and the customer.
- 2. Promotional consultants understand the big picture.** These consultants are not just order-takers; they are available to provide marketing direction. Promotional consultants can help you clarify your objectives, provide consistency and integrate your promotional products as key components in your marketing communications programs. Promotional consultants can become an important part of your creative team.

In recent years, organizations have discovered the marketing power of promotional products—turning a 100-plus year business into a thriving \$17 billion industry. No longer are promotional products just leave-behind campaign bumper stickers; they've expanded and evolved into a sophisticated world of name-brand wearables, high-tech products, writing instruments, calendars, drinkware,

- 3. Promotional consultants are exposed to a broader reach of products.** With special products sourcing tools like UPIC—an industry-supported database that includes thousands of products and suppliers—distributors are able to locate unique items not available to the end buyer, receive the best pricing and order products quickly and efficiently.
- 4. Experience. Promotional consultants know what works and what doesn't.** These consultants are able to quickly identify and recommend products that best represent your organization and its message.
- 5. Promotional consultants understand the technology.** Often times, the type of product and method of printing affect the price and quality of the product. They can recommend the type of imprinting to be used on the product. In addition, consultants will guide you on the artwork specifications and get imprinted samples for your review.
- 6. Receive best pricing.** Promotional consultants have strong relationships with a variety of suppliers. Smaller promotional consultants might be a part of a buying group and larger ones certainly have the clout to push for "end-column" pricing, meaning the lowest price without the quantity demands. These savings are passed on directly to the end buyer.
- 7. Promotional consultants can help develop a distribution plan.** Purchasing products does nothing for marketing campaigns unless these products are delivered to recipients in a timely and interesting manner. Promotional consultants can help devise and execute a timely distribution plan for your products.

For more guidance on executing promotional products in your next marketing campaign, consult the promotional products professional listed on the cover of this publication, or contact Promotional Products Association International at [www.ppa.org](http://www.ppa.org) to locate a PPAI member consultant near you.

**Brought To You By:**

# Top 10 Industries That Use Promotional Products

## AND THE REASONS WHY THEY DO

Many industries consistently rely on promotional products as a key component to their marketing programs. PPAI, the only national not-for-profit association for the promotional products industry, did the research on these top industries, and here's what was discovered:

### Top 10 Buyers Of Promotional Products By Industry\*\*

1. Education
2. Financial Services
3. Healthcare
4. Not-For-Profit
5. Construction
6. Government
7. Trade/Professional Associations
8. Real Estate
9. Automotive
10. Professional Services (legal, accounting, etc.)

\*\* 2004 research

### PROMOTIONAL FACT:

**Your promotional consultant can provide you with facts on why promotional products work and how they achieve results.**

The Caterpillar company used a promotional consultant to develop a campaign to promote a new engine to a highly selective list of prospects. With an attention-getting mailer and a shrink-wrapped compass, Caterpillar established its new engine as a means of "finding your way out of the forest of emissions regulations." The mailing was simple and clever, and the real clincher was the promise to hand-deliver a high-value, name brand Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) unit to prospects who scheduled personal sales presentations from Caterpillar. The GPS unit was imprinted with the familiar CAT logo and proved to be a highly sought-after item. The end results yielded a 48-percent response rate and a 16-percent conversion to sales.

Certainly, there are many reasons why companies like Caterpillar are adding promotional products into their marketing mix. PPAI interviewed many promotional consultants and buyers, and here's what was learned:

1. **Promotional products are flexible.** Whether your organization is trying to create a positive impression or generate sales leads, promotional products can fit any marketing objective.



2. **Products are tangible and long-lasting.** Most promotional products are designed for specific use, such as a writing pen or a golf shirt. Research supports the fact that recipients are willing to hold onto a product much longer if it serves a useful purpose.
3. **Impact can be easily measured.** Because promotional products are highly visible and highly tangible, it's easy to track the usage of products and measure significant change in behavior. This might be evident through an increase in sales, a need to order more products or a measurement of participation in a specific program.
4. **Promotional products create a higher perceived value.** Although cost-per-impression is low, promotional products give users a sense of value and need. As evident through recent studies, recipients of promotional products are more likely to do business with the company that sent the product to them.
5. **Promotional products can be highly targeted.** With such a wide range of products available for imprinting, products can be chosen that address a very specific audience.
6. **Promotional products complement other forms of advertising and promotion.** Promotional products can be easily incorporated into a full campaign that might include print advertising, direct mail, e-mail marketing and more. It's easy to incorporate the campaign's key messages into packaging and delivery of the promotional products.

For more case examples from specific industries in which promotional products were used, ask your promotional consultant about *IdeaSource*, created by PPAI. This CD and online resource includes a full library of award-winning campaigns, searchable by industry, company name and even product type.

### Top 10 Ways To Use Promotional Products

- Business gifts
- Tradeshow promotion
- Brand awareness
- Employee relations and events
- Public relations
- Dealer/Distributor programs
- New customer/account generation
- New product or service introduction
- Internal promotion
- Employee service awards

# Why Choose A Certified Promotional Consultant?

## WHAT MAS AND CAS MEAN FOR YOU

When you don't feel good, you refer to a doctor—MD. When you have a toothache, you turn to a dentist—DDS. If you need help with your taxes, you hire the services of a CPA. Why should you be concerned with all these letters and what do they mean for you? In short, these abbreviations stand for one word—expertise. These letters represent the fact that these professionals are trained experts in their respected fields of work. In fact, we seek these letters as a “seal of approval” when hiring professional services.

Do you take the same care and attention when it comes to creating your organization's marketing campaign? You should. After all, a 2005 survey by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) indicated that the primary concern of today's marketers is accountability. In other words, today's CEOs are demanding measurable results from senior level marketers.

To meet these accountability demands and achieve measurable results, you have to develop campaigns that have impact and recall. That's where a professional can help.

Start with three simple letters: MAS or CAS. That's the promotional products industry designation for EXPERT. A MAS (Master Advertising Specialist) or CAS (Certified Advertising Specialist) designation after a distributor's name means they've earned one of the industry's only official certifications.

Certification criteria is based on certain measures of professional competency including: industry experience, earned certification points through continuing professional education curriculum, and a comprehensive examination process. Maintaining a MAS or CAS requires re-certification every three years and adherence to the professional code of ethics of the Promotional Products Association International.

**PROMOTIONAL FACT:**  
**Certified promotional consultants bring added value to your marketing program by providing greater knowledge, expertise and resources.**

Approximately three percent of promotional products professionals today have achieved the industry's certification standards, making them true leaders and innovators in the business. Certified promotional products professionals bring added value to your marketing program—and that means accountability. Here's what else you can count on:

**UP-TO-DATE ON THE LATEST TRENDS**— Through continuing education and networking, these individuals are always up-to-date on the latest

## Questions To Ask When Hiring A Promotional Consultant

1. Does the promotional consultant seem interested in your business, your competition and your challenges? Does he/she ask the right questions in order to define the objectives and opportunities?
2. Does the promotional consultant have experience in providing solutions for your industry?
3. Is the consultant more interested in his/her products or more interested in the message you are trying to convey through your campaign?
4. How many products / what types of products does the promotional consultant represent?
5. What type of supplier network / relationships does the promotional consultant have? Does the promotional consultant work with US-based suppliers or does he/she go direct to overseas manufacturers?
6. Does the promotional consultant have any case examples of clients with similar issues/ goals as your own?
7. Is the promotional consultant a MAS/CAS designee?
8. What can you expect as far as customer service? If there is a problem with the order, who will handle this?
9. What are the art requirements? Do they accept electronic files? Do they have an in-house art department? Are there additional charges for creative services?
10. How does the promotional consultant determine competitive pricing and freight estimates?
11. Does the consultant have references that you can call?
12. Is the consultant confident in meeting your deadline?

products, industry innovations and trends and can help you stay ahead of your competition.

**PROVEN TRACK RECORD**—These professionals have already proven they know the industry and how to help the customer.

**GREATER KNOWLEDGE**—Because certification comes only after extensive education, MAS/CAS designees have a greater knowledge base from which to work.

**HIGHEST LEVEL OF SERVICE**—Because these individuals are trained to be service experts, you can count on them to handle your account with unparalleled professionalism.

**WELL CONNECTED AND RESPECTED**—Individuals carrying one of these designations are well connected in the industry and are respected by the manufacturers and suppliers of promotional products.

**OFFER MORE THAN A PRODUCT**—With their expertise, MAS/CAS designees are able to help you develop entire marketing campaigns designed to make sure your efforts result in success.

# Maximum Recall: Proven Reasons Why Promotional Products Work

CASE STUDIES OF XEROX® AND WELLS REAL ESTATE FUNDS®

Look at your desk or inside your desk drawers. Do you have a useful product with a logo imprinted on it? What about your pen, your mousepad, or the dispenser for your “sticky” notes? Logo-imprinted products are everywhere and usually within easy reach. These imprinted products are used to promote a product, service or company program.

Promotional products have reached a high level of popularity because they are flexible, tangible and long lasting. But how effective are these products when it comes to influencing or changing one’s perception or behavior towards an organization and its products or services?

To answer these questions, Promotional Products Association International conducted a 2004 research study and the results were quite surprising.

In this study, over 800 business travelers were randomly surveyed at Dallas/ Ft.Worth International Airport. Of those surveyed, at least 71 percent reported receiving a promotional product within the last 12 months. Of this group, over 33 percent actually had the promotional product on them or with them.

## Effective Recall

Of those who responded to receiving a promotional product in the past 12 months, 76 percent of these participants could recall the name of the advertiser on the promotional product that they received. In comparison to traditional print advertising, only 53.5 percent of this same group could recall or name an advertiser they had seen in a magazine or newspaper in the previous week.

## Lasting Impressions

In this same study, 52 percent of the participants conducted business with the advertiser after receiving the promotional product. Of those who had not done business with the advertiser that gave them the product, almost half stated that they were more likely to do business with the company that gave them the product, and 52 percent reported having a more favorable impression of the advertiser after receiving the item.

## Repeated Exposure

One of the key advantages of using promotional products, as proven in this study, is the frequency of exposure. The more the item is used and the logo message is exposed to the user, the lower the cost per impression for the advertiser.

## Xerox® Made Its Mark...Using Promotional Products

To promote a key product feature – free black ink – in a product training program, Xerox turned to the promotional services of Creative Counsel. Working together, they launched an espionage-themed FBI (Free Black Ink) campaign with spy-themed products like a briefcase box, sunglasses and a fun puzzle that required the reinforced understanding of Xerox color printer key features. Within 45 days of the new product launch, **Xerox trained more than 7,500 channel representatives** and created important product awareness.



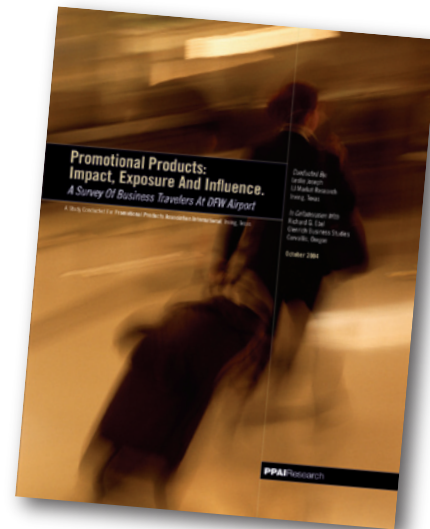
In the study of business travelers, 73 percent of those who had a promotional product stated that they used it at least once a week, and 45 percent claimed that they used a promotional product at least once a day. And, over half of the participants kept their promotional products for more than a year.

But why keep the products? Here's what the respondents had to say. Of those surveyed, 74 percent stated that they thought the item was useful.

This means that promotional products are not only cheaper per impression than traditional print advertising, they are long lasting and useful, leaving a positive impression on the recipient.

As proven by a high recall rate, impression and long-lasting exposure, promotional products are effective at influencing a person's decision to take action, such as using the company's products or services.

For more information on ways to incorporate promotional products into your next marketing program, refer to case studies provided in the PPAI-sponsored website [www.promobusinessbuilder.com](http://www.promobusinessbuilder.com) or ask your promotional consultant for case examples.



*Promotional Products—Impact, Exposure & Influence: A Survey Of Business Travelers At DFW Airport*  
PPAI Research available exclusively through the PPAI Bookstore. May be purchased online at [www.ppa.org/bookstore](http://www.ppa.org/bookstore).

### Wells Real Estate Funds® Made Its Mark...Using Promotional Products

Wells Real Estate Funds® was faced with the challenge of creating more unity and communication among its six divisions. It turned to the professional services of Summit Marketing, an award-winning promotional products agency. The results? A fun, eye-catching campaign in which six employees (one per division) were

awarded real surfboards for exhibiting the “Wells spark.”

These employees signed the boards and then passed along to other exemplary employees, who then did the same. Each Friday, all Wells employees received beach-themed products like beach bags, beach balls and sunglasses, to reinforce the campaign. The response was so enthusiastic to the well-chosen promotional items that **the company saw 100-percent participation in the program.**



# Promotional Products:

## THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO A FULLY INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Most marketing organizations today are focused on integrating their communications mediums - advertising, public relations, electronic marketing and direct marketing. But what can take a campaign from "just okay" to making a lasting impression? Promotional products.

Promotional products are often the missing – but very important – ingredients to a successful integrated marketing program. In order to determine how and why promotional products fit into a marketing program, we must first look at the key word: Integrated.

Today's marketers have various definitions of what it means to have an Integrated Marketing Communications program or IMC. The American Association of Advertising Agencies defines IMC as "the concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan. Such a plan evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact through seamless integration of discrete messages."

Effective IMC requires coordination of strategy. Collaboration at the planning stage is essential. To be effective, this requires an understanding of the different roles that each medium plays in the communications process. For example, print advertising might increase awareness, public relations influences the opinion and promotional products increases recall effectiveness. Coordinated together, all of these elements support and elevate the overall brand image.

This approach requires planning communications messages that are horizontal. In other words, the message must be interesting and simple, yet coordinated and adaptable across multiple mediums. For promotional products, this means choosing a product for which the message can be easily imprinted and delivered.

Coordinating the entire, integrated campaign requires flexibility. As a marketer you must be able to modify an image to most effectively communicate your message for various mediums. In other words, a pair of jeans might look great on a print ad, but most likely, you aren't going to mail a pair to recipients. However, there are many clever promotional products that could deliver a similar message.

With these elements in mind, it's a natural and effective step to incorporate promotional products into the IMC model. The following six easy steps are guidelines for integrating promotional products:

1. **First, it requires a mind shift** from thinking of a promotional product as a "complement" to your current campaign to an integral, strategic component of your integrated marketing communications program.
2. **Don't treat the product as an afterthought in the campaign—** incorporate into the budget-planning process. Determine the percentage of your budget that you are willing to spend on your product and how your product will be distributed. Remember, promotional products have long-lasting reach and recall so the cost per impression is often lower than traditional advertising.
3. **Make sure the products you choose represent the qualities of your organization.** If you are promoting a high-tech product, for example, you want to use a product that is innovative and modern. Also, incorporating promotional products often opens the doors to cross-marketing opportunities. Many name brand retailers today are entering the promotional products market.
4. **Determine your key message** and make sure your product clearly and simply delivers this message. With today's imprinting technologies, just about any product can be used in some way. The message must be consistent with the overall objectives of the entire marketing communications program.
5. **Determine what type of reaction or call-to-action** you want from the recipient. Do you want them to use the product on a daily basis? Do you expect the recipient to pass along the product to another user? Perhaps you want the recipient to request the product. If so, that message can be incorporated into the print advertising or other medium.
6. **Remember, timing is everything.** Will you send or give away your products at the beginning, middle or end of the campaign? Will the product be delivered concurrently with a running ad campaign? This is often determined by budget, as well as the number of products you wish to send.

While advertising and other marketing mediums open the doors, promotional products provide a lasting impression. Be a strategic marketer and make promotional products a key component in your next marketing campaign. For more information on promotional products, contact your local promotional product consultant or go to [www.buildapromotion.com](http://www.buildapromotion.com), created by Promotional Products Association International.

### PROMOTIONAL FACT:

**Promotional products have long-lasting reach and recall, so the cost per impression is often lower than traditional advertising.**

## Tradeshow Giveaways: THEY REALLY WORK

Tradeshows are an important component of the overall marketing mix for many companies. These shows are still the best venue for connecting buyers to sellers. In today's world, where technology is often taking place of face-to-face interaction, exhibiting in trade shows becomes the primary "live" opportunity to meet customers.

While tradeshow participation can be expensive, promotional products can play a key role in making sure tradeshow exhibitors get the best ROI.

Take pre-show promotions, for example. Research shows that 76 percent of tradeshow attendees have decided BEFORE they get to the convention which booths they will visit.

A 2004 study conducted by Georgia Southern University proved that including a pre-show mailing or an offer of a product increased the likelihood of an attendee stopping by the tradeshow booth. In fact, a pre-show gift, according to a study on tradeshow attendees, can produce three times greater traffic to an exhibit than an invitation without a gift.

"I always encourage my clients to define the demographics of their ideal customers. By going through this process, we can narrow down the specific product that fits in their budget but that is also appealing to the end recipient," explains Vytas P. Masalaitis, MAS with Widgets Promotions, Inc.

Giveaway items at the tradeshow booth are also very important. In fact, in a 2003 study by Georgia Southern University, 71.6 percent of the attendees who had received a promotional product remembered the name of the company that gave them the product and 76 percent had a favorable attitude toward the company.

Another popular approach, according to the Trade Show Bureau, is the use of "companion gifts," such as sending an imprinted coaster before the show and giving away a matching coffee mug at the booth.

"Sending out a two-part promotion is always an effective way to drive booth traffic," says Masalaitis. "For example, our client mailed a battery to their target prospects with the message and offer to receive the flashlight if they came by the booth."

So what items really work when it comes to tradeshow promotion? In short, it's the item that best represents your target audience. It's a proven fact, according to PPAI's 2004 study on the Effectiveness of Promotional Products at Tradeshows, that promotional products of greater value generate more sales leads than products of lower value.

Certainly, most exhibitors—especially those participating in very large shows—can't afford to give high-ticket products to all customers. That's why many companies are taking a segmented approach to booth giveaways. These exhibitors have several items of various values, from low to high. A person who simply walks by the booth or stops very briefly would receive the low-ticket item. A person who spends a few minutes at the booth, perhaps shares his/her contact information, would receive an item of higher value and usefulness. The person who actually sets an appointment with the booth representatives or sits through a demonstration would receive the highest ticket item.

**"When choosing the products, buyers should focus on results, not gimmicks,"** explains Masalaitis. **"Products need to be useful and relevant to the recipient. That's why it's important to work closely with distributors. We are able to source items and make appropriate product recommendations within the buyer's budget."**

Another important, but often forgotten, marketing opportunity is after-show marketing. Says Debbie Johnson, MAS from On Target Promotional Products, "I like to suggest that my clients hand-select the key prospects they want to follow up with, and then, a week after the show, send them a nice portfolio personalized with their name. Included on the inside left pocket of the portfolio is the brochure, offer and product information. On the inside right pocket, place a hand-written thank you note. This may be sent to only 25 to 50 leads, but what a WOW."

Promotional products will continue to be a very important component to the effectiveness of exhibiting at tradeshows. By mailing a product before the show and providing a product that is appropriate with the level of participation, booth traffic will be consistent, participants will walk away with a positive image of the exhibitor and the exhibitor will not "break the bank" when it comes to purchasing promotional products to use at the booth.

### *The Effectiveness Of Promotional Products In Tradeshow Settings*

PPAI Research available exclusively through the PPAI Bookstore at [www.ppai.org/bookstore](http://www.ppai.org/bookstore).



## Brand In Hand:

### PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS THAT CUSTOMERS KEEP

Coach. Fossil. Godiva. Movado. Ping. These brand names represent luxury, quality and indulgence. They also represent a growing number of retailers making the successful crossover into the promotional products market.

So when is it important to use retail brands in a promotional products program? In an article entitled “Are Brand Names Really That Important” from *PPB* magazine, Editor Lisa Horn interviewed members of the End Buyer Advisory Council to ask these very questions. The seven members of the Council represented many industries—such as manufacturing, education, sports, tourism, insurance, legal and financial—that are top users of promotional products. Here’s what they had to say:

#### **Are name brands important when purchasing promotional apparel?**

The panel of buyers unanimously agreed name brands are important because people recognize brands and attach a certain intrinsic value to the product because of a name. However, the degree of importance depends on the target audience and the nature of the promotion or event.

For in-house promotions, such as incentive or reward programs, this group of buyers tends to gravitate toward “brands that give the best quality at a reasonable cost and very few of these brands are considered ‘retail.’” Additionally, they find these house brands seem to be better in sizing. “When we order many of the name-brand shirts and jackets, they seem to run small,” indicates a buyer for one of America’s largest packaged food companies.

Conversely, name brands become more important in external promotions. “If we are purchasing for customer entertainment, we would consider name-brand promotion apparel,” says the buyer.

#### **What do name brands add to a program or campaign?**

If chosen well, name brands can bring “value perception and quality your customers know and trust,” according to a buyer in the soft drinks market. Credibility was also an attribute buyers recognized. But it goes beyond this.

Depending on the program, brands can make a huge difference. For example, “customers will flock to a giveaway item that has a name brand and a current season look,” says one buyer from the insurance industry. Additionally, notes

a merchandise manager for a prominent west coast horse-racing park, “If the volume of business warrants it, the name brand can bring in promotional monetary support, such as with advertising co-op dollars.”

#### **Do you discuss brands when making purchasing decisions with your distributor; and if so, how do you decide on which name brands to choose for your promotions?**

All buyers on the council indicated they do discuss brands with their distributors. And while distributor input is important to these buyers, personal experience with a brand is just as crucial.

“I will ask the distributor for advice on what is hot for the season,” says a buyer for an international law firm. “In the case of golf, I may talk to golfers, look at golf magazines and visit pro shops. I often ask for a sample to try myself or ask someone who plays golf to try out the item.”

Past brand performance is often one of the key determining factors when selecting apparel for an assistant vice president—marketing for an international bank. “We typically choose name brands with which we have had experience,” she says. “If, however, we are looking at a name brand we have not used previously, we always ask for a sample before buying.”

And let’s not forget about the role the target audience plays in the discussion of name brands. “I always discuss brands when making purchasing decisions,” says the insurance buyer. “We discuss specific needs or promotions first, price second. Cutting corners has its place, but the company is becoming more willing to pay a little extra for the brand exposure when it comes to image. But keep in mind this is when we’re marketing to our customers.”

#### **When given the choice between comparable products, would you prefer a name brand that is slightly more expensive (10 percent for example) versus a brand you don’t know?**

A foundation director for a city sports commission says in most cases, he would spend the additional money because “the name brand is a proven commodity.” And the assistant vice president-marketing agrees that the perceived value and quality are important. “The money you save may not be worth the 10 percent in the end,” she says.

So, the next time you put on a logo-embroidered shirt, reach for the imprinted pen or use the imprinted USB to transfer files, think about what drives you to use that product. Is it nostalgia? Is it the ‘cool factor’? Is it your loyalty to that brand? No matter the reason, you’ve taken the most important step in the eye of the marketer. You reached out your hand.

PromoSolutions is an annual publication designed to provide buyers with insight and case examples on the role of promotional products in overall marketing programs. PromoSolutions also provides guidelines for effectively working with promotional consultants to achieve the best end results. Additional copies of PromoSolutions are available through your promotional consultant or through the PPAI bookstore at [www.ppai.org/bookstore](http://www.ppai.org/bookstore).