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## **PPAI EDUCATES, INSPIRES AND RECOGNIZES ACHIEVEMENT AT THE PPAI EXPO 2008**

**Irving, Texas, (February 8, 2008)** As the longest running and largest tradeshow representing the \$18.8 billion promotional products industry, The PPAI Expo is widely recognized as the industry's premier event to kick off the selling year—and once again **Promotional Products Association International** (PPAI) announces a year of records.

“We always expect record numbers at Expo, but this year's statistics were phenomenal! The PPAI Expo 2008 once again surpassed all expectations in terms of attendance, education offerings, new product announcements and attendee energy and enthusiasm,” said Steve Slagle, CAE, PPAI president and CEO.

### **Show Numbers**

A record number of distributor companies, more than 5,000, and over 14,000 promotional consultants attended the show this year, according to final verified registration numbers. These figures include PPAI member and nonmember distributor companies, which qualified to attend as industry subscribers, supplier invitees or regional association members.

A total of 1,605 companies representing virtually every major supplier in the industry exhibited at The PPAI Expo 2008, and in terms of sheer size, the show absorbed 1.1 million gross square feet of exhibit space at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. The average attendee walked between five and eight miles a day! (Approximate numbers were gathered using pedometers during the show week.)

“We're really pleased with these numbers because they illustrate how essential this show is to our members and to the entire promotional products industry,” said Slagle. “The Expo is truly the industry's centerpiece bringing together all the top professionals in one location, at one time. It's their chance to see and touch new products, gather ideas from colleagues, hone their skills by participating in world-class education and expand their networks through peer-to-peer interaction. The PPAI Expo is truly their place to do business.”

### **New Product Pavilion**

This year, the New Product Pavilion (NPP) hosted nearly 500 suppliers who introduced 823 new products, including several green items in keeping with PPAI's theme of “Going Green In 2008.” This year's NPP also saw a trend of small electronics, including several iPod-compatible technologies and a unique array of writing instruments, such as pens that double as USB connectors.

More than 11,000 promotional consultants visited the New Product Pavilion and viewed the enormous array of unique items spread over 16,000 square feet, the largest new product display in the industry.

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## **Fashion & Accessories Show**

Traditionally an evening event, the PPAI Fashion & Accessories Show was moved to the morning and was the new kick off for this year's tradeshow. Energized by the time switch, nearly 3,000 attendees were on hand to view more than 100 promotional products such as shirts, pants, awards, bags, lanyards and wraps for electronic devices.

PPAI first introduced the fashion show concept in the promotional products industry in 1999. Often copied but never duplicated, the PPAI Fashion & Accessories Show has grown during the past six years from a handful of participants and less than 1,000 attendees to an event with professional models showing off apparel and accessories provided by dozens of suppliers, as well as video clips and live entertainment by dancers.

"This is my first time to attend the Fashion Show and I thought the presentation was excellent. It was interesting from start to finish," says Lisa Burnham of Lighthouse Promotions, LLC. "It was a great way to get the day started."

## **ONE**

The annual closing party was a huge success, as three-time American Music Award winner, Chris Daughtry and his band DAUGHTRY performed live at the Mandalay Bay Event Center to a sold-out crowd of more than 3,200 screaming fans. After a beneficial, yet tiring week of education sessions, business meetings and long hours on the show floor, Expo attendees were ready to end the week with a bang. And DAUGHTRY delivered, performing such hits as *Over You*, *What I Want*, *Home* and *It's Not Over*. The event was sponsored by The Corporate Marketplace, Inc. (UPIC: tcmpi).

## **Professional Development**

The PPAI professional development team offered more than 100 education sessions this year—more than any other event in the industry and delivered by the best faculty in the industry—covering a broad range of topics in the areas of business management, industry essentials, sales and service, advertising and marketing, strategic business issues, technology and professional development.

Some note-worthy seminar statistics include:

- Fifty-six professionals sat for their MAS/CAS certification exam—another record-breaking attendance figure.
- Participation in paid education seminars was up more than 15 percent over 2007.
- Nearly 700 seats were filled at paid education luncheons on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the show week.
- Approximately 7000 seats were filled during the first two days of education.

For the first time, The PPAI Expo initiated "Strategic Business Issues" sessions to update members regarding social responsibility, labor standards, environmental issues, ethical manufacturing and product safety. In accordance with those seminars, PPAI's Global Strategy Council, which provides leadership in developing a plan of action and strategic initiatives, released the first edition of the *Guide To Managing Responsibility For Product Safety, Social And Environmental Standards In The Promotional Products Industry*.

"As headlines plead for higher standards in product safety, PPAI has taken a proactive step toward identifying threats, resources, solutions and a course of action for the industry," said Slagle. "As we've done throughout the year in sessions, newsletters, websites and webinars, PPAI has committed itself to a leadership position in providing information and resources to its members and the industry about this and other important and evolving safety and responsibility issues."

Along with informational education sessions, this year's Expo provided four keynote speakers who took part in the "Marketing—RAW" session Thursday, January, 17. Facilitated by past chair of the board, Wayne L. Greenberg, MAS; James Gilmore, co-founder of Strategic Horizons LLP, Doug Hall, founder and CEO of the Eureka! Ranch, Kelly McDonald, founder and president of McDonald Marketing and Stan Slap, president of slap, provided no-holds-barred views on industry trends, challenges, perceptions and future uncertainties to a crowd of exhibitors and attendees.

As part of an increased environmental awareness initiative and growing conservation effort, PPAI went green in 2008, making the professional development seminars paperless. All handouts were made available via CD-ROM, and could be obtained at either the PPAI Bookstore & Resource Center or online. By going green at The PPAI Expo 2008, the Association demonstrated its commitment to environmental responsibility within the promotional products industry and hopes to inspire members to do the same.

## Awards

PPAI's Annual Awards Presentation & Dinner sold out with 950 seats reserved at the gala evening event.

- Twenty-six PPAI Pyramid Awards<sup>sm</sup> were presented to promotional consultants to recognize effective use of promotional products in business and institutional marketing programs. The competition features campaigns using promotional products that relate to the advertising client, its product and the overall theme of the marketing program.
- Twenty PPAI Web Awards<sup>sm</sup> recognized winning websites based on technical efforts, load time, ease of navigation and the site's usefulness as a business tool for the promotional products industry.
- Thirty PPAI Supplier Star Awards<sup>sm</sup> honored industry suppliers for overall service excellence in areas such as prompt response to distributor inquiries, adherence to shipping dates, quality of products and sales aids, adequacy and attractiveness of packaging, and the quality and accuracy of imprinting. The supplier in each sales volume category receiving the most distributor votes is named the PPAI Supplier Star for that category. Awards of Merit are presented to the runner-ups.
- Fifty-six PPAI Suppliers Achievement Awards<sup>sm</sup> recognized craftsmanship, creativity, graphic arts and manufacturing excellence.
- Three PPAI Regional Association Pyramid Awards<sup>sm</sup> were presented to recognize regional associations for outstanding growth directly tied to the incorporation of promotional products in their marketing campaigns.
- Three individuals were inducted into the PPAI Hall of Fame, which honors exceptional contributions to and long-term involvement with PPAI and the industry. Inductees are chosen by nomination from within the promotional products industry. The three deserving recipients, who took their places among the 66 previous honorees, were: **Richard G. Ebel**, **Robert B. Lederer, CAS**, and **Robert A. Waldorf, CAS**.
- Distinguished Service Award recipient, **Mary Ellen Pahlka-Hudicka, MAS**, was recognized for consistently sharing time and expertise with the Association through volunteer service and leadership.

For more information about Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) or to learn more about the proven power of promotional products (including research and case studies), visit the PPAI website at [www.ppai.org](http://www.ppai.org) or contact PPAI at 972-258-3041 or [AnneL@ppai.org](mailto:AnneL@ppai.org).

*NOTE: High-resolution photographs of the show floor, booths, crowds, education, events, speakers and award winners, as well as news releases on all award winners are available on request.*

PPAI—the promotional products industry's only international not-for-profit trade association—offers education, tradeshow, business products and services, mentoring, technology and legislative support to its more than 7,500 global members. Promotional products are an \$18.8 billion industry and include wearables, writing instruments, calendars, drinkware and many other items, usually imprinted with a company's name, logo or message. PPAI created and maintains the UPIC (Universal Promotional Identification Code), the industry's only free identification system and universal company database.

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