

Making Dollars and Sense



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Branded promotional products mean business! When organizations commit to growth strategies that include:

- strengthening and recognizing staff loyalty
- improving customer retention
- communicating brand awareness
- enriching meetings and events
- spreading good will and enhancing company image

branded promotional products become an integral part of the marketing mix and the quest for improved top and bottom line performance.

This \$2.1 billion a year industry continues to grow! Marketing Magazine published the results of a study conducted in 2005. When 1,000 promotional product buyers and recipients across North America were surveyed, it was found that 56% rated branded promotional products as the dominant method of increasing customer loyalty. (TV advertising was second at 13%.) They also ranked promotional products third behind online advertising as the best way to develop new business.

Further evidence supporting the effect of branded promotional products on behaviour comes from a survey conducted by Promotion Products International. Of 800 business travellers surveyed at the Dallas/Fort Worth airport, a whopping 70% had promotional products in their possession, and of those - 80% recalled the marketer's name. That's like having your company's business card personally carried by your target market.

The secret behind effective branded promotional programs is: Identification! Start by determining the 5 factors that follow. Your reward will be focus, direction and results!

Identify The Goal

Be crystal clear on what you want to achieve!

Recruiting and retaining employees is a hot topic for many companies. According to a Conference Board of Canada study, 67% of respondents reported challenges with recruiting and/or retaining talent. Compare this to the previous year's 49% and it's easy to see the growing challenges of managing human resources. When you consider the reality of our aging workforce - attracting, retaining and rewarding employees will be top of mind, along with client appreciation and loyalty.

And speaking of loyal clients ...who doesn't want more of those? Specifically, those who buy regularly and have the ability to influence others. It's well known that it costs 6-10 times more to acquire a new client than to keep the clients you already have. And yet, for some reason many businesses are so driven to increase their client base, they forget to appreciate what they already have.

Increasing brand awareness for a company or a specific product (or service) may seem like the proverbial David and Goliath task. Famous brands like Nike, Disney, and Harley-Davidson weren't built overnight. It takes time and the consistent implementation of a multi-faceted brand awareness strategy which includes promotional products.

Identify The Target Market

It's incredibly important to understand your target market once you've identified your goals. A Maritz poll of more than 1,000 full-time employees revealed there is a significant gap between how employees are currently recognized in the workplace and how they want to be recognized. Meetings & Incentive Travel Magazine reported that employees are currently receiving a range of rewards - from year-end cash bonuses and recognition awards/certificates - to professional development opportunities and merchandise. However, employees do not believe that cash has the same "trophy value" as non-cash incentives, according to research by the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE) Foundation. Spend time with your employees to determine what motivates them.

Other focus areas might be:

- existing/potential customers
- industry
- community
- shareholders
- suppliers

What may sound like a great promotional product idea for employees might be inappropriate for customers. Clearly identifying your target – after reviewing your goals will improve program results.

Identify The Message

This is probably the biggest conundrum that companies face when marketing in general – “what’s our message?”

- what makes us different?
- we appreciate you?
- benefits of a new product/service?

Simplicity rules. Complicated messages can be misunderstood or ignored. Be clear. Be concise. Be effective.

Identify The Product

There are thousands of branded promotional products available from hundreds of suppliers. How will you know which one is right for you? You won't. Time is a precious commodity. And there's never enough of it. Would you rather be leafing through catalogues, surfing the net and visiting showrooms – or doing the other important tasks that have to be finished before you leave for the day?

“Sell your strengths, buy your weaknesses”. Working with a promotional products partner can save you time, money, grief and enhance your personal brand.

Identify The Promotional Products Partner

When searching for a promotional products partner, be selective! Look for companies that focus on providing branded promotional products as their primary service offering. They are the professionals that deliver the best service and value along with extensive industry knowledge. Great partners offer these “Most Wanted” benefits:

- accurate orders on time – every time
- exceptional product knowledge
- responsive customer service
- all charges clearly explained – up front
- quality products, quality imprints
- competitive pricing
- solid company reputation

Your brand is an asset. Place it in the hands of a promotional products partner who cares about your business and your success. It makes dollars and sense to include branded promotional products in marketing programs. They're appreciated, retained and remembered!

Nancy Schreiner is the president of Excel Advertising Specialties Inc., Burlington-based branded promotional products specialists. Excel Advertising's focus is providing promotional product expertise, superior quality and value, along with exceptional customer service to businesses and organizations of all sizes. Proudly Canadian and based in Burlington, Excel Advertising has been in business since 1995. Excel Advertising was recognized with the finalist award for Small Business Excellence by the Burlington Chamber of Commerce in 2005 and 2006, a rare and significant accomplishment.

Discover the Excel Advantage today!

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