

The Promotional Item Payoff

In 2004, more than 14.2 billion dollars was spent on cable TV advertising. In that same year, corporations spent close to 17 billion dollars on promotional items, according to the Advertising Specialty Institution (ASI).

But does spending precious marketing dollars on promotional items really pay off?

A survey conducted by LJ Market Research for the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) revealed utilizing promotional products is a powerful way to build brand awareness, and increase both interest and sales of product and services.

This research project was designed to measure how end users responded to organizations that distribute promotional products as part of their marketing strategy. In a survey conducted by interviewing business travelers at DFW airport, more than 71% of the respondents had received at least one promotional item in the last year. Many of us receive magnets, pens, calendars, and even travel mugs with logos from local insurance companies, realtors, travel agencies and the like. Perhaps this statistic does not surprise us. However, the study also revealed that 76% of these same travelers remembered the name of the company on the product they had received. Impressive, particularly compared to their ability to recall the name of an advertiser from a print publication they had read in the last week, which came in at 53%?

Another survey of five U.S. Universities included 180 college students. This survey revealed that promotional products are not only appreciated but are indeed influential. Of the students participating in the survey, 95% mentioned appreciation at having received the items. Additionally, 85% could actually name the advertiser of an imprinted item in their homes or currently in their possession. Further, an impressive 83% of those students said that these promotional products would motivate them to act on purchasing a product or service, patronize a particular business, enter a contest or donate to a charity.

The fact is that an impressive number of people who receive promotional products do, indeed, remember the advertiser's name. Gifts and give-away items to the public or customers that have the company logo, theme or services imprinted on them prove to increase both interest and sales.

There are, however, literally tens of thousands of different products available to help promote company and brand awareness.

Additionally, there are so many different campaign approaches to get these products in the hands of the end users. Mailing campaigns, trade shows, business to business gifts, give-aways to the general public. It can be a daunting task just to choose the items and the method of delivery.

Keep in mind that you need to know your target audience. If your promotion is for young adults and teens, for instance, don't give them refrigerator magnets. They probably don't own a

refrigerator yet. Go with something cool and usable. CD holders, electronics, creative key chains, or something trendy and colorful. With executives, go with nice executive accessories like writing sets, and items that you know they wouldn't be ashamed to display. No matter how classy, unique, or trendy your promotional item is, if you give it to a target market that has no use for it they will have no use for you.

Try to be creative, even in the delivery of your promotional items. Mailings and trade shows are great, but don't forget drop-ins, business to business gifting and rewarding your best customers. If your budget allows, let the professionals handle it. They can advise on appropriate product purchases and even help you develop a creative promotional campaign.