

August 2018

## IN THE WAKE OF McDELIVERY



As almost everyone who goes online now knows, July 19 was McDelivery Day — a day when McDonald's partnered with Uber Eats to cart out a bunch of swag to hungry brand loyalists. If someone placed an order with Uber Eats for McDonald's between 10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. that day, **they could expect some fancy McD's promotional products** to arrive with their food in an obscenely large Big Mac box (maybe, **we're not entirely sure about the box**).

Customers had an array of retro options headed their way: French fry socks that make it look like you're standing inside a fry container with other fries peeping out; a fanny pack emblazoned with Big Macs, a bandanna with a French fry pattern, a sweet denim jacket with the Golden Arches on a front pocket, a t-shirt declaring McDonald's a "classic" (in short and long sleeve and in black or white), a selection of suddenly trendy enamel pins and a burger-toting PopSocket.

It was the second annual McDelivery day, unfortunately without **last year's standout Big Mac onesie**. But it was still a branding success, as people took to social media to brag about their swag — bringing the brand front and center even now, well after the event ended.

McDonald's did a lot of things right with this promotion (again), by creating buzz around and anticipation for a specific event and then encouraging social media shares to keep the brand in the spotlight for an extended period of time. But it also went a bit wrong. Among the shouts of joy for McD's swag online, people were complaining that they didn't

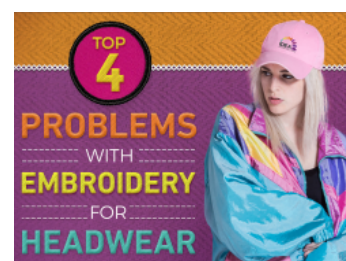
## QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY



## INFOGRAPHICS THAT CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS



Every month, Idea Custom Solutions publishes original infographics that we design to inform and educate industry professionals. Here are a couple of our most popular. Be sure to check out the [Insights section of our website](#), under Resources, for more of these tools.



get their promo products as promised. Some people ordered right on time, only to wait forever for their food and end up with no special items, while people they knew who ordered after them had less of a wait and some swag. The brand was lambasted for false advertising, being called a McJoke, and with some customers threatening never to eat at McDonald's again.

Of course, much of this can be explained away by the chain simply not having enough promotional products to meet demand. But it's a great lesson for companies on what can happen if a client's campaign goes viral.

- **Rule #1:** Make you have enough merchandise to go around and have a plan to get extra if needed. McD's ran out of promo items and loyal customers were mad as a result.
- **Rule #2:** Have a backup in place in case things don't go as anticipated. McDonald's was slow on communications, letting customers find out the swag was sold out only after getting their orders delivered. There should have been a better plan to inform customers of dwindling supplies long before they went out of their way to place orders.
- **Rule #3:** Be prepared for blowback. Luckily for McDonald's, the behemoth company won't suffer much from the few angry customers who didn't get their fanny packs. But make sure your company and your clients are ready for the naysayers because there are always naysayers.

Have a great idea for a potentially viral campaign? Let Idea Custom Solutions work with you to make sure the promotional products and packaging are as impressive as possible with [vector artwork](#), [embroidery digitizing](#), [image editing](#), [virtual samples](#) and [more graphic services](#).

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UNCONVENTIONAL ADVERTISING

For Cinco de Mayo in 2016, [Taco Bell struck marketing genius](#). The company leveraged popular social network Snapchat to allow users to turn their faces into giant taco shells. It was a hit and the campaign broke Snapchat records, achieving 224 million views in a single day. But it came at significant cost to the restaurant chain. Although no specific reporting indicated exactly how much Taco Bell paid for the taco-head filtered Lens, creating one and putting it to use can cost up to \$750,000.

That's all well and good if you're a massive company with a huge advertising budget. Unfortunately, if you are a small- to mid-size company in the promotional products industry, that's just not possible. Sometimes, even more traditional advertising, for example television or print ads, is impossible. Those increasing costs quickly eat away at companies' bottom lines. Instead, it is likely that you turn to word-of-mouth and referrals.

But there are other ways to promote your business that don't require big bucks or thousands of followers. Even a small to nonexistent budget can stretch far with some unconventional marketing tactics.

### Host a Social Media Contest

Assuming your business is on social media (and in 2018, it really should be), [try hosting a fun contest](#). Get a couple sample products and give

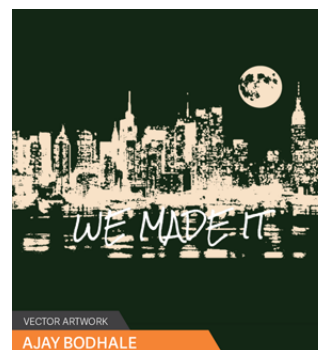
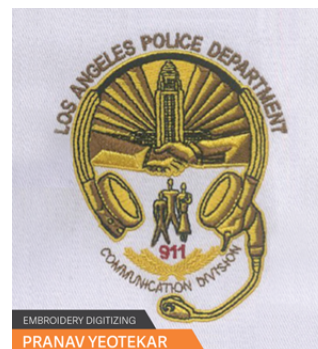


Under Insights, we also archive [past issues of this newsletter](#).

Feel free to contact us to request we cover any subjects that would help your business: [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TEAM

Every month, we celebrate the designers whose work scores the highest impressions on Instagram. This time, **Pranav Yeotekar** won for embroidery digitizing (for the third month in a row!) and **Ajay Bodhale** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



## NOTABLE QUOTES

them away as swag to the winners, but be sure to hit on something that will resonate with many people. BrandVia, for example, once did a travel-inspired contest where they invited people to post travel photos on the company's Facebook page and the best photo got a prize. Not only does a content like this increase engagement and get your company's name out there, it also shows customers that you have a sense of fun. The idea is to get them thinking they should probably buy from you; a business that is clearly entertaining.

### Engage the Community

Don't let that invitation to the neighborhood cookout languish on your table. **Get out there and represent your business!** Maybe that means offering giveaways to attendees at a booth or even simply wearing a polo shirt with your logo. But the more you're out in the community, the more people will see your branding and potentially ask about your business. It's good, old-fashioned networking. And it is targeted to locals — not just other company owners that you find at those organized business networking meetings.

### Embrace Public Art

First step here: **make sure you can alter the local landscape in a completely legal way.** Maybe you hire a sidewalk chalk artist or invite community members to participate in an art initiative such as yarn-bombing the downtown. If you can get people involved in a creative pursuit (or at least entrance them with a something like a spectacular drawing on the sidewalk), you'll get them talking about the reasoning behind it, which will be that it's a fun event sponsored by your company. Definitely include your logo somewhere in the public artscape you're creating, even if it's small.

### Open Up Your Showroom

It's time for an open house! Even if you don't have a showroom, invite the community to your office so they can have a look around. You can play host for the day and set up games for kids, offer snacks and drinks and essentially just be a fun factory for anyone who wants to stop by. This works best when paired with another happening. Say there's a parade coming up and you're inviting locals to help decorate your float, you're running a sale or **you've moved to a new location.** People love to look behind the scenes, so make it happen for them.

Whatever options you choose, Idea Custom Solutions stands ready to provide the graphic design you need — **whether that is vector artwork and embroidery digitizing for product decoration** or art for signage, invitations, flyers and more. We can even create a new custom logo if you are looking to enhance your overall image.

## INSTAGRAM-WORTHY PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS MARKETING TIPS



"There is a difference between being a leader and being a boss. Both are based on authority. A boss demands blind obedience; **a leader earns his authority through understanding and trust.**"

— Klaus Balkenhol



"**Timing, perseverance, and 10 years of trying** will eventually make you look like an overnight success."

— Biz Stone



"You can waste your lives drawing lines. Or you can **live your life** crossing them."

— Shonda Rhimes



"I'd rather regret the things I've done than **regret the things I haven't done.**"

— Lucille Ball





An April 2018 article in the Times of India highlighted **the selfie craze and how logoed apparel has seen a major boost in sales** thanks to Instagram and Facebook selfie posts. With **93 million selfies pumped into social media streams every day** (and that's as of 2014 and only on Android), that could mean big success for businesses looking to promote their brands and boost ROI.

Items of apparel are by far the most shared promotional items in the social sphere, but just about any product can go viral with the right marketing techniques. With that in mind, follow these simple tips to get the most out of Instagram and see the most sales you can from items shared.

- **Post Regularly.** Just like on Facebook, the less you post on Instagram, the less the algorithm will show what you have to say to the people following you. So be sure to post on a regular basis to increase the likelihood your content is actually being seen.

**“At the bare minimum, you want to publish at least one post a week,** because you never want someone to come to your account and only see old posts,” Joshua Storey, SanMar’s web and social media writer, told Counselor Magazine. “Ideally, you’ll post three to four times a week on Instagram ... That can be a tall order when you’re just starting out, but you can use scheduling apps like Buffer or Hootsuite to lighten the load. Start small and slowly build up to a more robust content schedule.”

- **Vary Your Content.** Social media, by nature, is social. People generally don’t go on the networks expecting to be sold anything. They want to see the lives of other people and avoid the dreaded **#FOMO** (fear of missing out). **To get the best response on your Insta posts, mix up the content a bit.** For every post touting a product, post another one showing off your company culture. Your followers will appreciate the variety and be more likely to engage.
- **Use Hashtags.** Many Instagram users don’t just look at the profiles of people they know. Instead, they actively follow hashtags to find posts relevant to their interests. The **#PromotionalProducts** hashtag alone has more than 176,000 posts on Instagram. **The first step is to follow that hashtag yourself.** That way you can see what other industry professionals are posting to promote their offerings. Next, when you post your own photos, be sure to use that hashtag and anything else



**“If you are not taking care of your customer, your competitor will.”**

— Bob Hooley



**“Formula for success: rise early, work hard, strike oil.”**

— J. Paul Getty



**“It’s not just about being better. It’s about being different. You need to give people a reason to choose your business.”**

— Tom Abbott



**“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”**

— Joshua J. Marine

relevant. For example, if you're posting a sticker, try using [#stickers](#). For luggage tags, include [#travel](#). Think about what you would search for and then use that hashtag.

- **Watch Your Metrics.** The best way to ensure your Instagram efforts are working is to follow the built-in metrics. You can learn how many people are seeing your posts, the demographics of those people and any activity such as likes, comments and views. These actions combined translate into the reach of posts; a number to which successful promotional products industry social media mavens pay extra attention.

"We monitor this number on a regular basis, and if we see it going up or down, we adjust our content accordingly," Storey told Counselor. "For example, if I come in on Monday and see that our reach is on the rise, I double down and do more of what we were doing last week. If I see our numbers waning, however, I take a step back and adjust our strategy."

We wish you success promoting your company and products on Instagram. When you get orders from customers, don't forget to reach out to Idea Custom Solutions for graphic design, including [vector artwork](#), [embroidery digitizing](#), image editing, marketing materials and more. And you can [follow us on Instagram](#) and see new examples of our work every day!

## MEET THE PPAI WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT WINNERS FOR 2018

Every year, the Promotional Products Association International bestows a special award on women in the industry called the Woman of Achievement Award. [The award honors women in the industry who have worked tirelessly to advance the role of women in the promotional products world](#), as well as women who have shown great leadership and community contributions. This year, two women took home the award: Marsha Londe and Mary Ellen Sokalski. Let's get to know them.

Marsha Londe is the owner and CEO of Tango Partners in Atlanta. She is well known in the industry for generously offering up her time and knowledge to help others in their businesses. [Her list of accolades is long](#): PPAI Fellow, PPB Powerful Partner, PPAI Best Boss, ASI Salesperson of the Year and winner of 25 PPAI Pyramid Awards. She is nationally recognized for her promotional products work. She was also in ASI's inaugural class of Women in the Promotional Products Profession and has also been honored by the Gold Coast Promotional Products Association. In addition to being an industry executive, she is also a speaker, writer, advocate and volunteer. She has been very active in industry organizations, serving on both the PPAI Awards and PPB Editorial Advisory Committees.

Mary Ellen Sokalski, MAS, is the CEO of The Scarlet Marketeer in New Jersey. [She has won a number of industry awards and recognitions](#): the PPAI Distinguished Service Award, ASI Woman to Watch, PPAI Lifetime Achievement Award in Education, PPAI Facilitator Excellence Award, ASI Distinguished Woman in Promotional Products Award, eight PPAI Supplier Achievement Awards, two PPAI Golden Pyramid Awards, the SACDV Pyramid, President's and Person of the Year Awards, and induction into the SACDV Hall of Fame. Sokalski has run more than 200 educational sessions about the promotional products industry and also



"By [working faithfully](#) eight hours a day you may eventually get to be boss and work twelve hours a day."

— Robert Frost



"Successful people do what unsuccessful people are not willing to do. [Don't wish it were easier, wish you were better.](#)"

— Jim Rohn

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



**Amit Dandekar**  
Senior Production Associate,  
Digitizing Team

In his role as a senior production associate, Amit supports numerous customers and handles escalated requests. His mission is simple: complete the assigned orders within the required turn times at the best possible quality.

Since joining Idea Custom Solutions 11 years ago, he has received several commendations from supervisors for his work. To this day, he says he has, "enthusiasm to do the scheduled tasks without compromising the quality of my work." He would tell

acts as a mentor, volunteer, speaker and advocate. Throughout her career, she has served on several industry boards, including the Promotional Professionals Mentoring Network, YESSA and Specialty Advertising Counselors of the Delaware Valley. She was the vice chair of marketing for PPAI itself from 2001 to 2005.

The award ceremony was held in June at the 2018 PPAI Women's Leadership Conference in Hollywood.

Idea Custom Solutions appreciates all the leaders in our industry, including these two impressive trailblazers.

## CLIENTS ARE RAVING

“ Prompt delivery!”

Apparel distributor



### Embroidery Digitizing



### Vector Artwork

other employees, “Value your positions in the company and strive to work here for a long time.”

He thinks people outside the company should know “Idea Custom Solutions is a leading service provider in promotional products and related industries, with outstanding embroidery digitizing, vector artwork and other graphic services.”

Amit is married and has a daughter. He is originally from Murud Janjira and loves to visit and explore his hometown with friends. Travel is a theme for Amit, as he likes to explore the areas around Pune on weekends and hopes to travel extensively. He also enjoys reading books.

Overall, Amit would like to be known for his outspoken and straightforward nature.

## TWEET THAT!

66% of people remember the brand on a [#PromoProduct](#) a year after it was given.

Tweet That!

[#branding](#)  
<https://goo.gl/38zDWS>

Do your customers think [#logos](#) won't be enough? Creative [#marketing](#) ideas for

Tweet That!

[#PromoProducts](#).  
<https://goo.gl/L61M6J>

[#Shoutout](#) to distributor [@BluSchool](#) for donating backpacks to School Rocks! [#PromoProducts](#)  
<https://goo.gl/YXs2e5>

Tweet That!

Hey, [@SEGA](#) fans — now you can eat the company's [#logo](#), [#taiyaki](#) style.

Tweet That!

Have you ever wondered why [#khakis](#) seem to be the go-to work [#uniform](#)?  
<https://goo.gl/1sNzwY>

Tweet That!

[. @memgrizz](#) launches new [#uniforms](#), but the basketball is now gripped by a left hand.  
[#southpaw](#)  
<https://goo.gl/YbCKa6>

Tweet That!

[. @Burberry](#) has officially

Tweet That!





changed its [#logo](#), for the first time in two decades. [#branding](#) <https://goo.gl/cybJNf>

[Tweet That!](#)

With good [#branding](#), your products can be just as memorable as [#Shakespeare's](#). <https://goo.gl/LY3Zzc>

[Tweet That!](#)

Extend your [#branding](#) efforts into [@google](#) products by maintaining your Google My Business page. <https://goo.gl/AdJC5q>

[Tweet That!](#)

Don't let new tech get in the way of your [#brand's](#) authenticity. [#marketing](#) [#SmallBusiness](#) <https://goo.gl/JrjmhV>

[Tweet That!](#)

Keep your customers engaged with retention [#marketing](#) through [#email](#) campaigns. [#SmallBusiness](#) <https://goo.gl/11nigJ>

[Tweet That!](#)

The more financially literate you are, the better your [#SmallBusiness](#) will do in the long run. <https://goo.gl/MQu3Ri>

[Tweet That!](#)

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