

# DESIGN EXPRESS

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



January 2016

## PROMO PRODUCTS IN 2016 AND BEYOND OFFER AMPLE OPPORTUNITY



Last year, we explored a full range of ideas on our [blog](#) to help distributors of specialty advertising and promotional products meet their customers' needs.

For example, we took a closer look at [classic favorites](#) like writing instruments, desk toys and the beloved morning icon known as the [coffee mug](#), while also exploring other, more quirky promo items which make their marks. For example, one investment management firm [gives out neckties](#) to its best clients. Other institutions more interested in courting non-Wall Street types have taken to branding [fanny packs](#) and [tote bags](#) to reach their target audiences.

While [insurance agencies](#) and realtors have been giving out quality [custom-branded pens](#) for decades to prospects, customers and partners, items like the tote and the fanny pack, embroidered or printed with logos, have helped travel firms, bookstores and even [public radio stations](#) give their brands mobility and a practical touch.

We also discovered that the change of the seasons — and consumers' anticipation of it — provides other opportunities. When winter turns to springtime and then summer, it's possible to appeal to customers with everything from [golf](#) and [outdoor sport items](#) to promo products that help business reach customers when they fire up the [barbecue or outdoor grill](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

If you are attending any of these conferences, please feel free to reach out to set up an appointment or connect with Jay Busselle, Business Development, [jbusselle@ideacustom.com](mailto:jbusselle@ideacustom.com) or [602-690-2595](tel:602-690-2595).

### ASI Show!

Dallas, TX  
February 10-11  
Exhibiting  
Booth 1050

### NBM

Arlington, TX  
March 10-12  
Exhibiting

### PPAI Expo East / ISS

Atlantic City, NJ  
March 16-19  
Exhibiting / Education Session  
Booth 500

### NBM

Indianapolis, IN  
June 2-4  
Exhibiting / Education Session

## NOTABLE QUOTES



"Whatever you do, be different — that was the advice my mother gave me, and I can't think of better advice for an entrepreneur. **If you're different, you will stand out.**"

— Anita Roddick

Moreover, we noticed the way that businesses use promo products outside the traditional realm of business, such as at trade shows or networking events. [Cultural, arts and music events](#), such as South by Southwest (SXSW) and Coachella, see everyday brands and smaller entrepreneurial outfits turning attendees into customers, the way that [NASCAR](#) and [Harley-Davidson](#) turn car and bike enthusiasts into lifelong fans and loyal buyers too.

There was plenty of evidence in 2015 that businesses are tapping both the traditional and the unusual to reach their customers, and that branding with promotional products is more important than ever. Ensure you're providing products with the [best quality logos](#), whether they are imprinted, screen printed or embroidered, with Idea Custom Solutions.

## A RE-BRAND IS KEY TO STAYING CURRENT

Whether or not you are up on the [latest lingo used by millennial consumers](#), change is always a part of corporate life and marketing. You need not have FOMO (fear of missing out) or be "on fleek" (on point) to keep up with what is new. But staying current with trends and tastes should always be a priority.

When companies merge or change their products, a simple logo tweak may do the trick. Other times, a more comprehensive re-brand can help keep customers engaged, while letting a firm show off its new shining identity.

For example, two food giants, [Heinz and Kraft Foods](#), merged recently. Given the size and scale of each side's operations, a re-brand starting with the parent companies was thought to be the best option.

Altogether, the new KraftHeinz owns and markets [eight billion-dollar brands](#) that include cheese, peanuts and coffee, plus a dozen other major brands of condiments and dessert foods. Each wanted to retain the strength and name recognition of the parent brand. That's why they started by forging a new corporate identity and logo, fusing both names together with some slight alterations in the logo's design.

Meanwhile, [Pepsi](#), a company whose core product has not changed much in a hundred years, alters its logo to suit consumers every decade or so.

Certainly the re-brand isn't just a tool for mega corporations. Often a smaller company with a new product or service can benefit from an update to its logo and marketing collateral.

As one "[essential guide to re-branding](#)" published this fall by iMedia states, companies should have a good reason to tweak their brand identity, and that a re-brand is more than just a new "logo on the door" but everything from "business cards, to letterhead, to automated emails" and more.

Working with an expert firm can help any business modernize a brand. And in doing so, your new look and new logo can recharge your business at the right time in a competitive market. When the time comes, Idea Custom Solutions can [re-brand your company](#) quickly and professionally, as well as enable you to offer re-branding services to customers — complete with logo design to creation of new marketing collateral and business documents.



"In business, the idea of measuring what you are doing, [picking the measurements that count like customer satisfaction and performance](#)... you thrive on that."

— Bill Gates



"I want minimum information given with [maximum politeness](#)."

— Jackie Kennedy Onassis



"[Knowledge is power](#). Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family."

— Kofi Annan



"The [keys to brand success](#) are self-definition, transparency, authenticity and accountability."

— Simon Mainwaring

## TWO IDEA CUSTOM SOLUTIONS TEAM MEMBERS MAKE THE POWER 75

Just this fall, two members of our team were named to the [“Power 75” list](#) by *Stitches Magazine*, a publication of the Advertising Specialty Institute.

For the sixth year in a row, *Stitches* has named the top companies and key people among apparel suppliers and manufacturers, to point out the innovators, “movers and shakers, and risk-takers” that have played a major role in reshaping the decorated apparel industry.

Joanna Grant, Vice President of Graphic Production, and Jay Busselle, who heads up Idea Custom Solution’s business development, were recognized for their work in the industry and evolving the company as part of its recent re-branding to better support promotional products suppliers, distributors and decorators.

Today, Idea Custom Solutions provides clients with a range of business services and support that facilitate their growth and profitability. The new tagline, “Your success. That’s the whole Idea!” reinforces our mission that companies view [Idea Custom Solutions as a partner](#) rather than a vendor.

## KEEP MOVING FORWARD TO STAND APART

During a cold winter morning on December 26, 1776, someone took a risk that paid off. That day, a little-known general named George Washington led a band of soldiers in a small fleet of canoes [across the icy Delaware River](#) to surprise enemy troops who were holed up in Trenton, New Jersey, and resting after their holiday festivities. By continuing to pursue their goal and doing the unexpected, Washington and his men captured about 1,000 Hessian soldiers and won a moral victory.

The same principle applies to entrepreneurs because business keeps going year-round. The most successful people know they have to persist no matter what the day or the season. While competitors lay low, they find ways to improve their skills and companies. Here are a few tips so can start the year off strong.

- **Keep Connected, Keep Business Moving.** Restarting the regular communications that halt with the holiday — as soon as possible — is one way to boost activity. Likewise, [“slow months”](#) are the perfect time to drop in on customers, follow up, or just say hello. Employ simple communications to heat things up and help you further develop relationships or generate new prospects. Pick up the phone, make an appointment, or even set the stage with an email.
- **Plan Ahead for Opportunities.** Planning ahead for the month and the beginning of the year means different things to different people. But as the person who knows your business best, it is critical to position yourself to be most successful. Be sure to arm your business with the tools and personnel needed. For example, when small business owners know they will have to hire salespeople, production staff or marketing help later on in the year, it often makes sense to start scouting and interviewing new employees and talent now in the supposedly “slower”



“You should be accumulating really [great relationships throughout your career.](#)”

— Anne M. Mulcahy



“Ultimately a good logo is something that [people recognize instantly](#) and relate to.”

— Matt Mickiewicz

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



**Sachin Maharanor**  
Unit Supervisor, Digitizing

Sachin has been with Idea Custom Solutions since 2007. He is the unit supervisor for digitizing and, in this role, focuses on quality improvement and training for the team. His promotion to this position is one of the proudest accomplishments for him, along with reaching the milestone of nine years with the company.

To anyone not familiar with Idea Custom Solutions, Sachin says, “It is the most successful company in embroidery digitizing in the graphic

winter months.

Recently, CEO of ConnectOne Bank Frank Sorrentino explained in a quick video how companies like his [plan for for rapid growth](#) each year. Sorrentino thinks that preparation is one of the most important parts of running a business and stated that, when companies “don’t plan” for their growth by making investments in equipment or adding the right people, “that’s when they get themselves into trouble” down the road.

- **Retool and Tune Up.** Keep in mind that every new year typically means new products are on the market. Use the season to become more familiar with products that may be perfect for your target market (maybe by attending events such as the [ASI Show in Dallas](#)) and meet existing customers’ needs. You can also work on sharpening your presentation skills and nail down your tactics to convert opportunities to close business in 2016.

Moreover, retooling yourself and your business should involve “cleaning up” from 2015 and [making room for a fresh new year](#). Kevin Daum, a best-selling author, identifies actions such as getting rid of excess and (literally) cleaning out your work space as cathartic and liberating. With less clutter, you will be able, he writes, to focus on new skills to improve while properly revisiting 2015’s successes and failures.

By keeping active in your business, it’s more likely you will shake off any winter chills. Better yet, you will come to view snow days and slower times as chances to tighten your game and capitalize on opportunities that competitors will miss. Idea Custom Solutions is here 24/7 to provide you with [graphic production and business services](#)!

## CLIENTS ARE RAVING

“I am SO glad that I gave Idea Custom Solutions a chance, as we’ve been very pleased ever since. Each art project we submit has been done exactly as we requested and in a VERY timely manner. The EPS viewer has been a godsend because we do not have any of the programs to view these types of files on our own. We are looking forward to sending more projects your way and utilizing your company for virtual layouts for our clients.”

Theresa Gonzalez  
**Owner, Stay Visible**



### Embroidery Digitizing

industry.”

He is married to Asha and has a daughter named Shreya. On weekends, Sachin likes to watch movies with them. “My favorite movie is ‘3 Idiots’ and I also like to watch Discovery, because it is very informative channel.”

During the week, Sachin’s favorite activities are playing cricket and spending time with his friends. He also enjoys swimming and playing football, as well as collecting stamps and coins.

Sachin’s goal is to give his best to Idea Custom Solutions to help grow the company and himself. “I would like to become the best trainer in the company. I am a very sincere and hardworking guy and always available if you need me.”

## TWEET THAT!

Let Idea Custom Solutions help you find content for social media:

Not only did the economy rise in 2015, so did demand for corporate gifts and  
[#PromoProducts](#).  
<http://goo.gl/UhLxcz>

[Tweet That!](#)

Jamba Juice is offering customers branded  
[#PromoProducts](#) as incentive to pay with AndroidPay.  
<http://goo.gl/A9MjfC>

[Tweet That!](#)

Your [#logo](#)’s color is just as important as its design elements and the name of the [#brand](#) that you present.  
<http://goo.gl/KMfdhL>

[Tweet That!](#)

What are the “4 Best Ways to [#Brand](#) a Small Business” in 2016?  
<http://goo.gl/U2BJJh>

[Tweet That!](#)

CBS Sports got ready for its coverage of [#SuperBowl50](#) with a

[Tweet That!](#)



new [#logo](#) to match its marketing.  
<http://goo.gl/0kXBab>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Logos](#) are not just corporate badges. They are an opportunities for your company to engage its audience.  
<http://goo.gl/JFL5Kk>

[Tweet That!](#)

Ghostbusters is primed for a reboot in summer 2016. The Ghostbusters [#logo](#), designed by the late Michael Gross, remains iconic.  
<http://goo.gl/7x1vzJ>

[Tweet That!](#)

### Vector Artwork



What would [#MajorLeagueBaseball](#) [#logos](#) look like in a [#StarWars](#) universe?  
<http://goo.gl/44AaVF>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Infographics](#) are a great addition to your digital branding and [#MarketingCollateral](#). Here are 5 tips on using them.  
<http://goo.gl/qhQVxA>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#StarWars](#) mania has sprung off the screen and onto [#PrintAdvertising](#) and digital media as well.  
<http://goo.gl/XMQZrE>

[Tweet That!](#)

If you have any designs created by our team that you would like to share in this newsletter, send them to us at [marketing@ideacustom.com](mailto:marketing@ideacustom.com)



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