

August 2016

## SEASONAL BUSINESSES: ALWAYS PLANNING



There are many small to medium sized businesses (SMBs) that have a "busy season" consisting of a couple of hectic months followed by some slower ones. But in every sector — whether consumer or B2B — there are successful firms that operate profitably despite their shorter windows of opportunity.

Some of these SMBs thrive in summer, such as travel and tourism related firms. Home builders and renovators also do well specifically because of the change in weather. Others like [specialty retailers and their suppliers](#) are especially active in the colder months or because of shopping booms connected to Christmas, Hanukkah and other winter holidays.

Just because some companies do most of their business within certain timeframes does not mean they don't need to think about their marketing year round. Seasonal companies are always planning. If you are a specialty advertising and promotional products dealer, or if you provide firms with you expertise on branding, rebranding, logo design or marketing collateral, you can be instrumental to helping these kinds of seasonal operations plan for success.

In terms of timing, keep in mind that the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI) found [20 percent of businesses think about promotional products](#) they buy to promote their companies three months ahead of time. Meanwhile, ASI says that 22 percent of firms plan as much as four months ahead.

So, what kind of seasonal or cyclical SMBs can you add to your client roster?

The warm temperatures and green grass of summertime bring landscapers and landscape architects to mind. Likewise outdoor equipment dealers, the often mom-and-pop [shops that sell everything from lawnmowers, chainsaws and farm equipment](#) tend to offer consumers and good deals in warmer months. Yet another category to tap is home improvement outfits that decorate, build decks or offer home remodeling which thrive in every corner of the U.S.

But don't forget other [seasonal spring and summer businesses that serve local markets](#): pool cleaning/repair services, house painters and gardening firms. There are also party stores, caterers and even fireworks dealers, who keep our summers festive from Memorial Day through July 4th to Labor Day.

A huge seasonal category — albeit "seasonal" in an entirely different sense — is tax preparers. Most of us would panic without the [accountants and tax prep firms that file 1040s and related paperwork](#) for us with the Internal Revenue Service.

One important thing to remember about some seasonal SMBs, including lawn, garden and home remodeling firms, is that in different times of the year they can shift their business to provide other services. For example, lawn care companies in colder climates typically [offer snow removal](#) to homeowners, apartment complexes, schools and businesses. Talk to lawn and garden firms and you will find out that most are [preparing ahead of time for the next season](#).

By showing all you offer in specialty advertising and promotional products, as well as branding and marketing services, you can contribute to SMBs'

## QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Would you recommend this newsletter?

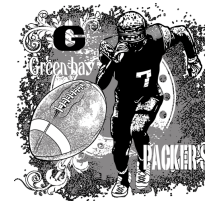
Nope  1  2  3  4  5 For sure

## WINNING ON INSTAGRAM

Congratulations to our team members who created the designs which got the most engagement on Instagram in July. If you haven't checked us out on Instagram yet, take a look: [idea\\_custom](#). You won't believe the range of designs and industries represented! New work is posted daily.



Embroidery Digitizing:  
Anushka Daware



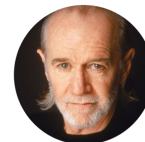
Vector Artwork:  
Sujay Mane

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ISS

Fort Worth, TX  
October 6-8  
Exhibiting, Booth 745

## NOTABLE QUOTES



"Think off-center."

— George Carlin

success while getting repeat business year after year.

Rain, shine or snow, Idea Custom Solutions will be there to support you as you propose and deliver new orders with [embroidery digitizing](#), [vector artwork](#), [image editing and design of marketing materials](#) — regardless of the sectors you target! For tips, check out our infographics on [Embroidery Digitizing Dos and Don'ts](#) and [Vector Artwork 101](#).

## LOOKS AND LOGOS: KEY TO DIFFERENTIATING YOUR COMPANY

It's typical for companies to freshen things up every once in a while. Certainly while each new year presents challenges and opportunities to drive revenue, it is customary for businesses of all sizes to change things up with new marketing campaigns.

Some of the world's largest and most influential companies — who have iconic and unforgettable logos — show us that occasional change and rebranding isn't anything to fear or avoid.

For example, [3M has reworked its logo](#) about 30 times over the past 100 years. This diversified products giant isn't shy about the fact that "the 3M logo is the key element of our corporate identity", but also states on its website that "getting serious about the logo" and their overall branding approach led the company formerly known as Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing to rebrand to the sleeker, easier-to-remember name 3M. It also helped the firm to become more easily recognizable around the world.

Another big, big company agrees with 3M's perspective on smart branding. "Good design is good business" became the [mantra of International Business Machines aka IBM](#). The company's approach also suggests that what constitutes good design and great logos changes over time. That's why smart firms should change to stay ahead of the times and relevant rather than lag behind. Taken a step further, IBM chief designer Paul Rand stated, "In the competitive world of look-alike products, a distinctive company logotype is one if not the principal means of distinguishing one product from that of another."

Similar to private sector firms, [global non-profits like the Peace Corps](#) and [Susan G. Komen for the Cure and breast cancer awareness](#) have demonstrated how important brand recognition and keeping their message current is to their mission.

Along the same lines, cities large and small — from [New York City and Amsterdam](#) to [suburban communities](#) and small towns all over the U.S. — are considering their logo, colors, fonts, marketing collateral and messaging as important contributors to driving business, succeeding at trade shows, and attracting tourists and new residents.

Rebranding or simply tweaking brands for SMBs is typically much simpler and not nearly as expensive and painstaking as that for corporations. But SMBs who want to rebrand or put out new logos are likely to achieve better results when working with partners. If you help [small companies kick-start their marketing](#), Idea Custom Solutions can support you as a partner.

[Contact us](#) about logo design services. In the meantime, you might find our infographic [29 Questions to Ask Your Design Resource](#) valuable. Our [Rebranding Checklist](#) will ensure you cover all the bases when helping your customers rebrand.

## T-SHIRTS: WINNERS WITH BUSINESSES AND THEIR CUSTOMERS

Summer is in full swing. So if you live anywhere between the equator and the North Pole, you are seeing lots of t-shirts everywhere. In the specialty advertising and promotional products industry we know that t-shirts are extremely popular with both consumers and small and medium sized businesses (SMBs).

*The New York Times* once pointed out that [95 percent of Americans wear t-shirts](#) and that 89 percent do so at least once a week, which is probably no surprise to anyone reading this newsletter.

T-shirts actually debuted as [simple garments for workers](#). But in time this comfortable classic [became an important part of American fashion](#). In 2016, t-shirts reflect [personal tastes in music and pop culture](#) as much as [attitudes on social issues](#).

Christin Wada, a TV show costume designer, says [the tee is "a way to express something personal about yourself"](#) without having to be all that personal . . . You're ultimately saying, "I'm a little bit rebellious but I don't want to tell you too much about it." These days, those pop culture or music [t-shirts work for the evenings and the office too](#).

Interestingly enough, individuals who buy individual tees and companies



"I am not afraid. I was born to do this."

— Joan of Arc



"Honesty is more than not lying. It is truth telling, truth speaking, truth living, and truth loving."

— James E. Faust



"However difficult life may seem, there is always something [you can do and succeed at](#)."

— Stephen Hawking



"I surround myself with a talented group of people that are opinionated and interesting. I try to remain very open to [what others have to say](#)."

— Anna Wintour



"The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential . . . these are the keys that will [unlock the door to personal excellence](#)."

— Confucius



"Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. [Dreaming after all, is a form of planning](#)."

— Gloria Steinem

that place bulk orders make their purchases for different reasons.

Last month, the Advertising Specialty Institute (ASI) wrote in an article that the price, the quality and the usefulness of the items to the end users are very important. Specifically, businesses responded that 65 percent of them think price is important in making their purchase but also 68 percent either agree or strongly agree that a quality logo on the product is essential too. Regarding the products, [52 percent of the businesses surveyed said they placed orders for t-shirts](#) in the last 12 months, making it the most popular promo product for the businesses surveyed. Plus, 71 percent of businesses give away their promotional products.

In terms of the consumers, the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) points out in their study of buyer preferences items like [t-shirts, caps, jackets and other wearables stand out as favorites](#). That's good for businesses that give out t-shirts to business partners and customers.

But businesses are also mindful of what they are paying for. SMBs know that only when t-shirts are worn does the world actually see their logos or brand marks. That's why promotional products distributors should aim to [offer something that users will wear over and over](#), which incorporates fashion, function and fit.

"If I won't wear it, I won't sell it," said one distributor in [Counselor](#) last month. [Making t-shirts that are winners](#) virtually guarantees the logos on them will be seen. And don't forget [the power of a free t-shirt!](#)

Idea Custom Solutions can help you with vector artwork files you'll need for decorating. Depending on your deadlines, we reliably deliver as fast as eight hours or in 48 hours for extra savings. Even better, if you are creating campaigns for customers and want innovative t-shirt designs, we have a team dedicated to Custom Creative orders like this. [Check out our free tips before you complete your next t-shirt order.](#)



#### PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

20 cutting-edge desk toys that grab attention and boggle the mind. [#PromoProducts](#) <http://goo.gl/JHl3nn>

[Tweet That!](#)

Swiss Army Knife: classic utility tool and favorite [#PromoProduct](#) for [#marketers](#). <http://goo.gl/USURuW>

[Tweet That!](#)

Sauces, seasonings, classy drinkware: the right [#PromoProducts](#) make restaurants sizzle. <https://goo.gl/fvHRDz>

[Tweet That!](#)

What [#PromoProducts](#) should be on every [#marketer's](#) radar in summer 2016? ASI knows: <http://goo.gl/UWijzQ>

[Tweet That!](#)

Tech firms often give employees company [#PromoProducts](#). Google's investors want [#swag](#) too. <http://goo.gl/w6cm3o>

[Tweet That!](#)

Experts say "everyone steals" certain [#PromoProducts](#). It's OK — that's why they're there. <http://goo.gl/J4Soyk>

[Tweet That!](#)

Earbuds, Frisbees and [#wearables](#) were plentiful for guests of Wizard World ComicCon. <https://goo.gl/0h0Hot>

[Tweet That!](#)

#### LOGOS AND REBRANDING

Here are 22 famous companies that have [#rebranded](#) with new names and [#logos](#). <http://goo.gl/sizG8k>

[Tweet That!](#)

Color, font and smart [#design](#) all play a huge role in the [#Olympics](#) [#logo](#) for [#Rio2016](#). <http://goo.gl/AHPAUs>

[Tweet That!](#)

Netflix adds pizzazz to [#branding](#) by rolling out red carpet on new app [#logo](#). <http://goo.gl/uI07EO>

[Tweet That!](#)

Seems every big tech firm is [#rebranding](#) or reworking a [#logo](#). Is [#Microsoft](#) next? <http://goo.gl/qfpuLv>

[Tweet That!](#)

Did you know the New York Yankees [#logo](#) was designed by Tiffany & Co? It's now an icon. <http://goo.gl/NjAPFA>

[Tweet That!](#)

The [#Olympics](#) are here, but designers are already at work on the [#logo](#) and brand mark for [#Tokyo2020](#). <http://goo.gl/0e1WUx>

[Tweet That!](#)

New York, Paris, London, even Eindhoven, Holland: cities around the world get their own [#onts](#). <http://goo.gl/5lLzFl>

[Tweet That!](#)

#### SIGNAGE

Car washes catch the eye and win customers with good [#signage](#). [#Logo](#), colors matter. <http://goo.gl/kqRfSz>

[Tweet That!](#)



"I am an ordinary man who worked hard to develop the talent I was given. [I believed in myself, and I believe in the goodness of others.](#)"

— Muhammad Ali



"Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th."

— Julie Andrews



"Once you [replace negative thoughts with positive ones](#), you'll start having positive results."

— Willie Nelson



"If you do things well, do them better. [Be daring, be first, be different, be just.](#)"

— Anita Roddick



"Initiative is [doing the right things](#) without being told."

— Elbert Hubbard

#### EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



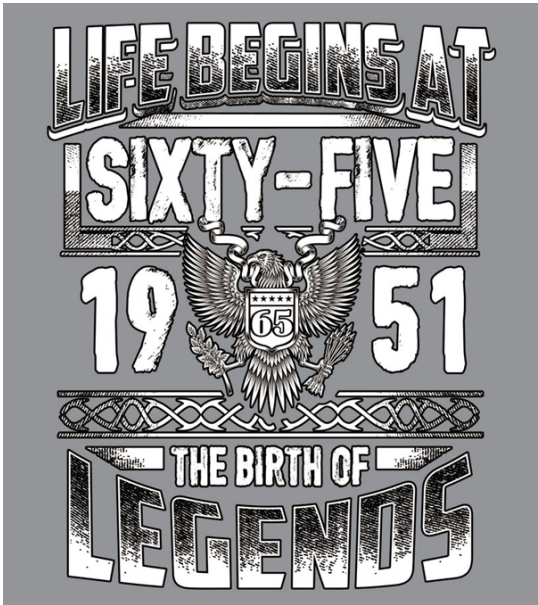
Priyanka Gaonkar  
Unit Process Specialist  
Artwork Team

Priyanka has been with the company since late 2012 and she

**Embroidery Digitizing**



**Vector Artwork**



has a leadership role in the Vector Artwork Department. She is proud that, in a short period of time, she gained a great deal of knowledge and was promoted to unit process specialist, achieving respect from both her colleagues and team leaders.

About the company, Priyanka believes, "Idea Custom Solutions consists of the most talented and creative people!" Ultimately, she would like to be known for her hard work.

When it comes to her life outside the office, she says, "In one word, it is awesome!" Her brother is her family and she dreams of having her own house someday where they can live together happily.

On days off, Priyanka's favorite activities are singing, dancing and visiting new places. In her free time, she likes to watch TV — mostly cartoon channels. She also researches work processes online to be better in her role at the company. Her favorite actor is Shah Rukh Khan, who is known as the "King of Bollywood".

Her best advice to team members and others is "Just be yourself and focus on your goal. One day you will reach your destiny!"

**CLIENTS ARE RAVING**

"The embroidery digitizing you did for me was exceptional — haven't had any orders for other logos since — will definitely use you again, should the need arise."

**Idea Custom Solutions  
Digitizing Customer**

"The service and the quality of work have been fantastic. I couldn't ask for more!"

**Idea Custom Solutions  
Vector Artwork Customer**