

March 2016

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS MAKE LOGOS TAKE OFF



A new logo is one of those things that make a small company “official”. Putting a logo on a business card, letterhead, or even a sign on the front door is as special to owners as the first dollar that goes from a customer’s wallet into their bank account.

As you already know, one way for your customers to get their logo to **resonate with more customers** is to put it out in the market with specialty advertising and promotional products. But then the next logical question is, “What kind of giveaways?”

The good news is that many of the products — whether you recommend wearables like **hats** and logoed outerwear, or something more for the office such as **pens**, calendars or desk toys — are very popular with nearly every consumer segment.

But a more effective marketing approach is to help clients think about who their customers are. We know that almost all consumers and business-to-business customers **love promo products that are unique, classy and creative**, and will both value and keep things that last.

Business Customers

For those small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) that target heavy industry, the financial sector or any relatively conventional business crowd, we have mentioned before on our blog that **golf and summer products are a very popular**, useful way to boost brands. Part of the appeal comes from the fact that **25 million Americans play regularly**. But any promotional product with customers’ names and logos on them, from branded **golf balls and gear, flip-flops and Frisbees** or **goods for the grill**, will conjure up happy times and warm weather, while spending all season in their target audiences’ hands.

Millennials

UPCOMING EVENTS

NBM

June 2-4
Indianapolis, IN
Exhibiting and Education Session

ASI Show!

July 13-14
Chicago, IL
Exhibiting
Booth: 1138

Embroidery Mart

August 5-6
Nashville, TN
Attending

ISS

October 6-8
Fort Worth, TX
Exhibiting

NOTABLE QUOTES



“Innovation distinguishes **between a leader and a follower.**”

— Steve Jobs



“I’m not a tech guy. I’m **looking at the technology with the eyes of my customers**, normal people’s eyes.”

— Jack Ma

For businesses that cater to younger people like college students and millennials, advise them to buck the old conventional assumptions. In 2016 millennials aren't so much interested in messages being tailored to "what's cool", as much as **brands' quality and authenticity**.

Event Participants

You might think free promotional calendars are just giveaways for realtors and restaurants, but think again. Last year the alternative music festival **Burning Man issued free promotional calendars** to cater to event goers, while colleges students across the nation made a habit of grabbing **simple but useful items** like pens, USB drives, wearables and the increasingly vital selfie stick at career fairs. At the same time, even the elite Ritz-Carlton is considering the importance of casting its **brand of luxury with approachability** to reach millennials (a.k.a. future customers) with ad specialties.

Whatever industry your customers are in and audiences they target, Idea Custom Solutions can **create production-ready artwork and graphic files**. Together, we'll get their logos and brands where they need to be — high-quality and in consumers' hands!

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS: JUST STORYTELLING?



For years, marketing experts have been talking and writing about a compelling idea: branding isn't just advertising, it's telling your story. Some of the biggest and best brands, like Nike, Lego and Apple have **gained massive success just by telling their stories**. The reason is that people want brands to **go beyond pitching products and connect**. And there's even an "art to telling your brand's story" according to *Entrepreneur Magazine*, which offers **four ways to get it right**.

Fast Company tells us that it's harder than ever to capture peoples' attention but **storytelling can be a compelling tactic**. So how do you get the attention of your audience of ideal customers... and keep it?

Make it Simple

One way to tell stories effectively, *Fast Company* says, is to keep things brief. Think about what you can say about you business in 100 words or in a few sentences. Sales professionals often speak of the "**elevator pitch**", a description of the company in about 30 to 60 seconds or the length of an elevator ride. Sometimes a tagline or a short-and-sweet one liner about who you are and what you do best is effective when communicating in written form.



"Colors are the **smiles of nature**."

— Leigh Hunt



"Never set limits, go after your dreams, don't be afraid to push the boundaries. **And laugh a lot — it's good for you!**"

— Paula Radcliffe



"I am a big believer that eventually everything comes back to you. **You get back what you give out.**"

— Nancy Reagan



"Genius ain't anything more than **elegant common sense**."

— Josh Billings



"I firmly believe that **respect is a lot more important**, and a lot greater, than popularity."

— Julius Erving

Whether you're making a product presentation or just thinking about the design for your next **brochure or marketing material**, make an effort to be clear, concise and informative.

Say Who and What You Are

Some businesses talk about concepts and say they are in the business of innovation, consulting or technology. But for small and medium sized businesses, **getting across what you do** and what product or service you ultimately sell is vital.

So don't mince words. While telling your story, convey what your solution means to your customers. What do they gain? What is the end result of their relationship with you? Why do they like you so much?

Other than being clear and direct, **talk about your track record** and your specific level of expertise to enhance the story.

Build a Strong Logo for a Strong Identity

Sure, a logo on its own is not going to build your business, establish relationships, and gain customers for life. But when done right, a good logo and brand identity helps insert your business and its value in customers' minds for the long haul.

Some say that placing the burden of storytelling on the businesses' logos leaves the craft of **logo design in a precarious state**. But the vast number of logo reboots and **rebrands** in just the past year, ranging from **Uber** to Google and Spotify to **Southwest Airlines**, suggests that the logo is a more important part of branding than ever before.

Every business has a unique background. Use your marketing not just to sell, but to tell your customers your story. If you need your logo revamped or want to help customers polish their images, **check out our Custom Creative services**. We have a dedicated team that will consult with you and/or your customers and design logos quickly and cost-effectively.

WEARABLE DECORATING TECHNIQUES AND THE VALUE OF DO-IT-FOR-ME



"Either you **run the day** or the day runs you."

— Jim Rohn



"Either write something worth reading or **do something worth writing.**"

— Benjamin Franklin



"Great things are not **accomplished** by those who yield to trends and fads and popular opinion."

— Jack Kerouac



"Luck? I don't know anything **about luck**. I've never banked on it and I'm afraid of people who do."

— Lucille Ball

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Manasi Acharya

Many of the professionals that Idea Custom Solutions supports are distributors and decorators of promotional products and marketing services — the very people that SMBs rely on to help them market their companies. When it comes to wearables, including classic promotional products like caps, shirts and outerwear, small businesses often need suggestions from experts.

If you are dealing with a customer that owns an auto body shop, an accounting firm, or a sports bar, they may have a great local reputation or brand name, but no idea what will help them spread the word about their offering. They may think “t-shirt” without knowing all the other great options available for wearables.

Last summer, we covered some of the new trends as presented by ASI’s *Advantages Magazine*. There were [a handful of new techniques](#) to provide any customer with the look and image best for their businesses.

One technique, called direct-to-garment (DTG) digital printing is used for customizing print on wearables, with the quick convenience of modified inkjet printing. DTG allows for a full range of colors and high-quality photography to be transferred to wearable garments. The ability to print vibrant artwork without extra time and charges for setup is a major benefit. DTG is best for natural fibers such as cotton and white fabric. As such, DTG is often the best technique for wearables like cotton hoodies and shirts, or other printed items like the Pittsburgh Steelers’ [“terrible towel”](#).

Another technique for cutting-edge graphics on synthetic materials like acrylic, or polyester is called sublimation. With sublimation, special dyes and transfer papers are part of the process used to bond graphics with items’ fibers to embolden graphics with vibrant colors and contrasting patterns. Popular [promotional items like tote bags](#) or the [nerd-chic fanny pack](#) can pack a punch for any logo or brand, thanks to sublimation.

Meanwhile, [distressed designs are another choice for SMB customers](#) who want promotional giveaways that speak to a more casual customer crowd. They provide the cozy, classic broken-in look of an old college sweatshirt or lucky baseball cap.

For those customers looking for a more intricate design, [multimedia embellishment](#) works best at creating exciting, three-dimensional graphics that stand out.

Whichever wearables typically appeal to the SMBs you serve, make sure to give your customers a variety of options. Most busy entrepreneurs are focused on their business and look to experts that can provide valuable do-it-for-me solutions. If you guide them, they’ll thank you!

Meanwhile, we can [create the production-ready files](#) for their logos and artwork, which will work regardless of the decorating technique.

CLIENTS ARE RAVING

“InnerCityCapital Management (ICCM) has incorporated Idea Custom Solutions within our personalization business solutions workflow. Jay Busselle has been very professional and time-sensitive to our needs. Idea Custom Solutions’ pricing has been very reasonable and they are becoming a critical component of our business solution for clients. We now include Idea Custom Solutions as our graphic partner, which allows our company to focus on other aspects of the business. Keep up the good work and we at ICCM are very glad to have you and your company as a strategic partner.”

Keith Jackson,
InnerCity Capital Management LLC

Unit Supervisor,
Order Management Team

Manasi started her career at Idea Custom Solutions almost four years ago and, today, is responsible for overall quality and production. As she tells us, “Perfection is our goal, so training, guiding and grooming team members for success are my key functions.”

Since joining the company, Manasi is most proud of her personal growth. “I have learned a lot and grown as a professional. I have also become confident and a good decision maker. Coming this far is a great achievement for me.”

To anyone considering a position at Idea Custom Solutions, Manasi believes it is “a great place to nurture your career.”

She lives with her parents and a bunch of cats. As an animal lover, she enjoys taking care of stray animals. She is not presently connected with any charity but would like to someday become part of an organization to help animals.

In her spare time, Manasi is an avid reader. She doesn’t know how to cook but still surprises her family members on special events. “I spend a lot of time planning and making events memorable.”

Her long-term goal has always been to become a news anchor. “It is a very cool and exciting profession.” She also hopes to get a degree in English literature.

In the future, Manasi would like to be known for being a kindhearted person, as well as both her creativity and knowledge.

TWEET THAT

[#PromoProducts](#) aren’t just for the [#TradeShow](#) hall. John Deere, 400 others use them to build brands at [#WorldAgExpo](#). <http://goo.gl/nqIM41>



College students love free stuff. Reach these drivers of the economy with the [#PromoProducts](#) they choose first.





DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork



<https://goo.gl/EcLVgi>

Bottle openers are a popular [#PromoProduct](#) year round. Pry into the history of this favorite. <http://goo.gl/RSv5MO>

Tweet That!

Branded matches are another outside-the-box [#PromoProduct](#) idea, with a touch of elegance. <http://goo.gl/PJAATm>

Tweet That!

Stan's Donuts makes their customer experience sweeter with [#branded #PromoProducts](#) like shirts and mugs. <http://goo.gl/gC19uzl>

Tweet That!

[#ThrowbackThursday](#) helps [#SMBs](#) reach consumers. Share a retro [#logo](#), run contests, show an old photo. <http://goo.gl/h0aqXX>

Tweet That!

Print [#brochures](#) aren't a thing of the past. But their past is beautiful. Just ask General Motors. <https://goo.gl/SA5xPB>

Tweet That!

As [#marketing](#) becomes more like storytelling, a [#logo](#) helps cast your brand's voice. <http://goo.gl/rQHE4X>

Tweet That!

Colors in [#LogoDesign](#) indicate evoke trust, familiarity. But shape may be more important. <http://goo.gl/DuPfy>

Tweet That!

British Rail helped spawn the famous Gill Sans font. Its [#logo](#) can be found on drinkware and more. <http://goo.gl/znM4Fv>

Tweet That!

Small cities and towns are still [#rebranding](#) everywhere to reel in business. Lemont, Illinois adds a new [#logo](#). <http://goo.gl/UbPBip>

Tweet That!

AC DC, Nirvana and other famed hard rock bands made sweet music of [#LogoDesign](#). Here are the top 20: <http://goo.gl/obsjQN>

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



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