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Design Express

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



WHAT AD AGENCIES REALLY THINK OF PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

The Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) conducted a study to determine the buying habits and preferences for promotional products among 400 advertising agencies and corporate advertisers. The four-page "Straight Talk" article in PPB Magazine summarizes the following topics: the Buying Process, Opportunities to Build More Business, Promotional Products as Media Investments, Promotional Products' Effectiveness and Campaign Use of Promotional Products.



These are some of the key takeaways:

- Seventy-four percent of buyers at advertising agencies and large corporations consider promotional products effective or highly effective.
- Eight in ten advertisers and agencies say they purchase promotional products from promotional consultants.
- Advertisers are significantly more likely to buy promotional products as needed -- without having a specific budget.
- There are three drivers for both groups when deciding to include promotional products: price,

STATISTICS AND RESEARCH

- [Boxercraft Apparel Announces Partnership with Minor League Baseball](#)
- [Printing Profits -- Contract Screen-Printing](#)
- [We Come In Fleece](#)
- [Probe, Don't Pitch](#)

TELL YOUR CLIENT!

[Bredin surveyed](#) more than 300 SMBs and found "designed for my needs" was the top-ranked reason for purchasing. The preferred online media to learn about product offerings is search, vendor websites and email. Offline, SMBs prefer trade shows, events, direct mail and public relations.

WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING?

"I was recently introduced to Jay Busselle and Idea Custom Solutions by Cliff Quicksell for my digitizing needs. I have now used them twice for digitizing jobs that were actually

design/function and favorites of recipients.

- More than half of advertising agencies and advertisers use promotional products in creating brand recognition and awareness.
- Apparel is the category of promotional products most often purchased in the past 12 months.
- Only half of advertising agencies and corporate advertisers track promotional product campaign results.

Our take:

Apparel is the top category and, according to *Stitches State of the Industry*, embroidery generates 64 percent of decorating services revenue. The embroidery digitizing services of Idea Custom Solutions ensures your customers receive quality decorating in record time with designs that best reflect their brand.

[To read more, visit the PPAI website.](#)

quite complicated. Their turnaround time is amazing and their pricing is significantly less than what I had been paying in the past. I have asked my embroiderer what they thought of the digitizing and they were **extremely pleased** with the quality of the work. Without hesitation, I recommend Idea Custom Solutions. Jay Busselle has been a pleasure to work with. I know that I will be using them for all of my digitizing needs going forward."

Linda Miller Seder

Innovative Promotional Concepts

CHANGE YOUR THINKING, CHANGE YOUR FUTURE

Joseph Scott, owner of promotional distributorship *Joseph Scott & Associates*, has pushed the boundaries of traditional consultancy and tells PPAI Publications that his success has been built on a steady of influx of ideas and advice from fellow industry professionals. To keep up with customers' needs and expectations, all while working within predictable market conditions, Scott relies on innovation.

Over the years, Scott has been making inroads in web design, social media marketing, graphic design, content creation and more. "I looked to my colleagues for inspiration and for ideas for business innovation . . . Rod Brown [Made To Order], for working 'on' the business and not just 'in' it; and Mark Graham [RIGHTSLEEVE Marketing, Inc.] and Bobby Lehew [ROBYN], for how to branch out into other more profitable areas and clients," says Scott.

And becoming innovative does not have to cost a lot of money or time. "One is only limited by one's imagination, team capabilities and the ability to sell to others," he says. "Start with small innovations first; small failures and small victories . . . As your appetite for risk and reward grows, you can bite off more ambitious projects -- this applies to internal and external innovations."

INDUSTRY QUOTE

Evaluate. Honestly evaluate your business. Does it offer a truly unique and demonstratively better offering for your defined target group? If not, what do you need? Better art, better skills as a printer, faster turn times, knowledge in apparel, updated equipment or technology? Be brutally honest. If you are lacking something, what are you going to do about it? Maybe you need to hire or outsource an artist, take a class, add embroidery or buy a delivery van. This could be a goal while you work toward filling the void, but the main idea here is to identify what you are lacking and have a real plan in place to shore that part up if needed. [Read the rest of the article.](#)

Marshall Atkinson

Chief Operating Officer
Visual Impressions, Inc. and
Ink to the People

UPCOMING



Our take:

On a constant basis, we must look for opportunities to innovate and improve customer satisfaction and retention. In fact, BIA/Kelsey reports it can be [ten times more expensive](#) to acquire new customers while repeat customers spend 67 percent more than new ones. Allow Idea Custom Solutions to handle traditional artwork and embroidery services, so you can focus your efforts on exploring new and innovative products and services.

[Read the rest of the article.](#)

CRAFT A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC CULTURE

Earlier this month, *Promotional Consultant Today* shared five tactics businesses should employ to maintain customer-centric cultures and we found research that reinforces how important it is for businesses to do this.



Re-Create Your Customer's Experience

By re-creating the customer experience, you can observe the pains and pleasures your customers go through when interacting with you and your employees. [In 2013](#), 62 percent of global consumers switched service providers due to poor customer service experiences, up 4 percent from last year.

Get To Know Your Regulars

INDUSTRY EVENTS

[ASI Show!](#)

July 15-17
Chicago, IL

[PPAI Women's Leadership Conference](#)

July 28-30
Denver, CO

[Imprinted Sportswear Show](#)

Aug 3-5
Las Vegas, NV

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Abhishekh Joshi, Manager

Abhishekh joined Affinity Express nine years ago as a junior team associate and has since been promoted to manager. He has been instrumental to the company's growth in this role, as he has increased major order entry projects, shown excellent product knowledge and demonstrated high-level customer service skills. Working very closely with customers during the development process to understand their needs, Abhishekh has built quite a rapport among customers and employees. He has a calming, flexible style that inspires people's confidence.

Regular customers are your best sources of revenue, so get to know their likes and dislikes in order to improve their loyalty. The small business report by [Manta and BIA/Kelsey reveals](#) that 61 percent of SMB owners report half of their annual revenues come from repeat customers versus new ones.

Hire Staff that Mirror Your Culture

Employees are keepers of your culture and they should uphold your operating standards and customer service practices to distinguish your business from competitors.

Trust in Feedback

Feedback from customers is your most powerful marketing tool. Listen to what your customers are saying on and offline. [According to The Nielsen Company's Global Trust Survey](#), 84 percent of consumers trust recommendations from people they know and 68 percent trust consumers' opinions posted online.

Product and Service Must be Parallel

The product or service you sell must be as good as the customer service experience and vice versa. If they do not support each other, customers may never come back.

Our take:

When you partner with Idea Custom Solutions for embroidery digitizing, vector artwork, image editing and marketing materials, you are in the hands of well-trained design team members who can provide you with fast turn times and award-winning quality. With this peace-of-mind, you can focus on establishing and maintaining the customer-centric culture that will give your business an edge.

[Read the rest of the article.](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a guide to convert PMS colors to thread colors?

Yes, since manufacturers make thread using different materials or blends of materials, they have all created charts that show which colors of thread match specific PMS colors. Manufacturers Madeira and Robison Anton (RA) have become trusted sources for matching PMS colors to thread.



DESIGN SHOWCASE

Vector Artwork



Input



Output

Embroidery Digitizing



Input



Output

If you have any designs created by our team that you would like to share in this newsletter, send them to us at marketing@affinityexpress.com.



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