

# DESIGN EXPRESS

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



October 2015

## TODAY'S "CHECK-IN CULTURE" IS GREAT FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS



Think about the last time you did something or went somewhere that you wanted brag about. Maybe it was visiting the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, a swanky vineyard in Napa Valley, or even catching Sir Paul McCartney live in concert. Perhaps you took the kids to the local ball game or art museum. In 2015, it seems typical that when Americans do something significant, they "check in".

With the rise of smart phones, checking in often means literally checking in on social media. But another way that we check in to monumental places and times in our lives is with souvenirs. Grabbing a Grand Canyon fridge magnet, a branded mini-bottle of Cabernet or a Paul McCartney t-shirt is commonplace for today's consumer. Just the [arrival of Pope Francis](#) last month caused a spike in the sale of souvenirs and promo products.

This phenomenon — our need to check in and mark the occasion — tells us two things:

- First, Americans like stuff. We love freebies. But when the chance presents itself, we will spend our own money to own and collect promotional items (or as some call it, "swag").
- Second, it shows that consumers approve of things we associate with brands. That "brand" so to speak, doesn't always have to be something product-related like Tide® detergent, Cheetos® or Coca-Cola®. Tech-savvy folks latch onto brands like Apple® and Pandora® the same way [sports fans](#) latch onto

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### ISS

Fort Worth, TX  
October 15-17  
Exhibiting, Jay Busselle



### ASI Power Summit

Laguna Beach, CA  
November 1-3  
Attending, Jay Busselle

## CLIENTS ARE RAVING

"I just completed my first order with Idea Custom. I want to say I was very pleased with the turnaround time and the work that was done."

— **Derek Payne,**  
**TexLa Specialties LLC**

"Your team is fast, professional and responsive. Thanks for all the good work!"

— **Michael L,**  
**catalog company that produces**  
**40 different versions per season**

## NOTABLE QUOTES

Nike®, the Super Bowl® or Phil Mickelson®.

For businesses, especially small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that are eager to promote their brands and build their names, the trend is a good thing. In previous issues of our newsletter, we mentioned how many SMBs and brands are promoting their businesses with [promotional products at events](#). These events include much-hyped music fests like Bonaroo and SXSW, as well as outdoor foodie events like the Taste of Chicago and smaller local versions. Just the same, small town farmer's markets, autumn apple fests and other seasonal events are also a great opportunity for your customers to get in front of people and hand out their branded giveaways.

Consumers and professionals love promo products of all types. Whether it's the mundane and useful (such as umbrellas, reusable water bottles and coffee mugs), or something playful like bobbleheads, logoed Frisbees and desk toys, the [Advertising Specialty Institute](#) notes that every category of promotional products has consumers asking your customers for "the free stuff".

We'll help you make the most of your customers' brands with [vector artwork and embroidery digitizing](#) in fast turn times.

## EMPLOYEES: ONE KEY TO BRANDING WITH WEARABLES

When it comes to branded wearables some of the most popular classics include baseball caps, jackets and outerwear, as well as t-shirts and college-style sweatshirts. Both screen printed and embroidered logos are the norm.

The [June issue of Advantages Magazine](#) kept us current on cutting edge techniques in wearables, including direct-to-garment digital printing, multimedia embellishment and distressed designs, which can give your specialty wearables that comfy, broken-in look.

When you approach companies with ideas to promote their businesses to customers, it's important not to forget employees. Now, we're not necessarily talking uniform-style golf shirts like the ones proudly worn by the sales associates at Best Buy and Meijer (although, if your customers have a regular demand for shirts for in-house employees, that's great!). Rather, one trend that has come up big in 2015 is that employers of all kinds, from colleges to corporations large and small are getting are using branded wearables and promo products to welcome and reward employees.

For example, internet radio firm Pandora made sure to suit up employees volunteering at the Ally Coalition this summer in Los Angeles. By dressing up their volunteers out in the community in slick t-shirts with an alternate Pandora logo in rainbow colors, the firm ended up displaying their brand as well as their genuine support for LGBT pride.

Other firms, like Chubbies Shorts®, Twitter® and Polyvore®, [give new employees](#) "swag bags" with branded apparel and gift cards for company promo products as part of the first week's welcome. These gifts typically go hand-in-hand with new employee orientation sessions and fun activities. Some companies keep the momentum going by running incentive contests throughout the work year, in which employees can win other coveted promo items as prizes.



"You can have brilliant ideas, but if **you can't get them across**, your ideas won't get you anywhere."

— Lee Iacocca



"Power is the **ability to get things done**."

— Rosabeth Moss Kanter



"Doing is a **quantum leap** from imagining."

— Barbara Sher



"Nothing is impossible, the word itself says **'I'm possible!'**"

— Audrey Hepburn



"Don't cry because it's over. **Smile because it happened**."

— Dr. Seuss

It doesn't hurt to have a sense of humor in the workplace. Google®, for instance, [pokes fun at its "noobs"](#) or new employees by handing them a propeller-topped cap that reads "Noogler" during their first week at work.

By using specialty advertising items to welcome and reward employees, employers make their company names more visible. Make sure to talk to your customers about the way they can welcome and honor their workers with wearables and instill pride in their brands. We're here to back you up with award-winning [design quality](#)!

## MARKETING COLLATERAL HELPS REACH CUSTOMERS

"Be prepared" is the age-old motto of the Boy Scouts of America®. The two-word idea has also been put to use in other forms by a variety of organizations and businesses, perhaps because being prepared is the single [most important thing](#) that an enterprising business person can do.

One of the best tools for being prepared to tell the story of your brand is marketing collateral: brochures, leave-behinds, or whatever you prefer call them. And even though the world has gone digital, marketing collateral is still not only relevant but also a great way to strengthen your overall marketing when combined with website content, social media, advertising and event marketing.

In fact, many of the most successful companies in every sector — even technology — regard marketing collateral as an essential part of connecting with customers.

One perspective on this comes from Tawheed Kader, CEO of ToutApp, a firm that helps salespeople increase productivity through analytics. On *Entrepreneur Magazine's* website last month, he weighed in on how marketing collateral's most potent power is how it [positions you as an expert](#).

"Marketers have a challenging job. They need to exhaust all avenues for success — and their sales division is often underutilized in helping them do that." Furthermore, Kader mentions that nearly 90 percent of B2B buyers engage with sales professionals "viewed as thought leaders in their industry."

Materials like quality printed product overview sheets quickly inform prospects on your solution options, while infographics help salespeople communicate data points, statistics and best practices in a direct way that requires minimal text.

Idea Custom Solutions is committed to helping entrepreneurs and the businesses they serve tell their stories through a full range [marketing materials](#) and eye-catching visuals. If you haven't tried our team for collateral design, you'll be surprised how easy it is to get attractive branded materials that speak volumes.



TWEET THAT!



"A satisfied customer is the [best business strategy](#) of all."

— Michael LeBoeuf



"No matter what people tell you, [words and ideas can change the world](#)."

— Robin Williams



"I believe [fundamental honesty](#) is the keystone of business."

— Harvey S. Firestone

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



**Brijeshkumar Sharma**  
Unit Supervisor, Order Entry

Five years ago, Brijeshkumar Sharma joined Idea Custom

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

What does a cutting edge [#logo](#) look like? Some great examples from successful companies.

<http://goo.gl/kYBzxv>

[Tweet That!](#)

Pro baseball started playoffs in 1969. [@MLB](#) Team [#logo](#) designs have changed much since the 1890s.

<http://goo.gl/jBJ3nQ>

[Tweet That!](#)

Top companies honor employee achievements. Awards and company swag help them feel valued.

[#PromoProducts](#) <http://goo.gl/pZzH3J>

[Tweet That!](#)

Cities keep rebranding! For Wichita, KS decals, patches, mugs pump its skyline to business and visitors. <http://goo.gl/uXK6sR>

[Tweet That!](#)

Does color speak for your SMB's [#brand](#)? Blue for trust, red for passion, say some color [#logo](#) experts.

<http://goo.gl/UBHQ0B>

[Tweet That!](#)

Nike's legendary logo was sketched by a student in 1971 for \$35. But you can't put a price on brand value.

<https://goo.gl/7O6Udz>

[Tweet That!](#)

Hotel giant Best Western is tapping new tastes, rebranding with [#logo](#) and website tune-ups.

<http://goo.gl/i7CGtv>

[Tweet That!](#)

Want to stoke new employees and build your brand too? 12 quirky things do for new hires with [#PromoProducts](#). <http://goo.gl/1S1QO9>

[Tweet That!](#)

Millennials love free branded "swag" and [#PromoProducts](#) are part of today's social media strategy. <http://goo.gl/wrz4tb>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Infographics](#) make great visual marketing collateral. Here's a few of the best out there. <http://goo.gl/sxx1ti>

[Tweet That!](#)

Solutions. He is currently the unit supervisor for order entry and manages the team's performance and delivery deadlines. He still remembers proudly the training sessions when he first started working for the company because he was rewarded for outstanding performance.

Brijesh lives with his wife and daughter. He says, "I will never forget when I got married. It was the most special day of my life because God blessed me with the perfect life partner."

In his spare time, he likes to go shopping with his family. He also enjoys playing chess and watching movies. "I think my teammates would be surprised to know that I like to dance very much. It would be hard for them to believe, considering my formal style at work."

In the future, his dream is to go on a trip to the United States with friends. He tells us he is an optimist and practical person. Above all, he would like to be known for his knowledge and honesty.

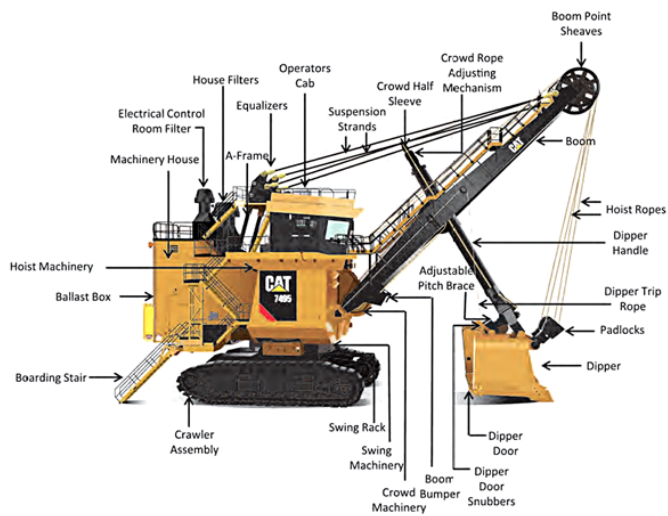


Embroidery Digitizing





## Vector Artwork



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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