

8 Promotional Product *myths* **BUSTED!**

Source: epromos.com

There are always some interesting myths swirling around about promotional products. Some marketers can spot these myths from a mile away and don't give them any consideration.

But others are quick to latch on to the misconceptions. They become wary about using promotional products. They doubt the effectiveness of promos and sometimes write them off altogether.

When marketers put stock in the myths they hear, they're missing out. Big time. In this blog post, we shatter nine common myths about promotional products. Read on for the myths and why they're busted.

Myth #1: People don't really use promotional products.

Why it's perpetuated:

There are so many branded items out there, people simply don't have use for them all. They can't possibly use all the logo tumblers, t-shirts, and tote bags that marketers fling their way.

Right? Wrong.

Why this myth is busted:

People love free stuff. And we mean love it. Eighty-three percent of consumers like receiving a promotional product with an advertising message, according to Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), and 53% of consumers use a promotional item at least once a week or more.

So go ahead – give people what they want. Unleash the promos on them. Just make sure they're useful to your audience and relevant to your brand.

83% of consumers like receiving a promotional product with an advertising message.

Myth #2 People don't really use promotional products.

Why it's perpetuated:

It's impossible to know if all of your branded swag is really working. You hand out hundreds

(or thousands) of bottles of hand sanitizer at a tradeshow. You freely give out tote bags at a career fair. You're up to your ears in promotional pens – and you've been giving them out for years.

You can't keep track of all of these giveaways and pinpoint their value – or at least that's how it might seem.

Why this myth is busted:

Promotional products are completely (and easily) trackable. You just have to take the time to do it. You're measuring the ROI of your other marketing efforts – don't let promotional items fall to the wayside because you're unsure how to track their effectiveness.

Some simple ways to measure the ROI of promotional products include:

1. QR codes (or, at the very least, unique URLs).

Create a landing page for your promotion and print the URL or a QR code (here's more on how to do this) on your promotional giveaways. Voila – you can now track the hits/leads/sales that came directly from the products. See how simple that was?

2. Phone numbers.

If you'd rather speak to prospects than drive them to a website, just put a twist on the first idea by printing a new phone number on your promotional products. It's easy to measure how many calls came in as a result of the giveaways.

3. A solid CTA.

When it comes to tracking promotional products, a CTA (call-to-action) is a must. Why? Because a CTA makes it super simple to measure the effectiveness of your giveaways. Print an offer directly on your promotional products, and you can see the kind of traffic it generates.

Test out different offers on different products. eg A nail bar might offer a half-price manicure if you bring in one of their custom nail files, or you could offer an instant 10% discount to customers who wear one of your promotional caps or tees when making an instore purchase. Or add value by offering free refills when using a

branded coffee cup or receive a free 'upgrade, service or small product' when the customer shows the required promotional item.

Make your CTA simple and appealing, and recipients will take you up on your offer.

More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of people can *recall* the advertiser's name on a promotional product they received in the past *year*.

Myth #3 Cheap is the way to go

Why it's perpetuated:

When it comes to promotional products, marketers sometimes have a one-track mind. All they want to do is get their logo in front of as many people as possible. To accomplish this, they seek out the cheapest products, never pausing to think about the impact on their brands.

Price should never be your only consideration. The products you choose are representative of your brand. Pick cheap promos, and that's how your business will be viewed.

Why this myth is busted:

Cheaper is not always better. You're purchasing branded merchandise – not a new phone plan.

Promotional products make a lasting impression on recipients. More than three-quarters of people can recall the advertiser's name on a promotional product they had received in the last 12 months, according to PPAI.

With technological gadgets such as powerbanks, safety should be a key concern

- choosing a powerbank based on price alone could lead to brand damaging health and safety incident and no-one wants that.

What you give people sticks in their minds. Do you want your brand to be associated with cheap throwaway items that will likely end up in the trash, or do you want people to associate your brand with useful, innovative promotional items that are relevant and targeted to their needs?

Don't go cheap just to save a few bucks up front. It doesn't do anything to help your brand.

Myth #4 It's better to invest in 'above the line', mainstream media.

TV ads get all the glory. Just think about the buzz that Super Bowl spots generate in the USA (and the money advertisers spend on creating those ads and securing those spots!). Don't forget about radio spots and print ads. Marketers go to great lengths (read: invest heaps of money with ad agencies) to churn out ads in these old-school mediums.

Well, guess what. The tides have turned when it comes to traditional forms of advertising.

Mainstream media is swiftly losing its appeal – and its effectiveness. PricewaterhouseCoopers predicts that traditional media advertising will decline by a 1.5% annual rate through 2017.

Why this myth is busted:

To get your message across today, you have to be personal. You must focus on the individual.

Promotional products allow your brand to get so up close with customers that your logo is in the palm of their hands.

Consumers can skip past or tune out other forms of advertising. (Who actually sits through traditional commercials these days?).

But promotional products stick with them. Eighty-nine percent of consumers can recall the name of an advertiser on a promotional product they received in the last 24 months, according to PPAI research.

Customers can fill up that custom coffee mug every morning and be reminded of your bakery.

They can slip on that promo t-shirt and think

back to the fun times they had at the company retreat.

Promotional products are incredibly personal – and that's something that mainstream media just can't touch.

Myth #5 All promotional product companies are the same

Why it's perpetuated:

Promotional Products and Promotional Marketing companies all do the same thing – they put logos on products, and then pass them on to customers for various campaigns. It doesn't really matter which company you work with as long as you get the stuff you need.

At first blush, that's how it may seem.

But actually, not all companies who deliver promotional solutions are created equal. Some are product sourcing specialists, some focus on providing creative, bespoke solutions, some just carry stock of the most commonly used items and operate out of their garage. All these companies have a place, but it is definitely not a 'one-size-fits-all' situation!

Why this myth is busted:

Many promotional companies are small mom-and-pop shops or even one-man-bands. They don't have a dedicated art department, production department, or merchandising team. They're doing it all themselves. As a result, there's a good chance your promotional products won't look as great as they could – or

When it comes to
promotion, there is **no**
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fits all'.

even arrive when you need them. Or you could end up with the same off-the-shelf product as your competitor because they didn't have many options in stock - awkward!

Not all promotional companies know promotional products, either. They don't know the different factories producing the items, and they've never felt or used the products.

When selecting a promotional products vendor, think about it like a partnership. You want a specific person handling your order from start to finish. You want him or her to answer all of your questions and be there for you in a pinch.

Myth #6 There's nothing new in promotional products

Why it's perpetuated:

Considering that promotional products have been around for hundreds of years (the first commemorative buttons trace back to 1789 when George Washington was elected President), it's easy to think that everything has been done before. That there's nothing new and fresh.

Why this myth is busted:

Well, the reality is that promotional items are constantly evolving. Promotional products are a \$19.83 billion industry, and every year, thousands of new products come to market. (Click [here](#) to get a look at some of the most innovative new items to hit the promotional marketing scene.)

Thousands of new products are unveiled *each year* in the
\$19.83 billion
promotional products
industry.

The 53rd largest tradeshow in the United States is The PPAI Expo, which in January 2014, featured more than 1,400 exhibiting companies in 1.1 million square feet of exhibit space. Nothing new in promotional products? It's quite the opposite.

Myth #7 Promotional Marketing won't work for my business

Why it's perpetuated:

You like the idea of using promotional products to promote your brand, business or products, but you're just not sure your business is cut out for them. You think they cost too much, they're unoriginal, or any of the myths we've just busted above. It's easy to doubt the effectiveness of promotional items – especially if you've never put them to work for your brand.

Why this myth is busted:

Promotional products can work for any brand and for any campaign – whether you want to drive tradeshow traffic, boost brand awareness, or achieve something else altogether. After receiving a promotional product, 85% of consumers do business with the advertiser, according to PPAI.

Promotional items also help you lock in new customers. Eleven percent of advertisers, according

to PPAI research, increase their business even among those who hadn't done business with them before.

It pays to use promotional products. They not only get your logo in front of your target audience, but they drive recipients to do business with your company. That's powerful stuff.

Myth #8 Promotional items don't last

Why it's perpetuated:

Promotional products sometimes get a bad rap for being cheap throwaway items. (Go back to myth #3 to review why cheaper isn't better.) They no sooner get doled out than they're dumped in the trash or shoved to the back of a drawer. At least, that's what some marketers think.

Why this myth is busted:

Promo items get your brand long-lasting exposure – and the research backs it up. Data from ASI (Advertising Specialty Institute) shows that the average amount of time people hang on to promotional products is 6.6 months.

That's more than half a year with your logo front and center.

Here's a look at some promotional items and how long people keep them:

- Calendars – 9 months
- Outerwear – 7.3 months
- Drinkware – 7.1 months
- USB drives – 6.9 months
- Bags – 6.8 months
- Caps – 6 months
- Desk/office accessories – 6 months
- Shirts – 5.8 months
- Healthy/safety – 5.5 months
- Writing instruments – 5.3 months

So there you have it - eight commonly held myths about Promotional Products and Promotional Marketing.

People *keep*
promotional products
for an *average* of
6.6 months.

Every one needs a little promotion from time to time - whether you want the whole world needs to know that you're re-branding, or you've

got a great new product, or you simply want to remind your customers of the great choice they've made in choosing your brand, a well-thought out promotional product can leave a positive impression that will leave a positive lasting impression.

Whether you use a stand-alone promotional item or you integrate promotional products into a wider campaign using complimentary media, just get your name out there and let them know what you stand for.

If you have any questions regarding promotional marketing, or would like to explore the benefits of including Promotional Marketing as part of your greater Marketing Plan, get in touch with the team at JPS Marketing - we'd love to hear from you.

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