

How do you choose promotional products for your business?

Source: epromos.com

Have you ever wondered why other businesses choose the promotional products they do? Were they selected because they made sense for the brand, or were the companies seeking something quirky and fun?

It turns out, a little bit of both. Here's the inside scoop from ten businesses on how they decide which promo products to invest in. The examples are American but the thinking and strategy behind their choices are universal.

Select different promos for different audience segments



Shelly Antley
Director of Marketing,
[Hanszen Laporte](http://HanszenLaporte.com)

I try to find things that tie back to our branding/logo and that would be fun or useful for the target audience. For instance, we have nail files with a house on the end for our residential realtor clients (who tend to be mostly female), and we have tactical flashlights for our male clients. Our logo is a compass, and we specialize in residential and commercial real estate. The flashlight ties back to our logo and also helps you “find your way,” just like our law firm.

We have also had drawings at tradeshows where we gave one sandal away on the first day and they had to come back to see us on the second day to get the mate. We had two opportunities to talk to the client, and they got a new pair of great sandals (the men got flip

flops). I think it's fun to have something folks will actually use and think of us when they do.

Incorporate a mix of useful promos



Ian Aronovich
Co-founder and CEO,
GovernmentAuctions.org

When we have our own booth at conferences, we generally give away free stuff that people typically use and keep. This may include pens, Post-Its, mousepads, and bottle openers. These things are not related to our business, however since they are useful things and are used by our swag recipients, we get lots of free advertising and publicity.

Never give promotional products that you don't like

I once received a nice sample pen in the mail, and I bought a batch of them to give out at tradeshows. The sample pen was very well made. When I received the subsequent pens,

they were poorly manufactured, often leaked and often fell apart. Sorry – no more pens.



Robert Barrows
President,
[R.M. Barrows, Inc.](#)
[Advertising & Public Relations](#)

Don't skimp on quality



Andrew Royce Bauer,
CEO,
[Royce Leather](#)

Royce Leather chooses promotional products that are synonymous with the luxury goods we sell.

[We] often choose high-quality materials like leather business cards to show customers and business partners that we are serious about giving them a quality

product.

When choosing our promotional products, Royce Leather always keeps in mind that we must put as much consideration and money into these promotional products as we do with our own leather products.

Choose promo items that get your brand noticed

We sell boutique, hard-to-find Champagnes for collectors, gifts, and more. To launch, we gave high-end baseball caps with our logo and a “Join the Party” message to friends and high-profile NYC media influencers. This was an effort to drive visibility and conversation about business.

To date, they are still in use and working hard for us. To reward and delight customers, we sent them a branded Champagne stopper (wine stoppers don't work for Champagne). This encouraged people to think of us when using our product—or reminded them of us when they use other



Ruth Frantz,
Founder,
[Henri's Reserve](#)

products. People still talk about them.

This past Valentine's day, we sent Valentine's cards and conversation hearts customized with French romantic phrases, our name, and a secret code for a Valentine's discount. No one else sends thank you's – or custom conversation hearts!

When you find something that works, stick with it

We are always looking for fun and interesting ways of getting customers to remember us. Other than the usual promotional products like imprinted pens, we like keychains – keychains in the shape of houses, with small LED flashlights, with multi-tools. It matches well with our real estate and property management business, and people tend to keep these items much longer than a stress ball.

—Oliver Overton-Morgan,
President, [Absolut Realty Inc.](#)

Pick promotional products with a pop of fun.



Rachel Parker,
Founder and CEO,
[Resonance Content Marketing](#)

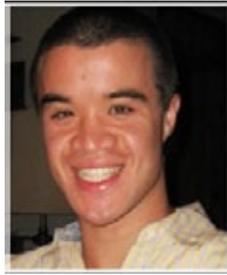
When I select promotional products for my business, I do some creative brainstorming. As a writer, I'm naturally drawn to pens and notebooks, but I realize my clients may not be. I have a lot of toys in my office, so I started looking at products in that field.

Then I stumbled across puzzles, which are a perfect fit. They're different, they symbolize what we do (“helping you put the content marketing pieces together”), and they're fun (like us). My promotional puzzles will be arriving this week and I can hardly wait!

Give promotional products that people will be happy to receive (and use)

The first thing to understand when choosing promotional products for your brand is [they] need to be [items] that your clients will actually use. If you give away t-shirts but your audience is more upscale, you may not gain much traction. If you have the budget, choose some

items that correlate directly to your brand, as well as some more creative items. Don't go with the cheapest promo items. A pen that stops working after a few weeks or a t-shirt that falls apart quickly will only end up in the trash.



Andrew Schrage,
Founder and CEO,
[Money Crashers](#)

Select promos that are unique and useful.



Erin Walsh,
Director of Public
Relations,
[Boost Software](#)

We try to find items that no one else is giving out. Also something that is tech-savvy is an extra bonus that aligns our promotions with the company's vision. In the past, we've given out gadgets such as a slap bracelet with a thumb drive that had all of our software on it with a license key ready to go for the affiliate to give it a test run.

We have also given out speakers for the iPhone. This little convenience has been much huger than we ever expected. We've had C-level execs thank us for this, saying that it saved the day when they were out on the beach. Now, that's how we want to be remembered for a promo!

Try handing out promos according to a theme or setting

I like to consider the demographic of the event's attendees when selecting the corresponding promo item. Another option is matching the promo product with a giveaway item. For example, we recently did a wine opener promo, and our giveaway was a basket of wine and cheese.

If you find it difficult to pair



Lauren Witte,
Associate Director,
Marketing &
Client Services,
[Jackson White P.C.](#)

the promo item with the theme of the convention or tradeshow, pair it with the location of the event.

Whenever we attend a convention near the beach, we love to offer a promo item the guests can use while enjoying their free time on location.

In Summary...

A common thread here is finding promotional products that your audience finds useful. You want recipients to appreciate receiving the giveaway and use it – not tuck it away and forget about it.

Know who you want to target with your promo items, and don't be afraid to get creative to ensure your giveaway has a lasting impact.

Get in touch - we love helping people craft really great promotional marketing!

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