

DESIGN EXPRESS

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



January 2018

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH THE PROMOTIONAL PRODUCT TRENDS OF 2018



2017 is a wrap! Now it's time to focus on propelling your business and your clients' companies forward into 2018. To succeed, it's important to thoroughly evaluate the marketing landscape. You should take the time to ask, what are the top trends in promotional product marketing going to be in the new year?

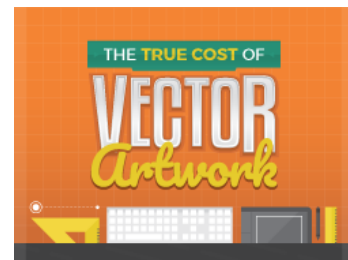
The good news is that **promotional products are still projected to be relevant**, according to leading experts. With that in mind, here are a few up and coming product trends and design choices to consider when making recommendations to your clients this year.

- **Tech will still rule, and wireless will become essential.** Technology will continue to be popular. **But when recommending tech items in 2018, make sure they're wireless.** New mobile phones nixing headphone jacks are prompting consumers to choose wireless headphones and other Bluetooth-enabled items.

QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY



INFOGRAPHICS THAT CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS



Every month, Idea Custom Solutions publishes original infographics that we design to inform and educate industry professionals. Here are a couple of our most popular. Be sure to check out the [Insights section of our website](#), under Resources, for more of these tools.



- **Tote bags will be more popular than ever and so will logoed apparel.** This will be the year when street style will include these products more than ever — **tote bags especially**. In 2017, **we saw a rise in plastic bag tax implementations and removal**. That's one reason it is a good idea to encourage clients to choose branded tote bags and apparel. Not only will your customers be more likely to wear them due to the latest fashions and environmentally-friendly initiatives, but they will also work as walking billboards for your clients. It's a win-win!
- **Consumers will want products that are linked with priceless experiences.** Everyone has stuff. **Today's consumers are looking to have more experiences than items**. ASI Central explains that "products that require assembly, or are packaged in interesting ways, will be in demand to help create those experiences for customers." ASI cites Instagat's "Tailgate-in-a-Box", which contains must-have items for tailgating, as the perfect example for this trend.
- **Everything will continue coming up rose gold.** Rose gold and "millennial pink" (if you are unfamiliar with the color, think of the shade of Pepto Bismol) are color trends that are expected to continue this year. The Disney Parks beautifully executed the trend when they produced **Minnie Mouse headbands, a popular purchase at the theme parks, in rose gold**. The ears were flying off the shelves and blew up in popularity on social media. It was so successful that **the company is now producing another popular item in this color**. Take a tip from the mouse and consider recommending rose gold to your clients when selecting apparel!
- **The past will continue to be present.** A marketing tactic that gained traction back in 2014, and is still relevant four years later when targeting the millennial demographic, is nostalgia. "Associating brand messaging with positive references from the 90s, 80s — and even the 70s — humanizes brands, forging meaningful connections between the past and present," says Lauren Friedman at *Forbes*. Consider recommending vintage designs or throwback logos when producing new orders for your clients.

Idea Custom Solutions is ready to help you and your clients make 2018 a defining year for their businesses with great quality and the most reliable turn times in **vector artwork, embroidery digitizing, image editing and marketing material designs**. You can count on Idea Custom Solutions to help you make this your best year yet. Happy New Year from Idea Custom Solutions.

5 TIPS TO DELIVERING WINNING SALES PITCHES

The stage is set. You've greeted them with a handshake and exchanged pleasantries. Now it's "show time". You must win over your potential customers. As you begin, the last thing you want to do is flub your lines. And winging performances works for virtually no one.

Instead, follow these tips for perfect business pitches and, beyond applause, you'll get orders for promotional products, printing, plaques and awards and anything else you are selling!



Under Insights, we also archive **past issues of this newsletter**.

Feel free to contact us to request we cover any subjects that would help your business:
marketing@ideacustom.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TEAM

Every month, we celebrate the designers whose work scores the highest impressions on Instagram. This time, **Pranav Yeotekar** won for embroidery digitizing and **Ajay Bodhale** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



EMBROIDERY DIGITIZING
PRANAV YEOTEKAR



VECTOR ARTWORK
AJAY BODHALE

NOTABLE QUOTES

1. **Provide details.** If your potential customers have **everything necessary to make informed decisions upfront**, they are more likely to feel confident in choosing to do business with you.
2. **Know the audience.** Always be prepared and tailor your pitch to whoever you are meeting. “Shark Tank” (a reality TV show in which wannabe entrepreneurs make business pitches to investors) investor **Barbara Corcoran** told *Business Insider* that one of the best pitches she'd ever seen on the show to date was from Sabin Lomac and Jim Teslikis in 2012. They were co-founders of a seafood truck company called **Cousins Maine Lobsters**. The secret to their success was preparation. The business owners watched four seasons of “Shark Tank” episodes together, studied each shark and wrote down every objection they made to entrepreneurs. The result was a successful pitch. Take a lesson from them and know who you are pitching. Get your hands on any available research, read bios, scan social media accounts, delve into their industries, understand client competitors and more. And of course, know your presentation backward and forward.
3. **Let them talk.** Make sure when making your pitch that you keep it conversational. In the words of Rhys Metler from Salesforce Search, “**Let go of your script from time to time and ask your buyer for feedback**. Ask follow-up questions to ensure that you're really hearing what he's saying so you can close the deal. The perfect sales pitch should feel like a conversation, which means you require some healthy back and forth.”
4. **Tell the story.** The basis for almost all effective marketing is storytelling. Grab their attention with a client experience or maybe your own personal experience with your product and services.
5. **Differentiate.** **Explain why your products and services are better** than everyone else's. According to *Inc.*, you will want to address three main points:
 - **Competition.** By acknowledging that you have competition, you're telling investors that you're confident that your business and options are better.
 - **Advantages.** Whenever you address the competition, you have to say why your business is better. What advantages are unique to your products and services? This could include quality, expertise, options for different product variations and more.
 - **Marketing Plan.** Show your customers your recommendations for what types of products are best to promote their businesses, outline campaigns so they get the best results for their investments and provide detailed plans on how they would work with you, including set-up requirements, turn times and anything else pertinent.

When you have taken all these steps, congratulate yourself for putting the time and energy into preparing your pitches. Your prospects and clients will appreciate it and you'll see the volume of orders rise. Idea Custom Solutions is ready to provide support 24 hours a day, whether you need **vector artwork, embroidery digitizing, image editing and/or marketing material design** to complete customer orders. We'll help both your customers brands' and you to shine!



“If you really look closely,
most overnight successes
took a long time.”

— Steve Jobs



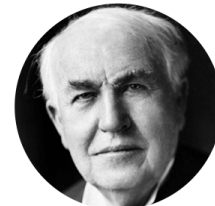
“The real test is not whether you avoid this failure, because you won't. It's **whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction, or whether you learn from it**; whether you choose to persevere.”

— Barack Obama



“**The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.**”

— Vidal Sassoon



“**Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do doesn't mean it's useless.**”

— Thomas A. Edison

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GIFTS FOR ANY SEASON TO MAKE CLIENTS

GRATEFUL

Although the holidays are over, your customers still have occasions to give gifts and they may get stumped on what to get their clients and employees. Advise them to never pass up the opportunity to say thank you to existing clients or even to **gift competitors' customers** — more than half of companies do this!

According to *Small Business Trends*, **the most popular gifts tend to be cards, calendars, food or fruit baskets**. Help your customers stand out from other business gift givers by upgrading to one of these gift ideas instead.

- **Luggage Trackers (or Key Finders!).** For the jet-setting clients, these gifts are lifesavers and give frequent flyers peace of mind. The devices are synced to apps on smart phones allowing the users to track the devices wherever they are placed. The flat surface of the items are also excellent canvases for your customers to place their logos as constant reminders to their clients. If your customers' clients are not the nomadic type, no worries! The devices are excellent for finding those car keys that always go missing.
- **Terrariums.** The weather outside is frightful. This gift will brighten up the desks of your customers' clients and bring them both memories of summer and hopes for a shorter winter on the dreariest of days. **Twig Terrariums** even offers the opportunity to create custom ones!
- **Temperature-Controlled Drinkware.** Water or coffee, tea or smoothie, **these containers will hold all of it and keep beverages at the perfect temperature!** This gift is perfect for the clients that are tough to buy for. The bottles are guaranteed to keep drinks hot or cold and show off logos beautifully as well.
- **Gift Baskets.** When in doubt, gift baskets are awesome! They don't always have to be a hodgepodge of exotic fruits or collections of chocolate. Encourage your customers to make gift baskets for their clients as personalized as possible. At the last pitch meeting, did they discuss golf at length? Help your customers throw in some personalized golf balls, tees and **dri-fit polo shirts**. Did their clients speak about their love for Italian food? Make Italy-inspired gift baskets with wine, cheeses, pastas, **branded aprons** and cookbooks. The real gift is acknowledging that your customers listen to their clients and remember their likes and dislikes.

When given the chance, **89 percent of companies customize their gifts with logos or other branding**. All year long, Idea Custom Solutions is ready to help you make your customers' logos shine on all these promotional products — providing the best quality and most reliable turn times in **vector artwork, embroidery digitizing and more**.

CLIENTS ARE RAVING

"We just wanted to take a minute and say thank you for the hard work on this design. This turned out great. We appreciate all you do for us."

Client contact for major national cap supplier



Rajanand Janrao

Production Associate, Embroidery Digitizing

Rajanand has been an Idea Custom Solutions employee for 21 years. He is currently a production associate and helps with quality control as needed.

He likes to have a healthy working atmosphere on the production floor. "I enjoy my job and believe in teamwork." He is most proud of when he received a reward and recognition award for his performance.

About the company, Rajanand believes it is the leading firm in the embroidery business and has a healthy working atmosphere. He says, "Employees of Idea Custom Solutions should maintain quality in their work to satisfy customers."

Reflecting on his career, Rajanand wants to be known as a good mentor who can enhance the skills of other team members. "I try to find out any errors in the work but do not forget to motivate them."

On the personal side, Rajanand lives with his family and spends spare time with them. His hobbies include listening to music and playing Tabla, a pair of drums that are used in Indian traditional, classical, popular and folk music. Otherwise, he tells us, "I like driving my car and prefer to roam around all over India."

TWEET THAT!

#Branding for **#SmallBusinesses** is big. 4 tips from **@HuffPost**

Tweet That!



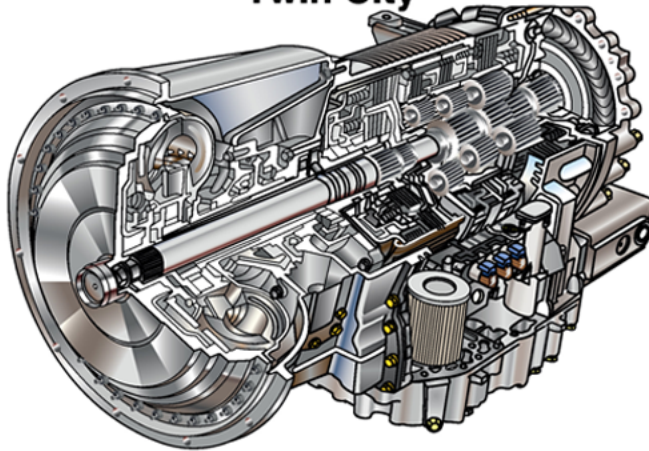
DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork

Twin City



Transmission

including

[#PromoProducts:](https://goo.gl/AG9m4r)
<https://goo.gl/AG9m4r>

Customers rush past tech items to grab exclusive [#PromoProducts](https://goo.gl/exv2oo) at the new [@Apple](https://goo.gl/exv2oo) Visitor Center.
<https://goo.gl/exv2oo>

[Tweet That!](#)

Help clients leverage [#PromoProducts](https://goo.gl/W6Pf13). Think campaigns versus products. From [@Promo_Marketing:](https://goo.gl/W6Pf13)
<https://goo.gl/W6Pf13>

[Tweet That!](#)

Hands off! [@benandjerrys](https://goo.gl/11WmhF) creates fun [#PromoProducts](https://goo.gl/11WmhF) to keep ice cream under lock and key.
<https://goo.gl/11WmhF>

[Tweet That!](#)

Learn more about the [#PromoProduct](https://goo.gl/pEyPEz) tee! 10 interesting facts about t-shirts from [@promo_marketing:](https://goo.gl/pEyPEz)
<https://goo.gl/pEyPEz>

[Tweet That!](#)

Stitch without a hitch! Consider these helpful [#digitizing #tips](https://goo.gl/hjtKVE) from [@PrintwearMag:](https://goo.gl/hjtKVE)
<https://goo.gl/hjtKVE>

[Tweet That!](#)

Don't forget the ladies! [@DailyYonder](https://goo.gl/aj6S1N) raise a prevalent issue in women's [#uniforms, #workwear.](https://goo.gl/aj6S1N)
<https://goo.gl/aj6S1N>

[Tweet That!](#)

7 [#B2B #marketing](https://goo.gl/9kiVxp) predictions for 2018, including [#CustomerExperience:](https://goo.gl/9kiVxp)
<https://goo.gl/9kiVxp>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Tips](https://goo.gl/qiwmQN) for startups. [@smallbiztrends2](https://goo.gl/qiwmQN) highlights shortcuts [#SmallBusinesses](https://goo.gl/qiwmQN) should avoid.
<https://goo.gl/qiwmQN>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Logos](https://goo.gl/Pm5KGM) on the runway? Expect [#brand](https://goo.gl/Pm5KGM) heavy fashion but in new ways this year.
<https://goo.gl/Pm5KGM>

[Tweet That!](#)

A [#LogoDesign](https://goo.gl/9CUHvo) competition for China's new Giant Panda National Park. Help customers with logos!
<https://goo.gl/9CUHvo>

[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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