

March 2017

WHY PROMO PRODUCTS WORK AND KEEP WORKING



Often on [our blog](#) and in the [monthly newsletters](#) that Idea Custom Solutions publishes, we have talked about the power of promotional products and why so many small and medium sized businesses (SMBs), as well as non-businesses use them.

We've talked about how [promotional products are essential to startup firms](#) that sell services, as well as mom and pop shops that sell products. They gain customers simply because the items people love, also known as “swag”, can help potential customers learn who they are and remember them.

Businesses large and small from [healthcare providers like hospitals and clinics](#), as well as car dealers, restaurants and B2B service firms, not only gain traction but remain top-of-mind to prospects and customers, thanks to the marketing efforts they put forth.

So it's not surprising that other entities, like foundations, colleges, political campaigns, even local and state governments, use promotional products to connect with their audiences. For example, take the new Trump White House. Regardless of your politics, one thing is clear: [the White House staff considers promotional products an important part of continuing get-the-word out efforts](#), specifically branded pens and writing utensils.

Throughout every election and [just about every political campaign for decades](#), [branded items like hats, pom-poms and even paper dresses](#) have been given out in abundance to push names and messages, as well as amplify the causes.

QUICK NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Would you recommend this newsletter?

Nope ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 For sure

UPCOMING EVENTS

PPAI Expo East / ISS

Atlantic City, NJ

March 23-25

Attending

ASI Show!

Chicago, IL

July 12-13

Exhibiting: Booth #1137

Embroidery Mart

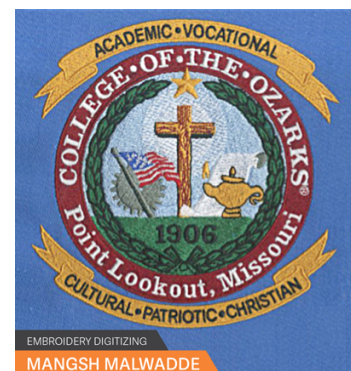
Nashville, TN

August 4-5

Attending

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TEAM

Every month, we celebrate the designers whose work scores the highest impressions on Instagram. This time, **Mangsh Malwadde** won for embroidery digitizing and **Sujay Mane** won for vector artwork.



We've written about municipalities, from small towns to **aspiring suburban business hubs**, which launched branding, rebranding and marketing campaigns using promotional products. Many times they start with revamped logos or redesigned websites. Yet, as **Boston** and **Petersburg, Virginia** have shown, these efforts to stimulate business and tourism go much further with promotional products.

But why do they work so well? The reasons promotional products are trusted by businesses and non-business marketers may be simpler than you think. Recently, the online magazine *TechDay* came up with some easy explanations.

Promotional Products Increase Awareness

TechDay writes that, “**when you give someone a freebie, it is highly unlikely that they will forget your company.**” Perhaps it's the fact that when you equip your customers with something tangible bearing their logos to distribute (along with their names, phone numbers and social media handles), their businesses stay visible. It is especially effective if those items are useful and needed frequently. *Brandwatch* specifically cites that “**over 94 percent of those who receive promotional products do not forget the advertiser or the product advertised.**”

Promotional Products Create and Amplify Brand Sentiment

Tech and entertainment website *TG Daily* wrote recently about the way promotional products create “hype around your brand and (encourage) people to follow” in the same way that television commercials do for major brands and the biggest corporations. But unlike commercials that craft a “one size fits all” message seen or heard by thousands if not millions of people, **branded products help companies target individuals that will do business with them.**

“Targeting the right audience,” *TG Daily* writes, “at the likes of a trade show can mean you are automatically enticing those who are interested in your industry already. While this might be half the battle, promotional products can help businesses stand out against your competitors and offer something memorable to potential customers.”

Promo Products Have Longevity

Think about the last few television commercials you saw or heard on the radio today. Chances are, unless they were funny or had production values at the level of Super Bowl commercials, you probably forgot them already. In contrast, *TechDay* states “promotional products last much longer than your average advertisement.” According to the Advertising Specialty Institute's annual Impressions Study, **a number of promotional product categories are kept for an average of nearly seven months**, including drinkware and outerwear.

Every day, Idea Custom Solutions helps firms of all sizes **prepare logos and marketing messages for promotional products**. We've worked with thousands of businesses, from the largest industry suppliers to individual entrepreneurs, enabling them to distribute branded products and wearables to their customers — because this is a cost-effective, proven way to market and build awareness.

TRADE SHOWS OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH DIFFERENT PEOPLE



VECTOR ARTWORK
SUJAY MANE

Great job, team! Check out new designs every day on Instagram ([idea_custom](#))!

NOTABLE QUOTES



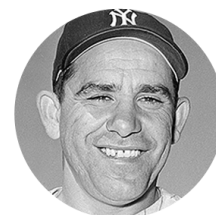
“I don't have time to be negative.”

— Venus Williams



“You usually can't tell what's inspiring until you *look back on it.*”

— Carly Simon



“When you arrive at a fork in the road, *take it.*”

— Yogi Berra

One remarkable thing about the trade show industry is that now there is a wider variety of venues and occasions in which SMBs can participate. Even better is the fact that today **trade show attendees transcend the traditional suit-and-tie crowd** to include consumers of all different kinds, including **health nuts and weekend warriors**, **music and pop culture fans**, **fashion and beauty business owners**, students and even **independent sales reps and entrepreneurial salespeople**.

Depending on the event, **it is possible to connect and subsequently do business** with tech-savvy independents, as well as **higher-end customers who prefer do-it-for-me solutions**. Moreover, trade shows attract all kinds of participants and businesspeople with different motivations for attending.

HubSpot points out that **there are a several types of personalities you find at trade shows** including:

- The Networker who is motivated to meet people and the Deal Maker who intends to build relationships, maybe even partnerships, from contacts at the trade show.
- The Spy who is attending to gather intelligence or the Sponge who is there to learn and gain knowledge — as much knowledge as possible.
- The Thought Leader and the Teacher, both of whom look to impart knowledge and possibly industry wisdom.
- The Collector who is there for business too, but wants promo products galore, including **a free tote bag to carry it all**.

When it comes to picking which promotional products to use at trade shows, businesses often turn to professionals for their expertise. Distributors of promotional products can guide SMBs to the right choices for their marketing strategies just by asking a few questions.

Classy, Casual, Useful or Fun

Are your customers trying to gain business from law firms and investment bankers or auto body shop owners? What's the office environment of their target audience like and would they make use more of **higher end pens** or sturdy coffee mugs?

Of course, that's not to say that your local mechanic couldn't appreciate **a beautiful Montblanc instrument** with your customer's logo branded on it. Or that an attorney wouldn't appreciate **a quirky desk toy**.

The point is to ask SMB customers about the clients that they have as well as the bigger audiences they are trying to reach. Every customer is different, but may be best suited with a variety of promotional products for different targets.

Stocking Up for the Show

No matter your SMB clients' existing customer base, trade shows provide the opportunity to reach diverse sets of people. So as the second part of a robust trade show marketing strategy, it makes sense for your customers to stock up on staple promotional products that keep booth traffic coming. A little "something for everybody" is a good way to proliferate the brand and logo of your SMB customers.

Some perennial promotional products to consider are bottled water,



"The greatest ability in business is **to get along with others and to influence their actions.**"

— John Hancock



"I have never worked a day in my life without selling. **If I believe in something, I sell it, and I sell it hard.**"

— Estée Lauder



"**Freedom lies in being bold.**"

— Robert Frost



"**You can't fake listening. It shows.**"

— Raquel Welch

branded plastic drinkware, **USB drives**, tote bags and convenience items such as **snack food items and lip balm**. Easy to grab, these round out an overall marketing approach quite well.

Make sure that you've had conversations with your SMB customers and asked the right questions before pitching products. You'll find out about who they are trying to reach and gain their promotional products business for the long-term.

Idea Custom Solutions looks forward to helping you professionally brand those products with **production-ready vector artwork and embroidery digitizing files**. If you haven't heard yet, **we are ISO certified for quality and information security**. That means your customers' valuable designs are safe with us!

THE REAL VALUE OF A GREAT LOGO

When you think about the most iconic logos out there, typically those of Coke, Target, Nike and UPS will come to mind, as do the golden arches of McDonald's and the mermaid of Starbucks. One reason is that vast amounts of money are spent to make these logos ubiquitous. Large corporations have the financial power to place billboards, buy television spots and buy Internet ads, while also featuring signage bearing the brands at the retail locations where they are sold.

Equally true is that a huge amount of resources — both money and professional brain power — has been poured by corporations and branding agencies into the crafting of extremely effective and iconic logos.

What Elements Make Great Logos?

- **Professional Help:** Not everyone who runs a business has a knack for design. However, most entrepreneurs usually have a vision for what it is about their businesses that stands out and the messages they would like to convey to customers. Just as they would take their Cadillac or work truck to skilled mechanics to get tune-ups or repairs, it makes sense for businesses to seek out professional resources to bring their visions to life.

Sharing those ideas with professional firms is, for many SMBs, the best way to start the process and end it with compelling logos.

- **Shapes and Balance:** Idea Custom Solutions published an infographic in 2016 that details **7 different types of logos**. Whether your SMB customers are looking for logos that are typeface-driven, such as word marks or even letter forms, logos that highlight the first letters in their names or something more symbol-driven, the shape and balance of their logos is critical.

According to design experts at CreativeBloq, the way humans perceive shapes has much to do with how effective and noticeable logos are. For example, the authors write that, "**straight edged logo shapes such as squares and triangles suggest stability**", while "circles, ovals and ellipses tend to project a positive emotional message" and can paint the picture of community, friendship, love, relationships and related sentiments. Meanwhile, triangles can also suggest power and action, whereas different lines can depict tranquility or strength, depending how such design elements are incorporated.



"You're not the only one who's made mistakes, but they're the only things that **you can truly call your own**."

— Billy Joel



"There is **little success** where there is little laughter."

— Andrew Carnegie

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Santosh Katkarl

Unit Production Specialist, Order Entry Team

In his role as a unit production specialist, Santosh is essentially a team mentor. His core functions include quality control and production support. He says he starts every day with a smile, looking to learn something new and work toward achieving his goals.

In terms of accomplishments, Santosh tells us, "Being a person with low profile, I never thought I would become a team mentor. But in this journey, my potential is

- **Color:** Likewise, color plays a big role in making logos speak to target audiences. A recent analysis on different sectors and brands discussed how colors affect the brands they represent.

For example, in the airline sector, United Kingdom business news site Equities.com notes that [United Airlines aims for dependability with its dark blue logo](#) — the logo it inherited from its merger with Continental Airlines. German airline Lufthansa brightens up its long name with a yellow cheerful logo. Meanwhile, British Airways seeks to shake off any notion of a stiff upper lip by deploying the color red for warmth.

Chances are, if you serve small businesses, crafting the right logos and brand images for them is top priority. Your best bet? Work with graphics and design experts.

Get What You Pay For

In our [September 2016 issue of the *Design Express* newsletter](#), we tackled the topic of cheap logos. Last year there had been some rumblings in the business press about whether the offering by some websites of “\$5 logos” is really a good deal.

While some websites based outside the U.S. [offer cheap and quick logos](#), there have been reports that often an inexpensive logo means a pirated one. [Pirated logos or ones adapted without proper permission](#) and licensing are cause for concern among businesses. Just ask retailer H&M and the recently famous “[Cash Me Ousside](#)” girl, both of whom are getting sued for trademark infringement. In another instance, [a Kansas dry cleaner got in trouble for a logo](#) which resembled that of a fast food chain. Increasingly, small businesses are being advised to [take their logos more seriously from a legal perspective](#). Making sure SMBs’ logos are original and unique is as important legally as it is to their branding.

While it’s true that you don’t have to hire the next Andy Warhol at top-dollar to get smart logos, working with professional firms has its advantages. For example, Idea Custom Solutions offers [Custom Creative services](#), with professional, creative designers and expert design consultants to develop original logo designs.

For companies that serve SMBs in a variety of sectors, we make it easy and inexpensive. Whether your goal is to help new businesses start off with impressive new brands and logos, or serve established businesses that need comprehensive rebrands, [contact us to learn more](#).

CLIENTS ARE RAVING

“I just started working with your company as a client and I found the service and attention to detail exception!”

Idea Custom Solutions new customer

“Clear understanding of request and timely!”

Idea Custom Solutions new customer

“The vector art received on my ‘meanest walleye’ ... unbelievable! That’s an understatement! When I downloaded the .eps file, I had one eye open and one eye closed, as I was worried since I selected the option of limited detail. I was extremely nervous. But when I saw it, I was absolutely amazed at the quality and could not have been more

being identified and enhanced with the support and guidance from my supervisors.”

About the company, Santosh thinks other people should know, “This is a good organization and the work environment and culture is really great. It provides the perfect platform to develop your career.” Based on his experience to date, he believes that hard work always pays here.

Santosh says he is a friendly, kindhearted person. “I like to help my teammates. I share my experience and knowledge with them, so they gain command of the processes and achieve both their own and their teams’ goals. I would like to be known as a good person and favorite leader.”

Outside the office, he spends free time with his family. He also enjoys outings with his friends, bike riding and going on hikes, as well as traveling to new places.

In the future, he says, “My dream is to be a successful professional. I am also fascinated by different languages, so whenever I get an opportunity, I will start learning a new language.”

TWEET THAT!

[#Oscars](#)
[#PromoProducts](#) not just for [#brands](#). Ohio cosmetics [#SMB](#) featured at [@TheAcademyAwards](#).
<https://goo.gl/3tZctq>

[Tweet That!](#)

Fore! 11 new [#golf](#) [#PromoProducts](#) for pros, casual golfers and smart [#SMBs](#).
<https://goo.gl/kudTqL>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#PromoProducts](#) let bands rock on. Festivals and events help grow fan bases.
<https://goo.gl/qJfD5f>

[Tweet That!](#)

Matches are one of the most collected [#PromoProducts](#) — Bars, restaurants, hotels know this. Perhaps they’re an art

[Tweet That!](#)

excited at the outcome. So thank you very much for your skills, customer service and timely delivery of my order. I'll be sure to spread the word about your company."

Donna M. Lingo
Lingo Design



DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork



form too.

<https://goo.gl/cZd8B3>

How you and your [#SMBs](#) can get noticed at crowded [#TradeShows](#). [@Entrepreneur](#) has four tips.

<https://goo.gl/Hj8Rp7>

[Tweet That!](#)

Increasingly Facebook [#ads](#) used to tout [#TradeShows](#), exhibitors. [#SMBs](#) can reach customers early.

<https://goo.gl/t3ysJ9>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Logo](#) color affects perception of [#brands](#). An [#infographic](#) on restaurant, apparel, auto and more.

<https://goo.gl/6Cv1sH>

[Tweet That!](#)

Food giant Tyson Foods has unveiled a new [#brandmark](#) and corporate [#logo](#) for 2017 and beyond.

<https://goo.gl/RxRuQo>

[Tweet That!](#)

Los Angeles Rams returning to old colors? [#Infographic @NFL](#) [#logos](#) and fan preferences.

[#FootballFriday](#)

<https://goo.gl/EXxH8Y>

[Tweet That!](#)

Easton, PA's new [#logo](#) heralds its Revolutionary War history. [#Rebranding](#) like other cities.

<https://goo.gl/ftnYxf>

[Tweet That!](#)

La Crosse County, WI launches [#rebrand](#), [#logo](#) to highlight "exceptional" Midwestern quality of life.

<https://goo.gl/fajLp6>

[Tweet That!](#)

What if global brands like Coke and Pepsi, VISA and Mastercard swapped [#logos](#)?

<https://goo.gl/ITcWPN>

[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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