

May 2018

4 TIMES PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS COMPANIES HELPED THOSE IN NEED



Thanks to news that distributor sales reached a record-breaking \$23.3 billion in 2017, we know the promotional products industry is alive and booming. With such a big sales base, we'd be remiss not to give back to our communities as much as possible. Here are four instances when promotional products companies helped bring awareness to a cause, raised money for those in need or helped out with disaster recovery efforts.

- 1. Humboldt, Saskatchewan, Bus Crash.** On April 6, the small community of Humboldt in Canada suffered a tragedy: a bus crash. The Humboldt Broncos team was on the way to a Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League playoff game when the bus and a semi-truck collided. Fifteen players and staff were killed. [Nearby distributors rallied to fundraise and provide items that will honor the victims.](#) MR Designs created hats, stickers, hockey pucks, hoodies and shirts with a commemorative logo and all proceeds will go to Canada's Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society. Spotlight Sport & Corporate Wear ran a T-shirt fundraiser with proceeds to benefit the victims' families.
- 2. Hurricane Harvey.** The devastation of Hurricane Harvey was wide-reaching throughout Houston and surrounding communities. Damage costs from the storm reached about \$125 billion and least 88 people died in the disaster. [Both suppliers and distributors joined forces to help those affected in the aftermath of the hurricane.](#) Florida-based Bullet sent over 1,500 power banks and cords and 1,500 tote bags. Hirsch Gift, which is based in

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.



Under Insights, we also archive [past issues of this newsletter](#).

Houston, helped to arrange donation shipments to local shelters. The owners of Charles River Apparel got a van and drove down to donate rainwear, jackets and dog jackets — and then donated the van itself to a local animal rescue.

3. **Mental Health Awareness.** Every year, athletes from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology participate in about 30 charitable endeavors in their community as part of an outreach program. In 2015, that included raising awareness for mental health and demolishing the stigma attached to it. **Their campaign, called “Make Some Noise for Mental Health,” included branded noisemakers, cowbells and shirts sporting a “Make Some Noise” logo.** Level 2 Sportswear not only provided all the branded merchandise, but also donated \$5,000 in scholarship money for students who dedicated their time to the issue.
4. **Small Business Marketing.** New small business owners often struggle finding the funds to market their company. Illinois-based Quality Logo Products is looking to change that with an annual giveaway called Give Your Brand a Hand. The giveaway has been running since 2015 and, every month, Quality Logo Products donates \$500 in promotional products to a business with less than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in revenue. **The effort even won them the Daily Herald Business Ledger’s 28th Annual Award for Excellence this year.**

Does your company want to donate products and energy to good causes this year? Let Idea Custom help you to be more profitable with our **cost-effective, high-quality vector artwork and embroidery digitizing**. We’ll also free you up to spend time on giving back!

THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND YOUR FAVORITE LOGOS

Creating a logo is more than just pairing an image with a fun font and bright colors. Truly successful companies, such as Starbucks and Target, know the key to logo design actually lies in the psychology behind it. Each choice, from shape to color to font, delivers a specific message to customers.

Shapes

We’re going to name a few brands. Can you picture their shapes? Starbucks, McDonald’s, Target, Nike, National Geographic. It’s not difficult to envision them, is it? **That’s because shape is one of the most easily recognized aspects of a logo** — and it says more about a company than any other visual aspect. A circle, as in Starbucks’ logo, represents community and friendship, suggesting the coffee shop chain is the perfect place to gather with loved ones. National Geographic’s iconic rectangle highlights the company’s authority level, being one of the most well-respected journalism brands. It looks solid and stable. Triangles — think Adidas — represent energy and purpose. And curves imply movement, comfort and protection; all things Nike’s swoop conveys with its sport products. Organic and hand-drawn shapes have their own purposes, too. Think of Whole Foods’ logo. The organic design makes people feel comfortable and communicates the idea that the stores offer hand-crafted and fresh products.

Colors

According to research by Colourfast, **color plays a huge role in logo design**: 84.7 percent say they buy a certain product based on color and

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, **Manisha Gaikwad** won for embroidery digitizing and **Bhagwat Warade** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



NOTABLE QUOTES



“If you are saying the same thing as everyone else, then why would and why should anyone think **you are different from everyone else?**”

— Loren Weisman

80 percent think color increases a brand's recognition power. That's because those colors have intense meanings behind them. Consider Playboy and the iconic black bunny. How do you feel about the company's decision to use black? It makes the company seem more sophisticated and adds an air of seduction. Red, like Red Bull's logo, elicits energy and action — exactly what an energy drink seeks to do. Calming hues of blue are perfect for companies that want to be seen as trustworthy, including Visa and Barclays. Green is a common choice for food-related companies (even though studies have shown food on green plates looks less appetizing) because it symbolizes fresh, organic ideals. Nickelodeon chose orange because it expresses everything the brand is known for: being happy, friendly and fun. Companies that want to go for a nostalgic air, like Hallmark often does, often shoot for purple.

Fonts

Rule number one: Don't use Comic Sans! The font has garnered such a visceral negative reaction from people across the world that smart companies won't touch it and with good reason. Who wants to work with a business having a logo that looks like a ten-year-old designed it? Believe it or not, **font selection says quite a bit about a company**. A font with serifs, for example, portrays reliability and reputability. It's no wonder Wikipedia uses a serif font to help position the company as a knowledgeable authority. Google, on the other hand, chooses a sans-serif font, something that symbolizes ease-of-use and a neutral disposition. A script font reinforces creativity and elegance. Think Disney and Cadillac, which want to be known as creative and elegant, respectively. Modern fonts, such as Futura and Bodini, speak to the future and show a company is forward-looking. Novelty fonts showcase the uniqueness of a brand, for example, the spikey edges on Metallica's logo. It just makes you imagine hard electric riffs, right?

Want to help your clients develop a logo that appeals to positive psychological dispositions? Let the experts at Idea Custom Solutions help you to help them. **Check out our custom logo design service**. It's cost-effective, fast and creative.

4 EMBROIDERY PROBLEMS WITH HATS — AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

Hats are one the most widely used items for promotional products and spreading marketing messages. You see them everywhere, branded with company logos, short clever quips and brand names.

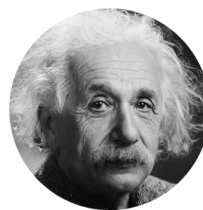
There's only one problem. Embroidering hats, specifically ball caps, can be a pretty big hassle. Here are the top four problems with getting embroidered artwork on ball caps and what you can do to solve them.

Problem: Not Enough Space

Your client may have the most fabulous logo the world has ever seen, but if it can't be shrunk down to stay within the constraints of the hat world, then no one will ever be able to appreciate it. **Hats have a limited amount of embroidery space** — generally only about 2.25" high, but that number changes based on the type of hat and how it's constructed.

Solution: Make sure your client knows exactly what type of headwear they want so you can be clear about the artwork requirements. Better yet, learn about the limitations and let them know in advance.

Problem: No Stability



"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value."

— Albert Einstein



"If it doesn't sell, it isn't creative."

— David Ogilvy



"When you **reach for the stars** you may not quite get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud, either."

— Leo Burnett



"If you **hear a voice within you** say, 'You cannot paint,' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced."

— Vincent Van Gogh

Caps are a mushy mess when it comes to stability. The bill is generally pretty firm, but otherwise there's not really anything to keep the fabric from moving around while it's being embroidered. That means designs may end up bunching the fabric or moving out of place.

Solution: Work from the bottom up. **Make sure the embroiderer starts from the most stable part of the hat (the bill) and extends from the center outward.** This pushes the fabric, instead of pulling it, causing it to stay taut and lessening the consequences of instability.

Problem: That Annoying Seam

Six-panel caps, the most common type, are a headache all on their own because of the seam that runs right down the middle of the front embroidery space. The difference in fabric thickness throughout that seam (high on either side and low in the middle) can cause massive distortions of your client's design.

Solution: It can be as simple as enlarging the logo or reducing the detail, especially if there's small text. **That way the letters or intricate logo aspects won't look weird when they interact with the seam.** Try to examine the hats in advance as well, so you can pick one out that has minimal height difference between the panel and the seam.

Problem: Artwork Distortion

Hats present a particular challenge when working with art, because the shape isn't the same as a garment or product that would lay flat while you embroider it. **What ends up happening is a final image that's distorted.** This is especially true with circular logos that can end up looking oval or egg-shaped once on the caps.

Solution: **Embroidery digitizing.** You'll want to make sure this is done for every logo you intend to put on a cap. A good digitizer, like the ones at Idea Custom Solutions, will be able to modify the design to make sure it shows exactly how you want it on the finished product.

GO OFFLINE TO REACH YOUR CLIENTS

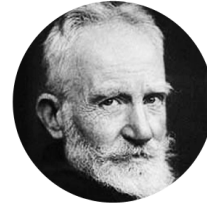


It's a common misconception in the promotional products industry that the best way to reach Millennials, and really the only way to reach modern customers, is by amping up your business's online presence. In other words, if you build an online persona, the customers will come.



"You can't wait for inspiration, you have to go after it with a club."

— Jack London



"You see things and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were and I say, 'Why not?'"

— George Bernard Shaw



"In every success story, you will find someone who has made a courageous decision."

— Peter Drucker



"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."

— Bill Gates

Or so they say.

In reality, printed materials like letterhead and brochures still hold the same oomph they once did — and possibly even more so. Promotional products companies that have dipped back into things such as dimensional mailers sent through the trusty postal service are seeing great returns; sometimes even better than they're seeing through email and social media marketing.

A recent survey by FedEx Office proved that printed materials are still relevant. The survey asked 800 consumers and small business owners about the power of print and the need for printed materials even among the digital channels of today.

If you still print materials for your small business or help your customers to do so, FedEx's survey says you're not alone. Seventy percent of respondents had materials professionally printed in the past year and some are printing even more than they have in the past. A surprising 50 percent of Millennials, which we usually relegate to an online existence, prefer professionally printed materials as well.

The vast majority of respondents (90 percent) said they prefer to read paper rather than digital materials and noted that businesses who send professionally printed materials give the impression that they have a higher quality service to offer. Eighty-five percent of consumers, in fact, said they're more likely to shop with a company that has great looking printed materials.

What's so special about print, anyway? It's a combination of things, Anna Kec wrote for Business 2 Community. One of the big perks is that print engages more of the senses. Think of those old scratch-and-sniff stickers. You remember them because they were tactile, usable and, hopefully, smelled good. With a printed marketing piece, you combine your visual message with something someone can actually feel — and if you choose a uniquely textured medium, even better. You also get the great ink smell that comes with quality printed pieces. Print materials demand your full attention. And they get it, thanks to a digital-free existence that removes pop-up ads, annoying auto-play videos that distract and random text alerts coming in to block what you're looking at.

Consumers are increasingly going digitally blind, meaning your ad or email or information may pop up in their mailbox or feed and they just scroll right past it without even realizing what it is. Or, they make a split-second decision that it's spam, delete and lose it forever. One market research company, Origin, found that 34 percent of Gen Z members had actually already deleted their social media accounts completely and another 64 percent are taking a digital break. These people are your current and future clients. Get offline and meet them on their playing field — the one of tangible marketing materials.

In need of graphic design for your printed business documents and marketing materials or are you trying to help clients brand their companies? Let Idea Custom Solutions design print-ready business cards, letterhead, brochures, flyers and more.



"It's important to be willing to make mistakes. The worst thing that can happen is you become memorable."

— Sara Blakely

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Virendra Junawane

Senior Production Associate,
Embroidery Digitizing

Virendra has been with Idea Custom Solutions for 12 years. He believes in teamwork and a cheerful atmosphere.

Since joining the company, Virendra is proud that he has become one of the most experienced team members in the ApS-Ethos application. He also gets to work with other embroidery digitizing software, such as Wilcom.

About Idea Custom Solutions, he would stress the quality of the creative work. To other employees, Virendra advises, "Enjoy your work and always face problems rather than avoid them."

What might surprise you about Virendra is this: "I like to arrange parties and surprise my teammates."

He lives in Pune (Aundh) with his family — his parents, wife and child. During free time, Virendra plays cricket and works out at the gym.



Embroidery Digitizing



Vector Artwork



Someday, he tells us: "My dream is to roam around the world and enjoy the different culture of different places."

TWEET THAT!

First quarter [#distributor](#) sales are up by 3.4%. Keep up the good work! [#PromoProducts](#) <https://goo.gl/2QGx3f>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Good move, [@Disney](#). Stores will phase out plastic bags, replacing them with [#branded](#) reusables. <https://goo.gl/Ug4Fxe>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Help clients grow by helping them communicate their sense of [#purpose](#). [#PromoProducts](#) <https://goo.gl/oet8tQ>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Are you selling nail wraps for [#logo](#) manicures yet? You should be! [#PromoProducts](#) <https://goo.gl/2UEhxn>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Video greeting cards? Cool! Here are some new [#tech](#) enhanced [#PromoProducts](#) you can sell today. <https://goo.gl/H9hUZm>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Jackets [#branded](#) with counterfeit [#logos](#) are used for [#charity](#) after being seized by authorities. <https://goo.gl/GZ4VvF>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

Why not investigate an untapped market? Carwash companies need logoed [#uniforms](#), [#PromoProducts](#) <https://goo.gl/wYmKJp>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

[#SuperiorUniformSales](#) and [#PerrysburgTownshipPolice](#) won the [#NAUMD](#) best-dressed award last week. <https://goo.gl/dD61MH>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

These are some of the most iconic [#uniforms](#) in history. [#video](#) <https://goo.gl/JajTRo>

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

[#ThatFeelingWhen](#) a company's [#branding](#) is so recognizable you

[Tweet](#)
[That!](#)

know it just by the [#font](https://goo.gl/vuGfER).
<https://goo.gl/vuGfER>

You may have a
[#branding](https://goo.gl/NT6ZJk) strategy for
your company, but what
about one for yourself?
<https://goo.gl/NT6ZJk>

Tweet
That!

You thought [#embroidery](https://goo.gl/7onLHy)
was only with thread.
500-year-old practice in
China proves otherwise.
<https://goo.gl/7onLHy>

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



© 2018 AffinityX All Rights Reserved. The mark Affinity Express is a registered trademark of Affinity Express, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries, and Idea Custom Solutions is the sole property of Affinity Express.