

February 2019

SPECIALTY MARKET SPOTLIGHT



With the beginning of every new year, it pays to take a look at your promotional products business and see where you can cut back and where you can expand. These three specialty markets are trending right now and it's important to consider if you can sell to them and ride those trends to new income streams.

Subscription Boxes

Subscription boxes don't seem to be going away. Now there's one for everything, including fresh food services to DIY essential oil crafts and pet-centric goodies to personal grooming for men. Even fast food restaurants are getting in on the trend: [Arby's just launched a six-month subscription box full of swag and sold out almost instantly](#). Every subscription box comes chock full of specialty products, free samples and flyers. Look into the boxes that align with your business goals ([you can find a huge list on Cratejoy](#)) and contact the companies. Maybe you can help them add some logoed promotional products. Or, maybe you have a specialty product, such as pens. Why not look into starting your own subscription box?

Cannabis

CBD oil is now fully legal and it doesn't seem like cannabis is that far behind. With that in mind, companies are springing up across the country to promote and sell the product. With that comes opportunities for promotional products companies. [The pot leaf is an iconic symbol of cannabis culture](#) and it's becoming so mainstream now that you'd be hard-pressed to not see one on a typical subway ride. The fashion aspect is king right now, so use that as a starting point. Just be sure to research governmental regulations first. Some states are picky about what type of cannabis swag should be available.

Restaurants

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.



We're not talking traditional sit-down restaurants. Instead, we're referring to [cheeky fast food brands that want to get their names out there along with some cool and clever merchandise](#). Arby's box is just the latest version of the trend. In the past, we've seen branded swag from Taco Bell, Cinnabon, IHOP, McDonalds and even a fake line of merchandise from Dunkin'. Brand loyalists are eating up these limited-edition opportunities to sport their favorite fast food logos and if you aren't jumping on the bandwagon to help a company come up with a campaign, you're missing out on some great partnerships that could result in impressive profits.

If you want to get in on these booming specialty markets but don't have time (or the skills) to develop the files for decorating, turn to [Idea Custom Solutions](#). We have you covered on vector artwork and embroidery digitizing for the products, as well as image editing and graphic design for sales proposals and brochures. We can even design or redesign logos for your clients and your business. [Explore all the possibilities with Idea Custom Solutions!](#)

THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE KOOZIE

In 2013, researchers at the University of Washington set out to accomplish a very scientific task: to see if can koozies really do keep our drinks cold. The project, which was eventually funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Atmospheric Research, proved what canned beverage lovers knew all along. We were absolutely right. It does keep canned drinks cold, mostly because the material in the koozie stops condensation forming on the outside of the can, preventing drinks from sweating away their chill.

Here at [Idea Custom Solutions](#), we bet the original creators of the can koozie would be thrilled to know that information, that is, if anyone knew for sure exactly who invented it or even who owns the patent today. The birth of the koozie is oddly murky and that intrigue continues to this day.

Depending on whom you ask, can koozies were invented in Australia, evolved from English traditions, were created by a corporation or were fabricated by a woman in Idaho. [In Australia, koozies were supposedly introduced in the 1970s](#) and became immediately popular among surfers, who called them "stubby holders." "Stubby," of course, means a beer bottle in Australian slang — thus the origin of the product name. But those who claim koozies are a British custom can also say the product evolved from a specific name, particularly the 100-plus-years-old "cosy" or "cozy," which are knitted or fabric covers for a teapot that keeps the water hot. Cosy evolved into koozie; becoming a product to keep the chill in rather than out.

In the 1980s, things got both more official and a bit more confusing. [The Radio Cap Corporation \(RCC, now Norwood\) trademarked the name "koozie" in 1980](#), but just the name. The next year, [Idahoan Bonnie McGough filed a patent for a 12-ounce beverage cozy](#), a two-walled drink holder filled with goose down insulation (suggested by McGough) and an elastic band at the top to keep it snug on the drink. Meanwhile, RCC was already mass-producing its own version, which was clunky, rigid and chock full of advertising space. Other companies quickly began production of the drink holders. The can koozie as we know it today emerged in the 1990s, when manufacturers switched to more forgiving neoprene and foam materials, with an equally imprintable surface.



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, **Sachin Awaghade** won for embroidery digitizing and **Raju Shinde** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!

All that said, we still don't know exactly who invented the holders and who owns the trademark today. RCC let their trademark on the name lapse in 2001 and, since then, there's been a continuous battle between RCC and company Kustom Koozies over how exactly the name should be used. And BIC makes it even more complicated; the company owns the trademark for "koozie" as well — just the all-caps version.

Regardless of who owns what part of the can koozie, they're still excellent promotional marketing opportunities. [Count on Idea Custom Solutions for the vector artwork and other graphic services](#) you need to decorate custom koozies for your clients and their campaigns.

THE LEGACY OF LOGOS

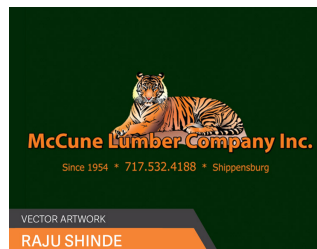
Like many other things (it seems), [logos have their roots in ancient Egypt](#). [The culture was among the first to use a standardized writing system](#) made up of symbols, with specific colors holding specific meaning. Later in history, medieval Europe prescribed meaning to specific symbols as a part of different crests and coats of arms, each designed to convey the status of the bearer in society and to explain who they were.

Around that same time, cities were growing larger as more people moved in, giving up the agricultural lifestyle. In order to determine what was a shop and what it sold, people began to hang signs depicting their wares. Branding took hold in 1389, when King Richard II required every alehouse to hang a sign to show what their business offered. The brewers combined heraldic images with the names of their establishments. The invention of the printing press in 1440 pushed branding further, as printers designed printers' marks to identify materials they published. Soon regular newspapers were distributed, containing ads from various businesses, though mostly still text only.

During the Victorian era, though, things began to change. [Color printing was introduced and companies wanted to ornament their brands](#) — creating stylized text and designs that would continue to represent the businesses and what they did. Many of the logos we know today emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

According to 24/7 Wall St., [these ten company logos are the oldest in the world](#), with designs mostly unchanged through the centuries.

10. Sherwin-Williams, logo first used in 1905
9. Shell Oil, logo first used in 1904
8. Prudential, logo first used in 1896
7. Twinings Tea, logo first used in 1887
6. Johnson & Johnson, logo first used in 1887
5. Levi Strauss & Co., logo first used in 1886
4. Bass Ale, logo first used in 1876
3. Heinz, logo first used in 1869
2. Peugeot, logo first used in 1850
1. Stella Artois, logo first used in 1366



NOTABLE QUOTES



"Success usually comes to those who are [too busy to be looking for it](#)."
— Henry David Thoreau



"Don't be afraid to give up the good to [go for the great](#)."
— John D. Rockefeller



"Stop chasing the money and [start chasing the passion](#)."
— Tony Hsieh



"Don't let the fear of losing be greater than the [excitement of winning](#)."
— Robert Kiyosaki

If you want your logo (or your customers') to make lasting impressions, reach out to [Idea Custom Solutions](#) and let us create stunning designs.

HOW TO LAND AND WORK WITH YOUR DREAM ACCOUNT

Have you heard of whale hunting? It's a clever play on landing your white whale, meaning catching that dream account you've always wanted. Some promotional products companies, though, are afraid to do a bit of hunting. Either they think they're too small, don't have the resources or they're just fine surviving on the profits from several small accounts. And that's understandable, but why limit yourself? Companies of every size and scope can land massive accounts — the ones that pay all your bills in one single order. You just need to know how to do it. Follow these tips for landing and working with your dream account.

Find Someone to Refer You

With large companies, it's often nearly impossible to figure out who exactly you should be speaking to in order to make a sale. [Try to get in through the back channels with a referral](#). Decide which company you want to work with and scour LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Hopefully, you'll have a connection on some level to a person in the company who can either find out who you need to talk to or put in a recommendation with the powers that be. If you don't have any mutual connections, maybe someone you know does. Or you can just try to reach out to whoever has been in the news lately as a new hire there.

Don't Hold Your Breath

[Big companies sometimes move at a snail's pace](#). Don't expect the same speediness you get from much smaller companies. Once you've got the right person in your sights, you'll likely have to submit a proposal for the project you want to work on. Then revise that proposal. Then revise it again. Then negotiate on price. Then wait for umpteen levels of approvals. It's a lot of tedious work but, in the end, it's worth it when you get that big check. Make it easier on yourself by asking the company if they have a timeframe and budget in mind, in which you should be working.

Be Available

[Big clients come with big problems that can spring up at the last minute](#). They have a lot at stake. For example, if one word is printed wrong on the company shirt, that could possibly be an urgent issue affecting hundreds of thousands of people. You'll need to make sure you can be there for your client whenever they need you, even if that means nights and weekends. Larger companies don't want someone who puts in a few hours to get an order and then bails. They want a partner: someone they can go to again and again. That means making sure you're ready to help when they need you, but also continually reaching out proactively to see how you can fill unmet needs.

Want to put together beautiful marketing materials and sales proposals to share with potential clients? Give Idea Custom Solutions a call and [we'll help you with all the graphic design to make your case](#) (and the vector artwork and embroidery digitizing for decorating the promotional products themselves).



"I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure--It is: [Try to please everybody.](#)"

— Herbert Bayard Swope



"A successful man is one who can [lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him.](#)"

— David Brinkley



"[Every time we launch a feature](#), people yell at us."

— Angelo Sotira



"[Always look for the fool in the deal](#). If you don't find one, it's you."

— Mark Cuban



"See things in the present, [even if they are in the future.](#)"

— Larry Ellison



TWEET THAT!

Did you go to the [@ThePPAExpo](#) in Vegas? These were the biggest [#PromoProducts](#) trends. <http://bit.ly/2sOXth2>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#spicegirls](#) are in hot water after report that empowering shirts were made with slave wages. <http://bit.ly/2S6HvgC>

[Tweet That!](#)

Remember [#Ozzy](#) bit the head off a bat? Celebrate with a plush bat (with a removable head, of course). <http://bit.ly/2ReLwLm>

[Tweet That!](#)

If you're a fan of [@BobsBurgersFOX](#), check out the entire family in [#embroidery](#). <http://bit.ly/2SaEvQ6>

[Tweet That!](#)

Starting in 2020, [@Nike](#) will be the official [#uniform](#) and footwear provider for the [@MLB](#). <http://bit.ly/2CLamxh>

[Tweet That!](#)

Jetsetting fans of [@Tracy_Reese](#), get excited. She's designing new uniforms for [@united](#)'s women. <https://r29.co/2Hudt22>

[Tweet That!](#)

[#Asics](#) has collection boxes for old clothes it will use to create Japan's Olympics [#uniforms](#). <https://bbc.in/2SaFla6>

[Tweet That!](#)

This year's [@NBA](#) [#allstar](#) game will feature [#uniforms](#) inspired by Charlotte and the 90s. <https://swoo.sh/2RkAu7k>

[Tweet That!](#)

Want your [#logo](#) to seem regal, smart and mysterious? Opt for a design in purple. <http://bit.ly/2MyLZr4>

[Tweet That!](#)

[@Showtime](#) brought back a 20-year-old [#logo](#) to help promote its new show [@SHOBlackMonday](#). <http://bit.ly/2UniZVZ>

[Tweet That!](#)

[@WellsFargo](#) is trying to gain back customer trust with a new [#logo](#) and [#marketing](#) campaign. <https://fxn.ws/2Dz2Gj2>

[Tweet That!](#)

[@teennick](#) has a new [#brand](#) identity that features animated [#typography](#). <http://bit.ly/2SdWWTY>

[Tweet That!](#)



DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



"In the end, a vision without the ability to execute it is probably a hallucination."

— Steve Case

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Venugopal Chintallu

Senior Production Associate,
Digitizing Team

As a senior production associate, Venu's function is to handle escalated orders, chat online with clients and interface with the Senior Management Team in Pune about critical inquiries, orders and reports. He has been with the company for 12 years.

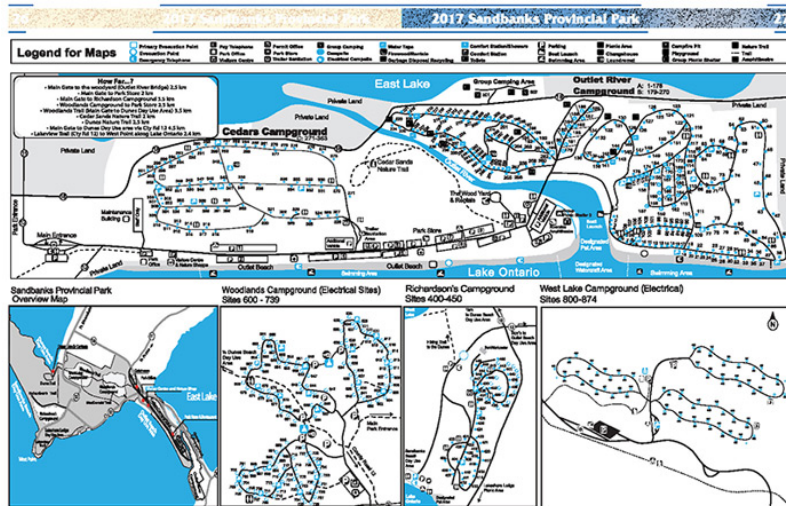
His objective each day is to complete the assigned work within required turn times with the best quality output. Despite challenges, Venu approaches his tasks with enthusiasm.

Among his accomplishments to date are numerous commendations and awards received from company management. He is also proud of the knowledge and management skills he has acquired.

To potential employees, he would encourage them to work hard and be loyal to the organization. "For those who are dedicated and disciplined, there is opportunity for self-development and more."

On the personal side, Venu tells us,

Vector Artwork



"I am a joyful person and I live with my mother, wife, son and daughter. I like to spend quality time with family and friends."

In addition, he is a fan of cricket, listening to music and visiting new places. Someday, he dreams of learning to speak French and would like to known for his ethics, hard work and loyalty.

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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