

DESIGN EXPRESS

The graphic services newsletter for promotional products pros



March 2019

OREO WANTS YOU TO SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



From February 4 to March 6 (also known as National OREO Day), the stuffed cookie brand held a huge celebration in honor of its new Most Stuf cookie. The promotion was called The S tuf Inside and featured an interactive online cookie that you twist open to see, well, what's inside.

The way people participated was to buy some OREOs and scan one with their phones or tablets. That brought up the online cookie, that they would twist open on their screens. Visitors would see what they won, if anything, inside the cookie.

"People love playing with OREO — from finding new ways to interact with the brand, to dunking their cookies and dreaming up their own unique flavor ideas — we love to find new ways to share that playful spirit with our fans," Justin Parnell, Senior Director, OREO brand, said in a press release announcing the promotion. "The S tuf Inside promotion uses technology to give fans a new, fun way to engage with OREO by scanning an OREO cookie to unlock a playful virtual experience with deliciously unexpected prizes."

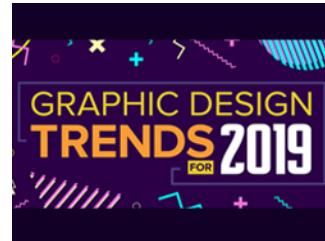
There was a new prize every day for the entire 30 days and they're were all tricked out with OREO branding. Everyone who participated was eligible to win a trip for two to New York City, complete with Broadway tickets for "Waitress".

What branded merch was available with The S tuf Inside? Quite a range, actually. Some highlights are: OREO-themed Grado Labs Headphones, OREO-themed Terez Leggings, an OREO-themed K2 Snowboard, an OREO-themed Jonathan Adler Cookie Jar, an OREO-themed Xbox One, an OREO print by Gray Malin, an OREO-themed iRobot Roomba Robot Vacuum and, our personal favorite, an OREO-themed Jeep Wrangler.

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.



INSPIRATIONAL DESIGNS

Hopefully, this promotion wrapped up better than [the monthly OREO subscription box on Amazon](#), which was poorly received overall for being too expensive.

Want to pitch or fulfill a creative promotion to your customers? Tap Idea Custom Solutions' graphic design skills to make your company and your customers' brands look good.

FOUR TIMES PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS WENT TERRIBLY WRONG

We all love a good promotional products campaign. Remember those flexible straws with people doing yoga poses on them or Shark Week's surfboards with bites taken out that were scattered on beaches? Sheer marketing genius! However, sometimes things don't go quite so well. Here are four of the biggest promotional marketing flops in recent history.

Diet Coke's Creepy Napkins

Delta Air Lines and Diet Coke recently developed a new product in their continuing collaboration: paper napkins. And almost as soon as they hit the cabins of airplanes, Delta pulled them out. Why? Because they napkins were just a bit creepy. They had fill-in-the-blank lines for your name and phone number and encouraged you to write them down and give them to your "plane crush." Because nothing makes an annoying, exhausting flight better than some rando coming up to you with an unsolicited phone number.

Turner Broadcasting's Accidental Bombs

In 2007, Turner Broadcasting wanted to boost excitement for the upcoming *Aqua Team Hunger Force* movie. They went to ten cities in the US and stealthily set out small LED devices that blinked one of the characters from the show, apparently powered by four D-size batteries. One problem: people thought the devices were bombs. In Boston, people panicked and the bomb squad had to come out to inspect the ads — which, of course, ended up not being bombs, but rather poorly planned marketing.

Snapple's Giant Melting Popsicle

You know those facts on the inside of Snapple caps? The inspiration for this campaign may very well have been one. In 1997, the world record was set in Holland for largest popsicle, measuring 21 feet tall. Snapple wanted to up the game in 2005. In order to break the record, [the company set up a 25-foot-tall Snapple popsicle in the middle of Times Square](#). But it got really hot that day (about 80 degrees hot). Predictably, the popsicle melted. No one really got to see it and firefighters had to shut down nearby streets to clean up all the melted Snapple.

Burger King's Cyanide Burgers

This campaign was all digital. [Burger King used digital capabilities to prompt a smartphone to read aloud the ingredients inside their burgers](#). It was initially a great and innovative idea — until the trolls came out. Burger King's flaw was that it linked the campaign to Wikipedia, a platform that, although has great information, can be edited by anyone. As you can imagine, soon the campaign began listing ingredients like cyanide and touting the Whopper as the "worst hamburger product." Oops.



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, **Anushka Daware** won for embroidery digitizing and **Nitin Antapurkar** won for vector artwork. Keep up the great work, team!



NOTABLE QUOTES

world. Partner with **Idea Custom Solutions** for vector artwork and embroidery digitizing so you can help your clients shine.

GET FAMILIAR WITH THE ANTICIPATED 2019 CREATIVE TRENDS

Another year, another **new creative trends report**. Shutterstock, the massive stock photography site, released its latest. The company analyzed billions of searches for music, video and images, plus downloads by current Shutterstock companies, to compile an infographic of exactly what design trends we can look forward to in 2019.

"Bright colors, cartoon faces, and ostentatious animal patterns show a vibrant undercurrent in this year's trends," the report says. "It's a treasure trove of distractions, playful reflections of our own audacious individualism. Echoes of past trends — leopard print, gold scroll frames, neon signs — remind us just how loud and lively design can be."

The major trends for this year are:

Zine Culture: A design style that's based loosely on collage and has a raw, almost jumbled but coordinated look to it. Expect to see rough edges, noise, textures and cutouts.

80s Opulence: The 80s are back (again) and this time with animal prints, gold chains, snakeskin, metal textures and fur. Everything is designed in a way that obviously clashes, but ends up looking good together.

Yesterday's Tomorrow: Think about what we expected the future to look like 20 years ago and that encapsulates this design trend. Neon lights, synthesizers, landscapes made of light grids — anything that screams "early tech." As far as colors, expect purple, blue, and pink, plus vector graphics and gradients.

The study also pulled out some rising trends for the year:

Beyond Plastic: Products will be made from more eco-friendly materials, such as hemp and bamboo and the three Rs (reduce, reuse recycle) will have more of an emphasis.

Kawaii: The adorable Japanese cuteness of kawaii has steadily been growing, grabbing everyone's attention with pastel colors, sweet cartoons and faces on inanimate objects.

Kalamkari: This is an Indian fabric art, defined by natural dyes and intricate patterns painted or printed onto fabric.

Rococo Romance: An art movement that dominated the 17th and 18th centuries is back. That means theatics, ornamentation, florals and romance.

Prism: Bright colors take the spotlight in this design trend, which sees a rainbow of hues in endless patterns.

Hypnotic: Color is again a big player in the hypnotic design style, but this is more focused on optical illusions and datamoshing (the manipulation of digital files to create a unique visual or auditory effect).



"You are the master of your destiny. You can influence, direct and control your own environment. **You can make your life what you want it to be.**"

— Napoleon Hill



Continuous learning is the minimum requirement for success in any field."

— Denis Waitley



"There are no great limits to growth because **there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination, and wonder.**"

— Ronald Reagan



A business absolutely devoted to service will have one worry about profits. They will be embarrassingly large."

— Henry Ford

Everyday Futurism: This is the world of tech unfolding at our fingertips and design will reflect that reality in 2019. Think tech-enhanced clothing and accessories, biometric features and virtual reality.

The final trend to watch in design for 2019, according to Shutterstock's results, is **Tempting Typography**. We've already seen this a bit with fonts made out of logos or designed specifically to help you remember what you read. But this trend is food-based — text that looks like yummy things to eat.

If you want to incorporate any of these design aesthetics into your work for clients, [try our Custom Creative services](#). We can design original [logos](#) and custom t-shirts, banners and posters that will amaze them.



"Here is the simple but powerful rule . . . **always give people more than they expect to get.**"

— Nelson Boswell

IT'S TAX TIME FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

It's that time of year again — the ever-exciting tax season. 2018 brought with it a number of changes to tax laws, including alterations that affect how small and mid-sized businesses, like most promotional products companies, should be filing. [Idea Custom Solutions](#) doesn't want you to be left in the dark when you work on your business taxes, so we've compiled some tips and helpful things to get your business through tax time without incident.

One of the biggest changes — and the most publicized — is a new 20 percent qualified business income deduction. This applies to sole proprietors, S-corporations and other pass-through entities. But it comes with limitations: if you want to take the tax break for your business, [you must have taxable income less than \\$157,500 if single or \\$315,000 if married](#).

A less business-friendly change applies to meal and entertainment deductions. Before, 50 percent of meals and entertainment costs were deductible, but no more! You can't deduct entertainment costs at all and meals only get the 50-percent deduction if they're small and you have receipts.

Some options exist, though, that may make up for that missing tax break. First, [have your accountant look at your forecasted income](#). Thanks to the new tax law, you might owe less on your last quarterly payment than you think. You can also purchase a piece of capital equipment (think computers, furniture and machinery). If you buy it and start to use it before 2018 ends, you can deduct up to \$1 million.

Should you be looking to pass on your business to one of your children, now would be a good time. The estate tax exclusion is at an all-time high of \$11.9 million for individuals or \$22.36 million for married couples. That means, in most cases, you can pass your business on to your children tax-free. It'll slide back down to \$5 million in 2026, that is unless Congress decides to change it first.

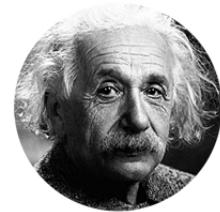
Also, take advantage of one perk that wasn't changed with the new tax laws: retroactive tax refunds. [Approximately 93 percent of business owners pay too much in taxes annually](#). If you've paid for the last three years, you can have a review done that shows potential missed tax savings.

Regardless of how well you think you know the changes, it's important to work with a qualified tax professional before filing. They'll know the ins



"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."

— Ralph Marston



"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the **same level of thinking we were at when we created them.**"

— Albert Einstein



"Don't be afraid to assert yourself, have confidence in your abilities and don't let the bastards get you down."

— Michael Bloomberg

and outs and be able to see you through any confusing regulations.

We are not tax professionals at Idea Custom Solutions, but as the leading provider of graphic services ranging from embroidery digitizing to vector artwork and image editing, we are dedicated to your business. That's why our tagline is: **Your success. That's the whole Idea!**



"Everything started as nothing."

— Ben Weissenstein



TWEET THAT!

Be on the lookout for these **#baseball** promos at the start of **@MLB**'s 2019 season! <http://bit.ly/2SMMsap>

[Tweet That!](#)

Needlework like **#embroidery** and **#quilting** can include unique materials, like **#military #uniforms**. <http://bit.ly/2XGCwD6>

[Tweet That!](#)

A **#basketball** team forgot to bring **#uniforms** to a game but still won, in the opponent's jerseys! <http://bit.ly/2HI2s1t>

[Tweet That!](#)

In **#Nebraska**, the tourism board can't legally sell **#PromoProducts**. <http://bit.ly/2C7RTLE>

[Tweet That!](#)

Did you see the women-centric **@USWNT #soccer** jerseys for the **#SheBelievesCup?** [#WomensHistoryMonth](http://bit.ly/2SLm6Wt) <http://bit.ly/2SLm6Wt>

[Tweet That!](#)

Indulge in some political weirdness with these quirky Michael Cohen **#PromoProducts**. <http://bit.ly/2UohEhP>

[Tweet That!](#)

Coming soon to Salt Lake City: A **#PromoProducts** superstore. <http://bit.ly/2tW9QZi>

[Tweet That!](#)

Browse 3,000 years of **#fashion** with Google's We Wear Culture tool. **#apparel #history** <http://bit.ly/2C8ywST>

[Tweet That!](#)

If you follow **#GraphicDesign**, you should follow these women **#designers** for **#WomensHistoryMonth**. <http://bit.ly/2XLsUqD>

[Tweet That!](#)

Are you ready? On April 4, the **@nyjets** will reveal their new **#uniforms**. <http://bit.ly/2ToRPSw>

[Tweet That!](#)

#Embroidery paying homage to the plight of women in the modern world, on display now. <http://bit.ly/2EMzgib>

[Tweet That!](#)

You may be afraid of **#millennials**, but they're a boon to the **#PromoProducts** industry. <http://bit.ly/2SJCGGa>

[Tweet That!](#)

One of the biggest parts of **#branding**? Your corporate identity. Here's how to make it a good one. <http://bit.ly/2HdUA1F>

[Tweet That!](#)

Bleed **#ForTheThrone** promotion took big strides in helping **@RedCross** blood donation drives. <http://bit.ly/2Vyh9Sz>

[Tweet That!](#)

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Rahul Alimkar

Data Analyst, Digitizing and Artwork Teams

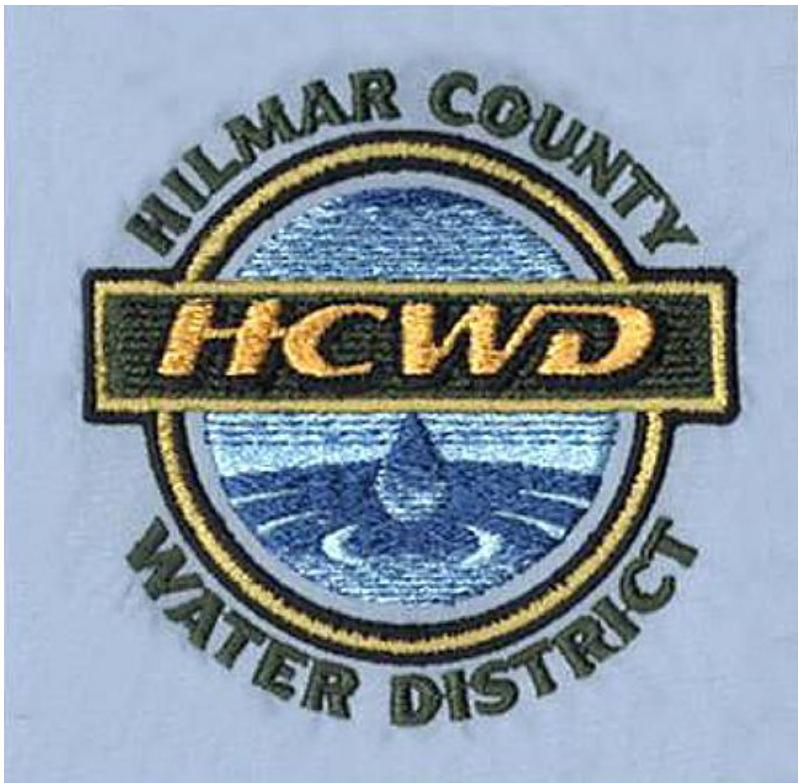
As a data analyst, Rahul's typical day at work revolves around creating orders, handling emails and generating reports.

After six years, Rahul says that he is most proud he has trained four junior associates for the administrative work. He thinks other employees should know, "For success, there is no shortcut. You have to work hard."



DESIGN SHOWCASE

Embroidery Digitizing



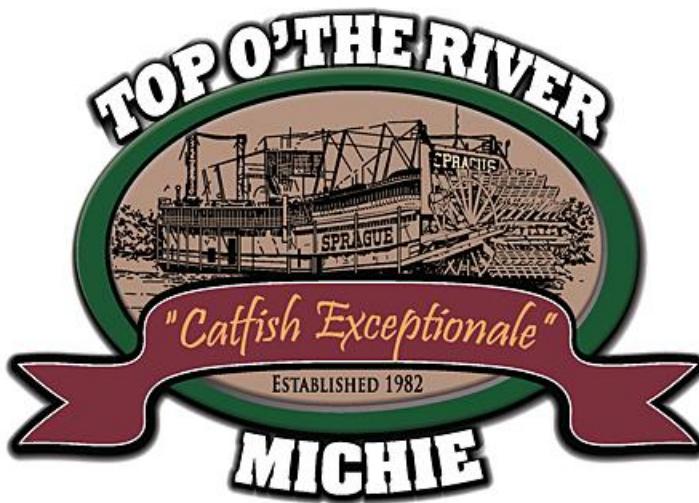
In his opinion, Rahul thinks people considering careers with Idea Custom Solutions should also know: "We are the best design company. We have multiple design techniques under one roof."

Outside of the office, he tells us, "I go to the gym to work out and on long drives with family and friends." He also likes to listen to music and play the dhol (a type of drum).

What you might not know about Rahul is that he likes to surprise his coworkers by bringing them their favorite dishes, which he has prepared.

Someday, he would love to visit London. "Overall, I want to be known as a good human being and friend for all my close friends."

Vector Artwork



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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