



How to Use Promotional Products as Effective Communications Tools

1. **Define a specific objective.** Whether the goal is to build excitement for a new company program or recognize employee achievements at an annual meeting, the first step is to clarify the program's purpose. For example, is it to increase traffic at a trade show or to boost sales with current customers?
2. **Determine a workable distribution plan to a targeted audience.** Distribution of a promotional product is as important as the item itself. Research shows that a carefully executed distribution plan significantly increases the effectiveness of promotional products.
3. **Create a central theme.** An event or marketing promotion without a theme is in danger of losing effectiveness. The theme and the promotional product should tie in with the event's objective. Creating a recognizable logo and color for all aspects of a campaign or event, from promotional products to printed materials, helps create an instantly recognizable image.
4. **Select a promotional product that bears a natural relationship to your profession or communications theme.** A good example is a company that developed a magic motif for its conference at Disney World. Attendees received magic-related products to tie in with the theme "Experience the magic at Disney."
5. **Don't pick an item based solely on uniqueness, price or perceived value.** Don't fall prey to the latest trends or fads. And remember that audience perceptions of a gift are not exclusively cost related. According to Promotional Products Association International, wearable items such as T-shirts, jackets and caps are the most popular category (27 percent), followed by writing instruments (11.8 percent), glassware and ceramics (9.4 percent), calendars (7.3 percent) and desk and office business accessories (5.6 percent).