



## **promotional information products**

You want your message to be noticed. To be believed. To be remembered. To be repeated to other people. One of the best ways of achieving this is to get it transferred onto a 'promotional product' - i.e. onto something other than a flimsy, undifferentiated, predictable piece of paper.

Promotional products can be used in various ways to illustrate, reinforce and brand particular messages. For example, they're great for:

- message delivery, as an alternative to the conventional leaflet or postcard format of information production
- props to illustrate a point during a presentation (vivid, memorable and conducive to viral marketing as people are more likely to talk to others about this 'visual aid')
- training - to trigger or enliven discussions

While the prospect of spending money on 'gimmicks' or 'gifts' can seem daunting, the realities are often very different. For example, many research projects will have cost thousands of pounds in staff time, and perhaps thousands more in printing and distribution costs. But how many key targets will actually read it, and of those, how many will remember even one key message – and make changes on the basis of this?

With these sorts of budgets and desire to maximise impact, it's invariably worth allocating some of the dissemination budget to lasting, tangible, promotional products which can give the message higher visibility and memorability. For less than £5 can buy giant golf umbrellas or a conference bag, printed with the 3 main results of your research findings, for example. Civil servants, academics, campaigners and others won't have had too many of those land on their desks and they won't be thrown away!

No one product is going to be right for everyone. Some people don't use pocket mirrors or calculators, or already have their favourite one. But no single means of reaching or convincing people is guaranteed, whether via the media, direct marketing or other communications route.

There are thousands of different formats (or 'gifts') that you can use to carry your message, and we hope the following will help you choose what works best for your particular communications initiative.

## **where to find suppliers**

- Yellow pages
- trade shows (Incentive World, annual in London)
- Promotions and Incentives magazine
- Promotional sourcing companies
- Directories – eg Promotions and Incentive’s annual guide
- Gift fairs – especially the huge Autumn Fair (Birmingham NEC)
- Printers (for paper products, from bookmarks to calendars)
- Internet search

## **points to consider when deciding on promotional products**

- as with everything else, notably design and print, the issue is about value for money rather than buying cheap. Cheap pens, for example, are often an embarrassing false economy, especially if the printing is done on the cheap – and is illegible.
- what is the minimum amount you want to order? Will the supplier do small runs?
- while deciding, get samples, even if you have to give them back or even pay for them if it's an expensive product.
- If you’re thinking of buying the eternally popular choice of sweets, the issue of packaging will be vital to plan, especially if you're going to send it through the post. Chocolate is particularly susceptible to being broken, or of course melted! Most suppliers can advise on this, or contact Marion at Bright.

## **ways of using/customising:**

- Most products can have a message added to them, by being overprinted or put into special packaging, or by something as simple as having an attractive sticker added to it.
- A variation of this is to have a postcard + key message delivered in an attractive product - eg photo frame, on a chrome memo clip etc.
- Adding value - what can you include along with your message that will make it more valuable for the targets? Calendar? List of phone numbers or websites? tube map?

## **distribution**

This needs careful planning, including

- mailing lists – are yours up-to-date, without duplications? Have you considered hiring a list from a direct marketing list broker?
- will the product you choose be difficult or expensive to protect en route?
- distribution budget needs to include cost of packaging (eg padded bags) as well as postage, as these can mount up

## some particularly engaging promotional products

- Interactive, or changing products - eg heat sensitive - mugs which reveal a different picture or message when hot, scratch'n'sniff t-shirts/postcards/menus, touch sensitive cards and stickers.
- Simple card designs which 'hide and reveal'
- Custom designed software games - a much more engaging and memorable way for people to learn particular facts - especially if there are lots of facts and they're very complex and/or dry
- It's often possible to find an existing product which represents the message you're trying to convey. To give an example with just one product, there are permutations of stress balls, in the shape of a: car, police van, plane, hand, heart, animals, globe, phone, £, camera, computer.... Some of these can be printed with your logo/message.
- Things which appeal to different senses, eg:
  - leaflets, gifts or packaging which has a scent – eg of grass or wine
  - cards which make a sound or give a spoken message when opened
  - products which you can squeeze, twist, stroke....
  - food! Anything from praline computers to sides of smoked salmon

# **examples of promotional information products**

## **very inexpensive promotional products – under 10p each**

- balloons
- card products – simple ones – eg bookmarks, greetings cards
- desk tidies (pen holders etc)
- Filofax inserts
- magnets
- plastic carrier bags (great for exhibitions)
- sweets

## **relatively inexpensive – under £1 each**

- card products – ones which are more interactive
- jigsaw puzzles
- key rings
- mirror
- pens
- pencils
- post-it notes (come in different shapes)
- puzzles
- rulers
- shopping bags (eg cotton)
- stress balls (in different shapes)
- wallets

## **not cheap, but still under £10 each**

- bags, eg conference bags
- calculators
- cameras (plastic ones)
- clipboard
- clocks (desk or wall)
- computer mice
- drinking glasses
- memo/photo clip
- mugs
- screensaver (sendable on disc or downloadable from website)
- sweatshirts
- t-shirts
- umbrellas
- wipe-off boards

## **suppliers**

### **wide range of products**

**classic range (pens, mugs, calculators...)**

emc  
0845 345 1064  
sales@emcadgifts.co.uk  
www.emcadgifts.co.uk

Worldwide Ideas  
0208 530 7171  
sales@worldwideideas.co.uk  
www.worldwideideas.co.uk

**internet sourcing**

The Promo Warehouse  
info@product.co.uk  
<http://www.promo.uk.com/>  
0870 4422111

**novelties**

Everything from chattering teeth, plastic trophies and whistles, to magic tricks and daft dressing up outfits

Tobar  
01986 782222  
sales@tobar.co.uk  
www.tobar.co.uk

Jarroy of London  
0208 519 7780  
jarroy@mcmail.com  
www.jarroy.com

**chic gifts**

Obsessions  
0207 403 3126  
info@osessions.co.uk  
www.obsessions.co.uk

**specific products**

**card products**

Whitney Woods  
01706 210538  
info@whitneywoods.co.uk  
www.whitneywoods.co.uk

Z-cards  
020 7924 5147  
info-uk@zcard.com  
www.zcard.co.uk

Karran Products  
01483 576777  
sales@karrangroup.co.uk  
www.karran.co.uk

**chocolates**

Belgium's Best  
01494 538 511  
sales@belgiumsbest.co.uk  
www.belgiumsbest.com

Coronation Promotions  
01253 798606  
sales@coronationpromotions.co.uk  
www.coronationpromotions.co.uk

Groovy Chocolate  
0800 0522108  
sales@groovychocolate.com  
www.groovychocolate.com

**jigsaw puzzles**

Image on it  
01756 799055  
info@image-on-it.co.uk  
www.image-on-it.co.uk

**magnets**

Magnetic Advertising  
<http://www.magnetic-advertising.com/>  
0131 524 9696

**recycled rulers, pens, pencils etc**

Remarkable Pencils Ltd  
0208 741 1234  
[info@re-markable.com](mailto:info@re-markable.com)  
[www.re-markable.com](http://www.re-markable.com)

**software information games, custom designed**

Corporate Adrenalin International  
015394 43133  
[sales@corporate-adrenalin.com](mailto:sales@corporate-adrenalin.com)  
[www.corporate-adrenalin.com](http://www.corporate-adrenalin.com)

**sound cards**

Clegg  
[info@cleggonline.com](mailto:info@cleggonline.com)