

Changes or trends in the way marketers are using promotional products

by William Kestin, CEO, Australasian Promotional Products Association, looks into the future.

Promotional product agencies are consulting much more in tandem with ad agencies (in some cases in place of ad agencies). Most promotional agencies don't put clients on the 'creative clock' the second they walk in the door. That adds value for clients. The promotional consultants of today are much more an intricate part of outsourcing creativity and helping marketers to be much more efficient.

The next generation of consumers are very engaged by promotional products. APPA lectures at universities across the country to marketing students, we see great promise coming from the next generation of youthful marketers. They are excited about the creativity and variety of our industry.

Driven by technology

Technology will continue to influence the types of products produced. Links to the web will be crucial to connect recipients with campaigns which drive business to websites. There are many products that plug into today's technology, such as digital voice activated products, UV activated products, mobile and web-link related products. Technology is playing a big part in consumer engagement.

Rewarding the consumer

Historically in recession, promotional products consistently outperform other forms of advertising in cost, reach and recall. Uniformly, research agrees that in times of economic hardship, it is imperative to reward and engage your target markets.

Extending the message

The current downturn in the market will affect our industry in both good and bad ways. From a positive perspective, as marketing budgets get tighter, clients have to find more creative ways to make their budget stretch further. Because the value of promotional products retains the 'message' for longer than traditional forms of advertising and, in comparison to above the line advertising expenditures, are less expensive, more creative marketers are using them as an integral part of their marketing strategies.

The trend to green products

The move to green or environmentally-friendly products is a huge trend. We still want to soften our carbon footprints. There are environmentally friendly products that are responsible and yet inexpensive through APPA members. BUT there is a lot of misinformation out there! Calling something 'Eco' doesn't mean it has any

particular environmental value.

Some 'recycled' products actually cause more pollutants to recycle than they would if they were just disposed of. This is complex area and Australia has very little legislation on what constitutes a 'green product'. APPA is available to consumers for advice on the subject.

Using intelligence

The products themselves are as varied as the brands they are promoting. It is how they are used in the campaign, which takes real talent. This is where experience in these cases, generates the creativity. We all like cool products and there are some great new things in the market. Portable GPS systems, solar powered desk wind turbines, mini USB 'dust buster' like vacuums that clean keyboards, but what impresses clients more is the very clever use of a very basic product that can still work magnificently.

Never underestimate the intelligence of your audience. Customers like to be amused and made to think. A real promotional product professional knows how to use the most basic of products in a campaign that creatively generates attention.



Kestin: Take advice about so-called green products

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM PROMOTIONAL PRODUCT CAMPAIGNS

Successful promotional product companies are not simply commodity suppliers, but tangible advertising specialists. Successful promotional campaigns require:

- Strategic 'logistical' and 'emotional' roll out
- Action engagement triggers
- Data collection analysis
- Technical logo application knowledge
- Creating the difference between a 'passive' and 'active' promotion

What is a passive promotional product?

A passive product is given out without any thought about what you want from your target audience. Everyone loves 'free stuff' but if you are throwing money at give-a-ways without getting something from your target audience you are missing great opportunities using this form of advertising.

What is an ACTIVE promotional product?

All promotions should provide the giver with valuable information or some form of action from the recipients. Whether it is to log on to your website, complete a survey, buy a product, or complete a task, promotional products are a great incentive to collect information from your customers.



WHAT SHOULD I ASK MY PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS COMPANY?

- How long have they been in the promotions industry?
- How long have they been APPA members?
- What is their policy on return of products?
- What is their policy on timely delivery of goods?
- What is their policy on quantity-short product deliveries?
- Have they received any APPA awards for creativity?



What should I tell my promotional products company?

- The audience and objectives of your promotion. (To reward consumers? Increase sales? Acknowledge external business partners or internal staff? To brand or increase attendance to an event?)
- The response you want from the recipients of these products
- The information about your brand that you want to communicate
- The information from the recipients you would find useful, if you were able to obtain it
- Historically, some of the other promotions done by your company
- What would you like the recipient to think about your company after the promotion is finished?

WHAT SHOULDN'T I HEAR FROM MY PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS COMPANY?

- That they will undercut any price
- That promotional products are so cheap they cannot be guaranteed to work
- That there is no reason for them to be an APPA member
- That there is no reason to sign off on art work approvals



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS SCORE HIGHLY IN REACH AND RECALL

- 75% of human resource managers surveyed are using promotional products in recognition programs.
- 72% of marketing and HR managers say that promotional products are very effective in motivation and retention of staff
- 100% of advertisers said that adding a promotional product returned a favourable response to their campaign
- 69% of advertisers said promotional products increased brand interest
- 84% of advertisers said promotional products created more favourable impressions of the brand itself

APPA Award winners of the highest standard

Award winners at the 10th annual Australasian Promotional Products Association (APPA) awards revealed an exceptional level of quality, innovation and brand alignment, according to APPA CEO William Kestin. The annual APPA awards are the only awards that recognise excellence in the promotional products industry. Entries received represent the highest standards of below-the-line marketing from Australia and New Zealand.

The awards night is one of the highlights of the APPA Convention and Exhibition (Convex). The APPA Convex is the most successful and longest-running promotional trade show in the Australasian region, and APPA is the only professional trade association specifically for the promotional products and promotional marketing industry in the region. APPA members have worked hard to achieve a status within the industry that assures their clients of the highest quality products as well as the benefit of their experience, expertise and advice.

APPA advises in this current economic climate, it is more important than ever to verify you are dealing with a legitimate APPA member. You can confirm this by going to www.appa.com.au and clicking on Find A Promotional Products Company or contact APPA on 03-9499-5544.

The Platinum Award for Overall Promotional Excellence

Winner WALKIN' PROMOTIONS

Client The Seven Network

Entry Seven's Beijing Olympic Corporate Gift Program

Also awarded

Gold in Apparel/Wearable Products

Gold in Merchandise Programs

Gold in Australasian Made

The Platinum Award for Promotional Product Excellence illustrates the creativity and quality that can be achieved when a client entrusts a professional agency who is an APPA member instead of ordering uninspiring products from a non-member "commodity" supplier.

Walkin' Promotions developed this exceptional range with a clear vision of what the brand represented and what the client wanted to achieve. In addition to budget requirements, very strict safety and quality standards needed to be adhered to. As the official Australian Broadcaster of the 2008 Olympic Games, Seven Network was hosting their most extensive Corporate Hospitality Program to date. They wanted to intrigue, excite and engage the VIP guests with a range of sophisticated merchandise that would convey the spirit of the Beijing Olympics and reflect their brand at the highest level.

Walkin' Promotions was responsible for the overall creative design, production and delivery of the entire range. It was their driving goal to create products that guests would embrace as lifetime mementos.

There were three phases developed for this promotion. First the invitation/RSVP packs were sent out, followed by ticketing and information packs, and finally a welcome pack for the Games in Beijing. The smallest details were given the highest attention and each item was scrutinised before production by the client and also the IOC.

Walkin' Promotions was also responsible for managing all aspects of budget, production, quality control, packaging, warehousing and freight in both countries at the same time.

What the Client Said

The Seven Network was thrilled with the overwhelming response from the guests. The products matched Seven's corporate vision with subtlety and style and as a result a steady stream of the recipients have since approached Walkin' Promotions to creatively design ranges for their own company purposes.

What the Judges Said

- 100% creative design from the promotional products company



- A comprehensive range of the highest quality customised with great attention to detail that perfectly commemorated the occasion
- The merchandise perfectly commemorated the occasion
- The 3-part invitation concept built a sense of anticipation about the event
- 100% responsible for all logistics, roll out and freight
- Very hands on with the technical side, site inspections, safety and quality checks were exceptional

The Gold Winner for Tradeshow & Conference Programs

Winner CHILLI PROMOTIONS

Client Virgin Broadband

Entry USB Mini Vacuum Cleaner

Virgin launched its Internet Broadband service at a series of conferences. The brief was for a product that was IT related, and not seen before. It needed to be in line with the Virgin 'personality' of fun and fresh.

The target market was staff, using an incentive to promote sales of the broadband service to resellers. Chilli Promotions designed the promotion around a Mini 'Dust Buster' like vacuum, which is powered by USB, to keep your desk and keyboard clean. It also had extra fittings for those tricky areas. The lead time was short and the expectations high, but Chilli Promotions produced this product, met all relevant safety standards and air freighted the item within six weeks from the order.



What the Client Said

Virgin Broadband was very pleased with this unique and fun product, which communicated their message perfectly. They were also grateful to find a reliable professional that could do the job at low cost with a very quick turnaround time.

What the Judges Said

- A unique product that fits in with the Virgin fun brand provided in extremely short lead time.
- Relevant to Virgin's core product and all the more difficult to achieve when the product had to be totally new and customised for the client.

The Gold Winner for Promotional Agency Self Promotion

Winner ACCURE

Entry Brandslappers

Accure's message in this promotion was simple. "If we can't produce an effective program for ourselves, then what chance do we have to deliver for a client?" Accure developed the 'Brandslappers' campaign and microsite to re-engage existing clients and ignite potential ones.

Accure wanted an instant, standout impression with high perceived value and high perceived relevancy.

The call-to-action? "Plug in, call us and visit our site".

The branded retro mobile phone handset fitted a large number of mobiles and came with a cheeky hand-written letter. The gloss cylinder packaging highlighted something engaging was inside.

Accure received an astounding 76% positive response, resulting in immediate, substantial, increased business. Every recipient visited the 'Brandslappers' micro-site and many new clients said this promotion was the reason they switched to Accure.



What the Judges Said

- Engaging from the moment you open the lid/product
- Original product, relevant and creative. The results were exceptional
- The letter was witty, engaging and not too long
- The packaging is intriguing and well branded

The Gold Winner for Limited Budget – Under \$5.00

Winner THE MINC MARKETING GROUP

Entry Tennis Scorer

Medibank Private is a sponsor of the Junior Tennis NSW. The sponsorship provides an opportunity for Medibank Private to enhance its exposure with branded merchandise at events throughout the season.

The objective of Minc Marketing was not to have the merchandise seen as a 'give-a-way' but to enhance Medibank's image as a participant of the events which included a Family Day and other Junior Tennis events throughout NSW.

The brief was for an item targeted to kids between 8 to 14 years old. In its research Minc Marketing identified that children had trouble keeping score of the game, as they were learning the fundamentals of the game at the same time.

Minc went outside the box of previous years' predictable choices and designed a custom-made tool to help with scoring and understanding the game simultaneously.

The "tennis scorer" was simple to use, could stand up to the rigours of kids and could be attached to belts or backpacks.

Minc supplied the fully integrated promotion from concept, design, manufacture and distribution all within a limited time frame of approximately eight weeks.



What the Client Said

The Tennis Scorer proved to be one of the most talked about items of the tennis season. Medibank Private was thrilled and said "The Minc Marketing Group met and outperformed our criteria of a quality product, on time and on budget".

What the Judges Said

- The product is educational for kids and was produced in an amazingly short lead time
- Inventive, creative and quality product
- Supplies high involvement and participation in the match
- It promoted great additional sponsorship exposure for Medibank, where a passive 'give-a-way' couldn't
- The brief was initially quite vague and Minc went beyond the obvious choices and for the same dollar value created something different.

What can APPA do for you?

The Australasian Promotional Product Association (APPA) is the professional trade association specifically for the promotional products and promotional marketing industry. APPA began in 1986 and includes the regions of Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

APPA provides its members with ongoing education, pricing advantages on the supply of products, dispute resolution, tradeshows access showcasing the latest innovations, ethical and professional standards and a flow of information from our international counterparts.

APPA is a proud founding member of the International Federation of Promotional Product Associations (IFPPA). APPA and IFPPA promote international labour standards, ethics and communication throughout the worldwide, multi billion dollar promotional industry.

APPA provides professional advice to consumers, and lectures regularly in both the university system and corporate boardrooms throughout the region. To verify your promotional product professional has reached the benchmark of excellence and is an APPA member go to www.appa.com.au. Click on 'Find A Promotional Company' and search by company name or regional areas, or contact APPA on 03-9557-7717.

90% of the complaints APPA receives comes from consumers who use a non-member and find out about APPA after the fact. APPA can intervene on behalf of consumers if they deal with a reputable APPA member.

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