



The Redbows Promotional Merchandise Handbook



Promote yourself with Redbows
Creative promotional marketing experts

The Promotional Merchandise Handbook

A guide to promotional merchandise projects and their role in the marketing communications mix

by Dawn Koffler, Managing Director of Redbows Ltd

Index

1. Promotional Merchandise and Marketing	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Industry Background.....	2
1.3 The UK Promotional Merchandise Market	3
2. Strategic Promotional Marketing.....	6
2.1 Marketing Tools.....	6
2.2 Key Success Factors	7
2.3 Technology Trends.....	8
3. The Production and Review Process	9
3.1 Artwork.....	9
3.2 Origination Charges and Printing Processes.....	10
3.3 Fulfillment.....	11
3.4 Packaging.....	12
3.5 Delivery	12
3.6 Project Review and Audit.....	13
Appendix A - Industry Links	14
Appendix B – BPMA Market Research	15
Appendix C – Promotional Merchandise Project Checklist	26
Appendix D – About Redbows	27

1. Promotional Merchandise and Marketing

1.1 Introduction

Promotional merchandise is one of the most powerful mediums available with which to promote an organization. Branded merchandise has many uses ranging from general giveaways that can help to boost brand awareness to a more strategic role promoting a new product or website and the generation of enquiries and visitors.

Promotional merchandise can be used to promote any organization and any for any purpose. Users can include marketers, entrepreneurs, business owners, not-for-profit organizations, public sector hospitals, local government councils, schools, colleges, universities, charities, clubs and even individuals. Recipients can be any stakeholders within the promoting organization: clients, prospects, employees, suppliers, local community, general public, shareholders and members.

The term ‘promotional merchandise’ refers to any product or gift branded with an imprint and used within a marketing promotion. The imprint will typically include a logo and sometimes a marketing slogan, call to action, contact telephone number, email and/or website address and be applied through one of various application techniques. These can include: screen printing, lithographic (litho) printing, digital printing, embroidery, embossing/de-embossing, stick on plastic, paper or domed label or engraving.

Whilst we tend to use the terms ‘promotional merchandise’ or ‘promotional gifts’ in the UK, elsewhere in the world other terms are popular and it is not uncommon to find them used interchangeably. A search on Google for the keyword phrase ‘promotional merchandise’ shows other potential search terms including:

- Promotional gifts, promotional products, promotional items, promotional giveaways
- Advertising gifts, advertising specialties, marketing gifts, branded gifts, branded merchandise, branded products, corporate gifts, business gifts

In the UK, the term promotional merchandise is used within the name and title of the two main UK associations: the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA) and PROMOTA, the promotional merchandise trade association. In the US, promotional items, promotional products and advertising specialties are more commonly accepted terms, supported by industry associations including the Advertising Specialties Institute (ASI) and the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI). A list of associations is included in *Appendix A*.

1.2 Industry Background

Unsurprisingly the history of promotional merchandise is closely tied to advertising and entrepreneurship. The first acknowledged piece of promotional merchandise was a commemorative button commissioned in 1789 to celebrate George Washington’s Presidency of the United States of America.

The industry itself had a very slow take-off. It was not until a certain Jasper Freemont Meek in Coshocton, Ohio came up with what we today recognise as promotional merchandise. At that time, walking down Main Street was no easy affair. Children on their way to and from school often dropped their books in the dirt, mud and filth of an 18th century street.

Meek had his Eureka moment. He recognised children need a bag for their books. He was also looking for a way to keep his printing presses running when idle. The solution was simple.

Persuade the local shoe shop to give out a branded shoe bag with each pair of new shoes that the children (or anyone else) could then use. Meek even ended up supplying the bags and used his printing press to apply the slogan 'Buy Cantwell Shoes'. Other products were developed including branded horse covers and a new company formed; the Tuscarora Advertising Company.

As with any good idea, competition is never far away. Another printer Henry D. Beach started up a similar product line and both competed aggressively printing any items that could carry an advertising slogan: aprons, hats, marble bags, buggy whips, card cases, fans and calendars. It was Beach who perfected print methods onto metal leading to the use of advertising trays by Coca-Cola.

In 1904, the early pioneers of this new industry formed a trade association known as the Advertising Manufacturers Association. By 1906 the initial 12 members had grown to 56 and the association started to hold its own annual exhibition and regular conventions.

Industry associations play an important role within their markets and on an international stage. In the UK the BPMA provides several services to its members including:

- Industry Research
- Charter Codes of Conduct
- Professional development and certified qualifications
- Education days, regional events and exhibitions
- Marketing, annual conference and promotional products week
- Resources and strategic support
- Networking events and seminars
- Awards and recognition
- Voucher schemes
- Information Services
- Free legal advice

BPMA membership is split into the two categories representing the two sides of the promotional merchandise industry: suppliers and distributors. Each has a BPMA Code of Conduct.

Chartered Suppliers are those companies that manufacture and import plain stock items for branding. They supply these to Chartered Distributors who add value by interfacing with clients and providing project management and promotional marketing services.

1.3 The UK Promotional Merchandise Market

The UK market is estimated to be over £1billion in turnover (BPMA) and the industry has a fairly well defined route to market through its Suppliers and Distributors. The distinction is sometimes blurred, however thanks to opportunities for direct import from the Far East by distributors and large corporate contracts that can be attractive to suppliers.

The last market research survey completed by the BPMA in 2013 (*see appendix B*) covered 1,000 businesses and organisations including IT, retail services, insurance, charities and the educational sector.

The research carried out by the BPMA is part of longer-term study into the use of promotional products within the marketing mix. The results collected demonstrate how powerful promotional products are in generating a positive outcome for your brand and organization.

In summary these are:

- **Products that motivate you:** seasonal products include hampers (43%) and USB flash drives (31%). We would comment that Power Banks would now rank highly as a recent trend in promotional merchandise.
- **Products you keep:** USB tops out the pole at 63% followed by mugs and umbrellas. Again with the rise of smart phone use we would expect Power Banks and other related merchandise to show high rankings now.
- **Products to put on your desk:** pens, mugs and calendars are the most popular.
- **Initial Reactions:** almost 98% do not view promotional merchandise as a waste of money and 66.9% keep a new promotional product.
- **Media Analysis:** 35% rate promotional merchandise as the second best channel after TV advertising for recalling where a brand.
- **Media Actions:** promotional merchandise (50.7%) has the best ability to generate an action and tops out the poll ahead of TV and online advertising.
- **Office Product Numbers:** over 88% have one or more promotional products in their office, with 74.8% two or more.
- **Free Products:** 53.9% of respondents would pick up product at an event.
- **Message Recall:** mugs and pens both score 47% as the best promotional merchandise products for recalling an advertising message.
- **Promotional Response:** over 55% of recipients used their promotional merchandise more than once.
- **Advertising Medium and Appreciation:** 64% rate promotional merchandise as the best medium to make a person feel appreciated.
- **Positive Reactions:** over 60% feel positive about promotional merchandise.
- **Memory Reminders:** over 61% like promotional merchandise as a medium for being reminded about a brand.
- **Incentive To Take Action:** over 50% responded that promotional merchandise provided them with an incentive to take an action.
- **Creating Loyalty:** 58.6% of respondents reported promotional merchandise best suited to invoking loyalty.
- **Grabbing Attention:** over 48% viewed promotional merchandise as an attention-grabbing medium.

The BPMA will update this research in due course. The current results show the power of promotional merchandise and why it is becoming such a strategic marketing tool.

The range of promotional merchandise available is varied and runs to several thousand variations, when colour combinations, packaging and trim options are taken into account. For large volume requirements, it is possible to have custom bespoke promotional merchandise designed and made to order. Often the process takes longer than off-the-shelf plain stock items but result in promotional merchandise that is unique to a specific organization and brand.

The list of available promotional merchandise continues to grow, with new product development spurred on by technology changes both within the printing world, business trends and society itself.

Typical products include:

- Bags: backpacks, carrier, cooler, document, messenger, exhibition, laptop, picnic, shopping and travel bags, phone pouches, tablet sleeves and cases.
- Clothing: corporate work wear, safety and sports wear
- Drinks, flasks and water bottles
- Eco-friendly products made from organic or reclaimed materials
- Electronic gadgets: mobile, power banks, flash drives, US and IT
- Executive desktop high-end gifts and gadgets
- General gadgets: automotive, tool kits, outdoors, leisure and travel
- Glassware: awards, trophies, paperweights, glasses and decanters
- Foods, snacks, confectionery, sweets and chocolates
- Fun: novelties, games, beach, stress relievers and toys
- Health: wearables, sanitizers, medical, cosmetics, dental and beauty
- Homeware: safety, gardening and pet related
- Mats: mouse mats, coasters, counter mats, floor mats and carpets
- Mugs: bone china and earthenware cups and travel mugs
- Writing instruments: pens, pencils, highlighters and stylus pens
- Sports merchandise: cycling, golf, football, tennis and swimming
- Stationery products including calendars, diaries, badges and lanyards
- Umbrellas: walking, sports, telescopic and storm proof

With such a wide range of choice available within the promotional merchandise industry it can be daunting to select the right products for a promotion and to get the most value from them.

Chapter 2 provides more information on the role of promotional merchandise in marketing and *Chapter 3* an overview of the stages of a promotional merchandise project with a useful checklist in *Appendix C*.

2. Strategic Promotional Marketing

2.1 Marketing Tools

Promotional merchandise is a powerful marketing tool that can be used anywhere within a strategic marketing plan.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) defines marketing as “the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably”. This definition is just as applicable to public sector organizations, charities, clubs and societies as it is to SMEs, multi-nationals and FTSE-100 companies. The term ‘profitability’ can mean different things to different organizations. Within business we consider ‘profits’ but within not-for-profit organizations, we may consider membership and take-up as the desired outcome.

Most people associate marketing with advertising and promotions such as coupons. This may be true to a degree but marketing encompasses far more as it is a management process that must be monitored and controlled. Marketers view four elements known as the 4Ps as the cornerstone of their marketing plan:

- **Product:** the product may in fact be a service or product/service combination package and marketers will seek to define a unique selling proposition (USP) and target customer audience, profile, demographics and niche segments.
- **Price:** the value of any product or service is subjective and personal. The price a customer is willing to pay for a product/service package is determined by the perceived value of the item to them. There are various pricing strategies including penetration (low-price to gain early entry into a market) or skimming (high-price to maximize margin).
- **Place:** how do products/services get to market. Really here we are talking about distribution and delivery to the customer. Delivery may be direct or through some form of distribution or resale channel.
- **Promotion:** we do communicate with potential customers, existing clients and other stakeholders in the organization the offer. This is perhaps what most people associate with marketing.

If you ask the general public what marketing is, they will almost certainly say ‘advertising’. However, marketers generally view ‘advertising’ as a form of promotion and just one potential element within what is termed the Marketing Communications Mix:

- Direct mail: postal and emails, e-newsletters and e-shots
- Advertising: TV, radio, print, posters, Pay-Per-Click, website banners,
- Publicity: third party reviews, editorials, articles and press releases,
- Personal Selling: exhibitions, trade shows, conferences and sales visits
- Sales promotions: coupons, free gifts and samples
- Interactive marketing: websites and apps

So just where do promotional gifts fit into the marketing communications mix? The answer is that they span all the elements. Promotional gifts can be used to:

- Increase response rates to direct mails
- Support advertising and boost brand awareness
- Generate interest in a brand and lead to a request for more information
- Boost response rates to advertising and sales promotions

- Assist in the launch of new products and services
- Build brand identify and a positive impression of the organization
- Encourage repeat purchases and positive testimonials

Ultimately, promotional gifts can help to develop long terms links and recurrent marketing for an organization. We can use the Google search engine as an analogy to show just how important promotional gifts are today within marketing. The organic search engine results shown for a specific search keyword or keyword phrase are organized based on a complex ranking algorithm. The more high quality website links and mentions for an organization, the higher it will appear in the search engine results.

Widely distributing strategically chosen promotional gifts can have a similar affect and over a long timescale. Promotional gifts help organizations create links and mentions in the real world of 'bricks and mortar'. The more times an organization's logo is seen and viewed positively, the more likely the client or potential client will recall and want to use them.

2.2 Key Success Factors

To review what makes promotional merchandise so successful as a marketing tool we need to consider that marketing is all about getting the right message, to the right audience at the right time. For a promotional merchandise campaign to be successful we need to ensure:

- **Set Aims and Objectives:** whatever you spend on promotional merchandise has to be accountable. For this you need to define the exact purpose and your aims for their use. If you can set quantifiable objectives this will help you to review and audit the process at a later date.
- **Audience and Product compatibility:** the merchandise chosen should be appropriate to the marketing campaign and desired by the target audience. The branded product has to be something the recipients will want to receive and use and not simply pass on or bin. Ideally we want the merchandise to be seen and where possible envied, by as many people as possible, rather than stored for occasional use.
- **Product Availability and Longevity:** the merchandise has to reach the audience at the right time and neither too long before a particular event or too long after. Imagine the negative impact of advent calendars delivered during the second week of December. The impact build-up would be missed from the end of November onwards. Ideally we want the merchandise to last as long as possible and be in a good condition to promote the brand unless the goods are perishable and date-restricted (e.g. foods).
- **Initial Impact and Marketing Message:** when a promotional gift is received there is a 'moment of truth' an initial reaction. We want to make sure this is positive and also reinforces the wider message(s) of the marketing communications plan.
- **Imprint and Remarketing:** the marketing message imprint must be clear and concise and easily readable. Sometimes less is more in marketing and this is true with promotional merchandise, where imprint sizes can be small. Remarketing is an additional benefit of promotional merchandise where the products are visible to a wider audience. Products can include desktop gifts, calendars and the latest mobile phone gadgets such as power banks or tablet covers. Anytime a piece of merchandise is on display it is remarketing your logo and imprint to a wider audience.
- **Occasional or Ongoing:** the pricing of promotional merchandise is volume related. It is important to order the maximum quantity to get the most from your budget. However, you should avoid unnecessary waste and unused stock. Many strategic users of promotional merchandise carry a general stock of products that can be used for a variety of promotions. This can be topped-up with re-orders as required.

Another way to test promotional merchandise and its suitability for a particular promotional campaign is with the marketing advertising mnemonic known as *AIDA*:

- **Awareness:** will the promotional merchandise attract the recipient's attention and create a positive reaction to the organization's brand.
- **Interest:** does the merchandise and imprint develop their interest?
- **Desire:** will they want to find out more about the company and offer?
- **Action:** does the imprint provide the information necessary for the recipient to find out more information?

Of course the more strategic the marketing campaign and the larger the promotional spend, the more you may want to test their suitability. It is always recommended to do so, even for what are considered low-cost giveaways for example for exhibitions, conferences and seminars. Consider a low-cost key ring or plastic pen, purchased in high quantities for general distribution. The product must still be of a high enough quality; with a good imprint and suitability for the exhibition and target audience if it is to have a positive impact on the organization's brand and marketing.

Lord Leverhulme said that he knew half of his marketing didn't work but didn't know which half. Some organizations use promotional gifts as giveaways and as part of a general wider marketing plan. Others want to more closely monitor their success and for this it is just as important to set objectives for the marketing spend on promotional merchandise and establish either a direct key performance indicator (KPI) or some other proxy measure. This can include for example printing a special code on the merchandise for use to register on a website or monitoring a unique tracking phone number.

Whilst it is unusual, plain unbranded items may also be used within promotional marketing. These are generally accessories to the main branded products. Examples include packaging, cartons, pockets and sleeves used to protect the branded merchandise.

2.3 Technology Trends

Within marketing communications, technology continues to open up new avenues for interactive dialogue in the form of more intuitive websites and mobile applications.

Whilst there will always be mainstay products within the promotional merchandise industry, print technologies are developing at a rapid rate. These can cater for smaller print runs and even single-unit personalisation. 3D printing is also on the horizon. Websites within the industry are becoming more interactive and cross-platform friendly. Logo upload, on-screen visuals and back-office account campaign management portals are becoming more popular. Most trade associations provide enquiry-sourcing facilities to link up end-user buyers and trade suppliers, as does specific portals such as Sourcing City.

Most product development occurs to meet general trends. Eco-friendly products have been around for some time and cater to those organisations who want to add an environmental element to their campaign and/or are concerned about the use of recycled materials (glass, tyres and aluminium) or want their goods developed from organic or sustainably farmed materials. Jute shopping bags are a good example of this and the retail trade looking to reduce plastic bag usage. Special confectionery and chocolate ingredient options are more widely available allowing more opportunities for niche marketing.

The rise of smart-phones and tablet computing has led to the launch of branded covers, phone stands and power banks. The majority of these product developments come from Far East based manufacturers.

3. The Production and Review Process

Chartered promotional merchandise distributors add value to the industry through their knowledge, creativity and project management skills. Once you have chosen the promotional merchandise to use within your marketing campaign, your chosen distributor will organize the necessary artwork file, product manufacture or supply, imprint application and delivery of your merchandise.

Each stage is multi-disciplined and the most successful distributors are those that make this process seamless and deliver your promotional merchandise on time and to budget. In order to enable this the distributor will have a team of professionals and suppliers managed through accredited ISO-certified management processes.

Below we discuss some of the key stages within the promotional merchandise process. *See Appendix C* for a useful checklist that can be used to manage your campaign and provide useful input at planning meetings.

3.1 Artwork

In planning the use of promotional merchandise within a marketing campaign it should be noted that all delivery dates are typically stated from ‘artwork sign-off’. Most professional suppliers and distributors will have their own artwork teams and will not charge for their services, unless the project is time consuming or there are multiple amendments. Their artwork services will include:

- **Virtual visuals:** this is a visual showing how your logo and imprint will look on the promotional merchandise. A ‘mood board’ may be generated showing a range of products with your imprint for a particular campaign theme. Virtual visuals are generally provided free of charge. An alternative to a design team created visual is an on-line 3D rendering service. Here a website visitor can upload their logo and see how it will appear on a chosen promotional product.
- **Artwork file generation and review:** many clients do not have their own design team or access to files to print their promotional leaflets and other marketing tools. The artwork in a promotional supplier or distributor is set-up to provide a file generation service using whatever materials the client can send to them including with compliment slips, letterheads and scanned documents and images. From these the artwork team can lift and redraw the logo and add the necessary text and contact details, within a file suitable for printing onto promotional merchandise. Where clients can send over the right type of file, the artwork team can review it for fit and suitability, and make any necessary amendments.

The higher the quality and layout of the artwork file, the better the imprint will look on your chosen promotional merchandise. The following points are important when reviewing an artwork file:

- **Vector and Raster files:** for promotional merchandise Vector files are required with the text saved as outlines. Vector files have the extension .AI or .EPS or .PDF and are normally generated within Adobe Illustrator, a professional design package for creative advertising, design and print agencies. As the text is saved as outlines the printer does not have to have the font used for the text within their system. A Vector file uses mathematical co-ordinates for each pixel and the file can be expanded or shrunk with no loss of definition or resolution. Raster files are produced within Adobe Photoshop and are not suitable for promotional merchandise printing because they cannot be scaled without a loss of resolution.

Raster files can however be converted to Vector files by skilled technicians either directly using a software package or indirectly via an artwork redraw. Most professional suppliers and distributor will be able to offer this service and can generate artwork from with compliment slips, letterheads and even a website logo.

- **Font selection and Text size:** due to the size available for an imprint, it is best to use easily readable fonts. The most common being Arial or Times Roman. It is always best to adopt a 'less is more' principle but print the text as large as possible within the edge of the imprint area available. If the text is too small it can fill-in during the print process.
- **Colour specification:** printing pricing is defined by the number of colours used. The imprint may require a single colour, two, three or four-colour print. Four-colour printing is also known as full CMYK colour printing with each colour printed defined as percentages of the four primary colours: For example C44%, M100%, Y30%, K9% tells a printer to produce a specific lilac purple. Pantone references may also be used for text, logos and images. Pantone colours use a unique reference such as Pantone 2707U to indicate a colour and finish. In this case a light sky blue, uncoated.

Once an artwork file has been checked a proof is generated showing how the imprint will look on the chosen promotional merchandise. The proof will likely be a black and white PDF file sent to the client for sign-off via fax or email.

Your artwork proof is a final chance to review before the merchandise is printed. If there is an error to be corrected it is important to leave enough time for another proof. Most suppliers and distributors include a caveat on the sign-off form placing all responsibility for any print errors onto the client.

An alternative to an artwork proof is a one-off print sample. This can be expensive, as it requires a print-machine to be set-up for the print that can be expensive in terms of time.

3.2 Origination Charges and Printing Processes

When an artwork file is set-up to print onto a promotional product, printing companies will charge a set-up/origination charge. This is to cover the time and physical screens, dies, molds, templates and embroidery jacquards used to apply an imprint file to a product. There may be multiple originations for each colour used if there are multiple print colours and print runs required or a single origination 'catch-all' charge. Suppliers and distributors will generally hold artwork files for clients up to 1-2 years or longer and offer either reduced or zero origination charges for repeat orders.

A number of 'printing' techniques are available within the promotional merchandise industry and the most common include:

3.2.1 Digital printing: offers a simpler print process than conventional printing and removes the need for filmmaking and plates. Advantages include a short turnaround, consistent print and low volume printing. The origination charge is for the set-up time.

3.2.2 Embroidery: applies an imprint through stitching coloured cottons onto promotional merchandise garments. These can include baseball caps, polo shirts, t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, fleeces and jackets. The print cost is determined by the number of stitches required, number of colours and size of the area to be embroidered. The stitch number is typically from 2,000 to 10,000. Often the imprint uses a negative or reserve colour to ensure that the logo stands out on a corporate colour matched garment. The imprint must be fairly simple for a good application. The origination charge is for a 'jacquard' that is used to weave the colours into the material.

3.2.3 Hot-foil blocking: uses a metal blocking die, mirror etched with a raised imprint. The die is placed in the printer and heated to a high temperature. A jig is used to hold the promotional merchandise. A foil is run between the jig and the product and the imprint applied. The foil is embossed onto the product as per the imprint. Typical foil colours are gold or silver. The origination charge is for the metal blocking.

3.2.4 Laser engraving: suitable for imprint application onto a metal or wooden product. The process uses a computer program to laser cut the imprint into the body of the product. An advantage of this is that the imprint will be permanent and complex designs can be engraved. The origination charge is for the laser program set-up.

3.2.5 Lithograph (or Off-set Litho) printing: the most common high volume full colour printing technique in the publishing industry. In the promotional merchandise industry, the imprint is burned onto a plate and then transferred from the plate to a rubber blanket and then to the printing surface. The Litho process is based on the repulsion of oil and water. The imprint is applied from inked rollers, while the non-printed areas attract a film of water, keeping the non-printing areas free of ink. The origination charge is for the plate(s).

3.2.6 Pad printing: also known as tampo printing. Applies an ink colour via raised image on a metal or rubber plate. The process uses a jig into which the products are placed to ensure the exact print position is maintained on each product inserted. The use of a jig also allows more than one colour to be applied using separate pads for the position. Suitable for a variety of shapes and surfaces. The origination charge is for the pad(s).

3.2.7 Screen-printing: uses a stencil or silkscreen to apply an imprint and is one of the most common printing techniques in the industry. The origination charge applies to the total number of screens. These allow ink to flow through onto the product to build-up the imprint, which solidifies under a light. A popular process for plastic and metal materials: pen barrels, power banks and business card cases. If the imprint text is too small, fill in can occur as the ink is applied. The origination charge is for the screen(s).

3.2.8 Transfer printing: uses heat to apply an imprint from a thermal paper onto a product garment. The process is popular with clubs and societies for clothing but care has to be taken to look after the merchandise long term in terms of cleaning processes. The origination charge is for the transfer(s).

Some promotional products have more than one imprint application option. It is always best practice to consider product, imprint and printing technique when selecting the final merchandise to use. When mixtures of products are chosen for a campaign, differences can appear in the final print when one product type is compared to another. This is typically due to the difference surfaces that the imprint has been applied to and their finish.

3.3 Fulfillment

The key to on-time delivery is stock availability, imprint capacity and the availability of printer-ready artwork. By imprint capacity we also refer to any application including ink printing, embroidery, laser engraving etc. Once signed off, the imprint file is passed to production for scheduling. Some printers have small print machines and dedicate a single run to a machine. Others set-up a print with one print run encompassing a number of different clients. This is common with volume full-colour process printed items and helps to lower unit costs. The imprint may be directly onto the promotional merchandise or a secondary label requiring another process, either automatic or manual to apply it to the product.

3.4 Packaging

Promotional products by their nature are supplied in volume. It is important to understand how they are packaged as this will have a bearing on how they are to be distributed.

The primary role of packaging is to protect a product in storage and transit. For promotional merchandise this means not just protection from breakages but other forms of damage including rubbing, chaffing, damp, moisture and temperature.

Promotional products tend to be bulk packed but with a level of protection that is defined by their fragility and imprint method. Promotional pens tend to be bulk packed in large polythene bags containing say 150 pieces. These bags are then placed in a box for shipment.

The imprint is generally screen-printed and it is highly unlikely that the pens will suffer wear in transit. It is common for gadgets such as power banks and memory sticks to be individually packed into a polythene bag with a cardboard outer. These are then put into a larger box for distribution to a client. Electronic items may also be packed with a small hygroscopic bag of crystals to protect them from moisture.

More fragile items such as bone china or ceramic/earthenware mugs may also have moulded polystyrene fitments to protect them. For large weights the packaging may be shrink-wrapped to a pallet and this in itself will require off-loading facilities at the final point of delivery.

Packaging can also have a secondary role: reinforcing a brand and the promotional campaign itself. Here the packaging may be printed and personalised to add another dimension of expectancy for the recipient. This is common with point-of-sale items. A classic example would be promotional mice and mouse mats packaged together in a sealed clear cover with a printed cardboard insert.

Outer packaging in the form of envelopes and mailers can also be personalised with a logo and marketing message. Even the colour of the packaging can affect the overall impression; brown envelopes tend to infer bills and invoices, where as white can somehow seem more prestigious and professional.

3.5 Delivery

The penultimate stage of the process is distribution. Just how do you intend to get the promotional merchandise to your clients. This may be done directly via exhibitions and trade shows, sales teams or through third-party carriers and mailing houses.

The delivery may involve collation with other promotional materials and need labour to put the packages together. Products may be bulky, perishable or high value. All this has to be taken into account of and it is important to ensure that there is a clear set of briefing, storage and distribution instructions.

Timing is just as critical. For a consumer-orientated campaign you may want the merchandise to arrive at a weekend. For a work-related campaign a Tuesday or Wednesday may be preferable. Within commerce, research shows that Monday and Friday campaigns produce the least impact.

Other important factors to consider include public holidays, potential bad news days, school holidays and religious festivals.

3.6 Project Review and Audit

It is just as important to review your promotional merchandise campaign and seek feedback. If any part of the process failed to live up to expectations it should be audited and a corrective action put in place.

It is important to assess the impact of the campaign on your marketing and against the initial aims and objectives of the campaign.

Review against any KPIs you set earlier in the campaign and establish a return on investment (ROI) figure and that you can track against future campaigns.

Appendix A - Industry Links

Advertising Specialties Institute (ASI)

www.asicentral.com/

British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA)

www.bpma.co.uk

Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)

www.cim.co.uk

PROMOTA - the promotional merchandise trade association

www.promota.co.uk

Promotional Products Association International (PPAI)

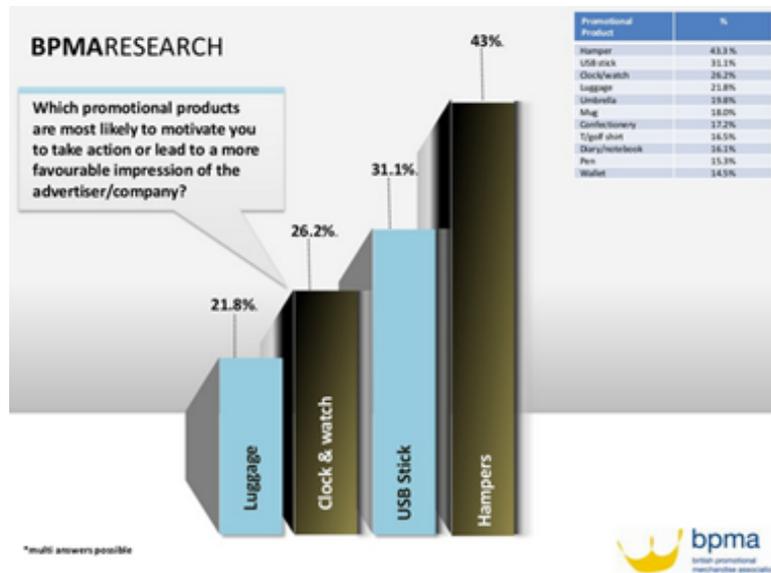
www.ppai.org

Sourcing City

www.sourcingcity.co.uk

Appendix B – BPMA Market Research

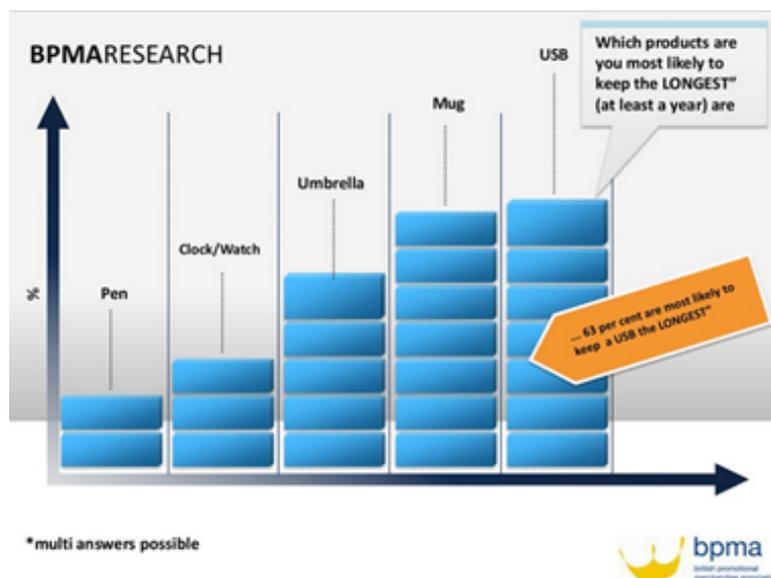
A1. Products That Motivate You



Question: which promotional products are most likely to motivate you to take action or lead to a more favourable impression of the advertiser/company?

Items	Percentage
Hampers	43.0%
USB Flash drives/Memory Sticks	31.1%
Clocks and Watches	26.2%
Luggage	21.8%

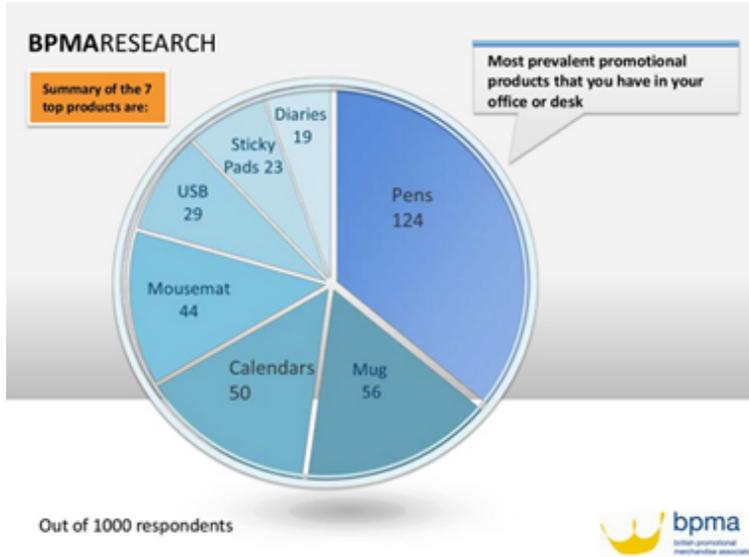
A2. Products You Keep



Question: which products are you most likely to keep the longest (at least 1 year)?

Position	Items
1	USB 63%
2	Mugs
3	Umbrellas
4	Clocks/Watches
5	Pens

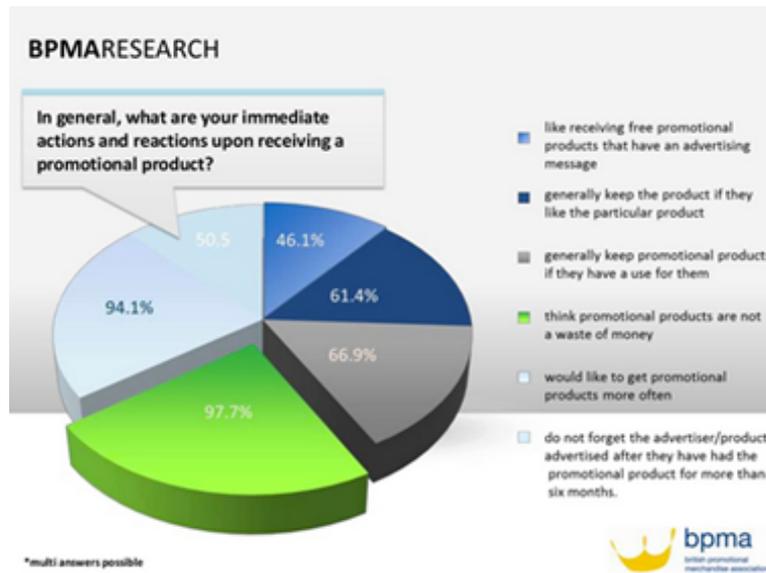
A3. Products To Put On Your Desk



Question: what are the most prevalent products that you have on you desktop? Out of 1000 respondents there was quite a widespread response?

Position	Items	No
1	Pens	124
2	Mugs	56
3	Calendars	50
4	Mouse mats	44
5	USB	29
6	Sticky Pads	23
7	Diaries	19

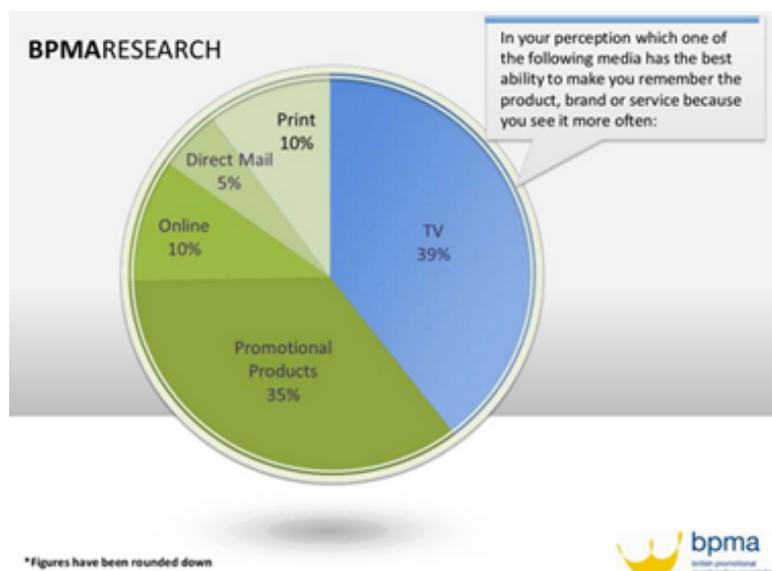
A4. Initial Reactions



Question: what are your immediate actions and reactions upon receiving a promotional product?

%	Note
46.1%	like receiving promotional products that have an advertising message
61.4%	generally keep the product if they like the particular product
66.9%	generally keep promotional products if they have a use for them
97.7%	think promotional products are not a waste of money
94.1%	would like to get promotional products more often
50.5%	do not forget the advertiser or product advertised after they have had the promotional product for more than six months

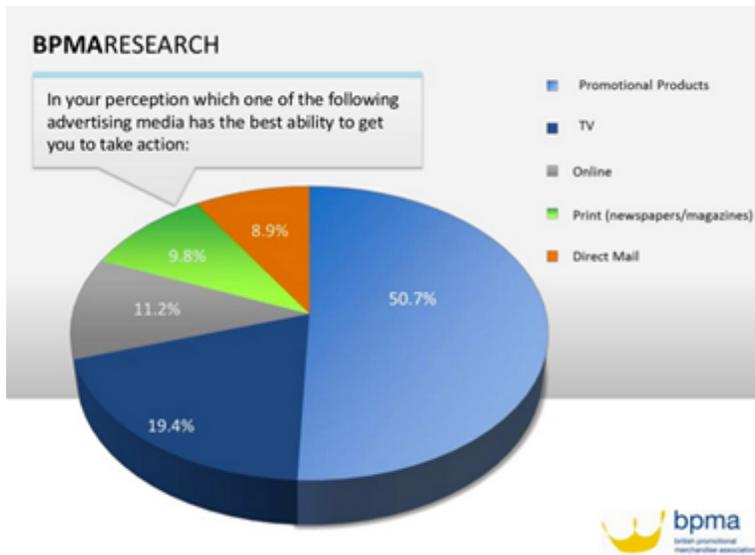
A5. Media Analysis



Question: in your perception which one of the following media has the best ability to make you remember the product, brand or service because you saw it more often?

%	Media Channel
39%	TV advertising
35%	Promotional products
10%	Online advertising
10%	Print advertising
5%	Direct mail

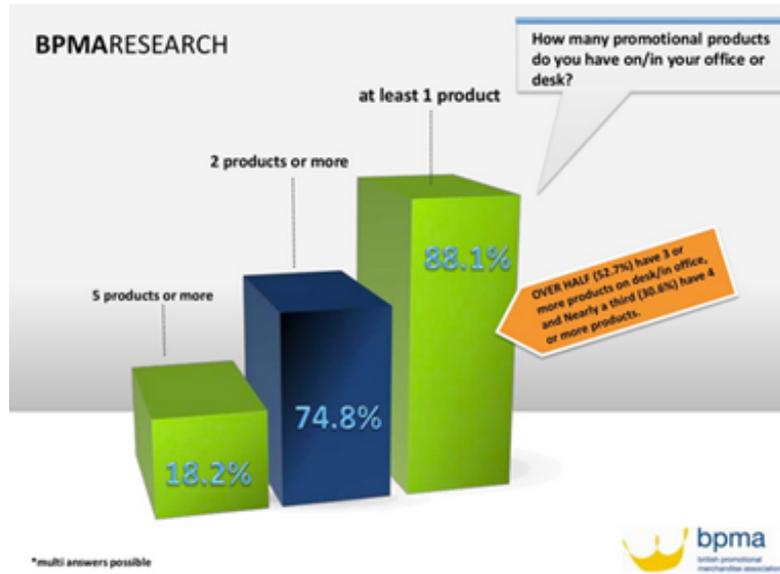
A6. Media Actions



Question: in your perception, which of the following advertising media has the best ability to get you to take action?

%	Media Channel
50.7%	Promotional Products
19.4%	TV advertising
11.2%	Online advertising
9.8%	Print advertising
8.9%	Direct mail

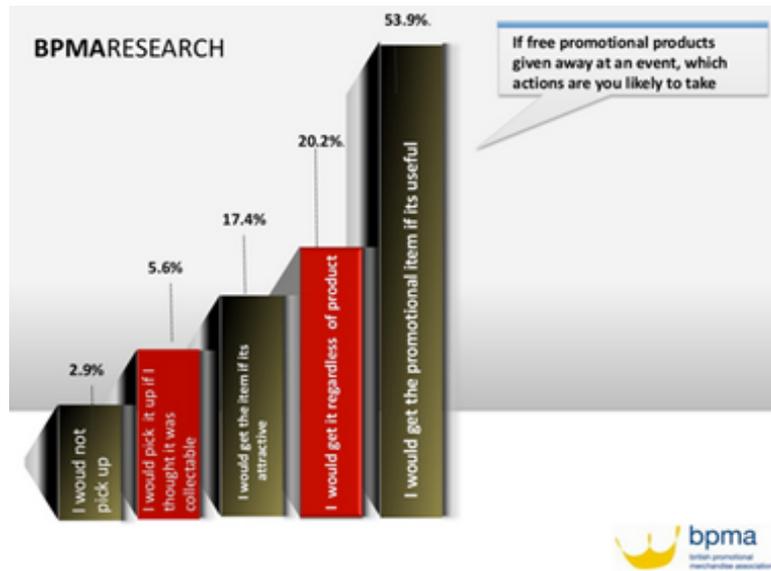
A7. Office Product Numbers



Question: how many promotional products do you have on/in your office or desk?

%	Products
88.1%	At least 1
74.8%	2 or more
18.2%	5 or more

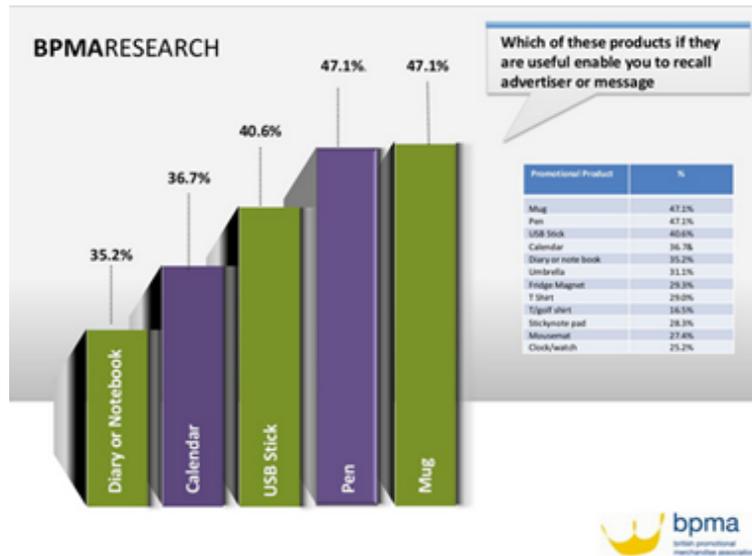
A8. Free Products



Question: if free promotional products are given away at an event which are you most likely to take

%	Products
53.9%	I would take the promotional product if it was useful
20.2%	I would get it regardless of it was useful
17.4%	I would get the item if it was attractive
5.6%	I would pick it up if I thought is was collectable
2.9%	I would not pick it up

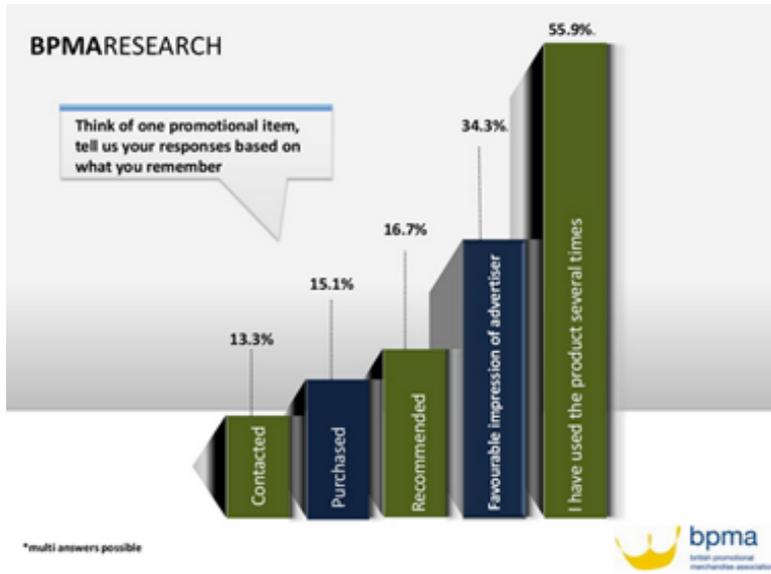
A9. Message Recall



Question: which of these products if they are useful enable you to recall and advertiser or message?

%	Products
47.1%	Mugs
47.1%	Pens
40.6%	USB Flash Drives
36.7%	Calendars
35.2%	Diaries or Notebooks

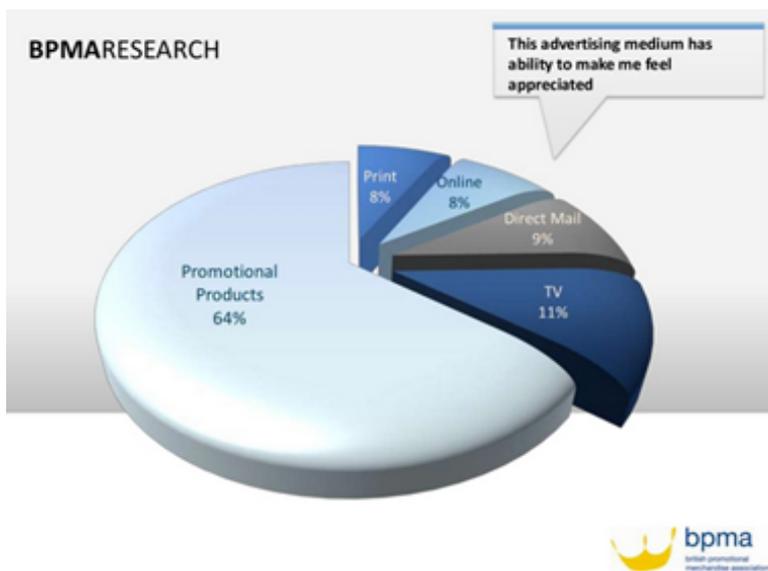
A10. Promotional Response



Question: think of one promotional item and tell us your responses based on what you remember.

%	Products
55.9%	Used the product several times
34.3%	Favorable impression of advertiser
16.7%	Recommended
15.1%	Purchased
13.3%	Contacted

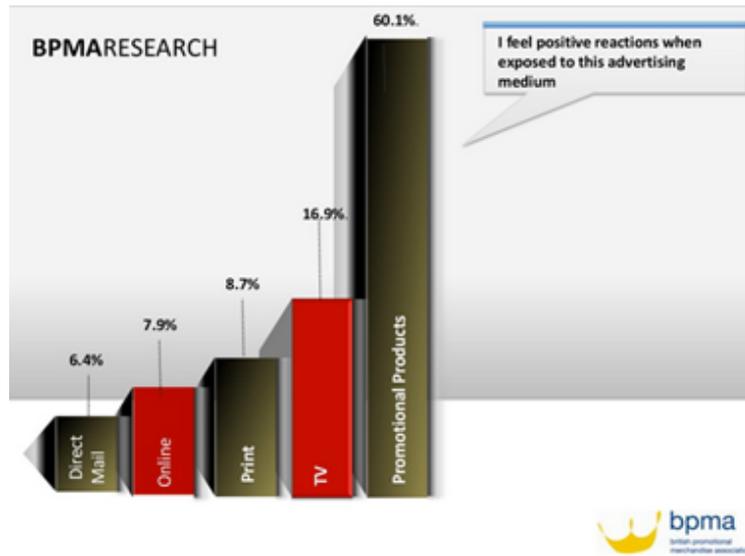
A11. Advertising Medium and Appreciation.



Question: which advertising medium has the ability to make me feel appreciated?

%	Products
64%	Promotional Merchandise
11%	TV
9%	Direct Mail
8%	Online
8%	Print

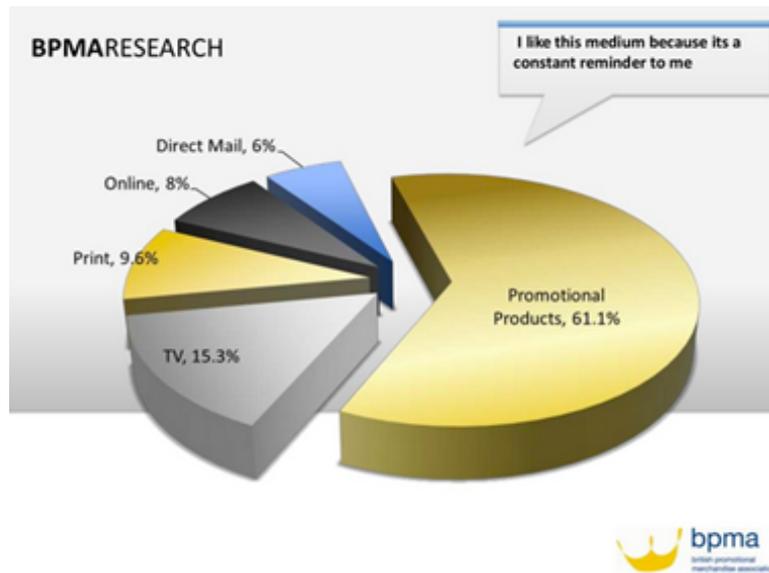
A12. Positive Reactions



Question: I feel positive when exposed to this advertising medium.

%	Products
60.1%	Promotional Products
16.9%	TV
8.7%	Print
7.9%	Online
6.4%	Direct Mail

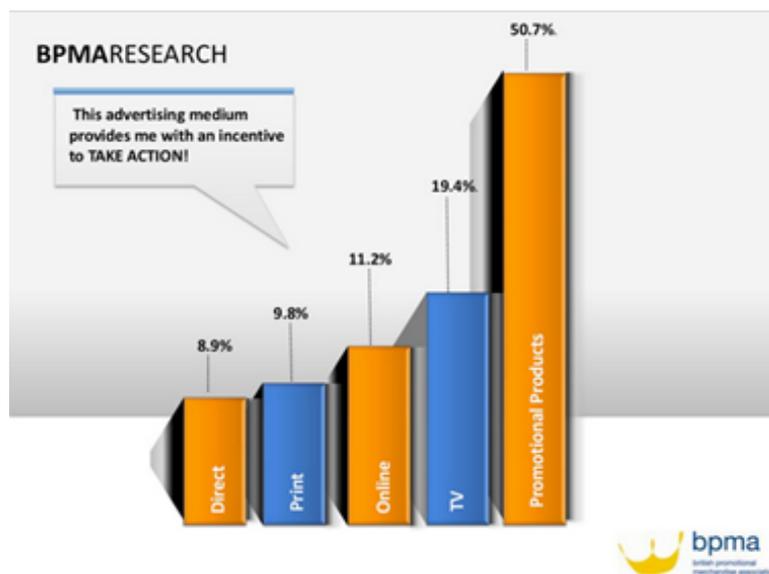
A13. Memory Reminders



Question: I like this medium because it is a constant reminder to me.

%	Products
61.1%	Promotional Products
15.3%	TV
9.6%	Print
8%	Online
6%	Direct Mail

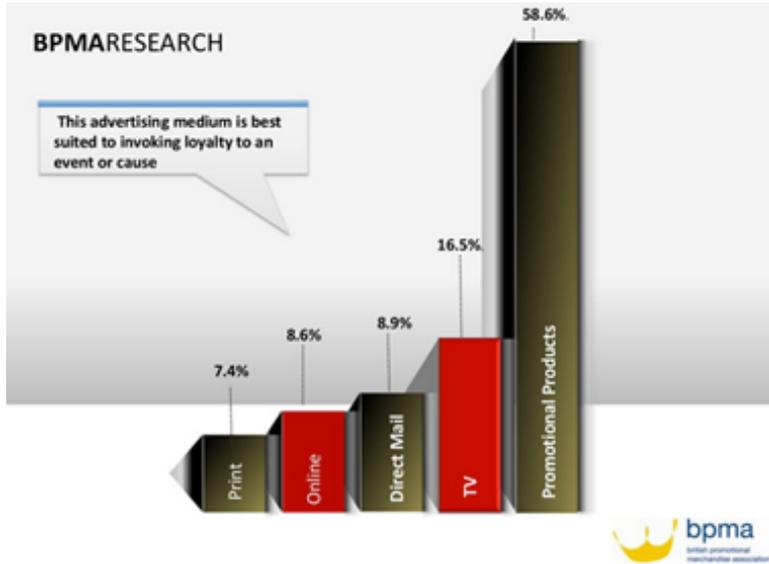
A14. Incentive To Take Action



Question: this advertising medium provides me with an incentive to take an action.

%	Products
50.7%	Promotional Products
19.4%	TV
11.2%	Print
9.8%	Online
8.9%	Direct Mail

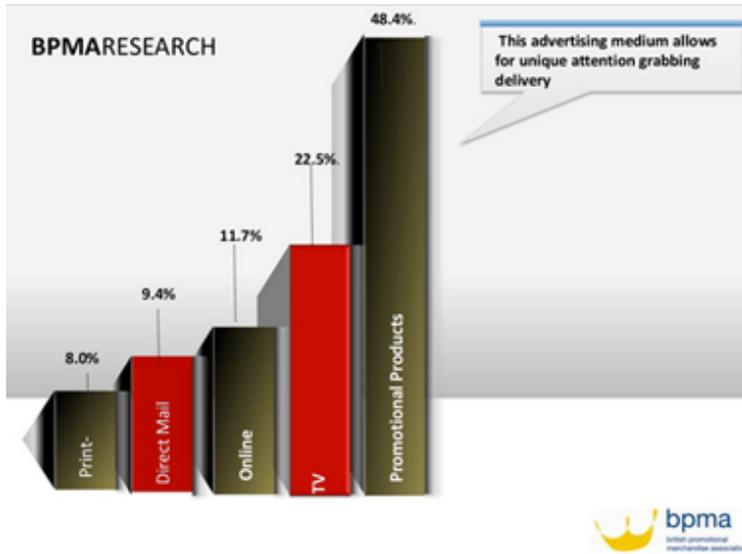
A15. Creating Loyalty



Question: which advertising medium is best suited to invoking loyalty to an event or cause?

%	Products
58.6%	Promotional Products
16.5%	TV
8.9%	Direct Mail
8.6%	Online
7.4%	Print

A16. Grabbing Attention



Question: which advertising medium allows for unique attention grabbing delivery?

%	Products
48.4%	Promotional Products
22.5%	TV
11.7%	Online
9.4%	Direct Mail
8.0%	Print

Appendix C – Promotional Merchandise Project Checklist

The following checklist may assist you with your project and covers the key areas to be considered.

Item	Project Task	Project Stage	By Whom	By Date	Completed
1	Identify areas of the marketing communications mix where promotional merchandise can be effective, efficient and cost-effective.	Planning	-	-	N
2	Identify key dates in the planning process, working back from at least 2-3 days before delivery is required for key events.	Planning	-	-	N
3	Set a promotional merchandise budget and identify the quantity of items required.	Planning	-	-	N
4	Set aims, quantified objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) where possible for the promotional merchandise.	Planning	-	-	N
5	Identify marketing message and potential content for imprint.	Planning	-	-	N
6	Select suitable promotional products including colour combinations, print position options, imprint sizes, trim options, printing techniques, optional extras, storage considerations, shelf life, working life and packaging.	Planning	-	-	N
7	Obtain competitive quotations and draw-up a short-list of potential suppliers. Review testimonials, background and industry reputation.	Planning	-	-	N
8	Test product selection against campaign key success factors, target audience and compatibility, and AIDA model.	Planning	-	-	N
9	Prepare an artwork file for your imprint either with your advertising or creative team or with a distributor's artwork team.	Planning	-	-	N
10	Request virtual visuals, mood boards and/or pre-production one-offs.	Planning	-	-	N
11	Review imprint (logo and text) for legibility within the imprint area. Check other product specifications including accessories included, material handling requirements, cleaning instructions and expected working life.	Planning	-	-	N
12	Review logistics including: stock location, delivery lead times, contingency factors, packaging and distribution instructions.	Planning	-	-	N
13	Review and select delivery options including generating distribution instructions. For corporate work wear consider adding a uniform section to the Employee Handbook.	Planning	-	-	N
14	Place order for promotional merchandise.	Ordering	-	-	N
15	Review order acknowledgement and expected lead-time.	Ordering	-	-	N
16	Review and sign-off artwork proof or sign-off one off print run if required and agree delivery date.	Ordering	-	-	N
17	Receive the goods directly or request a selection of products to review if third-party fulfillment services are used.	Delivery	-	-	N
18	Distribute to campaign audience.	Delivery	-	-	N
19	Monitor and collect data to compare against campaign aims, objectives and KPIs.	Delivery	-	-	N
20	Campaign review and audit. Calculate return on investment (ROI) and rate the promotional merchandise campaign on a suitable scale.	Review	-	-	N

At the end of the process set a stock review and re-order date.

Appendix D – About Redbows

Redbows Ltd is a UK-based advertising gifts distributor and promotional marketing company. The company was started in 2004 by Dawn Koffler, its owner and Managing Director and is a BPMA Charter Distributor. Redbows operates certified quality and environmental management systems to ISO9001 and ISO14001.

The company provides a range of promotional marketing services including in-house design and artwork, branding and promotional merchandise project management. The company is a leading light within the promotional marketing industry, differentiating itself through customer service, innovative products and investments in technologies that add value for clients. Redbows products are manufactured in the UK, Europe and Far East and range from tradeshow giveaways to high-end premium promotional gifts. The company boasts an impressive client base including organisations ranging from SMEs, multi-national and FTSE-100 companies to clubs, charities and public sector organisations such as local government, health boards, hospitals, schools, colleges and universities.

Handbook Updates

If you have a suggestion for improving this handbook including additional contact please contact Dawn Koffler. For notice of updates please join our mailing list.

Contact details

Dawn Koffler, Managing Director – Redbows Ltd

Email dawn@redbows.co.uk

Telephone 0800 158 3080

Websites: www.Redbows.co.uk

Social Media

Follow Redbows on social media with the following accounts:

Platform	Account Name	URL
Twitter	@redbows	https://twitter.com/redbows
Facebook	/redbows	https://www.facebook.com/redbows
LinkedIn	/redbows-promotional-gifts	https://www.linkedin.com/company/redbows-promotional-gifts/
Pinterest	/redbowsltd	https://uk.pinterest.com/redbowsltd/

What our customers think...

"I was extremely pleased with the service I received from Redbows. We had a very tight deadline and they pulled out all the stops to deliver on time. Quality of merchandise was excellent too."
Debbie Harrop

"Customer services where excellent, I found them to be helpful, friendly and efficient. Ordering process was quick and easy and the overall experience was hassle free, simple and pleasant. Well done Redbows!"
Jim Sharpe

"All good with the Mint Tins and the customer is very happy. Thank you for everything!"
Recognition Express

"Super speed service, totally professional, excellent prices and SO helpful ...nothing was too much!"
Diane Simpson

"Just wanted to say thank you for pulling out the stops to get the badges delivered to the venue for us in time for our event on Thursday. They were sitting there waiting for me at reception when I arrived and went down really well with the attendees."
Sunrise Medical

"Just to let you know that we are really happy with the Easter Eggs – they look great!"
TVGuide.co.uk

"Very happy indeed and sincere thanks for your "after sales" service."
Sandhurst Town Council



Tel: 0800 158 3080
sales@redbows.co.uk
www.redbows.co.uk

