



**Make Your Brand Work  
Smarter, Not Harder With**

# PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS





## PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS: Make Your Brand Work Smarter, Not Harder to Reach More Customers

Coming up with a product or service your audience will respond to is important. But having a strong brand identity around that product or service will reinforce not just what you're selling, but who you are in a crowded, competitive marketplace.

One of the biggest challenges for businesses is making lasting, meaningful impressions on customers that ultimately lead to conversations and conversions. Establishing and reinforcing a unique brand identity early in the customer journey – one that is visceral and differentiated enough to set a business apart from the competition – is crucial to ongoing success. To this end, promotional products are a great way to drum up enthusiasm for your brand.

With such a heavy emphasis on digital marketing, it's natural to question the relevance of promotional products. Despite this digital push, promotional goods are still a valuable tool for building brand awareness and reaching more customers. Overwhelmingly, most consumers, in fact, regardless of age and other demographics, prefer promotional products over any other form of advertising.<sup>1</sup>

Promotional products are items branded with your logo, tagline or slogan to promote your brand or company. They can be mailed or gifted to customers or passed out at tradeshows and other company events. What's nice about these types of giveaways is they tend to create a lasting, rather than fleeting impression of a company, often rising to the level of a keepsake or something to remember a company by long after that initial connection.

Further, they are a great way to establish and maintain brand consistency and convey a message of quality in their execution.

### Marketing with Swagger

Chances are you have some promotional items or swag at home, including your favorite travel mug or weekend tee. According to the American Marketing Association, over half of all adults use at least one promotional product and among those that do, 85 percent will eventually do business with the company advertised on that product.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there are many compelling reasons beyond the immediate giveaway that make promotional swag the gift that keeps on giving:

- Most people love the idea of free stuff, and are compelled to take it from almost any business or organization.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**46% OF CONSUMERS** would feel more favorable about the advertiser who gave them a promo product if it was Environmentally Friendly.



Source:  
2023 Ad Impressions Study

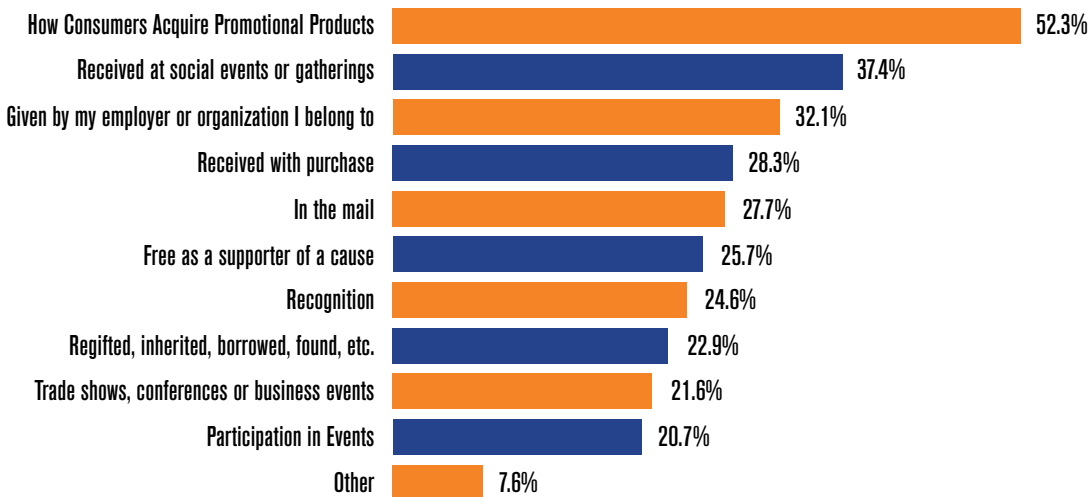
- Promotional items make companies more approachable at trade shows and events. They are great way to introduce and help people remember your company and your brand.
- Mailing gifts to prospective customers can be more powerful than the common business card or cold call, enabling them to engage with your brand on their terms.
- Unlike fleeting digital interactions, useful promotional products are physical possessions that can live on in various contexts, from office to home.
- Passing out swag can serve as an ongoing form of advertising, depending on the user and way to create constant churn around your brand.
- Promotional goods, like branded apparel, present numerous opportunities to easily identify and connect with people based on personal preferences, social interests and causes.

Not everyone is adept at selling products or services. One of the most compelling benefits of including promotional items as part of any go-to marketing campaign strategy is that they cut through the small talk and handshakes to sell themselves and your brand – often without anyone having to say a word.

### Follow the Stats

If recent statistics on the subject tell us anything, it's that consumers continue to have an appetite for giveaways. Approximately 78 percent of consumers enjoy receiving free stuff from the companies and brands they love and nearly 73 percent of them want to receive promo products more often. It's not surprising then that the global promotional products market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.17 percent during the period from 2020 to 2026.<sup>4</sup>

### HOW CONSUMERS ACQUIRE PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS



Post-pandemic, the ways in which customers get their swag has undergone a huge shift as most businesses have resumed in-person operations. As shown in the figure above, more than half, or 52.3 percent of consumers picked up branded products that were free to use or take home as a patron of an establishment – a big increase from the 16 percent who had done so in 2021.<sup>3</sup>

Further, consumer engagement with giveaways is also up – from 24 percent a few years ago, to 60 percent now. And more than half (approximately 52 percent) say their initial response to a promotional item is to Google or look up the website of the company that gave them the branded merchandise.<sup>3</sup>

## Give Customers Something They Can Use

The most common promotional items are often the most useful. While this list covers more familiar promotional items, it's not exhaustive. There are many logo-friendly options out there. Company logos can be easily applied to a variety of items that are suitable for any budget and occasion.

- **Awards and recognition items**, whether they are being awarded for business, academic, or athletic achievements, can be presented as engraved plaques, postcards or corporate gifts.
- **Printed bags and totes** with prominently displayed logos are great giveaways for tradeshow, conventions and company meetings and are available in many styles, from messenger to travel bags.
- **Computer accessories** to meet any users wants and needs, including custom USBs, mouse/mouse pads and custom-printed bags for both laptops and tablets put promotional messaging at a customer's fingertips.
- **Desk items** including custom logo pens, desk calendars, calculators and name badges help keep brands top-of-mind long after they have been given out and are practical, useful and helpful to customers.
- **Health and safety products**, such as sunscreen, hand sanitizer, travel flashlights and vehicle escape tools are perfect for the office or company outings and demonstrate that a company places value on personal safety.
- **Mugs and drinkware**, whether it be a glass, mug, water bottle or travel coffee cup that can be used at home, at work or during the morning commute can often become permanent fixtures.
- **Apparel** is a popular, affordable, fun way to get a brand message across, be it on a tee, polo, hoodie, sweater or rain jacket complemented with an umbrella.

## DID YOU KNOW?

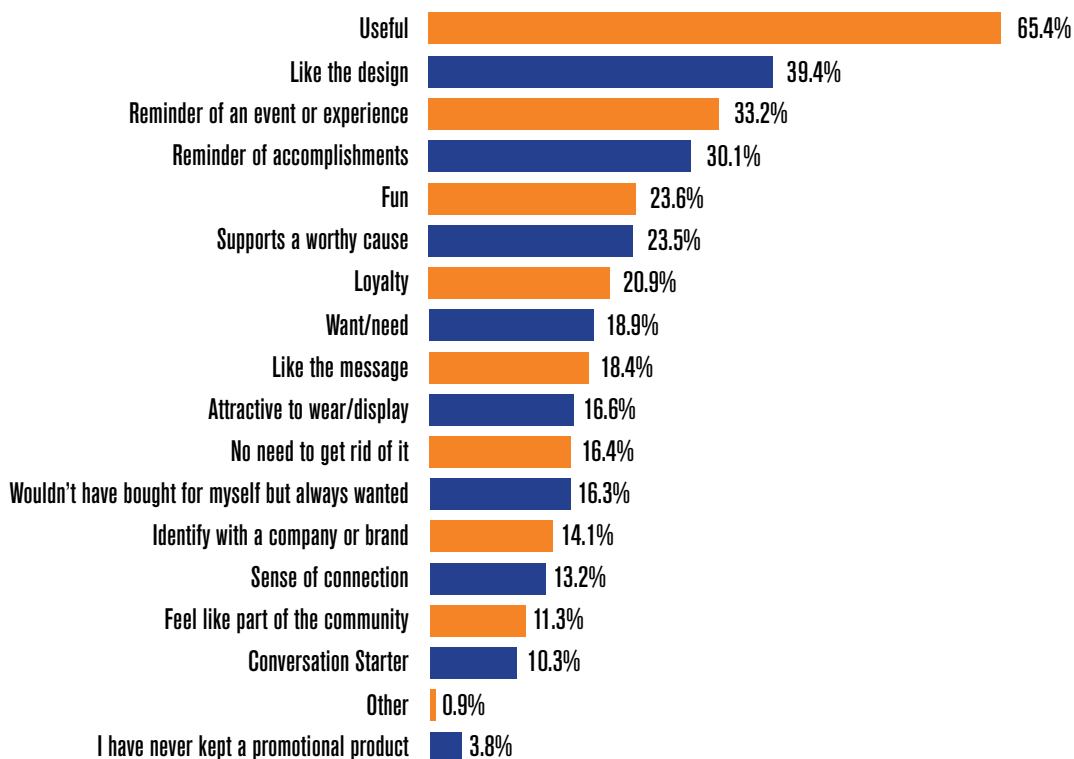
Promotional products  
**GENERATE**  
**500%**  
more customer referrals than other forms of advertising?



Source:  
<https://gitnux.org/promotional-product-industry-statistics/>

What makes any item a great choice for targeted marketing campaigns is rooted in its appeal. In the figure below, 65.4 percent of consumers kept promotional products they have received from companies they know based on their usefulness.<sup>3</sup>

### REASONS CONSUMERS HAVE KEPT A PROMOTIONAL PRODUCT



#### DID YOU KNOW?

**61% OF CONSUMERS** would keep and wear promo outerwear for 2 years or longer!



Source:  
2023 Ad Impressions Study

## Reinforce Your Value Through the Power of Connection

Establishing a marketing plan that includes promotional products involves more than simply dusting off that box of branded tees and pens sitting in storage. While it's true that these are among the most common (and most effective) promotional items, they may give you limited reach, depending on customer demographics.

To successfully build brand awareness through promotional items, whatever you choose to gift should be something your audience will actually use. Regional differences can have a significant bearing on the effectiveness of a given promotional product. For instance, recent research reveals the top giveaway in Maine is a T-shirt, but in Mississippi it's pens, which are prioritized over outerwear, polos and T-shirts respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Above all else, you need to understand your audience to connect with them. The most memorable gifts are those that make lasting impressions. With your audience in mind, organizing useful or fun items around themes also makes for some thoughtful customer care packages.

Want to make a lasting impression on your audience? The graphic below shows how and how many, depending on what promo items you choose:



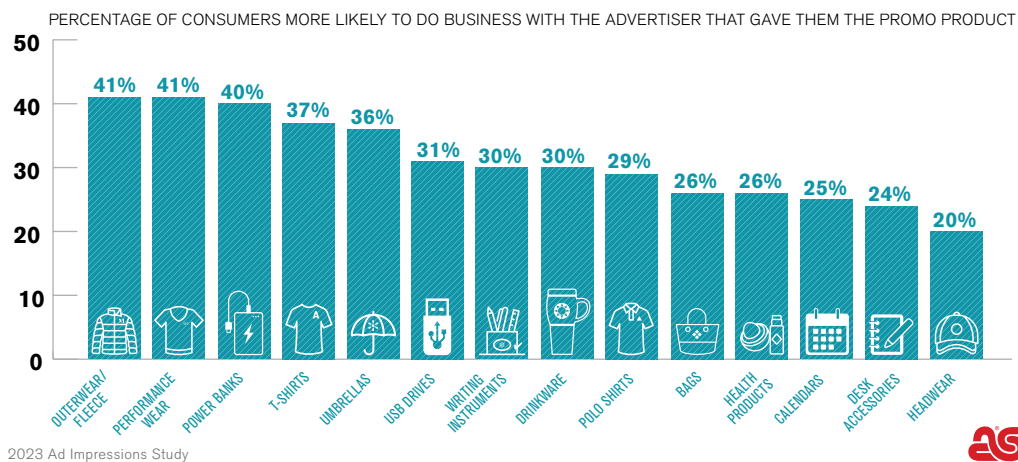
Some businesses, for example, might choose to send a new employee a work-from-home themed package to meet their unique challenges that include extra-long phone charging cables, mouse pads, or stress balls, for example. Others might be compelled to give out products that relate to what they do. For example, to position themselves as industry experts, a construction company might give out branded tools.

Finally, appeal to your audience by recognizing what matters to them. Often consumers seek out and attempt to connect with quality products and services. They also like to align with companies that share the same values. Today, for example, 46 percent of consumers have a more favorable impression of advertisers if their promotional items are environmentally friendly.<sup>1</sup> So, any tie-ins to corporate responsibility in the execution of a quality promotional item speaks volumes to potential customers.

## Make a Lasting Impression

Above all else, if impressions are important to you, promotional items have the power not only to generate an immediate, actionable response – they are strong brand and relationship building tools. Quality, usefulness and presentation are important aspects of a giveaway with the power to influence your audience.

## Promo Products influence behavior and the likelihood of consumers to do **business** with the **advertiser**.



Like your product or service, giveaways don't always sell themselves, but must be presented in the context of who your audience is and what you are trying to achieve to reach them. Promotional items generally work well as part of a branded campaign strategy involving print and direct mail to raise market awareness about your mission and your brand.

For example, handing out branded totes with more giveaways and a branded business flyer or brochure inside helps your audience connect with your company and what you do. And for those hot prospects you are least likely to encounter, sending a direct mail piece with a promotional item enables you to reach a specific demographic in a specific geographic area in a more thoughtful, personal way.

Today, the experience of getting a handwritten thank you note really resonates with people. Perhaps that's why direct mail response rates are twice as high as digital ads. Consumers, regardless of age and other demographics, are still most comfortable receiving personalized advertising experiences and rely on print for making smart purchasing decisions.<sup>5</sup>

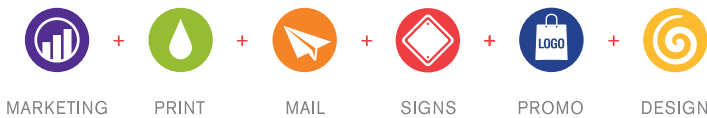
Some companies have further personalized these types of campaigns by sending a postcard, flyer or letter first explaining their business and gives their audience the opportunity to select from a variety of available giveaways online, or by mail. These types of promotional tactics are a way for you to extend the relationship further, while getting branded merchandise into the hands of customers most interested in engaging with your brand.

## Conclusion

Everyone loves free stuff. Taking the time to present your business in the context of a quality item that's helpful to your audience can mean the difference between making seconds-long digital connections, or developing ongoing business relationships. That's because audiences, despite varying demographics, resoundingly prefer giveaways to any other form of advertising. Employing a thoughtful, targeted strategy that incorporates direct mail, including letters, flyers and other print materials with your merchandise can make a lasting impression that wins both converts and customers for a lifetime.



**Ready to start taking advantage of all that Promotional Products have to offer? Contact Allegra to get started!**



### SOURCES:

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2. *Why Should You Use Promotional Products?* <https://www.ama.org/marketing-news/why-should-you-use-promotional-products/>
3. *Hungry for Promo*, <https://media.ppai.org/ppai-magazine/hungry-for-promo/>
4. *Promotional Product Industry Statistics, December 16, 2023*. <https://gitnux.org/promotional-product-industry-statistics/>
5. *Does Direct Mail Still Work? 40 Direct Mail Statistics to Convince You that it Does, 2023 Direct Mail ROI Study*, <https://www.sequeldm.com/direct-mail-statistics-prove-mail-still-works/>