

Four Things to Consider Before Purchasing Promotional Products

By Eric Windholz

Promotional products offer a great way to brand your business logo and create repeated exposure and awareness at a reasonable cost. Whether you're a start-up business or a large company, promotional products can be an effective marketing tool, if done the right way. By following these four basic steps, promotional products can help make your marketing campaign a success.

1. **Establish an agenda or purpose:** Is your product intended specifically for a special event or trade show? Perhaps you want to show appreciation at your company-wide barbeque or company awards banquet? Maybe you like to purchase client-appreciation gifts for your most valued customers for the holidays or at the end of the fiscal year?
2. **Plan ahead:** This may be the most important element to consider. Although some items can be produced and in your hands within several days, it's best to plan out a minimum of two weeks before you need the items. With some products, such as apparel, you may need to factor in additional lead-time. There are details to consider, such as low quality artwork, the proofing process, and production timeline, which can lead to pressing deadline issues. Then, there's the cost of delivery which, depending on the product, can be expensive, especially for overnight shipping. If at all possible, it's best and most cost-effective to build in a few additional days from when you actually need your product. This will avoid the aggravation of stress and save you money in the long run.
3. **Know your budget range:** When I assist some clients, some have a budget in mind, but they may not be aware of all the costs involved in purchasing promotional products. If my customer is interested in one particular item but not sure about what to choose, I like to provide them with three options and three different price points. In addition, it's important to present each option and the benefits of each item so that the customer is informed. Some other costs involved include set-up costs for company logos (which is usually a one-time expense), shipping, and of course taxes. It's important to understand all of these factors during the selection process so, as a client, be sure to ask questions.
4. **What item(s) is right for your marketing campaign?** There are literally thousands of promotional items to choose from and many suppliers who manufacture promotional items. There are more traditional items such as hats, apparel, bags, and pens. On the other hand, today there are more high-tech options for your smart phone, tablet, or home and office. The most effective promotional items, especially for a trade show, connect to or enforce your main marketing messages. It's important to lean on your promotional products provider to lead and guide you in the right direction.

There are many choices for branding and marketing available. As companies look more toward increased return on their ROI, promotional products can be an effective, fun, and creative approach to getting your company's name out there. Based on these four elements, it's also important to choose an item that is useful to the end user and ideally an item that they will use over and over again. Hopefully, this creates a winning combination with logo branding exposure for your business and a memorable product for your customer.

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