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While saving the planet!

How to Use Premiums to Promote Your Business

Imprinting promotional items, also known as premiums, is a great way to promote your business. You can put your name and logo on hundreds if not thousands of items – t-shirts, pens, mugs, key chains, puzzles, first aid kits, water bottles and more. Hand them out to people; they'll have something tangible that will remind them about your business every time they use it.

But if your idea of a premium is slapping a logo on an item, then you're missing a great marketing opportunity. A little promotional planning can go a long ways towards getting your promotional money's worth. Here are some tips to help you do this:

- Who will get the premiums? Are they potential customers, current customers, past customers, employees, trade show attendees or someone else? Knowing who will be getting the premiums allows you to customize each message for that specific audience.
- What is the premium going to be used for? A thank you gift for an employee is an entirely different message than an enticement for a potential client to give you business.
- What result are you looking for when you hand out this premium? Do you want a past customer to pick up the phone and call you for another job? Do you want a trade show attendee to remember meeting you? Keep in mind the result you want when crafting the message.
- If the premium is going to be used with other supporting material (for instance, as part of a direct mail package), then will you hand potential clients a brochure and promotional item at the same time? Make sure the printed materials and premium work together as a package – it will make the message so much stronger.



- Think about the lifespan of your promotion. Will it get used more than once? Can it have a double life (like using seed paper or tags that will remind us of you later when the message is planted and blooms)? How will people dispose of or “recycle” your promotion at the end of its intended life? Here's something to think about, for example sealed plastic items with batteries in them shouldn't end up in the local land-fill, but do. Whatever you choose, make sure it reinforces your branding message and is useful to your clients. A great first step is to think about your company values – is there a promotional piece that matches you?

Once you have the answers to those questions, you're ready to craft the message. Here are some examples of how you do that:

- If the premium is a gift to your employees, then you don't need contact information or what your company does or why customers should buy your company's products or services. Instead, the message should be about teamwork or appreciation for service or recognition for a job well done. Humor may even be appropriate for this audience.
- If the premium is a promotion for potential customers, then you should make sure you have complete contact information on it. If you can swing it, you should also add why customers should buy your products or services. If the premium is going to be used with other supporting material (for instance, as part of a direct mail package) then you should make sure the message on the premium fits with the message in the printed materials.
- If the premium is for current customers, then you don't need to add benefits of doing business with you, but you should still have some contact information on the premium. You may also want to add some sort of “thank you for your business” message.



- If the premium is for past customers, then you need to address somehow the reason why they stopped doing business with you, even if it's only a "We miss you" message. This group also needs contact information on the premium.
- If the premium is for trade show attendees, you're probably dealing with a mix of current, past and potential customers. You're going to want to make sure the message works for all of them. You may also want to make sure the premium "matches" any other promotional materials you hand out at the trade show.

Don't forget to ask your graphic designer for help with your promotional item's message. Many of them work with copywriters who specialize in crafting messages for all sorts of promotions. Feel free to ask questions or gather information about your specific situation.

Samples of Premiums Done Right Food Consulting Company Holiday Greeting and Gift

Food Consulting Company is owned by Karen Duester. She creates the nutrition fact panels that you see on the back of almost every piece of food that you buy. As her product is integral to her brand, she has incorporated a fact panel into all facets of her marketing and advertising. She has incorporated a fact panel into all of her branding. The business card and letterhead go together nicely. On the letterhead the background image of the fact panel was cropped to keep the letter area clear. The background art is a subtle reminder of what Food Consulting Company does for their clients.

We also worked together to come up with a giveaway that tied into food, but did not contain food. She didn't want to send competitors food to her clients as gifts! So we came up with an idea to send recipes with nutrition facts, along with a cookie cutter.



One version is the thank you and holiday greeting, with the gingerbread man cookie cutter. The star box is for people that have attended and completed a workshop with Karen. This is also a thank you and tells the recipient that they are a star! A final box is planned with set of 5 cookie cutters in it for sending out as thank yous to people who provide testimonials.

Karen has gotten a lot of good feedback on the thank you boxes. One person let her know that the gift has created a new tradition with her grand-daughter, making cookies together at Christmas. What a way to reach out and touch your clients and get them engaged with your brand!



Wild Woman Design Silly Putty

I wanted to send a gift to my clients and yet needed it to match my values about conversing natural resources.

I developed a reusable metal tin with silly putty inside, and a sample of my art on the label. My messaging encourages creativity and recycling. My clients just love it and it is a staple on their desks that they play with when they need inspiration.

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