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## WHITE PAPER

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# Using Promotional Products To Attract And Keep Customers

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Keeping Your Name In Front Of Customers And Prospects  
Is Critical To Growing Your Business

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Keeping your name in front of customers and prospects is critical to growing your business – especially if you rely heavily on word-of-mouth and referrals. You've got to find ways to make it easy for people to remember you and find you.

Newspaper and magazine advertising is one option, but often too expensive for small businesses to do on an ongoing basis. Another way, which is memorable and cost-effective, is through the creative use of promotional products-items given away free to your customers, prospects and referral sources.

Who hasn't received a pen, key chain, or mug imprinted with a company's name and phone number on it? Maybe your company has even handed out a few of these items. But do you know the true power of promotional products and how to use them most effectively? Consider this recall rate data:

Banner ads...27%      Print & TV ads...53.5%      Promo Products...76.1%

## **The Power of Promotional Products**

The "staying power" of promotional products is what makes the difference. Unlike ads that can be overlooked, a good quality promotional product is functional and used for a very long time.

Imprinted with your company name, logo, and phone number, promotional products continue to remind people of your business long after they have been received. For example, a calendar hanging on a wall and a mouse pad sitting next to a computer keep your company name and phone number ready and available for customers when they need your products or services.

The following statistics and trend information from the Promotional Products Association International might surprise you:

- Mailing a pen or other promotional product along with a sales letter can increase the number of prospects that call you back by as much as 50 percent.
- Customers who receive promotional products as gifts are more likely to refer friends, colleagues, and others to your company than those who don't.
- Promotional products can help increase repeat orders from your customers by as much as 16 percent.
- Sending a useful promotional product like a baseball cap or t-shirt instead of a general thank you note can enhance your customer's positive feelings about you by as much as 25 percent.
- At trade shows, promotional products can increase awareness of and preference for an exhibitor's products by as much as 70 percent.



## Make Sure It's Useful

Besides the ever-popular pens, key chains and letter openers, you can find a wide variety of items that can be personalized and used as promotional giveaways. Nowadays, everything from luggage tags and golf tees to water bottles and measuring tapes can be imprinted with slogans, company names, and more. What's important, however, is to select something that is useful and that your customers will want to use again and again.

Consider choosing an item related to your business. For example, automotive companies may give out key chains or travel mugs, lawn care companies may pick sun visors, and contractors may select mini screwdrivers and flashlights. Whatever you decide, make sure the products are of good quality and have meaning to your audience.

Also, don't be afraid to give different people different items. For example, you may choose to give a more expensive item, like a sweatshirt or jacket, to your very best (or largest) customers and a magnet or notepad to other customers and referral sources. Everyone will remember your company favourably and you will maximize the use of your company's promotional dollars.

## Think Of Creative Opportunities

While holidays present a prime time for using promotional products, those given at unexpected or unusual times can often be the most effective and memorable. The fact that you gave away an interesting and useful item will stand out in people's minds, instead of being forgotten amidst all the holiday excess and clutter. Try to pick a time that ties in with something directly related to your business – like an anniversary, open house, or the launch of a new product or service.

Some other creative ways to use promotional products include:

- To reinforce early orders and early payments, for instance, send a pen to customers who consistently pay once a bill arrives.
- To thank customers for their business. For example, bicycle dealers may want to give out free water bottles with the purchase of every bicycle and auto repair shops may include floor mats with every service job.
- To support community events, sport teams, and educational programs. Instead of giving money to your town's summer festival for instance, try donating Frisbee® Discs imprinted with your logo. Or donate balloons to the high school graduation ceremonies as a way of showing your company's pride in students' accomplishments.
- To recognize employees for their hard work and length of service to your company give them sweatshirts, jackets or t-shirts. These are popular gifts for employees on 5- or 10-year anniversaries. (Remember, employees who feel good about your company may do a better job with customers.)



## WHITE PAPER: *Using Promo Products to Attract and Keep Customers*

Think over your brand to see if there is a tie-in you can make. The more you can relate the item to the rest of your company, the more powerful it becomes. For more information on branding your business, look for other **NEBS** White Papers such as "Understand Your Brand And Position".

Many brands' logos were not designed with promotional items in mind. Size and format vary widely by product. Also, do you have logo colour restrictions? For more information on this look for **NEBS** White Papers such as "What Colours Will Work Best With Your Brand and Position?" and "Top 5 Mistakes Businesses Make With Their Brand That Make Them Look Small".

Used creatively, promotional products can help differentiate your company from the competition, build relationships with current customers, and attract new business. They can also create feelings of goodwill and encourage the word-of-mouth your company relies on for new business.