

How can one be different in a world where everyone is giving away promotional products?

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Abstract

Humans have been around for a long time in which we have invented, built, and evolved dramatically. Originality is what we strive for, which can be understood as “the power of independent thought or constructive imagination” or “being the first instance or source from which a copy, reproduction, or translation is or can be made” (Merriam-Webster). But it’s difficult to imagine things we haven’t thought of yet. This is a fear for many industries. When thinking about maintaining the success of companies, we think of promotion and awareness. This promotion tends to be conducted through promotional products. However, not only does the company itself need to be original to be successful but its promotional products as well. Thus, the big question is, what makes them different from others? What makes them unique? This research paper aims to explore the elements that create unique giveaway products that ensure the success of companies. We will start by looking into a company’s message and purpose. Through this, we look at promotional products and their relationship with the purpose. Lastly, after a few examples, we will explore the role of customers.

The Purpose of a Company

To be unique in promoting one’s business doesn’t start with the promotional products but with the company’s purpose and message. Companies are successful when they have a clear message and purpose. Most companies’ messages and purposes can easily be found on their website. For example, Ben and Jerry’s:

“We love making ice cream—but using our business to make the world a better place gives our work its meaning. Guided by our Core Values, we seek in all we do, at every level of our business, to advance human rights and dignity, support social and economic justice for historically marginalized communities,

and protect and restore the Earth's natural systems. In other words: we use ice cream to change the world" (2021).

Purpose acts as a motivational and engaging force for employees and their audience. Research has shown that companies that have a strong purpose perform better on the stock market. In a study with 20,000 employees, 100% were more likely to stay in the organization when the leaders were clear about the purpose (Meister & Bach, 2021).

Promotional Products

After defining its purpose and message, it has to have a product. For example, for Starbucks, it is coffee, and for Budweiser, it is beer. Now, the company has a purpose and a product but to be successful; promotion is needed. Promotional products are the answer, but it can't just be any product. Many companies resort to the basics, such as water bottles, keychains, writing tools, and products of that sort. However, it is not unique and does not grab people's attention. The promotional products must be personal to the company, align with its purpose and product, and be useful. Several examples (Mertes, 2022):

- **The Budweiser Goal-Synced Glass** lights up when your favorite team scores.
- **IAMS Frisbee for Dogs** looks like 10kg weights to promote its dog food for healthy and "strong" dogs.
- **KFC Colonel Sanders Pool Float** has two hand-shaped cup holders for a bucket of fried chicken and a drink.

These examples are quite creative, but it can also be as simple as Starbucks mugs that are personalized to each city. All these promotional products have in common that they relate to the company's purpose and original product in a way. They promote the company through useful and personal products but in a fun and quirky way.

Customer Feedback

Customers play a vital role in the continuation and success of the company. They help promote and purchase the products, which keeps the company standing. Thus, the company has to create a strong relationship with its audience. This is done by welcoming feedback and knowing one's audience. Welcoming feedback from its customers allows for development and progress. In essence, there is no better and more reliable source about a company and its products than customer feedback. This shows that the company values and appreciates its customers. The appreciation found on both ends creates this cycle of feedback and response. Additionally, the company needs to know its audience. This can mean an average age range or profession in which they attract. For example, Tim Hortons, a Canadian multinational fast-food chain, attracts an extensive and varied audience. As a promotional product, they have done two collaborations with pop artist Justin Bieber for their coffee and donuts. This product attracts younger ages, but as their product is useful to everyone, it works with everyone.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for promotional products to be unique and successful, it demands effort from the basics of the company to its customers. The company has to have a clear purpose and message. Then, promotional products align with the company's purpose and original products as a form of production in a personal, useful, fun, and creative way. Lastly, to maintain the success of the company, it prioritizes its customers by listening to their feedback and understanding their audience to promote personalized promotional products. To summarize, it's a whole process.

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