

Personalized Promotional Gifts Can be Both Fun and Effective

Party favors aren't just for kids. Many businesses distribute customized gifts to increase brand recognition and to differentiate themselves from competitors.

The Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) published a 2004 study titled *Promotional Products – Impact, Exposure and Influence: A Survey of Business Travelers at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport*. It revealed that 76.1% of respondents remembered which advertisers provided them with promotional products over the last year. In addition, 75.4% reported that they keep giveaways because they consider them useful.

Bright Ideas in Broad Ripple, Inc., located on the north side of Indianapolis, is a distributor of personalized promotional products. Clothing apparel (e.g. hats, jackets and shirts) generates the largest percentage of the company's sales, while writing instruments are most popular in terms of quantity sold.

"The fun items have really been the big sellers the last few years," notes Bright Ideas CEO Bev Middaugh. "People have learned that if you're in a trade show booth and have the item everyone's talking about because it's fun, people will talk to you."

Examples include plastic ice cubes that glow when dropped into a drink or balls that make sounds when bounced.

"At one time, they (key players in business and industry) didn't consider promotional products a true advertising medium," Middaugh points out. "Now it is an essential advertising medium."



A look at a few of the products that are on display at Bright Ideas.

It's the repetitive visual that makes them extremely valuable."

She adds, "For us, everyone is a potential client because everyone is involved at some point with an event or organization that needs promotional products."

Resources: Bev Middaugh, Bright Ideas, Inc., at (317) 257-4111 or www.bright-ideas.org

Promotional Products Association International at www.ppa.org

Governor's Call Helps Retain Indiana Jobs

In the age of web sites and mass e-mail, personal contacts are often most effective. This was certainly the case when Gov. Mitch Daniels telephoned the president of Novozymes Biologicals in Denmark and sent a personal note to the plant manager in Albion in a successful final-push effort to keep one of the company's investments in Indiana.

Novozymes was considering moving its Indiana business to Virginia or North Carolina – states where the company already has large operations. The multi-national enzyme and microorganisms producer employs only 12 people at its Albion location. Nevertheless, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and Gov. Daniels aggressively sought to keep those jobs in Hoosier hands.

"The governor was very supportive of our efforts to maintain the operations in Indiana," reveals John Sedivy, director of business development for Novozymes.

In addition to strong support from state and local leaders, the company credited retention of the quality employees at its Albion facility in its final decision to stay.

"We're very pleased with the workforce we have in Indiana," Sedivy reports. "We have good, skilled employees there and that was part of the determination to keep the operation in Noble County."

Resource: Novozymes Biologicals at (260) 693-6579

Sizing Up the Packaging Industry

Many companies in the packaging industry are altering their products to save customers money and help protect the environment. The solutions, however, don't always complement each other.

"We're seeing a movement toward recycled paper instead of plastic air pillows and plastic foam," comments Chris Kernan, division manager of the Fishers facility of Shorr Packaging Corp. "Plastic pillows provide very good cost savings, but aren't necessarily environmentally friendly. The problem (with paper) is that it doesn't provide as much protection as some of the other means of packaging.

"Some of the products that are shipped are so fragile that they require a more complex, plastic packaging style," he adds. "The only way to mitigate using the plastic is to recycle."

Shorr offers businesses a cost-efficient, environmentally conscientious alternative by using corrugated paper as one of its packaging materials. Comprised of cardboard and ideal for shipping heavy items, it can be molded into a variety of shapes that increase its protectiveness.

Kernan credits businesses for doing their part. "In the past, I don't think customers would think twice about using an oversized box or a lot of foam or air pillows to protect their products. But now, they're using small boxes. They're using the right size box (to accommodate their products), so there's limited waste."

Resource: Chris Kernan, Shorr Packaging, at (317) 845-3200

Compiled by Symone Salisbury, Jonathan Wales

Large Impact From a Small School

Franklin College, located 20 minutes south of downtown Indianapolis, is among Indiana's strong collection of private higher education institutions – and one having a large impact on its host community and the state.

Enrollment at the four-year school is just 1,000 students, but a recent economic impact study placed the college's contribution to Central Indiana at \$57 million. Data from the 2005-2006 fiscal year showed \$1 of every \$12 spent in the city of Franklin was a result of the college's presence. The school produced 8.3% of the city's revenue and created 281 full-time jobs on campus. Franklin is also credited with making 110 Central Indiana jobs possible through companies that are supported by students, faculty and college functions.

In addition to the economic and workforce impact, the college's students contributed 9,500 hours of community service in the city of Franklin and 20,000 hours in the larger region.

Alan Hill, vice president of enrollment and marketing for Franklin College, feels the third-party study is important in detailing benefits resulting from the connection between city and school.

"When we bring kids to Franklin College, we aren't just bringing them to college, we're bringing them to the community as well," Hill remarks. "We have had and continue to have great relationships with (the city of) Franklin, Johnson County and the greater Indianapolis area."

Resource: Alan Hill, Franklin College, at (317) 738-8298

Shedding Light on Energy Savings

Random House, the largest general trade book publisher in the United States, is reducing expenses and enhancing the environment one light fixture at a time.

The company began replacing metal halide lighting fixtures in its Crawfordsville warehouse with T5 fluorescent lights last year. Operated by motion sensors, the lights automatically turn off after approximately 10 minutes.

"A fluorescent light is much more energy efficient," comments facilities manager Mark Wollenberg. "The old ones were on all the time, and a lot of the energy was wasted in heat." By radiating less heat, the new lighting system offers workers at the non-air conditioned facility a major advantage: warm weather relief.

"It just made sense because the warehouse is not active every day," adds operations manager Tom Wakefield. "Why light it unnecessarily?"

New lighting has been installed in approximately 60% of the 660,000-square-foot facility. Completion is scheduled for 2008. Wollenberg estimates that savings from lower electricity bills will produce "a payback in a little less than two years."

"I was just looking at ways to save money on our electric bill," he recalls. "And when I started looking at our options, it was the best way to go. I think you can save money and be good to the environment at the same time."

Resource: Mark Wollenberg, Random House, at (765) 361-2715 or www.randomhouse.com



Spending Thresholds Reduce School Construction Costs

Indiana falls in the middle of the pack (when compared with other states) on numerous K-12 education expenditures. While debates continue over the adequacy of general education funding, an area of immediate concern is the one in which Indiana costs are significantly above average – school construction expenses.

Despite recent improvements, the cost of school construction in Indiana remains greater than what is typical in other states. Hoosier taxpayers paid 40.4% above the national average for new building construction in 2005 and 36.4% more in cost-per-square-foot for renovation projects. Both of these figures were improvements over 2004; in 2006, Indiana's costs continued to decrease, but remained well above national averages.

Helping correct Indiana's overly expensive school construction are spending-per-square-foot thresholds enacted by Gov. Mitch Daniels and his administration in 2005. The thresholds – calculated from national school construction statistics – and subsequent increased scrutiny of projects saved Hoosiers \$90 million their first year and \$337 million in 2006.

The Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) is charged with administering the thresholds and scrutinizing project proposals. The DLGF reviews much more than building materials, however, when making project determinations. The degree of community support, district graduation rate, standardized test scores and steps the district has taken to reduce costs are all part of the equation.

The construction funding thresholds are working. Improvements in other K-12 expenditure categories may help produce the needed increases in academic performance and worker preparation.

Resources: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance at www.in.gov/dlgef

Indiana Department of Education at www.doe.state.in.us

National Center for Education Statistics at www.nces.ed.gov