

EAT, DRINK, AND BE... **NOTICED**



How tasty merchandise
raises awareness p16



**TOGETHER
AGAIN**
MERCHANDISE
WORLD IS
BACK IN MK
P13



**YOU DO THE MATH
DO YOUR FINANCIALS
ADD UP? P22**

**TIME TO SHINE
ENTER THE BPMA
PRODUCT AWARDS P36**

Your Brand Ambassador



BIC® LIGHTERS

When the smallest thing says a lot.

Light up your imagination

Being the number 1 worldwide in branded pocket lighters, means always being open to our customers' needs. Because we know that despite their small size, our lighters are powerful in terms of brand communication. Yes, everything is possible with our print techniques, and your brand message will stand out and become part of people's lives. As everybody has a BIC® at home, everybody will have your brand at home. That's giving light to your brand's life, in an iconic, safe and high-quality way.

Ready?

PRINT FINISHES

- SP SCREEN PRINTING
- BR BRILLIANT
- MT MATT
- H HOLOGRAPHIC
- M METALLIC
- SA SANDY
- P PUFFY PRINTING
- UV UV
- PG PUFFY GLITTER



Print 360°



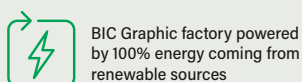
J25
UP TO 1450

J23
UP TO 1800



J38
UP TO 1800

J26
UP TO 3000



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Product Awards

Enter the industry's leading merchandise celebrations

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

WELCOME



It's interesting times for our industry as companies look to get back on the growth curve following the pandemic.

From what we hear from members, these are encouraging times

for the businesses that have weathered the storm of the past few years. According to the most recent Purple Club market report into the industry, it has almost returned to its pre-pandemic size. That's not to be sniffed at given the battering that it has taken of late.

Of course, there are still challenges, not least the battle against inflation; the ongoing washout from Brexit, and recruitment, but where there are challenges, there are opportunities.

It is interesting to note a number of acquisitions of late by Geiger, LSi and Premier Print & Promotions – see details inside. Some of the acquiring businesses are indicating that they are on the lookout for other targets as they set ambitious growth targets.

For businesses considering such dynamics, there are useful articles inside this issue from business consultant Peter Hill and Galpeg MD Paul Green. They examine various factors to bear in mind around the issue of M&A activity, not least the soundness of your financials, and what's actually on the table.

For merchandise businesses looking at growing, there is no better destination this month than the Marshall Arena where suppliers and distributors will gather at Merchandise World to network, share gossip and do deals as we enter

the all-important final quarter of the year – a time that can be the making of a business in this sector.

Hopefully, it will be a fruitful time for those in attendance. And those who are, should make time to visit the BPMA on stand 36. Not only will there be great seminar content around the Association's StepForward Pledge, but there is the opportunity to meet some of the new members of the BPMA team who have come on board to help with our own ambitious plans to better serve members. We look forward to meeting you there.

Last but not least, this month marks the start of the search for the winners of this year's BPMA Product Awards. You can find details on page 36. Remember, you have to be in it to win it!

Carey Trevill
BPMA CEO

Product Media Magazine is available to the whole promotional merchandise industry. It is the official magazine of the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA).



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Laltex launches hassle free clothing offering

Laltex Group has officially launched its premier clothing division Fast Fit Promo as it continues to strengthen its 'one stop shop' approach to make life as easy as possible for its customers.

The new specialist division, which was introduced to the industry at Merchandise World earlier this year, aims to support trade customers by providing a quick and hassle free service that they can rely on.

Laltex Group successfully launched its first specialist division, Pencom, back in 2010 which was closely followed by Bags HQ and Source It in 2013.

It claims trade customers can take advantage of large UK stock levels; lead times from just five days; introductory prices; MOQs as low as 10 pieces, and a range of personalisation techniques.



Geiger back on the acquisition trail with Firebrand Promotions deal

Promotional products distributor Geiger has continued its growth in the UK with the acquisition of Leatherhead-based Firebrand Promotions.

Firebrand has been in business since 2002, with a reputation for sustainably focused business practices and strong client services.

Under Geiger, Firebrand will have expanded resources, wider distribution channels, and a global platform to strengthen its market presence.

Geiger is retaining all Firebrand employees, ensuring a smooth transition and continuation of service.

Managing director of Geiger International, Vicky Kinasz, said: "We are delighted to welcome Firebrand to Geiger. Their focus on sustainability perfectly aligns with our own principles. By joining

forces, we can enhance our offerings to customers and drive positive change in the promotional products industry."

Andrew Bourne, managing director of Firebrand Promotions, said: "By leveraging Geiger's industry prominence, we can amplify our reach and improve value for our customers while maintaining our unwavering commitment to sustainability. Together, we will raise the bar in our industry and make an even more significant impact."

Geiger is the largest privately held and family-owned promotional products distributor in the world.

It has acquired several UK businesses since a merger deal with promotional products distributor BTC in 2018, including Shout Promotional Merchandise, EMC, and Response Marketing.

Group takes advantage of behind the scenes tour

Snap Products and The Pen Warehouse welcomed members of the Advantage Group for a visit to their premises in Hampshire to showcase the wide range of products and services on offer, as well as provide insights into product performance and innovative printing processes.

Lawrence Angelow from Advantage attended with four group distributors: Jiggle, Something Different, Bushey Promotions, and Merchandise Branding.

The highlight of the visit was a factory tour that offered the members a firsthand experience of the companies' state-of-the-art production facilities in order to gain valuable behind the scenes knowledge.

Throughout the day, the Advantage Group had the opportunity to discover the extensive range of products and services available. The brand and product showcase allowed the visitors to observe the diverse and innovative collection, including new products from Chili, the carbon neutral brand.

The day concluded with a private dinner, shared stories and future planning.

Lawrence Angelow from the Advantage Group said: "Particularly impressive is Snap Products and The Pen Warehouse's technical branding ability and range of state-of-the-art equipment. The product presentation was also of great benefit, and I am sure the new product additions will be welcomed by the industry."



Oldeani gets certified Global Recycling Standards recognition

Oldeani has taken stock of its new recycled cups and invested in having them TC certified to validate their eco credentials and confirm exact quantities of recycled materials.

The Essex company is committed to constantly reviewing product selection to ensure products supplied have the least impact on the environment and production meets the strictest level in terms of best practices.

The Global Recycling Standards (GRS) is an internationally recognised standard that provides companies with a tool to verify one or more specific materials in a product.

To receive GRS certification products must be made up of at least 20% of certified recycled products and be both ethically



and responsibly produced.

Oldeani's popular insulated cups the Arusha and Oyster in addition to the new Jumbo Oyster will now be available in recycled stainless steel.

The new cups have been certified and have been TC certified confirming that production processes and materials have been audited to validate that the percentage of recycled materials has been measured and meets all requirements set out in the GRS.

"Auditing is a crucial in order to provide transparency to consumers," said Malcolm Fritschy, MD of Oldeani. "Backing up our GRS claims by holding the audited TC documents is vital and shows our commitment to ensuring we can substantiate any eco credentials."

The investment in testing is costly but provides Oldeani with a differentiation,



added Fritschy.

"Saving the planet does come at a cost but I think buyers are now prepared for this and appreciate we all have a social responsibility to do whatever we can to protect our environment," he said.

Oldeani's bottles to bags range also hold the audited GRS certification and is manufactured entirely from RPET recycled bottles.

Kingly pulls its socks up with express delivery

Following the expansion of its sock knitting facility, Kingly is offering an express custom socks manufacturing service from five working days from final artwork approval and shipping time.

The service ensures custom socks are manufactured and ready to be delivered when every moment counts.

It is available for Kingly's best-selling Crew socks and Sport socks created with Euro cotton for up to 250 pairs.

Kingly emphasises the importance of confirming production samples as soon as possible as prompt approval allows it to expedite the manufacturing process without any delays.



It's in the bag for Goldstar

Goldstar has unveiled its latest product expansion in Europe called Simply Bags, a collection of diverse trendy and functional bags to meet the promotional needs of its European partners.

Building on the success of bags in the North American market, Goldstar recognised the demand for a broader product offering in Europe and aims to arm distributors with a wide selection of promotional items tailored to their unique requirements.

It recently launched drinkware in several European countries and bags will follow the same model.

The collection showcases more than 15 distinctive bag styles, including premium travel bags and backpacks, cotton and jute totes, coolers and shoppers.

Each bag offers ample space for branding, customisation and decoration, and comes with all-inclusive pricing to ensure a transparent ordering process.

Earth-friendly options are available, such as bags made from recycled materials or sustainable fabrics, aligning with a mission to promote environmentally friendly practices.

"We prioritise innovation and simplicity for our valued distribution partners," said Howard Cubberly, general manager at Goldstar. "With the introduction of our new bags collection in the European market, we are excited to offer our customers the same convenient benefits of Simplicity and All-Inclusive Pricing that they have come to appreciate from Goldstar, not only for pens and drinkware but now also for bags."



Prodir notebooks put on the style

Prodir has launched an original and unique collection of notebooks for the promotional market.

The collaboration between the Swiss writing instrument specialist and Portuguese stationery start-up mishmash, is called 'mishmash x prodir'.

Founded by designer Beatriz Barros, mishmash paper products have been attracting increasing international attention for their balance of style, function and attention to detail.

They are available in some of the most famous museums around the world, including New York's Guggenheim.

The new notebook collection comprises two

formats. MM01 Small is a passport format notebook designed to fit comfortably in any handbag whilst MM02 Medium is a classic A5 soft cover.

Fine details and structural elements round out the models, such as inner flaps to increase the value perception and reinforce the soft cover of the MM02, and colour-coordinated stitching on the spine of the MM01.

Logos can be discreetly applied to both models in high-quality embossing that can be felt with the fingertips.

Pleasantly rough cover surfaces emphasise the haptic experience, and the notebooks feature ink-safe,



FSC-certified paper, as well as sustainability information inside.

The notebook collection is also available unprinted in selected configurations in low quantities and with shorter delivery times.

All notebooks are manufactured in the Porto region for short, intra-European delivery, and guarantees compliance with European labour, social and environmental standards.

Double U-turn over post-Brexit regimes

The UK will retain the EU's CE product safety mark indefinitely after the government bowed to pressure from industry and manufacturers.

Britain had been due to introduce its own safety standard, the UKCA (UK Conformity Assessed) mark for goods sold in Great Britain from the end of 2024.

There have been several extensions to the deadline for the changeover with businesses arguing that the UKCA mark added a level of red tape and cost to their operations as it would not have been recognised in the EU and would only have been required for goods to be sold in Great Britain.

Businesses had called on the government to extend the use of the CE mark, which is used by the bloc to certify that a wide range of items meet safety standards.

Smaller businesses had been particularly concerned about the cost of adapting to the new UKCA requirements.

Tina McKenzie, the policy chair of the

Federation of Small Businesses, said the continued recognition of CE-marked products would "allow time for small firms to adjust to the UKCA marking system and focus on growing their business both at home and overseas".

The Department for Business and Trade said it had made the decision after discussions with industry.

Companies will be able to choose whether to use either the UKCA or the CE mark when selling their products in Great Britain.

In another climbdown, the government looks set to delay post-Brexit border checks to EU food imports over fears it will fuel inflation and reduce choice.

The checks, which have already been delayed several times, were due to come into force in October, but the latest delay will give port operators and companies time to prepare for them.

British exports to the EU have already been subject to similar checks since 1 January 2021 with the result that some merchandise companies have withdrawn from servicing EU clients due to increased cost and hassle.

Others have established arrangements in the EU to deliver goods from there.

Government insiders have told the Financial Times that while final details of the border plan would be published "very soon", its implementation on the ground would be pushed back.

A new timetable has not yet been signed off, but the start of the new regime is expected to be some time in 2024.

UK CA



Sporting competition resumes with AMT fantasy league

AMT Trade has kicked off its eagerly awaited fantasy football league for the 2023-24 season.

The league has been running among participants in the promotional merchandise industry for the past five years and last year attracted 100 players keen to pit their management guile against each other.

Last year's league was won by Trevor Howard from Colchester-based Evergreen Branding who picked up a prize of a vintage leather football and £100 vouchers, as well as the plaudits of being the top manager.

To be in the running for this year's prize fund of the ball and vouchers, players sign up online at fantasy.premierleague.com.

The launch of the league coincided with both the Women's football World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, and the Rugby World Cup in September, in France.

AMT Trade is a leading supplier of balls for sporting promotions.

Your product media expert



We support you through the sustainable transition – one product at a time

With our long-term strategy “Rethinking Plastics 2030”, we are committed to phasing out all virgin fossil-based plastics from our collection by 2030. That’s why we are happy to introduce to you the enhanced iconic Parker Jotter!

Since its debut in 1954, the Parker Jotter ballpoint pen has captured hearts worldwide as one of the most beloved writing instruments.

Now, we’ve taken this everyday classic to the next level. Behold the Parker Jotter Recycled ballpoint pen, where timeless design meets sustainable innovation. Experience style, sustainability, and exceptional performance with the revamped Parker Jotter Recycled pen. Rediscover the joy of writing in a more responsible way.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our Parker Jotter Recycled.



PARKER JOTTER IS NOW MADE FROM 55%* RECYCLED MATERIALS.

*55% CALCULATED ON WEIGHT OF EACH COMPONENT. EXCLUDES REFILL.

94% RECYCLED STAINLESS STEEL

29% RECYCLED PLASTIC

87% RECYCLED STAINLESS STEEL

100% RECYCLED STAINLESS STEEL

The remaining parts of the pen are not made from recycled materials, we are working on this for the future.



PEN RECYCLED CONTENT



100% RECYCLABLE PACKAGING



PLASTIC FREE PACKAGING



REFILLABLE

TO DYE FOR

Holiday season means beach towels, and beach towels mean dye sublimation, says **Clive Alcott**



Dye-sublimation is a printing process that uses heat to transfer dye on to a material, such as a towel.

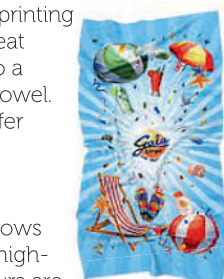
Dye-sublimated towels offer several benefits over other printing methods:

1. Vibrant and permanent colours: Dye sublimation allows for full-colour printing with high-resolution images. The colours are infused into the fabric, resulting in vibrant and long-lasting prints.

The dye becomes part of the towel's fibres, making it resistant to fading even after multiple washes.

2. Soft and smooth finish:

The dye-sublimation process does not leave any noticeable texture or residue on the towel's surface. This results in a smooth, soft feel, which is particularly appealing for towels used on sensitive skin, such as for babies or in spas.



3. Edge-to-edge printing: The entire towel can be covered with the design without any borders or limitations, allowing more creative and striking designs including photographic imagery.

4. Quick drying: Sublimated towels generally have better moisture-wicking properties due to the nature of the dye infusion. However, most purpose branded towels have a cotton terry on one side and the print on the other.

making them more absorbent and quick-drying, so practical for use in sports, gyms, or travel.

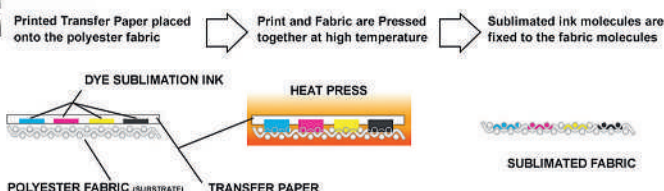
5. Durability: The print is highly durable and resistant to wear, tear, and

fading, ensuring the towel maintains its visual appeal for a long time.

6. Customisation: Dye-sublimation allows for easy customisation, making it a popular choice for personalised towels, promotional items, and branded merchandise often with low minimum order quantities.

7. No texture change: The process does not alter the texture or softness of the towel, providing a comfortable user experience and therefore long-term brand recognition.

Overall, dye-sublimated towels are a popular choice for those looking for high-quality, visually appealing, and durable product that can withstand regular use and frequent washing while still maintaining their original design and colour.



Make sure you look at what's available from your preferred supplier and present the perfect branded solution.

Happy Selling
The Clothes and
Bag Guru. 

Connecting Brands With People



Preseli is a first choice supplier of core products to the promotional industry. We have built our reputation on 30 years of award winning service & time-proven reliability.

We are experts in areas like Keyrings & Lanyards and are delighted to be offering a wide range of Eco friendly products as part of our Step Forward pledge.

See our range at Merchandise World including:

- Rubik's promotional range
- Conference and office supplies
- Full selection of badges and keyrings
- eco-eco stationery
- UK branded umbrellas
- Neoprene bottle holders and tech accessories
- Customised ties and scarves



LITTLE EVIDENCE ADVERTISING AND MERCHANDISE BANS WOULD CUT DRINKING

Concerted action from trade associations, including the BPMA, has prevented a harsh new ban on marketing activity... for now

Earlier this year, the BPMA joined ranks with the alcohol and advertising industry to oppose the proposed Scottish ban on alcohol advertising and sale of branded merchandise in a cross-industry consultation. In a massive U-turn, the Scottish First Minister Humza Yosef vowed to go back to the drawing board.

EVIDENCE LACKING

The Scottish Government had previously been consulting on plans which would have barred drinks firms from sponsoring sport and live events, and which would have prevented distillery and brewery shops from selling branded merchandise to visitors and giveaways at events.

With a threat to the promotional merchandise industry in Scotland, the BPMA consulted its Scottish members to present case studies to show the economic impact of the proposal, citing significant job and revenue loss which threatened Scottish companies. Coming hot on the heels of pandemic recovery, the position presented was a 'no go' for members.

IEA REPORT

The new report issued by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) to look at the economic impact of the consultation, proves there is "remarkably little" evidence to show that banning alcohol advertising would lower consumption or reduce harm on society, Scottish ministers have been told.

A consultation on removing alcohol marketing from areas such as billboards and retail premises as well as sports and hospitality locations was launched last year. It was welcomed by health campaigners but faced fierce criticism from the industry.

ANTI-BUSINESS FEARS

The document sparked fears that Scotch whisky distilleries and tourist attractions, such as the Johnnie Walker Experience in Edinburgh, would have to be covered up, although Nicola Sturgeon, then the First Minister, denied that would happen.

It was among the policies shelved by Humza Yousaf shortly after he became the SNP leader and he said in April that the plan should go back to the "drawing board" as it needed more input from businesses.

When he took over as First Minister, Mr Yousaf said he backed the aim of the measures "to reduce the harm caused by alcohol to children" but accepted that they had caused "real concern".

'ADVERTISING HAS NO EFFECT'

The IEA report claims "the weight of evidence leans towards alcohol advertising having no important effect on the aggregate demand for alcohol".

The think tank looked at academic papers assessing the impact in countries and regions where some form of alcohol marketing restriction has been in place. Canada, Scandinavia, France and Russia were among the places analysed.

It concluded there was no "robust" evidence showing that a ban had a significant effect on demand for alcohol. It suggested that advertising spending had little impact on overall drinking levels.

WHAT NOW?

It is likely the issue will be raised again as the topic of alcohol in Scotland does cause concern and there is no doubt merchandise will be targeted again. The BPMA is standing by to step up and defend our industry with the backing of the wider alcohol and advertising industry.

Background

Advertising bodies and media organisations had reacted strongly to the Scottish Government's proposals to ban alcohol advertising and marketing in their responses to the Government's consultation.

The Advertising Association, ISBA and the IPA, which represent their members in Scotland, took the unprecedented step of issuing a joint public statement, alongside the Marketing Society Scotland, the BPMA, the Cinema Advertising Association and the UK Cinema Association, the Scottish Newspaper Society, and Outsmart.

The statement said: "We stand together and publicly reject the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce swingeing alcohol advertising and marketing bans. Whilst we understand the Government's desire to reduce alcohol consumption harms in Scotland, there is no evidence that advertising bans will achieve that aim. The proposals set out by the Scottish Government will fail to address the problem. Such measures will be harmful to the Scottish economy – including local communities – to Scotland's advertising and creative industries, and to the Scottish media including publishers, broadcasters and cinemas, as well as the outdoor advertising sector."

'Little evidence' that alcohol adverts ban would cut drinking

Report by Institute of Economic Affairs comes after Humza Yousaf shelves plans to prohibit marketing in specified areas, including tourist venues



SNP humiliated as IEA report says 'no robust evidence' to support alcohol ad ban

SNP policy makers had planned to ban alcohol firms sponsoring sport and live events to the dismay of the drinks industry.

By RICHARD ASHMORE

09:01, Thu Jul 27, 2023 | UPDATED: 11:26, Thu Jul 27, 2023

BOOKMARK



The SNP are moving plans on alcohol advertising bans (Image: Getty)

The Scottish National Party have been forced into a humiliating U-turn over plans to ban drinks firms sponsoring sporting and live events after a report said there was "no robust evidence" to support the plan.

SNP First Minister Humza Yousaf has pledged to go "back to the drawing board" in the wake of findings from the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and outcry from the drinks industry.



BPMA Product Awards Lunch

1 December 2023

St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, Euston Road, London

For the first time, the prestigious Product Awards will be presented at a magnificent lunch hosted in the prestigious surroundings of St Pancras Hotel in London. The industry is invited to secure their places. The celebratory lunch follows the Member Networking Event taking place on the same day. Celebrate in style and start the festive season with a bang!

Visit bpma.co.uk/events for details of how to book tickets and tables.

Inspire | Connect | Educate

Booking Terms & Conditions apply. Networking Event: only open to BPMA members. Product Awards Lunch: open to the industry. See bpma.co.uk/events for more information. Last date for Networking Event and Awards Lunch Bookings: 13th November 2023. For sponsorship opportunities (members only, first come, first served basis), please contact Tom Robey on **01372 371183** or email tom@bpma.co.uk.



SHOWCASE IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Total Merchandise held an event for its suppliers and staff to get to know each other better

Colchester-based online gift house, Total Merchandise gathered some of its main suppliers for an open day to help build relationships and product knowledge with its staff.

Held at local restaurant Mimosa, the event included a number of suppliers who took the opportunity to unveil their pre-Christmas merchandise and also get to know Total Merchandise staff better, and keep them informed about their latest offerings.

Sales manager Jason O'Connor said the showcase was a chance for the team to meet many of its great suppliers and provide them with an up-close and personal look at what Total Merchandise does.

"This type of learning is invaluable. Thanks team for taking it all on board and thanks to our great supply chain for supporting this and being part of what is destined to be the first of many TM supplier showcases," he said.

He added: "This particular event was a fantastic success and I know that both our staff and the suppliers exhibiting took a lot from it. It gave the staff a chance to see and learn more about some of the products that they're selling and the print processes, as well as discovering up-and-coming new

launches, arming them with additional knowledge that can then be passed on to our customers. Historically, it's been tricky time-wise for us to get our staff in front of suppliers like this, so this is a great format to bring promo alive."

Suppliers also welcomed the opportunity to explain their products, branding options, and how they could work closely with their distributor partners.

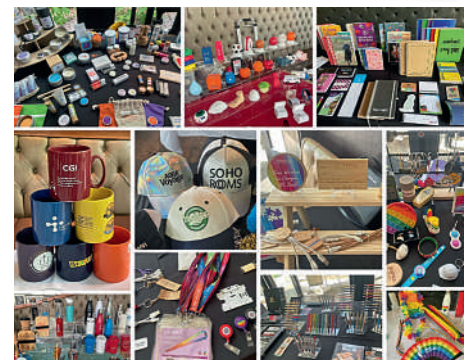
For some suppliers, the event provided a valuable addition to industry events such as Merchandise World which is happening in Milton Keynes on 13 September.

Among those present at the showcase was The Sweet People which presented its Christmas range, including homemade chocolates, and its new recyclable packaging.

Cup specialist Keramikos demonstrated its whole range and pointed out that end users were becoming more adventurous in their use of colour. Personalisation is also a trend in the vessels market, especially with more people now back in the office.

CHX had its eco-motor range on display highlighting the demand for sustainable merchandise with the growth of electric vehicles. Its new products included a three in one ice scraper, keyring and trolley coin. It also launched a set of cutlery, called Lunch Mate, which packs down into an on the go case.

As well as bags and textiles, DTB has moved into towels, and explained how its screen printing expertise could also be turned to branding other items at the request of clients. The company also explained how its Polish facility could help



service its European clients.

Among the other suppliers present were hats specialist Sharon Lee, and Bio Laboratories which provides a range of products based around wellbeing.

Following the event, suppliers and Total Merchandise staff continued networking at a post-event drinks designed to extend the conversation. **PM**



Be Unique

Visit us at
Merchandise World
13th September 2023

Marshall Arena Milton Keynes
and see the new products and
services we have on offer.

The New End of Year Collection '23

The art of creating conscious and unique looks

Our End of Year collection comes with a fool proof range of over 130 new items for daily use. Giving a personalised gift is a nice and high-impact opportunity to show your appreciation and to increase your brand recognition.

From long lasting useful bags and travel accessories to use during your business trips and events to recovered materials reused in the product design.



Be conscious while creating a significant impact

During selection our goal is always to create functional and stylish products while increasing the use of recycled and renewable materials.

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Merchandise solved

The industry returns to Milton Keynes to help build for a successful end of the year push

If it's September then it's time for Merchandise World in Milton Keynes. The kid sibling of January's mighty industry get together is still an important calendar date in its own right.

At the time of writing, 94 exhibitors had signed up for the one-day showcase in Buckingham, including such industry players as BIC Graphic, Desktop Ideas, Listawood, Goldstar Europe, Midocean, PF Concept, Senator, and The Sweet People.

September is a one-day event for both frontline teams and business leaders from professional distributors.

Teams can discover new products for the peak season and learn about product branding techniques. The relaxed atmosphere allows time for business leaders to have quality



conversations, negotiate trading partnerships, and build relationships with top suppliers.

To deal with any distributor the relationship must be built from the top, and this event provides the opportunity to establish and build these top-level relationships.

David Long (left), founder of Sourcing

City, organiser of the show, said: "As everyone gears up for the industry's peak season, September is the perfect time to meet with lots of suppliers in one go, to hear their latest news, and of course to build new relationships and reinforce existing ones."

The number of exhibitors and high interest from visitors is a clear reflection that in spite of the difficulties in the general UK economy, the promotional

merchandise industry remains buoyant and bucking the trend, Long said. This year's show is expecting to build on previous successful shows held in Milton Keynes.

"Merchandise World in September is the perfect time to introduce new starters to the suppliers and market in general. This show of course remains of great interest to all distributors, as new products and in particular 'eco products' are the lifeblood of the industry," he added.

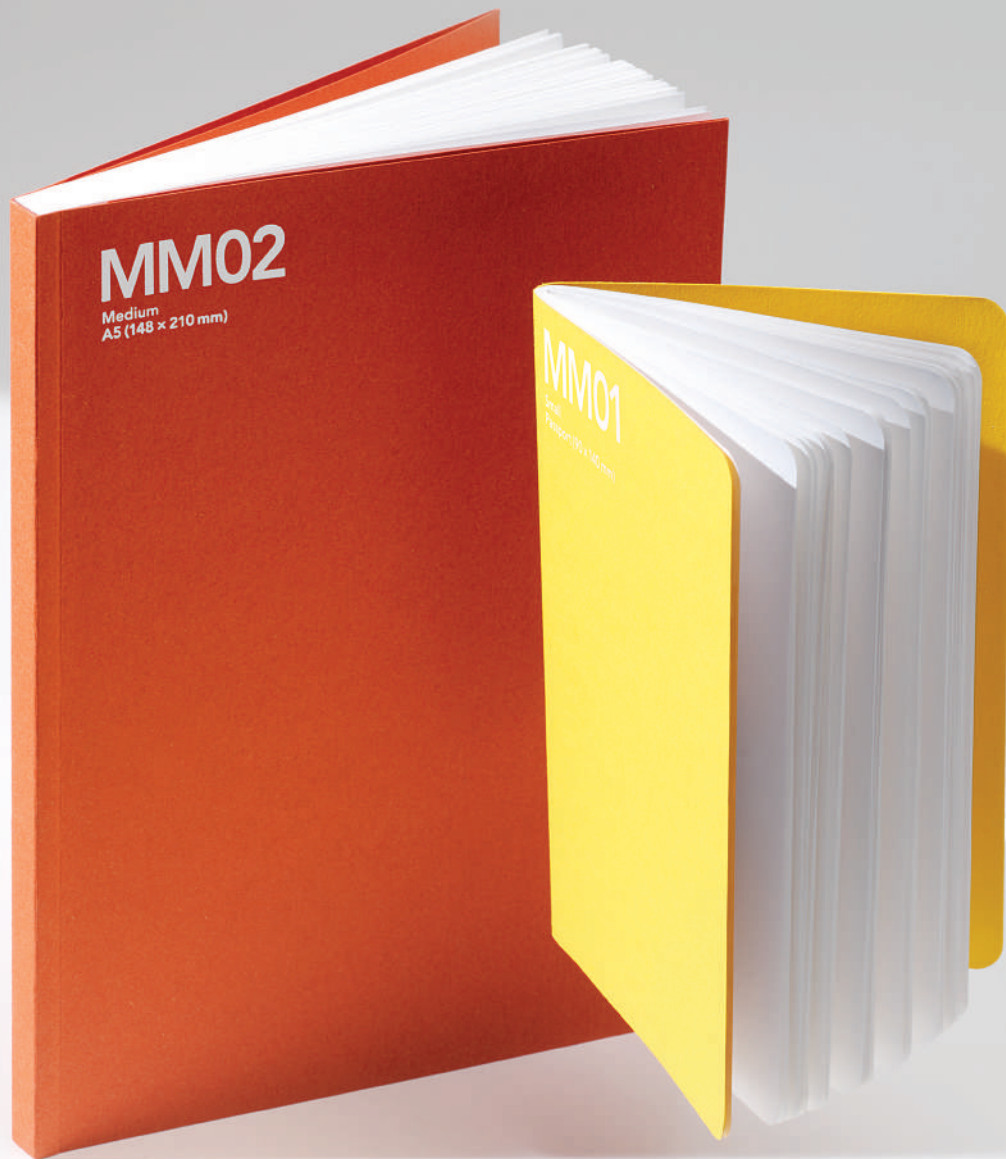
"Being in the centre of the country, Milton Keynes makes an ideal location for distributors to visit, and so much true value can be discovered in just a few hours."

ECO WORLD

In an increasingly eco world, Merchandise World continues to reflect the efforts of suppliers to innovate products that their clients are crying out for.



Every product tells a story.



Prodir is a brand of Pagani Pens SA.

The 'mishmash x prodir' collection comes in a range of sizes and formats, from the MM01, which slips easily into a handbag, through the A5 soft cover MM02. To emphasize the high-quality near-natural look and feel of our notebooks, we always use relief branding. Made in Portugal.

Facts, not fakes.

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Drinkware specialist First Editions is inviting Merchandise World visitors into its 'inner circle' as it unveils a revolutionary innovation in sustainability – a new bottle crafted from 100% post-consumer waste and designed to keep recyclables out of landfill.

With both safety and quality at its core, the newcomer is food grade assured, BPA free and dishwasher safe.

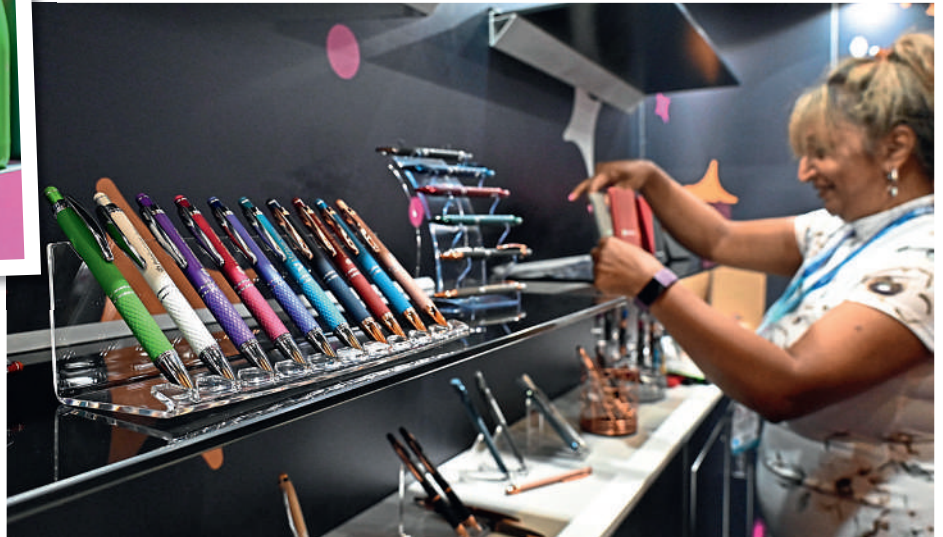
First Editions' MD Mark Alderson said: "We're confident that our latest innovation represents a pivotal moment in drinkware sustainability. With this product, we're aiming to redefine sustainability standards, and of course once more showcase our dedication to responsible and transparent business practices."

The new product will launch at Merchandise World with the help of Birmingham Energy Institute's Climate Innovation Platform (CIP). First Editions was selected as one of thirteen businesses to join the platform and marks a major milestone in their commitment to achieving net-zero emissions and driving the development of sustainable products.

As a member of Briman, First Editions will also be representing the best of British made merchandise, alongside other members including WCM+A, Sow Easy, Bio Laboratories, CHX, Eat My Logo, and Juniper.

RESPONSIBLE MERCHANDISE

The BPMA, which jointly owns the show with Sourcing City, will be present in Milton Keynes with the team looking



to meet with existing members and sign up new ones.

An important strand going forward is explaining its StepForward Pledge to support members on their sustainable pathways.

North Wales-based trade supplier Preseli has announced a lanyard repurposing initiative as part of its commitment to the Pledge. As one of the first members to take the Pledge, Preseli is taking active steps to reduce, reuse and recycle materials wherever possible.

Merchandise World will see dedicated lanyard recycling bins in place for the first time, encouraging visitors to return their lanyards for onward use. The initiative has been developed by Preseli with the support of the Merchandise World team at Sourcing City and the BPMA.

Preseli is working with local charities to find ways to repurpose items and will ensure that all lanyards are repurposed, or appropriately recycled with nothing going to landfill.

The company has provided the show lanyards for several years and already uses recycled PET material and responsibly sourced components. This

commitment to recycling will take this step further into 2024.

BPMA CEO, Carey Trevill, said: "This is a simple and effective step to help reduce event waste at Merchandise World. We all tend to take lanyards home after events and we're delighted to support Preseli, one of our first members to take the StepForward Pledge, with this initiative."

Preseli started a programme of initiatives this summer with a repurposing ideas competition. This is the first step to encourage responsible buying and disposal of promotional items.

BAGS GALORE

Other companies will be using the show as a launchpad for new products in the run up to the Christmas peak selling period.

Goldstar is extending its promotional offering beyond its core speciality of pens and will be showing its whole new bags collection during Merchandise World.

After launching drinkware, it now has a Simply Bags proposition which aims to provide distributors with even more products from one supplier, with a promise to prioritise simplicity and style.

Whatever your needs, the gathering of suppliers at the show will be able to cater to them. 



The Essentials

Where – Marshall Arena, Stadium MK, Milton Keynes

When – Wednesday 13th September 2023. Show opens from 9.00 and closes 16.30. Breakfast is served from 8.00-10.00. There's also free lunch, tea and coffee.

Why – this one day event for frontline teams and leaders from professional distributors will help them discover new products for the Peak Season and learn about product branding techniques.

A relaxed atmosphere allows time for quality conversations, negotiating

trading partnerships, and building relationships with top suppliers.

How - visitors can register at merchadiseworld.co.uk. There is a free station transfer shuttle bus every 30 minutes between Milton Keynes Central station and the Marshall Arena between 8am and 5pm (no pickups between noon and 1pm).

Free airport transfers from Luton are available by prior arrangement. Call 0844 504 5006 for details.

Onsite parking in all car parks is now chargeable at £5 per day, payable via RingGo.



A-Z

of food and drink

Everyone needs sustenance so there is always a promotional food or drink item that will appeal to any customer. Find out how to eat, drink, and be noticed with the *Product Media* guide

ASK

We all eat and drink, but it is a specialist area, so make use of the expertise of food and drink suppliers. As well as asking them about their products, distributors should also take the time to ask what clients are looking to achieve with their edible products.

Asking about the date or dates of use, how the items will be used and the format of the event they will be used for is a great starting point. This will help you offer solutions that tick all boxes.

BARCODES

Originally developed in the nineties for labelling car parts, QR codes have enjoyed a resurgence in recent years providing a digital link that can be placed almost anywhere, and that includes on food.

Scannable QR code chocolates or cake toppers are just a couple of examples of how food can create a longer lasting connection with the person who consumes it.

The possibilities with food and drink are endless and bound only by imagination. So many distributors have been able

to enhance their offering to clients by including these exciting treats as part of quote proposals.

CREATIVITY

Food can be an important part of a creative diet – essential for anyone in marketing. Amino acids in protein, are essential for the production of neurotransmitters, that transmit signals between neurons in the brain. Some of these neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin, are associated with creativity and positive mood. Certain vitamins and minerals are also important for brain function and creativity.

As a company, Eat My Logo loves finding out how products are being used, to help it make sure it offers the perfect product for the occasion, as it learns more about the creative applications of its end users.

This approach has helped it launch memorable products including suitcase shaped biscuits to promote a new range of suitcases; sweetening a Wimbledon workplace event with cake jars, and treating delivery drivers over Christmas with oaty breakfast bars.

DRINKS

Don't forget the liquids. Eat My Logo has also launched a range of beers and ciders including 330ml cans of craft IPA and pilsner, and cider, branded with a full colour label wrap.

Promotional drinks specialist, Just a Drop can offer a plethora of liquid options including branded water in glass or plastic bottles, cans or Tetra Paks.

For those after a relaxing cuppa, The Sweet People offers its 'Tea-licious' eco bus box tin, which is filled with four Tetley tea bags and four shortbread biscuits.



EFFECTIVE

Lara Leech of Distinctive Confectionery says that after 25 years working at the coalface of the promotional confectionery and chocolate sector, the offering retains its appeal.

"More and more companies are ordering promotional sweet treats. These clearly work for them as we get many repeat orders, proving that anything edible is an excellent way to promote your business and keep clients or staff happy," she says.

FLEXIBLE

Everyone loves cake, and it is an incredibly popular and engaging giveaway at events, says Daniel Clarke, business development manager at Eat My Logo.

"Many distributors assume that branded cakes and biscuits sit on stands at exhibitions to entice people over, however only a few know the full extent that these unique products can be applied," he says.

In its almost 10 years in business, the company has noted many uses of branded cakes, biscuits and confections, including employee engagement; launches; anniversaries and milestones; thank yous; gestures, and meeting treats.

GIVING

Workplaces are choosing to treat their staff members, to help create a fun and positive culture. Edibles are a small gesture but they go a long way in helping businesses celebrate the people who work for them.

"Employee engagement and gifting is our number one purchasing reason," says Clarke. "With so many businesses focused on making sure staff are feeling positive in the workplace, offering treats as part of the working day, and special occasions is just a small way to create a fuzzy feeling for teams, and keep them on a high."

HYGIENE

This became paramount during the pandemic and having products individually wrapped is still a priority for many, as this keeps them fresh and hygienic. However, there has also been a return of sharing products such as large celebration cakes, which are a great cost-effective way to create an event centrepiece.

INFLATION

It has been hard to avoid the rise on prices for everything over the past year. A combination of factors, from supply chain difficulties, geopolitical problems, and the pandemic recovery have contributed to UK inflation hitting more than 11% at its peak. Food inflation was even higher, at

more than 19% earlier this year.

Those rates are coming down but they have pushed prices up. However, this doesn't seem to be putting companies off ordering, according to Leech.

"I think everyone expects to pay a bit more and companies are still putting aside a good budget for this type of giveaway, as they know it will have a positive impact for their company," she says.

JELLY BEANS

These chewable sweets were available as far back as the nineteenth century and remain a firm favourite with more than one hundred flavours.

As well as standbys such as Cherry and Buttered Popcorn, there have been some slightly less appetising versions for the foolhardy, including Dog Food, Toothpaste, and Rotten Egg. Dig in!

KNOCKOUT

Which is the response companies will hope to get from their tasty offerings, especially as we near Christmas when advent calendars come into their own. Chocolate is the traditional offering, and The Sweet People can create bespoke 3D moulded bars from its own production facility.



N is for New

Everyone loves novelty, and there is plenty to be had amid promotional food and drink players.

Distinctive Confectionery's Lara Leech, says: "We are very excited about our new, most sustainable premium advent calendars which are TUV stamped, as well as new chocolate additions to the advent range, such as Tony Choclonely extra-large premium adverts and different eco chocolate box options with branded chocolate inside. We have recently launched a new giant swirl lolly available in a large variety of flavours and your choice of colourways and printed chocolates in different flavours."

You can also provide a little Christmas cheer with boozy adverts containing a selection of beer, whisky, or gin. Cheers!

LITTLE AND OFTEN

The Sweet People notices a growing trend is the use of edible treats as branded reminders and rewards sent to workplaces, used in retail incentives and at events.

These small tokens of appreciation, packaged professionally and responsibly make a huge impression, particularly if used creatively such as through seasonal flavour combinations.

During winter for instance the range will introduce gold chocolate and truffles infused with whisky flavours, while earlier in the year during the King's Coronation the range contained clementine infused truffles which were popular too!

MADE IN BRITAIN

Given the growth in interest in food miles, the fact that many food and drink products are UK-made, is another feather in their cap.

Companies such as The Sweet People have invested heavily in its production and gone to great lengths to make its products more sustainable.

Its Eco Bus Box is made from sustainable, recyclable materials in the UK, and lovingly filled by the team in Leighton Buzzard. It can be branded with full colour digital printing on the top and to both sides of the box.



At Eat My Logo, the team has kept product development constantly moving. This year has seen new products including chocolate bars, macarons, funky cupcakes and confectionery.

Ahead of the Christmas rush, its launch schedule includes cheesecake jars; brandable candy canes; tray bakes, and individual mini loaf boxes filled with cake or chocolate brownie sponge topped with icing and a branding area.

OUTDOORS

The events sector was badly hit by the pandemic but has roared back as individuals and companies look to bring back face to face gatherings. It is estimated that as many as 14 million people attend festivals in the UK, which presents a mighty opportunity to engage with potential customers and clients.

More and more companies want inexpensive giveaways again such as mint tins, promotional lollies, sweets, branded drinks, promotional chocolate giveaways, and even ice creams for their events and exhibitions.

POST

With working from home a norm during Covid, companies looked for ways of reaching out to their dispersed workforces and the letterbox became the frontline of engagement.

Faced with an almost immediate end to their events business, companies created products such as brownies, flapjacks and biscuits that could be sent through the post to employees, encouraging a sense of belonging and even communal activity as teams gathered online for virtual meetings and breaks.

Postal products are still going strong for the WFH employee market, even as many workers are now back in the office on a fulltime or part time basis. The treat giftboxes that were popular during the height of the pandemic have now been replaced with larger orders delivered to office or workplace locations, according to Eat My Logo.



QUALITY

End users want a quality product that is cost effective to promote their company name, be it for an event, promotion, or exhibition, says Leech.

"Our best sellers tend to be products that have a lasting impact on clients such as our personalised biscuit tins and personalised premium advent calendars which sit on clients' desks for the whole of December, reminding them of the generosity of the sender and of their company name," she adds.

RELIABLE

Following Brexit, exporting to the EU became problematic

with increased red tape. However, the hunger for British products remains, and companies such as The Sweet People have adopted imaginative processes to make it smoother.

Advances in its edible product range are being mirrored by advances in production and fulfilment with the investment of its own EU based fulfilment house in the Netherlands. European based customers can now be served from within the eurozone, making access to treats, faster, cheaper and more reliable.

SUSTAINABLE

Food and drink companies have taken great strides to improve the carbon footprint of their products, such as replacing plastics and cellophane with more



sustainable options.

The Sweet People has revolutionised edible treats in the UK promo marketing sector since its inception and continues to innovate including advances in sustainable, customisable packaging that can be composted and recycled.

TRENDS

As well as looking for more eco-friendly and sustainable items, clients want products that reflect their company standards and the changing tastes of their audience.

Vegan and healthy products are also becoming more desirable, hence the rise of items such as energy bars, vegan biscuits and chocolate. Nobody need be left out.



UTENSILS

You can't eat without the proper kit and merchandise companies can help here too with promotional utensils.

CHX has launched a complete brandable cutlery set all contained in its own neat case ready for use and then stored for washing later. Lunch Mate is all made from recycled plastic and designed and made in the UK with four-branding areas available, all in full colour.

VALUE

Despite increasing costs in all areas, including ingredients, packaging, and delivery, suppliers have strived to protect clients and distributors as much as possible, says Clarke.

"We've been able to continue offering products at a great value price point, ensuring that end users can still enjoy the benefits of treats without exceeding budgets," he says.

WFFH

The past couple of years have seen a massive shift in how we work with more of us undertaking hybrid arrangements with at least some of our time spent working from home. This has made the task of reaching out to staff, clients and partners ever more important, and small, sweet treats have been one of the more popular ways of doing so.

"Mailings to individual clients are becoming more and more popular, especially as so many are still spending some days working from home," says Leech. "We offer a fulfilment service, so any of our products can be mailed out to staff or clients."

XMAS

All the signs are that events are back stronger than ever, according to Eat My Logo. As well as exhibitions,

Food & confectionery

conferences, and corporate celebrations, Christmas parties are back.

"Last Christmas was our busiest yet, with the hundreds of UK businesses choosing edible gifting to help spread festive cheer. This year we are predicting an even bigger take-up, as businesses celebrate a year of uncertainty and difficulty in some industries and areas. It is so important that celebrations take place, to keep spirits high," says Clarke.

Its Christmas gifting packs include fantastic selections including chocolates, confectionery, shortbread, and cookies, along with some extra special surprises.

YUMMY

Food is the only form of merchandise that triggers the taste sense, making it a powerful way to make an impression. Food has the unique ability to trigger positive endorphins, which will be directly associated with the brand image on the food item or packaging. Recipients won't forget the fuzzy feeling they got when they received a tasty treat.


ZAP

Food can very easily zap energy and excitement into any situation, whether it's an office celebration, exhibition or brand activation. Recipients and attendees are more likely to take pictures and post them to social media if there are eye-catching treats involved.



British made merchandise supporting people and planet


We don't simply plant a tree for each order, every single item we make from natural materials or sustainable metals counts to make a much bigger impact.



Your orders for metal badges and merchandise will offset over 1000 tonnes of carbon every year whilst improving people's lives through funding projects providing clean water and fuel efficient cook stoves. Every aluminium / steel badge, coaster & keyring counts.



Your orders for our eco awards and a wide choice of other products made from natural materials, wood and bamboo, will plant over 20,000 trees every year around the world. Our corporate membership of The Woodland Trust helps create, restore and protect UK woodland.



We sell all our aluminium & steel scrap from production and items returned at end of life to offset over 100 tonnes of carbon every year in projects supporting renewable energy.



We simply call all of this “**Sustainable British Manufacturing**”. We have videos, e-flip brochure and full details explaining how it all works and how your orders will make a real difference, with literally every item we make using sustainable materials, on an end user website at: www.sustainablebritishmanufacturing.info

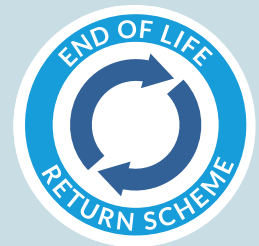
Your product choices can help make a real difference

carbon offsetting schemes. No loss in quality, no additional cost to you, no increased lead times, just environmental benefits from informed decision making.

If the product you buy is made from natural materials it contributes to our tree planting scheme. If the product you buy is made from sustainable metals it contributes to community and renewable energy



At end of useful life we are best placed to efficiently recycle many items and can dismantle many products for component reuse, the most sustainable practice of all. All earnings and savings made from this contribute to our carbon offset and tree planting schemes.



Our unique Ecopack Solutions plastic free packaging, has reduced our use of polybags by over 1.5 million every year. Supplied as standard with no plastic tapes or bubble wrap at all it is easily recycled in any office.



From design to delivery, everything we promote is manufactured, printed and finished at our UK ISO9001 + ISO14001 certified factory in Herefordshire. British made goods are without doubt better for the environment, UK economy & give you peace of mind knowing exactly where something is made.



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DOES YOUR BUSINESS ADD UP?

Companies can grow their profits through a better understanding of the financials. **Peter Hill** does the math

Let me start by admitting that I am an accountant. Not only that, but I am both a Certified and Chartered Accountant. I like numbers and I understand them. But that doesn't make me a dull person, honest!

What it does mean is that I understand how businesses make money, and perhaps just as importantly, where they lose it. I have presented countless seminars around the world (and virtually) on why businesses need to focus attention on the five ways to grow profits, but what I see over and over again, are businesses making decisions based on emotions and not facts.

Let's illustrate one of the common challenges I come across, with a real-life example.

A limited company – A Ltd – was a wholesale business turning over £10m. It sold mainly business to business, but with some consumer sales over the counter. Like many of this type, it gave discounts to customers against the list price of its goods.

When I became involved I asked how much was given away in discounts each year. The answer (in fact the answer I get from every business where I ask this question) was that it didn't know.

The first line of its accounting information was 'sales', i.e. the amount of all invoices raised at the prices agreed. So after a little investigation, we found the 'list price' of all items sold and compared this to actual sales, and discovered that the average discount given was almost exactly 20%.

So we now know that this £10m

business is actually a £12.5m business that gives away £2.5m in discounts each year. This was the second biggest cost in their business behind goods bought to sell. Bigger than payroll, bigger than all the property costs, bigger than all other running costs of the business added together. But remember, no one knew this number. It was not reported anywhere. No one had responsibility to control it. You would find it hard to get £10 from the petty cash tin for expenses, but you could give away £1,000 in discounts with the press of a button.

SO WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?

When we ran sales training for this business, we encountered the typical sales attitude of "If we are more expensive we will sell less". Therefore, the standard approach was "We need to be cheaper (give discounts) in order to sell more".

I get it. It is probably right at a conceptual level, but it is wrong at a practical level. The business was a 30% margin business. So something costing £70 was sold for £100 generating £30 gross profit. The sales argument was that if we charged say £90 (10% discount) we would sell more stuff. However, the business now only makes £20 profit on these items. So 1,000 of those items used to generate £30,000 of gross profit, and we now need to sell 1,500 items to make the same amount.

So, if the business discounted prices by just 10% to drive extra sales, it needs to sell 50% more of them just to get back to where it started. That simply doesn't happen.

So the emotional, instinctive judgement 'be cheaper = sell more, be more expensive = sell less', reaches the wrong conclusion in the absence of the financial reality.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

Let's look at another key area where facts change behaviours.

Another company – B Ltd – has a £6m business serving a wide range of customers. It has good financial information on profit margins, discounts being given and makes a healthy bottom line. But it assesses all this information on a 'whole business' basis.

One of our first tasks was to do a 'customer classification'. We split all the customers into three categories. Large and profitable accounts from important customers – group A. Small, low value and difficult customers – group C – and the core business of typical sized OK customers in the middle – group B.

What this showed (as is the case in the majority of businesses), is the A customers were small in number (less than 5% of all accounts), but accounted for a big slice of turnover (around 66% of total sales). We identified around 32% of turnover came from B customers and they were about 45% of all accounts. This left just 2% of turnover from around 50% of customers, from the C category.

SO HOW DOES THIS INFORMATION HELP?

Firstly, it shows how critical A customers are to the business and poses some important



questions. How often are they contacted? Who is building relationships with them? What ideas, input, advice and support are you offering to them?

In this particular business the answer was that A customers were getting the same treatment as everyone else, and that changed as soon as the analysis was done.

What it also highlighted was that over half of the customers reflected just 2% of all sales. You don't need to be an accountant to know that this was not a profitable part of the business. In fact, a further extension of the customer classification was to identify the profit generated by groups A, B and C. This showed that 85% of all profit came from A, 30% came from B, meaning that C was responsible for minus 15%. In other words, the company was losing money on this group of customers.

WHY ARE C GRADE CUSTOMERS LOSS MAKING?

Let's consider a typical interaction. The customer rings up and asks "have you got X". The answer is "yes, and the price is £y". The customer then asks for a quote to be e-mailed and accepts by return e-mail. Sale done.

Someone then picks, packs and ships. An invoice is raised and sent. A statement is raised and sent. The customer gets two months free credit. Even the simplest of transactions would cost say £5 in wages, overheads and finance costs. So, in this 25% gross profit business, any invoice below £20 makes no money. There were 14,000 transactions below £20 in the year we analysed.

The emotional response from sales people was that every sale contributed to the overall costs of the business, or they

might become a bigger spender next year. There are lots of excuses. The financial analysis simply shows they cost the business money. What can you do about this?

- Increase the margins for these customers so you do make a profit
- Minimum order quantities to make transactions more cost effective
- Charge more for delivery
- No credit
- Online accounts only to reduce transaction costs


And as a last resort, ask them to leave!

In the example above, the business would have increased profits by 15% by sacking 50% of its customers. What would that liberate in time and energy to serve or win better accounts?

These are just two simple illustrations of how good financial analysis affects the way a business should operate, and why 'emotional' decisions are so often wrong. Many of the businesses we work with don't have adequate financial information to make the right decisions, they don't train their team to understand the mathematics and financial consequences of discounts or small order levels, and they look at the business as one single entity making

'averaged' decisions on how they serve customers rather than differentiating between the top, middle and bottom categories.

If you would like to know more about the 5 ways to grow your business profits, then read, *Pricing for Profit* (available on Amazon) or attend the upcoming BPMA member webinar on 7 September. Visit bpma.co.uk/ events to register for this.

Peter Hill has been advising clients of Mark Holt & Co for more than 30 years, guiding them on all aspects of their business and personal financial affairs. Contact him on phill@markholt.co.uk or 01752 229079. 

Your Brand Ambassador

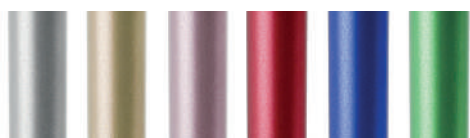
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A low-angle photograph of the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel in London, showing its intricate Gothic Revival architecture with red brick, white stone accents, and multiple spires against a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

BPMA Member Networking Event Sustainable Future of the Industry

1 December 2023

St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, Euston Road, London

The BPMA are hosting another landmark Member Networking Event to bring members together to meet and discuss the sustainable future of the industry on Friday 1st December. This is a morning event starting with a sponsored networking session followed by a workshop to deep dive into the next sustainable steps for members. On the same day, we're also hosting the BPMA Product Awards presentation to round off a day of progress and celebration!

Hosted in the spectacular surroundings of St Pancras Hotel, this must attend event is now open for bookings. For ticket options for the Networking Event and Product Awards Lunch, please visit **bpma.co.uk/events** to secure your places.

Inspire | Connect | Educate

Booking Terms & Conditions apply. Networking Event: only open to BPMA members. Product Awards Lunch: open to the industry. See **bpma.co.uk/events** for more information. Last date for Networking Event and Awards Lunch Bookings: 13th November 2023. For sponsorship opportunities (members only, first come, first served basis), please contact Tom Robey on **01372 371183** or email **tom@bpma.co.uk**.

Premier back on the acquisition trail

Essex-based Premier Print & Promotion has announced its thirteenth acquisition in the shape of Manchester merchandise distributor LogoX.

The company was founded by Sibby Khan and has been managed recently by

his wife Yasmin.

After 30 years running the company, the couple have decided on the deal with Premier to allow them to concentrate on their other business of providing residential care for underprivileged children.

Premier founder, Jamie Marshall, said: "I have known Sibby for many years and when the opportunity came up, I was pleased we could put a deal together. I'm excited to get to know the LogoX customers and introduce them to Premier."

The deal follows the acquisition of M-Four Promo by Premier at the beginning of 2023.

Marshall said that Premier remains open to further confidential conversations concerning acquisition opportunities.



B Corp status for growing business

BPMA Accredited supplier Everything Seeds has been certified as a B Corp with a score of 95.9.

The certification is awarded to companies that meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

Rigorous assessment involves more than 200 questions covering every aspect of business, from its

environmental impact to how it treats its team.

Securing it has taken Everything Seeds years of teamwork and commitment to the mission of using business as a force for good.

The company commended the efforts of its team and the support of its our promotional merchandise distributors, and said that it would continue to improve and elevate its standards.

Coast looks to a bright future

Coast Promotions has announced it has joined the Galpeg programme to help deliver greater value and service excellence to its clients.

As part of the Galpeg programme, Coast Promotions will continue to operate as an independent business while benefiting from an array of support services that will free it up to focus on its core strength of sales.

These services include streamlined invoicing, efficient order follow-up, preferential pricing and idea and resource exchanges.

Andy Sheridan, co-director at Coast Promotions, said: "Our decision to affiliate with Galpeg was driven by the myriad of services they offer. These valuable resources will empower us to enhance our customer interactions and overall efficiency. With Galpeg's support, we are confident in reaching new heights of success."

Co-director Jayne Jones added: "We're really excited about the potential benefits this collaboration will bring. Working with Galpeg will allow us to elevate our service offerings and create lasting impact for our clients".

Galpeg managing director, Paul Green, said: "Coast

Promotions' commitment to quality and customer satisfaction aligns perfectly with our own values, making them an ideal addition to the Galpeg network. I look forward to the mutual growth and success this collaboration will bring."

Founded in 2006 and based on the Kent coast, Coast Promotions is a family-run business that serves a diverse clientele, ranging from multinational corporations to local businesses.



Improvements for Laltex peak period

Laltex Group has announced changes to its production capacity, warehousing, and customer service in preparation for its end of year busy season.

A second shift, five days a week, has been introduced at the in-house print room to increase capacity and reduce overall lead times. Keeping more orders in-house will also ensure tighter quality control.

The company has made a six-figure investment to its warehouse to increase racking locations by 1,800 to a total

of 14,000 spaces, allowing for larger stock quantities and reducing congestion.

A container management system has also been introduced to improve the flow of incoming stock.

A further 20 people have been added to the team to cope with the peak season, and a new, standardised training process has been introduced to close any team member knowledge gaps. Supervisors in the in-house print room have also undertaken specialist training.



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ON A CHARGE

It's a plug but not as you know it. USB-C plugs are the new promotional charging companion says **Matt Pluckrose**



Charging your device is getting easier. With EU regulations changing for the good of the consumer and the environment even the likes of Apple is now changing all its devices to USB-C ports and looking for ways to charge them more quickly.

USB-C chargers are more convenient as they are smaller and a more powerful way to charge all our devices quicker and safer than ever. Like all technology advances, this opens up opportunities for our industry as such sought after accessories make for great promotional gadgets to use in marketing campaigns and as rewards or gifts, delivering a long term, higher return on investment. Products with long life cycles such as this are also better for the environment.

HOW TO CHOOSE

Smartphones, tablets, laptops and accessories let you work, play, and stay in touch, anytime, anywhere – until your battery runs down. You want to make sure you can charge your devices whenever you need to, and charge them fast. If you're ready for a better alternative to your old plugs, it's time to look at upgrading to the right USB-C wall charger.

WHAT IS A USB-C CHARGER?

A USB-C charger uses the USB-C power delivery (USB-C PD) standard, enabling slimmer and lighter gadgets than chargers from the past. But don't let the size fool you. USB-C chargers also deliver more powerful, faster charging.

KEY BENEFITS

They are faster than old basic chargers as they recognise your device's power requirements and adjust to power it safely in as little time as possible. With a USB-C PD charger, your smartphone can charge up to 160% faster than a charger with 5-watt capacity.

A 20-watt USB-C PD charger powers an iPhone battery from 0% to 50% in 24 minutes compared to 63 minutes with a 5-watt charger.

They also have universal compatibility. Apple, Samsung, Google, Sony, LG, HP, Lenovo, DELL, Microsoft, and Nintendo all use the USB-C PD protocol.

You can find a USB-C charger that provides the wattage you need for fast charging of any device. Refer to the wattage of the charger to see if it's right for your device.



USB-C Wall Charger Wattage	Devices
18-27W	Smartphones, cameras, drones
27-45W	Tablets, small laptops
45-100W	Large laptops, displays

Next generation USB-C chargers also need the right cable to work to their full capability. Larger laptops and displays need to be paired with a 5A cable to support charging up to 100 watts, instead of using a standard 3A cable that only supports charging up to 60 watts or standard cables that only allow charging to 20W. So, look carefully at the charging cable and opt for the Fast Charge cable to go with your USB-C wall charger.

ALL WAYS ARE UP

USB-C wall chargers are more user-friendly than USB-A chargers. Symmetrical USB Type-C charger plugs don't require you to orient the cable in a certain way. With the reversible connector feature, you can easily connect your universal laptop charger or phone charger to all USB-C cables.

MORE POWER

Some USB-C chargers are small, sleek and easy to carry. The reason is a material called Gallium Nitride (GaN), which is now used in semiconductors. Space-age GaN, used

on solar arrays and satellites, is a crystalline material that conducts electricity faster but also generates less heat. That means components within the charger can be closer together, and chargers can be smaller and still meet safety standards.

SINGLE AND MULTI-PORT OPTIONS

If you want to charge a smartphone, tablet, laptop, and more, a dual USB-C charger or multi-port charger is a smart investment and a more useful promotional gadget. A multiport wall charger allows you to charge all of your devices at the same time.

A TIP ON BRANDING

Add names and logos to the USB-C plugs and you will guarantee your plug will be viewed very differently in future. Keep up with tech trends and you will be ready to assist your client with their next gadget accessory brief.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas 



MARKETING
CAMPAIGNS
OF THE YEAR
2023-24

OPEN FOR ENTRIES

This year, we're opening the Marketing Campaigns of the Year entries earlier than usual. Open to BPMA supplier and distributor members only, the Marketing Campaigns of the Year will be celebrated at the Annual Awards Dinner in January 2024. Visit bpma.co.uk/mccategories for more information, what's involved plus helpful guidance. Closing date for all entries: 6th October 2023.

Inspire | Connect | Educate

Terms & Conditions apply. Only open to BPMA members. Visit bpma.co.uk/mccategories for more information. No charge to enter. Promoter: British Promotional Merchandise Association Ltd (BPMA). Opens 01.09.23 closes 06.10.23.





BPMA helps members take steps forward in sustainability at Merchandise World

Be sure to head over to the BPMA's stand (number 36) at Merchandise World this September, to find out more about how the Association is supporting its members on the road to net zero.

There will be two talks on the day with BPMA Board Director and BPMA Sustainability Champion, Melissa Chevin and CEO Carey Trevill explaining more about the StepForward Pledge.

The Pledge was launched this summer and with over a third of members signed up already, the first advocates of the Pledge report finding the process both helpful for planning their



businesses and revealing areas where action can be taken.

A first talk at 10am is open to anyone attending the show and is focused on why the Pledge is important. The second talk is a focused workshop for members taking the Pledge who want to ask more questions. These

short informative sessions are open house and all are welcome, although it should be noted that only members can take the Pledge.

Attendees for the show can register ahead of time by visiting the BPMA events page at bpma.co.uk/events and request a 1:1 meeting with the BPMA team on the day.

Membership update

The following companies have not updated their BPMA memberships:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| • ARC Textiles | Services |
| • AT Cross | • Kwik Skirts |
| • Atlantic | • MacDonald |
| Access/ | Fyne |
| Rocketbook | • Northern |
| • BIDBI | Flags |
| • Branding 365 | • OfficeBase |
| • Brandstore | Ltd TA REDBOX |
| • Bursali Towels | • Outdoor and |
| • Coast | Cycle Concepts |
| Promotions Ltd | Ltd TA Cotswold |
| • Encore | Outdoor |
| Catalogue | • SB Print |
| Group/ | • Scribes Digital |
| Manchester | Print |
| Printers | • Synergraphics |
| • Envelopes Ltd | • The |
| • Insignia16 | Promoman |
| • Kjt | • Tomato |
| Management | Source |
| Ltd T/A Redfern | • Mercharoo/ |
| Marking | thehatch.co.uk |

New starters at the BPMA

The BPMA has been on a hiring spree this summer to build the team and deliver the extensive programme for 2023/24 and beyond. New hires for membership, compliance and sustainability, marketing and events join Carey, Tom and Georgie in early September. If you're attending Merchandise World, head over to say hello.

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 **berghaus**

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 **Jack Wolfskin**

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CLOSING THE DEAL

Succession planning need not be radical, but it pays to know what options are open to you, says **Paul Green**

Once a decision to sell your business has been made, the next stage is to carefully consider the process. Whether the sale is urgent or not, a lack of planning and understanding of the options available may well lead to disappointment in the final outcome.

It does not matter whether the business is a one-person operation or has multiple shareholders, or is with or without staff. A strong track record of sales and profits will always attract potential buyers.

BROKER CHOICE

A commonly chosen route is to engage a business broker. However, this option can often be expensive and cumbersome, with a great deal of emphasis on the preparation of due diligence materials.

Business brokers don't necessarily have adequate knowledge of values of businesses in a particular market sector and end up applying inappropriate calculations especially for smaller companies.

Once you sign up with a broker, it is not dissimilar to using an estate agent and you have little control over the quality of the leads and can easily end up wasting a lot of time and effort.

FISHING APPEALS

When considering a sale due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, divorce or financial difficulties, it is important that the reason is not disclosed to avoid

adversely affecting any potential offers.

Many owners receive unsolicited letters from 'interested parties' eager to buy their business. These companies or individuals are often 'fishing' for distressed selling opportunities and seek to have conversations to establish the motivations for a sale. They also often seek to finance a purchase out of future generated profits, if they can.

Using a business broker can be helpful where a sale is unexpected and distressing as they can handle the entire process on your behalf with no need to engage directly with interested parties.

OTHER OPTIONS

A more straightforward and cleaner route would be to sell the business to one or more existing employees or to a competitor within the industry. Both options have their merits and which one to go with depends on whether the sale is urgent or can be planned in advance, such as in the case of a retirement.

If the sale arises unexpectedly, employees can generally be trusted and may show genuine understanding of the unfortunate circumstances. This option has several benefits. Firstly, the current employees are already familiar with the company's operations, culture, and values, which can provide a sense of continuity for both the business and its stakeholders.

There's a higher likelihood that they genuinely understand the reasons for the sale and may be more invested in maintaining the company's success

and reputation. This can lead to a smoother transition for customers, suppliers, and other business relationships.

TRADE SALE

Selling to a competitor limits the time-wasting factor but, be prepared for the valuation to be based on a mixture of current and future profitability and the likelihood that the dynamics of your involvement during the selling period may well change and not necessarily for the better. For example, the competitor might want to integrate your company quickly, which could lead to changes in management, operations, or even layoffs.

It's essential to be prepared for such possibilities and ensure that any agreements made during the negotiation phase consider the well-being of both your employees and the company's long-term prospects.

CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

In most cases, business owners aim to sell up in the most tax efficient way to capitalise on what has been many years of sweat and toil and to go with what appears to be the best financial deal. However, what may seem like a good deal at first glance, may not necessarily be the case. Seeking advice from multiple sources, careful consideration and a clear vision of your desired outcome for the business are crucial. The ultimate goal is to achieve as many of these objectives as possible.

The structure of any deal is key and having a thorough understanding of the available options and their individual merits and choosing the right one, is often more important than the price. Remember, all that glitters is not necessarily gold.

Paul Green is managing director of the Galpeg Network which provides back-office support for promotional merchandise distributors. 



SUSTAINED COMMITMENT

Embracing a sustainable marketing strategy can reap great potential rewards for businesses. Don't delay, start today, says **Melissa Chevin**



In a world where purpose increasingly matters almost as much as product, how can you ramp up enthusiasm for sustainability within your business?

Although my own expertise began in external communications, almost half of what I do now revolves around communicating social and environmental purpose internally. So, in this column, I'd like to share some tips on how you can drive purpose within your business – and, at the same time, create a better and more sustainable future.

On a mission

While some might dismiss mission statements as meaningless words mainly catering to millennials, for purpose-driven brands they are extremely significant.

Your mission statement is the 'why' behind your company's existence. It all starts here.

Unlike a vision statement, which sets out aspirations, the mission statement (together with your company values) serves as the foundation of your operational framework.

It goes beyond mere catchphrases – it's about effectively communicating values to your team and ingraining them into your day-to-day operations.

Why purpose matters

Purpose serves as an invisible compass, aligning employees, suppliers and customers with your company's reason for existence.

It also drives motivation within a company and helps to attract top talent, especially from the pool of socially-conscious Gen Z and millennial workers. A company's culture is often a key to its success, so emphasise these values when recruiting.

Have a strategy

Effectively communicating purpose internally demands continuous effort and involvement from all levels of your organisation. While business leaders naturally set the tone, it's crucial that the entire company embraces its ethos. So here are some ideas to help you succeed:

- Establish a sustainability team. Hold regular meetings to create action points, and actively monitor and measure momentum and progress.
- Use engaging visuals, such as videos and charts, to communicate your company's sustainability efforts and keep employees engaged.
- Create sustainability-focused reports, encompassing Sustainable Development Goals and Global Reporting Initiative frameworks. These boost transparency and can form the basis for 'concise' internal and external communications. Note that adjective – keep these brief and to the point.
- Identify and encourage the sustainability champions within your business. Offer incentives to those employees who contribute to your sustainability goals.
- Be real. Acknowledge that perfection is unrealistic and be transparent about your sustainability challenges. Talking about room for improvement helps secure the truth of both customers and employees.
- Provide education and training to deepen employees' understanding of sustainability.

Employees who are better informed often see a positive impact of this training on both their work and personal lives.


- Use company newsletters, intranets and meetings to discuss sustainability and purpose. How about an 'eco' pub quiz or an away day to help showcase your purpose-driven initiatives?

Tell the world

Once your sustainability efforts are well established, create a dedicated section on your website to showcase both your initiatives and achievements – and the areas ripe for improvement. This strategy of public transparency also helps your workforce to believe your commitment to these causes is genuine.

Ready, steady, go!

Finally, don't wait for some perfect moment to begin your journey. Purpose-driven initiatives fuel growth, inspire innovation and foster a culture of sustainability that can set your business apart from its competitors.

• **Melissa Chevin is BPMA board director and marketing consultant with GF Consulting – mchevin@gf-consult.co.uk** 



Second acquisition for LSi in the south

LSi has announced the purchase of London-based promotional merchandise distributor Propaganda with effect from 11 August.

Lloyd Simpson, LSi managing director, said he was thrilled by this latest acquisition which follows the purchase of Sussex Promotions last year and further strengthens LSi's presence in London and the south of England.

"Propaganda is another well-established distributor that shares our values in delivering an exceptional customer experience and we look forward to introducing Team LSi, and everything we can do, to our new customers," he added.

Propaganda founder and managing director Stephen Taylor said: "After 30 years it was exceptionally important to find the right partner that mirrored our core values of providing outstanding customer service and value add products. LSi is that perfect fit, and I leave knowing our customers are left in very safe hands."

Taylor, who also founded promotional

sweet business, Sweet Concepts, said he felt the time was right to move on from promotional merchandise and explore new opportunities at home and abroad.

LSi is on the lookout for further acquisitions and Simpson said companies could contact him in confidence to discuss possibilities.



Jutebag steps up to silver

Jutebag has gone from bronze to silver with its Ecovadis certification, a recognition of its dedication to environmentally sound business practices.

The company's performance increased by 15% within the certification standard, putting it in the top 25% of more than a million businesses assessed worldwide.

Director Parit Shah said: "This new silver rating is a testament to the efforts the entire Jutebag team has put into sustainability across our operations. I'm incredibly proud of the progress achieved, and we look forward to continuing our internal work as well as supporting our customers to achieve their sustainability goals."

By forging sustainable partnerships with suppliers and distributors, Jutebag aims to substantially reduce its environmental impact with a commitment to sustainability that encompasses environmental stewardship, promoting social well-being and strong communities.

"For example, we support social and solidarity sourcing initiatives which help people from vulnerable communities to get a job and receive a decent income," said Shah. "One of our latest collections of retail bags is hand-stitched by people with disabilities. The profits received from the sale of each bag goes towards improving facilities at a SEND centre that caters to special education and disability needs."

Jutebag is also working hard to reduce its carbon footprint, with the company actively seeking to measure its global greenhouse gas emissions.

"This will enable us to start working on our path to decarbonisation, with initiatives such as an e-waste recycling scheme, and a commitment to reduce business travel by air compared with pre-pandemic times. Our supply chain is also committed to carbon neutrality and renewable energy."

Sustainability nomination for Geiger

Geiger has been named as a finalist in the Lloyds Bank British Excellence Awards for Sustainable Business of the Year 2023.

This reflects its values and highlights the role it is playing in putting sustainability, social and environmental impact at the heart of the promotional merchandise industry.

The Lloyds awards celebrate the best of British business, culminating in a ceremony in November. This July, Geiger announced it had achieved the Platinum Ecovadis rating for the second year, strengthening its sustainability stance further.

The company claims advanced



reporting and management systems demonstrate how sustainability is embedded in all its operational activities and aligned with commercial objectives.

Procurement director, Steve Wickham said: Being shortlisted for Sustainable Business of the Year is amazing recognition for

the effort of our team to double down on our Sustainability Pledge and embed sustainability in everything we do. It is also a marker for the promotional merchandise industry and how we are demonstrating that desirable merchandise products can be produced responsibly and with the smallest possible environmental footprint."

Kingly webinar examines sustainability

Textile supplier Kingly is holding a webinar looking at how sustainability is shaping the promotional industry.

Kingly CEO Rob Armour (right) will lead the webinar on 4 September, covering topics such as what makes a promotional product sustainable, and how to spot greenwashing.

The event will also cover the benefits of using sustainable products and how businesses can move towards carbon neutrality.

Delegates can sign up to the event at Wearekingly.com.



IT'S TIME TO SHINE

The latest BPMA Product Awards are a chance of the industry to show its creativity and innovation. Don't miss out on the opportunity to take part

The BPMA Product Awards are open for entries from 1 September, so it's time for the industry to get its best product stories ready to impress the judging panels.

"The Product Awards are a fantastic celebration of the most innovative and creative products in our industry and we're looking forward to seeing the calibre of entries this year after a highly competitive Awards last year," said BPMA CEO Carey Trevill. "We've got over 50 judges lined up again this year, ready to assess the entries and with a range of categories to suit every product."

WHO CAN ENTER?

There are 13 categories and entries are open to all BPMA member Suppliers and 'Qualifying Suppliers'. 'Qualifying Suppliers' are those companies with registered status in the UK or another country, who have been trading for more than 12 months, trade in the UK market and are classed as Trade Only or Multi-Channel. These Awards are not open to Distributors or Agencies.

In addition, the Marketing Campaigns of the Year categories are now open for BPMA members only with entry from 1 September. More information about all categories is available at bpma.co.uk/productawards.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR 2023-24

This year, all entrants are required to enter and submit a minimum of 1 x entry into a 'Category A' award category before access to a 'Category B' special award is granted.



This is to ensure all products are entered into the most appropriate product category before entering a special category. The categories are set out below.

The Product Awards are open to all promotional merchandise products on the market and with the exception of Category B criteria, do not need to be new to the market but must be able to evidence the date on the market. Please see the guidance notes and terms for more details of on the market dates.

UPDATED CATEGORIES

There are 13 categories split across 11 'A' Categories and 2 'B' Categories to enter. Please note suppliers must enter and submit a Category 'A' entry before access will be granted to Category 'B'.


Category A

- Apparel Product of the Year
- Award & Gifting Product of the Year
- Bag & Folder Product of the Year
- Drinkware Product of the Year
- Exhibition Product of the Year
- Food & Drink Product of the Year
- Health & Travel Product of the Year
- Writing Instrument Product of the Year
- Stationery Product of the Year
- Technology Product of the Year
- Work & Play Product of the Year

Category B

- Innovation of the Year
- UK Made Product of the Year

PRODUCT AWARDS GRAND PRIX

An overall winner will be chosen from all winning entries across the 13 categories, awarded on an accumulator points basis. The Grand Prix Award will be revealed at the BPMA Awards in January 2024. Please note all entries are subject to Terms & Conditions plus an entry charge. Details can be found at bpma.co.uk/productawards. 



Mark the key dates

The timeline for this year's BPMA Product Awards is as follows:

- 1 September:** open for entry
- 11 September:** BPMA member early bird entry rate closes at 17:00
- 6 October:** entries close at 17:00
- 23 October:** shortlist announced
- 30 October:** branded samples to be submitted for shortlisted entries
- December 2023:** Winners will be announced! Look out for a special event announcement!





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OPEN FOR ENTRIES

The BPMA Product Awards are now open.

The Product Awards are open to all BPMA member suppliers and *qualifying suppliers. Please visit bpma.co.uk/productawards for more information about how to enter, categories plus helpful guidance. Closing date for entries: 6th October 2023.

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*Qualifying suppliers must be registered in the UK or another country, have been trading for more than 12 months, classed as Trade Only or Multi-Channel Suppliers. Not open to Distributors or Agencies. Terms and conditions apply. Charges apply. See bpma.co.uk/productawards. Promoter: British Promotional Merchandise Association Ltd (BPMA). Opens 01.09.23 closes 06.10.23.

