



A YEAR FOR THANKS

Gifting is back... and it's green **p16**



**A TIME LIKE
NO OTHER**
HOW 2020
UNFOLDED FOR THE
INDUSTRY **p11 >**



**THE CASE FOR
MERCHANDISE** BPMA WINS
ONLINE DEBATE **p14**

BREXIT FAQs WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW **p28**

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

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WELCOME



Welcome to the first *Product Media* of 2021. At the start of 2020, the industry was looking ahead at a very lucrative year crammed with events, orders and what seemed like another huge growth year. A few weeks in and every country in the world was just starting a very long journey to battle a virus which threatened our way of life, economy and livelihoods. As we enter the new year, we are still on that journey but with better days on the horizon.

With fortitude that many outside our sector envy, we have kept innovating

and moving ahead despite all the odds. Now preparing to answer the pent-up demand as live events start to open up, end users want us on our toes to deliver. With many regrouping and refocusing their businesses, capacity and response is geared for a slicker, streamlined distribution into the market.

The Brexit transition period has also ended with many loose ends meaning firms were left hanging to the last minute for long-term critical details. No matter how you have viewed Brexit, the process of doing business outside our borders has changed forever and with much to get used to, see our source article (p28) for help on the most common questions. We also recommend keeping

up to date by visiting Government pages dedicated to supporting the process. Things are still changing.

Accelerated focus on areas such as sustainable packaging and the explosion in reward and recognition is investigated in this issue (p16). Highlighting trends, expectations and warnings from sector experts to be mindful of planning ahead with capacity still stretched.

Look out for features on our new education programme revamp (p33), how we won our first Debating Society debate (p14) and a review of 2020 for the BPMA (p11), completing my first year as CEO.

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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WCM+A gains Made in Britain status

Merchandise manufacturer, WCM+A has joined Made in Britain, the organisation that recognises British made goods.

The Herefordshire company, that specialises in badges, awards and promotional merchandise, adds the Made in Britain membership to other accreditations, such as ISO9001 quality and ISO14001 environmental certifications, and SEDEX-registration. It is also a BPMA Patron and Charter Supplier, as well as a Briman



member.

Jules Adam, director, WCM&A, said: "At a time when it is more important than ever to support UK manufacturing, WCM+A Ltd are very proud to join. We are very

excited to be a part of this rapidly growing community."

Made in Britain brings together the British manufacturing community, and allows members to display its mark, which shows that members meet its criteria. Members must be manufacturers of physical goods where raw materials or components have undergone a substantial and transformative change as a result of manufacturing processes in Great Britain.

Mantis World says no to forced labour



India and Tanzania. The supply chain is backed up from field to finish by trusted third-party certification bodies.

This year, the company introduced QR codes to its garments to allow the wearer to see the journey of production and understand the origins of the cotton used.

The company said that it "will continue working with organisations who are investigating and shining a light on the human rights abuses the Uighur people are facing and to use their voice as a company to speak up against the atrocities being committed".

Mantis World, which is celebrating 20 years in business, has a longstanding commitment to principles of fairness. The company pledged early on to never buy cotton from Uzbekistan, where forced labour of adults and children had been widely reported, and intensive over-irrigation was causing enormous environmental damage.

It is a member of pressure groups, Textile Exchange and Fashion Revolution, that advocate for change in the garment industry.



Mantis World has called on textile manufacturers and consumers buyers to take responsibility to make the right choice about where raw materials are sourced, and where clothes come from.

The promotional clothing company has drawn attention to the fact that an estimated one in five cotton garments

globally has been produced in the Xinjiang province of China.

Human rights groups believe that more than one million people from the Uighur community, a minority ethnic group who have traditionally called the province home, have been detained by the Chinese government.

Detainees have described being separated from their families and being held in detention centres. Reports have cited harassment, sexual assault, torture and even forced sterilisation as part of their experience.

They are also reported as being used as an unpaid workforce, in manufacturing of tech and textiles.

Mantis World has a traceability map to show where its cotton is sourced and claims that its cotton comes only from certified and known organic farmers in



New recruits at JuteBag Trade

JuteBag Trade has added two new recruits to strengthen its offering to promotional product distributors.

Lee Thompson (pictured), the company's new trade sales manager, has worked on the supplier side of the industry for almost three decades.

Meanwhile, Binisha Shetty has joined in the role of production and sourcing manager, bringing more than a decade of experience in industry logistics perspective, as well as delivering high profile, bespoke campaigns.

Parit Shah, director, JuteBag Trade said that the company has recently seen a surge in the popularity of sustainable bags for life.

"Obviously, it's important to have an expert team on board to manage and exceed our customers' expectations, and adding Lee and Binisha to our staff is a big part of making that happen."



BPMA member offer from Dectek

In a further acknowledgement of the importance of the BPMA to the success of the promotional merchandise sector, Dectek Trade Print is launching the first in a series of BPMA member benefits.

For the whole of 2021, and subject to standard credit checks, eligible BPMA distributors can receive 60-day payment terms on all purchases from Dectek Trade Print.

The company offers a wide and increasing range of specialist printed products which includes labels, badges, coasters, fridge magnets, short run mugs and banners.

David Carter from Dectek said: "Business will be hard fought over the coming months and everyone will have a close eye on cash flow. We are supporting the premier sales force within our industry by offering them a highly valuable business tool that will help win new and secure existing contracts."

The Dectek Trade Print web portal is now open, showcasing its product catalogue and range of distributor resources.



Steel City fitness challenge raises spirits and funds for charities

Sheffield distributors Steel City Marketing marked its 40th year in business with a month of Zoom workouts that raised money for local charities.

The 40x4 Challenge asked participants to do four sets of exercise every day for 40 seconds for a month. Wellbeing experts, fitness gurus and business leaders joined the sessions providing motivational tips and messages during the mini fitness sessions.

As well as helping individuals start the day feeling physically and mentally energised, promotional prizes were on offer. Three charities benefited: Cavendish Cancer Care, The Children's Hospital Charity, and Weston Park Cancer Charity.

James Biggin, managing director, Steel City Marketing, said: "What started as a fun Joe Wicks style workout to raise morale with other businesses, developed into a wonderful community and became a morning ritual for myself and those involved. I was blown away by the support we received, in particular from our suppliers The Laltex Group and PF Concept who generously donated to the three life changing charities we raised funds for."

Steel City Marketing managed to exceed its target and raised £1,211.25 for the three chosen charities.

The company is looking to run a one-off 40x4 Christmas Challenge special.



PSI moves to new dates in May

PSI is the latest trade show to switch dates in the light of COVID prevention measures in Germany.

The show, which also includes PromoTex Expo and viscom, was planned to take place from 12-14 January 2021 in Düsseldorf. It has been postponed to 18-20 May 2021.

Organiser Reed Exhibitions Deutschland said that it hoped the early announcement would allow time for the impact of COVID-19 to stabilise and for the event to continue safely.

Michael Freter, managing director, Reed, said: "With the pandemic once again spreading throughout Europe, medium-term economic planning is challenging, including the organisation

of PSI, PromoTex Expo and viscom. After consultation with our exhibitors and partners, and with their support, we have made this difficult decision to postpone."

Freter expressed his disappointment that the show could not go ahead, but said the top priority was the safety and health of exhibitors and visitors.

"We are confident that the postponement of PSI, PromoTex Expo and viscom to next May will provide the industries with the best possible conditions for a successful event, in order to provide the urgently needed impetus for a new start as soon as the crisis subsides," he added.

Planned online elements of the show are also postponed.



First Edition offers British made gift choice

First Editions has launched a range of themed gift sets featuring its popular AquaMax Hydrate branded bottles.

Launched to give an impactful choice ahead of the Christmas period, the sets are suitable for strategic gift-giving throughout the year. The bottle is made from BPA-free Tritan and can be individually personalised.

The Sweet Treats Selection teams the

bottle with a hand-made chocolate bar, from the Cocoa Horizon Foundation, and a pouch of Jelly Bean Factory sweets. The set is packaged in a 100% FSC-sourced gift box, branded edge-to-edge in full colour and 10p from each set sold will be donated to an NHS charity.

A Work From Home gift box contains a mouse mat and drinks coaster, available in more than 350 colour combinations. Each

item can be branded in full-colour digital print.

The Grow Your Own Selection gift box includes a seed stick pack.

Mark Alderson, operations director, First Editions, said: "We're really happy with our new gift sets – they have something to please everyone. They're 100% FSC-sourced, proudly British-made and can be branded 360 degrees, with a competitive lead time of two weeks."

Hay Hampers takes sustainable hamper to next level

Hay Hampers is launching a gourmet gift hamper created with sustainability in mind.

The company introduced the first sustainable Christmas hamper into the British market in 2016, and the new Because We Care hamper goes further in covering the reduce, reuse and recycle message.

Because We Care contains exclusively British-made food to reduce the impact of food miles. It is fundamentally a cheese hamper with two cheeses, a soft one and a mature one, with crackers and chutneys plus a variety of sweet biscuits, sweets and jam.

The deli food comes from small family businesses local to Hay Hampers, and there is no palm oil contained in any of the products.

The packaging of every item is recyclable, with cellophane use minimised. The open woven basket it comes in can be reused in a variety of practical and useful ways.

Paul Yeates, managing director, Hay Hampers, said: "For us, sustainability is key and when we are brainstorming new and exciting ideas to bring to market, this is always one of the key factors in that process."



TRANSFER MARKET

Technology moves on, but that doesn't make other options redundant. **Clive Allcott** explains why transfer printing is still relevant



So, with the advancement of technology and the introduction of direct to garment (DTG) has the old favourite of transfer printing kept up with the times?

Transfer printing is a term used to describe any printing technique that begins on a non-textile surface before being transferred on to the host product.

In fact, the majority of transfers are created on vinyl, which is later sealed into the garment fibres using a heat press. Transfer print should always be considered when there are multiple colours, photographic imagery or lower quantities.

Transfer printing papers or vinyls have been evolving over the years and today offer a great printing solution. These vinyls are soft feeling, flexible, washable and durable and offer a branding solution that can be used on a multiple of products including

bags, shoes and garments.

While DTG offers good quality printing, it still has limitations in application, such as garment composition and pre-treatment prior to printing.

If you are looking for an affordable branding method that offers great results you won't go wrong with transfer print.

With all the development over the years, transfer printing is now a versatile form of garment decoration, which is a cost-effective, durable and a high-quality method for a wide range of garments or accessories. Take a browse below, look at the features of transfer printing and become the expert.

Advantages of transfer prints

- It is cost-efficient for small quantity orders (especially when

compared to DTG printers).

- Certain effects and textures are only available by transfer.
- The set-up costs are lower.
- There are a great variety of effects and textures from fluorescents to metallics and even velvet.
- It is suitable for full-colour printing.
- It has the ability to be printed on a range of items.
- It is capable of producing

high quality and complex graphics such as gradients with unlimited options.

- Vibrant and limitless colours.
- Outstanding brightness on to dark colours.
- It is washable at 60 degrees.

Ask your branding specialist what transfer options they have available.

Happy Selling
Clive, The Clothing Guru. 



Gold standard for new venture

Former Brand Addition account director, Nicky Gold, has launched his own distributor business with Galpeg Network providing administrative and financial services.

Gold, who has been working in the industry for 35 years, has called the new company NRG Promotional Solutions Ltd.

"During my time in the promo business, I've seen huge changes in styles, trends and the demands of clients," he said. "The list of product options is endless but my experience, creativity and sourcing expertise will allow me to bring clients solutions which are on budget and which fit the brand's marketing strategy."

Gold added that being able to outsource routine admin tasks to the Galpeg team would allow him to concentrate on delivering solutions and building his client base.

Paul Green, managing director of Galpeg, said: "We're delighted to be working with Nicky on his new venture. Whether they're seasoned sales professionals striking out on their own for the first time, or established business owners, people are really beginning to see the advantages of outsourcing."



Direct mail gift boxes from CHX

CHX Products has launched a range of direct mail merchandise gifts that can be sent directly to individual addresses when people can't be there in person.

The company has six packages to choose from or customers can make up their own from CHX's selection of promotional merchandise, excluding the 30cm ruler and large flying disc.

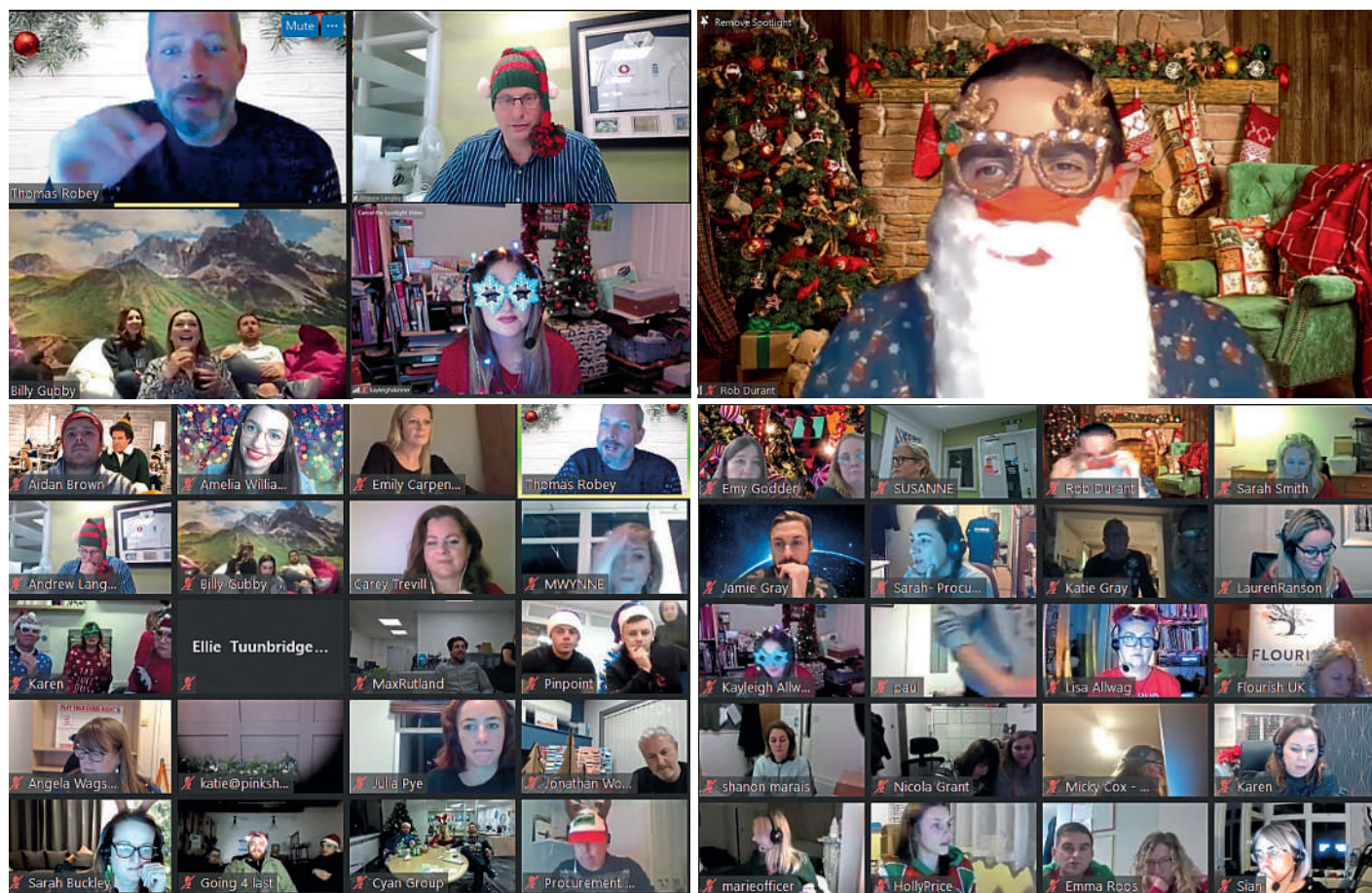
Direct mail merchandise gifts are made from 100% recycled plastic and come wrapped in brown paper secured

with a branded logo sticker. There is a choice of four cards with a personalised message with a logo on the front and back.

The boxes can be supplied from £2.75 per person, with additional items included, for a small fulfilment fee. The boxes are suitable for a virtual exhibition, webinar, Zoom meeting or just to share some brand love.

Just send the artwork, copy and customer addresses to CHX.





BPMA SMASHES QUIZ FUNDRAISING FOR



BPMA members got together virtually to pit their wits and raise some money for its charity of the year

In December, the BPMA hosted a quiz in aid of Mind, the mental health charity. With many events still cancelled and the traditional opportunity to get together over Christmas lunch and celebrate the year's achievements on hold, BPMA members got their Christmas jumpers on and raised £1000 for the charity.

The BPMA has supported Mind for several years in recognition of better mental health across the industry. After a year where mental health has been highlighted after months of lockdown and isolation for so many, Mind provides incredible support for anyone seeking support – no matter who you are. Online resources and helplines are just part of the services Mind can offer. Employers can also use Mind's resources to help support staff as they return to work and you can find these brilliant tools online via mind.org.uk.

With this incredible charity to raise funds for, the BPMA asked members to make a donation of £10 per person to take part and for the chance to win a range of generously donated prizes even an award for the best Christmas jumper.

Quiz winners were Team Allwag, with a close second from PF Concept and CHX. Allwag walked off as triumphant champions with a luxury Christmas hamper, courtesy of Pencarrie.

Pink Sheep stormed home with the Best Christmas jumper prize after impressive team collaboration and some very interesting moves! The winners bagged a magnum of champagne, donated by

Preseli.

The BPMA would like to thank everyone who took part and donated so kindly to this deserving charity. Special thanks to those who donated prizes for this event:

A T Cross | Brand Addition | Pinfold Promotions | Procurement International | Stormtech Europe | Award Signs & Business Gifts | AdGiftsOnline | Badge Base | Desktop Ideas | Juniper Trading | Swag Branded | Preseli | The Pen Warehouse | Ad-Options | Ravensden | TheSourcer.com | Odeani | Premier Impressions | Midocean | Pinfold Promotions | Pencarrie | Ad-Options | Sykes | Award Signs & Business Gifts

If you or someone you know needs support

When you're living with mental health problems or supporting someone who is, access to the right information is vital. We all need a little help from time to time and asking for support is a phone call or a click away. If you or someone you know needs support, help can be found online via Mind.org.uk.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all our members who donned their Christmas jumpers, became quiz aficionados for the afternoon, donated so generously and joined our Christmas Quiz.

With your support, we raised

£1000

for Mind, the BPMA's chosen charity.



The BPMA are proud to support Mind, the mental health charity. Declaring a mental health emergency during the pandemic, Mind have provided support for thousands across the UK.

Practical advice and help can be found on mind.org.uk for individuals and organisations.

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2020:

A year of global change

This year has been like no other, but its unprecedented challenges have been met by the BPMA and its members. Here's how it unfolded

2020 is a year many would wish to press the rewind button and start again. For the BPMA, the year developed in ways the Association could have never foreseen, with change and progress the name of the game. Starting the year with the BPMA's Sustainability Groups, NextGen and Patrons Dinner, the impact of COVID-19 in China was just starting to be felt as orders were delayed.

FROM BOOM TO CLOSED

During February, the most successful Merchandise World was hosted at the Ricoh Centre in Coventry the only signs of COVID were to request those who had been travelling to avoid the event and discussions centred on the disruption in the far east. As it quickly became apparent, this was a virus with plans to travel, the UK went into lockdown in March causing an immediate fall in orders. With the sudden drop of up to 80% of business, our sector quickly reached a pain point.

NEW APPROACH

In an unexpected senior management change in February, Jon Birrell returned to the commercial sector and the Board appointed interim CEO Carey Trevill just as lockdown broke. Appointed to run research and standards projects for the BPMA in January, Trevill was already in place and able to

step up. Responding quickly to the members, the BPMA hosted a series of four webinars to let businesses know what measures the government was able to provide in terms of financial support. Lobbying government immediately on the adjacent market status of the promotional merchandise sector, the BPMA gathered information from members to support the sector needs across the year, monitoring the industry impact.

PUTTING THE CASE FOR MERCHANDISE

Leading the way for the industry, the BPMA has contributed to government consultations on the business impact of the lockdown plus the impact of Brexit transition, campaigning tirelessly for its members during this period. The Association was invited to be part of regular round table meetings with politicians and weekly calls with the Department of Culture Media & Sport (DCMS), Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department of International Trade.

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Recognising the acute challenge the sector faced, the BPMA Board approved an immediate change in annual membership fees in April, anticipating the hardship many were facing in June when renewals fell due. Providing the first three months of membership at no charge was welcomed by

INSPIRE | CONNECT | EDUCATE

BPMA A YEAR OF SUPPORT FOR THE INDUSTRY

Delivering insights and findings during the toughest trading period the industry has ever seen, the BPMA supported every member with facts, stats and views from end-users.

KEEPING THE INDUSTRY INFORMED

1000+

Hosting the first BPMA virtual conference, members arranged meetings and discussions to boost business in September 2020.

2500
sessions attended

With over 25 webinars covering Government support, insights, member interviews and more, the BPMA connected with over 60% of members attending sessions across the year.

90%

BPMA rated 90% either good (46%) or excellent (44%) of members surveyed in September and November 2020.

KEY STRATEGIC PILLARS FOR 2021



INSPIRE

Provide the tools to drive business, innovate and plan with fresh research and insights for members.



CONNECT

Championing sustainability and long term goals for the industry, building standards for our members and their products, driving our connections with end-users.



EDUCATE

Highlight expertise and supply chain standards to end-users, growing the market and BPMA member reputation.



END USER RECOGNITION

Build end-user recognition of BPMA standards in 2021.



INSPIRE | CONNECT | EDUCATE

DELIVERING CHANGE IN 2021

Building new standards and growth agenda as the industry responds to pent up demand, the BPMA has regularly surveyed member response to the pandemic. Lobby Government regularly, member feedback has enabled the BPMA to represent sector challenges, building visibility of business needs.

LISTENING TO THE INDUSTRY

40%

Members surveyed told us they were feeling fairly confident for the next six months ahead vs 22% in September 2020. Tough times still lie ahead but the outlook has improved.

BPMA Survey: Dec 20

56%

Members maintaining the workforce has increased but 38% say they will still reduce their overall workforce. A small increase in retention (4%) was recorded.

43%

Understanding the risk of the industry contracting, members told us they could operate for more than 12 months. This increased from just 24% a month earlier.

BUILDING BUSINESS IN 2021

61%

BREXIT TRANSITION

Transition has ended and preoccupies members with the impact of changes.



RECOVERY

The sectors anticipated to drive growth are Health & Medical, Finance.



REGENERATION

With 63% stating the drive to convert enquiries to orders is their biggest challenge, the industry is poised to regenerate in 2021 in line with demand.



RESILIENCE

35% of members are facing changed expectations on service and delivery as we face different trading in 2021.



every member, enabling many to remain in membership in 2020 and beyond.

Chair Angela Wagstaff recalled the momentous and unanimous decision made earlier this year: "We didn't hesitate to make this decision on behalf of the members. The successful years prior meant the BPMA was in the position to help and lean on the BPMA's reserves to support every member. The Board has worked hard with the BPMA executive team this year to ensure the support and advice has been on hand."

LIFE ONLINE

The popular BPMA webinars developed into a regular weekly slot over 25 sessions across the year, only pausing to run a September conference to bring members together and provide a networking opportunity. Speaking to 2,000 individual members across these sessions provided essential contact during a remote year the industry didn't expect or plan for.

ADVICE AND EDUCATION

As member businesses pivoted to PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), the BPMA was able to provide educational sessions with experts to ensure members understood the strict regulations surrounding this area. Support and advice has been at hand throughout this year from the BPMA and with important milestones changed such as September's Merchandise World event unable to proceed, the BPMA provided a virtual platform, engaging 60%+ of members and a range of engaging speakers for a live event and meetings week. Bringing members together enabled more than 1,000 meetings to take place and drive all-important conversations about innovation and opportunities.

STAYING CONNECTED

As the second wave proved more than just a theory, the brief glimpses of a return to normal business were once again paused in September and October as the industry felt the ongoing loss of income for another quarter. As part of the event staged in September, the BPMA opened the doors for the virtual Networking Hub for all members

until the end of the year, providing a member benefit for every company to be inspired, connected and gain important insight and education from fresh research and resources provided.

Together with these resources, the BPMA has also been busy behind the scenes overhauling its education programme and member platforms to provide the resources the industry needs. Enrolling from January 2021 onwards, the updated materials and content have received incredible input and support from the whole sector.

The BPMA also joined the Advertising Association and the Debating Group in 2019, enabling the BPMA to have a greater share of voice across end user groups. Partnering with the IPIA in their first debate, the BPMA won the opposing debate against the IAB and DMA in November (see report on p14).

BREXIT READINESS

In the midst of the survival mode many businesses found themselves in, the government gave everyone a hearty nudge towards Brexit transition, reminding us all of the need for preparation despite a no deal scenario into early December. Bringing 'transition teaching' into webinars, the BPMA broke down the most common questions on tariffs, tax and transportation, providing additional information via its website once most areas affecting its members were clear.

HOPE FOR 2021

Providing fresh consumer research in September also showed the acceleration of sustainable best practice and expectation across the end user market. Citing sustainability as a core strategic pillar for 2021 linked to a long-term plan to establish clarity for businesses and products in this area, watch out for more news from the BPMA early in the new year.

2021 now dawns and while business may have changed, the BPMA has provided a place where members can feel reassured of support, advice and insight, setting high benchmarks for the year ahead.

If you would like to find out more about the BPMA and becoming a member, please contact the BPMA team on 01372 871 134 or enquiries@bpma.co.uk

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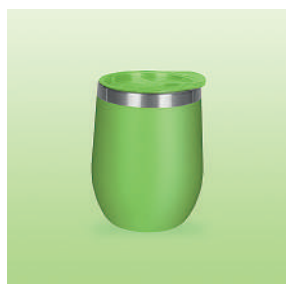
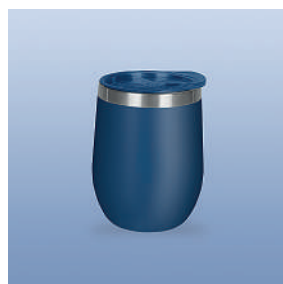
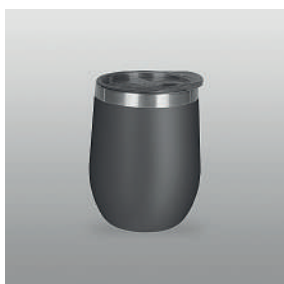


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PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

The BPMA put the case for merchandise in the ever more digital marketing mix at the first ever virtual Debating Group event



MARK CRIPPS, DMA
"FIVE MILLION INTRODUCED TO THE ECONOMIST"



MONICA MANORAS, TWITTER
"WHERE EYEBALLS GO, MONEY FOLLOWS"

On Monday 9th November, the BPMA took part in its first debate as a sponsor of The Debating Group, partnered with the IPIA, the Independent Print Industries Association.

The Debating Group holds events where marketers discuss contentious issues around marketing, in a formal debate setting in the House of Commons. Like much of life, activity has switched online for now, with the debate held virtually for the first time.

Nonetheless, the proposal that "digital communication is more important than ever in building brands" was rigorously examined at an event hosted by the BPMA and attended by more than 70 marketing professionals and BPMA members.

Communication matters

The debate was chaired by Watford MP Dean Russell who provided an update on the government's response to the pandemic, pointing out how government values creative industries, an area where he worked prior to entering parliament.

"If anybody didn't realise the importance of

communication before the pandemic, they do now," he said. "Communication and marketing have been critical to getting messages out."

Making the case for digital, Monica Manoras, head of account sales, Twitter said that digital is now everywhere – in your car, OOH, on the smart TV, YouTube, social media and news apps.

Life online

Since the pandemic, people have been doing even more online, with each of us spending an average of more than four hours a day online.

"Where eyeballs go, money follows. Advertisers can't not afford to be building brands online," she said.

Manoras pointed out that some of the most well-known brands in the world – Apple, Google, Coke, and Nike – buy most premium ad placements even though everyone knows them. They understand the importance of finding ways to stand out, and invest heavily in digital where distinctiveness and uniqueness are necessary to be chosen.

"Digital is not the only driver of brands, however its dominance is clear," she added.

Comments from the floor

"The trust and feel of a tactile item that connects you to a brand is something you rarely get from an email. But one isn't more important than the other – merchandise is difficult to sell without digital."

Graeme Smith

"It takes more than one ingredient to make a cake. It's the quantity that is likely to change in the years to come."

Brian Hayward

"Digital has grown as an unregulated channel. It has been the Wild West. So, I'm looking forward to a level playing field."

Mark Davies

"Print is giving way to digital and we have to accept the inevitable. There's an arrogance of people in marketing – it's happening."

Jonathan Fingerhut

The power of stuff

An excerpt from BPMA CEO Carey Trevill's speech to the Debating Group

"Representing the promotional merchandise industry in this debate, I must draw the attention of the debate to the stellar brands that owe much of their performance to the presence and promise of physical items as part of their campaigns, complemented by their digital channel counterparts to deliver the true brand connection craved.

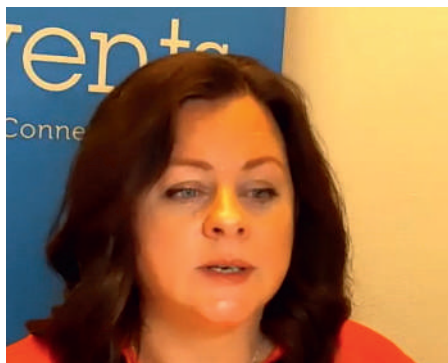
Using Compare the Market as one option, we are instantly taken to the memorable TV advertising and the promise of the latest meerkat toy. This brand grew exponentially linked to the love of these bizarrely accented animals that we took to our hearts and into our homes. Every 30 seconds, we claimed a meerkat toy at the start of this epic campaign, producing 4m+ toys in the first stages, dramatically growing market share for this comparison site brand, building brand equity unrivalled in digital only circles.

Understanding that branded merchandise and premiums have the ability to increase brand awareness by 96%, this example demonstrates the power of plush.

UK consumers love premiums and merchandise with 72% of us drawn by the promise of a free gift. But it's not just about the free gift, we want to be impressed, cared for and considered. Ranked third in research carried out this summer by the BPMA, a brand can increase its market share through considerate gifting, packaging and messaging when personalised. Brand engagement increases and importantly cost per impression reduces.

With every step of evolving technology, our need to connect in the physical space is driven further. With channels packed full of influencers and hyperlinks, how the human connection is created must be at the forefront of every marketer's mind as they ponder the world we are now faced with.

As employers turn to gifts and hampers to recognise the times in which we live, chockablock with goodies emblazoned with company logos and greetings which shout – we care, we thought of you, you matter. The whole package is part of the discovery and we're all opening up into a new world that desires connection."



CAREY TREVILL, BPMA
"UK CONSUMERS LOVE MERCHANDISE"



DEAN RUSSELL, MP
"COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING HAVE BEEN CRITICAL"

Seconding the motion, Mark Cripps, non-executive director, DMA showed how the Economist had used digital to address a slide in relevance and subscriptions, particularly among younger audiences.

Smart marketing

It used smart programmatic targeting that served up Economist articles to individuals based on the content interests they demonstrated while browsing. Teamed with subscription offers and retargeting, the campaign introduced five million to the brand in six months. Brand awareness went up by 25%, with favourability up by more than 20%. In all, the Economist gained 100,000 new subscribers with an ROI of £25 for every £1 spent.

Peak digital

It came down to Mike Hughes, managing director, Latcham Direct, to oppose the motion, seconded by BPMA CEO Carey Trevill. He pointed out that while digital is important, it has reached a saturation point where it is counterproductive. With consumers seeing 10,000 ads a day, mostly online, it's perceived as spam.

"It's hard to stand out against

digital fatigue," he said. "Consumers crave a physical connection in their lives."

Faced with a digital tidal wave, physical mailings stand out while digital can feel like the cheaper choice for brands, and consumers can sense it.

"Information is fleeting, while physical stuff lingers," he said. "It's the difference between being asked to a wedding through Facebook and receiving a handwritten embossed invite."

He refuted the idea that the next generation would be digital only, emphasising that consumers are open to a rebalancing of the channels that put print and merchandise back in the marketer's armoury and allowed brands to cut through. Ecommerce brands like Ocado are already appreciating this approach, he added.

Left and right brain

Carey Trevill pointed to Orlando Wood's work looking at brand saliency, which pointed to a crisis of creativity in marketing, with digital getting much of the blame for a short-termism that is undercutting marketing effectiveness.

Wood said the left brain thinking dominating some campaigns led to a narrowed perception of brand purpose.

"Well tested theories show the placement of branded materials and merchandise, switch on our right brain thinking, building a memory with a clear sense of place," said Trevill.

Relevant merchandise, whether a logoed tote bag, a hotel pen, or a branded water bottle, are tangible brand reminders that cement positive behaviours. "You are 75% more likely to continue to buy again when you receive a brand message this way – and 80% more likely to recommend to others," she added.

With the debate flowing backwards and forwards, and some telling contributions from the floor, it was left to Debating Group chair, and marketing legend, Andrew Marsden, to put it to the vote. Despite its virtual nature, the motion was opposed, providing a feather in the cap of tangible media and proving that 'dead tree media' still has some life left in it.



Surprising and delighting

THE RISE OF GIFTING AND SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

With so many working from home, the letterbox has become the new frontline for merchandise as brands seek to maintain contact with staff, customers, and suppliers. With the gifting season upon us, we look at the opportunities and challenges it presents

There are so many ways to thank, reward and recognise and during the last few months, the growing trend in gifting is set to continue into 2021. In this issue, we explore some of the ways the industry is adapting and adjusting to deliver during challenging times – and to client

expectations.

To understand demand, we quizzed the industry on what they are experiencing, how they are responding, together with the direction of travel towards everyday goods, premium or personal use.

TIME IS TIGHT

Demand for more complex gifting options and tight turnaround times has proved both a welcome bonus for the industry after such a lean period and an opportunity to expand range options. Expectations in packaging have also developed with sustainability high on the agenda.

The thought and care put into every package and its presentation is driving the industry to restock and rethink the materials that surround the carefully chosen gift or reward. Seen as pivotal in steps towards a more sustainable

Out of the box thinking

Swag Branded

The Christmas gifting season is always a rush. We have seen a sharp increase in the need to send out gifts over November, in particular for staff now working from home. This year, it feels like it's all come at once leaving my team working overtime to deliver. We were expecting to be able to wind down and regroup.

Start early

Based on the conversations we have with our clients orders are a combination of both useful and luxury items. One of our tech clients opted for a Bose Headset to be included in packs as they collaborate over Zoom on a daily basis and have now closed all of their offices with no plans to reopen. They are making sure their teams are well equipped at home.

The days of cheap promotional gifts are long past and we couldn't be happier, we'd much rather send out quality swag that resonates with our client's teams as ultimately, it's their perception and feedback that confirms that what we do brings huge value. Our clients want fresh new products and throughout the pandemic our key suppliers have been bringing them to the table.



Wellbeing needs

Another huge part of our client requests are for items that promote personal wellbeing. With government falling short on the plans to increase funding for mental health services, some of our clients are taking it on themselves to care for their teams.

When it comes to presenting gifts, we have found that each job will take its own path, we love getting creative, however at busy times we like to keep things sweet and simple. It all comes down to the specs of the job. They all have different needs and it varies from industry to industry.

Our bread and butter clients want the all-singing and dancing package without the price tag and we try to provide the right compromise. Other clients want to

take things to overkill. These projects can be rather long winded and time consuming so we really have to buckle down. As an example, we have been working on the specs for one project for more than 14 months.

We have invested heavily in developing our range of packing and presentation options with more to come in the new year as we continue to focus on the high-end market and bring new presentation ideas to our clients.

Making lives easier

Flexibility is king. Client demands are the same as ever but with a slight twist. As always things are needed urgently but now it's all about making their lives a little easier and bridging the gap between their business and their remote teams. We will be investing more into expanding our fulfilment capacity and warehousing. We may even offer a trade service in the near future.

Changing markets

Our Swag Branded sales are down massively. We have just been ticking over with our general merchandise services and focusing on our onboarding packs. However, back in March things got scary so like the rest of the industry we can't wait for trade shows and events to pick back up – getting life back to normal is high up on our wish list.



A year to learn

WCM+A

With the introduction of our range of high quality, all British made personalised gifts, and then our eco and Christmas postal packs, we have experienced a huge increase in interest and demand. We are able to personalise and dispatch individual gifts very easily with many items being sent to individual addresses and most can be sent via letter post, therefore negating the expense of courier carriage rates. Everyone loves receiving a gift through the post and this has been the perfect year to prove that.

Stay in touch

The main trends are sustainable products that are personalised, but we think it is more to do with just saying 'hello' and 'thank you'. Personalised gifting is an extremely powerful way of keeping in touch with people be they 'WFH', suppliers, or customers. Nobody likes to feel that they have been forgotten about.

The ability to be able to dispatch small orders to individual addresses is something we have been doing successfully for more than 20 years with our core name badges, so adapting to sending individual personalised gifts was easy. In early 2019 we launched ecopacksolutions.co.uk, a new way of sending out products using completely plastic free packaging. It was an immediate hit with distributors and their customers and proved that plastics and poly bags were unnecessary. In the first year we removed 1.5 million poly bags from our operations.

Goodbye plastic

Our packaging solutions are completely plastic free and sustainable, made from recycled card, 100% recyclable, and designed to improve the presentation of the products. We were able to make these improvements for everyone at no additional cost, so it was a real win, win.

We will be introducing more postal packs and packaging ranges going into 2021 and are developing our own in-house packaging production. There will be no compromise in sustainability.

Rise of the post

A lot of companies will be taking a serious look at how they operate with more time spent home working. As such, postal packs and gifting to individuals will continue. We have seen an ever increasing trend for personalisation of everything we manufacture, which is why we set up the end user site addnames.co.uk. There's lots in the pipeline for 2021 in terms of innovative new products to suit this requirement.

2020 has been such a difficult year in so many ways but we have learned a huge amount and the team have adapted brilliantly with a huge amount of successful development, so we're really excited for what 2021 brings.



Integrated fulfilment

Listawood

Products such as drinkware and desk items continue to be popular thanks to their usefulness and ability to carry high impact messages into the working environment at home. Practical gifts continue to be popular, with an increased demand for individually personalised lines. We have also seen a growth in the requests for co-ordinated sets such as a mug for home and a travel cup for commutes.

Fulfilment options

Listawood has had an automated and integrated fulfilment

solution for a number of years, processing a high volume of orders every day. A variety of services and packaging solutions are available including fully branded boxes for added impact.

Our 'On Demand' service enables our distributors to get quickly and easily set up with their own white label site, enabling them to process orders from just one unit with little set up and minimal investment.

We certainly see the trend continuing into 2021, the demand for direct-to-consumer shipping and fulfilment services has been growing over the past few years; the current climate has intensified the demand.



future, many point to packaging as an essential ingredient to get right from the outset or risk losing clients if this is not addressed.

In addition, the scope and value of briefs from clients appear to be increasing in variety and value enabling the industry to propose higher quality goods when recognition must reflect the right product.


PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL

Whether it's sugarcane packaging or wheat-derivative packing to replace polystyrene, highlighting green packaging and distribution methods are a huge value add for clients looking for the right options.

Interviewing marketing logistics experts, MRM in a recent BPMA webinar, commercial director Melanie

Sheldon asked the industry to be mindful of planning delivery requirements into the whole project as capacity for consignments is under huge strain. With Brexit transition concluding, the need for careful and considered planning has never been more essential.

Sheldon urged us to not be complacent and expect the usual level of delivery slots. In addition, she raised the cardboard shortage the UK is experiencing and as green packaging options rise in demand and popularity, working through exactly what is needed at each stage is paramount.

Product Media will be keeping a close eye on gifting and packaging developments and highlighting the innovation and development evolving rapidly as a result of this year's extraordinary impact. 

A responsible approach

Snap Products and The Pen Warehouse

Demand for gifting

The shift from in-person meetings to virtual communication, almost overnight, created the need for businesses to maintain a presence with their customers in a tangible way. This change in how we communicated also impacted employees and employers who since March of last year have had to adapt to a more agile way of working. Gifting has been that bridge for any communication gap and has been a staple for much of last year.

The end of the year is always popular for gift giving, and we have seen an increased uptake in particular areas such as letterbox friendly and personalised gifts. Working with our customers has been key to manage demand, as distributors have increased their fulfilment capabilities. It has been essential for us as a supplier to understand if our product is forming part of a larger gift, such as a hamper (this may not always be obvious), and to be developing new and exciting products and packaging ideas for our customers to choose from.

Gifting trends

Gifting opportunities increased last year which meant there was more of a demand throughout the year and not just for the festive season. There are established gifting product lines in our industry which continue to be popular, however the breakout product last year has to be customised packaging. More specifically the gift box, which has a dual purpose: maximum branding potential and a safehouse for gift collation. It also offers endless opportunities to market with welcome, working from home and PPE packs being the most popular.

There was also a large uptake in the individual personalisation of products during 2020. Retail was no doubt a driver in its popularity, however there are other

factors which influenced this trend. In 2020, sharing was no longer caring and putting an employee's name on a product became part of an employer's COVID secure strategy. Gifting will always remain meaningful, but individual personalisation gives the receiver a sense of acknowledgement.

One of the most frequently asked questions of last year around packaging and gifting were whether an item was suitable to be posted through a letterbox and if we could send individual products straight to someone's home. This has seen whole product lines redeveloped and those who adapt will benefit from this popular trend.

Presentation matters

Customers either want bespoke branded packaging or minimal/eco-looking packaging such as craft paper or card.

We obtained FSC registered status in 2008 and have heavily invested in paper products and packaging as part of our UK manufacturing arm since. This has gone

from strength to strength as we were accredited Made in Britain membership last year and are able to brand, print, cut and assemble boxes and card products in-house in 3-5 working days.

Towards the end of 2019 we changed the way we packed our samples and finished goods. All plastic sleeves were replaced with 100% eco-friendly paper sleeves for pen and pencil samples. These sleeves also provide an alternative solution to plastic sleeving for writing instruments, and are

available as an optional extra. Additionally, our whole dispatch process changed, all our finished goods are now sealed and shipped with eco-friendly gummed tape.

Packaging developments

As fulfilment becomes a growing area for suppliers and distributors, the way an item is packaged is as much of a talking point as the product itself. Ensuring your packaging looks the part from dispatch to arrival will become more important, especially as many of these parcels are going straight to peoples' homes and brands will have a heightened awareness around this, meaning protective and decorative packaging may become one and the same.

Packaging end-of-life is as important as the use of the product itself. As standard, we now offer disposal instructions on all customised packaging, giving the distributor and the end user a choice. We rolled this out on all writing instrument sample packaging in 2020.

The future

The sustainability discussion is only gaining momentum, responsible packaging options are a necessity going forward and we welcome any discussion with customers and other suppliers in this area to share ideas and collaborate. Packaging and customisation will always add value to a product, as well as a premium finish, and this will not change.



Sending good cheer

Festive Promotions

At Festive Promotions business is brisk which is very welcome, putting our 2021 future in a great place.

So, what's been new this Christmas? Gifting to staff and customers. Gone are the corporate Christmas trees; gone are the big celebrations in hotels and restaurants; gone are the Christmas holidays – foreign travel and cruises, where previously the demand for personalised Christmas promotional items was high.

A different celebration

Instead, companies, charities and the public sector want to say, 'thank you'. Thank you to their staff, thank you to their customers, and thank you to those who they support. For this market, we have introduced the branded Christmas goody box – 'Christmas in a box'.

We have supplied party poppers, crackers, Santa hats, baubles, candle tins, and snowglobes to help customers mail out festive fun.

There has also been an increased demand for decorations that can be posted at no more than the Royal Mail large letter rate. Our 2D (flat) eco bauble decorations in wood or recycled plastic meet these criteria, and they're both 100% made in England.

Finally, two other trends. We have welcomed two new customer groups, firstly those wanting to thank the NHS, and a more scathing group wishing 2020 would, er, do one. Hopefully, we won't be getting repeat orders for F*** You 2021 next year!



Durable by design

Badger Design

We are definitely seeing a higher demand for products that can be sent directly to people at home. Due to environmental concerns, buyers are looking for useful, long lasting promotional gifts that will be kept for an extended period of time, rather than tossed away after a single use. Our slate, glass, ceramic, wooden and 100% recycled acrylic coasters are sturdy and durable and will stay on people's coffee tables for years to come.

With so many people out of the office and working from home at the moment, we have definitely seen an increase in requests for promotional gifts that are easy to send in the post, as well as being functional.

Sustainable gifting

Packaging always adds value to a product, however, in the current climate there are growing concerns regarding packaging, particularly in relation to single use plastics.

While we do have acetate presentation boxes for our coasters, we have also created an environmentally friendly gift box option made from 300gsm FSC certified board. These can be printed with company branding or designs in 4-colour processes.

This trend will continue into 2021 – it's a great idea and direct mail marketing has always had a really high ROI. People love receiving presents in the post, it's always a lovely surprise and makes them feel valued



Packed to please

Oldeani

We have definitely seen an increase in trade customers coming to us with quite open briefs for gifts. With Christmas parties not on the agenda this year, many companies seem to be looking at alternative options. We are offering delivery services direct to individual addresses as delivering to staff or clients working from home is something clients don't necessarily have the resources to deal with.

Thank you

Clients want premium, quality gifts to make sure their message is saying a special thank you. Quality Bluetooth speakers and premium branded drinkware have been popular. It's all about making people feel valued. Tech products feel like a gift you would receive from a friend and mean more than the standard corporate gift. Personalised items are also popular – not only is it important in the current client in terms of hygiene but it shows thought.

High street look

We have always placed value on packaging.

A beautiful gift in a low-quality plain box doesn't do the product justice or make the recipient feel valued. The majority of our products are packaged in printed boxes that look like something you could buy on the high street. We work hard to design packaging that reflects the product inside.

As an industry, we have a chance to play a critical role in bringing sustainable packaging to the market. As a supplier, we can harness the power of creativity to change behaviour.

Close the loop

One of our biggest challenges in the medium term will be the debate on packaging waste and how we can close the loop on plastic pollution. As a supplier, it is not our role to drag or nudge, but to collaborate with our clients to create a positive, tangible change.

As an industry, our strength lies in creative solutions and we can deliver powerful results. Our clients are increasingly knowledgeable and focused on sustainability. Renewable packaging is an important part of the move towards a low-carbon circular economy.



First impressions count

At the moment, only 14% of the plastic packaging used globally is recycled and more than 40% of packaging ends up in a landfill (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). Companies need to think of the 3Rs when it comes to packaging: reduce, reuse, and recycle.

We've made big steps with our drinkware supplied in compostable corn-starch packing and FSC certified boxes but there's a long way to go. Going forward we will use biodegradable tape and bubble wrap, fillers made from recycled materials and bio-wrap.

Another option is pallet wrap manufactured from sugarcane instead of oil.

It's not going to all happen overnight, but the main thing is we're making progress and moving towards the same goal – a sustainable world for the future.

Rewarding after a tough year

PF Concept

Retail choice

It has been clear that merchandise remains an important mechanism for companies to deliver relevant and desirable end of year gifts to their clients. Our collection has always catered well for this thanks to our partnership with a number of well-known retail brands such as Moleskine, Parker, Waterman, Jamie Oliver and Rubik's for example. However, 2020 has seen a noticeable increase in demand as customers look to reward hard-working employees or important clients following a tough year.

Our new partnership with SCX.design, a French technology brand which we introduced in January has been very popular during this gifting season. The range of light up tech items such as powerbanks, speakers, cables, and desk accessories are nicely presented and can be personalised from 25 pieces. It has been one of our success stories this year.

Lifestyle leaning

In previous years, our colleagues in Europe have strongly focused their end of year

gifting towards subtly branded home and lifestyle items that can be used around the house or in the kitchen. These have never consistently made their way into regular buying habits in the UK however this has certainly changed in 2020. Products such as blankets, throws and candles have been popular, as have items which can be used in a home working environment with premium Bluetooth speakers, soundbars and branded drinkware selling well.

Finally, we have seen a shift towards UK-made items during the autumn and our range of Americano tumblers for use at the desk or on the go have continued to sell very well. Brands are being a lot more creative with their artwork and we've seen a lot of great orders for our Brite Americano with full colour in-mould label option.

Smiles supplied

Personalisation is an area that I do not see going away when some form of normality returns. Promotional merchandise is designed




to put a smile on the recipient's face and receiving a unique gift with your own name on does this and increases the retention rate.

Upgraded or differentiated packaging is also an area which continues to evolve. As brands look to reignite dormant marketing campaigns or launch new ones, they will do so by standing out with impactful gifts, naturally relevant to their campaign, which create instant positive first impressions.

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SELLING IN A SOCIALLY DISTANCED WORLD

The sales skills of last year may not be what you need today. Mark Holt & Co's **Peter Hill** explains how to find your sales ninjas

I've advised businesses of all shapes and sizes, and run a variety of projects and training for individuals and large businesses. I am a buyer of domestic and business products and services, and I sell high value and complex business advice as well as routine services.

The points below are not theory, but well researched, tried and tested, and from first-hand experience – failures and successes!

We are all busy, so there is no waffle...

Let's start with selling in a 'normal world'.

Perhaps 80% of 'salespeople' do zero selling. They take an order and process paperwork. Maybe 15% educate and explain what the product is and does (Note: the term product includes services). But in reality only around 5% are what I would call professional salespeople.

UNDERSTAND CUSTOMERS

The role of a salesperson is to build rapport with the buyer. Explore their needs, and understand the key aspects of their buying decision. To educate on the features and benefits of their options, and sometimes to persuade a passive buyer to make the decision to commit.

To do this, they must know their products inside out, and understand body language cues to know what the buyer is really feeling. Listening skills are key (most salespeople just talk too much) so they know what is important to the buyer, how the decision will be made and who really makes it. They should have considered the likely objections and have good responses to these.

STAY UP TO DATE

All these skills should be refreshed and updated, so they are comfortable with new techniques and industry practices.

I am a Chartered and Certified Accountant. I worked hard for those qualifications, but if I don't prove every year to both of my professional bodies that I am keeping up to date, they take them away from me.

When I challenge salespeople on the last training course they attended, the last book on selling skills they read, what industry magazines or online articles they have researched, it is years and often decades ago. If sales is to be regarded as a profession, then salespeople need to be professional.

TEST THE TEAM

So regardless of a socially distanced world, the harsh reality is that most salespeople are just not improving and developing their skills to do the job properly. If you aren't sure, test your frontline team with some basics.

- Ask a couple of typical questions and assess the professionalism and preparedness of their response. For example, a price objection ("That's expensive"), or competition issue ("ABC say they are better than you"). These are common issues your sales people should have a quick and professional answer.
- Pick a couple of products and ask them to explain the key features and benefits. Do they explain things clearly and cover all the key issues? Do they ask what elements are important to the customer or what issues frustrate them on other products?

- Ask them to give you their opinions on your major competitors, or industry challenges. Do they come across as knowledgeable and up to date? Do they know their competition and are they able to help the customer differentiate and understand your USPs?

So before COVID-19, most businesses had frontline sales people that were not properly trained to manage and handle selling opportunities professionally, and to win business rather than just take orders.

WHAT'S CHANGED?

Nothing really. While it is more difficult to do some these things via audio or video calls, or in emails or written proposals, the principles are no different.

If you have a sales meeting via Zoom or Teams, prepare properly, consider all possible objections and have good responses. Understand your products, know your market place, and think about body language. It's even more important when you only see head and shoulders.

In a challenging world businesses may simply need fewer salespeople, so make sure you know who the professionals are, and who are just order takers.

Peter Hill of Mark Holt & Co is a practising accountant and business consultant. He has worked with hundreds of business across Europe on developing sales systems and training and helping to increase revenues and profits. PH



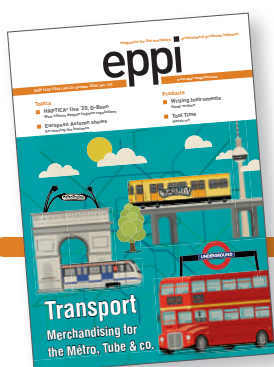
Marcin Pawłowski

CEO of badge4u

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IS IT TIME FOR CHANGE?

Companies who have been affected by the downturn need to adapt for the future, says **Mike Collins**



To say that the promotional goods sector has been hit hard by the pandemic is an understatement. Exhibitions cancelled, events put on hold and marketing budgets slashed was not anticipated as we embarked on 2020. As a trusted service provider to BPMA members what has really resonated with our team is the resilience and commitment shown by those members we have been fortunate enough to help. Digging deep and finding solutions to significant challenges has been the attitude.

Survival strategy

For many members, the pandemic was the catalyst to using our services for the first time. As the ink was drying on this article, we have collected more than £15 million in overdue invoices and unpaid debts for our clients since the start of the pandemic. One client recently confided in us that the debt we collected meant they could keep their home. For other members that had all but written off their debts, being able to contact them with the news we had recovered the amounts owed in full was fantastic for both them and us.

That said, emotionally it is never easy to outsource a debt – you don't want to alienate a customer but you've tried everything in your toolkit and can't believe they are not paying. While we are your last resort, it's still a decision taken with some reluctance. But don't lose sight of the fact that the amount recovered could make the difference

between continuing to trade or handing in the keys.

Credit is a privilege

Always remember that it's your money and you deserve to be paid. You have supplied goods on credit as a privilege. You have most likely given additional time for the payment to be made and have nudged your customer in a polite and professional manner. Nevertheless, they have decided they have more right to that money than you, despite the fact they willingly took the goods on credit. It's galling and it's unacceptable.

Changes due

So, what should you change in 2021 to improve on this situation?

Firstly, I would encourage you to review your entire collection process.

For example, should you introduce strictly defined stages in your credit control process? A customer goes on stop when they are seven days overdue; the first reminder is sent on day 10; a second on day 17, with the final notice seven days later? Being in close, regular contact means a customer is likely to prioritise payment of your invoice over other creditors simply crossing their fingers.

Finally, decide when enough is enough and when you will outsource the debt for third party collection and stick to this date.

What about new customers?

In the current climate

especially, new customers are a bonus. But are some coming to you because they are on stop elsewhere? For this reason, don't automatically grant credit to new customers. Can you put them on a pro-forma arrangement? As they begin to order more you can relax a little and ask for a percentage payment of the order up front. Should they subsequently decide not to pay then at least you're not left with the bill for the goods.

Tell your sales team about the new policy so they can bring this into conversations with a new customer.

Don't be afraid to change.

As always, we're here to help, advise and guide so don't hesitate to get in touch to discuss any challenge your business faces now or in the future.

Mike Collins is MD of Direct Route

Local Support Contact Details

Please contact a member of our local support team for advice on any matter related to debt and credit management.

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LOCAL HEROES

Supporting British manufacturing creates a virtuous circle that will help rebuild the economy, says **Mark Alderson**

Consumers regularly make decisions on the purchase of goods and services from both British and foreign manufacturers. Their decisions may be informed, among other considerations, by cost, choice, convenience and environmental factors. Now there is something else to consider – improving the British economy.

Research on spending by local authorities shows that for every £1 spent with a small UK-based business, 63p stayed in the local economy, compared to under 30p with a multinational business.

Patriotic boost

If most citizens decided to buy British where possible, clearly our businesses would receive a massive boost. Such a patriotic campaign would act like rocket fuel on the economy. As British manufacturers and retailers grow, we would be locked in a virtuous cycle towards prosperity. An effective crusade

like this could achieve more than all the furlough programmes and bounce back loans. In the aftermath of the Coronavirus crisis, there is a powerful appetite among the British people for such a drive.

British preference

Data from the Made in Britain group suggests that two-thirds of consumers are now more likely to buy British goods than they were before the COVID outbreak. According to the survey, two-fifths would prefer to purchase British made products regardless of the cost. This is a generous sentiment that should be fully harnessed in the push to rebuild the economy. Coronavirus may have been a tragedy, but it has also helped to crystallise the most important values of our society.

Badge of pride

The new patriotic consumerism is

reflected in the fact that the Made in Britain organisation has seen a 60% increase in accreditation requests since April. The British trademark can be a badge of pride and an engine of growth.

In the new climate of public support, British companies would be able to increase investment and employment because of enhanced sales, while they would also enjoy more resilient, localised supply chains.

Now, more than ever, is the right time to support home grown entrepreneurs and innovation and benefit from uncomplicated customer service and a straightforward buying experience. Increased British business leads to greater revenue and job opportunities which will contribute to a better quality of life for us all.

Coronavirus has transformed the way we live and work, and it should transform the way we buy.

Mark Alderson is the chairman of the Briman Group 

CHANGE THE RECIPE

After a great first quarter, Eat My Logo had to look at its business model for a new approach due to COVID-19

2020 got off to a brilliant start for Eat My Logo. The business had expanded into a much larger bakery, orders were flying in and business was booming, but all that suddenly changed when the COVID-19 lockdown was announced. Within three working days the business lost 98% of booked orders due to cancelled events and things were looking bleak.

Adapt or die

Andrew Poar, co-founder of Eat My Logo says: "Our business was built around supplying products to groups of people at business events and celebrations, but overnight that market disappeared and we needed to adapt very quickly or go under."

Eat My Logo quickly realised that the people who normally ate its tasty logo branded products were now working from home, so it needed to amend its proposition to serve this new market.

Poar says: "Our distributors usually ordered hundreds or thousands of cakes and biscuits that went to their client's workplaces or events, but as that changed

overnight we needed to help distributors by creating new products so they had something else to sell apart from PPE."

A postal product range was quickly created, designed to go through the letterbox of a homemaker. "We worked hard to develop a range that would fit in a 25mm thick box and survive the rigours of Royal Mail," says Poar. "The new range was an instant success and has since grown and evolved."

Trade portal

A new Trade Portal was also an important lockdown project. Daniel Clarke, business development executive says the resource allows distributors to access product and pricing information for the entire range including product information sheets, image templates and a range of blank images for visuals.

"We also added marketing resources including PDF/page flip brochures, ready-made marketing emails for use on distributor email marketing platforms and web upload files for distributor websites," he says.



Trade sign up

Eat My Logo would like as many distributors as possible to sign up to the trade portal and use the resources available. As a little incentive, every new registrant before the end of February will receive a Free Letterbox Brownie. Please register at www.eatmylogo.trade.

2021 PRODUCT MEDIA UPCOMING FEATURES

In 2021, Product Media is featuring a range of special features to spotlight product sectors and celebrate innovation.

Issue 35

March/April
Apparel & Bags

Issue 36

May/June
Writing Instruments & Stationery
Branding Applications

Issue 37

July/August
Innovation &
Sustainability Review

Issue 38

September/October
Drinkware & Ceramics

Issue 39

November/December
Food & Confectionery

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FRESH INSPIRATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Bringing a marketing partner on board can keep your brand more agile, says **Melissa Chevin**



The more things change, the more they stay the same, as French novelist Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr once famously observed.

Well, you can't deny that 2020 has been a year of change, commercially as well as socially. We've seen panic buying as lockdown set in, increased focus on mental health and wellbeing and people flocking to social media in order to shore up the communities devastated by COVID-19.

Only connect

However, some things haven't changed. Businesses are still striving to connect with audiences in a world where consumer patterns were being transformed long before the pandemic struck. And those businesses will still benefit greatly from an external partner when it comes to marketing.

A good external marketing agency brings a fresh pair of eyes and new thinking to a company's long-term consumer engagement strategy. At its

best, such a partnership combines into a creative force which has two centres, but a shared passion for the brand.

Partnership

The role of a marketing agency is to point a business in the general direction of their consumers. Once positioned, brands then need to bring their own fresh thinking to this encounter, appreciating that audiences are no longer passive consumers, but empowered communities who choose exactly what to consume, and who are as cynical and more demanding of brands than at any other time.

To really connect with their audiences, businesses need an exciting, coherent and relevant story. What's more, they need to keep retelling it in creative, interesting and appropriate ways. Bringing in an external agency helps break the predictable cycle of a business doing what it has always done, with new spheres of influence and fresh, inspirational thinking.

Keep moving

To eternally circle around an established, fixed idea or strategy is to invite extinction, from which size is no protection. Can you believe that an historic powerhouse such as Ford is 28 times smaller than Facebook, founded only 16 years ago?

No matter how big they are, businesses undoubtedly need to rewire in order to survive in a changing world. The best partnerships between brands and agencies result in a combined creative force which propels consumer relationships forwards, transforming mere customers into engaged brand advocates.

A great agency idea can take an ordinary product or service in a crowded market, and make it stratospherically more interesting and successful.

As Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr might have said, the canvas may have changed but the opportunity to create impact definitely hasn't.

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

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BREXIT FAQs

Almost four years after the vote, the UK is leaving the EU on 1 January 2021 and businesses need to embrace changes. Here's what you need to know

TRANSITIONING TIMES: BREXIT UPDATE

As of 31 December 2020, the UK officially completed its 'transition' out of the EU bringing new rules affecting our industry, impacting trading, duty and more. The UK government spent many months briefing businesses to get prepared for change, putting the onus firmly on the shoulders of SMEs to unravel the new rules and understand how they apply to your business, customers, and trade.

Here, we recap many of the most frequently asked questions and with a helpful address book for links and resources to help every business find the right information fast.

If you are only just starting to work all this out, do not worry you are not alone. The 'transition checklist' service online is a great place to check what you might need for your specific business. Found on gov.uk/transition, follow the steps to 'transition enlightenment'.

With more than 50% of UK businesses declaring they are not ready for the majority of the measures and their immediate concerns directed at lockdown and tiers, breaking down the information and tasks to be done is best approached step by step. Where possible, dedicate someone in your business to understand the rules. Don't forget there is still funding for customs training available and excellent online courses available via The Institute of Export & International Trade.

The government department central to Transition changes is the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy or BEIS for short. All found via gov.uk, most information businesses need can be located here but is not always easy to find. It is important to note all information within this article was correct at time of going to press however some changes are expected as final negotiations take place and PM recommends you check government sources for the most up to date information.

EXPORT AND IMPORT – WHAT'S CHANGED?

EXPORT

When exporting to a third country, the merchandise needs to be declared to the customs authority of the country the goods will leave.

IMPORT

When importing to a third country, the merchandise needs to be declared to the customs authority of the receiving country.

Usually the information will be transferred electronically before the actual import of the merchandise.

VAT AND EXPORT

Public postal operators (PPOs) interact on a global level to exchange mail and parcels. Where no customs unions exists, merchandise needs to be customs cleared. Private people and companies can send merchandise to third countries (e.g. to UK after a no deal or hard Brexit) through a postal operator and have the merchandise customs cleared in the destination country.

In this process, the recipient (importer) of the merchandise will pay VAT, customs duties and a handling fee upon delivery.

POSTAL CUSTOMERS WILL NEED:

- CN22 or CN33 customs document
- Invoice (with copies) with each item
- Sending companies need to enter the customs codes on CN22/CN23 forms to identify content

If you import goods in consignments not exceeding £135 in value

Further guidance will be provided on the VAT treatment of goods in consignments not exceeding £135 in value in updates expected from HMRC. Check with HMRC if you have questions.

The exporter needs to prove to the local customs authorities that the merchandise item has been exported to a third country, i.e. export from the UK to a third country or export from the EU to a third country.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:

- Export proof document
- Customs authorities also may accept alternative export proof information for example airway bills, track and trace information, or invoices
- The details depend on the requirements of the national customs authority

If the customs authority has accepted the export proof document, the exporter of the goods can VAT zero rate the sale.

VAT AND IMPORT

Either

The exporter pays VAT together with any customs duties to customs authorities in the destination country (usually via a customs broker).

Or

The importer of the item pays VAT, customs duties, handling fees and in some cases excise duties upon receipt of the merchandise (usually to the postman, the usual process for merchandise items sent via a public postal operator including customs clearance in the destination country).

EORI NUMBERS

- Where no customs unions exist, goods need to be customs cleared when moved to a third country.
- For shipments with a value exceeding the postal clearance limits the commercial customs clearance process is utilised. Companies can send goods to third countries (e.g. to UK after a hard Brexit) and have the merchandise customs cleared by a customs broker.
- Companies who want to import from the EU (or other third countries) into the UK post-Brexit will require a UK EORI number.
- Companies who want to import goods into the EU from the UK (or other third countries) will require an EU EORI number.

For example:

- If you have a subsidiary in the UK and you export goods from France to your subsidiary, you will need to complete an export declaration in France and an import declaration in the UK. You will need an EU EORI number and a GB EORI number.
- Some commercial agreements stipulate that either the buyer or the seller is responsible for both the import declaration and the export declaration.
- The choice of Incoterms often determines each party's responsibilities in an agreement.
- If your business completes both declarations, you will need an EU EORI number and a UK EORI number.

gov.uk/eori

GETTING THROUGH CUSTOMS

What customs documents do you need?

Export Declaration

- Invoice and copy (trade or proforma)
- Export declaration (if value is more than €1,000)
- Transport documentation (airway bill (AWB), CMR**, CN22/23)
- Proof of Export (for VAT purposes)

Import Declaration

- Invoice (trade or proforma)
- Preference (EUR1, Form A, certificate of origin***)
- Transport documentation (e.g. AWB, CMR, CN22/23)
- Licences and approvals (e.g. for pharmaceutical products)

*Depending on the customs clearance process and national customs authority, the required customs documents may vary. This chart gives a general overview on documents which may be required.

**CMR = Standardised document for cross-border transport of cargo by road, in force in the European Union.

***A certificate of origin (often abbreviated to C/O or CO) is a document widely used in international trade transactions which attests that the product listed therein has met certain criteria to be considered as originating in a particular country. A certificate of origin is generally prepared and completed by the exporter or the manufacturer and may be subject to official certification by an authorised third party like e.g. a Chamber of commerce. It is often submitted to a customs authority of the importing country to justify the product's eligibility for entry and/or its entitlement to preferential treatment.

Three factors have to be taken into consideration to calculate the customs duties to be paid when trading goods:

- **The value of the goods**
Customs duties and VAT are calculated as a percentage of the goods' value.
- **The customs tariff to be applied**
Check your TARIC (Integrated Tariff of the European Communities) check the applicable code number.
https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/taric/taric_consultation.jsp?Lang=%20en
- **The origin of the goods**

Preferential origin is conferred on goods from particular countries, which have fulfilled certain criteria allowing preferential rates of duty to be claimed. There will be no preferential origin of goods manufactured in the UK* when entering the European Union after a no deal Brexit

***https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/sites/taxation/files/notice-to-stakeholders-brexipreferential-origin-final_en.pdf**
Source and further information: https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties_en

PLACING GOODS ON THE MARKET: CE/UKCA

New approach: Goods with a CE-marking may be placed on the UK market until 1 January 2022 e.g. toys, PPE, machinery.

Old approach: Changes to existing standalone regulation models depend on specific goods.

Non-harmonised goods: mutual

recognition will no longer apply to non-harmonised goods in GB

CE

- If you self-certify or use an EU Notified Body, you can still use the CE marking until 1 January 2022 for goods placed on the GB market (more in some cases). In this case, you can continue to use your EU Declaration of Conformity.
- The CE marking will still be required for products placed on the EU market.
- You can place the UKCA and CE marking on the same product if it is destined for both the GB (England, Wales and Scotland) and EU so long as the product meets the rules for both markets.

UKCA

- From 1 January 2021 new approach products assessed against GB rules by a GB 'Approved Body' will need the UKCA marking. In this case, you will need to use a UK Declaration of Conformity.
- If you currently self-certify for the CE mark you can also do so for the UKCA mark.
- From 1 January 2021 the essential requirements and standards that can be used to demonstrate compliance to the UKCA marking will be the same as they are now for the CE marking.

DO YOU NEED A CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT?

Placing new approach goods on the GB market

All UK-based 'notified bodies' will automatically become UK approved bodies from 1 January 2021. You can find details of UK notified bodies on the EU NANDO database or the UKAS

Checklist	Action	Checklist	Action
Customs declarations will be required for all EU traffic	A CN22 or CN23 form will be required for all items/goods (excluding personal correspondence) attached to the outside of parcels or letters	Items valued at under £22 which are currently part of the Low Value Consignment Relief (LVCR) scheme are not subject to VAT or duties	Items valued at under £22 will remain part of the LVCR scheme for items sent into the EU and not be subject to VAT until 1 July 2021 (subject to EU negotiations)
Customs data will need to be submitted electronically	Provide electronic customer data for all export items/goods via an approved shipping solution	Commercial items/goods sent to the EU over £22 and below £150 may be taxed at the border and may incur a customs clearance fee in the receiving country	You will need to understand clearance fees and what VAT and duties are applicable
Customs clearance fees may be payable on items/goods (entering the EU from the UK)	You will need to understand clearance fees and what VAT and duties are applicable (and how the recipient will pay these)	Commercial items/goods sent to the EU over £150 may attract VAT, duties and a customs clearance fee	You will need to understand clearance fees and what VAT and duties are applicable
It will be mandatory to have an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number to send to the EU from the UK	If you do not have an EORI number you will need to register with the HMRC for your unique business number	Register to pay VAT using the Import One Stop Shop Scheme (IOSS) applicable from July 2021 for exporters sending commercial items/goods under £150 to the EU, where you pay VAT (where applicable) on behalf of the buyer	More information on ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business_en and search for Import One Stop Shop

website. UKCA marking will become mandatory for most goods currently requiring the CE mark from 1 January 2022. If your product requires third-party conformity assessment this will need to be done by a UK-recognised body from 1 January 2022 (in most cases). The CE marking will still be required for products placed on the EU market.

Placing new approach goods on the EU market

From 1 January 2021 mandatory conformity assessments by UK bodies will no longer be recognised in the EU (unless agreed otherwise in negotiations). Businesses should speak to their existing certification bodies to discuss options.

STAY COMPLIANT

Arrange for separate certificates for the UK and EU markets to be ready well in advance of 1 January 2022. There may be a requirement for a level of re-assessment before the second certificate is issued so you should start planning as soon as possible. Contact your notified bodies as soon as possible to understand your options for conformity assessments for the UK and EU markets.

Who is responsible for being compliant?

A UK-based distributor of EU goods may become an 'importer' – and vice-versa. Compared to distributors, importers have a stronger duty to ensure products are compliant and often must ensure their address is on a product.

Review guidance on the responsibilities of importers by searching for 'placing goods on the GB market' on gov.uk. Authorised representatives for the GB market must be based in GB or NI. GB-based Authorised Representatives will also no longer be recognised in EU.

EU legislation coming into force on 16 July 2021 may mean you need to appoint an EU representative if there is no other economic operator in place.

REACH

1. Both the UK and EU would operate REACH, but the two systems would not be linked in any way
2. Businesses will need to take steps to ensure regulatory requirements are fulfilled on both sides of the Channel in order to maintain continuity of supply chains
3. Companies from both markets would have 'third country' status in the other

UK companies procuring chemicals directly from EU/EEA suppliers, will change from downstream users to importers under UK REACH. Existing UK-held EU REACH registrants have 120 days to provide UK authorities with some initial information.

DEFRA has extended the deadline for importers of substances from EU-based registrants by a further 120 days. These registrants now have 300

days to provide UK authorities with some initial information. Companies then have 2, 4 or 6 years beginning after those 300 days for full registrations to be completed. These deadlines are dependent on tonnage bands and hazard profile, with the highest tonnage and most hazardous chemicals first.

Maintaining EU/EEA market access and making new registrations

REACH registrations and existing EU authorisations decisions held by UK entities would no longer be valid under EU REACH after the transition period. UK registration holders would need to transfer their registration to an EU-27/EEA legal entity. Alternatively, EU/EEA companies may register the substance themselves as an importer. To register a new chemical for the EU/EEA and UK markets businesses would need to register with both REACH regimes.

REACH actions to take:

1. Identify the chemicals you manufacture, sell or use and their regulatory responsibilities with respect to that chemical in the UK market.
2. Check plans across your supply chain to understand what information you may need to provide to maintain UK and EU market access.
3. Consider appropriate actions if the status of existing EU REACH registrations or authorisations could change.

More information can be found here: REACH-IT@defra.gov.uk

TARIFF CHECKS: KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

UK Global Tariff will apply to all goods from 1 January 2021

Exceptions are:

- Developing country that pays less or no duty because it is part of a generalised scheme of preferences
- Has a trade agreement with the UK
- Has a tariff suspension

The UK Global Tariff replaces the current common external tariff and EU trade agreements will no longer apply to the UK. It is now looking unlikely we will reproduce the effects of a trading agreement and we will go to WTO terms.

Every business will need to know the right commodity codes for import and export to avoid issues and delays. It is recommended to check the guidance for 'hard to classify' goods to check the duty and if you need a licence. Use the Tariff Tool to find the right information especially if you send out a variety of goods.

TARIFF CHECKER:

www.gov.uk/guidance/ask-hmrc-for-advice-on-classifying-your-goods

www.gov.uk/check-tariffs-1-january-2021

www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-trade-tariff-tool-to-find-a-commodity-code

www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-commodity-codes-for-imports-or-exports

www.gov.uk/guidance/trading-under-wto-rules

Brexit address book

Brexit transition

<https://www.gov.uk/transition>

Get an EORI number

<https://www.gov.uk/eori>

Import goods from outside the EU: step-by-step

<https://www.gov.uk/import-goods-outside-eu>

Apply to use simplified declaration for imports

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-simplified-declarations-for-imports?step-by-step-nav=849f71d1-f290-4a8e-9458-add936efefc5>

Making an import declaration in your records

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-import-declaration-in-your-records>

Making an import supplementary declaration

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-import-supplementary-declaration>

Prepare to import goods from the EU to Great Britain from 1 January 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/prepare-to-import-to-great-britain-from-january-2021>

Delaying declarations for EU goods brought into GB – 1 January 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/declaring-goods-brought-into-great-britain-from-the-eu-from-1-january-2021>

Customs declarations for goods you bring or receive into the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/customs-declarations-for-goods-brought-into-the-eu>

Get UK customs clearance (importing) step-by-step

<https://www.gov.uk/import-customs-declaration>

Finding commodity codes (imports and exports)

<https://www.gov.uk/import-customs-declaration>

Temporary import tariff rates

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-temporary-rates-of-customs-duty-on-imports-after-eu-exit#preferential-tariff-rates>

Get someone to deal with customs for you

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appoint-someone-to-deal-with-customs-on-your-behalf>

List of customs agents and fast parcel operators

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/list-of-customs-agents-and-fast-parcel-operators>

Apply to use simplified procedures (import and export – form C6E48)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/import-and-export-simplified-procedures-application-ce48>

Customs Freight Simplified Procedures – software providers

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/list-of-software-developers-providing-customs-declaration-support>

Notice 252: valuation of imported goods for customs purposes, VAT and trade stats

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-252-valuation-of-imported-goods-for-customs-purposes-vat-and-trade-statistics>

Notice 60: Intrastat general guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-60-intrastat-general-guide/notice-60-intrastat-general-guide>

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/authorised-economic-operator-certification>

Due diligence when making customs declarations

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/due-diligence-when-making-customs-declarations>

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BPMA EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Are your teams trained in promotional merchandise?

Register your staff on the TPM course starting in March 2020

The BPMA Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) course is the only UK industry specific entry level course for your teams. Delivering essential training on trends, promotional merchandise fundamentals everyone needs to know, plus the latest topics driving the industry forward, accessed through our online learning platform. Benefit from expert knowledge, built by the industry for the industry, complimenting your company training and development.

Our March course includes:

- Introductory webinar
- Guest speaker webinars
- Access to all TPM course content delivered online – including artwork, industry research, screen printing and much more!
- Online exam
- Online community

Start the course in March and achieve your TPM certificate by 31st May 2020

Why enrol?

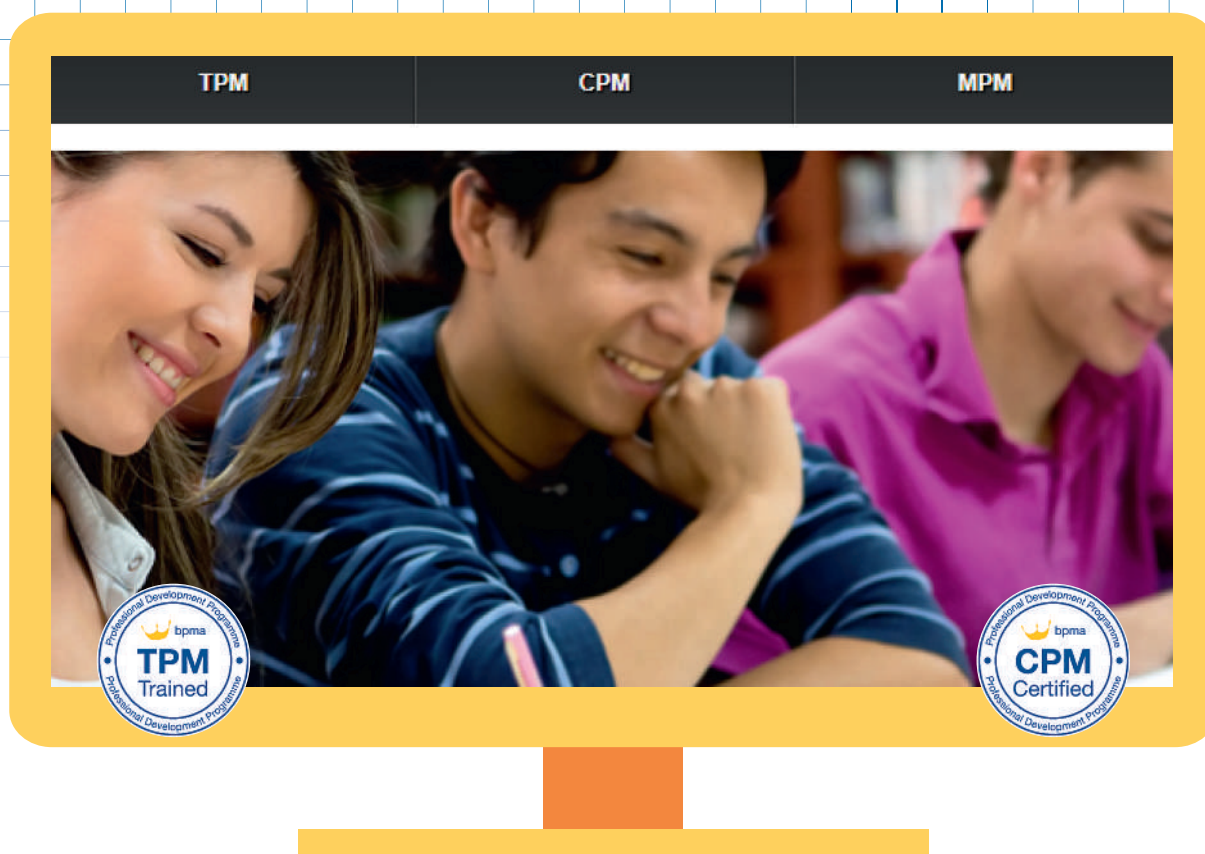
- Flexible, structured learning programme
- Online portal can be accessed 24/7
- Industry specific expert knowledge
- Fresh, updated content
- Cost effective training for the whole team
- Compliments company training & development



➤ Sign up

For more information and to sign up contact
education@bpma.co.uk or call **01372 371 184**

www.education.bpma.co.uk



TRAINING NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD: BPMA REFRESH COURSES FOR 2021

Last summer, the BPMA decided to completely overhaul the industry training available to bring the quality of learning and courses up to date in line with the industry's accelerated rate of change.

Understanding the need for change, BPMA CEO Carey Trevill cites the reasons for revised courses and content.

"After a year like 2020, investment in people is essential and the need for industry training to be up to date and suitable for the next generation in the sector is never more needed as we take stock for the year ahead," she said. "We took the hard decision to pause all training for several months after a technical challenge to allow us to rebuild, assess and importantly refine the subject matter."

FIRST NEW COURSE

With more than 30 pieces of course content, the new Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) course, the first to be released, has a vastly improved learner

experience. The team has been working non-stop to bring this course to fruition and the BPMA will be releasing the revised CPM course shortly.

"We are proud of the new course and look forward to welcoming learners back this year. We appreciate everyone's patience whilst we undertook this work," said Trevill.

A NEW APPROACH

The course is being opened first to those who were unable to complete training during 2020 after which fixed intake dates in March and October will be taking enrolment shortly. By fixing the intakes and shortening course times, learner outcomes are expected to improve with greater success rates. Courses will now be completed within set periods with live online learning alongside virtual study. Tracking progress, every person taking the new courses will be able to see how far and fast they are progressing plus able to update their managers on where they are with coursework and development.


JOIN THE COMMUNITY

Working with a new platform, the BPMA is able to provide an online community for learners in the industry, helping those new to the sector get to know their peers. With options for BPMA employers to integrate into their own training, BPMA members are encouraged to explore options for their teams and take advantage of the new and updated course experience.

NEXT STEPS

Looking for advice on training or have questions about what's involved?

Contact the BPMA for more advice on suitable courses or what is possible for group bookings and bespoke options for employers. Contact the BPMA on education@bpma.co.uk.

If you are still due to complete your course from 2020 and are unsure on the next steps, please speak to the BPMA team on 01372 371 184. 

Boosters makes acquisition and looks out for more

Boosters Limited of Cornwall is pleased to announce the acquisition of Midlands-based agency The Promotional Mix Ltd and has signalled the possibility of further deals.

From 1 December, The Promotional Mix became part of Boosters which is based in Redruth.

John Thorp, managing director of The Promotional Mix said: "This has been a year like no other and like so many companies The Promotional Mix has experienced some difficult times. I have taken the decision that in order to protect our customers and to continue to give them the best possible service going forwards that it is best if The Promotional Mix becomes part of a larger business."

Blair Carroll, managing director of Boosters (pictured), added: "The Promotional Mix was a business built around customer service. I've known John since we joined the Page Group several years ago. We have a very similar outlook to customer care. The majority of clients have been loyal to Promotional Mix for many years and it is our hope that they will find with the move to Boosters a company that shares the



same ethos and outlooks. Moving forward we welcome the possibility of further mutually beneficial acquisitions should the opportunities present themselves."

Advantage to launch antimicrobial coated catalogue in 2021

The Advantage Group has announced that it will launch its next annual members catalogue treated with Biomaster Antimicrobial protective coating.

The coating has been successfully tested and approved to give surface protection against bacteria, moulds, and fungi.

With heightened awareness of hygiene becoming part of our daily lives for the foreseeable future, Advantage director, Lawrence Angelow said it was a timely and inevitable move.

"We have been working closely with our print partner, The Blackmore Group, keeping up to date with the latest developments on how we could incorporate the Biomaster treatment into our catalogue," he said. "Biomaster additives have been proven to reduce the overall levels of bacteria on inks and lacquer coatings by up to 99.9%. Knowing it is possible to incorporate without compromising the print quality then made the decision easy. It feels the responsible thing to do in this climate."

Response from members and suppliers has been "fantastic", he added. The catalogue is due to be launched on 1 September.

Andrew Robbins, managing director of The Blackmore Group added: "I'm delighted that the Advantage Group have decided upon this course of action for their next catalogue. We have selected Biomaster coating as it is from a reputable supplier, has been fully tested and compliant, meets the latest ISO standards as well as the Biocidal Products Regulation, is food safe and registered with the Food and Drug Administration, and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. We are really looking forward to working with Lawrence and the team again next year."

Sourcing City lauds industry players

Sourcing City has announced the winners of the Annual Sourcing City Awards.

The Sourcing City Awards show how well both suppliers and distributors are regarded by each other, with both sides of the industry voting for the people they most respect and enjoy doing business with.

To determine the awards, all distributors and suppliers had three votes on a first to third basis for each category.

In the Over £3m distributor award category the winner was Total Merchandise. Mojo Promotions won the

£1m to £3m category, and BH1 took the honours in the under £1m category.

In the supplier categories the first place was again Laltex Promo winning Major Wholesaler of the Year for the fifth year running. Winner of Specialist Supplier of the Year was Pinpoint Badges. There was strong competition across all of the categories and some final results were tight at the top.

Sourcing City congratulates all the winners and thanks those who took the time to vote.

The full list of winners can be found on sourcingcitynews.co.uk.

Senator supports the Rainbow

Harlow-based Senator Pens is supporting local charities by supplying them with their own printed Anti Bac pens.

The latest to receive some is the Rainbow Centre, a local charity that aims to support voluntary and community organisations within Harlow via a range of infrastructure support services and practical facilities.

The Rainbow Centre has been helping local organisations bring about beneficial change in the Essex town since 1999.



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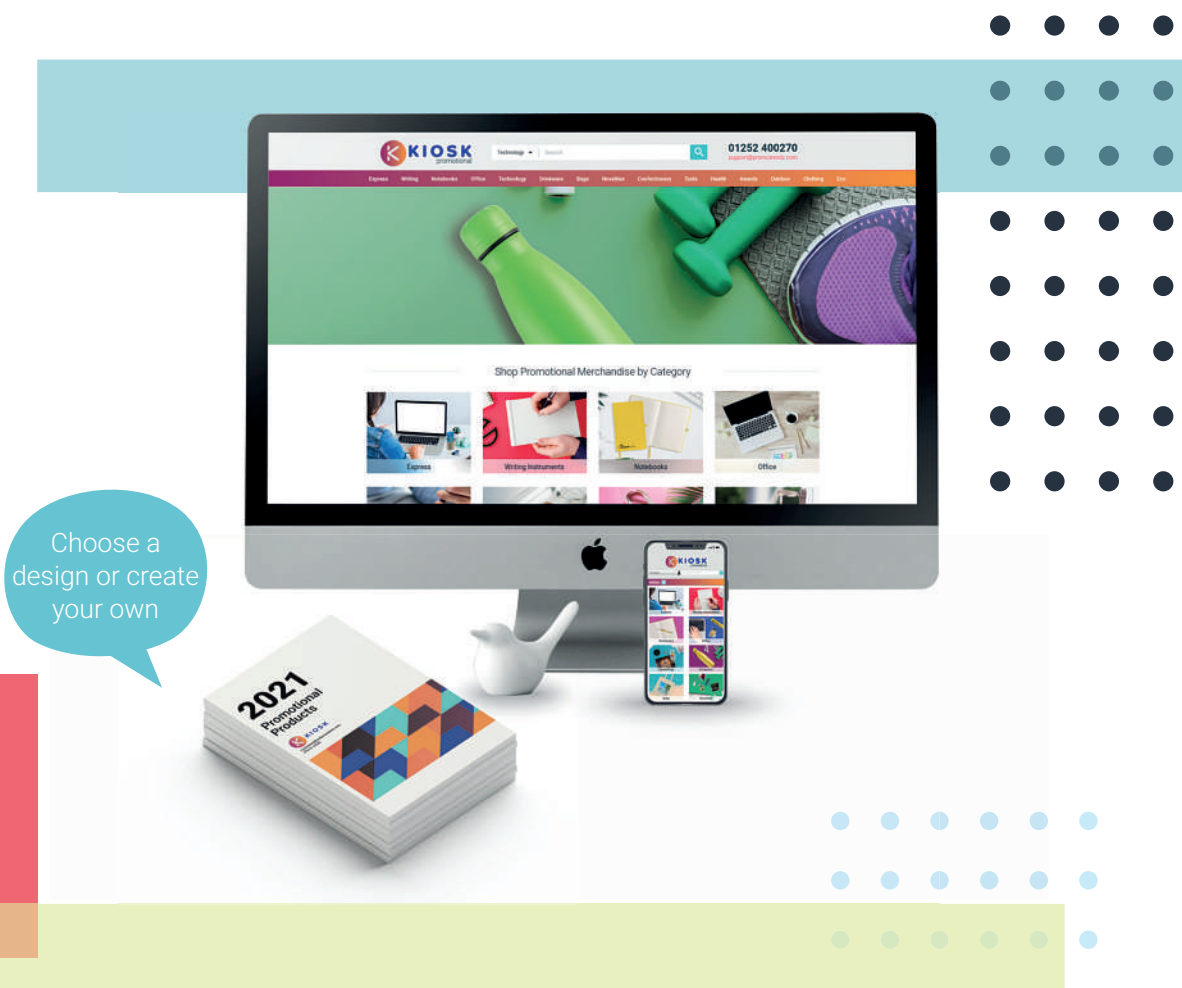
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