

TOGETHER AGAIN



Merchandise World preview **p12**



LIQUID ASSETS
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DRINKWARE **p21**



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GROWTH STORY TIME TO
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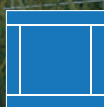
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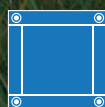
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WELCOME



Welcome to our bumper September-October issue of *Product Media* magazine packed with features, news and of course, our pre-show guide to the long-awaited

return of Merchandise World. As the whole world starts to wake back up to the delights and inspiration of merchandise, in this issue we look at drinkware and ceramics, following the journey from prospect to purchase, the BPMA's work on addressing VAT challenges plus insights and advice on getting your business back on track.

Looking ahead to Merchandise World, we know there are many of you looking forward to seeing friends and colleagues as we gather for the Peak Season show in September. Working hard to keep the show as normal as possible, the Merchandise World team has issued fantastic guidance for exhibitors and

visitors to help them attend safely (see p19). Welcoming back suppliers to Milton Keynes this year is cause for celebration after so many postponed shows and uncertainty; you'll find familiar faces and some new ones as we welcome distributors back to the show. Look out for the BPMA stand where we can't wait to see members and meet new friends.

A cautious re-opening of the economy has signalled end users to get back to abandoned campaigns, reward home working staff as they return to offices and start looking ahead. With reports that increased activity continues, price alerts were issued across the industry and supported by the BPMA to highlight raw material price increases and shortages. Coupled with freight prices that have left most slack jawed with shock, a perfect storm of demand, price and stock challenges plus COVID impacts have left many carefully managing expectations with their supply chain to hang on to hard-won orders.

There is no magic solution so

communication is critical. Assumptions can't be made and it's imperative the industry checks details, and understands the scope and timing of every order (see p11). Some suppliers have been forced to respond by putting out unprecedented mid-season price increases after months of carrying additional costs to secure stock and uphold contracts. In a situation like this there are no winners; working together to address the increasing demand will help all parties as we get back on track.

Read on for more industry updates and innovation. Don't forget if you would like to contribute to the next issue with your news, articles or to be included in the focus feature on Food & Confectionery, get in touch with us via editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk. For advertising in the next issue and for opportunities in 2022, please get in touch with Tom Robey at the BPMA.

See you all at the show!

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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New FD at Geiger joins other appointments

Promotional products agency Geiger has appointed Neel Gohil as its finance director.

The CIMA qualified professional has previously gained ten years' experience at Heathrow Airport in a variety of senior finance and commercial roles, including

creating effective ways to develop data analytics and insight through monthly financial reporting, planning and the creation of KPIs.

As well as relevant experience, Gohil brings rigorous analytical skills and an understanding of the complexities of various financial models on business performance to Geiger.

Vicky Kinasz, Geiger's managing director, said: "Neel is a crucial addition to our senior management team. His financial experience will bring numerous improvements to the company as we continue to implement our business strategy."

Gohil said he was impressed by Geiger's growth, despite the challenge of COVID and added: "I am looking forward to leading Geiger's financial team and driving revenue and margin improvements in the business to the benefit of all stakeholders."

Geiger has also made two new operational appointments in the shape of account manager Lauren Farrell and account coordinator Abbey McGrath.



Gohil



Farrell



McGrath



Juniper looks to leather alternatives

Juniper's Susanne and Andrew Langley have visited a new Peterborough facility of a key supplier that produces sustainable leather alternatives.

The joint MDs were shown around ELeather by director Alexandra Bennett, to see first-hand the production of their new material ranges.

ELeather is an award-winning supplier of sustainable leather alternatives, producing material for clients ranging from airlines to major sports footwear brands. Juniper partners ELeather in the UK manufacture and supply of corporate merchandise.

Leather wastage and scrap, destined for landfill is repurposed in an energy efficient, clean process, and results in a beautiful material, that has the look and feel of leather and crucially uses far less

man-made resources than other leather alternatives. Combined with UK product manufacture this offers substantial sustainability credentials over imported plastic alternatives.

Andrew Langley said: "ELeather continues to lead the way in creating fantastic solutions for materials that we can make into quality, long-lasting, and useful merchandise. Brands want to know more and more about the provenance of the materials used, their sustainable credentials, whilst providing gifting that they know will be cherished, and last. We at Juniper are delighted to continue our excellent relationship with ELeather."

Juniper will be launching more than 10 new products made from ELeather at Merchandise World in September.

Stormtech teams with PenCarrie

Devon-based PenCarrie has been chosen to distribute a range of Stormtech's best-selling technical outerwear and apparel collections across seven categories including its technical bags and backpack collection from July 2021.

Blake Annable, president and CEO of Stormtech Europe said: "We are looking forward to working with the PenCarrie team headed by Nicci Gratwicke, Tony Lock and director of sales Mike Symons, and, of course, the business development team, as we continue the growth of the Stormtech brand in the UK market."

Founded in 1991, PenCarrie has more than 30 years of experience in the promotional apparel industry.



The Sweet People moves to sustainable UK manufacturing

Confectionery merchandise company, The Sweet People, is moving towards 100% UK-manufactured products, including its packaging and sweets, as part of a more planet-friendly focus for the business.

With a host of new green initiatives to be launched in 2021, The Sweet People has introduced innovative, plastic-free eco-packaging, including the replacement of all bubble wrap with recycled paper. New labelling will also feature on all packaging with guidance on how to dispose of each element.

"We've shifted our focus and ramped up efforts company-wide to become a more sustainable, ethical business," said director Mandy Hastie.



From September, customers will also be able to order a new Gold Treat Tin, which has been made in London using solar power and can be filled with biscuits, cakes and chocolates.

"It's time to move into a new world where green credentials complement great taste, creative thinking and happy customers," added Hastie. "Today, we are focused on doing our bit to help make life better, happier and more sustainable."

The company has also invested in better practices throughout the business to minimise product waste. With increased in-house production of chocolate and sustainable packaging, it is now also able to reduce the carbon footprint from beginning to end of a customer's order.

The Sweet People new range will be officially launched at Merchandise World on 8 September on Stand 83, along with further announcements.



Ignite Group gets back in the race at Warwick

Ignite Group will be returning to Warwick for its annual exhibition and race day on 30 September following a year's absence due to the pandemic.

Richard Pettinger from Ignite said people were looking forward to getting back to face to face meetings.

"We are so pleased that we will finally be able to return to Warwick, I have been inundated by requests from suppliers and members in the hope that we will be able to stage our much loved event. We will be using the whole marquee which will enable plenty of space between tables and will follow all guidelines to ensure a safe day out. Already we have several suppliers and distributors booked in and expect a very full attendance," he said.

The 2019 event saw more than 100 suppliers and members attend what was the eleventh edition.

Jamie Marshall from Premier Print and Promotions, said: "As events open up again and the country has that feelgood factor, what better way to start than Warwick races with the Ignite Group. A selection of the finest distributors in the UK, joined by the industry's top suppliers, a fantastic setting with excellent atmosphere to discuss the industry's latest offerings, followed by an entertaining afternoon."

Supplier Andrew Williams from Pencom added: "For me, the highlight of the promotional calendar is back. A chance, at long last to get to meet face to face with industry friends, catch up, and get our business relationships back on track – can't wait!"

Ross joins growing Preseli

Preseli has appointed Rachel Ross as sales account manager, bringing a wealth of sales experience to the merchandise specialist. Ross has previous experience at Senator, BIC and, most recently, Goldstar.

Rachel's appointment comes at an exciting time for Preseli, said managing director Dave Wilson.

"The past 12-15 months have been hugely challenging. That said, we worked really hard all the way through the pandemic, so it is very encouraging that the increase in business we have seen in recent months is such that we needed to recruit another account manager."

Russ Coleman, sales manager, who recruited Ross, said: "I am so happy that Rachel, who not only has an excellent reputation in the promo industry but who is also a friend of ours, has chosen to join us. We look forward to Rachel working as part of the Preseli family as we continue to build and strengthen relationships with our distributor customers."

Ross will work from her home in Glasgow. Like colleagues Clare Etoe and Jackie Thomas, she will service distributor enquiries and orders via email and telephone.

She added: "I'm delighted to be joining the Preseli team – it feels like coming home. More so now than ever, it's important to me to work for a company with a good reputation and the trust and integrity that Preseli have earned over the years is so reassuring."



Team Preseli:
L-R, Rachel
Ross, Dave
Wilson, Jackie
Thomas

International recognition for top pair at Fluid

Fluid Branding's CEO Matt Franks (left) and managing director Miles Lovegrove (right) have won the award for International Persons of the Year in the 2021 Counselor Awards hosted by American trade association ASI.

The ASI (Advertising Specialty Institute) annual awards usually takes place during the organisation's trade show in Chicago, but this year were hosted virtually.

Nominated by industry peers and chosen by an in-house committee, Franks and Lovegrove were praised for their leadership in the face of the many challenges of 2020, including the COVID pandemic and Brexit, highlighting the fact that they managed to keep their team intact across their 11 UK and European offices during this difficult time.

It also shone a light on their investment in improving processes, their commitment to technology and in using business as force for good by becoming a Certified B Corp. In a busy year, the company has also acquired Reflex Marketing and Promotions and become a founding members of the Brand Unbound global network of promotional product agencies.

Matt Franks said: "A massive thank you to ASI, what a privilege and an honour it is to accept this award. We have a strong team behind us who have done exceptionally well in a really tricky environment."

David Long, CEO of Sourcing City, which partners with ASI added: "Through impressive growth, strategic acquisition and innovative marketing, Matt and Miles have built Fluid into one of the largest and most respected merchandise companies in the UK."



Laltex Podcast aims to provide industry insight

Laltex Group Promotional Merchandise has launched a brand new podcast hosted by Laltex Promo national account manager, Chris Nelson.

The podcast titled 'Industry Insights' features Chris and personalities from the promotional merchandise industry discussing key trends and a range of topics.

Nelson, who has been with Laltex for more than eight years encourages guests to draw on their own experiences to offer insight and snippets of advice from their perspective as industry leaders.

Guests have included BPMA chair Angela Wagstaff, Jamie Marshall of Premier Print & Promotions, and Lawrence Angelow of My Advantage.

"Whilst I have worked in the industry for a number of years now, there is still a lot to learn so for me this is very much about developing my own



knowledge and inviting listeners along for the ride," said Nelson. "This is all brand new and although it has pushed me way out of my comfort zone I think it is important to challenge yourself and I'm genuinely excited to see what is uncovered as the series progresses - hopefully my colleagues and peers will find it interesting too."

Listeners can stream the weekly episodes on several online platforms including Amazon Music, Spotify, Apple and Google Podcast.

Leadership shake up at Goldstar

Colin Loughran has been appointed as global director of operations & merchandising at Goldstar as part of a series of leadership changes as the promotional company expands into a global supplier brand.

A key leader within Goldstar's European operation since he joined the team in 2013, Loughran's new strategic role will encompass global merchandising, compliance, logistics, operations, systems and technology and customer care.

"I'm looking forward to collaborating with the many talented teams across Goldstar to drive product innovation and elevate the level of service we provide to our customers and partners at a global level. These are exciting times for Goldstar," he said.

Meanwhile, Kenny Ved has been



named Goldstar director of global sales, assuming responsibility for all Goldstar sales teams worldwide. He has worked for the Goldstar team in North America for more than 20 years.

Announcing the changes, Goldstar's Global GM, Howard Cubberly said: "We are excited to take the next step in furthering our position as one global organisation, and both Colin and Kenny have shown their exemplary efforts in leading our teams throughout Europe and North America. This is just one of many steps we are taking in furthering our commitment to offer unmatched value and a simple buying process for our distributors across both continents."

Prepare for kick-off with AMT Trade promo league

After watching England so nearly bring it home this summer, it's that time of year again when would-be managers pit their wits against each other in fantasy leagues.

AMT Trade is again welcoming merchandise professionals to start tinkering with their Premier League teams in the quest to become the greatest manager in the promotional

merchandise industry.

Last season more than 100 players took part and the victorious manager was Mark Alderson from First Editions.

The overall winner at the end of this season will take home £100 of Amazon vouchers and a leather vintage football.

To set up a team go to fantasy.premierleague.com and then enter

the private league using the following steps:

Log in OR Sign up - Then enter the private league with League Code: e67ui4

The league name is Promo Merch. League - AMT Trade. This season you can also use an Auto Join function at fantasy.premierleague.com/leagues/join/private.





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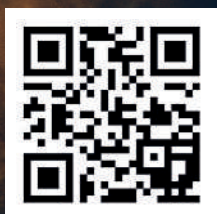
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Bouncing back sustainably with balloons

B-Loony reports that the pre-pandemic appetite for sustainable promotional products has not deteriorated, with the majority of enquiries it receives are now for sustainable or eco-friendly options.

Both end users and trade customers are acknowledging their requirement to reduce plastic consumption and work together to lessen their impact on the environment, according to the Chesham business.

B-Loony has invested in the development of environmentally friendly alternatives to its core promotional product range in recent years. Innovations include sustainable bunting, made from cotton and paper; ditching plastic sticks in favour of paper for their hand flags, and re-invented the balloon stick as a cardboard BalloonGrip which can also be printed for promotional use.

With July 2021 seeing the EU's ban on an array of single use plastics coming into effect, the demand for natural rubber balloons with BalloonGrip balloon holders have also soared.

As the world's first 100% plastic free balloon stick, the cardboard BalloonGrip contains no PLA, bio plastic or any other form of plastic derivative.



Creative and sustainable options from Jutebag

Jutebag is offering to create innovative and completely bespoke products, turning concepts into reality, even if they are just a scrawl on a piece of paper.

The bag specialist's bespoke product designers will take an idea and produce a choice of designs and materials for review.

Jutebag uses materials which are organic, recycled, upcycled, closed-loop and/or Fairtrade-certified. Among the latest innovations are hemp, linen and linen-cotton blend fabrics which are sustainable and can be used for luxury packaging.

The company uses an established network of dedicated and certified factories in India, Vietnam and Europe. Once a product begins being made, its team on the ground will visit the factory and conduct quality control on behalf of its clients.



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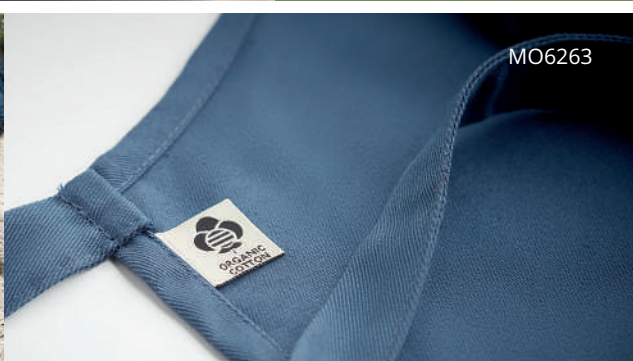
A collection filled with conscious and meaningful gifts

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- New functionalities in our digital End of Year Catalogue
- Contact your account manager for more information



Rethink

Aligned with the growing need to support social and responsible production, recycling and reutilization, we continuously re-examine the way we approach our product and material selection, manufacturing and print production processes. Many materials have found a second life by being recycled. This also counts for ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene). Check out these new trendy items made from recycled ABS.



Personalise your drinkware all the way around

Our new full colour rotary digital print and laser engraving offers you maximum brand exposure on a wide range of drinkware with these enhanced decoration options.



A FLEXIBLE FRIEND

In the second of his focus on materials, **Clive Allcott** takes a look at the possibilities for hemp



cultivated for thousands of years and on almost every continent. It is a remarkable plant offering an almost limitless selection of applications including food, building material, cosmetics and of course fabrics.

The fibre produced from pure hemp is similar to linen in texture. It can also be blended with other natural fibres to create fabrics with the durability of hemp and the softness of cotton.

grows. Amazingly this return of nutrients back into the soil can be as high as 60-70%.

However, it is important to be aware that hemp does not always mean organic as many farmers still use environmentally damaging fertiliser to grow it. So, when going for hemp, make sure it's organic and thoroughly study the supporting credentials.

Happy selling,
Clive (The Bag and Clothing Guru). PM

So, what makes hemp so amazing?

Hemp is a type of 'bast fibre' which means it's one of a number of natural fibres derived from the stems of plants such as flax, jute and the stinging nettle. The fabric it produces has various natural advantages such as keeping you warm in winter, cool in summer and even protecting you from UV rays.

Hemp actually has a very long history of being used as a fibre. In fact, it has been

Well, it's easy to grow and can be planted almost anywhere in the world as it requires little water or resources to grow.

A densely growing plant, hemp literally chokes out any competing plants meaning harsh chemical herbicides are not necessary for weed control.

Hemp also naturally reduces pests, so no pesticides are usually needed. It is also great for the surrounding soil, replenishing the nutrients from the ground in which it



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Soopa Doopa fundraising for Mind

Jake Scott-Paul of Ely-based branding company Soopa Doopa has raised over £3,300 for Mind, the mental health charity.

He raised the money after completing the Spartans 'Super' obstacle course race along with friend George Marsden despite dislocating a finger three weeks prior to the event.

The race boasted 25 gruelling obstacles over 11km of hilly terrain.

Scott-Paul said: "While we took this on as a bit of fun and a personal challenge to ourselves, we felt it was a great opportunity to raise awareness around mental health, especially so given the damage done over the last 18 months of lockdowns, which has seen a real increase in mental health issues. The more we can get people talking about what's going on inside, the better everyone will be."

The pair were helped in their fundraising



by shirt sponsors Brewers Decorator Centres, The Cambridge Joiner, Soopa Doopa, Burnt Orange Creative, Business Growth Coaches Network and Squeeze Football.



They enjoyed the challenge so much that they are planning 'The Wolf Run' in September and will be reappearing in next year's Spartan event too.

Trio of promotions at Eat My Logo

Eat My Logo has promoted Robert Jackson, who first joined Eat My Logo back in 2018 on a food apprenticeship, to head baker.

Having joined the business on a Prince's Trust placement, he now assists the business in baking and producing thousands of branded, edible goods every week. Since his promotion, he is working more closely with the management team and will be taking on more responsibilities to assist the business and further develop his skills.

Another promotion goes to Amy Lang, who also joined the business in 2018 on a Level 3 Digital Marketing Apprenticeship. She has proved herself to be a valuable member of the sales and marketing team and has now been promoted to the

sales team leader, managing a small but expanding sales team.

Eat My Logo also welcomes a new production supervisor, Andrew Birchall who will be overseeing the bakery. This will consist of planning each day in depth to ensure the team produces, assembles and dispatches all orders on time.

Eat My Logo director Ruth Poar said: "It's been a tough period navigating the business through the pandemic, but it's great to be at a point where we can expand the team again as we drive the business forward for the future. It's great to be able to develop the roles of existing team members as well as recruit new staff and we are very excited about the future with our new stronger management team on board."



● **BLAUPUNKT**

Blaupunkt chooses Desktop Ideas

Trade promotional technology supplier, Desktop Ideas has partnered with Blaupunkt as demand for well-known and affordable technology brands that deliver good margin for distributors rises.

The extensive Blaupunkt range features a wide choice of Bluetooth headphones, earbuds, speakers, activity trackers and other lifestyle items that often integrate the latest technology such as Qi certified wireless charging.

Desktop Ideas is the exclusive partner in the UK promotional market and will be launching the range at the Merchandise World show in September on Stand 95.

With more than 20 years of experience in this sector Desktop Ideas will be providing both tech and branding support to supply the perfect gifts for this Autumn-Winter.

The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products host a personal safety training day

The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products have hosted a self-defence class to ensure all staff members are fully equipped with the latest defence techniques to help keep them safe.

Streetwise Safety Training, a company founded by ex-police officer Martyn Bowie, provided an afternoon of safety training mixed with team building. The event went ahead as soon as COVID restrictions permitted.

The companies have taken steps internally to provide guidance and assistance to their employees when walking alone as part of a 'Walk safe initiative'.

Helen Dyl, operations director at The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products said: "Our employees are our family, they are also

mainly based in the local community and will walk to and from work. Their safety and wellbeing are our responsibility and after the tragic news of what happened to Sarah Everard, we knew we had to act. This will now be an annual offering for our teams. Martyn and his team were fantastic, and we would recommend their service."

The companies also celebrated Freedom Day on 19 July with freshly made stone baked pizzas, both traditional and experimental - including an Italian-style meat feast and a Nutella pizza.

The afternoon was also an opportunity for the companies to hold their annual charity sale, with all proceeds going to Frimley Park Hospital.



WE *meet* AGAIN

The industry assembles in Milton Keynes in September.
Here's what Merchandise World will have in store

It's hard to believe that it is more than a year and a half since the last Merchandise World event. Who would have thought as we waved goodbye to clients, colleagues, and friends after a storming return of the main industry event to Coventry's Ricoh Arena, that it would be so long before the industry would gather again?

No wonder the comeback event on 8 September at the Milton Keynes Arena has the tagline 'Bringing the industry back together'. It seems a long time in coming.

Of course, the event will be slightly different to those in the past, with a COVID safety policy in place to protect visitors and exhibitors (see page 17). However, with Sourcing City boss David Long predicting around 100 exhibitors, it looks like the industry can't wait to get back to meeting face to face.

Long says that visitor number may be down slightly as COVID has taken its toll on industry staffing levels in many distributor companies.

"Feedback is that many distributors

are planning to attend as they see it as valuable and essential to meet with suppliers. However, it is anticipated that visitor registrations will be later than normal this year as distributors plan to cover their workload in order to attend," he said. "It is forecast that about 450 to 500 visitors will attend, which should ensure many productive meeting for exhibitors and visitors alike. As always it is 'quality rather than quantity' that truly matters."

Show organiser, Ella Long certainly thinks so. She said: "We are delighted that so many suppliers are keen to meet existing and new customers in person once again. This enthusiasm is matched by many distributor visitors who are looking forward to getting together with known and new suppliers. The event and venue is prepared and we can't wait to see people enjoying themselves as the industry starts to rebuild with purpose."

Keith Lewis, operations manager, Premier Brands agrees with those sentiments.

"Whilst Zoom or Skype meetings have their benefits, I think it's fair to say we have all missed being able to meet face

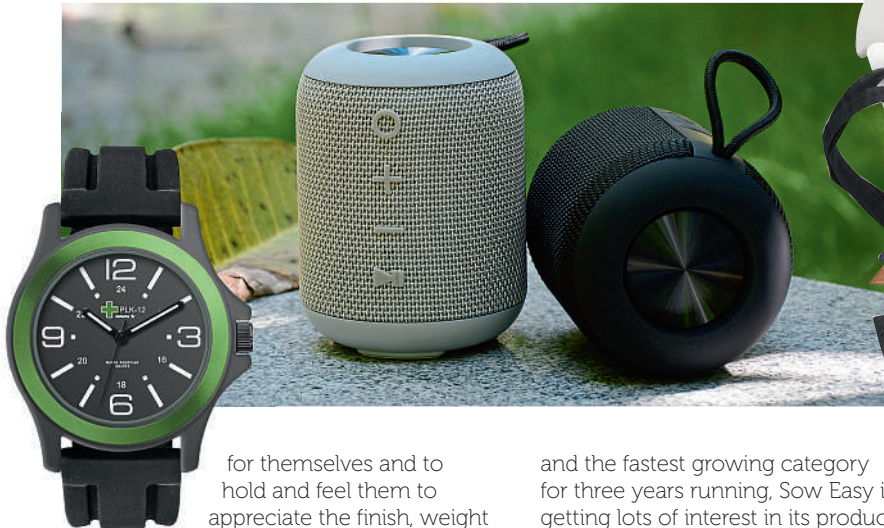
to face," he said. "A physical event brings both suppliers and distributors together on a different level and, we're looking forward to showcasing our range of new products at Merchandise World."

Daniel Clarke, business development executive at Eat My Logo, is another exhibitor looking forward to the return of Merchandise World.

"In my business development role it has been great building relationships with lots of distributors on the phone and via video, however I am really looking forward to meeting people face to face at MW21 in September," he said. "We've got some great new products in development that we will be bringing to the show, and we hope that these will spark the interest of our distributor partners."

At Oldeani, Lucy Bennett said that as regular exhibitors, the company would be in Milton Keynes.

"Shows are really important to us. Our products are selected for their quality and design. Whilst photos and the internet are great, we need people to see products



for themselves and to hold and feel them to appreciate the finish, weight and mouldings we chose.

This year we have been running offers to send products to clients as we have been unable to meet with them face to face and have sent out hundreds of samples."

The list of well-known names signed up to the show includes companies like Premier Brands, Listawood, Senator, The Sweet People, Goldstar, Xindao, and BIC Graphic Europe. The BPMA, which jointly runs the event with Sourcing City, will also have a presence at the show to meet up with members and deal with queries.

As much as it will be great to meet up with industry peers, it's worth reiterating the reason people will be at the show – to do business. Recent studies have shown that marketing spend is definitely on the way back, after a year in the doldrums. The Advertising Association recently predicted that UK ad spend will increase 18.2% this year, clawing back most of the £1.8bn it lost in 2020. Merchandise can draw a direct line to that recovery, and the revival of events which are also on the up.

Visitors to Merchandise World will be anxious to get the recoveries of their own organisations underway after so long spinning their wheels. They will be met by exhibitors ready and willing to show them how it can help.

GROWTH AT MERCHANDISE WORLD

A sector that benefitted during the past year was gardening as many turned to the therapeutic power of growing plants. With seeds and plants being number 16 in Sourcing City's latest market report



and the fastest growing category for three years running, Sow Easy is getting lots of interest in its products.

The business will be showing its product range including best sellers Seedsticks, seed grow kits, and seed packets.

Events manager, Emma Cooke said the company has missed trade shows and the feeling of excitement when showing the seed and plant-based products.

"We are really looking forward to having the opportunity to see people face to face again. Our products are very visual and it will be fantastic to show them off. Nothing beats the buzz at an event or trade show," she says.

"We keep hearing how well our products are received and brands are wanting to come back greener and choose the sustainable option – and there's nothing more sustainable than pure seeds and plants."

SUSTAINABLE GADGETS

Branded tech will be getting a pandemic upgrade this year. Baby USB is serving up the latest in health tech with products that promise to sanitise, sterilise and purify.

Sustainability is also making a splash with the latest collection of fully certified, biodegradable eco chargers, audio, desk and travel accessories, ideal for brands with eco-friendly values at their heart. With its recent move to larger premises, Baby USB now offers a host of additional UK based services helping to overcome many of the challenges of Brexit.

Large UK stock holdings and in-house branding means it can deliver quick turnaround, low MOQs and avoid many of the price fluctuations that the market has been experiencing recently.

Pick up a mini-brochure full of gifting ideas with a tech twist on Stand 91.

BOXING CLEVER

Xindao developed a gift set concept MYBOXD over the past year as a fully bespoke offering. This allows huge personalisation including selecting any product, decoration, choosing an individual name on one item, adding a sleeve, gift wrapping, designing your own



gift box including printing inside, adding a personal note, adding an item from another supplier, and finally delivering to individual addresses in the UK and EU.

The company will also be showing its new Impact collection which claims to tell the true story about sustainability and end greenwashing. The collection takes on the issue of 'water stress' – having to deal with a lack of sufficient and ready to use water is something 50% of world's population will experience by 2025.

By using recycled polyesters and cotton thousands of litres of water are saved. The claims are verified through a system called Aware, which is a virtual component that verifies sustainable content in a final product by tracer technology and validates claims by blockchain technology.

Merchandise World need to knows

- **Where** - Marshall Arena Stadium, MK Stadium Way, Milton Keynes MK1 1ST
- **When** – 8 September 2021. Show opens from 8.30 and closes 16.30. There's free lunch, tea and coffee, but no breakfast this time to minimise gatherings.
- **Why** – to acquaint yourself with the industry's main promotional suppliers in the flesh. September is peak selling period for the industry when everyone involved with sales in professional distributor companies wants to see the new and best-selling promotional products. With much buying delayed, it could be busier than ever.
- **How** - visitors can register at merchadiseworld.co.uk. There is a free station transfer shuttle bus to and from Milton Keynes Central station every 30 minutes between 08.00-17.30 on the day of the show. Free airport transfers from Luton Airport are available by prior arrangement. Call 0844 504 5006 for details.

Badger looks for new start at MW

The British manufacturer will be displaying its range of coasters made from recycled materials, wood and slate.

What are you most looking forward to at Merchandise World?

I think, like most people in the industry, we're just looking forward to getting back to normal. It will be great to be able to meet with existing and new customers face to face and show them the new products we've been working on over the last 12 months. Having Merchandise World in September will almost be like a new start for us after the turbulent last months.

What trends are you noticing in the market at the minute?

We're continuing to see a high demand for eco-friendly promotional products. Environmental welfare is at the forefront of everyone's minds, with customers and



just a preference.

We're really pleased to be able to offer recyclable, recycled and bio-degradable options for some of our products, and are constantly looking at new production methods to increase our eco-friendly range.

Are you noticing that customers are looking towards buying British?

Being British manufacturers has always been a strong selling point for us. Our customers know that they will get top quality products produced and shipped in a timely manner. We can't deny the impact that Brexit has had on the industry, and with the prolonged international shipping issues for products and materials, we are seeing a higher demand for locally sourced goods.

businesses all looking to do their part. Single use promo items are being replaced for ones with a longer product life, while sustainable materials are becoming a necessity, not

PET PROJECT

Preseli is looking forward to seeing people at Merchandise World and talking about pet products, which it has found to be popular in the past few months due to the uptick in pet ownership since everyone started working from home.

The pet range has a strong focus on dogs and includes dog leads, collars, food bowls, treat bags, and rope tug toys. A very popular product for dogs, in recent months, has been dog bandanas.

The company has also launched a brand-new range of high quality, bespoke-made bags that enables customers to create a cohesive range of matching bags and accessories in up-to-the-minute styles and fabrics.

It includes shopper bags, shoulder bags, deluxe drawstring bags and fold-over rucksacks in on-trend styles and a choice of innovative, attractive fabrics. Other new designs include cosmetic bags, wash bags and waist bags.

The new range is manufactured by Preseli's long-standing factory partner that is ethically audited (BSCI and SMETA) and manufactures for companies such as Disney, Coca-Cola, Estee Lauder and Starbucks.



GOOD FOR THE PLANET AND BUSINESS

With businesses increasingly turning their backs on single-use plastics, First Editions' focus on sustainable solutions has broad appeal.

More than 90% of the waste generated in the First Editions water bottle production is granulated and used again, while the remainder is passed on to another local business which uses it to produce roof guttering.

First Editions will be showcasing new and trending lines, including its bestselling Aqua range of British-made Tritan bottles for life, on stand 51. These are stylish, robust, energy-recoverable and 100% BPA-free.

The company's award-winning full colour, full wrap digital print bottles reproduce intricate, multi-coloured logos and photo-realistic imagery.

With the gifting season in full flow themed, personalised gift sets are available including 'work from home' essentials or even a 'grow your own' kit, all packaged in a 100% FSC-sourced box.

Mark Alderson, First Editions' operations director, said: "UK manufacturing is at the heart of our philosophy, as it clearly results in far fewer carbon emissions than goods produced overseas. International shipping is responsible for more than 5% of CO2 emissions. Not only that, but the UK recycles 70% more of its plastic waste than China."



distributors something to sell apart from PPE.

As people return to offices and events start to run again, the company predicts that the 'new normal' will be a blend of office days and remote working. The company now has a very flexible range that ensures distributors have an offering that suits both postal and bulk delivery options. Serving both markets is going to be critical as some businesses aren't going to be moving back into the office yet, while some are already settled back into their usual working spaces.

Always innovative, Eat My Logo has also been working on a new range of edible products to launch at Merchandise World. These will offer more tasty options and will have great eco credentials.



TASTY RETURN

Pre-COVID, Eat My Logo's tasty range of logo branded cakes and biscuits were traditionally used at business events. When physical events stopped, this presented a real challenge so the Eat My Logo team developed a range of postal products to serve the sudden spike in homeworking. It was more important than ever that businesses engaged with their home based

staff and the Eat My Logo postal range quickly filled that gap. This pivot kept the business running and also gave



UP FOR THE CUP

Premier Impressions looks forward to welcoming customers to stand 84a to showcase new and exciting drinkware products and more.

As reported in *Product Media's* Ceramics and Drinkware feature on page 21, Premier has lots of innovative products to show off, such as the Camelbak Tritan Renew bottles which contain 50% Recycled Material.

Tritan Renew is an innovative plastic that features polyester renewal technology (PRT) which is more effective than mechanical recycling and produces new material that is made with less virgin plastic. The Camelbak Eddy and Chute bottles are now made with this plastic. Tritan Renew is highly durable, dishwasher safe, and free of BPA, BPS, and BPF chemicals.

The company also has a range of clever reusable coffee cups to help put a dent the 300 billion single use cups that are produced every year.

PRINT PARTNERS

DTB will be bringing bags to life with printed completely bespoke carriers, offering the most freedom in not only colour options or print position but bag choice too. It has everything from bags made from recycled bottles right through to the standard Paper Grab bag



and everything in-between. Its new 2021 bespoke bag range offers a whole host of new opportunities never before seen at DTB.

Listawood will also be showcasing its stunning print processes at Merchandise World. These are available on a wide choice of products including matching gift sets and packaging to match from just 50 units.



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Staying safe at Merchandise World

The first priority at Merchandise World is protecting the safety of all visitors, exhibitors, and the events team. The show will follow Government guidance and the event venue's best practice.

A COVID safety policy is in place for visitors & exhibitors this year.

You must not attend Merchandise World if you have:

Any COVID-19 or cold symptoms - a temperature - feel unwell in any way - come into contact with anyone who has/or does develop COVID-19 - or are self-isolating.

ENTRY RULES

1. NHS COVID PASS: All visitors, exhibitors & event team are required to present the NHS COVID Pass OR show evidence of a Negative PCR test OR a Negative Rapid Lateral Flow Test within 48 hours prior to the show. (Or EU Digital COVID Certificate)

2. FACE COVERINGS: We respectfully request a face covering to be worn in the venue & show hall for the protection of others. Although no longer required by law, the Government expects that people wear face coverings at events. (Exemptions respected.) Face coverings must be used on shuttle buses. (See Section 6.)

QUESTION & ANSWERS ON ENTRY RULES

Q. Do I have to have the NHS COVID PASS?

A. No, but all visitors, exhibitors & event team that do not have the NHS COVID Pass showing vaccinations or negative tests will need to show evidence of a Negative PCR test OR evidence of a rapid lateral flow test that you have taken within the 48 hours prior to the show.

Medical exemptions are respected.

Note: After testing, Negative Rapid Lateral Flow Tests can be reported online using the QR Code on the Test Strip. PCR Tests are taken at testing centres. Either will receive a confirmation text/email that can be presented at show.

Q. Do I have to wear a face covering?

A. Wearing a face covering is ultimately a personal choice. As organisers we respectfully request for a face covering to be worn in the venue & show hall for the protection of others. (Although no longer required by law, the Government expects that people wear face coverings at events.)

Q. Do I have to use the NHS Track and Trace App?

A. No. The venue's NHS Track and Trace QR Code is available to scan for those that wish to.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL SAFETY - LATERAL FLOW TEST:

For additional safety, we recommend that before attending Merchandise World, that a Lateral Flow Test is taken at home 48 hours prior to the show.

If a positive result, do not attend.

1. REGISTRATION

- To avoid queueing, visitors are encouraged to pre-register at: merchandise-world.co.uk.
- Please bring your e-badge which will be emailed to you prior to the event.
- Multiple registration desks will have self-check in using your e-badge.
- Registration desks for walk-in registrations of invited visitor companies.
- If you use the NHS Track and Trace the venue's QR Code will be available to scan.
- Help Yourself to a lanyard and show bag with hand sanitiser.

2. SOCIAL DISTANCING

- 'Please keep your distance' lanyard available for those who would like one.
- Social distancing messaging will be prominently displayed.
- Where applicable one-way systems will be introduced, and signage displayed.
- Extra wide aisles throughout show hall. All a minimum 3 metres wide.
- Show Hall operating at reduced capacities allowing comfortable, social distancing.

3. GREETING & MEETING

- Please respect each other's personal space and avoid contact & shaking hands.

4. HYGIENE & CLEANING PROTOCOLS

- Hand sanitisers at all entrances and sanitiser stations within the show hall.
- Regular cleaning of high touch point areas.
- Fresh air supply to the arena higher than the government recommended amount.
- Doors to be open for ventilation where practical.
- Access to outdoor fresh air.

5. FOOD & DRINK

- Free tea, coffee & lunch sandwiches will be available. (But not breakfast.)

- Catering areas will have limited seating capacity to avoid people congregating. Please avoid areas if they are busy.
- A minimum of socially distanced tables available for brief stays only.

6. SHUTTLE BUS & PARKING

- Face Coverings MUST be worn when entering, moving around inside, and exiting the shuttle buses. Passenger numbers will comply with social distancing.
- Free parking available at venue.

EXHIBITOR COVID SAFETY POLICY

1. The physical hand to hand contact between visitor/exhibitor items is to be avoided.
2. Exhibitors are asked to place samples, catalogues, business cards etc. pre-sanitised, on spaced displays so that visitors can help themselves without touching other items.
3. Where display samples are handled by visitors, please ensure these are sanitised between each contact.
4. If this not possible, employ a 'look but don't touch' policy on your stand, providing alternative methods to convey product information such as a QR code to link to a product page or single use leaflet.
5. Samples and other items not to be in help yourself bowls.
6. Unsealed food, sweets & drinks must not be given out.
7. Exhibitors are to regularly sanitise the surfaces and touch points of their exhibition stands.
8. Please ensure that the minimum safety distance is observed during conversations, and with visitors waiting to meet a salesperson.
9. Exhibitors to complete a COVID Risk Assessment prior to event.

EVENT TEAM

The event team will comply with and enforce all of above policy.

This policy may be subject to change dependant on changes in Government guidance.



Create the difference

Dancing cups or particularly communicative ballpoint pens? Regardless of what makes your product something special – it deserves to be in the spotlight. The Promotional Gift Award has been distinguishing haptic promotional products that stand out from the crowd since 2003. The creativity label that is conferred by an independent jury of experts thus creates that certain difference – in the perception of the target group. The presentation at the HAPTICA® live, on March 16, 2022 in Bonn (Germany) attracts additional attention.

Register your creations for the Promotional Gift Award 2022 now and profit from the favourable early bird rate (180 Euros) up until September 30, 2021!

All information, the terms of participation and application forms can be found at:

www.promotionaward.com

Entry deadline: November 26, 2022



**PROMOTIONAL GIFT
AWARD 2022**

Open FOR BUSINESS



With enquiries and orders coming back as the industry rebounds, there is a need to ensure that everyone is aware of the new conditions the industry is operating under

On 19th July, the UK opened its doors again – cautiously – to get the economy moving. For the promotional merchandise industry, this signalled a boom in enquiries and orders as end users finally spent budgets, meaning that suppliers and distributors have had to crank up a gear to ensure they can fulfil those orders and meet demand.

With ad spend originally forecast to grow by 15.2%, now revised to 18.2%, reports issued by the Advertising Association/WARC during July showed the latest figures suggest that the UK's ad market will recover the entirety of 2020's £1.8bn decline. Further growth is expected in 2022, pushing the market up to a record £30bn, which will positively impact the promotional merchandise industry.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

The whole industry has been on a price alert for several months as the UK's exit from the EU, and Far East delays coupled with rising freight and stock shortages have created a perfect storm for many. End users who have grown used to rapid turnaround are now being advised stock delivery timings may be severely restricted.

The BPMA issued an industry wide price and freight alert in early July, urging members to manage their clients' expectations positively as the return to normal might hold a few shocks. Noting the situation changing daily, the BPMA stated that during the pandemic, the industry has been acutely aware of certain shortages of goods, particularly since the UK left the EU, with challenging port, freight and carrier conditions adding to the mix.

In the last 6-9 months, the price of raw materials has started to creep up including staples for our industry such as cardboard, paper and plastic causing dramatic increases not just in the UK but across many markets.

THE INDUSTRY SHOULD BRACE FOR PRICE INCREASES AND FLUCTUATIONS

In anticipation of rising prices, industry suppliers are expected to issue revised pricing in the coming weeks and months

to reflect the situation. While many suppliers have borne additional freight and raw material price increases in recent months, this is no longer viable for many in the market. With the global raw material shortages and subsequent eye-watering price increases, the BPMA has advised the industry they must start preparing the ground for the inevitable impact. Add logistics cost increases and extended delivery times into this mix and the result is an increase in promotional merchandise prices.

The raw material list includes but is not limited to:

- Cardboard
- Plastics
- Paper
- Cotton
- Metals
- Wood

NOT JUST THE PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE INDUSTRY AFFECTED

It is imperative the whole industry understands any increases are not limited to promotional merchandise. Globally, the price of raw materials is pushing costs up everywhere and while we expect reaction from end-users it is important for the whole industry to stress that the market forces at work are beyond our control.

Other factors are also affecting the industry, such as continued COVID isolations increasing running costs of business. As we receive reports from across the industry that spend is being increased, enquiries and order levels are at the biggest high for more than 12 months, creating a balancing act for all concerned.

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

The BPMA recommends all suppliers and distributors communicate during the order process to ensure all stages of an enquiry to order are fully understood, managing expectations through to delivery.

ENQUIRY & QUOTING

- Make sure, especially if a repeat order, stock is available and at what price
- Check how long quotes are valid for and don't assume quotes will be valid for

extended periods

- Check if stock can be reserved for short periods to guarantee specific goods are available
- Are there any lead time or availability challenges impacting the order you might wish to place?
- Are there any additional freight or carrier costs or delivery restrictions?
- What terms are your orders being delivered on and could this impact cost and lead times?
- Manage expectations with all stages of the supply chain to ensure customers at each stage are aware

PLACING ORDERS

Check, check and check again: clarify and confirm all details before orders are placed – assume nothing, check everything!

1 Enquiry

Check stock and pricing is current, any price guarantees and short period validity. Actively inform customer of anything that might change at short notice.

2 Quote

Check how long quotes are valid for - don't assume prices or stock can be held for long periods. Check leadtimes and don't assume what has been the norm is still the same.

3 Availability

Once a quote is accepted, before placing an order, check price and availability.

4 Leadtimes

Leadtimes are not the same as they were; to manage expectations, ensure all parties are aware of all and any impacts on leadtimes.

5 Order

Make sure a final check is done before an order is completed; price, stock, leadtimes, delivery and a final check on any other customs duties if your delivery is outside the UK.

NEW



Kiato Coffee Cup Range



350ml • borosilicate glass • secure silicone lid • heat-resistant band in silicone or cork • BPA-free • reusable and eco-friendly • 15 colours





Drinkware has been a growth sector over the past 18 months, and there is plenty of innovation in the market

As time goes by it is becoming abundantly clear that moves to improve sustainability are moving from the margins to the mainstream. Nowhere has this been clearer than in drinkware.

AN INNOVATIVE SECTOR IN DEMAND

Over the last 18 months, we have seen requests for certain products growing exponentially to meet corporate demands as we've sought to help brand the homeworking experience. While there may have been hesitance at the start of the pandemic as even coffee shops shied away from refilling our on-the-go cups, drinkware still features in the top three products we all want to receive (not including hand sanitiser and face coverings). This covers everything from the trusted mug to water bottles, with 22% of consumers welcoming these as gifting options, according to BPMA research.

These industry staples are part of the homeworking box with many employers providing drinkware to employees in their thousands as the nation gets back to work. Providing a safe and more environmentally friendly alternative to single use plastics,

more and more turn to the vast array of materials and finishes which help uphold safety and sustainable messaging.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

And this is just one area where brilliant products feature; with the gifting season just around the corner and plans for 2022 now feeling more and more concrete by the day, the sector is anticipating further strong growth for the last quarter.

From antimicrobial coatings to recycled plastics or materials made from 100% waste which leave no trace, the industry has geared itself to the future and is helping more and more end users discover the possibilities.

In this feature, *Product Media* looks to explore the vast array of options in the market; from the familiar solutions all the way to the latest innovations developed in response to the climate crisis.

With so much change in the industry during this period, suppliers have faced some of their toughest challenges yet still deliver whatever the circumstances, carefully managing expectations. From COVID to Brexit, this part of our industry backbone is like no other and while battling rocketing freight and raw material prices

have continued to innovate and launch outstanding propositions for the market. With end users bouncing back with money to spend, our industry is prepared to take on the next stage of regeneration knowing what amazing products are available.

To our intrepid drinkware and ceramic suppliers, we raise a glass, flask, bottle and mug to salute the progress made and here's to an outstanding recovery!

CRYSTAL CLEAR

Cut glass is making a comeback, claims Crystal Galleries. In the past, fully cut crystal glassware has been used as display items or reserved for special occasions but times are changing, and this type of glassware is becoming increasingly more desirable and being used as an everyday glass. The sparkling effects as each facet or cut reflects and refracts light creates a visual impact like no other type of glass on the market.

Fully cut glassware is the latest must have at any dinner party, restaurant or bar. The quality, look and feel of this glassware is proving that tradition is something consumers are choosing over more modern styles of glassware. It feels elegant and heavier in the hand and enhances the overall drinking experience.

An exciting range that is currently on trend is the beautifully designed Flamenco Crystalite Fully Cut range. They are robust enough for everyday use while adding that extra touch of style for special occasions. Visually they combine a traditional style and shape with a diamond cut design and

Drinkware

the decorative stems create a statement whether you are drinking champagne, gin or brandy.

Another big trend hitting bars is the fully cut gin glass, a high-end alternative to contemporary gin balloons. This glass gives 550ml of stylish diamond cut design adding quality and tradition to this quintessentially British drink.

DRINKWARE THAT'S SET TO STAY.

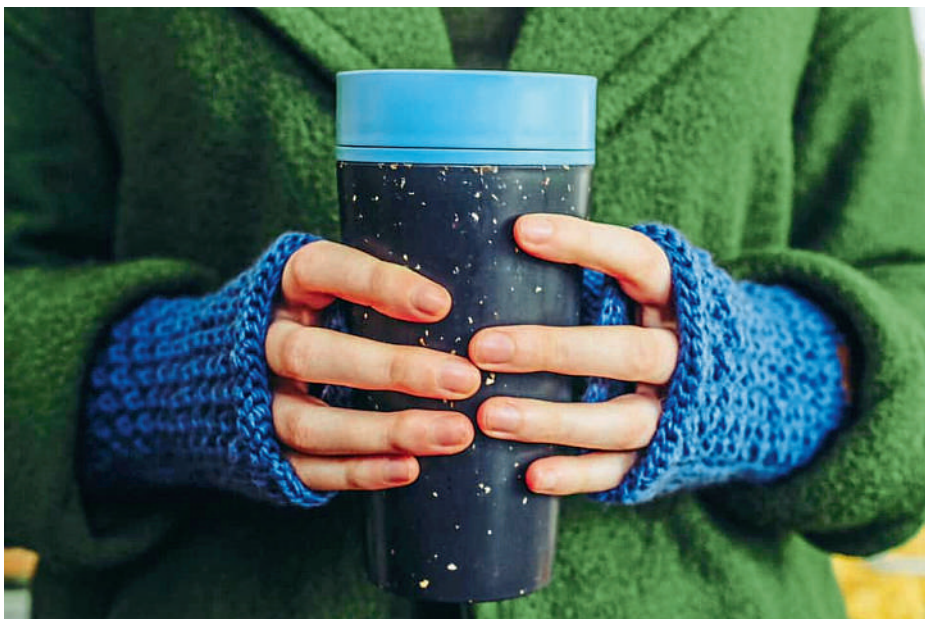
It's estimated that more than 38.5 million plastic bottles and around seven million disposable coffee cups are used in the UK alone every single day. Reducing this number, along with a desire for high quality gifts that will be kept for longer, has led to an increase in demand for reusable promotional drinkware, which fits in with Listawood's increasingly popular 'Actively Sustainable' programme.

Listawood offers Pantone matched thermal bottles and coffee-to-go drinkware in a choice of finishes from just 50 units, despatched in just 10 days. It can also offer 360 degree photographic print from as little as 30 bottles.

"We are constantly introducing new products that enable our distributors to offer high demand, environmentally friendly alternatives to their clients," said Alex Turner, managing director. "Our strategy is to deliver innovation in the promotional drinkware market, presenting a stream of new processes and product ideas to supplement our comprehensive range of bestselling drinkware lines."

OCEANS APART

Another player with an eye on the future is Oldeani, which focuses on good quality, reusable drinkware and is introducing bottle bags made from RPET. It has been supporting Ocean Day, promoting the use of reusable drinkware and recently donated £250 to the Blue Marine Foundation which supports conservation in local waterways and across the globe to maintain the biodiversity of our oceans.



A REUSABLE CUP FROM SINGLE USE CUPS

Circular Cup from Premier Impressions is the world's first reusable travel mug, made from recycled single-use paper cups. Every purchase of a Circular Cup is funding a sustainable solution to global waste. The mug is designed for 10 years of use and the outer thermal insulation layer is made from

used paper coffee cups.

Manufactured in the UK, the multi-award-winning sustainable travel mug is 100% leakproof with a simple push lid mechanism eliminating spills and offering one-hand opening for total peace of mind on the go.

Premier has other innovations to shout about, including the Topl cup, a vacuum insulated stainless steel reusable coffee cup with game-changing technology. The lockable lid keeps your coffee safe if you are bumped on the bus while the spill safe technology means you never have to worry about spilling your drink on your laptop again.

A 360 degree lid regulates the flow, and if it is accidentally knocked over, Spill-Safe technology will activate automatically, snapping shut so that you never have to worry about hot liquids damaging your belongings again.

Topl comes in a variety of beautiful colours and two sizes, 8oz and 12oz (standard barista sizes) and comes with a drawstring storage bag made from recycled ocean plastic for storage. A great finishing touch.



Cup Print

Despite the rise of the reusable cup, there is still a place for single use items, and there are ways that they can be used in a more sustainable manner.

Cup Print is a supplier of printed paper cups, a market that has done well in recent times for several reasons. Firstly, more organisations are appreciating the value of branding opportunities on cups, whether that is local coffee shops or multinational organisations.



Edward Pinnock, business development manager, Cup Print says the company's wrap round branding options are very appealing to organisations who want to stand out. "Bespoke print has really taken off and it's no longer only available to the big chains. With fewer people dining in during the pandemic the take away market took off and advertising your services was more important."

Demand for single use cups increased during the pandemic due to hygiene concerns. The company offers the first and only paper cups to achieve AAA certification by the Institute cyclos-HTP in

conjunction with the European Green Dot scheme for processing through Waste Path 13 (paper and cardboard).

The EarthCoating Certified-as-Recyclable cups from Cup Print uses an innovative barrier coating specifically engineered to recycle. The cup itself is made from food-grade recycled content and PEFC-certified sustainable-forestry-sourced virgin paper.

Operators can also ensure cups are recycled by choosing a pick-up and processing service with Cup Print waste collection partner First Mile, so you can sup your beverage with a clear conscience.

WARMING TO THERMOMUGS

Reflects' Bayamo Thermomugs are double walled design enables it to keep liquids warm for four to eight hours. Additionally, a copper coating that provides a maximum insulating effect is worked into the mug. They are now available in three sizes: 230ml, 320ml and 440ml.

The doubled walled Thermomugs can be customised according to corporate colours, with bodies in white, black or silver, plus sleeve and rings of silicone in 17 colours.

A thermo drinking bottle, Nizza, is also available with customisation options. Customers can choose a ring for the bottle neck and a bottom sleeve made of high quality silicone in one of 17 different colours.





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MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF YOUR MESSAGE WITH **360° DIGITAL PRINTING**. **FULL-COLOUR** DIGITAL PRINTING FROM THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF COLOURS DOWN TO THE SMALLEST DETAIL. TO LEAVE **A LASTING AND MEMORABLE IMPRESSION**.



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The advantages of flying the flag

The combination of a more health-conscious population and increasingly regular high temperatures in the UK has driven a dramatic increase in the market for reusable promotional drinkware. The last two years alone have seen a rise in spending on such products in excess of £2 million.

However, this growth in demand has also been matched by raised expectations about the sustainability and provenance of these items. More than ever, consumers are demanding more insight into supply chains and the story of how their products are made.

First Editions, the largest specialist trade supplier of British-made branded sports bottles, has an advantage in this respect. Its products are designed, tested, manufactured and branded in-house in the UK.

The company's reusable drinkware, including the best-selling Tritan range, is packed with eco-credentials, not least its policy as a 'zero-waste' manufacturer. More than 90% of waste material is granulated and reused in the manufacturing process, while the remainder is supplied to a local business to make into guttering.

Mark Alderson, operations director at First Editions, said buying British supports the UK economy, and helps



the planet.

"British-made products start life with a smaller carbon footprint because the energy used to create them is 'greener' – and that's before you even think about the thousands of extra miles to bring in similar items from the other side of the world.

"Pressures on worldwide container freight in the wake of COVID have seen both costs and lead times around Far East products significantly increase, while Brexit has also brought its own frustrations and complications for importers. Buying British circumvents all those problems at a stroke."

INDIVIDUALLY YOURS

Love Island has a lot to answer for, not least in showcasing individual water bottles – a trend noted by Xindao that has been fuelled by people wanting the reassurance of knowing they are drinking from their own bottle. The company thinks that more individually named corporate items, including mugs, will be popular as staff move back to the office.

Anti-microbial products are also coming to the fore. Xindao offers an anti-microbial tumbler that is protected with Biomaster, an anti-microbial agent that provides a second line of defence against harmful bacteria.

The body and lid are both treated so that it is in the product, not on it, offering permanent protection. Biomaster does not affect the recyclability of the item. The product also includes Verimaster a unique tracer that is built into the material to prove that the item is treated with Biomaster.



CHANGES FOR CHILI

The past year has been a time to reassess business opportunities and prepare for the bounce back

Like all promotional merchandise companies, Leicester-based Chili Concept has faced challenges over the past 18 months. With the events industry shutting down and companies switching to working from home, the business saw orders dry up.

It adapted by using its supply channels in Asia to source PPE, which managing director Kiran Somaiya describes as "a lifeline".

"We were fortunate that our distributor base of clients did the same and therefore this helped with being able to market the products we could supply with our trusted clients," he says.

As the events and marketing industry bounces back, there is scope to shift back towards promotional products. Somaiya predicts a boom in business starting in the middle of Q4.

"We have seen a lot of movement in terms of acquisitions, personnel changes and product innovation over the past year in our industry," he says. "This mix of streamlined and focused distributor

clients coupled with end-users who have more confidence, ready to spend again will serve our industry well. I'm optimistic and the only way is up."

The past year has seen a trend for small mailable box sets which can be shipped remotely. Despite tough times, customers still want to wow their clients, albeit on a tight budget.

"They are relying on their supplier to come out with new and innovative ideas. As a supplier to the UK market, we are always trying to keep up to date with trends and new designs and fortunately our products are unique and patented which I believe will help us in this crowded market," he says. "We are seeing clients asking for full customisation on products at low quantities and very fast lead times."

Chili's uniquely designed range of tech accessories and stationery products have been popular says Somaiya. Sustainable, useful and eco-friendly are in vogue too.

Prior to the pandemic Chili invested in working with an organisation called Nature Office in Germany to calculate



its carbon footprint from factory production to delivery. Meanwhile, a trade-only website details live stock levels, pricing and allows 24/7 ordering.

10% off for BPMA members

To accelerate the increase in demand that Chili predicts in the industry, it is providing 10% off all orders to all BPMA and Purple Club members until January 28th 2022. Just quote CHIL10 on any orders placed.



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CHILI

THE CHANGING PACE OF CREDIT CONTROL

Getting paid is a timely process and the clock is continually ticking, says **Mike Collins**



As Bob Dylan famously sang, "The times, they are a changing". Regular readers will know that we've commented how the pandemic impacts the important processes, procedures and checks associated with maintaining a robust and successful credit control practice.

It's a fact that the day-to-day actions of strong credit control departments have evolved and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Time for control

Many employers now run 'flexible' departments, where employees work both from the office and at home. Whereas this situation can be beneficial for both the employee and the business, it can often be detrimental to a supplier's credit control functions. Especially when it comes to time.

We have seen occasions where a customer's purchase ledger contact is working from home and a telephone call cannot be transferred across because of an incompatible telecoms system. As a result, all you can do is email the purchase ledger contact and await a response.

This inability to discuss and resolve a matter instantly can be detrimental on two fronts.

Firstly, the opportunity for the supplier to resolve at that specific moment is lost. The supplier becomes reliant on the customer's want and/or need to return any call or respond to an email. Let's not forget that the supplier picked up the phone so the likelihood is the matter requires resolution there and then. Will being forced to wait have an adverse effect on the supplier? Probably.

Secondly, being forced to email a customer and await a response means all momentum now passes to the customer. The challenge here is, if the customer is juggling cash flow or indeed has no monies to clear matters, will there be any

desire from them to contact the supplier back? Probably not.

Lost in the system

Other timely challenges we've seen unfolding are delays in getting matters processed and paid through a customer's own internal procurement system.

Their purchase ledger tries to speak with a buyer with regards an invoice to pay but the buyer is unavailable on the phone. An email is sent instead asking for confirmation this can be paid. If the buyer has a more pressing task or one which might earn the business money, rather than the cost the business money, are they likely to park this request until they are chased again? Probably.

Eventually the purchase ledger gets the invoice passed for payment and they pass the invoice to the financial director for payment but the FD is working from home and can only be emailed. Should the FD be met with a message to resolve a matter that impacts cash flows as soon as they address it, do you think their first thought would be to resolve it instantly? Probably not.

Don't delay

The question is, are you taking steps to avoid experiencing delays in your credit control functions?

The likelihood is that some of the potential delays are not through inadequacies in your processes, rather a result of the working conditions that have become more prevalent in recent months.

There are a number of proactive ways you can attempt to avoid further delays. You can:

- Act quicker.
- Don't wait until an invoice is significantly overdue, take action as soon as it falls due.
- Chase more.
- Sending an email and relying on the goodwill of the customer to come back to you may not resolve matters as they once did.

Continue to press for payment until the matter is addressed.

- Close better.
- Don't be content with a promise that the matter is with the director team for payment. As stated, there could always be delays in higher management too. Continue to liaise with your contacts until your money is in your bank.
- Put the onus on the customer to come back to you in an agreed timeframe. If they don't, you have every right to chase them on the basis that they agreed to come back by the given date and time. Alternatively, don't worry if

you are already experiencing these delays and are being forced to spend more and more time on your essential credit control functions. Help is at hand through your retained BPMA service partners.

AccountAssyst and Direct Route are here to help you with free advice, guidance and support on all things related to credit management.

Simply email at mail@directroute.co.uk, or contact us on (01274) 223 190 for support.

Mike Collins is managing director of AccountAssyst

Local Support Contact Details

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

London and South East

David Barker
dbarker@directroute.co.uk
07766 545871

South Wales and South West

Ron Dingle
rdingle@directroute.co.uk
07976 675420

Midlands and East Anglia

Ken Brown
kbrown@directroute.co.uk
07795 214426

North Wales and North West

Ian Jenkinson
ijenkinson@directroute.co.uk
07860 197476

East Pennine Lincolnshire & Yorkshire

Shaun Egan
segan@directroute.co.uk
07801 108402

North East, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Mike Collins
mike@accountassyst.com
07866 427363



ZOOMING IN ON SUCCESS

In the second part of her look at how marketing is changing, **Melissa Chevin** advises you choose your battles wisely



I'm picking up where I left off in my last column, examining the long-term effects the COVID pandemic has brought to marketing channels, and the ways in which customer engagement is changing.

One great advantage that online and in particular social media marketing has over more established, traditional channels is its ability to dramatically zoom in on very specific target audiences.

Hyper targeted

This is obviously extremely useful for highly specialised products – but don't discount the advantage for more mass-market items either. When you think about it, pretty much every product has been designed with a specific target group in mind, and online delivery of messages helps brands bring an almost clinical focus to that outreach.

Just as with any online activity, the

most important thing is to be found in the first place, so the use of keywords and hashtags will continue to play a vital role in achieving this over the next couple of years.

Be sensitive to trends and circumstances – so, for example, expect words like 'hygiene', 'comfort' and 'contactless' to be among the most searched for in the year ahead. Identifying trends, and the keywords which go with them, is a vital skill to acquire.

Get the look

Visuals will also continue to play a vital role in selling, particularly to the rising generation, with channels such as TikTok and Instagram continuing to ramp commercial activity. Needless to say, the dark art of SEO (search engine optimisation) will also continue to be indispensable in the continuing fight to be heard above the digital noise.

Going mobile

On-the-go customer engagement is another area which is likely to grow significantly, whether through email newsletters, podcasts or YouTube channels covering everything from tech to fashion, hill walking to rabbit-keeping.

Expect brand partnerships to multiply in these channels – web hosting specialist Squarespace is a prime example of how to do this, with its branding all over diverse YouTube channels. You can bet that more mainstream brands will not be slow to follow suit in the year ahead.

All this is very inspiring and exciting – but don't forget that post-pandemic life is also unpredictable, so choose your battles and spend your money wisely, leaving wriggle room for a change of plan if needed.

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



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TECH'S BIG FINISH TO 2021

As clients look to spend towards the end of the year, technology could be high on the agenda, says **Matt Pluckrose**



This September our industry is optimistically looking forward to getting back to business with events, meetings, promotional merchandise and hopefully profit moving back to 2019 levels.

Promotional technology is rising again and becoming part of the promotional tool kit of many marketing professionals, but what will be the tech trends for the balance of 2021?

During this article we will look at a few areas of growth and some ideas to keep your eyes on and to add to your client's next presentation when the request is 'what's new and techy?'

Greener tech

Sustainable products will remain at the top of many shopping lists with different materials helping to make a difference such as wheat, coffee, RPET, cork, and bamboo to name a few materials that product shells will be made from.

Within this category charging cables will return to the dominant sales position as buyers turn away from lithium battery powered power banks given the increasing difficulty in transporting them across borders.

Leading the charge

Speed will become an increasingly attractive feature in tech especially the speed at which consumers can charge, connect and stream as 5G starts to become the norm. This change to a faster pace of digital lifestyle will mean buyers want everything to be faster.

Charging your devices is the dominant use for promotional technology and wireless chargers particularly that can charge at 20W, 30W and even up to 60W will become the norm. A long way from the very basic 5W chargers we were all selling only three years ago.

Chargers themselves will also become lighter and hence more stylish with the adoption of GaN (gallium nitride) materials which produce less heat and allow designers to produce more powerful and smaller chargers that can easily handle the latest speed and power of USB PD (power delivery).

In your ear

The next area which will continue to grow is TWS (true wireless earbuds) often described as 'Air Pod-style'. These little music wonders are set to account for 52% of the headphone market by the end of 2021 with some 56% growth this year and more than 290 million units set to be sold globally.

The trends to watch within this category



will be ANC (active noise cancelling) and smart assistant compatibility with systems like Alexa or Siri. It's definitely an area to consider when making Christmas gift suggestions for your clients' staff briefs.

Gifting

This last year has seen a huge rise in the demand for lifestyle gifts. Companies have been spending their budgets on gifts to keep their staff motivated and their spirits up while working from home through the pandemic. This will continue and demand for smart lifestyle gifts this Christmas will benefit many product sectors of the overall market.

Tech ideas that will be popular will include LED mood lamps, bedside alarm clocks, and design led wireless speakers. Many of these feature a second use such as wireless charging, sound or even double as a wine cooler.

Coupled to this will be the demand for high street brands to reward and motivate colleagues, clients and even suppliers. Within this area look out for A-list brands that make amazing gifts such as Bluetooth speakers (JBL, Sony, Blaupunkt, Bose), smart speakers (Alexa, Apple Pod), and high end Bluetooth headphones (Beats, Philips, Apple, Sony).

These all make amazing gifts at Christmas and can often be branded with a bespoke four-colour sleeves around the gift packaging, as often the product does not have much space to print a logo or the product's materials don't support ink adhesion.



Fit for business

Health remains an important aspect of promo tech and given the challenges faced by everyone this last year, staying fit will be important to many. Within this area fitness trackers are the item to continue to watch and trends recently are that marketers and buyers with HR departments are looking to brands such as Fitbit, Garmin and of course Apple Watch.

For lower budgets there are also many generic brands that offer great value for money and the client's logo can be more prominent on the device itself than the branded equivalents.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas

GROWING SKILLS IN THE INDUSTRY

The BPMA has overhauled its education offering to provide merchandise professionals with the expertise that end users expect

Over the past 18 months the BPMA has been busy rebuilding its education platform. It was a plan already in place for 2020-21, however the pandemic and staff movement in the industry has meant expert skills are back in high demand meaning the new courses are delivering an even greater need than was first anticipated.

With its core Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) and Certified in Promotional Merchandise (CPM) courses bang up to date, since its relaunch earlier this year, over 100 employees signed up for success.

The BPMA team has worked closely with the BPMA Board to determine the right content for the industry. Driving a centre of excellence agenda has been central to the strategy behind the right training to ensure the expert skills expected by the entire supply chain are delivered. With a new remote learning platform, learners have an online experience complemented by live webinars to help bring critical content to life.

Considering different learning styles, the BPMA's Carey Trevill notes: "It was really important to us to present a number of ways to take on board complex, detailed information alongside sales and presentation skills. We're an industry where we need to have the background detailed

knowledge to be able to present technical solutions to customers in a simple way. With a mix of media for learners to work from we can appeal to an individual's learning style and help retention of information. We're really pleased with the feedback from those on the new courses, giving us great ways to keep improving ways to deliver. Employers need all their staff to be as productive as possible and by ensuring the base knowledge is there, it will help every customer interaction return on the small investment into training."

With the demands on suppliers and distributors much changed in recent times, the need for core skills in the industry has never been more important. From listening to the growth statistics promoted by end users driving a hike in orders, what is also now starkly apparent is the requirement for expertise to advise and guide clients as many end user firms have also reduced headcounts. A clear expectation exists from those who consult suppliers and distributors that they know their products, why promotional merchandise is a great solution and what technical information is needed.

ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

Offering congratulations to those who have recently passed their exams which are taken

on set monthly dates to provide milestones for learners, the BPMA enjoys celebrating newly qualified TPM on social channels to help demonstrate new skills acquired across the industry.

The CPM course has also been given the same treatment, with a greater focus on commercial competences to support business growth. From understanding business financials, profit and loss through to fundamental compliance knowledge, employers who have already put employees through TPM are encouraged to invest in staff by signing up for the CPM course as a natural progression, supporting industry careers.

With the next intakes for the BPMA's TPM course ready for October, those members of the BPMA looking for training places are urged to secure places to support the skills drive in the industry, investing in knowledge to help every business build back better. Taking on four intakes for 2022 for this course, anyone looking for training advice should contact the BPMA.

BPMA Education courses are only available to BPMA members. To book places, please contact education@bpma.co.uk and for those interested in finding out more about training and membership, please contact membership@bpma.co.uk. 

What learners said

"The study was in very easy to handle sections and ideal for newcomers to the industry." **Phil Heard, Magic Touch**

"I really enjoyed the course – I found it very informative and learnt a lot. I would recommend this course. It is beneficial to all within our industry." **Kerry Brooks, LSI**

"The course has given me a great overview of the promotional merchandise industry, and a better understanding of some of the technical elements of supplying branded products." **Daniel Clarke, Eat My Logo**

"The content was extremely helpful. Not only will it help me with my own development and knowledge within the industry, but it helps me be a better member of my team. The support received has always been responded to quickly and effectively. The course has allowed me to access a great deal of knowledge that I can't wait to put into practice." **Sophie King, Sycal**

"I am not always deeply involved in the technical part of the merchandising process and it has been great to refresh my memory as well as to learn more about the process. I cannot wait to study further for CPM." **Valerie Beresford, Brand Addition**

BPMA EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Are your teams trained in promotional merchandise?

Register your staff on the TPM course intake October 2021

The BPMA Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) course is the only UK industry specific entry level course for your teams. Delivering essential training on 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 October course includes:

- Introductory webinar
- Guest speaker webinars
- Access to all TPM course content delivered online
- Online exam
- Online community

Start the course in October and achieve your TPM certificate in 6 months

Why enrol?

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



➤ **Book today**

For more information and to book places, call 01372 371 184
or contact education@bpma.co.uk

bpma.co.uk

CODE MASTERS

QR codes can improve your postal campaign response according to mailing specialist Whistl

We live in a connected world, and with the last couple of decades advancements in technology, we are now in a position where our phones can do almost everything for us. Our mobile phones have become our credit cards, cameras, diaries, and allow us access to a number of different communication channels (calls, emails, messages or short texts).

CREATE CONNECTED DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGNS

Allow your direct mail campaigns to connect the offline world with the online world, by using techniques such as QR codes. This will help your recipient connect quickly to relevant and live content, giving your campaign more creative flexibility, as the content on the page can be changed as often as you need, with no impact on the printed item.

WHAT IS A QR CODE

QR stands for 'Quick Response', and is a form of barcode that can easily be scanned by a smartphone to track or provide information

about products, and can be used in marketing and advertising campaigns. QR codes are easy to add to direct mail and can take those who use them to a wide variety of actions and locations.

With Apple's 2017 iOS 11 updates and Google's Android 9 and 10 smartphone update, it became easy to simply scan QR codes directly through the internet-connected phone cameras. This means you no longer needed to download a special app to scan a QR, making them more user-friendly.

QR CODE USAGE

Though the technology and QR codes have been around since the early 2000s, we have seen a welcome increase in their usage. When first launched, QR codes did not have a strong awareness of what they could do for the general public, and smartphone ownership in the UK was roughly half the population.

Fast forward to now, around 95% of the population owns a smartphone. A MobileIron survey in September 2020 showed 27.5% of respondents in the US and

the UK had used a QR code as a payment method. The same survey highlighted 32% of consumers had scanned a QR code in the last week.

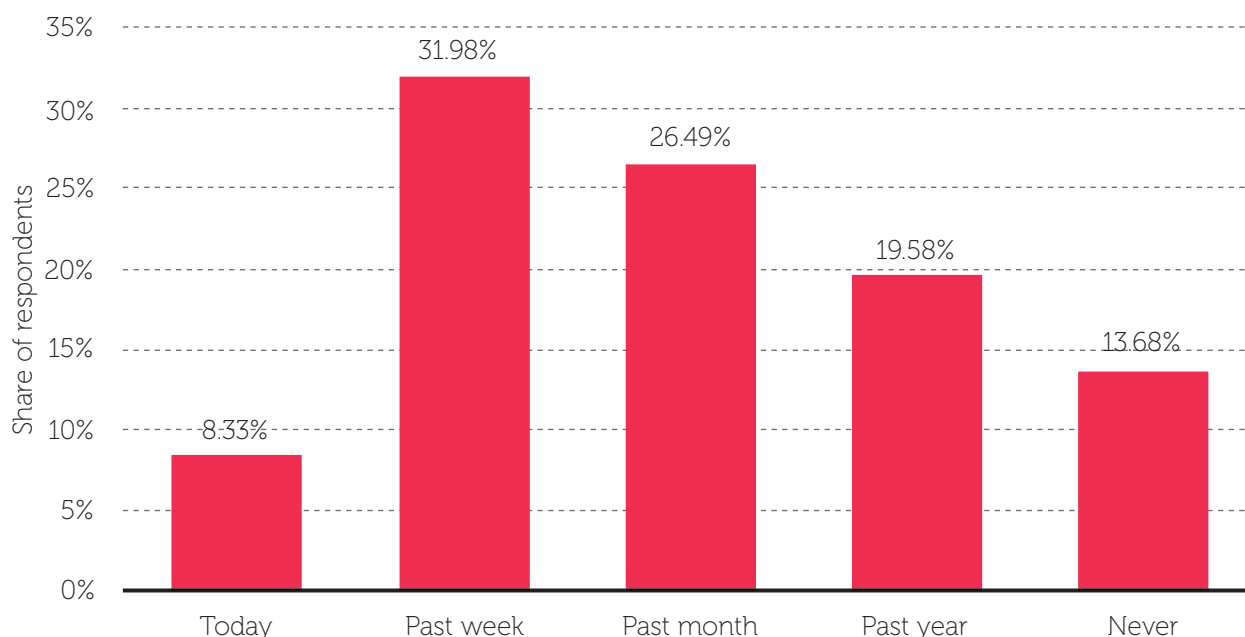
SUCCESSFULLY INCORPORATE QR CODES INTO YOUR DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN

Outlined below are a couple of examples of how QR codes can be used on printed materials to improve your campaign results:

Business cards: If you want to add a QR code to a business card, you may want it to lead somewhere general like your portfolio, LinkedIn account or the contact details on your website, or maybe even your Google my Business account showing your office location.

Promotional items: For promotional items, create a link that directs them to an exclusive offer code or a webpage where they can purchase your goods or services. This destination page can be updated based on real-time available inventory or your availability to fulfil a service, giving the consumer more control in the buying cycle at the point of purchase.

Most recent QR code scan according to U.S. and UK consumers 2020



Note(s): United Kingdom, United States; September 2020; 2,197 respondents

Further information regarding this statistic can be found on Page 8. Source(s): MobileIron; ID 199334

Smart direct mail: With QR codes you can create a smart direct mail that allows your customers to interact with the mail they receive. If it links to your social media platforms it also gives your customers a way to reach you. When a customer scans the QR code on your direct mail piece, even if they don't act on it, they can be retargeted on Google or Facebook, thereby increasing your ROI.

Customised QR codes: Advanced QR codes allow you to create live and continuous marketing campaigns, that can be changed as regularly as your campaign needs. Adding an agile destination from your QR code within your direct mail means your campaign could be in constant use. For example, if you wanted to send your audience something that they could keep in their house like a fridge magnet or other promotional item, the recipient will simply scan the item QR code, to see the current exclusive offer, helping you manage the marketing message on a regular basis.

BENEFITS OF USING QR CODES

- Free & easy to create: There are a number

of websites that allow you to create a personalised QR code for free. Once created this code can be applied to your print materials.

- Easy to use: For both the user and advertiser.
- Personalisation: QR codes no longer have to be just black and white. You can create more of an identity with our own brand colours and/or logo.
- It only takes up a small amount of space: Because of its size, you can fill your artwork with information, imagery and offers. The recommended size of a QR code should not be printed smaller than 2 cm x 2 cm, allowing it to be scanned easily.
- Effortless call to action: With the increased awareness of the technology, most of your recipients will know how QR codes work, so you may only choose to accompany the code with a simple instruction like 'use your phone's camera to scan me'.
- Measurable: QR codes are easily measured, allowing you to capture more about your response rates and your customer's online behaviour.

CREATE A DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN WITH A QR CODE

With direct mail being delivered directly into the home of your target audience, it is a channel that is hard to ignore. With items staying within the household for nearly eight days, direct mail continues to be a channel that should be included within your advertising media mix.

Before you start your campaign creative, ensure you include:

A test stage: to check that the code can be easily scanned across different mobile devices and that it links through to the correct place.

Destination pages are mobile-friendly: If directing them to a website, ensure the destination page is mobile-friendly.

Call to action and clear instructions: If the objective is to use the QR code to encourage the use of your company's services to buy a product. Include simple instructions such as 'scan here to receive our exclusive offers' or 'scan me to be a part of our mailing list'.

Whistl is a BPMA preferred provider and can supply further advice. BPMA members can contact the BPMA for further details or visit whistl.co.uk for more details about its services.

How Movember and Sky used QR codes

THE MOST IMPORTANT MO YOU'LL EVER GROW

We won't forget 2020 in a hurry. It's been a big year for humanity, and a lot has changed.

The consequences of physical distancing are challenging our mental health and physical wellbeing.

Movember is committed to tackling the men's health crisis through investment in early intervention mental health programs, as well as groundbreaking projects and research in prostate cancer and testicular cancer. But we can't do it without you.

So join us this Movember, it might just be the most important Mo you'll ever grow.

Scan with your phone camera to sign up now

SHAVE THE DATE

1. Sign up to Movember
Visit movember.com/shave to sign up and start raising funds.

2. Receive your free Gillette SHAVE DOWN pack*
Including free Gillette razor when you sign up at movember.com/shave

3. Join the SHAVE DOWN and start growing
From Friday 30th October join Mo Bros around the world for one epic shave, ready for Movember 1st. Take a picture or video and share it using #Movember to join the SHAVE DOWN.

4. Get hairy
Asking friends and family to support you with a donation.

Gillette FUSION5 PROGLIDE

*Offer available for the first 2,000 sign ups. Visit the.movember.com/shave for details.

SIGN UP AT MOVEMBER.COM/SHAVE

Wispily, patchy, lopsided - who cares. Whatever you grow will save a bro.

Run or walk 60km over the month. That's 60km for the 60 men we lose to suicide every hour across the world.

Virtually or physically, we have plenty of ideas for your crew. Hosting is about having a good time for a good cause.

GROW MOVE HOST

SIGN UP AT MOVEMBER.COM/SHAVE

Movember

The main objective was to generate fundraiser sign-ups to the Movember campaign which turned out to be the most successful Movember campaign in recent years. Whistl Doordrop generated a direct response of 0.8% which provided an ROI of £9.21. The uplift analysis showed an ROI of £10.20.

The QR code provided 21% of the direct response with a conversion rate to sign up of 34% vs 30% for the URL. This doordrop campaign engaged with a relevant and core Movember audience through the use of regional targeting and the QR code.

Sky

Whistl's customer Sky was one of the first brands to use a QR code within a print media channel. The doordrop media campaign combined print and digital technology to support the launch of Sky's new channel, Sky Atlantic. The creative execution used a QR code to showcase the wonderful shows they would experience on the new channel, to engage with existing customers to promote awareness of the channel, and also look to attract new Sky subscriptions.

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A LESSON IN THINKING DIFFERENTLY

Sandler Training delivered a three-part series for BPMA members to come out of the crisis charged for the future

Building the industry back to strength with timely information and advice has been core to the BPMA's strategy to support its members. Addressing the huge challenges and opportunities faced by members throughout the pandemic has delivered some outstanding sessions to help every member company, no matter its shape, size or experience.

Delivering a complementary three-part series for members with Sandler Training London's Justin Stephenson, took BPMA members through techniques for selling in a crisis and uncertainty, leading a team to recovery, and managing teams remotely. In hour-long sessions, members were taken through several steps to help broaden understanding and think differently about the way individuals and teams perform.

Starting with a fundamental rule: you can't manage anything you can't control, Stephenson helped explain the way common challenges can be addressed when certain factors were put into context. For example, employees who conform, execute the usual drill expected of them might just be going through the motions, working frantically or sporadically or in fact working too hard and missing the techniques to help build success.

The right combination of attitude, behaviour and technique leads to competency, conviction, and commitment to deliver. Underlining the need for courage to be at the cornerstone of change, it was impressed on BPMA members that results don't change if we continue to do what we have always done. The Sandler theory helps companies rewrite beliefs for teams and individuals to help businesses come out the other side of the crisis; shaping what the crisis allowed and enabled rather than took away from the process of succeeding.

Citing the second part of the Sandler Rule, Stephenson told members: "Never manage your numbers, manage your behaviour. The rest will come."

Going on to explore ways to bond with clients during a crisis, the group explored the concepts of actionable pain understanding that people buy emotionally and justify a purchase intellectually. Recommending communication strategies to overcome the crisis mode many customers are in, the first session



concluded by reminding listeners to:

- Build social capital by giving and listening first
- Build relationships by staying connected
- Build authority by adding value
- Build intimacy by opening up and being personal

Following sessions on leading teams to revenue recovery and managing teams remotely, the final session included a questionnaire that helped donate more than £100 to MIND, the BPMA's chosen charity.

Stephenson summarised the session with reminders about behaviour management, how to break rules in selling to build pipelines, and finished with a

detailed look at working remotely and how companies should manage the process to create successes in future.

Reminding the leaders on the final session that employees want to be part of their plan not yours, he concluded the need to backwards-engineer goals into behaviours, reviewing those behaviours alongside results, using the observations to drive coaching and training which would ultimately deliver more for companies than trying to manage numbers alone.

With helpful tools such as the 5-point meeting checklist, members were left with a wealth of actionable ideas to take forward into their own businesses immediately.

Sandler exclusive BPMA course

Sandler Online Sales Academy: an exclusive BPMA course starting October 2021

Following outstanding feedback from BPMA members, Sandler Training London is hosting a Foundations Programme for members. Starting in October, there are only 10 places available for this 5-week programme. Registration is required before 17 September and includes full personal profile, access to the online course plus a one hour consultation with each attendee to help optimise

training, and access to the Sandler Online resource library for 12 months.

To find out more or secure a limited place, contact Sandler Training direct via Justin Stephenson justin.stephenson@sandler.com

If you are looking for further information, BPMA members can contact Tom Robey via Tom@bpma.co.uk. Only open to BPMA members.

BPMA GOLF DAY

Join the BPMA and fellow industry golfers at the
Annual Golf Day on Wednesday 13th October 2021



Venue: Burnham Beeches Golf Club, Green Lane, Burnham, Slough, Bucks, SL1 8EG
For more information about the course visit www.bbgc.co.uk

Tee off!

- 9:00am: Meet for coffee/ tea and bacon butties
- Morning: 9 hole scramble
- Lunch: Sandwiches and fries
- Afternoon: 18 hole Stableford better ball competition
- 3 course evening meal with awards
- Prizes for winners including nearest the pins, longest drive plus lots more
- Hotel accommodation available locally

➤ Book today

Contact us via events@bpma.co.uk to book in your teams and tickets. Bookings must be received by 1st October 2021.

£130+vat per person or a team of 4 for £500+vat for BPMA members
Non BPMA members £155+vat per person or a team of 4 for £550+vat

CREATING A GROWTH STORY

Merchandise businesses are starting to bounce back as pandemic regulations relax. **Jodie Newman** offered BPMA members advice on how to get back on track



After 18 months of battenning down the hatches, businesses are finally able to start planning for growth, so it was timely that a recent BPMA member webinar enlisted the assistance of business development expert Jodie Newman, founder of The Business Allotment.

Pronouncing herself as “passionate about growing SMEs” Newman provided a rapid fire rattle through creative ways of growing your business with the limited bandwidth many of us have these days.

With clients that have included the Telegraph, ITN, Yahoo, and Dorothy Perkins to name but a few, Newman covered the sales journey from prospects to point of purchase, examining how to build a path that drives people into your business.

WHO IS YOUR CUSTOMER?

Newman challenges the audience to define their prospect type by looking at their customer type or ideal customer. By

understanding who they are, businesses are in a better position to know how to target more customers that they want.

Rather than trying to sell everything to everyone, it is more effective to sell types of products to types of prospects. By defining the purchase type, the conversation becomes more targeted from the outset rather than broad scope marketing.

For companies with limited time and money, the 80:20 rule makes sense – 80% of business comes from 20% of customers and those are the ones that matter most.

PATH TO PURCHASE

The first step for a business of any size is awareness. Newman pointed to many simple, low cost tactics that can be used to get prospects to know who you are, including social media, SEO, PR, and networking

“It’s not a selling opportunity at this stage,” she said. “It’s about getting to know you through low key building blocks and it’s fairly one way at this point.”

A single awareness idea can play across many different platforms and it shouldn’t be onerous for the business.

Make it doable for your team, and keep it informative, educational and entertaining.

“You are selling to individuals so be yourself. People sell to people,” she said.

ENGAGEMENT

Once you have their attention, try to get a two-way dialogue going to cement the relationship. You can get people to lean into your business with simple stuff such as signing up to a newsletter or an email, but make sure that you deliver engaging content that makes

your prospect’s job easier. A lot of this can be automated through email sequencing.

Position yourself as the experts at what you do, says Newman. Free courses in webinars, practical how to’s, top tips, and checklists all work well, and you can do them yourself – you don’t need a copywriter to do a free checklist. Giving your expertise away for free can mean the client comes back for what they need.

“If you upskill your client, it makes them look better in the eyes of their customer,” says Newman.

A REASON TO BUY FROM YOU

Don’t forget your own brand story, says Newman. Find a story that tells what’s different about you. Nurture it and craft it to embed your brand in customers’ minds.

There are always purchase anxieties when it comes to buying. The more you can take away obstacles, the easier and quicker the transaction. Think about the barriers customers will have and you can plan to circumvent them.

With margins even tighter at the minute, discounting should be only one tool you have. When margins are gossamer thin, be more creative. There are lots of things in your business that will be of value. Free expertise in the form of an audit is another way of offering value. Don’t underestimate how valuable your time is to clients.

You can even use different terminology to sidestep the money off – a ‘preferential rate’ is not as blunt sounding as a discount and can stop it looking like you are a pushover on price. Remember, Apple never discount.

There are also lots of classic incentives that work really well, such as intro offers, free gifts, product bundles, and time limited offers.

Pick what works for your business. 

For more information on the Business Allotment, go to thebusinessallotment.co.uk. BPMA members can revisit the webinar recording and access resources by contacting the BPMA team.

BRIMAN PUTS ON A SHOW AT MERCHANDISE WORLD

British manufacturers of promotional merchandise will be exhibiting their latest wares at the industry's premier show in September, say **Mark Alderson**

Over the past 18 months many UK manufacturers have had a unique opportunity to press the 'reset' button. This has enabled a number of Briman members to undertake changes which, under normal circumstances, would simply not have been feasible.

With many of these projects reaching a conclusion, the forthcoming Merchandise World exhibition offers a great chance for Briman members to showcase these developments.

Investment

One such company which has made extensive improvements across their business is Northampton based Juniper. With the intention of improving productivity and reshoring more of its production to the UK, they have invested in four new machines.

Juniper MD, Andrew Langley, said: "We have also been developing 15 new UK-made products, including Flexi desk mats up to gaming mat

size, quarto sized notebooks and a new range of designer tote books. In addition, we have developed and launched a new material, COMO, which is a recycled PET made from plastic bottles."

Antimicrobial products

Trade exclusive supplier, WCM&A has focused on product development. MD Simon Adam said: "Of all the developments we introduced during the pandemic, which included a whole range of no touch keyring and tools, eco postal packs for homeworkers and customers in bamboo, the one of which we are most proud is the KeepSafe badge. This unique product is the world's first truly antimicrobial name badge and has sold incredibly well to health authorities, care homes and health conscious companies who recognise the benefits of antimicrobial infection."


Online platforms

Both First Editions and Badger Design have invested in new online platforms. These

websites offer distributors online pricing, images, spec sheets, print templates and certification 24 hours a day. With many distributors working from home, these new websites have allowed greater flexibility by providing information at the click of a button.

Sustainable promotional merchandise remains an essential part of the industry as we move out of the pandemic together. With this in mind, Badger Design has introduced new environmentally friendly stickers (some of which are completely compostable), coasters made from recycled material, and a magnet that has passed strict environmental criteria.

The Briman group is eager to welcome distributors to Merchandise World in September. The Briman Zone can be found between stands 45-53 and members are looking forward to the opportunity to meet visitors in person to discuss all these new developments in more detail.

Mark Alderson is the chairman of the Briman Group 



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SELLING INTO EUROPE

Britain has left the EU, but British companies can keep exporting, if they can reassure customers, says Rocketbook

The EU is a significant market and there are plenty of deals to be done. However, Brexit has led to a lot more uncertainty for European customers when dealing with British suppliers. The two main objections and concerns are:

- How expensive will the import taxes be?
- How much will the delivery be slowed by customs?

In 2021 within Europe, about 55% of our promotional merchandise sales have been to EU customers and there are some key takeaways we've learnt since January.

The main point is to make the sales/buying process as easy as possible for the customer. We have learnt from deals with EU customers post Brexit, that the noted questions/objections will likely be asked. If they are not asked directly, they may well still be in the customer's mind and so could kill the deal if not addressed.

The most successful strategy is to make clear the order will be a UK export and explain the import process for them. Keep the facts simple. It is not going to cost them any more money (excluding duty) and it should not affect the

delivery timeline.

KNOW THE IMPORT TAXES FOR YOUR PRODUCT

Make sure you know these. How much they are and how they will be applied and collected. It is seamless for an EU customer to buy from another EU supplier. Now the UK is not in the EU, make sure you can handle the import/customs objections before they are raised.

When sending a quote, include in the note section clarity that your products are printed in the UK and so will be an import. This means import VAT will be collected, however customers can claim that back on their VAT return. We also highlight whether a product is duty free or not. Our aim is to make sure the customer has complete transparency over any additional changes or costs to the usual process.

KNOW HOW THE CUSTOMS PROCESS WILL AFFECT DELIVERY TIMES

For 99% of our EU deliveries, customs have not slowed the lead time. When sending tracking

information, remind the customer that customs or the courier will be in touch to collect the import VAT and so long as the import VAT is paid quickly, then the delivery should not be held up.

When booking the shipment, you must make sure to include the invoice for customs to calculate any due VAT or duty. Failure to get this right will delay shipments and will be your responsibility. If you are not comfortable, check with your freight forwarder or courier who will be able to support you.

The key as always in sales is to give the customer the confidence to make a purchasing decision. If you are able to keep transparency and trust with your customers, Brexit does not have to be a limiting factor in your EU growth. PM



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VAT, IMPORT AND EXPORT:

INDUSTRY QUESTIONS ANSWERED

More than 100 BPMA members posed questions and received answers from a team from the HMRC

In June, the BPMA hosted a joint event with the specialist export team from HMRC. The online session followed the successful meeting with the Minister for Exports in April, highlighting to the Minister the excessive cost burdens on SMEs since our exit from the EU.

After surveying its members, the BPMA revealed results at a webinar in June sharing stark responses to the end of transition and the considerable burdens faced by both distributors and suppliers alike.

AN INDUSTRY ADJUSTING

The BPMA export survey discovered 51.2% of suppliers were expected to continue DDP (duty delivery paid) terms for existing customers and with 47% of distributors reporting the same expectations from end users, 2021 has been a very expensive year.

A total of 76.5% of suppliers reported a downward trend in spend overall but with enquiries building, the outlook was more positive for the second half of the year – based on getting the sums right on VAT and customs duties. With the entire industry searching for answers, 20% of distributors answering the survey stated they had been forced to find new distribution solutions or risk losing business. The EU was named as the dominant challenge by 67% of businesses, largely unchanged from the previous survey taken in March this year.

Add delivery charges, customs complexities and learning local member state rules, and the cocktail of frustration was leading BPMA members to embrace and instigate significant changes in their businesses with many restricting trade in the EU as a result. The additional operational and real costs have been hard to bear with rising freight and material increases, prompting members to search for more answers.

VAT ANSWERS

Keen to find out answers to niggling VAT questions which appear to have alluded even the most experienced of accountants, the remote session was welcomed by the BPMA.

BPMA CEO Carey Trevill was joined by members to help represent a series of key questions surrounding ongoing export and import activity. BPMA Chair Angela Wagstaff (Allwag Promotions), Andrew Langley (Juniper Products),

Lisa Munroe (Marke Creative) and Alex Turner (Listawood) presented the HMRC experts with the quandaries facing member businesses.

Members posed questions to the HMRC team on a number of areas. These included shipments with no value to the recipient; ecommerce webshops; how to approach postponed or deferred VAT; whether UK businesses are now better off setting up shop in Europe, and avoiding pain in exporting.

Tackling the 'non-value' shipment query, Andrew Langley addressed the VAT experts on the transaction and destination to help determine where VAT should be charged when considering a delivery where the recipient never receives a bill. Separating whether the transaction was between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, the type of direct export or a transit movement would help determine whether zero rated VAT would be applied.

HMRC advised if on direct export, time limits and correct paperwork existed, then zero rate would apply. Import VAT however might be due on arrival as the EU is treated as 27 member states, not a single territory and therefore local rules would apply. The VAT team went on to explain the

company or person responsible for supply is responsible for ensuring all the different rules are adhered to and advised members to consider fiscal representation to aid smooth transit. Langley said the significant burdens on SMEs query costs on occasional transactions often rendered transactions 'uncommercial' by their nature.

Angela Wagstaff addressed the next question relating to fulfilment via webshops, asking how to treat goods based in the UK and sold between UK-based companies. The first point was addressed about where goods were physically located rather than the client location. Based on goods located in the UK, VAT is applied at the point of sale. HMRC was keen to stress VAT treatment is based on where the goods are physically held at the point of sale.

Stating that goods held in the UK at point of sale would qualify for zero rating when exporting outside of the UK, irrespective of where the buyers are located helped clarify how goods should be billed. HMRC did however highlight there may be additional import duties for these types of transactions, advising members check the destination country for rules which may apply. If location and export is from Northern Ireland to the EU, this will be treated as an intra EU supply for VAT purposes. Rules of Origin were also addressed as dependent on the origin of goods, tariff rate of that good would also need to be considered and applied, noting the application of the Northern Ireland protocol.

TO POSTPONE OR DEFER, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Many in the industry have wondered whether it is best to postpone VAT or defer duties. Alex Turner asked the panel to help with a real-life application of postponed VAT to help suppliers



BPMA chair Angela Wagstaff



Andrew Langley, Juniper

with import and export.

Postponed VAT accounting was introduced for UK registered VAT business, providing cashflow benefits for companies explained HMRC as there was no need to pay VAT immediately. For those businesses importing before 31 December 2021, HMRC said this was mandatory for those importing non-controlled goods, under the staged customs process.

There is no application or approval process for postponed VAT accounting and HMRC expects companies to use this system rather than pay for VAT at the point of import. Picking up on the confusion between postponed vs deferment, Lisa Munroe asked which system would be preferable based on the types of transactions the promotional merchandise industry undertook.

The VAT team stated clearly there wasn't much difference however duty deferment only delayed payment at the point of import and was a customs process. On a more detailed explanation, the postponed VAT accounting system was considered a far better cash flow advantage solution for businesses as you are accounting for and recovering the import VAT at the same time. On the basis you are a fully taxable business, this was a better way to manage cash.



Alex Turner, Listawood

Duty deferment was considered to hit cashflow harder and therefore there was a clear recommendation to opt for postponed VAT accounting. Some key points for all businesses to note were to understand the use of a duty deferment account to account for any other duties needed, deciding what deferral limits might be. Postponed VAT accounting also negates the need to account for import VAT in declarations pointed out HMRC.

IS SETTING UP A BUSINESS IN THE EU THE WAY TO GO?

After listening to several scenarios during the session, BPMA CEO Carey Trevill posed the last question as to whether, all this could be solved by simply setting up a business in the EU. VAT policy team members pointed to postponed VAT accounting as a great solution and didn't see that an EU business would benefit. However, importing and making taxable supplies into EU member states, an EU VAT number would be beneficial.

Using the EU VAT electronic refund scheme was also considered a more effective electronic solution and HMRC pointed to this option to help look at

how VAT costs could be recovered.

This was advised as a preferable route to the 13th Directive (the EU VAT refund process), seen as a slower and more cumbersome way to reclaim VAT.

Going on to answer a number of questions posed by the 100+ members listening into the session, the four HMRC experts addressed queries relating to location and delivery of goods, how best to resolve VAT concerns and helpful links to navigate complex EU sites.

REPRESENTING THE INDUSTRY CASE

Continuing the cause of members, the BPMA has progressed conversations with The Department of International Trade, The Business Energy and Industrial Strategy department and HMRC to ensure our voice is heard in the continued challenges faced by members and the wider industry. Now actively involved in consultations and expecting more information to be shared in line with the work Whitehall is doing with supporting British business with EU member states, the BPMA will continue to report back to members on progress.

BPMA members can access the recording of the session, Q&A and updated information by contacting enquiries@bpma.co.uk. Survey conducted in May/June 2021 with BPMA members. Results first shared on 17th June 2021.





Building excellence across the industry: refer a member today

If you're a BPMA member, you'll know the reasons why you joined and stay engaged with the association. It might be the badge which represents standards and conduct, the training, the shows... or even the social side of collaborating with fellow businesses.

Whatever the reason, the BPMA is now actively looking for brilliant businesses to join the Association, taking advantage of brilliant advice to inspire members, connecting the industry plus educating and building the latest skills.

Over the last year, the BPMA has sought to bring every member the right

information to help businesses through the pandemic. In addition, there have been several reports and sessions aimed at helping the whole industry understand the demands of the new customs rules. Being a centre of excellence is at the core of the BPMA's mission to inspire, connect and educate its members.

If you would like to refer a new member who you believe would benefit from being part of the BPMA, subject to status and credit checks, get in touch today.

Contact Tom Robey at the BPMA today on 01372 371184 to find out more and claim your referral reward.

Hello Ethan

Congratulations to BPMA sustainability and compliance manager, Daniela Arena and her partner Stuart who have had a lovely baby boy called Ethan at the beginning of August.

We're sure the whole of the industry sends its best wishes to the new parents.



BPMA CALENDAR

2021

8 September – Merchandise World: Peak Season Event. Marshall Arena, Milton Keynes

10 September – PSI Digital Friday

8 October – Sandler London Foundations Programme

8 October – PSI Digital Friday

13 October – BPMA Golf Day. Burnham Beaches golf course

12 November – PSI Digital Friday

10 December – PSI Digital Friday

2022

11-13 January – PSI 2022. Exhibition Centre Düsseldorf, Germany

26-27 January – Merchandise World. Ricoh Arena, Coventry





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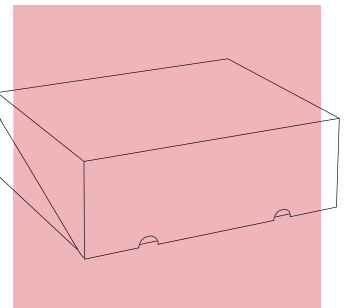
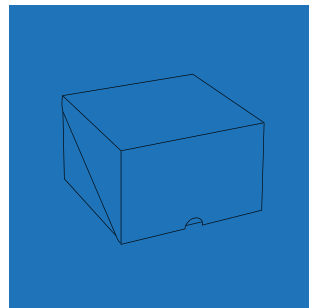
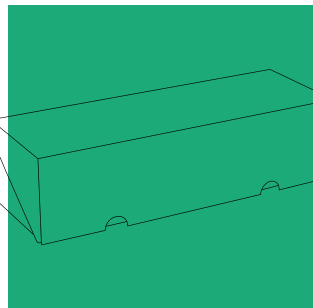
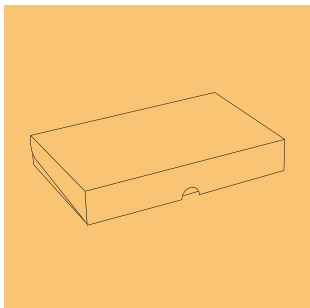


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