

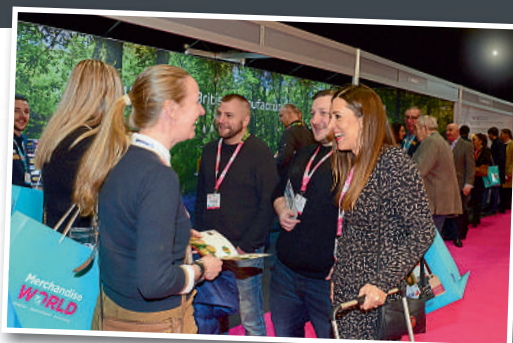


ARE YOU READY?

The industry prepares to hit its stride in 2022 **p13**



**NEW DATES
FOR MW**
UPDATES ON
MERCHANDISE
WORLD **p21**



BPMA PRODUCT AWARDS
DISCOVER WHAT
IMPRESSED THE JUDGES **p25**

IT DOESN'T WASH
GREENWASHING CLAIMS
ARE UNDER SCRUTINY **p32**

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The BPMA's membership manager is on the road

WELCOME



Welcome to the first edition of Product Media for 2022. With news of some events postponed including Merchandise World due to the continuing challenges with the pandemic, we're

exploring how the industry is getting back on track. Look out for our special feature with views from the BPMA board.

2021 was yet again sent to test and try the UK economy and our industry. Survival became revival in the last quarter as order books started to fill again. However, it was necessary to remind the whole industry at critical points the strain the supply chain has been feeling and continues to

feel from all sides. During a recent interview with BPMA Chair, Haydn Willetts, he was asked about the biggest challenge facing the industry and stated communication was going to be our greatest asset to avoid the challenges we undoubtedly have in store to juggle demand and availability. At Product Media, we couldn't agree more.

January was set to be a busy month in promotional merchandise with both PSI and Merchandise World taking place just weeks apart however Covid clearly had other ideas. With news that broke just before Christmas both shows have now been moved to April. There is an update on the rescheduled show on p21.

In this issue we are also covering important updates with the challenge made to the CMA, greenwashing and

your communications and of course the BPMA Product Award 2022 winners.

Read on for more news and useful articles on R&D tax claims for your business, cyber insurance plus export updates.

Our pre-show edition for Merchandise World will now be the next publication. Issue 41 March – April so if you'd like to get involved in the feature, please let us know. If you would like to contribute to the next issue with your news, articles or find out about special features, 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.

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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CMA backtracks on funeral merchandise

In the last issue of PM, we reported on the challenge to a recent new Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) order imposed on the funeral industry. When setting out any new legislation, guidance, directives, orders and rules for an industry, clarity is essential at each step not only for those making the rules but for those expected to adopt and implement them. The Funerals Market Order 2021 was implemented in 2021 with sensible new rules but it appeared the CMA overlooked a few areas when it came to promotional merchandise.

Like many industries across the UK, funeral directors look to promote themselves through several different channels and it has long been the position of the CMA to help regulate and promote best practice and competition in these areas – pricing, favouritism, inducements.

The BPMA joined forces with the NAFD and BPIF to challenge the notion that a company could control the way a piece of promotional material could or would be observed and seen in settings such as care homes or hospices, as it relied on presumed behaviours. In an unprecedented move, the CMA backed down on this small but important point.

While at the time of going to press, the revised guidance had yet to make an appearance, the BPMA stated: "It was a good day when we told the members who had raised this issue with us that collective effort had addressed and resolved in a relatively short period allowing hard won orders to progress. Our huge thanks to fellow collaborators at the NAFD and BPIF for their support on this – the NAFD were instrumental in bringing this change."



Mantis World wins for climate commitment in promotional textiles

Mantis World has been named as the winner of the Ryan Young Climate+ Award, in the category of climate leaders. The award is in recognition of work towards Textile Exchange's Climate+ strategy.

Mantis World was lauded for "innovative, scalable, and transparent programmes" which demonstrate their overall commitment to meeting the Climate+ strategy goals. The introduction of an Impact Calculator, which shows wearers the positive impact of choosing an organic garment on the environment, is playing a key part in putting traceability and responsibility front and centre for their customers.

Mantis has also been recognised as a leader in the Material Change Index, the largest peer to peer comparison initiative in the textile industry. This index tracks the use of preferred fibres, such as organic cotton, as well as other key factors. Mantis World was

given the highest score of 4 in 2020.

The annual award recognises individuals and teams in the textile sector who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and innovation. The Climate+ strategy offers a pathway for companies within the sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45%, by 2030.

Textile Exchange has supported brands like Mantis World in their sustainability journey. Mantis World have been a member since 2008, and founder and CEO Prama Bhardwaj serves as the chair of Textile Exchange's Pan-Africa Sourcing Working Group.

Bhardwaj said: "At Mantis World, we place fair and responsible practice at the very heart of our business, and are forever striving to do better. We are grateful to Textile Exchange for recognising our work in making transparency and impact savings accessible to all our stakeholders."

BPMA joins AdNetZero and UK Advertising's Export Group

As part of the end user awareness strategy in the past few years, the BPMA became a member of the Advertising Association, taking a seat on the prestigious Ad Association Council with the likes of Google, ISBA, IPA, ITV, Channel 4, WPP, Pearl & Dean, Spotify, and McCann Worldgroup to name a few.

As part of the initiatives springing from this high-profile group, AdNetZero represents the overall marketing and advertising industry's push to be part of a solution to reduce the carbon impact of developing, producing and running advertising to real net zero by 2030, with organisations involved committing to practical change.

AdNetZero represents a number of critical

production-led goals including the broad arena of events and consumer behaviour change. Getting involved in the goals and aligning our industry and others to what is possible for merchandise, our role is to show where we can change the conversation.

In addition, the BPMA has recently joined the UKAEG – the Department for International Trade-backed group which has come together to help export British creativity in all its forms. Members include trade bodies ISBA and the IPA, agencies Adam & Eve, Hey Human, Umbrella, VCCP, and Mullen Lowe Group, and the Creative Industries Council.

With a focus on export in March, the BPMA will be joining Export Month to run events for

members and end users, to shout loud about the excellence available from BPMA members. Watch out for more news about this exciting development.





PAGE gets an update from TPW and Snap

PAGE Partnership visited The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products with director Brian Hayward leading a group of catalogue members for its annual meet up.

The day started with a tour of Innovations House including the factory, offices, studio and showroom, before an afternoon focused on a company update. This outlined challenges, achievements and objectives for the future, and was followed by a presentation of brand-new products

for 2022.

The evening concluded with a private dinner to catch up on both a business and personal level.

Monica Malfa, marketing programme manager at The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products said: "It was so good to welcome PAGE Partnership back and meet with familiar faces, sharing each others' experiences and gaining invaluable feedback to help us build back better."

Geiger builds in the UK and Germany

Geiger has continued its global expansion with a new sales office in Dusseldorf, Germany to work in coordination with its German distribution facility in nearby Nettetal.

Renate Schmid is joining Geiger as account director for Germany to manage Geiger's clients in the region. She has a background in client service, with more than 14 years in the merchandise and print management industry.

"We are delighted to welcome Renate to our European team and support the growth of this new era for Geiger in Germany," said Vicky Kinasz, managing director of Geiger's UK division. "She brings a wealth of experience in merchandise and management of global accounts, and I look forward to working closely with her."

"Germany is an important market for our clients," added Chris McKee, Geiger senior vice president and CRO. "Adding this sales office in Dusseldorf to our local distribution centre and online platform will streamline their efforts throughout Europe."

Geiger has also added four new employees in the UK.

Radhika Chagane and Charlie Lambe join as production coordinators to support the increased order activity.

The sales and marketing team is being bolstered by Manni Virdee, who joins as sales coordinator and Kayleigh Ennis as marketing executive.



Merchandise companies plant for a sustainable future

Sow Easy has joined Ecologi and is now officially a Climate Positive Workforce.

Each employee has 12 trees planted every month and their carbon emissions offset on various worldwide projects.

The company is encouraging suppliers and distributors to become a Climate Positive Workforce, said key account manager, Laila Serroukh.

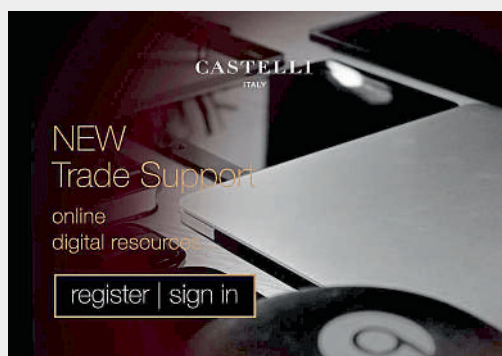
"There are so many ways we can all do our bit and this is a great step for us. I also want to thank our partners who continue

to offer sustainable products to their clients from the word go," she said.

The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products have also signed up to a tree planting campaign, in collaboration with UK charity Ripple Africa, to help mitigate the effects of deforestation and offset CO2 emissions.

By providing free fresh fruit for employees via Fruitful Office, a tree is planted in Malawi for every fruit basket. With three fruit baskets delivered per week, the companies will plant about 156 trees a year.





Castelli offers improved trade support

Castelli has introduced a new trade support area that has been designed to make its customers' jobs a bit easier.

If you are looking for inspiration for your next marketing campaign, or simply need assistance with your sales enquiry head over to the area to take advantage of a wide selection of online digital resources.

The include: digital and print-on demand catalogues with trade pricing; stock availability; trade offers; sample branding packs; product data and imagery; editable product flyers, and artwork guides.

More information is at castellicorporategifts.com.

Workforce investment pays off for Ross

Ross Promotional Products has been awarded the Investors in People (IIP) Gold Award Level to recognise its commitment to supporting its small team and working through the pandemic.

Formed in 1984, the company has a tradition of nurturing its workforce to grow the business, while retaining strong family values.

Its journey with IIP started in 2010, and with its guidance and support Ross achieved its first accreditation in 2011.

In 2017, having worked closely with colleagues and IIP, the company achieved Silver Award Level and maintained this through the next few years.

With 2020 being one of the toughest years in its 36 years in business, Ross saw even greater value in the accreditation.

Alan Gebbie (IIP Assessor from This is Remarkable Ltd) said: "It was clear during the IIP assessment that people are at the heart of what you do. Everyone I met with spoke very highly of the way they are led and managed and the culture is one of openness and honesty. Everyone has an integral part to play in the organisation and is motivated and committed to achieving the highest standards of customer service."

Robin Carmichael, finance & HR manager at Ross, who helped the team to maintain the Silver Award said he was delighted to achieve the gold award ahead of the schedule the company had planned.



Fluid family and friends reconnect

After taking their conference virtual last year due to the pandemic, Fluid got its teams and trusted suppliers together again for a face-to-face event, with the theme of Reconnection.

Held at Ryder Cup venue, The Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, South Wales, Reconnection featured an action packed weekend.

Friday night saw informal drinks and networking with a quiz. Saturday began with an icebreaker session where the team all got to know each other that little bit better, before the Fluid friends showcase, where delegates chatted and explored the latest product offerings.

Fluid's MD Miles Lovegrove gave an inspiring address on 'Unleashing your inner Black Panther' before afternoon breakout sessions exploring ideas around sustainability, connecting with colleagues and delighting customers. The Fluid team then rounded off a busy day with a

competitive teambuilding session.

The evening was a drinks reception and then a birthday themed gala dinner and awards ceremony, celebrating Fluid's 15th year of delivering Meaningful Merchandise! The awards acknowledged achievements both internally and externally.

John Walker Fluid's commercial director said: "This has been our biggest conference to date, the facilities and venue have been amazing - everything was tip top. It's been so good to be able to catch up face to face with our Fluid friends and family after so long."

Miles Lovegrove added: "Wow, what a weekend! It was fantastic to chat to so many of our team and share our successes. Thanks to everyone for attending, also a huge thank you to the conference team in making the event run so smoothly. A big well done to all of our award winners."

Senator picks up award for sustainability

Harlow-based Senator Pens has won a Classic Novo Award for its environmentally sensitive products.

The Essex business awards were open to all businesses, with six different streams. The awards were presented at a gala dinner at Braxted Park near Chelmsford.

Senator said: "We are so proud to have won a classic Novo Award in the Environment stream. Anyone that knows the promotional industry knows it is plastic heavy. Here at Senator Pens we have been able to show that you can still brand products whilst being sustainable and eco-friendly."

The company's entry highlighted its



materials and production processes that are designed to be free of harmful substances, ecologically compatible, waste avoiding and recyclable.

Senator uses green electricity from hydropower, invests in energy-saving measures and develops products to have a long product life.

Snap deal aligns operations with The Pen Warehouse for digital future

Snap Products has agreed a deal with The Pen Warehouse (Tancia Ltd) to formally transfer all sales operations to Pen Warehouse's facility in Aldershot.

It follows a strategic review of Snap operations to ensure the company adapts to the changing business landscape and drives costs down.

James Cleere, managing director of Snap said: "This deal strengthens Snap Products' business proposition by reducing costs and with the added financial strength of Tancia Ltd, will ensure we are able to augment our product offering

and continue to deliver and improve on the high level of customer service we are passionate about."

Following a multi-million-pound investment in its Aldershot manufacturing and warehouse facilities, Tancia is planning additional significant investment in IT to ensure that Snap Products' current range is seamlessly incorporated into Tancia's and that sales and sales-ordering, warehousing, manufacturing and financials are aligned.

Cleere added that the deal would allow Snap to adapt quickly to challenges as it entered a new B2B digital age.

Premier acquires latest company

Premier Print & Promotions has announced the acquisition of Hertfordshire-based Juice Promotions.

Juice managing director Sean Dwyer and sales administrator Elaine Powell will join Premier to manage the transition and become members of the Premier team.

Ryan Askew, MD of Premier, said: "After a year or so off we're pleased to continue our acquisition strategy with today's addition of Juice to the ranks."

Founder of Premier, Jamie Marshall, added: "We're excited to welcome the Juice customers onboard and offer them the unrivalled service and skill Premier are famous for."

Sean Dwyer, owner of Juice, said: "I've known Jamie and the team for many years and recognised synergies between the two companies. Now the time has come for me to start taking steps towards retirement I could not think of a more suitable guardian for the business I have built over the last 22 years."

Ryan concluded: "Premier have worked



tremendously hard over the last 18 months and I'm so grateful to the staff, customers and suppliers who have helped us get through. This recent announcement is just one of a few exciting things happening for Premier in the near future. Watch this space."

Premier is an award-winning distributor of promotional merchandise based in Feering, Essex.

Juice is its eighth acquisition and Premier is open to confidential conversations with anyone looking to discuss options.

Boosters seeks successor to grow the business

Cornwall-based Boosters is looking for a director who will be able to take over the company when managing director Blair Carroll retires.



He told PM: "I am currently looking at the succession of the company. While not expecting to retire immediately I would like to ensure that my company has a good and secure future to the benefit of all the staff and directors, current and future. In order to guarantee this I'm looking for my long term replacement."

Carroll said the role is an amazing opportunity for the right candidate. Based in Cornwall with a well-established and successful business, Boosters celebrates 25 years in 2022.

"The plan is for the right candidate to take over and further grow the company and providing the current business owner a work out package which can be afforded by the company and the directors."

Although the initial role will be sales orientated, it will quickly move into a more managerial position giving the successful applicant full control and ownership of the business.

Carroll said: "Who doesn't want to live the dream in Cornwall? For the right person and their family the most desirable place to live in Britain awaits, whether you prefer the sea, sand and surfing or the endless walks and places of interest, low crime rates, clean air and loads of outdoor activities. It's been a great place for my wife and I to bring our daughter and she loves the county as much as we do. We made the right move in 1993 and want to offer the same opportunity to someone with the added security of a solid financial future."

The right candidate will want to grow their own business. Although already successful, Carroll feels that there is lots more potential. A dedicated team player with strong sales and managerial skills gained within the promotional products and/or printing industries would be a strong candidate.

The right candidate is expected to be sales manager within one year and director in two, and will be supported by Carroll, after which he expects to take a more backseat position.

Product Media: call for next special feature!

Our special features are a brilliant way to showcase your latest products, innovation and news. The next feature is focused on Apparel & Bags for the March/April edition. With a deep dive into this sector, with views on sustainable materials, production values and homegrown talent, we're looking for your contributions now.

May/June edition swaps focus to Sustainability and the future in promotional merchandise. Innovative production, processes and materials continue to evolve and in this issue we

reveal the solutions every end user should be considering in their planet friendly plans.

In the second half of the year, we look at Writing Instruments, Stationery, Food & Confectionery, Drinkware & Ceramics. As we search for the latest news and views, why not schedule these features in your own marketing calendars and contribute today? If you'd like to get involved or discuss special feature advertising, contact the editor for more information at editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk

A GREAT START

First Editions has helped new talent find its way into the industry, courtesy of the Kickstart programme

The Government's Kickstart scheme provides opportunities for young people aged 16-24 to gain valuable work experience. The scheme is particularly aimed at those currently on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment and helps them begin their careers and boost their future job prospects.

The BPMA has been actively promoting the scheme to the industry and co-ordinating the application process. Among those to benefit is Shakela Brown, who was taken on as a graphics and digital marketing executive by British-made drinkware specialist, First Editions. We spoke to Shakela about her new role.

WHY DID YOU APPLY FOR KICKSTART?

I studied creative digital media at university. When I graduated last year, in the middle of the pandemic, my main worry was finding a job within the sector. With the job market coming to a halt and many roles becoming 'work from home', I found it hard to find something I felt I would really enjoy doing.

I was advised to join the Kickstart Scheme, as there was an array of opportunities which would allow me to gain experience and put my skills into practice in a real-life work setting; something I was lacking prior to applying.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO WORKING AT FIRST EDITIONS?

When I was introduced to the company I was quite intrigued, as the promotional industry was one I didn't really know the ins and outs of. The role was exactly what I was looking for and I was really drawn to the fact that First Editions has strong company values focused around sustainability and innovation.

After attending my interview and seeing the quality of the products and overall service offered, I was further drawn to wanting to join the team and to start creating content for the company.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR MATCHED UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

It's totally surpassed any expectations I had. Originally, I was worried that I would not be good enough for the role, especially with this being my first 'real' job. However, as soon as I started, I was welcomed and supported by a great team.

I've learnt so much about the industry and how influential promotional merchandise is in everyday life. I've spoken to many customers and started to build relationships within the industry. This has made me more and more confident and allowed me to understand the type of content that is best received within the industry and helped to develop my skills further.

HOW HAS THE KICKSTART SCHEME BENEFITED YOU?


I've had many opportunities for personal growth and development working at First Editions, but I would say my biggest achievement so far was passing the BPMA TPM course in August. I've gained a lot more knowledge of the industry and it was nice to see my hard work pay off, especially as I have been able to use what I have learned in my day-to-day work life, benefiting both me and the company.

WHAT'S BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT SO FAR?

Attending my first Merchandise World in September was brilliant – it was my first time working on an exhibition stand and the event was great fun.

I decided to stay on at First Editions after my initial six months, as I've really enjoyed working for the company. Every day so far has been different and some of the tasks



I've been set have challenged me to push myself to create some of my best work. I'm looking forward to seeing what the future holds. 

A word from the boss on Kickstart

First Editions' operations director Mark Alderson said: "The Kickstart scheme has proven to be a very good fit for First Editions. We identified a number of opportunities where we could offer not only six-month placements but also the prospect of permanent jobs at the end of them.

"The BPMA made the application process simple and straightforward, and we had a superb pool of talent to choose from. We've really benefited from Shakela's energy, new ideas and digital know-how, and it's been heart-warming to watch her progress.

"We're very happy to play our part in helping to get young people into work, particularly given the recent economic challenges of the pandemic. There is not long left to apply but I would encourage other employers thinking about participating in the Kickstart Scheme to go for it."

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2021: *that was the year that was...*

...unpredictable. Opportunistic. Forward looking. Complex. Testing. Whatever words you think of when casting your mind back on the bizarre rollercoaster of 2021, it will be a mix of challenge and opportunity says Carey Trevill

In December 2020, the 29th to be precise, my inbox started to ping with news that ports and freight were bottlenecked affecting supply chains across the EU and the UK. With a call well before Christmas to beat the 'Brexit exit' deadlines, anyone who had goods in transit that weren't needed until January planned to deal with the new customs border after the break.

WE WERE PREPARED, RIGHT?

Wrong... oh so wrong and as the BPMA lines and emails started to go into overdrive, I am reminded of a call that sticks in my mind from a distributor just a few days

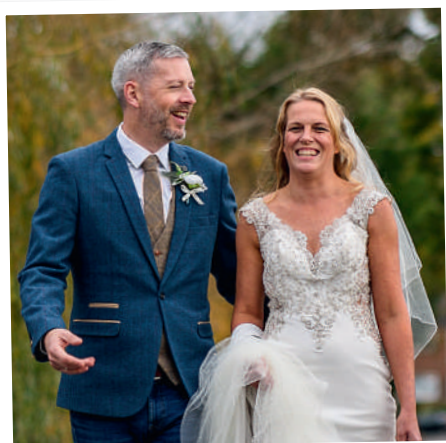
into January 2021 who asked me "Are we all going mad or is this new customs stuff insane?"

Far from insane, the industry could be forgiven for thinking their Government had pulled a fast one and left them dealing with red tape of the most extraordinary nature. We expected more challenge with legislative areas like UKCA so the customs rug being proverbially ripped from under us wasn't what we expected. Carriers just added to the confusion, and some stopped altogether as they retreated to the benches for a time out and to work out what to do while their customers screamed for their parcels to be at least shipped within the month.

Deadlines died and were replaced with 'honest conversations' about how long goods would take, while we stared at a crystal ball waiting for the clouds to clear.

DEMYSTIFYING CUSTOMS

For those still able to trade and doing business during the pandemic, the fragile lifeline they had been given suddenly started to snap and contracts were at serious risk. Working closely with the supportive and proactive Board at the BPMA enabled us to activate the right support for members and while not claiming to be export experts, we were able to help de-mystify some



of the customs aspects. With members reporting the losses running into telephone number figures, we stepped up and got the information needed for everyone fast.

SIGN POSTING ADVICE

Fast forward a few months and webinars on every aspect of customs, rules of origin, VAT, fiscal representation and tapping up our Government contacts and the Institute of Export for expert help, we were becoming the go-to place for sign posted advice. We also found some gaps in the way we operate as an industry vs the reality of the customs and VAT process.

The BPMA Board and representing export Board director Andrew Langley worked with his local MP to present an important question in the House of Commons to the Minister for Exports Graham Stuart, sparking further discussions with HM Revenue & Customs.

Some answers were found but not all. Answering questions as candidly as possible during the meeting, Department for International Trade's Martin Cook asked the costs of supporting export for members. Hearing the numbers involved, Cook commented on the very expensive shirt we've had stripped from our backs. The response to Mr Cook was clipped when we asked what the alternative should be. Tough talking for tough times.



A NEW PLATFORM

In the meantime, myself and the BPMA team had behind the scenes been busy rebuilding the BPMA's website and education platform. With exceptional help from the Board and some very clever minds, we re-launched both the education platforms and the website delivering back to the members the services and information they need to grow and develop. Moments of great relief and pride and thanks to everyone involved including Angela Wagstaff, Helen Brennan, Melissa Chevin to name a few.

ORDERS RETURN, BUT...

As lockdowns lifted and some sense of life as we knew it returned over the summer, the conversations with distributors and suppliers turned to a more optimistic tone as orders started to build and confidence return. The stinger that was waiting in the wings was the growing shortage of pretty much everything, raw materials, stock, drivers... petrol.

You'd be forgiven for thinking we were stuck on page 20 of the disaster movie script still such were the blows to the back of the knees just as we were trying to climb back to profit. We issued a price alert to the membership to aid the conversations underway across the industry and with end users, helping address the demand and response to orders coming through.

Continuing into 2022, the strain on supply chain is global and not limited to promotional merchandise which while challenging makes the universally difficult trading conditions an 'all in' problem.



SHOW TIME

With order books filling and an air of optimism, we were able to attend Merchandise World in September and a few gloriously warm days hailed a much-needed reconnection of the merchandise soul at the trade only show – and my first chance to meet some of the amazing people and businesses that I'd got to know through distant digital means.

A great way to approach the first step back into 'business as usual', exhibitors and visitors weren't disappointed with the quality and quantity of conversations.

However, the pandemic continues to be a step ahead of us and at the time of writing, the incredibly hard decision has been taken to postpone Merchandise World and the Awards until April. Despite this, the BPMA is looking positively ahead to a brighter 2022. Our sustainable agenda is taking shape, we've joined the AdNetZero initiative and UK Advertising Export Group to help us promote the exceptional industry we are – and that's just some of what we have in store. After the incredibly hard period we've just been through and with some tough times still ahead, the active and forward thinking agenda for the industry is just what we need to drive the momentum that's built in the last quarter.



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

This year has been one of change for many of us; we've welcomed two BPMA babes to the team with the safe arrival of Amelia William's little girl and a long-awaited baby boy for Daniela Arena. With promotion for Georgie Yeats and marriage at last for Tom Robey, the team has been amazing and we've achieved a lot in a short space of time.

I'm so proud of how hard they have all worked for members and it's been good to look back, see how far we have come for members in this time. It's been a huge privilege as the BPMA team to support this industry and personally, it's taught me so much about the businesses I'm lucky enough to work alongside and be backed by the best board a CEO could have.

30th Preseli Anniversary

Connecting Brands With People

Preseli has been a supplier of popular products to the promotional industry since 1992. During 30 years of trading, we have built our reputation on great service and time-proven reliability.

Our business is delivering our customers' promises on every order, from large to small.

We are a subsidiary company of Preseli Merchandising based in Hong Kong. Their team of experienced merchandisers and logistics personnel ensure that our orders are supplied on time and to specification.

We work with our supply chain to adapt to shifting business and consumer requirements. Our capacity in 2022 is more flexible than ever with scalable Far East production supported by an expanding range of UK Stocked and Manufactured products.

We use UPS carbon neutral services for Air Freight and for local deliveries. We offer the option of sea freight to minimise emissions (and save our customers money). We offer sustainable packaging options, are reducing waste across our business and we continue to add eco friendly options to our product range.

Whether your customer is a local community group or business, a start-up or an established blue chip corporation, Preseli is equipped and ready to receive your order and manage it through every process, from conception to final delivery.

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CORPORATE & PROMOTIONS

CHARITIES & EVENTS

EDUCATION

SPORTS & CLUBS

WORKPLACE

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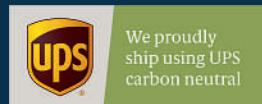
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BACK ON TRACK

The industry views its revised starting block for 2022 and beyond

With expressions like 'build back better' and 'resilience' being repeated until the words have lost all meaning, we could be forgiven for thinking we're stuck in the film, Groundhog Day.

At the start of 2021, we faced yet another lock down in the UK and watched as neighbouring countries did the same. We knew this last sacrifice was part of making sure we had a future. Then came changes with our exit from the EU, with new importing and exporting rules, plus a carrier crisis. We could be forgiven for not wanting another kick when we're down and rolling over.

But not this industry.

The grit shown in 2020 continued and hard decisions made to ensure we are fighting fit for the rewards on the horizon. The recovery for the UK at every stage in the last 12 months has beaten the downbeat forecasts giving end users hope and importantly, money to spend.

Order books have started to fill, and past crisis point, we are now looking at how the support system around the industry is geared to help business flourish and grow.



HAYDN WILLETTS
BPMA CHAIR

TAKING STOCK

The BPMA has been busy throughout, supporting members and providing some industry wide guidance across a range of 'need to know now' topics. Taking the reins in November 2021, Chair Haydn Willetts provides a view on the year ahead for our businesses.

"2021 was always going to be a testing and extremely tough year for many businesses. I'm sure in years to come when it is written about there will be amazement as to how the vast majority traded through it – the important thing is, we did.

However, we are in a different place now both commercially as well as operationally and the entire supply chain must be mindful of this. Shortages of both labour and stock, raw materials plus huge increases in carrier costs have led to immense pressure points to achieve on time delivery and to specification of the orders, thankfully, being placed.

Our biggest challenge for the year ahead it has to be stock availability. We do not have a crystal ball to predict with any certainty when we might



**COMMUNICATION IS
ESSENTIAL TO AVOID
LOSING HARD WON WORK**

see a return to 'normal' levels as to be honest, we are all facing new levels of everything. Communication, therefore, is even more essential to avoid losing hard won work but also to work proactively with clients and suppliers on what is possible. The BPMA and the entire Board are committed to ensuring we support members in this regard by inspiring, educating and connecting through the service goals we all strive to deliver."

SUPPORTING MEMBERS

The BPMA's membership has always been a good barometer for success. Dropping numbers during 2020 was predicted but with retention in 2021 at an all-time high, PM asked board director Brian Hayward (PAGE Partnership), responsible for membership at the BPMA, for his thoughts.

"It's no secret that the industry has changed since the early days, and we are seeing the base of members shift from the 'purists' into those with mixed media under their belts. It's reassuringly hard to become a member of the BPMA, with references and credit checks plus peer-to-peer recommendation, and we are seeing high quality businesses out there coming to us looking for standards and education.

The level of innovation coming through from our existing members is outstanding and the unique opportunity they had during lockdown to re-focus and re-purpose has meant many have re-emerged with a cast iron view of the future, working with the BPMA to ensure they succeed. The Board is looking at ways to embrace what the industry wants and needs to



CLIVE ALLCOTT
BPMA BOARD DIRECTOR,
CHARTER



BRIAN HAYWARD
BPMA BOARD DIRECTOR,
MEMBERSHIP

work, starting with recognising what the BPMA has to offer, and what it must and should deliver to members to ensure it's here for the future.

Our standards and services have gone up and up in recent years so look out for some changes in the coming months."

CHARTER PROGRAMME

Re-joining the Board in 2021, Board Director Clive Allcott (DTB Europe) has assumed responsibility again for the BPMA's Charter programme. Alongside the BPMA, Clive has taken considerable time and effort to regulate the Charter process and ensure every member looking to achieve the exceptionally high standards expected is capable of doing so.

"Charter for both distributors and suppliers is a hard standard to achieve but that badge means something; it builds business and tells your customers 'We've got this covered'. Verification in the businesses we work with can no longer be assumed to create a point of difference. Not only does BPMA membership provide reassurance and trust, but Charter takes you to another level of evidenced trust.

As we see the supply chain come under closer and closer scrutiny, the



CHARTER FOR BOTH DISTRIBUTORS AND SUPPLIERS IS A HARD STANDARD TO ACHIEVE



HELEN BRENNAN
BPMA BOARD DIRECTOR,
EDUCATION

need to differentiate yourselves is even more important. We've already started a 'tap on the shoulder' programme for members who we believe should be considering Charter status while enjoying the applications from those member companies who have sought to attain higher standards."

EDUCATING MERCHANDISERS

So, what about educating the industry? With vacancies rising everywhere, and a shortage of experienced staff in just about every role, education and training are top of most companies' agendas.

After a technical issue in 2020, the BPMA's celebrated TPM (Trained in Promotional Merchandise) and CPM (Certified in Promotional Merchandise) courses were taken off line. In a planned overhaul, the new courses were kick started again in 2021 and saw more than 100 industry professionals engage with fully refreshed content.

But it doesn't stop there. Helen Brennan of Brand Addition fame, Board Director responsible for the education direction at the BPMA tells PM of the need to get skills up to scratch fast.

"Keeping skills current is good for anyone at any stage of their career and now we're really seeing the value of our 'for the industry by the industry' courses to support those joining our industry for the first time. We're able to get those in the first few formative months of their roles up to scratch with the fundamentals on TPM and provide a springboard into more commercial knowledge with CPM. We're also providing a huge amount of

resource and knowledge via the BPMA site, webinars and ongoing guidance across a huge range of topics.

As a heavily regulated industry, we need to ensure we really know our subject and having the central base of expert knowledge means the Association can provide its members with up-to-date knowhow in accessible formats. In addition, we regularly open up webinars to the wider industry when addressing key topics such as exporting to share the knowledge and help our industry thrive – and of course show off the immense value BPMA members get along the way.”

PROGRESSING SUSTAINABLY

With a sharp focus on the planet, the industry is also geared towards a more sustainable future, but it's already been a tricky one to address. Former Chair, now President of the BPMA Angela Wagstaff heads up the Association's



ANGELA WAGSTAFF
BPMA PRESIDENT



ON ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY THE MESSAGE COULDN'T BE CLEARER - TELL US MORE

drive on sustainability. Spelling out the need for a progressive and staged change, the founder of Allwag Promotions wants to make sure we're all clear on one thing. The changes are coming and the industry must embrace the opportunity.

“It's all a question of education, communication and transparency. As the briefs ask for more and more, we must be ready to provide the right information first time and that means we must do two things; educate ourselves and educate our customers.

During 2020 and 2021, despite being hampered by the pandemic, we did carry out consumer research about awareness and recall, and the ethics and sustainability message couldn't be clearer – tell us more about the products as we love getting them but we want to be responsible. We are already taking huge steps to address ways in which to improve communication and many distributors and suppliers have fantastic programmes and information.

The better the standard of information, the more opportunities we will see. COP26 shone a huge spotlight on the marketing and advertising industry and we are expected to act – not just react. The World Federation of Advertisers reported at the AdNetZero summit in November last year that 95% of marketers can make a difference in the sustainability journey and 92% of consumers agree brands have a



ANDREW LANGLEY
BPMA BOARD DIRECTOR

responsibility to change consumer behaviour.

There is an opportunity to communicate the way our industry can be part of this change so look out for more initiatives from the BPMA on this. We're part of a number of Government and wider advertising initiatives such as AdNetZero to ensure we are talking directly to end-users.”

GLOBAL CHALLENGE

In 2021, we also finally made our exit from the EU which brought challenges and opportunities for every UK industry, not just promotional merchandise. However, exporting for our industry continues to be problematic, especially when goods have been sold in the UK but delivered to the EU for distribution or an event.

Andrew Langley, Board Director and founder of Juniper Products says: “BPMA members are able to take advantage of resources in the member only section of the website; an export resource which provides extensive guidance and signposts help for our members. The only





GRAEME SMITH
BPMA BOARD DIRECTOR

downside is it does require your own reading and research to identify the specific problems that you may be facing. The BPMA Board and team is in regular contact with Departments for International Trade, Export and Revenue and the Government more generally raising members concerns. We are also pleased to advise our members that we are to join the UK Export Group, run by the Advertising Association, and will be joining forces with other industries in running an 'export month', in a high-profile campaign promoting UK businesses. If you are interested in hearing more about this, talk to myself or the BPMA."

A HIGHER STANDARD

Running alongside all the themes for getting back on track are the standards the industry holds itself accountable for. With complaint levels rising across the industry, the way in which we operate has perhaps never been under more scrutiny. The expectations for service excellence, communication and transparency are all hygiene factors we expect from every business from the top down. With the spotlight on trading, sustainability, availability and more, it's critical we stick to great ways of working and seek to improve to make sure the order books we are now seeing full for the first time in 18 months stay that way.

Past President and Board Director looking after standards for the BPMA, Graeme Smith of Cyan Group, states: "We have to hold ourselves accountable. We have an incredible opportunity after the pandemic to be better, bigger, and bolder and we must keep the great work up. Starting with our Code of Conduct, the myriad of



WE HAVE AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO BE BETTER, BIGGER, AND BOLDER

legislation and compliance we have to adhere to and the skills we can gain to have fantastic client relationships, do brilliant business and keep on doing it means we have to do it right. I'm so proud of the work the BPMA has done in recent years to keep upholding its principles to inspire, connect and educate every member. We know projects go wrong and equally, being able to address this with solutions, not problems, will mean reputations and clients are more likely to stay."

NEW ON BOARD

The BPMA Board has also been busy recruiting new blood with the recent additions of Jamie Marshall, Premier Print of Promotions and Billy Hussain, Alvastone. With interests in standards and educating end users to the obvious benefits of merchandise, Jamie Marshall told PM: "Joining the Board was a no brainer – I want to give back to an industry that's been great to me and I want to see it thrive."

Marshall, an industry veteran was keen to work with the Board seeing their work in recent years. "I've watched and seen the Board working together with a strong team to deliver in some very trying times. Being part of the change and future of the BPMA is incredibly exciting."

Billy Hussain, who joined at the same time as Jamie Marshall explained his reasons for getting involved. "Our industry is changing, and we all have a responsibility in creating the right future with our businesses. Never has so much been at stake with so much opportunity to change and grow. As a business with vast experience in manufacturing and sourcing globally, I hope to bring some fresh perspectives

The return of
Merchandise
World was much
anticipated



DAVID LONG
SOURCING CITY CHAIRMAN

and insights into our sustainable journey. Collaborating with the rest of the Board means the best minds are coming together to deliver exceptional support in 2022."

Together with Board Directors Mark Alderson, responsible for the Briman group, Melissa Chevin championing communication and marketing for the BPMA, Neal Beagles focussed on Europe and events, and Alex Turner on finance, the BPMA heads into 2022 in very strong hands.

BACK TOGETHER

After a long few years away from shows, the Merchandise World Peak Season show took place with better than expected results. With visitors only marginally reduced from the 2019 show, the quality and quantity of visitors was praised and provided a successful forerunner to the January 2022 show.

David Long, chairman of Sourcing City, the show's organiser in the Merchandise World joint venture with the BPMA, said: "The industry has at last commenced the recovery from so much lost time and business. Distributors and suppliers across the country are currently reporting a clear uptake in business and there is an exciting air of optimism across the industry."

With a late change in show dates, the industry will be able to get a sense of that revival on 13-14 April at the CBS Arena in Coventry when we are able to meet.

So, things are changing but the orders are coming in, the phones are ringing and fingers crossed we will be looking at not quite normal but as near as possible, in the first quarter of 2022. With many reporting 2021 saw some of their best months towards the end of the year, here's to getting back on track and finishing in first place this year. **PM**

BPMA EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Are your teams trained in promotional merchandise?

Registrations open for 2022 intakes

BPMA training courses, Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) and Certified in Promotional Merchandise (CPM) are the only UK industry-specific courses 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, complementing your company training and development.

Our courses include:

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

Achieve your TPM or CPM qualification within 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
- Complements company training and development



➤ Secure places today

Courses start from £200+VAT. For more information and to book places, call 01372 371 184 or contact education@bpma.co.uk. BPMA members only.

bpma.co.uk

NO HANGING AROUND

Briman Group founder member, UK Lanyard Makers made best use of lockdowns to prepare for the bounce back

For a company whose motto is 'British made lanyards – with no hanging around' Briman member UK Lanyard Makers has had plenty of time to ponder its business over the past 18 months.

Like many merchandise companies, the pandemic provided an unexpected pause, although, unlike some, it kept going.

"What stood the business in good stead, is that during lockdowns we kept the doors open. We kept answering the phone and email, and we kept doing production, albeit on a limited scale. So, people have come to rely on us," says director Phil Hardy.

The Surrey-based business, which is in its seventh year, did not let the downtime go to waste, taking the opportunity to look at some of its fundamentals.

"We didn't know what was going to happen, so we've tried to get better prepared. We did some work on the website, on pricing. We looked at our documentation, and adapted and enhanced some of our internal systems. We are now able to produce more than we were able to produce previously. So, we are more efficient."

This is just as well as business has

come back at pace. "We had our best ever September and October was almost as big. Things are really busy," says Hardy.

Expectations of procurement that were changing before COVID have continued. Shorter deadlines mean that buyers are not always prepared to wait for a shipment from China, something that is a bonus the proud British manufacturer.

"Companies like Amazon have helped because people get used to getting things the next day and they want to buy locally," he says.

UK Lanyard Makers' zero air miles promise with delivery as soon as next day has helped it fit in with new business expectations. So too has its broader approach to sustainability.

Nothing it uses arrives by plane. Its polyester ribbon is recyclable and it also has an RPET option. Inks are water-based and not solvent.

There is no plastic in the company's lanyard packaging and everything in the box is recyclable. Waste paper and ribbon are sent for recycling, and none of the staff live more than eight miles away, with some cycling and walking to work.

If that isn't worthy enough, UK Lanyard


Makers is based on a farm where its factory is powered by a 40KW solar array with heating from a biomass burner.

It is not surprising therefore to learn that it supplied some of the lanyards at Cop26.

However, Hardy says the company can't rest on its laurels given the widespread misunderstanding about sustainable issues. The company spent part of its downtime during the pandemic working out what information distributors needed to sell its products.

Issues such as explaining why bamboo is not necessarily the greenest solution, have to be tackled with information for distributors that boils down what they need to know to just a few bullet points, keeping it simple for them. That is another lockdown bonus.

As one of the founder members of Briman, UK Lanyard Makers values the collegiate nature of the group that allows UK manufacturers to share experiences and knowledge.

"It's amazing what we found out and what other people have found out from us, just by being able to talk to each other as British manufacturers. And they're also thoroughly nice people." 



STAYING AHEAD

Buyers are looking for British made merchandise and innovation. WCM+A is happy to oblige, says managing director Simon Adam

WHY DID WCM+A JOIN BRIMAN?

Simply because British manufacturing is what we believe in and we are manufacturers to our core so we were happy to come on board when Mark Alderson got the ball rolling. It's a great group of people who can share experiences and ideas in a positive way for the benefit of everyone as there is an awful lot that is common between us. A prime example has been the knowledge regarding R&D tax relief which many members took on board to their advantage. Any UK manufacturer is welcome to talk to me about this.



WHY SHOULD MERCHANDISE BUYERS AND DISTRIBUTORS LOOK TO BUY BRITISH?

It is how distributors can best support the UK economy and the environment in so many ways at a time when both are so fragile. We're also seeing lots of brands asking distributors specifically for British made merchandise wherever possible so to have a wide range of British made merchandise certainly widens their options. Sustainability is of course coming more and more to the fore and manufacturing locally in the right materials at factories with proven environmental credentials such as ISO14001 has to be the way forward.

WHAT'S THE MOST EXCITING THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO THE COMPANY LATELY?

Winning the Page catalogue group Gold Supplier of the Year award recently was a wonderful honour, and truly appreciated by everyone here who can see that the efforts they put into customer service and getting things right day in day out are recognised. Development of the world's first antimicrobial name badge was a great innovation for us that makes people, particularly in care situations, that bit safer from bacterial infections such as MRSA.

We've also recently



redeveloped our whole award offering using everything we've learned from the last few years working with wood, bamboo and recycled acrylic to significantly expand the range, giving distributors a real choice for customers looking for a genuine eco option to reflect their company values.

HOW IS BUSINESS LOOKING GOING FORWARD?

We're currently above pre-pandemic levels of business but taking nothing for granted as circumstances beyond everyone's control could change that very quickly. Obviously, the name badge side of the business continues to be hit with fewer conferences and exhibitions, but our new products have exceeded expectations and are driving growth in a different way than we might have predicted pre-pandemic.

We've been able to invest in some great new kit that will help us to significantly reduce both costs and lead times in a world where rapidly rising material prices and supply chain problems are hitting everyone.


The balance of the business may change moving forward but if we keep innovating, do what we do best and maintain our standards then even if the post-Christmas

period gets tough again we will be absolutely fine and in a great position for when things pick up again.

WHAT HAVE THE LAST 18 MONTHS TAUGHT YOU?

Follow your gut instinct, trust the team here, trust your distributors and keep innovating. We stayed open throughout as it was perfectly safe to do so here in rural Herefordshire with significantly reduced staff on site and there was enough NHS work coming through from our distributors to keep things ticking over even, though it would certainly have been easier and cheaper to close.

While our products, particularly NHS name badges, were in demand and providing a useful service in a world where everyone wore a mask, my gut and the continued orders told me it was the right thing to do. From there it was a case of developing products using the materials we had to fit what people were looking for, so the whole KeepSafe range of no touch keyrings, tools, screens and more was developed and introduced very quickly which proved a great success.

Going forward the things we develop are constantly being copied so we must stay ahead of the game and there are plenty of innovations in the pipeline. At the end of the day it's up to us to provide the products and services that work for our distributors. It's not their fault if things don't work, and in a world with so much choice we must give them what they need as the trade exclusive supply chain works brilliantly if we as British manufacturers play our part well. 



Advantage members show recognition

The 21st annual Advantage Awards were presented at The Malmaison Hotel, Birmingham on Wednesday 8th December. An audience of over 80 diners saw Mojo Promotions scoop the coveted position of Group Member of the Year as voted for by the Advantage suppliers for the second year running, while Xindao was popular winner of the Group Supplier of the Year as voted for by the Members.

Advantage group director, Lawrence Angelow said: "Many congratulations to all the companies who featured in our awards. I know much hard work and endeavour goes into achieving these sought-after positions. Business remains challenging and it looks like the first quarter of 2022 will be no different, so it was great to have a lively evening of fun and laughter among industry friends old and new."

Commended and Highly Commended positions were awarded as follows:

Group Supplier of The Year

- Commended: CHX Products, Juniper Products, Midocean Brands
- Highly Commended: Laltex Promo, The Umbrella Company

Group Member of The Year 2020-2021

- Commended: Manic Merchandise, Promo Brand (Bounce Creative), Stay Sourced
- Highly Commended: Something Different, Pinksheep Marketing



Nomination caps winning month for Total Merchandise

Jason O'Connor, co-founder and sales director at Total Merchandise, has been accepted into networking organisation the Forbes Business Council.

Candidates are selected by a review committee with criteria for acceptance including a track record of successfully impacting business growth metrics, as well as personal and professional achievements and honours.

The appointment caps a successful month for the Essex company which was voted Distributor of the Year (£5m+) for the third consecutive year in the prestigious Sourcing City awards.

Total Merchandise also recently scored top place in the South East Business Awards (£5m+ category), run by NatWest and LOCALiQ.

O'Connor said: "It is a great honour to have been selected and to be able to connect with so many great minds through the Forbes Business Council. This is a great platform to be able to bounce around ideas and gain, arguably, a wealth of inspiration from some great leaders."

As an accepted member of the Council, O'Connor has access to a variety of opportunities designed to help him reach peak professional influence. He will connect and collaborate with other respected local leaders in a private forum and at members-only events. He will also be invited to share his insights in business articles on Forbes.com, and to contribute to published Q&A panels alongside other experts.

Members also have access to vetted business service partners, membership-branded marketing collateral, and the support of the Forbes Councils member concierge team.

"We are honoured to welcome Jason into the community," said Scott Gerber, founder of Forbes Councils. "Our mission with Forbes Councils is to bring together proven leaders from every industry, creating a curated, social capital-driven network that helps every member grow professionally and make an even greater impact on the business world."



Fluid plants 20,000 trees on the way to Net Zero

Fluid has reached the milestone of planting 20,000 trees through the 'Tree with Every Order' campaign it launched in August this year.

The trees planted have been steadily growing month by month with the landmark achieved on 16 December.

As a B Corp, Fluid is constantly looking for ways to do things better for people and planet. The tree campaign is part of its commitment to be Carbon Net Zero by 2030.

The Fluid forest trees are planted in the real world using verified and sustainable tree planting projects across the globe, where they can have the most impact.

Jon Birrell, Fluid's Marketing and Sustainability Director said: "Our aim with this campaign was to plant trees responsibly through a partner we can trust and to make the scheme inclusive for all of our customers to drive maximum engagement, so I'm delighted that we've reached this milestone already. Our ultimate goal is to responsibly plant one million trees."



MERCHANDISE WORLD

moves to April 2022

Industry shows are forced to change dates due to ongoing pandemic challenges

Like most economies around the world, the UK has had to plan, plan and plan again as the impacts of COVID-19 and all its variants keep us on our toes. After a surge of activity towards the end of 2021, with amazing buying signals, the whole industry was looking forward to meeting in January 2022.

Despite a successful vaccination and booster programme, the UK faced a huge crisis in the days leading up to Christmas 2021 which necessitated COBRA style meetings with the organisers of Merchandise World. PSI had already been moved to April 2022 and with safety of exhibitors and visitors of paramount importance, the tough decision to move the event in January was taken. With just six weeks to go, the industry hailed the decision as not only necessary but sensible, safeguarding investment and visitor confidence.

David Long, chairman of Sourcing City said: "When events are planned over two years in advance it is massively frustrating for exhibitors, visitors and organisers alike when they are postponed due the threat of Covid. We all fully appreciated the significant benefits Merchandise World brings in terms of discovering products and building relationships. Due to demand from many events wanting to get restarted, ideal alternative dates were understandably like gold dust. Our new April date is our best option to provide the valuable opportunity for the industry to meet once again, and for everyone involved to give their own business a significant boost. We are now focussed on making Merchandise World 2022 the best yet, and with the level of loyal support the event has it will be

a great revitaliser for the whole trade. As, they say, 'Good things come to those that wait!'

BPMA Chair Haydn Willetts noted: "The show is such an important event in our calendars and after the last two years, we need everyone to come together positively and feeling confident to attend. This was a much debated and discussed; the situation presenting before Christmas and risk of restrictions meant the only option was to move the date. We really appreciate the support from the industry in making this change and to our sponsors for the Awards dinner which of course moves to 13th April as well. It will be worth the wait!"

Praising the reaction from exhibitors and visitors, show organisers have been working hard to reorganise the event, no mean feat for a show of this size and scale. Anyone still interested in exhibiting should get in touch with the Merchandise World team as a few slots were still available at the time of going to press.

The pre-show feature for Merchandise World now moves to PM's March/April edition, coming out in plenty of time for visitors to plan ahead to see the incredible variety of exhibitors at this year's event. The BPMA Awards Dinner now moves to Wednesday 13th April with all bookings moving to the new date so there is still time to secure your table to hear who has landed the coveted supplier and distributor Awards.

More information about the show can be found at merchandiseworld.co.uk. For more information about the BPMA Awards dinner, open to both members and non-members, please visit bpma.co.uk

European shows announce new dates

RX Austria & Germany, organiser of European promotional product trade show PSI is re-scheduling its event due to the on-going pandemic and travel restrictions.

The event, which had been due to take place on 11-13 January, 2022 has been moved to 26-28 April in Dusseldorf. The move follows consultation with exhibitors and partners.

The show attracts more than 50% international exhibitors and visitors, but with continuing travel restrictions impacting international events it was felt that the new dates would provide both exhibitors and visitors with more planning safety.

In the meantime, exhibitors and visitors can continue to learn about the latest trends and innovations across the industry by connecting with the PSI's online platform www.psi-messe.com, via the PSI Product Finder, on Planet Advertising as well as in the PSI Journal and the weekly Newsletter.

Haptica Live, which had been due to take place in Bonn on 16 March has also been moved. The event will now happen at the World Conference Centre Bonn on 6 September.



A toast to THE YEAR AHEAD

The BPMA Awards are back this year giving the industry a chance to catch up on celebrating the best of the best

Amongst many of the highlights of the Merchandise World event is the BPMA Awards Dinner, recognising the members' choice for suppliers and distributors of the year. The previous Awards held in February 2020 promised a brilliant period ahead for the industry and we were all looking ahead to what promised to be a bumper 2020.

As we soon found out, the Merchandise World show and BPMA Awards that February was the last time for most that we were able to get together freely and easily. Two years on and we're able to assemble to celebrate the industry's achievements once more.

Roll call

In 2020, the roll call of BPMA Awards celebrated the standout companies in promotional merchandise, including Xindao, CHX Products, Total Merchandise, Premier Print & Promotions, Printed 4 You, and Bounce Creative. They were presented and hosted by the lofty talents of Martin Bayfield, rugby player boasting 31 England and three Lions caps who turned actor and shared stories of his time on the Harry Potter set.

Cue 2022, and with a pandemic that halted shows and celebrations, the industry is looking forward to 13th April 2022 at the CBS Arena at Coventry

(formerly the Ricoh Arena). With tickets selling fast, suppliers and distributors are coming together to not only attend a much-needed show to build business relationships but thank the industry for its staying power.

Your awards

The BPMA Awards are nominated by members, selecting their 'best of the best' votes in categories up to £500k (Distributors only), £2m, £2m-£5m and £5m+ turnover. There are also unsung heroes for suppliers and distributors plus the Briman Award recognising distributors



who have championed British goods.

Despite the past two years being like no other, we have reasons to celebrate and bring together the businesses who have shone during tough times. The voting approach means the Awards could literally go to any BPMA member business so it's always a nail biter to see who has clinched the respect and thanks of the industry.

The BPMA has undergone much change in the last two years itself and with a new Chair at the helm, Haydn Willetts of Midocean fame, those gathering for this sparkling event will be looking forward to hearing from the man himself and finding out who walks away with the coveted trophies this year.

Cross industry support

Like all great events the BPMA Awards boast a range of fantastic sponsors supporting the industry; and without them, these events simply wouldn't be possible.

This year's Awards are supported across the industry. With a long history of getting involved in high profile events, suppliers PF Concept, DTB, Preseli and Listawood

will all be exhibiting at Merchandise World giving everyone a chance to enjoy new products and talk first hand to the experts about fulfilling the orders coming in.

Support from Geiger and Fluid Branding has also been constant for events like the Awards. Fluid is sponsoring the 'up to £2m supplier' category.

Meaningful merchandise

Miles Lovegrove, MD at Fluid said: "We're delighted to be sponsoring the BPMA awards once again. We think it's more important now than ever for our industry to celebrate excellence after such a turbulent time. We are looking forward to 2022 with huge optimism and ambitious growth plans backed up by our exceptional teams."

Fluid Branding is one of the largest promotional merchandise distributors with offices spanning the UK and Europe and a team over 100 strong. The company is proud to be a certified B Corp, meaning it meets the highest standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability, to make a positive difference to people and planet. It is committed to becoming carbon net zero by 2030.

Going for growth

Geiger is supporting the '£2m supplier' category and MD Vicky Kinasz said: "I am truly delighted that Geiger can support the BPMA Annual Awards in 2022, and that after a difficult two years for everyone, we will once again be able to collectively gather and celebrate the best of the industry. It is an opportunity for us to thank our supply partners for their support and hard work during what has been the hardest of trading times for us all. In 2022, Geiger UK has exciting growth plans as we continue to expand our reach internationally and build our business globally as part of the Geiger Group."

Geiger is the largest privately owned promotional products distributor in the world, and an award-winning global industry leader. The company offers a full in-house, end-to-end service from design and digital print, to warehousing, fulfilment and worldwide shipping. Geiger also puts emphasis on its environment, social enterprise, and corporate responsibility committed to achieving the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance.

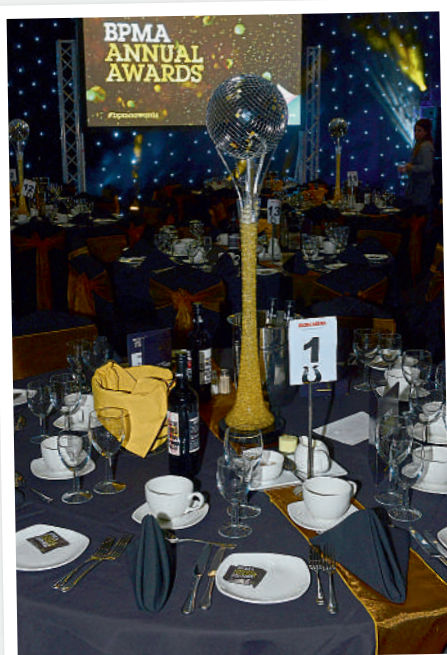
The drinks are on CBTax

The event kicks off with a drinks reception, supported by CBTax, benefit provider to the BPMA and R&D tax reclaim specialists.

Trophies to cherish

With Crystal Galleries providing the beautiful BPMA Awards, we will also be able to see who has landed the coveted Product Awards from BPMA members exhibiting, provided by Laser Crystal. A sumptuous dinner is rounded off by some delicious treats from long time BPMA member, The Sweet People.

PM wishes all the contenders for the BPMA Awards the best of luck on the night.



Bookings for the BPMA Awards dinner are now open until late March with tickets and tables available. If you'd like to book, please email events@bpma.co.uk or call 01372 371184.

“
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PRODUCTS TO *inspire*

The BPMA Product Awards aim to recognise the best in merchandise

Determining the products worthy of awards in any year is always a tough call, and with an industry that has pressed pause for over 18 months, this year's BPMA Product Awards are no exception.

With news that Merchandise World is postponed to April coming literally as judging was concluded, it was decided to continue with the Awards announcement in early January 2022 as planned, culminating in the planned celebration at the show and BPMA Awards dinner.

The BPMA requested all those members who are exhibiting at Merchandise World this year to enter their best products across a range of refreshed categories, covering a longer period than usual to recognise the exceptional period of trading and lack of new year show in 2021. Bringing in a revised entry process and two rounds of expert judges, nominating Brian Hayward of PAGE Group as Product Awards Chair, the BPMA aims to pave the way for future scope for this important industry recognition.

Tom Robey at the BPMA said: "Getting behind the industry after the immense challenges this year, recognising the innovation, product development and huge investment made by members was not only important, it has also helped signpost those products that deserve recognition."

Brian Hayward, who oversaw the judging process with BPMA CEO Carey Trevill, noted: "We asked for products to be entered from the last two years to ensure we could represent the growing trends across the industry for eco-led deliverables and more which we expect to see strongly represented at Merchandise World this year."

Those able to enter were allowed to submit entries from 2020 and 2021 as no Product Awards took place during 2020. Categories and criteria were refreshed resulting in the following categories to be awarded:

- Apparel Product of the Year
- Award & Gifting Product of the Year
- Bag & Folder Product of the Year
- Drinkware Product of the Year
- Eco Product of the Year
- Exhibition Product of the Year
- Pen & Stationery Product of the Year
- Technology Product of the Year

All entrants were asked to answer key

questions around price, credentials, eco credentials and provide supporting evidence with their entries.

Judging took place across two rounds, involving senior industry distributors and catalogue heads who met to agree final winners in each category in December 2021.

APPAREL PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: United Brands of Scandinavia

Product: premium soft shell jacket

Gold award

Supplier: PF Concept

Product: Elevate Macin insulated down jacket

Silver award

Supplier: The Outdoor Company

Product: The North Face 100 Glacier full-zip promotional fleece

Judges said: "This category presented a range of premium apparel across a number of brilliant ranges; the winners in this category represent the level of quality available to the market."

AWARD & GIFTING PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: Eat My Logo

Product: 4/6 Postal Cupcake Giftboxes



Gold award

Supplier: Snap Products

Product: Mood® gift set 2.0

Silver award

Supplier: Xindao

Product: MyboXD gift set

Judges said: "Refreshing the category this year meant we were able to look at a wide scope now available – with established suppliers delivering to market demands, we can see this sector going from strength to strength."

BAG & FOLDER PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: Juniper

Product: designer tote bag

Gold award

Supplier: JuteBag

Product: Kobe, natural jute shopper

Silver award

Supplier: Xindao

Product: XD Design Flex gym bag

Judges said: "The winners in this category were hotly debated. Bringing innovation into this sector can be tricky but our Platinum winner stood out as the difference we're looking for our customers."

Clockwise winners: United Brands of Scandinavia jackets; Eat My Logo cupcakes; Juniper tote



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Clockwise winners: First Editions bottle; Jutebag shopper; Bag Co notebook; Prodir pens; Desktop Ideas charger

DRINKWARE PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: First Editions

Product: Aqua Hydrate Bottle-for-Life

Gold award

Supplier: Premier Impressions

Product: Circular & Co reusable coffee cup

Silver award

Supplier: Reflects UK

Product: Bayamo Thermomug

Judges said: "The drinkware category was newly created in 2020 for a reason – huge strides forward in the materials, production and marketing of highly desirable goods the end user market is demanding. Our winners are representing the acceleration of eco credentials in this sector beautifully."

ECO PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: Bag Co

Product: Lamberhurst Eco recycled notebook

Gold award

Supplier: Senator

Product: Evoxx recycled pen

Silver award

Supplier: PF Concept

Product: H2O Active® Eco Base 650ml bottle with spout lid

Judges said: "Eco credentials for this category were another area where we have seen a huge increase in the quality of products being put forward – a treat to judge and award with genuinely memorable features and benefits that help distributors create desirability with customers."

EXHIBITION PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: JuteBag

Product: Biomaster Protected, antimicrobial

cotton bag

Gold award

Supplier: Desktop Ideas

Product: Eco Octopus

Silver award

Supplier: BabyUSB

Product: Baby Bio multi-charging cable

Judges said: "We were interested to see what would be entered for this category and the products available for exhibitions are now varied and multi-purpose. Our overall winner in this category has captured the ongoing needs for attendees to events to feel protected."

PEN & STATIONERY PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: Prodir

Product: QS40 True Biotic

Gold award

Supplier: Juniper

Product: Deluxe Silk Stone paper notebook

Judges said: "Always a tough category to judge as quality is high and innovation continues at pace – we decided to award to the products in this category that stood out and recognise the design and flair applied."

TECHNOLOGY PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Platinum award

Supplier: Desktop Ideas Ltd

Product: Mr Bio Family wireless charger

Gold award

Supplier: BabyUSB

Product: rPET Qi wireless charger

Silver award

Supplier: midocean

Product: MO6252 Rwing

Judges said: "Technology as a sector delivers those little moments of delight with an excellent range of entries which just make life easy – coupled with eco-friendly materials means a win-win in sales messages, grabbing attention and orders with products like these."



This year's judging panel received thanks from the BPMA and Awards Chair for their time and service in providing their expert views across two panels and rounds of judging. Judges are noted below.

Round 1: Lisa Munro, Marke Creative; Mick Humphries, TC Branding; Debbie Willsmer, Willsmer Wagg; Andrew Derryhouse, WildThang; Kyle Scott, Fluid Branding; Chris Dickinson, LSI; Steve Wickham, Geiger.

Round 2: Brian Hayward, PAGE (Awards Chair); Lawrence Angelow, Advantage Group; Richard Pettinger, Ignite; Melissa Chevin, Globe Fish Consulting; Angela Wagstaff, Allwag; Graeme Smith, Cyan Group; Jamie Marshall, Premier Print & Promotions.

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BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

The BPMA's newly restructured education courses
are signing up candidates for 2022

Every employer and employee recognises the need for building knowledge, service and expertise – after all it's what makes our businesses distinctive and stand out from the crowd.

The situation during 2021 meant a significant movement and loss of workforce across every economic sector in the UK and affected the majority of businesses. As the order books start to fill, the pressure to get skills back up to the standards of excellence expected and train newcomers in the industry has taken on a new urgency.

After pressing pause on its education platform during 2020 and taking the opportunity to reset, rewrite and refresh, the BPMA relaunched its education platform with the TPM 'Trained in Promotional Merchandise' and CPM 'Certified in Promotional Merchandise' courses to great acclaim from members.

Training over 100 promotional merchandise learners on the TPM course in the first few months of 2021 alone showed the commitment from employers to get skills back on the agenda. With a massive shortage of experienced staff across the UK and job boards rammed with companies searching for talent, the fast track to knowledge lies in a mixture of courses like TPM and CPM plus on the job training.

"It's important we have the knowhow as customers rely on us to be the experts. We're like their secret agents they can turn to at a moment's notice; we have all the latest products and knowledge to help them buy better for their needs," said Carey Trevill at the BPMA.

"These courses have been the go-to for many years and to give them a complete refresh and restructure last year was not only important but will help form the basis of expert promotional merchandise knowledge needed for the industry in the critical 18 months ahead as we regain losses from 2020-21. It was important to us following feedback on the reason employers use the course that TPM provided the groundwork and CPM built commercial

skills. The courses are designed to not only qualify promotional merchandise professionals but also to ensure those professionals are able to understand why they are critical to contributing to the bottom line."

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

With no shortage of training available, building the recognition of industry specific training across employers and end users is also part of the BPMA's plan. Providing the much-needed reassurance for inexperienced buyers, the BPMA is encouraging all distributors and suppliers to consider training a minimum 10% of customer facing staff for three core reasons:

- demonstrate commitment to training and progression as an employer
- build skills and expertise from the ground up
- tell customers your staff are experts in their field

Urging distributors to reveal the expert training their teams have undertaken, Trevill said: "In every other situation, companies help differentiate themselves through awards and other accolades. Tell end users you're not only trained but your staff are experts in their field. There is an opportunity to demonstrate your levels of professionalism to end users who don't have the skills you do. That extra reassurance to your clients will underpin your strength as a business."

WHO SHOULD BE TAKING COURSES?

A wide spread of distributor and growing numbers of suppliers take part in the courses; account management, sales, creative – the job titles vary but the desire to build understanding and knowledge is clear. Choice of mandatory topics and elective topics means every learner has the chance to learn essential and new skills.

Once qualified as TPM, learners can move on to CPM courses and with access to TPM content as well, a wealth of up-to-date course material awaits.

EMPLOYER BACKED

Employers such as Marke Creative, Allwag Promotions, Fluid Branding, Keylogo, and BX Merchandise are using the TPM course as a fundamental part of first year or refresher training. WildThang has also just signed up a raft of new trainees for 2022. Intakes across the year for TPM and CPM courses start in January 2022 followed by April, July and October.

The courses are only accessible to BPMA members and there is still time to sign up in January so if training is on your agenda for 2022, get in touch with the BPMA Education team today on education@bpma.co.uk. Courses start from £200+VAT per learner.

Qualified professionals

The BPMA would like to congratulate all those who qualified during October and November 2021

TPM

Harry Hamilton, KeyLogo

Nine Marston, Allwag Promotions

Fleur Beck, Fluid Branding

Jenine McKreith, Marke Creative

Lizzie Murphy, Allwag Promotions

Paul Howe, Allwag Promotions

Rhea Venegas, BX Merchandise

CPM

Christopher Smith, Vibrant Colour



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REWARDING INNOVATION

Merchandise companies could be missing a trick if they are not aware of R&D tax relief that could be to their benefit

Research and development (R&D) tax credits are a valuable HMRC tax incentive that rewards UK companies for investing in innovation through qualifying projects.

A qualifying project requires two aspects: scientific or technological uncertainty and an advancement in science or technology being sought. With certain sectors, such as medical or aerospace, identifying these projects is relatively straightforward, but can the promotional industry benefit?

Having spent five years working for Great Central Plastics, Steve Oakenfull joined CBTax with a knowledge of the promotional industry that has been instrumental to the success of many claims for BPMA members.

Oakenfull says distributors can be sceptical and think this relief is purely for manufacturers. However, third party involvement (i.e. a manufacturer) can be part of a qualifying project.

"HMRC likes to see the journey of a project or product from the client's initial brief to the end product. The distributor is the one steering this journey: managing the expectations of the client with the capabilities of the manufacturer. As such, they are an essential part of the process and have an invaluable function in a qualifying project," he says.

DO YOU QUALIFY?

Simply adding a logo to a standard product is not enough. In simple terms, it's the tricky, head-scratching jobs that will test both you and the manufacturer. Bespoke jobs that involve tooling, samples, and testing are the projects to focus on.

Even projects that have failed can count as qualifying activity. Other areas to consider could be internal procedures that improve efficiency or level of service.

PACKAGE SOLUTION

An example of a typical qualifying project came from AMT, which sought continuous improvement activities to develop a better shipping solution for its tangle product, in comparison to conventionally used plastic blister packs typical within the merchandise industry. Benefits of the newly developed solution included:

- Improved material sustainability
- Reduction in size, weight, and shipping costs
- Improved protection to the tangle product

The project was not straightforward, with AMT undertaking significant material research, design, prototyping and testing activities due to technical challenges surrounding:

- Sustainable material compliance
- Material effects on manufacturing processes
- Design changes to reduce product damage during transportation

Andrew Turner at AMT Marketing says: "I was aware of R&D tax relief but not quite sure the right way about claiming it. That is when Steve reached out and it was their guidance and advice that gave me the confidence to make a successful claim. This was well received after such a tough couple of years."

Paul Burr at CM-Brand also benefitted from help from CBTax, despite previously having a claim rejected.

"With your knowledge of the promotions

industry, I thought we would try again, and I am so glad we did. Although the pressure was on from the start due to HMRC deadlines, you guys put the work in, and we got the successful claim in within the deadline," he says.

Chris Beale, managing director at CBTax says: "When carrying out the second claim for BPMA members we have noticed a significant increase in the number of qualifying projects, which inevitably results in a more robust claim."

BEYOND THE CATALOGUE

If the UK promotional industry is going to flourish and bounce back after such a tough couple of years, then innovation and design can play a vital part. This relief is designed to reward innovation, so the next time you receive a client brief that requires you to think outside the box, for a product or idea that may not be found in a catalogue, be confident that this is exactly the sort of project that will qualify for this relief and you will benefit from going 'the extra mile' for this client.

CBTax has now carried out many successful claims for BPMA members.

This success has led CBTax to become a preferred supplier of R&D Tax Relief to the BPMA's membership. It will be presenting and holding a Q&A session at Merchandise World and will be available for one-to-one meetings over the two days.

To discuss any aspect of R&D Tax Relief or to make an appointment to meet one of the CBTax team at Merchandise World, email steveoakenfull@cbtax.co.uk or call 0333 455 9010.



Green
WASHING

Greenwashing: KEEPING IT CLEAN

As consumers become more interested in sustainability, the requirement to back up green claims is building

In the UK, we're lucky enough to regulate our own marketing and advertising. A privilege not afforded to all markets around the world and one we should guard fiercely. Our regulatory body is the ASA – the Advertising Standards Authority and as part of a major marketing consultation in 2021, they are helping highlight the Codes already in place and examining the use of terms such as 'net zero' and 'carbon neutral'.

In a recent session the BPMA held for its

members, it highlighted the salient points about how to avoid 'greenwashing' in the industry, stressing the point that B2B and B2C are covered by the CAP – Committee of Advertising Practice – Codes. There is a specific part of the Code dedicated to environmental claims (Section 11, available to download via asa.org.uk) and together with DEFRA's Green Claims Code and the recent Competition & Markets Authority advice, there is a lot of information out there. In this article, we highlight the areas we feel the

industry should be aware of and applying in their communications within the industry and to end users.

THE KEY AREAS TO BE AWARE OF WHEN PUTTING YOUR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS TOGETHER:

- Understanding of environmental 'green claims' is increasing across the general population BUT you cannot assume a level of understanding

- You must not mislead customers
- You should hold the evidence relative to your claim(s)
 - Don't be socially irresponsible

WHAT YOU SHOULD AVOID:

- Making unqualified claims
- Making sure all terms are clear and can be understood easily
 - Absolute claims must be supported with evidence

BUT Comparative claims such as 'greener' or 'friendlier' can be justified if the

advertised product provides a total environmental benefit over that of the previous product or competitor products and the basis of the comparison is clear.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR MARKETING GETS REPORTED?

It's important to remember just because you are B2B doesn't make you immune. If someone decides to report you to the ASA, you are likely to be asked to substantiate what you've claimed. It takes just one complaint to launch an investigation and while you may have a complaint that is not upheld, it is still recorded and on public record. And yes, upheld complaints really damage reputations.

In particularly serious cases, you may even be referred to Trading Standards which can carry fines and more.

CLARITY ON CLAIMS YOU ARE MAKING IS CRITICAL

You must base environmental claims on the full lifecycle of the advertised product, unless the marketing communication states otherwise, and must make clear the limits of the lifecycle.

If a general claim cannot be justified, a more limited claim about specific aspects of a product might be justifiable.

You must ensure claims that are based on only part of the advertised product's lifecycle do not mislead about the product's total environmental impact.

Do not imply a claim is universally accepted if there is split evidence; for example, if you have published a claim and asked a qualified third party to support your claim, and they don't agree then you are not able to state the claim.

If a product has never had a demonstrably adverse effect on the environment, marketing communications must not imply that the formulation has changed to improve the product in the way claimed. For example, if you've had a product that has always been eco-friendly you can't start claiming it has suddenly started saving the planet.

You may, however, claim that a product has always been designed in a way that omits an ingredient or process known to harm the environment.

RECYCLING CLAIMS CAN'T BE A LOAD OF RUBBISH EITHER!

This is all about the evidence. When stating what is and isn't recyclable it's critical you do not imply a product is recyclable if they are not. Also take time to understand expressions such as 'widely recyclable' really do mean the doorstep recycling or local recycling centres not specialist disposal.

Hold clear evidence you can recycle the product and include clear instructions – end users want to see this level of instruction. QR codes are a great way to link to more information products too. Don't leave out critical information when considering including a recycling claim – make sure it's clear and directs the recipient to more information as needed.

If you want to say how much you recycle as a business, you must be able to prove it. A number of large businesses recently have been in the dumps because they couldn't show clear evidence of what they had been able to recycle despite it being a huge advertising campaign.

Don't exaggerate the recyclability of the product or the packaging and if you're not sure, investigate or speak to the supply chain. As we are more aware of what can and can't be recycled, help customers understand what can be widely recycled so we can make the most of the opportunity at the end of the product's life.

However, you should be careful that they do not make claims such as "100% environmentally friendly" or "totally recyclable for zero environmental legacy" that cannot be substantiated. Product lifecycle claims can be problematic as they can often be interpreted as 'absolute claims' from manufacture to disposal. An absolute claim means it's understood to be a total truth.

If you describe products as 'low impact' or 'eco-friendly', you may be indicating some of the materials are recyclable when in fact it's only part of the product. Take care here as some materials rather than all materials may not represent the true impact of the goods across their lifecycle.

WHAT'S COMING IN 2022-23 AND AFTER COP26


A lot of potentially negative pressure, which is why it's essential the industry doesn't fall foul of the rules at this stage. The ASA is investigating how carbon neutral and net zero claims are being made – this is being applied to certain sectors first so expect more detailed guidance and ways to uphold the CAP Code coming in early 2022.

WHAT IS THE BPMA DOING ABOUT THIS TOPIC FOR MEMBERS?

The BPMA is heavily involved in promoting and educating members and end users about the sustainable opportunities available, plus being part of the Advertising Association's AdNetZero initiative to positively engage the end user community.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND INFORMATION AND HELP?

If you are a BPMA member, you can access support via their website or via the helpful team. You can also ask for free of charge advice on your marketing materials from the Copy Advice Team at CAP, available when you visit asa.org.uk under resources.

Other useful sites:
recyclenow.com
recycle-more.co.uk
bpf.co.uk/recycling/where-can-i-recycle-my-plastic 

How do you apply the rules to promotional merchandise?

The BPMA used some examples to illustrate how common expressions could be potentially problematic if not correctly evidenced.

'Our packaging is 100% recyclable'

You can only say this if it's true. A recent complaint was upheld as a piece of packaging contained plastic that was not widely recyclable.

'Our products are making a positive impact on the planet'

You must not give the impression products are greener than they are. For example, focussing on claims that represent a minor positive impact when the main business produces significant negative effects.

'Our goods are genuinely green forever'

Making statements about the implied claims of the lifecycle of a product mustn't mislead about the product's total environmental impact.

'Our goods are coated in an environmentally friendly film'

'Our mailing is 100% environmentally friendly'

Thinking about the impact of the product during its lifetime, consider if the application of another product to make something environmentally friendly is in fact the case. You may need to state the damage is less than with other similar products and be prepared to back up the claim. Exaggeration is another big challenge.

EXPORT TO THRIVE

The Government is looking to almost double exports to £1 trillion by 2030 and while changes can be confusing there is help out there

SURVIVAL OF THE EXPORT FITTEST

Whether you've been importing or exporting this year, you will have experienced the highs and lows of the impacts from our exit from the EU in December 2020. As we go from survival to revival, getting to grips with the complex and often expensive routes to market has tested most businesses to the limit. But where are we a year on? Getting better at it? Given up? Embraced the change?

Whatever your view, the UK Government has woken up to the fact that this hasn't been the year businesses felt supported outside of measures for Covid and is now providing more support and help for businesses in plainer terms. Here we summarise some of the key updates every business should be aware of and importantly, where to find further support.

TRADE SHOW SUPPORT

With news the TAP programme was cancelled in 2021, trade associations across the UK united in uproar about the limiting factors this would place on SMEs across the UK. In late November, the Department for International Trade announced the new UK Tradeshow Programme for SMEs. The Tradeshow Programme has now published the limited list of shows it's supporting at Great.gov.uk and during recent calls with DIT, they have advised the BPMA local LEP funding via International Trade Advisors (ITAs) will provide some funding routes for the industry. The BPMA will be updating its members on what is available.

Grants are from £2,000 to £4,000 to help cover costs such as stand build, conference fees, promotional material but will be limited to companies who have not received funding previously or can demonstrate they

are expanding into a brand new territory.

PM has also been told businesses are eligible for just one crack at funding for the entirety of the new programme meaning the precise criteria is very strict.

Businesses looking to exhibit can apply after 30 November and if you are looking to visit, applications will be from January 2022 onwards. Businesses looking to apply must be between £250,000 and £5m turnover, be first time applicants or can prove they look to grow exports in new markets.

The BPMA noted: 'After the TAP funding was cancelled with no consultation, we have been waiting to hear from the Department for International Trade about what they plan to do. Their communications are very clear; this funding is limited and to ensure our industry gets a slice of any funding, we'll



need to be on our toes once the approved list is released so we can help members secure much needed funding."

NORTHERN IRELAND PROTOCOL AND TRADER SUPPORT SERVICE

PM has been waiting for some time to update on the situation with the protocol; will they or won't they activate Article 16? There is no doubt the situation has been confused, frustrating and more. Businesses must be registered with the free to use Trader Support Service or TSS. With details available via tradersupportservice.co.uk, the TSS will raise declarations on your behalf for free. This is required for those who are moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

You can make your own arrangements however businesses can save time and money by using the TSS. With free training and support, this service is starting to be used more frequently and the Northern Ireland Customs & Trade Academy is a great place to start – details can be found at nicustomstradeacademy.co.uk.

SUPPLEMENTARY DECLARATIONS

Bringing goods into the UK requires various declarations and for goods brought into GB from the EU, declarations must be made no later than 175 days after you've imported goods into Great Britain. It is recommended that you get someone to deal with these on your behalf as many carriers will include this job within their communication.

Customs declarations on EU to GB imports are due from 1st January 2022 with the Institute of Export (IOE) and Government saying this deadline won't be postponed. Import customs declarations will be mandatory from 1st January 2022.

The IOE recommends using a customs agent but reminded PM: "You can complete these declarations yourself or use an agent BUT even if using an agent, the legal responsibility for accuracy of the data included falls to the importer."

The BPMA works closely with the IOE and recommends their customs courses for any business needing to gain a deeper understanding of the complex rules. From the start of 2022, UK Customs authorities will require full customs declarations and checks to allow import shipments from EU into GB. There are serious concerns voiced towards EU companies preparing to send goods to the UK, with many believing the UK isn't serious about the Border Operating Model. However, for anyone who is working with suppliers with an EU base supplying them, make sure they are aware or risk delays.

After the tsunami of carrier and courier problems since December 2020, no one wants to see any further delays or costs incurred. The IOE has constructed a new platform with the providers of the TSS, Fujitsu, to promote the Digital Trader Service – a fee-based service to aid import paperwork.

FREEPORTS

In the March 2021 budget, the UK government announced eight new freeports: East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe and Harwich, The Humber region, Liverpool City Region, Plymouth, The Solent, The Thames, and Teesside.

UK 'freeports' are a series of government-assigned special economic zones where customs rules and some taxes do not apply until goods leave the specified zone. Government provides customs and a trade help desk to support businesses in the freeport and local economy. The location of the freeport provides an access point for global or regional supply chains, such as a deep sea hub from the Rest of World (ROW) and short sea crossing to EU, meaning the creation of new business in sectors such as manufacturing, food production and clean energy.

In addition, the application of different customs status such as customs warehousing, inward processing, and outward processing is possible through these sites. The Government believes these freeports will increase supply chain visibility and uses examples such as being able to transfer goods from one free trade zone to another without paying customs duties.

EXPORTING: THE HEADACHE OF 'NO CUSTOMER TO INVOICE'

Still the greatest challenge for those sending goods to an EU destination with no 'invoiceable' customer, the BPMA is battling with getting a clear route for its members to address the non-transactional nature of merchandise.


CEO Carey Trevill comments: "HM Revenue & Customs has been helpful, but they just don't get this transaction and as EU VAT is of no interest to our Government, there is no clear solution. It's like both sides forgot about the gifting aspect of so many industries when exporting goods between GB and EU leaving our members with costs and complexity."

HELPLINES HAVE EVOLVED

Overall, Government advice has improved a little with the very late introduction of a helpline and webchat service via digital assistance. Businesses can call the Import and Export helpline seven days a week on 0300 322 9434 or go to the Gov.uk website to use the digital assistant. This new service does tackle general questions and you have the option of webchat – good for the inexperienced or infrequent exporter and importer.

The BPMA has also changed benefit providers for member helplines, switching to a provider who provides some export and VAT advice that members can access free of charge within membership.

KEEPING AN EYE ON CUSTOMS AND TRADING

PM will be issuing export and import updates in forthcoming issues and recommends readers register with updates from the Department for International Trade under great.gov.uk and helpful updates from the IOE at export.org. BPMA members can also access a raft of helpful information and checklists when logged in at bpma.co.uk. 



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CYBER ATTACKS

WHY WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION

Some of the biggest companies in the world have been victims of cyber attack. You can't afford to think it won't affect you, says Towergate Insurance

Cyber attacks are becoming more and more commonplace. Being insured against the risk may have been seen as a 'nice to have' but these days, any size of company might be targeted.

The BPMA has covered a number of sessions including safeguarding data and here, Towergate Insurance, one of the BPMA's Preferred Providers spells out the risks and why looking at cyber should be part of every business plan.

The Mail on Sunday reported a cyber attack on exclusive jewellery firm Graff. Cyber criminals are alleged to have leaked up to 69,000 confidential documents including private details of David Beckham, Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey and Sir Philip Green. They are thought to have demanded tens of millions of pounds in ransom money

to stop the release of further sensitive information.

WHAT TYPE OF CYBER ATTACKS MIGHT YOU EXPERIENCE?

Recent research shows 86% of businesses experience fraudulent email issues or being directed to fraudulent sites. A total of 26% of businesses have found others impersonating the organisation's emails or online. This happened several times to the BPMA in 2020 and 2021 and a number of other industry organisations have also been affected.

In all, 16% of businesses have come into contact with viruses, spyware and malware and 9% have experienced hacking or attempted hacking of online bank accounts. This doesn't cover the ransomware demands (8%), unauthorised use of computers, networks or servers (6%) or by staff (5%) and

other breaches (5%). It's a murky cyber world out there so you might need protection.

WHAT IS CYBER INSURANCE?

It's a good question. Cyber and data insurance covers losses relating to damage to, or loss of information from, IT systems and networks. Cyber is a very real, current threat to UK and worldwide businesses. Existing insurance policies such as commercial combined, management liability or professional indemnity insurance may provide very limited elements of cover against cyber and data risks. But they are unlikely to be sufficient and businesses could find themselves exposed.

It is important that you understand if and what cover you have and how it would respond in the event of a cyberattack or incident. Some policies will help you to



respond to said attack, with 24/7 helplines to give immediate, practical assistance to mitigate costs. Others will help to restore equipment and software after an attack.

Clients should particularly consider purchasing cyber and data insurance if they:

- Hold sensitive customer details such as names and addresses or banking information
- Rely heavily on IT systems and websites to conduct their business
- Process payment card information as a matter of course.

RANSOMWARE DEMANDS UP TO £1 MILLION NO LONGER UNUSUAL

Ransomware attacks have really hit the headlines in recent weeks, with companies such as Colonial Pipeline, CNA, Toshiba and JBS all the victims of cyber criminals. In the case of Colonial Pipeline significant disruption was suffered by the US East coast energy infrastructure network, and Colonial ended up paying a \$4.4 million ransom.

Lindsey Nelson, cyber development leader at market leader CfC Underwriting, says she is not surprised that such blue chip companies can be targeted in this way.

"Criminals are going to go after companies who are vulnerable, providing them with the path of least resistance, rather than companies who are valuable," she says. "But the large Fortune 500 or FTSE companies typically have the perfect combination of being both extremely lucrative, while unfortunately having limited barriers of entry

for criminals to penetrate their networks."

She adds: "There can be several motivations behind criminal activity ranging from political state actors to hacktivists to rogue employee scenarios, but largely what's fuelling crime is financial gain, and blue chip companies are often targeted either directly or through smaller subcontractors and suppliers to gain access to their systems."

Equally, she says, as ransomware now largely involves an element of data exfiltration, allowing criminals access to financial information including the net profits of a company, it easily enables them to ask for a larger monetary demand by way of extortion. "Larger companies also tend to be incentivised to pay the ransom demands quickly due to the fear instilled by either strict fines or penalties under privacy legislation and to avoid subsequent negative publicity from the media resulting in customer attrition."

FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY ON THE INCREASE?

We often hear repeated in the wider media that both the frequency and severity of cyber-attacks, (not limited to ransomware demands), are on the increase, but as far as Nelson is concerned, this picture is not necessarily an accurate one.

"Everyone in the insurance industry will have a vested interest in keeping both frequency and severity of cyber claims down, however, unlike some of the headlines, the frequency of cyber claims hasn't increased in a significant way relative to the increase in the


number of policyholders," she says.

"What we are concerned about is the severity of cyber claims due to proliferation of ransomware attacks against businesses, and the extraordinary extortion demands making the headlines which, in a relatively young line of insurance, can easily overtake the profitability of cyber as a line of business. Long gone are the days of Wannacry [a ransomware virus] where the average demand was £300 per victim; it's not unusual these days to see extortion demands of up to £1m per victim, and that's true across any industry, territory or size of business."

MANAGING CYBER RISK

However, she adds, while it's not possible to stop cyber-crime in the foreseeable future, there are ways to appropriately manage it across client, broker and insurer channels.

"Cyber insurers are increasingly seeing the benefit of providing continuous scanning services on behalf of their policyholders to find vulnerabilities specific to their business, driving the frequency of claims down and helping shut a company's digital windows and doors closed. Providing an experienced, multi-disciplinary – and crucially – in-house incident response team will also help."

BPMA members can access advice through the dedicated help email – members should log into the BPMA site to access details for Towergate and speak to Richard Davies. You can also assess your cyber risks by visiting Towergate's website and taking the 3-minute cyber test at towergate.com 

HOW FAST IS FAST?

Don't be left behind in the race to connect with the latest fast charging technology, says **Matt Pluckrose**



Keeping our phones, tablets, laptops and other gadgets charged is one of the daily chores for many of us. However, the solution to this chore is also a growing opportunity for our industry to deliver great products for marketers and will be the trend to watch in 2022.

That's why an on-trend promotional tech accessory which helps make this faster, easier, greener and more efficient will make for a product that keeps your client's logo in view for longer. This in itself makes it one of the most sustainable ideas around as the product lifecycle is extended immensely as it so useful and hence will be kept longer. Such items deliver a better return on investment and are among the most sought after promotional products currently.

So, let's investigate some of the jargon – grab a coffee and read on.

From smartphones to laptops and cables to power banks to wireless chargers, many are talking about 'fast charging', but what does it really mean?

Fast charging is a term frequently used to upsell chargers, power banks, wireless chargers and devices capable of charging faster than the current charging standard (5 watts). Though there are multiple technologies that enable these fast-charging speeds, there is no industry-standard single technology that measures and supports all devices.

The two most common forms of fast charging are Qualcomm Quick Charge and USB Power Delivery (USB PD) and it's worth looking these up on Google for the full specs.

An example of fast charge in business would be when you are short of power between meetings so a quick plug in of your promotional USB PD wall charger with fast charge cable can charge a MacBook Pro from 0–50% in about 40–60 minutes or fast charge an iPhone from 0–50% in only 30 minutes. What better promotional gift could you give?

Power and charging is made up of the basic components of amperage, voltage and watts. Amperage (or current) is the amount of electricity flowing from the battery to your phone or other connected device. Voltage is the speed or strength of the current. Watts are amperage multiplied by voltage.

A common comparison used is a hose pipe. Amperage (or current) is the hosepipe width, voltage is the water pressure, and watts is how much water is coming from the pipe. So, the higher the watts the quicker the charge if the device supports it.



HOW DO YOU CHARGE FASTER?

Before you embark on a high-speed charging journey, you'll need the right equipment. Your smartphone, tablet, laptop, or other device will all need to use the same fast charging standard. In some cases, even your cable will need to be compatible with the fast charging standard used in your device and power source or charger. This is where good promotional technology comes to the rescue with lots of choices, designs and brands – this is an area of large opportunity for 2022.

If you find the right material (eco is growing like crazy), right design and something that is useful you have the ultimate promotional item for the future for your clients.

Once you have a charger and cable with the fast charging standard compatible



with your phone, laptop, or other device, take note of the maximum charging speed for both. For example, if you are using a 27W charger with a smartphone that has a maximum charging speed of 18W, the phone will charge at 18W.

Products that charge phones and tablets are the norm for our industry but the future will be cables that are capable of charging your laptop, phone and tablet using the same cable – look out in 2022 for FAST Charge cables that have the ability to charge from USB-C to USB-C at 60W allowing them to be used to charge your laptop from a suitable mains powered plug.

This area is complex and not for everyone but the opportunity for our industry is large as we develop and deliver promotional solutions to keep us all fully charged at top speed.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas

BACK 2 BUSINESS

Companies were eager to meet face to face again at ExCel and the BPMA was representing members

Like many expos and shows, B2B Marketing Expo had been delayed several times due to the pandemic but finally took place in November 2021 at London's ExCel.

Bringing together the B2B fraternity and several hundred companies all offering services to the mass of visitors, stand out was needed to make an impact and grab attention. With lower than usual numbers, visitors attending the show reflected what has been seen across many business shows since restrictions were lifted – less in number but higher quality decision makers.

Supporting members exhibiting at the event the BPMA's Tom Robey commented: "This show was always going to be different from the last one in 2019 after so many delays. We were delighted to be able to direct potential customers to explore the offerings from members who were on site and explore the distributor directory over the two-day show."

DOING BUSINESS

As a show partner, the BPMA was able to secure a great deal for members exhibiting and make sure they got support from the team at Roar.

"There is no doubt it was quieter on footfall than in previous years but in the main, people were there to buy, looking to solve problems and importantly find solutions," said Robey. "We heard from a few visitors who had either recently placed significant orders with members or who were looking for accredited, verified partners to work with."

BUYER INSIGHT

Conducting research at the event, the BPMA asked its brand and agency visitors to share their views. With 75% there to find insight, new products and services, most were looking to either find sustainable solutions or work out how best to integrate



sustainability into their buying choices.

Those surveyed also stated over 70% of their own customers were asking for sustainability status or criteria but most admitted to this still being a work in progress. When asked if they felt they received enough information about eco or planet friendly merchandise when placing enquiries and orders, more than 25% said they always got enough information. Half (50%) said they would prefer more detailed information with 40% stating they were not offered information unless they asked for it. With a drive to find out more, most were looking for more education on how to buy sustainably which is good news for an industry keen to share innovation in this field.


GAINING TRUST

Leading a well-attended keynote on the second day of the expo, BPMA CEO Carey Trevill presented on the routes brands should take to gain trust through the marketing mix, citing merchandise as a way to help cut through the short attention spans and low trust in some marketing channels, delivering return on investment and long-term recall. The talk drove visitors to the BPMA stand looking for partners to help them deliver outstanding results



through BPMA members, discovering the reasons merchandise matters in their communication spend for 2022.

B2B is back in November 2022 and we'll reporting back to PM readers on the difference a year makes.

BPMA members receive a discount when booking exhibition space for this event. If you are a BPMA member interested in this benefit, please log into the BPMA website or contact membership@bpma.co.uk 

IS 2022 YOUR TIME FOR CHANGE?

Having put one tough year behind you, turn over a new leaf with credit management says **Mike Collins**



To say that the promotional goods sector has been hit hard during the pandemic is an understatement. Exhibitions cancelled, events put on hold and marketing budgets slashed was not anticipated as the seemingly never-ending pandemic damage continues.

As a trusted BPMA service provider what has really resonated with our team is the resilience and commitment shown by those members we have been able to help. Finding solutions to significant

challenges has been key.

For many members, the pandemic was the catalyst to using our services for the first time. As the ink was drying on this article, we have successfully secured more than £28 million in overdue invoices and unpaid debts for our clients since the beginning of the pandemic.

Survival strategy

Our client base is wide ranging and made up from a myriad of business. What will really stick with us is the client who confided in us that the debt

we collected meant they could keep their home. For other similarly cash flow strapped members that had all but written off their debts, being able to contact them with the news that we had recovered amounts owed in full was fantastic for both them and us. Helping businesses survive is our mission and we'd like to think we keep delivering on that.

That said, we appreciate that it's never easy to outsource debt...you don't want to potentially alienate customers by getting somebody else involved, but what else can you do if you've tried everything in your toolkit? We know we are your last resort and understand it's a decision taken with some reluctance.

But as we've highlighted above, don't lose sight of the fact that the amount recovered could make the difference between your own continued trading, or not. And always remember it's your money... you've done a good job... and you deserve to be paid. You have provided additional time for payment and have politely nudged your customer multiple times in a professional manner. Nevertheless, they still retain your money, despite the fact they willingly took the goods on credit. Keep in mind while your invoice remains unpaid you're an interest free overdraft for your customer.

So, what changes for 2022 to keep ahead?

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

Being in regular contact with your customers means they are more likely to prioritise payment of your invoice over other creditors. Consider instigating a 'touching base' process with bigger customers, just in case you need to call

in payment favours during the coming months.

Can you introduce strictly defined routines in your collections process?

We recommend a first reminder be sent when a customer is seven days overdue, and if there is no response then the customer should be put on stop by day 10.

Send a second stronger reminder on day 14 with a final notice seven days later. You can easily set this process up on AccountAssyst using your free benefits package.

Finally decide when enough is enough. Set a date to outsource the debt for third-party collection and stick to it. The customer has already received a period of you chasing payment alongside the initial credit terms. Should you really be risking more time?

What about new customers?

In the current climate especially, new customers are a bonus. How many however are enquiring because they are on stop elsewhere?

For this reason, don't automatically grant credit to new customers. Ideally put them on a pro-forma arrangement or request 50% up front with orders. Should they subsequently fail to pay then at least you've secured initial monies to mitigate potential loss.

The point we're making for 2022 to all members is to 'change and adapt'.

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

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

David Barker
dbarker@directroute.co.uk
07766 545871

Midlands and East Anglia

Ken Brown
kbrown@directroute.co.uk
07795 214426

Wales and North West

Ian Jenkinson
ijenkinson@directroute.co.uk
07860 197476

North East, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Mike Collins
mike@accountassyst.com
07866 427363



NATIONAL INSURANCE: 2022 CHANGES

The Autumn 2021 budget update brought into play changes to tax and NI to provide additional funding for social care and the NHS in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and long-term stabilisation of the sector.

THE FIRST CHANGES AFFECT NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

From 1 April 2022 there will be a temporary increase to the NI rates for the 22/23 tax year. The changes will affect employees, deemed employees and the self-employed.

A 1.25% increase is to be put into place on NI contributions for employees which will be deducted through PAYE. The main rate contributions due on earnings from £191 to £967 per week will increase from 12% to 13.25%, and the higher rate contributions, payable on earnings above £967 a week from 2% to 3.25%.

Employer contributions also have an increase of 1.25% for earnings over £175 per week being subject to an increased deduction from 13.8% to 15.05%.

For the 23/24 year onwards the increased 1.25% rates will still be in place but will

be listed separately in payroll and self-assessment as Social Care Levy, with the NI rates reducing back to the 21/22 levels.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SMALL BUSINESSES?

There have been concerns from small business on the additional costs raised by the social care levy, especially upon its separation with national insurance rates for 23/24 year onwards and at that point will it still be covered by the employment allowance? HMRC have confirmed that yes, the deduction can be covered by the £4,000 employment allowance meaning many smaller businesses will in fact not be affected by this increase.

Awareness also needs to be brought on the fact that this increase affects not only salary but bonuses, benefits in kind and any other payments made

by the company that are subjected to national insurance deductions.

However, the increase does mean that salary sacrifice arrangements become more attractive with there now being higher savings on employee and employee on the deduction in salary.

THE NEXT CHANGES AFFECT DIVIDEND TAXES FOR THE 22/23 TAX YEAR ONWARDS.

There are no changes to the £2,000 dividend allowance however dividend tax rates are to increase by 1.25%.

Basic rate dividends will then be taxed at 8.75%, higher rate at 33.75% and additional rate at 39.35%

BPMA members can access further HR, Tax and Legal advice via the BPMA Helpline. Contact the BPMA for details or login to the Resources section of the BPMA site.

GETTING BACK ON TRACK

There are learnings from the past 18 months that can help business rebound says **Melissa Chevin**



The last couple of years have been an unprecedented time of change for both consumers and businesses.

Consumers prioritised personal safety, dealt with illness, job losses and a lack of available products and services. Businesses furloughed staff, diversified their offerings and learned how to make working from home, well, work.

Many of these changes will persist in the short term, while others are almost certainly permanent. It's vital to understand the implications of these changes and plan effectively to serve the post-pandemic consumer.

CAN YOU DELIVER?

Time was when a consumer's first consideration was where they would buy a product. Increasingly, it is: "When can I get it?"

Businesses which provide upfront information about availability and despatch gain a huge advantage.

This increased emphasis on lead times, combined with the persisting challenges

in container shipping, has also shifted focus towards many more locally-sourced products – a solution which dovetails with the trend for reducing emissions.

GREEN TIMES

The climate crisis has been part of global conversations for years now, but we are finally seeing credible action from governments.

Similarly, many businesses are aiming to become carbon neutral within the next few years. As well as big global players like Amazon, Apple and Microsoft, many small businesses are embracing the same goal. Understanding these goals will be vital to those wishing to do business with these companies.

HOME FRONT

Remote working was already becoming a popular option for companies before the pandemic, given the potential savings in office and energy costs, but it expanded enormously with Covid.

A surprising bonus has been the ability

to transcend geography and access a new pool of talent for many businesses.

With ever-faster internet speeds, it seems working from home is here to stay.

PERSONALISE TO CAPITALISE

So how can you make your business stand out in these changed times? Well, for a start, think about how you can personalise your marketing, whether that's in emails or other content or even the product itself.

EasyJet recently launched a data-driven email campaign that used customers' travel histories to create personalised itineraries.

Similarly, video marketing continues to be a huge driver for business. As more and more items are purchased online, video plays a vital role in showcasing products and services. A website which includes video content is 50 times more likely to generate organic search results.

If we can understand and react to all these changes, the future for business is bright.

Melissa Chevin is BPMA board director and marketing consultant with GF

Consulting – mchevin@gf-consult.co.uk



Agility

IS IN THE BAG

There's a lot more traffic on the road and I'm pleased to say, the business world seems to be getting back to normality. How does this affect me? Membership visits. The association is getting back out there again, and site visits and exhibitions are continuing to open conversations and highlight for us the state of the industry.

Bags of preparation

Early October and a Lincolnshire visit to BPMA Charter members, Direct Textiles and Bags. A familiar name for most of us in promotional merchandise, a great visit to fully understand production facilities and capacity for the two-site company. Running two sites on the day of the visit turned out to be critical as power failed at the company's Old Darby site and surrounding businesses.

Most work with critical deadlines and staff were able to transfer to their Lincoln

site, without customers even being affected in most cases. Transfer, screen printing, direct to garment and embroidery facilities throughout the two sites were soon running at near to full capacity.

That ability to get back up to speed is mirrored in my conversations with distributors as enquiries in the back end of 2021 are converting well into orders.

The set up

One of the main takeaways from the visit are the processes every order goes through from set up to fulfilment. As with many garment decorators, it all starts with the set-up process. A charge we're often quoted on as customers, but what's really involved?

The costs and time in screen printing are largely the set up. The cost per shirt drops the more you print per design. Almost every department gets involved. Artwork created and checked with films then

A power cut at a BPMA member did not get in the way of delivering for customers, reports Tom Robey

created. Film is converted into screens. Printers set up the presses to run the shirts. And that's just the labour. Not taking into consideration new machinery investment (we can come to this another time) and quality control, we get our fair bit for a £13-20 set up.

With recent carrier and shipping issues, having three million bags at any time on the water and warehouses packed to serve the industry, there's little chance of DTB supply running dry.

There's even more on the cards. Recent investment in new warehouse facilities in Old Darby means further stock being held in the UK, room for new printing method equipment and staff expansion in the months and years to come.

Continuing a sustainable and green business model, with more than 600 solar panels providing factory power, recyclable bag stock and sustainable garment options, DTB should be a go to for sustainable garment options.



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