



What's new in promotional textiles? **P20**



THE INDUSTRY GATHERS AGAIN

MERCHANDISE WORLD IS THE PLACE TO BE **P17**



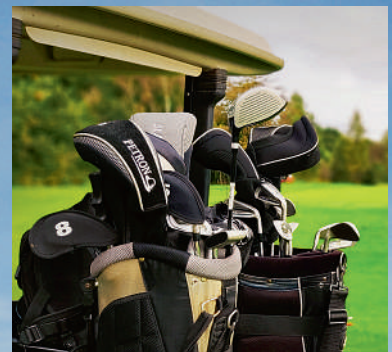
SPOTLIGHT ON OUR HOMEGROWN MANUFACTURERS

BUDGET BOOM **P12**

WHAT DO MARKETING INCREASES MEAN FOR MERCHANDISE?

BPMA GOLF DAY

Join the BPMA and fellow industry golfers at the
Annual Golf Day on Wednesday 15th June 2022



Venue: The Nottinghamshire Golf & Country Club, Cotgrave, Nottingham NG12 3HB
For more information about the course visit thenottinghamshire.com

Tee off!

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

➤ Book your place today

Contact us via events@bpma.co.uk to book in your teams and tickets.
Bookings must be received by 31st May 2022.

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



30



20



8

17

Contents

4 News

Need to know information for the industry

11 Ask Clive

Time to stop over-packaging

12 Marketing spend

How will increases affect merchandise?

17 Merchandise World preview

The industry gathers again

20 Bags & apparel

What's new in textiles?

26 BPMA awards

The shortlist

28 Briman Voice

Spotlight on British manufacturers

30 Made in Britain

Research shows demand for homegrown merchandise

32 Change the conversation

Finding what customers want

35 Insurance

Are you covered?

37 Finance

It pays to stay in contact

39 Tax

Credits for R&D

41 PSI

Update on the show

42 Technology

Something in the air

44 BPMA news

The value of membership

46 Roving Robey

The BPMA's membership manager is on the road

MARCH/APRIL 2022

WELCOME



Welcome to the packed pre-show edition of *Product Media*. Grab a coffee and settle down for special features, a focus on the growing economy plus all your usual news and updates. Merchandise

World is finally happening and as a veritable swarm of distributors descend on the show this April, planning ahead is a must to ensure you gather the sights and delights of this long-awaited two-day show. Look out for the show guide and check out the vast array of exciting companies joining the show this year. Exhibitors, brace yourselves!

As the issue lands, the BPMA will be kicking off Export Month. There

are more details about topics and an update in the magazine this month plus a forecast for UK recovery. We are set to recover faster than any other market from the pandemic which is reflected in heavy ad spend.

Why does that matter for our sector? Advertising spend and confidence pushes up overall spend and investment across the UK as certainty grows. Find out more about this and other trends affecting the orders for our industry, why decisions about supply chains are more important than ever, plus how the balance between sustainability and growth is impacting budgets.

Our special feature in this issue is on apparel and bags. Read on to hear more from this year's BPMA Product Award winners plus updates from some of the

industry's brightest and best. We have also collaborated with our friends at Made in Britain to spotlight the incredible opportunities with British made goods and suppliers who already take full advantage of BPMA and Made in Britain marks to highlight their businesses.

Our next publication, Issue 42 May-June, is focused on Our Sustainable Future 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).



British Promotional Merchandise Association
Fetcham Park House, Lower Road,
Fetcham, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 9HD
All phone enquiries: 01372 371183
www.productmediamagazine.co.uk
www.bpma.co.uk

Editorial
editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk
Advertising and Media Pack
advertising@productmediamagazine.co.uk
Circulation
circulation@productmediamagazine.co.uk
Editorial Services
Stuart Derrick

Design and Production
ATG Media,
www.atg-media.com
Printed by
Mailing Guy Ltd
Photography
shutterstock.com,
Freepik.com



The BPMA has the right to refuse editorial content and advertisements on sight of artwork, particularly where there may be a conflict of interest.

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the publication or the editor. The publishers cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage, nor can responsibility be accepted for any claims by advertisers, contributors, or other persons and organisations. No material may be reproduced without the written permission of the publishers.

Merchandise staff gain BPMA qualifications

Impamark and Sow Easy staff are among the latest to gain merchandise industry accreditation from the BPMA.

Impamark has announced that digital marketing executive Holly McLoughlin has just passed her BPMA Certified in Promotional Merchandise (CPM) qualification with flying colours.

Impamark has put several staff through the BPMA's education programme over the years. McLoughlin, who started as an apprentice with the company in September 2017, previously passed her Trained in Promotional Merchandise qualification (TPM) in December 2018.

McLoughlin has grasped every opportunity while working for the company during the past four years, and was awarded Apprentice of the Year in 2018 whilst studying for her level 2 NVQ in Business and Administration. In 2019 she was awarded Highly Commended for her level 3.

During the latter period, Impamark was honoured to have won the ACL Essex Employer of the Year Award.

Nicky Crisp, Impamark managing director, said: "This latest achievement is nothing less than Holly deserves. Scoring an amazing 81% in her CPM overall, we are delighted with her results. The course has complemented her current training and her own personal development."

Meanwhile, Carrie Marshall, account executive at Sow Easy has achieved TPM level on BPMA's Professional Development Programme.

She has been working on the first of three levels in the BPMA programme which consists of online learning and a final exam.

Marshall, who hopes to complete the full course, said: "I learnt so much from the BPMA course. It was really interesting, and I find myself putting what I learnt into practice at work every day. I am looking forward to moving on to the next stage and learning even more."



Alderson takes the reins at First Editions

Change is in the air at First Editions as the company prepares for further growth, with Mark Alderson becoming managing director.

After joining First Editions in 2012 as operations manager, he stepped up to operations director two years later. He is taking over from the retiring Brian Alderson.

As part of the changes, Alderson's colleague Harry Walbaum moves up to operations manager from his previous role as production manager. Walbaum joined First Editions in 2019.

During their time with the company, the pair have collaborated on key cross-departmental projects while continuing to build an even stronger service offering, putting the customer firmly at the heart of their decision-making while further enhancing First Editions' sustainability pledge.

The company's products are manufactured using an efficient moulding process which consumes 30% less energy than traditional methods. The production

process uses only renewable energy in a closed loop, zero waste environment.

Alderson said: "I'm truly proud and honoured to be taking over this role from Brian, and we thank him for the great success he's achieved over the years. Everyone at First Editions wishes him a very happy and fulfilling retirement."

He added that the company had a high-performance team in place and an array of new products coming on-stream.

"It's a pivotal time for the industry as it looks to be ever more innovative, and First Editions is well placed to make the most of this opportunity," he said. "The company has seen tremendous investment and growth over the last decades and put our core values of sustainability and UK manufacturing front and centre."

Walbaum said: "First Editions shares my belief of offering value with values. I am excited to build on the existing platform to ensure we remain the market leading supplier of sustainable drinkware."

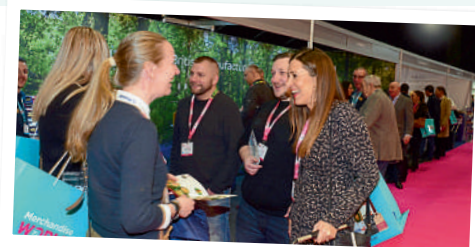
Merchandise World registrations higher than MK

Expectations are high for the forthcoming Merchandise World at the CBS Arena, Coventry (Formerly the Ricoh Arena) on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 April 2022.

Visitor registrations opened recently and already the registered visitor numbers exceed the visitors that attended Merchandise World last September in Milton Keynes.

There are still 10 weeks to go, and visitor numbers are expected to increase significantly as distributors make their plans to attend and register.

This year's show sees a large feature on environmentally friendly eco and sustainable products in ECO World, and visitors and exhibitors alike will welcome the return of free



breakfasts to start the day, in addition to the all-day refreshments and lunch.

For more information, go to merchadiseworld.co.uk, or read the PM preview on p17.

As always, the hall will be buzzing with excellent suppliers large and small from across the industry, and it will be a great opportunity to re-engage and reignite relationships with people you have not seen for two years, and of course meet valuable new people to grow your business.

B-Loony forest certifications point to greener future

After two faultless audits, B-Loony is proud to have achieved continued Chain of Custody certification to both FSC and PEFC standards.

FSC and PEFC are forest certification standards and achieving them is an integral part of B-Loony's sustainability programme which is being expanded to align with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

James Clephan, operations & sustainability director, said that following two days of auditing, the company passed on all aspects of each audit.

The company achieved a recommendation for certification without a single non-conformance issue or observation.

"These certifications not only give our clients the confidence that our products are responsibly sourced, but more importantly, certification gives us full traceability and assurances that the material used in our products originates from certified forests, managed with due respect for environmental, economic and social standards," he said.

Kris Baker, marketing manager, added: "Whilst being conscious of the term 'greenwashing', it is important to highlight the certifications

we have already achieved for the company and many of our redeveloped products, and to make our customers aware that we are making a serious and concerted effort to develop sustainable replacements across our full product range."

B-Loony has developed an array of new paper and cardboard products including substitutes for existing products which were previously partly or entirely made from plastic, such as BalloonGrip balloon holders, paper handwaving flags, paper bunting, and gourmet food flags.



2021 takes the biscuit for Eat My Logo

Despite a turbulent year in 2021, Eat My Logo has reported its best financial year yet, including its largest ever biscuit order of 160,000 units.

An uptick in orders towards the end of the year meant the company also had its busiest Christmas yet, allowing it to invest in new equipment and people for the year ahead.

EML has invested in a new flow wrapping machine to streamline its processes. The vast majority of its products are sealed individually for versatility and hygiene.

Individually packaged products can be taken away and eaten at a later date, or packed into gift bags for corporate

celebrations.

The company uses NatureFlex biodegradable film so tasty treats are also environmentally friendly.

Production manager Andy said: "The investment into our new flow wrap machine means we can wrap products at a much faster rate and subsequently turn orders around more efficiently, reducing lead times. It's fantastic progress and we hope to invest in further equipment for our factory in the coming years."

The business has also taken on new members of the production team to fulfil orders.

Increases continue to cause concerns for recovery

Last summer the BPMA alerted all its members of price rises across the global economy. The long-term impacts of raw material shortages, port closures in China and low petrol production impacting the plastics market, meant the industry has struggled to maintain published prices with many suppliers driven to increase prices out of sync with traditional timings.

Now with energy prices set to hit all-time highs for an indefinite period, *PM* looked at the true picture for the months ahead. In April, many firms face energy price increases in excess of four times their current costs and while some have been able to secure fixed rate prices, not everyone was advised to do long-term deals. With suppliers now facing the very real scenario of having to pass on more costs, how will the industry tackle the impending challenge?

PM has been told by several sources the costs may be represented in varying ways but won't be a surprise to distributors as costs have been rising. The challenge with raw materials hasn't lessened and with China enforcing strict lock downs, and countries in the EU still experiencing delays due to Covid, the industry must be cognisant of the multiple factors that may impact orders in the coming months.

Supplier groups have encouraged the distributor community to ensure they don't assume costs will remain the same and whilst everyone will strive to keep any increases to a minimum, the problem is UK wide so communication on this topic will become more commonplace. But it does mean making sure end users who are placing repeat orders are in tune with this message. It is a fine balance for those who are focused on retaining hard won clients.

Reporting the sector concerns and asking for prioritised support to the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy team in Government, the BPMA is keeping a close eye on the industry's ability to keep pace with the incoming demand and productivity needed to get our industry back firmly on its feet. *PM* will continue to update on this topic in future issues.

New recruit Debbie strengthens support

Industry stalwart Debbie Illingworth has joined the Galpeg team, as the production and finance support specialist goes for further growth.

Her new role as production and pre-sales administrator will strengthen the support Galpeg offers to its network members.

During her many years in the promotional industry, Illingworth has helped to deliver exemplary customer service and contributed to securing countless 'Supplier of the Year' awards, as well as being named the 'BPMA Unsung Hero' for excellence in customer care.

Galpeg managing director Paul Green said: "We're excited to have Debbie on board the team – her knowledge of the industry and her eye for detail are both first class."

He added: "Over the years, we've built a reputation for providing the best in back office administrative and financial support to brand owners, helping them to start, run and grow their business."

"Even with the challenges of the last 18 months, network members have witnessed significant growth. Our production team has decades of experience between them and is well-placed to navigate even the toughest of markets."



Fluid donation helps UK care homes

Fluid has donated 300,000 disposable aprons to the Salvation Army for use in its care homes.

The products were excess PPE stock and as the business has pivoted back to its more traditional products it looked to find a way to make best use of them.

The Fluid Futures group was tasked with identifying a suitable candidate and after received an approach from the Salvation Army Trading Company (SATCoL), decided it would be a perfect fit. As a B Corp, Fluid is always looking for ways to make meaningful contributions to the wider community and give back to projects that benefit others.

Kirk Bradley, head of corporate partnerships, SATCoL, said: "We appreciate this donation of aprons from Fluid which has been distributed to some of our care homes. Our warehousing and delivery capacity means we are able to eliminate any distribution costs for our corporate partners, and also take the cost away from our parent charity. We welcome all kinds of donations from consumables to electrical items. All donations we receive will go to front line services directly, or are sold in our charity shops to raise funds for The Salvation Army."

SATCoL partners with organisations



**SALVATION ARMY
TRADING
COMPANY**

to support their sustainability and CSR goals. Through its various reuse and recycling schemes, SATCoL diverts 250 million items every year to good causes. The clothing collection division alone diverts 50,000 tonnes of textiles away from landfill, saving 235,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year.

Jon Birrell, marketing and sustainability director, Fluid Branding said: "We're delighted to have been able to help with SATCoL's donation request. It's fantastic that we were able to put this stock to such good use supporting a very worthy cause."

Meanwhile, Fluid has been awarded with the highest level of trusted service award from Feefo for the 7th year in a row.

Feefo has given Platinum Trusted Service awards to businesses who have achieved either Platinum or Gold standard for three consecutive years. To receive the award, businesses must have collected at least 50 reviews with a Feefo service rating of between 4.5 and 4.9 between 1st January 2020 and 31st December 2021.

Sow Easy wrist bands encourage distance respect

Sow Easy has launched a new product to make it easy for staff, visitors and customers to make their social distancing preferences clear without awkward questions.

Its social distancing wristbands are a simple and effective solution with three simple traffic light colours, indicating the level of interaction individuals are happy with, from 'Keeping my distance' to 'Handshakes and high fives'.

The wrist bands are also plantable after-use as they are embedded with wildflower seeds. The wristband can be cut up and planted in soil making them kind to the planet, sustainable and aiding biodiversity.

All three colours come in a pack and can be printed with a logo and instructions. They also come with a free downloadable poster to display with your wristbands encouraging their use.



Goldstar keeps it simple with 2022 catalogue

The new 2022 Goldstar catalogue, Experience Simplicity, offers options for any budget and branding need with a mix of almost 100 different writing instrument styles.

The collection includes a full range of writing instruments in both plastic and metal styles. They include the Simplicolour 360° collection, value-priced plastic and gel pens, eco-minded writing instruments, and the best-selling metal collection.

Goldstar claims its all-inclusive pricing system makes it easier to give brands more of the styles they want without extra costs.

Howard Cubberly, global general manager of Goldstar said: "We believe in making things simple. In everything we do, our team is committed to making it easy for our customers to grow their business. From simple, all-inclusive pricing to free creative selling tools and best-in-class decoration options, you have a reliable partner with Goldstar."



Dana joins up with Manic Merchandise

Manic Merchandise has announced that Dana Whiteland has joined as an account manager.

Whiteland is new to the industry but has been working with the business for about six months through her own company.

"I am really excited to team up with Ben and the Manic Team. We have worked really well over the last six months and I am looking forward to becoming part of the Manic family," she said.

Managing director Ben Whibley added: "Dana will be a great addition to our sales team. Her creativity really shone out and we can't wait to see her development over the next year and beyond."



P&P is the latest show to move

Printwear & Promotion Live! has rescheduled the exhibition from February 2022 to April 2022.

The garment decoration show will now take place from Sunday, April 24 to Tuesday, April 26. The change in dates also means a change in hall at the NEC to Hall 12.

Tony Gardner, event director, said: "For the successful and safer running of the show, we felt that it was the more sensible

and prudent decision to take up the option of moving to April, in view of the current climate. All being well, the situation will be a lot better by then, with exhibitors and visitors being able to attend confident of a safer and better experience for all parties."

The rescheduled exhibition will still feature over 100 stands for visitors to explore, including the vast majority of the major equipment suppliers, clothing distributors and brands.

Winners lauded by BPMA Product Awards

BPMA members have been celebrating their success in the latest BPMA Product Awards.

First Editions is raising a toast to its Aqua Hydrate Bottle-for-Life range, after it struck platinum by placing sustainability centre stage.

The bottles are 100% British-made, using a high-efficiency moulding process which consumes 30% less energy than traditional manufacturing methods. A 'zero waste' production environment reinforces the product's eco credentials.

First Editions' managing director Mark Alderson said: "We're absolutely delighted to have come out on top in what was such a highly competitive award category. Clearly, Aqua Hydrate's clever mix of style and sustainability made a big impact on the judges."

Aqua Hydrate is BPA-free, dishwasher-safe and fitted with an 'easy clean' leakproof spout, handle and drinking straw. There's a selection of thirst-quenching sizes and popular colour accents.

Promo technology specialist Baby USB had two big reasons to celebrate after receiving a Gold Award in the 'Technology Product of the Year' category for its rPET Qi Wireless Charger, while its Baby Bio Multi-Charging Cable landed a Silver Award in 'Exhibition Product of the

Year'.

Plastic water bottles are used in the production of the 10W rPET Qi, making it a perfect vehicle for promoting an environmental message. It also comes in a recycled presentation box.

In addition, the charger also features inbuilt antimicrobial technology.

The Bio Multi-Charging Cable is made from corn starch and wheat straw, and comes with a fully-compliant, biodegradable cable.

Kashif Siddiquei, Baby USB's managing director, said: "We're thrilled to have been recognised with these two awards from the BPMA. We're looking forward to an exciting year ahead, which will see even more innovation and investment from us in the growing field of fully-compliant tech."

Reusable bag specialist Jutebag also walked away with double awards.

The Biomaster-protected Antimicrobial Cotton Bag was honoured with a Platinum Award in the Exhibition Product of the Year category, while Jutebag's Kobe Natural Jute Shopper landed a Gold Award in Bag & Folder Product of the Year.

Lee Thompson, Jutebag's trade sales manager, said: "The popularity of reusable bags



has soared in recent years, and these days public health is obviously right there at the top of the agenda too. Our Antimicrobial Cotton Bag is exactly the product business needs at this time together.

New Poland plant and paint shop for Listawood

Listawood has confirmed the opening of a third manufacturing plant to cater for its growing customer base in continental Europe.

"We opened our first factory in the UK in 1988 and in 2012 opened a manufacturing facility in Chennai, India. Now, ready for 2022, we're really excited to be announcing the opening of our new facility, centrally placed on the western border of Poland, servicing all our clients in the European Union," said Alex Turner, managing director.

The company stocks over six million items of drinkware and its manufacturing footprint makes the company well placed to provide product and service continuity to distributor customers on a pan-European level.

The company has also invested in the largest and most sophisticated custom colour painting facility for drinkware in Europe.

The new automatic spray-line boosts its ability to offer Pantone matched drinkware products, including a wide selection of stainless, aluminium and thermal

bottles, ceramic mugs and coffee-to-go cups with a choice of satin or gloss finish.

With the new line, the company can decorate more than 20,000 items of drinkware a day, and claims price points which would usually be associated with Far East manufacture, and turnaround times of around 10 days on bestselling lines.



LAUNCHING
THIS SPRING



We are proud to announce Snap Products is now the UK-exclusive supplier of a range of Chili Concept drinkware and technology.



UK Stock · In-House Branding · Competitive Lead Times · Registered Designs

FIND OUT MORE

sales@snapproducts.co.uk | +44 (0)1252 796 860 | www.snapproducts.co.uk



LISTAWOOD'S UNIQUE TWO TIER OFFERING



Duraglaze® PhotoMug
Unrivalled dishwasher durability.
Lifetime guarantee.



New Promo PhotoMug
Industry standard durability.
Best price guarantee.



Over 6 million drinkware bodies continuously in stock.
Innovative, high speed automated decoration.
Widest choice of sublimation drinkware in Europe.

TIME TO GET OVER PACKAGING

Excessive packaging is the bane of the garment sector, but there are alternatives, says **Clive Allcott**



With single use plastic concerns across the promotional industry how can the garment decorators, clothing suppliers and you, the distributor help in this global issue? Overpackaging is a great concern not only in textiles but across all sectors.

Garment decorators often face the issue of 'double or overpackaging'. The supplied garments are delivered in individual polythene bags which are removed to apply the agreed branding method, the completed garment is then re-bagged and boxed for delivery.

We need to change this and clothing suppliers and wholesalers are looking where possible to deliver as a bulk packaged product (placed in one bag for protection instead of individual bagging). It may be a small step but I am sure it will be the first of many.

As decorators, we are also looking

to make changes to replace the standard plastic bag with alternatives such as bio degradable or compostable packaging. However, research is still not conclusive on this as a solution.

Biodegradable plastics take three to six months to decompose fully which is much quicker than synthetic counterparts that can take several hundred years. The concern is that there are so many dependences associated with it, such as temperature and the amount of moisture present.

Many plastics that are described as biodegradable or compostable have to be collected and separated, then sent to a purpose-designed industrial composting facility where they can be broken down successfully. These facilities exist for food waste, but ensuring compostable packaging reaches them can be challenging. Although another step in the



right direction it not the full solution.

There are other ways to present and package the garment such as recycled paper wraps, pillow packs, presented in a cotton bag, even potato sacks however they do come with additional costs. As suppliers we are continuously looking to find solutions but distributors need to drive these ideas into the marketplace.

It is in your hands to make a difference. Ask your decorator what options they have for packaging garments. It might be just what your client is looking for.

**Happy selling,
Clive (The Bag and Clothing Guru). 🇬🇧**

samedaybags.com

Bags printed & delivered within 24 hours.

See us at Merchandise World
Stand 47

We look forward to seeing you there

01600 800 500
hello@samedaybags.com

🐦 f 📷 in





THE ADVERTISING COMEBACK

As adspend hits a record high for the UK, does this spell growth for promotional merchandise?

At the end of January, the latest Advertising Association/WARC Expenditure Report outlined an even greater recovery for the UK's advertising market than previously expected, with revised estimates for growth in 2021 standing at 26.4% to reach a total of £29.7bn.

The new findings upgraded October's projection for 2021 (+24.8%) by 1.6 percentage points, equating to the strongest year in UK ad market history. This is supported by the actual data released for Q3 2021, showing adspend of £7.3bn – the largest-ever summer spend on record.

New forecasts also show total investment for 2022 is set to rise by 8.5% to £32.2bn – meaning the UK market will have expanded by more than a third since 2020. A bright start to the year contributes to an upgrade of almost one percentage point for 2022 growth, while sectors especially hit by the Covid-19 pandemic – such as cinema and out-of-home – will expect to see a continued recovery.

In addition, these recovery projections are supported by international data from WARC which expects the UK's bounce-back in 2021 to be the largest across any major international ad market – including the USA,

France and China – while outstripping the global rate by more than 12 percentage points.

BEST-EVER SUMMER CONFIRMED IN 2021

Actual figures released by AA/WARC confirm adspend rose 23.2% during Q3 2021 to a record £7.3bn – three percentage points and £183m ahead of forecast. All media recorded double-digit growth in Q3 2021 following the previous year's decline, as the summer period saw the return of key sporting moments such as the Euros,

Olympics and Paralympics along with the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

Triple-digit growth was confirmed for cinema (+655.9%) to £20.2m, marked by the September release of James Bond's No Time to Die, while out-of-home saw an increase of 62.6% to £270.4m.

2022 MARKET WILL HAVE GROWN BY MORE THAN A THIRD SINCE 2020

UK adspend is expected to continue to rise to £32.2bn this year as current projections anticipate 8.5% growth, including strong recoveries for cinema (+201.1%) and out-of-home (+26.8%). Continued growth is also expected as consumer habits gained during the pandemic are set to be retained.

The latest figures suggest Q1 2022 also looks to be stronger than expected (particularly within TV) and overall adspend is now forecast to grow 12.6% year-on-year, compared with 10.5% previously.

WILL MERCHANDISE BENEFIT?

How does this impact the promotional merchandise industry? The BPMA is a member of the Advertising Association and as part of the AA Council, sees an overall increase in confidence which in turn drives overall spend across the country.

CEO Carey Trevill noted: "We see how compelling the upward trend behind investing in communications, events and more brings spend into our market. When adspend goes up and UK wide confidence grows, historically we start to track the same uptick in orders. As we start to come out of the other side of the pandemic, the UK is head and shoulders ahead of other markets on our recovery path and we will see this reflected in orders over the coming weeks and months. The end of 2021 shook everyone and while no-one is complacent that we may still face some disruption, we are best placed to reinforce messages and sentiment through merchandise helping end users secure their own customer bases."

Stephen Woodford, CEO, Advertising Association commented: "UK advertising has seen a remarkable recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, racing ahead of key international markets with spend expected to cross the threshold of £30bn this year. A strong advertising market is a key indicator of the UK economy's growth, with every £1 spent on advertising generating £6 GDP. The latest AA/WARC report brings welcome news not just for our industry but for the wider economy, as advertising investment is a key lever for businesses to capture new markets and drive their recovery. It is all the more important therefore that the Government recognises the need to support industry-led skills training to complement the demand for digital skills required to keep this market booming."

James McDonald, director of data, intelligence & forecasting, WARC said: "The latest verified data support our previous estimation that 2021 was the strongest year for the UK's advertising market since monitoring began. Encouragingly this

MEDIA	Q3 2021 YEAR-ON-YEAR % CHANGE	9M 2021 YEAR-ON-YEAR % CHANGE	2021 FORECAST YEAR-ON-YEAR % CHANGE	PERCENTAGE POINT (PP) CHANGE IN 2021 FORECAST VS OCT	2022 FORECAST YEAR-ON-YEAR % CHANGE
Search	18.7%	36.7%	31.0%	+0.9pp	11.1%
Online display*	20.5%	32.8%	26.9%	+1.5pp	8.3%
TV	28.9%	30.6%	26.1%	+3.2pp	5.3%
of which VOD	33.9%	39.4%	37.5%	+3.4pp	13.7%
Online classified*	36.8%	31.6%	25.8%	+1.2pp	3.9%
Out of home	62.6%	14.2%	25.4%	-2.2pp	26.8%
of which digital	68.7%	24.8%	35.7%	-2.4pp	35.4%
Direct mail	23.4%	21.0%	17.1%	+6.8pp	-6.8%
National newsbrands	25.4%	11.7%	10.9%	+3.3pp	1.4%
of which online	22.8%	22.4%	17.4%	+4.2pp	6.4%
Radio	30.7%	28.9%	21.7%	+4.0pp	4.0%
of which online	49.7%	54.5%	41.4%	+6.7pp	10.7%
Magazine brands	22.3%	24.4%	20.4%	-1.2pp	-3.0%
of which online	41.0%	62.2%	45.9%	+4.0pp	-1.0%
Regional newsbrands	22.4%	7.8%	7.8%	+0.4pp	-6.1%
of which online	55.7%	37.0%	33.2%	+8.2pp	0.9%
Cinema	655.9%	-57.0%	70.0%	-18.0pp	201.1%
TOTAL AD SPEND	23.2%	30.8%	26.4%	+1.6pp	8.5%

Note: Broadcaster VOD, digital revenues for newsbrands, magazine brands, and radio station websites are also included within online display and classified totals, so care should be taken to avoid double counting. Online radio is display advertising on broadcasters' websites.

Source: AA/WARC Expenditure Report, January 2022

Our new more than gifts collection

A collection filled with conscious and meaningful gifts

- Over 200 new products in our more than gifts collection 2022
- With many new materials
- Inspirational and interactive digital catalogue
- Contact your account manager for more information



MO6458



Rethink

Aligned with the growing need to support social and responsible production, recycling and reutilization, we continuously re-examine the way we approach our product and material selection, manufacturing and print production processes. Many materials have found a second life by being recycled. In our new collection we offer more organic cotton options. Check out these new trendy items made from organic cotton.



MO6408



The Bottle Specialist

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

momentum appears to have sustained into the new year, with the impact of the Omicron variant on advertising trade appearing to be reasonably muted across the majority of sectors. While inflation is set to act as a headwind on both the consumer and media buyers alike in the coming months, we have little reason to believe that the UK's ad market won't achieve growth of 8.5% this year – well ahead of the average recorded during the decade preceding the outbreak."

The Advertising Association/WARC quarterly Expenditure Report is the definitive guide to advertising expenditure in the UK with data and forecasts for different media going back to 1982.

THE RACE FOR TALENT

One of the biggest barriers faced by industry across the UK is the lack of talent or those who are opting out of their usual career streams. From account management to creatives to sales and pretty much every other role in between; every industry sector is reporting shortages in talent. The BPMA was a Kick Start gateway for members during 2021 and the scheme worked well but timing wasn't great.

"For those who had success, some incredible new talent has been discovered and retained but for many, timing in and around lockdowns, uncertainty and work from home rules didn't give us the right environment to work from," said Trevill.

Noting the next stages of what the industry was doing to self-start again, she said: "We know there is a big push coming for apprenticeships from Government but we need to understand a lot more about why we have a talent shortage."

TALENT TASKFORCE

Devised by the Advertising Association, the new Talent Taskforce has commissioned UK advertising's think tank, Credos, to produce a Talent Report to assess the competitiveness of the industry as a career choice. The brief for the Talent Report covers:

1. The macro-economic picture for UK advertising and marketing – how the UK advertising and marketing services industry fares versus other industries in the UK job market.
2. A cross-industry analysis – looking at the challenges within advertising and marketing services across brands, agencies, media owners and tech companies to develop and retain the skills needed.
3. The hearts and minds of industry professionals – a combination of qualitative and quantitative research studies to better understand what is driving job satisfaction.




TALENT RETENTION HAS COME UP TIME AND TIME AGAIN AS A COMMON CHALLENGE WE ARE ALL FACING. WE ARE A PEOPLE INDUSTRY

The Task Force will also work to raise Government awareness about the value and importance of supporting and investing in the practical skills training provided by industry trade bodies and professional associations. Devised by business leaders, they offer practical and state of the art skills training and should be a vital part of the UK's overall skills strategy.

Alessandra Bellini, president, Advertising Association and head of customer at Tesco said: "From the moment I joined the association last autumn, talent retention has come up time and time again as a common challenge we are all facing. We are a people industry, and it is thanks to our brilliant, skilled people that the UK ad industry is forecast for the fastest growth of any ad market around the world. But we have a role to play in supporting our people. I feel very passionate that we nurture and support progression, encourage diversity and ultimately continue to attract talent."

This taskforce is the first step but has the potential to make a real positive difference across the industry."

The Talent Taskforce will review the findings of the Credos report and aligned with the Inclusion Working Group, consider how best to boost the industry's appeal to talent, presenting options to the Advertising Association's Council this summer to form the next three-year strategy for the AA membership and wider industry.

It is expected Talent will grow as a critical workstream for the Advertising Association alongside Public Trust and delivery of the All In and Ad Net Zero Action Plans, helping the industry deliver on its economic and societal responsibilities to the UK, aid the Covid-19 recovery and transition to a net zero economy. The BPMA will be participating in discussions to address the challenges faced by the promotional merchandise industry on behalf of its suppliers and distributors. 

March is Export Month

The BPMA recently joined the UKAEG, a collaboration between UK creative industries and Department for International Trade (DIT). To answer the drive from international companies looking to the UK for creative ideas and work, the BPMA will be engaging members in discussions and forums during March to highlight the opportunities in new markets while delivering outstanding case studies for the new UKAEG site, helping DIT local agents and international firms discover the immense talent and power of the UK promotional merchandise industry.

Look out for more information on Export Month at bpma.co.uk.

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.

EXPRESS UK STOCK

EXHIBITIONS & CONFERENCE

CORPORATE & PROMOTIONS

CHARITIES & EVENTS

EDUCATION

SPORTS & CLUBS

WORKPLACE

OFFICE



Connect with us

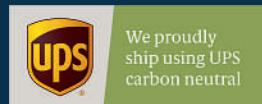
On the web: preseli.biz

By phone: 01352 730 006

By email: sales@preseli.biz

Responsible - Supportive – Reliable – Proven

Order after order, for 30 years, distributors have trusted us with their reputation.



GETTING DOWN TO business

After last year's absence the industry is heading back to Coventry to kickstart the 2022 recovery



As if anyone needed reminding, it will have been more than two years since the promotional merchandise industry, in the shape of Merchandise World, has assembled at its spiritual home of Coventry.

A lot has changed in that time, not least the name of the venue which has been reborn as the CBS Arena, a sign of the venue shaping up for the rebound hopefully.

After a successful trial run in the summer at the Milton Keynes Arena, Britain's biggest merchandise show is also looking to channel that positivity.

At the time of going to press 127 exhibitors had booked for the two-day show in the Midlands, including such industry players as BIC Graphic, Goldstar, Kingly, Listawood, Oldeani, Pen Warehouse, PF Concept, Preseli, Screenworks, R&JP, Senator, The Sweet People, The Umbrella Company, and Xindao.

Registered visitors were sitting at about 480 and still has plenty of time to build up as the industry looks to get back together again.

Let's not forget the reasons for attending the show – it's to rebuild the sector that took such a bashing in the past year, but that has started to show signs of recovery. BPMA members are starting to sound positive about what's ahead having seen orders begin to filter back as their clients restart their own companies after periods of relative dormancy.

There are budgets to spend and deals to done, according to David Long, chairman of Sourcing City, the

show's organiser with the BPMA.

"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," he said.

"Merchandise World in April, at the renamed CBS Arena in Coventry, is eagerly anticipated with the many exhibitors clearly excited to see both existing and new customers. The show has always been where companies meet, learn and prepare themselves for the year ahead and 2022 feels more important than ever. We are expecting the trade to be attending en-masse and can't wait to see everyone benefitting from being together once again."

Long's upbeat take is echoed by BPMA Chair Haydn Willets, who urged the industry to back its show.

"This event really does kick start the year with an opportunity for suppliers to show off their new products and services and to take advantage of meeting customers old and new," he said. "I would ask that the distributors really get behind the show and turn up with sales, marketing and operational staff and engage with suppliers and each other."

The BPMA team will be at the show too providing an opportunity to ask any questions about services and support it offers members. There will also be seminars at the show for some learning time.

Of course, the show is all about products, and last issue revealed the BPMA Product Award winners which you will be able to see at the show and interrogate suppliers about them.

Eco products will get their own spotlight as this is an area of growing interest from end users, so make sure you check out Eco World for sustainable merchandise options.

Using the show's appointment booking system, visitors can make the most of their time at the show by prearranging with exhibiting suppliers. By visiting merchadiseworld.co.uk they can select the supplier they wish to meet and a time in their diary.

Safety of both exhibitors and visitors will remain a priority for the show which will run with a similar Covid safety policy as for the Milton Keynes show where networking and socialising were not impeded by sensible precautions. You can find the policy on the Merchandise World website – merchadiseworld.co.uk.

Of course, no show would be complete without a chance to celebrate with industry peers, so don't miss the promo sector's premier night out, the BPMA Awards. After the past two years, there will be some serious catching up to do.

The Essentials

- **Where** – CBS Arena, Judds Lane, Coventry CV6 6GE
- **When** – 13-14 April 2022. Show opens from 8.00 and closes 17.00 on Day 1, and 15.00 on Day 2. There's free lunch, tea and coffee, and breakfast is back, served from 8.00-10.00.
- **Why** – The start of each year is the main time when everyone involved with sales in professional distributor companies wish to meet suppliers to discover the new and best-selling promotional products for the new selling year. With delayed buying last year, there could be a lot of catch up purchases.
- **How** – visitors can register at merchadiseworld.co.uk. There is a free station transfer shuttle bus to and from Coventry station every 30 minutes between 08.00-17.30 on Day 1 and 08.00-16.30 on Day 2. Free airport transfers from Birmingham International are available by prior arrangement. Call 0844 504 5006 for details.

WHAT'S ON SHOW? SUSTAINABLE TECH

As more businesses turn towards sustainability, BabyUSB (Stand 79) is making it even easier for customers to seek out tech that is good for the planet. Merchandise World 2022 will be the launch platform for an exciting collection of multi-function, plant based, biodegradable technology – chargers, audio items, desk and travel accessories, complete with eco-packaging solutions.

The search for sustainable tech can be a challenging one, and it's important to find suppliers with a track record of ethically sourcing products.

For example, do they ensure that no child labour is used in the mining of metals? Do they protect the wellbeing of their workforces and the local communities? Are there ways to recycle the product or parts of the product at the end of its useful life?

BabyUSB's dedication to ethical sourcing is deep-rooted, and its UK-stocked and branded range offers fast turnaround on our most popular tech items.

NEW FOR 2022

PF Concept (stand 85) has a host of new products for 2022 with 250 new models to be launched during Q1. A third of those new introductions have a clear and obvious focus: sustainability. Building on those products launched during the end of 2021, you will find new sustainable Green Concept products in major categories such as bags, stationery, drinkware, PF manufactured and apparel.

The tech collection has been almost completely refreshed, with new power, sound and accessories in Avenue and Bullet. There is also a new brand Tekio, redesigning the standard in promotional tech. Tekio aims to fulfil the current consumer needs: versatility in personal use through professional needs and the hybrid work model (work-from-home, on-the-go, office).

In apparel the focus is on Elevate, with a clear positioning in three sub-ranges: Elevate



Essentials (the successful Superheroes collection), Elevate Life (retail inspired), and Elevate NXT (responsible corporate wear).

Following the change in market demands food-on-the-go is expanding with new products in Avenue, Mepal and a fresh new brand called Amuse which specialises in sustainable lunch boxes.

Visitors will be able to see the PF Concept team demonstrate its unique Catalogue Creator Tool, which helps create customised

digital catalogues for customers containing relevant product ideas presented with their logo in just a few clicks.

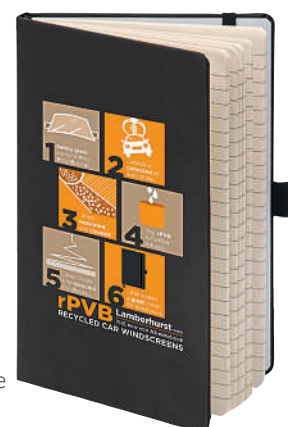
IT'S IN THE BAG

Bagco (Stand 83) is showing its range of environmentally friendly bags, notebooks and coolers. Every Bagco product is made from natural or recycled fabric and there are new designs with some of the old favourites all available in eco friendly fabrics.

Getting ready for summer 2022, there is a new range of coolers made from rPET (recycled plastic), a new 7oz and 10 oz (recycled cotton and rPET) Seabrook Totes in a choice of exciting colours, and the new gift bag in the same fabric.

A new product is the A5 notebook, the Lamberhurst which is made from recycled windscreens (rPVB safety glass). It has a great soft feel and a great product story.

Everything is backed up with certification, from audited factories and the Bagco warehouse/print facility is carbon neutral. Come and see the selection and pick up some samples to take away.



Come join the show

BPMA Chair Haydn Willetts wants to industry to get together at the CBS.

"We are almost there and the whole industry is, I am sure, looking forward to the event of the year the Merchandise World Show on the 13 and 14 April. Again, at the popular and central venue in Coventry now known as the CBS Arena this event really does kick start the year with an opportunity for suppliers to show off their new products and services and to take advantage of meeting customers old and new. Not only as a supplier but also in my new role as Chair of the BPMA, I would ask

that the distributors really get behind the show and turn up with sales, marketing and operational staff and engage with suppliers and each other. Ask what is new, how you can sell more, what tools are available to help achieve this.

In addition, there will be the award-winning products of 2021 on display, the ever more important Eco World product display, meet the BPMA team and find out more about the support that is available to BPMA members. Last but certainly not least the Gala BPMA Awards evening. A chance to celebrate the achievements within the industry,

socialise and reconnect with each other.

So suppliers if you have not signed up yet there is still time to book to exhibit and distributors please confirm your attendance in advance of the show and book your tickets for the Awards dinner (tickets are selling fast), stay for the two days if possible, to maximise the benefit of the time the suppliers have put in to present a wonderful display with the thousands of items that will be on show.

Get behind this industry that we all enjoy so much and let us ALL make the 2022 Merchandise World event one to remember. See you all in Coventry."

Travel restrictions hamper PSI

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.



UK MADE

When it comes to creating sustainable promotional bottles, First Editions (Stand 4) believes actions speak louder than words.

That's why the company's products are made in the UK, using an efficient moulding process which consumes 30% less energy than traditional manufacturing methods. First Editions uses only renewable energy and operates a closed loop, zero waste process.

Find out more about exciting new launches for 2022. There's the newly-created marketing hub, offering a wealth of downloadable blogs, videos, infographics, social media assets and eShots which will help tell customers the story of sustainability behind all the products and processes.

Also on show at Merchandise World will be the stylish, best-selling sustainable drinkware range, sporting the latest colour palettes and offering plenty of extras to help make a bottle a truly custom solution, with a choice of sizes, lids and spouts, carry handles, dust caps, fruit infusers and much more.



TRACEABLE STORY

The environmental credentials of products have never been more important – yet, sadly, there is still a huge amount of 'greenwashing' going on.

Sustainable bag specialist, Jutebag (Stand 78) has a sustainability story it can prove from start to finish, thanks to its investment in traceability. The company uses a track-and-trace block chain technology which allows for full authentication and end-to-end traceability on a curated range of its new recycled bags.

Jutebag's 2022 line-up features stock bags made from rPET, recycled cotton/canvas, organic and Fairtrade cotton/canvas. In addition, it offers trailblazing bespoke solutions which includes even more diverse sustainable materials, such as linen and hemp and pineapple leather.

To cater for EU customers, it will be showcasing, Bonjour Francois a 100% Made in France brand that champions ethical manufacturing, diversity and disability within the workplace.

Come and meet the team, see what's new and pick up an antimicrobial, exhibition-safe kits, available while stocks last.

IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD...

Established in 2006, Product Zone (Stand 83) is one of the largest UK headwear suppliers producing fully bespoke branded caps, beanies and bobble hats.

It has recently launched an extensive range of plain stock headwear, caps, beanies, polar fleece and fleece-lined beanies, which can be embroidered/decorated in-house or available as plain stock.

Product Zone supplies a wide range of companies ranging from sportswear, supermarkets, fast-food chains and fashion brands, providing high-quality headwear for an ever-growing list of blue-chip companies.

With offices in China and Hong Kong, it has an extensive network of factories and offers a diverse range of high-quality products and extensive decoration options.



Material assets

Bags and apparel are firm merchandise favourites, and with demand set to rebound, *PM* looks at what's new



B PMA Product Award winners were announced in early January 2021 following two rounds of intensive judging and discussion. Like many of the Product Award categories, judges were looking for those twists of innovation and inspiration, great credentials and product sell. With an extended qualifying period for the Awards, recognising the exceptional trading times the industry has faced over the last few years, the Bag & Folder and Apparel categories had stiff competition. With high quality entries across the board, the narrow margins to award platinum, gold and silver awards tested our judging panels. Only those exhibiting at Merchandise World were able to enter.

In the apparel category, United Brands of Scandinavia landed Platinum with their all-round good-looking winner, the Prime Softshell Jacket, with PF Concept's Elevate Macin Insulated Jacket grabbing gold and The Outdoors Company's North Face 100

Glacier Full Zip Promotional Fleece secured silver. The quality of these shortlisted entries and overall availability of superior quality clothing to the promotional industry was discussed by the judges at length. The step change in sustainable credentials in particular ensured the entries not only scored highly on their performance but highlighted the advancements in technology and materials, producing apparel to satisfy a demanding end user market.

Moving to the Bags & Folders category judges were pleasantly surprised by the range of entries, innovation and clever twists to bring the surprise and delight moments looked for when reviewing ranges. Entries delivered a wide scope of uses and Juniper's delicious Designer Jute Tote bagged platinum, JuteBag brought home gold with their Kobe Natural Jute Shopper and Xindao's clever XD Design Flex Gym Bag's silver award reflected the close competition in this category. Judges

comments here discussed the need for this category to keep delivering excellence and inspiration to the marketplace and this year it didn't disappoint.

As well as the BPMA Product Awards, there are plenty of other developments in the category. We rounded up some of the most interesting.

MANTIS GETS HEAVY

Heavyweight tees are making a comeback, not just in merchandise but also in retail. The new M03 from Mantis comes in at 220gsm and is made from 100% organic or 'in conversion' to organic cotton. This means cotton harvested during a farm's transition to organic production. It takes up to three years to reach certified organic status even though farmers adopt fully organic practices right away, removing harmful pesticides and fertilisers as well as using GMO-free seeds.

The heavier material is great for



decorating and takes both print and embroidery well. Available in five shades, sizes XS to 3XL and with a flattering unisex fit, this is a versatile garment suitable for a whole range of markets. Plus, QR codes in the care label show the wearer the positive impact of going organic, and the journey of how and where the garment was made.

Mantis also offer the M196 denim shopper bag as a handy solution to the modern issue of not having enough space for your groceries. A stylish yet sustainable option, this roomy shopper is made from 100% organic or in conversion to organic cotton. With cross-stitched long handles for added stability and strength, you'll also find a pocket on the inside that is perfect for pesky little items like keys and change. The smooth denim is great for decoration and is finished with traditional orange stitching for a classic look. It is also available as a tote (M195).

DESIGNED TO IMPRESS

Juniper was delighted to win the Platinum award at the recent BPMA product awards for its new Designer Jute Tote bag.

The concept behind the product is to offer clients a level of choice not previously available for short run, short lead time jute bags.

Brands can choose their bag style, handle style, the trim material and colour used, the patch size and shape for logos, and the branding method, and thereby create customised, high quality, bags for



life, from 10 pieces upwards and with just two weeks lead time.

Juniper already stocks multiple materials and colours in real leather, imitation leather and an increasing selection of recycled PET materials like its new COMO rPET, material. With inhouse cut and sew skills, Juniper is able to provide not only a very sustainable product, but one that can be tailored to brands requirements.

Speaking ahead of the Merchandise World 2022, managing director of Juniper, Andrew Langley said: "It's very much part of the Juniper ethos to attempt to bring new options and possibilities using UK manufacturing to the market. We are not

Doing good in the great outdoors

Stormtech Performance Apparel is introducing Pure Earth by Stormtech, the brand's first fully sustainable apparel line. From recycled fibres, BCI cotton, and sustainable packaging, the brand is committing to conserve nature and give discarded plastics a second life.

The range features 18 new styles, ranging from polos and performance tees to softshell jackets. Each style is made with recycled polyester (rPET) and/or certified BCI cotton and is never re-dyed. Stormtech is also committed to reducing its carbon footprint throughout the operation. All new styles will also come with hangtags produced from sustainable FSC paper, and will be packed in eco-conscious materials.

"Sustainability has always been part of our DNA and at the core of our business values," said Georgeta Navodarszky, vice president supply chain of Stormtech. "In addition to our 'zero real fur and down' policy, we focus on sourcing raw materials with minimal impact on forest habitats. The newly launched Spring 2022 Collection took a step further and sourced more sustainable, durable materials, trims and packaging. By 2025, we are committed to transitioning all top materials by impact to fully sustainable solutions."

The clothing's polyester is regenerated from PET plastic found in landfills and waterways, and all fabrics are certified as recycled materials by a Global Recycle Standard Certificate.

Cotton is certified by the Better Cotton Initiative, a not-for-profit cotton sustainability programme that reduces the environmental impact of cotton production. It involves minimising fertilisers and pesticides, caring for water, soil health and natural habitats, as well as providing better work conditions and training for farmers. All BCI cotton is traceable to the farm/field level.

Stormtech provides premium outdoor apparel in the B2B space for companies ranging from tech giants to heritage auto companies. The company donates 1% of global sales to charitable initiatives focused on outdoor exploration and the environment.





this year.

Non-woven, polyester and various paper bags such as craft and laminated paper carrier bags are in stock, as well as new postal bags all available within 7-10 days.

Bagtrade has announced additions to its jute product range, including six-bottle bags with a removable inner, ideal for taking wine to parties. Large jute bags with a canvas front allow extra fine detail to be printed.

"Whilst we continue to invest in new technology, Bagtrade are committed to offering the personal service for which

we are known," said Battersby. "All our team are back in the office and ready to take your calls and emails."

The company is happy to advise on any project and recommend the right product with prices and samples available.

IF THE HAT FITS

Having specialised in fully bespoke caps Product Zone decided to break into the world of plain stock just over one year ago and has been delighted with the response from the trade. Plain stock sales are fast catching up with the bespoke market, says

known for bags, so to win the prestigious BPMA product of the year in the bag category is tremendously encouraging. The amount of permutations we can offer for handles and badging on these bags is huge. We really look forward to showcasing these and many other new products at the Merchandise World show in April."

IT'S IN THE BAG

With business starting to pick up Bagtrade has ensured it has large stocks across all its product ranges.

Managing director John Battersby, says: "We decided to invest early in product and stock at pre-Covid prices to be ready for an improved 2022 with an enhanced product range, large stocks and great prices."

These include recycled cotton bags, dyed cotton and canvas bags, jute bags of different sizes and colours and drawstring bags ready for the return of sporting events



Product Zone director Tony Marks.

"Stocking all types of caps and knits has really been a success story, with demand almost outstripping our stocks, but with shred buying and factories working with us we have never had to turn an order down."

The main bespoke business is returning to normal after "the crazy years of 2020 and 2021", the company looks forward to hearing from trade-only customers moving forward.

"We are also pleased to announce that for over 25 years our relationship with Walk the Walk, the largest London Moonwalk Marathon event continues to flourish and yet again we are supplying fully bespoke caps for the event that is now starting to return as a major participant event complying with Covid restrictions," adds Marks.

COMPLIANCE NOT COMPROMISE

DTB's recycled 5oz cotton shopper, in colours including red, light blue, black and natural ties in with the company's mission to become leaders in sustainability and continuing to make progress as an environmentally-friendly supplier.

To partner such a product range DTB has a sustainable and certified method of screen printing, using water-based inks that are GOTS approved, have their own ISO certification and are OEKO-TEX certified. They also have the stamp of approval from the Soil Association.

The market is only going one way, and that's going green and DTB hopes to demonstrate that compliance doesn't have to mean compromise. It also has an extensive offering of sustainable and eco-friendly garments to pick from that will be sure to fit your every need.

RPET BAGS BOTTLE IT

As always, United Bag Store will be exhibiting its full range of bags at this year's Merchandise World show. This will include the extremely popular and best-selling cotton shoppers, its full eco range of cotton shoppers and drawstring bags and more.

This year sees the introduction of four new bags into the range, one being the rPET 190T polyester shopper, a promotional bag made from 100% recycled post-consumer plastic. This must-have bag comes in five core colours and offers large brand exposure to both sides of the bag making it a fantastic environmentally friendly promotional tool. With up to four spot colours available and the option of a transfer print too, the branding possibilities of this bag are huge and will appeal to a wide range of industries.

With each bag having GRS certification and being made from about two 500ml plastic bottles, you can be proud to promote your business with products that are helping to save the planet. These bags will be landing in the UK and available for purchase May 2022.

Back on the move

As everyone is getting back out and about bags are back in a big way, says Oldeani. Whether it's business travel, visiting clients or getting off on a much-needed holiday there's no getting away from the fact that we are all moving around a lot more than we have in the last few years and this must be a good thing. With everyone desperate to get out and about opportunities for bag promotions are high.

The way we work and live are not the only things that have changed. The importance of materials and the impact promotions make on our planet have become huge influences on our buying behaviour. Sustainability is key. Getting the right balance between responsible sourcing and sustainable fabrics, practicality and design are all important. If you can deliver products with the latest eco credentials without compromising on style and design, you are on to a winner.

An increasing number of people are doing blended home/office working resulting in the need to transport files, laptops and vital work items to and from creating a possibly greater demand for some items than pre-Covid.

Malcolm Fritschy, MD at Oldeani, says:

"Compact tech bags to house all those bits that often end up in the bottom of a bag have always been popular products. The demand is still there but

as suppliers we have had to look for alternative materials that are up to the job. rPET is perfect for such applications – it's highly durable, lightweight, water resistant and looks good. rPET uses up to 50% less energy than making virgin rPET and saves existing PET heading to landfill."

Oldeani has invested in a new range of rPET bags, using some bestselling designs in new materials and is also introducing new and innovative products like the HIP bottle bag. The HIP rPET bottle bag is not only made from rPET, it's encouraging the use of reusable drinkware with its extendable pouch to hold your favourite bottle. It also features space for valuables and a handy pouch for mobiles.

Other items in Oldeani's rPET range are the Tech Tidy and attractive Shield bag.

"Sustainability is one of the key thing clients are demanding so we are meeting this demand by moving our bag range to rPET options where possible," says Fritschy. "It's exciting to work with these new materials and the opportunities they bring."



INTRODUCING THE 2022 **HOUSE OF INSPIRATION** CATALOGUE

Kick start your sales with our extensive collection in our brand new catalogue!

Featuring over 170 innovative and sustainable new products.

Combined with a selection of our extensive core range.



A new convenient layout and clickable index for easy browsing.

Introducing two exciting new brands for 2022: Sharpie & K'arst.

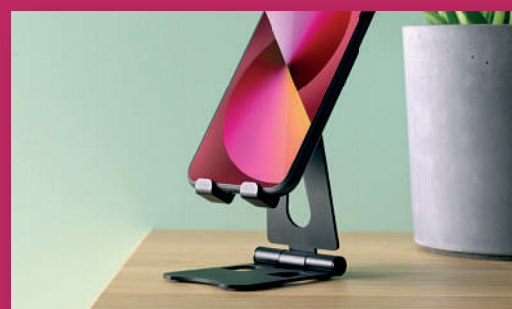
Visit www.pfconcept.com to see our new digital catalogue.

NEW BRAND



TEKIO

enhancing work mobility



SEE **THE NEW 2022**
COLLECTION AT
MERCHANDISEWORLD,
STAND 85

BPMA AWARDS SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED



The much-anticipated BPMA Awards shortlist is out! The BPMA Annual Awards take place at the CBS Arena, Coventry on 13 April 2022, at the end of day one of Merchandise World

Congratulations to all the BPMA members who have been shortlisted below.

- CHX Products
- Desktop Ideas
- Oldeani
- WCM+A
- Laltex Group
- Midocean
- PF Concept
- Xindao
- Total Merchandise
- Navillus
- Premier Print & Promotions
- BH1 Promotional Merchandise Specialists
- Beeline Promotional Products
- Ellenell
- Manic Merchandise
- ASP Promotions
- Bounce Creative Designs
- Mojo Promotions
- Printed4You Promotional Products
- Allwag Promotions
- LSI
- Pinksheep
- Fluid
- Geiger
- 4imprint
- Total Merchandise

Unsung Hero nominations will be revealed on the night.

Marketing Campaign of the Year
Please note, these entries are currently being judged by the BPMA's panel of end-user judges and the shortlist for this award will be announced in the coming weeks.

BPMA Awards Dinner: book your tickets today
The BPMA will be celebrating winners at the annual dinner on Wednesday 13 April. If you are still to book your tickets and tables, don't delay and email the BPMA today on events@bpma.co.uk to secure your seat. A fantastic evening with industry friends, and a chance to network with great food and entertainment.

It is the perfect complement to your Merchandise World visit.

Last sponsorship opportunities available

There are sponsorship opportunities available for this high-profile industry event. Get in touch with Tom Robey today to find out more via 01372 371183 or tom@bpma.co.uk

The BPMA would like to thank all the amazing Award sponsors for their incredible support; CBTax, Fluid, Geiger, BRIMAN, Preseli, PF Concept, Listawood, DTB, The Sweet People and Crystal Galleries.



To find out more about Merchandise World, book your tickets or exhibit, visit merchandiseworld.co.uk

BPMA ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER 2022



Wednesday 13th April 2022
CBS Arena, Coventry

Book your tickets today

Tickets from £100+VAT

Tables from £850+VAT

For more information please visit bpma.co.uk
To book tickets email events@bpma.co.uk

Proudly sponsored by



Proudly supported by





COVER STORY

The Umbrella Company has weathered the storms of the past few years by evolving

Q. What's the history of The Umbrella Company?

We started out on April fool's day 2000 (no jokes please) and lasting nearly 22 years in the industry we have seen a number of different challenges from the credit crunch in the noughties to the dreaded C word (Covid) in the last couple of years. A big change from when we started has been the switch to items being sold online more than ever before.

As UK manufacturers we have over the years managed to grow our product range further by adding gazebos, parasols, deck chairs, face masks and snoods to name a few, which has allowed us to adapt through the various seasons. In-house UK manufacturing has played a major role in not only helping us to survive and grow with the difficulties through the years but has also allowed us to develop our range and adapt to the world.

Who would think that a UK umbrella manufacturer would eventually manufacture gowns for hospitals during a pandemic along with the seasonal demand for snoods for cold and face protection?

Q. What are your best known products?

We have over 400 umbrellas in our range, all ranging in quality, prices and colours. Our Spectrum range of umbrellas has been

popular for a number of years and we now have exclusive agreements with our European partners Fare and Impliva, which in turn allows us to offer more products than we ever have done.

Q. Do you manufacture everything in the UK? What are the advantages?

Our factory is based in Sheffield which includes an inhouse sewing and printing team and this allows us to offer a large amount of products made in the UK. By offering this service, it allows us to give quicker lead times, smaller quantities (or large if needed) with fewer uncertainties of customs or delivery delays. These have been a common issue for a lot of businesses in the last couple of years, ourselves included).

Having full control over our sewing and printing gives us the confidence to take on orders that most couldn't handle or even gamble on flying in from the Far East, despite the customs issues.

Q. How has the business fared during the pandemic?

We have been no different to every other supplier in our industry who are trade only suppliers and have found it difficult over the last couple of years. Raw material costs have risen massively. Brexit happened at the beginning of 2021, meaning delays


at ports for getting raw materials into us and container prices at their height quadrupling in cost to name a few of the many issues we had to deal with during the pandemic.

We have been lucky with the products we offer as most businesses were pushed to use outdoor venues with a big emphasis on outdoor eating and drinking. Because of the great British weather our products were more in demand than most others in our industry, which worked in our favour.

Q. Have you changed the business in any way to meet these challenges, or seize on new opportunities?

We utilised our sewing team by adding to our range of products by producing UK made face masks, snoods and shopper bags, all of which are dye sublimated all over as standard. This during the height of the pandemic helped us massively. The snoods and shopper bags in particular we see becoming much more popular in the coming years.

Q. How are things looking going forward into 2022?

We have a few ideas up our sleeve which involve UK made umbrellas. All I can say at present is watch this space. 



A Sweet PROPOSITION

By stopping firefighting, The Sweet People have had the chance to look to the future

Like many businesses during the pandemic, The Sweet People had to pause and reassess where it was going.

But for the Bedfordshire business it was not the first time it had pivoted and headed in a new direction.

The company has been around for nearly a quarter of a century, and for much of that time it had a different focus. As Liquid Lens it sold a range of merchandise and technology for branding.

With the financial crash of 2008, managing director Mandy Hastie noticed a switch to the few confectionery products the company then carried.

"Jellybeans and mints became the most popular products because they were quite low cost so you got a lot for your budget," she says.

Fast forward a few years and the company went all in on edibles, renaming itself The Sweet People in the process.

"It was a light bulb moment. There were lots of people selling confectionery, but not many focusing on it exclusively," she says. "It was probably one of the most straightforward rebrands ever – people took to the name so quickly."

From mints and jellybeans the range expanded to cover the gamut of sweet treats that could be branded and used as pick me ups in businesses such as call centres.

With the advent of Covid, that business disappeared overnight and Hastie had to look at the options again.

Staff numbers went down and the company rationalised its product range.

The low margin sweets that were its bread and butter were no longer viable and the company had to look to a new business model.

With many staff working from home, it looked to treats that could be sent through the post. There was no point sending low-cost sweets, that cost less than the postage so the company started to sell more upmarket confections.

"As a small company, we can turn on a sixpence and we did by looking at what the market needed," says Hastie. "Four years ago we introduced our own chocolate range and that proved perfect for the work from home market."

The market has changed in other ways too. Budgets have switched from marketing to HR and with it messaging has moved from logos to motivation.

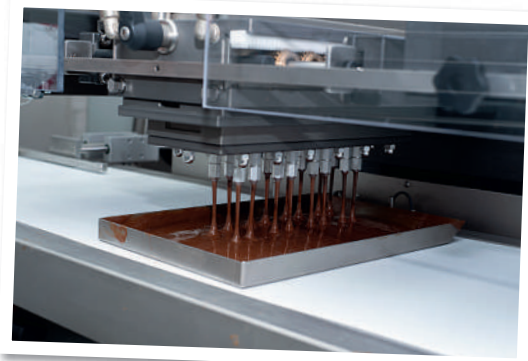
Products such as tea boxes and picnic boxes for online meetings became popular. This led to The Sweet People working more collaboratively with other suppliers to send out multiple products, such as mugs, with their orders.

Rising concerns about sustainability have been an issue. The company was already addressing this with the launch of non-plastic, recyclable packaging but was outsourcing this.

With the pandemic it decided to invest in its own resource inhouse.

It has also developed its chocolate manufacture, with a fair trade offering that has also been launched as a consumer brand spin off.

As befits a Briman member, it has also brought other elements of production



closer to home, contracting tin manufacture to a London firm where it was previously carried out in the Far East.

As well as avoiding some of the supply chain problems that have bedevilled all companies in the past year, it means the business has been able to cut back on a warehouse that previously held stock.

"By the end of last year we were starting to see some of the regular things coming back," says Hastie, however it is not a case of back to business as usual.

"For the first time we have been able to step back and analyse what we are doing and where we want to take the business. We've developed the management team from within and we've managed a rebrand that we would never have had the time for before," she says.

The result is a more profitable and better business now that the company has stopped firefighting.

"The industry has changed and may not go back to the way it was, but there are still lots of opportunities out there," she says.



Flying the flag FOR MERCHANDISE

Buyers of merchandise are increasingly looking for a British made solution. Made in Britain is helping to provide confidence of choice

Supply chain disruption during the past year or two has underlined the delicate balancing act that many firms face when sourcing from abroad.

Costs may be cheaper – although this is no longer a given – and quality can be better – ditto – however, if you can't lay your hands on the goods you or your customers need, then there is absolutely no advantage.

As supply chains became troubled during the pandemic and shipping costs went through the roof, the advantages of using a British manufacturer have become clearer.

The merchandise sector has a strong tradition of British manufacturing that is represented by the Briman Group. Members span products from confectionery and other edibles to notebooks and trophies.

At a broader level, the Made in Britain group provides a similar role in recognising and promoting British companies that continue to manufacture, and providing a procurement hub for the growing number of businesses that want to buy British.

Some merchandise manufacturers are members of both organisations.

Andrew Langley, managing director of Juniper, said the company has undertaken a journey of reskilling and investment in the last five years, which now sees 65% of production in the UK.

"Research is showing a real growth in the demand for UK made items amongst consumers and trade buyers, and it is important for our local economies that we invest in people and skills, as well as cut down on the amount of carbon used for the importation of goods, which can be made locally," he says.

John Godfrey of BPMA and Briman member Just a Drop says that the exchange of experiences and marketing ideas that comes from networking with a group of likeminded, similar businesses with the same target audience is hugely beneficial.

"Brexit has made transactions a lot more complex. UK-sourced products make for shorter lead times and less paperwork. In the promotions business deadlines are often short. So, if you have a UK-manufactured product that matched the brief you are more likely to meet the deadline dates," he adds.

Phil Hardy, director of UK Lanyard Makers, says the company has been a

member of both Briman and Made in Britain since the business was established.

A key reason is the business's long-standing focus on sustainability, he says.

"As a British manufacturer, nothing that leaves the factory has any air miles attached. Corporate customers increasingly looking at sustainability and buying British made is one way of determining that is the case," he says.

The two markings are quite separate. While Briman provides a specific network of merchandise manufacturers that can share information and challenges about merchandise, Made in Britain is a more universally recognised label.

"We include it on our website, on quotations and on our artwork templates," he says. "Its directory also provides great exposure of the company and we have had direct enquiries from it, which as a trade only supplier we pass on to our distributors."

As a company that has been manufacturing in the UK for more than 30 years, seed specialist Sow Easy joined Made in Britain to be represented as part of the wider British manufacturing industry and have the MIB seal of approval.

"We have seen a huge increase in

demand for Made in Britain products mainly due to the constant risks involved with importing orders into the UK namely customs issues and delays," says Jamie Gray, sales and marketing director. "The British spirit and the resilient promotional products industry combined has created a real community feel of coming back together and supporting the UK-economy by going for MIB products."

Recent research by Made in Britain found a mismatch between the desire of companies to buy British and specific procurement policies to mandate it.

The organisation, which represents 1,750 UK manufacturing companies certifying their products' country of origin and recognising their ethical and sustainability credentials, has conducted its third annual 'Buying British' survey in partnership with OnePoll.

The research polled 1,000 purchasing and procurement decision makers at British companies. In line with last year's results, the research found:

- 91% agree it's important to buy British made products,
- 82% would pay more for British goods,
- 73% say they want the business they work for to buy more British made products than it currently does.

Support for UK plc was more pronounced among London businesses with eight in ten (82%) wanting to purchase more British items than they currently do, and 70% willing to buy British whatever the cost, a 12% uplift on the UK average (58%).

However, in spite of the strong appetite for British goods demonstrated by consumers and businesses alike, just 3% of businesses surveyed said their organisation has a 'buy British' procurement policy in place to encourage consideration of buying British-made a priority, where possible.

FLY THE FLAG

Currently, 87% of buyers at British companies typically consider where something was made before buying it on



behalf of the business they work for (a 7% increase from 2020), which rises to 93% for London businesses. More than half (53%) are more likely to buy a product when seeing a British flag on packaging or marketing materials.

Again, London businesses and London-based consumers were the most likely to be swayed with 65% and 63% respectively admitting to be more inclined to purchase an item upon seeing a British flag displayed.

To address the short-fall in businesses buying goods made in Britain, more than half (51%) think their company should consider implementing such a policy.

POST-COVID RECOVERY

63% of decision makers say that they are more likely to buy British products post-pandemic. And of those who want to buy more British items, 42% said such a move supports British jobs and 39% that it boosts the British economy. However, the sentiment was felt more keenly in 2020, with almost three-quarters of businesses more likely to buy British.

With more than a quarter of decision makers saying that quality is their main priority when making a purchase on behalf of their business, 41% say that buying British ensures better quality. A further 36% also stated they are keen to increase purchases from British manufacturers as

they demonstrate higher ethical standards.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Companies increasingly look at how environmental and sustainability issues are being addressed. While more than 60% agreed they are more aware of the world around them and their future and that the source of products and their carbon footprint is more important than ever, this was down 10% on 2020.

In line with last year's survey, just under three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed that buying more products made in Britain could help the UK to combat climate change. More than a third (36%) think British made products can be better for the environment and 38% say the fact such goods have travelled less makes them a more sustainable option.

CONFUSION IS A BARRIER

While the number of businesses that would like to increase purchase of British made goods is increasing, 45% report that it is difficult to ascertain which brands are actually made in Britain even if it's a British registered brand.

Over a third say that one of the barriers to buying British is knowing whether a product is or isn't made in Britain. These statistics echo those of the same survey in 2020 and 2019.

Made in Britain CEO John Pearce, said that buying British products is important to British businesses, but confusion over provenance is still a real issue. An easily recognisable and trustworthy mark such as Made in Britain can help.

"Our organisation's core aim is to help manufacturers achieve more sales – through the use of the Made in Britain official mark, which enables our member companies to clearly display the truly British provenance of their products," he said. "Like the BPMA, Made in Britain insists that our members sign up to a strict code of conduct to become part of our organisation. This helps consumers know that they are buying a product that bears the official mark, made by a business they can really trust."





CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Knowing what do end users want from merchandise can be game changing, so why don't we ask them?

As the UK and other markets start to get back to 'normal', *PM* is receiving reports on the strong forecast for 2022 and the upward trajectory for orders in the industry. So how has the market changed in the last two years and what should the industry expect in the next 12 months? Indicating a need for a change in the conversation, *PM* explores the trends and influences impacting the market and importantly, how the industry can stay a step ahead.

PM has been looking into the spend trends affecting the industry, what is driving spend and behaviours plus

the challenges with trust and how we are best placed to address this with promotional merchandise.

In our report (p12) about the wider industry, ad spend the UK indicates an incredibly strong investment planned for UK advertisers. This shows confidence which historically triggers spending in other business sectors. With major advertisers set to spend £32.2bn, this shows a rise of 8.5% on 2021 spend. These are big numbers and demonstrate companies are looking to regain share of voice in markets.

A recent Sourcing City Purple Club

report (February 2022), indicated the pattern of the pandemic unfolded, showing the peaks and troughs as the UK went in and out of lock downs during the period. With an expected dip in late 2021 with the rise of the Omicron Covid variant, the industry saw a fast recovery by the end of January as public confidence started to rise with the easing of restrictions. Demonstrating just how fragile the recovery process has been, the current value of the industry was tentatively cited as £800m versus the previous value of £1.1-1.5bn.

The positive outlook for the year



chain demonstrate the value add in the process. Trevill encourages some simple approaches to understand more about where end users are spending right now and on what channels (e.g. print, digital), what are they planning to spend in future, and on what areas, and importantly what outcomes they are expecting.

This last question is considered the most important as every piece of branded communication is there to prompt a response. Finding out what this is might just be the key to providing a better-than-expected response for the client.

With research from think tanks WARC and McKinsey citing some important trends in how major business is viewing areas like financial growth and sustainability, a recent study suggested some 46% of companies put equal importance on financial growth and environment; the 'double bottom line'. Research also picked out three key areas to boost the way companies are accountable:

1. Changing manufacturing, packaging and distribution, improving supply chain transparency
2. Making public commitments to which companies will be held accountable
3. Encouraging green consumer behaviours in messaging

This all sounds sensible and expected given the accelerated awareness of climate change in the last 24 months but with 95% of marketers stating they believe marketing can make a difference in the sustainability journey (World Federation of Advertisers/AdNetZero 2021), they felt the gap in corporate adaption of the same approach was lacking. Whether we are talking B2B or B2C, we are all consumers at heart and with 92% of consumers agreeing brands have a responsibility to change consumer behaviour, we ignore the prompt to find out more about what our end-users need at our peril.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Equally, the measurement of our sector has often been limited to impressions studies which whilst great, don't align with other broader marketing measures. Understanding what end-users are doing to measure impact is also essential to future orders.

WARC found that 54% of marketers surveyed stated market penetration and customer gain are important barometers of effectiveness. With an estimated 66% now rethinking the channels they use for communications, the time is ripe for promotional merchandise to make a bid for budgets.

Surveys conducted by the BPMA continue to indicate brand recall and propensity to purchase as exceptionally high, even during the pandemic, far outstripping the type of results seen in other channels. 73%

ahead, indicated climbing back to this market value is within reach but will take time. A strong UK forecast bodes well for business owners as they plan resources to answer rising demand.

ASKING MORE QUESTIONS

Do we ask enough questions at order stage? Do we understand what end user clients are spending, what they are spending on and why? Asking the BPMA for their view the answer is straightforward – we should be more inquisitive.

BPMA CEO Carey Trevill observes: "Coming from the end user side myself, I knew before starting this role I wasn't an expert. I've been buying promotional merchandise throughout my career, either in my agency roles or client side on behalf of brands, and whilst I've always had a pretty good idea what I needed, what I loved was when I was asked more questions or had better suggestions for products provided unprompted, particularly if these helped tick another campaign box for the project I was working on. Finding out more about what your client needs is something we should never be afraid of asking."

Asking the right questions at the start could not only impress the end user but also help the entire supply

PM's top tips

- **Purpose and presence:** keep solutions authentic to the brand or service you are working for, delivering a tangible measurable impact to help meet goals
- **Be flexible, but think long term:** adapt to short-term volatility and demand, keep core strategic objectives and long-term growth in mind by understanding more about outcomes
- **Use your knowledge wisely:** our industry is an untapped resource for companies needing business advice – you are the experts with highly valued knowledge


of marketers surveyed said the way our behaviours have changed during the pandemic will impact strategies in 2022 with customer experience high on the agenda for change.

How can we help address some of the challenges end users want to address? Taking the knowledge 51% are looking to emphasise their sustainability commitments in their communications, eco solutions to carry messages long term through promotional merchandise seem like obvious answers.

Trust has again been highlighted as a huge challenge for most markets and of course, trusting communication from official sources has been in question for some time. Understanding the actions companies should be making to have an impact as opposed to what we as consumers are prepared to do does present a gap, according to the latest Edelman Trust report. Making it simple to participate and meet values is a very important consideration when companies consider the onward impact and effectiveness of branded messages.

The origin of goods is also driving a call for more British-made goods with recent Made in Britain research citing 80% of companies want to buy more locally produced goods and 73% say they want the businesses they work for to buy more British-made products.

Understanding more about the journey your end user is on will help every part of the merchandise supply chain deliver solutions that matter, whether it's the product origin or values, helping bridge the effectiveness gap between digital communication and physical goods and embracing trends emerging from the pandemic such as wellness and mindfulness.

£1 invested in marketing by an SME can go eight times further than for a larger corporate. Changing the conversation towards merchandise will be great for them and great for your business too. 

50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



Plant Your
TREE
BUYING
STILOLINEA
PENS WITH



stilolinea[®]
WRITING INSTRUMENTS SINCE 1972
100% MADE IN ITALY

STILOLINEA Srl

www.stilolinea.com
info@stilolinea.it



UK Official distributor
Hainenko Ltd, 284 Chase Road
Southgate - London N14 6HF

sales@hainenko.com
www.hainenko.com
tel 0208 882 8734
fax 0208 882 7749

PROTECTING YOUR ASSETS

Checking your premises are correctly insured is not a job to be put off. The cost of underinsurance can be a shock

Most years, your policy doesn't change much and it's probably one you don't spend hours checking but with reports many commercial properties are woefully underinsured by £32.5bn, *PM* talks to Towergate about why it's so important to check the details on your policies.

According to the insurance company, Towergate: "A sustained rise in construction costs this year is increasing the likelihood of significant underinsurance of buildings in the UK, which means shops, factories, warehouses and many other commercial buildings are woefully unprotected in the event of a loss or damage."

It adds: "Recent data from RebuildCostAssessment.com has highlighted how on average, buildings are covered for just 68% of the amount they should be in Britain. However, with rebuild costs rising rapidly, the current situation is likely to be even worse."

SO WHY IS THE SITUATION SO CHRONIC?

According to the Builders Merchants Federation (BMF), prices have risen by between 10% and 15% for products and

materials this year. However, some products, such as timber, have seen prices go up by 50% and by as much as 100% for oriented strand board (OSB) and other sheet materials, which are all key housebuilding components.


The main factors at play here are pent up demand following Covid lockdowns and the re-starting of postponed building projects, as well as the impact of Brexit on imports from the EU. The loss of around 1.5 million foreign workers throughout 2020 and 2021, many from construction, together with increased demand in other countries for construction materials, such as high Chinese demand for steel and extended lead times for virtually all materials, have combined to create a perfect storm around rebuilding costs.

Towergate also pointed to the insurance issue with our homes as well as telling *PM* the owners of as many as 580,000 homes across the UK worth more than £1 million each are also significantly underinsured and

should check their policies.

"Now is not the time for businesses and individuals to find out that their property is underinsured and that their insurance policy will not fully cover a loss," said Towergate's commercial director, Mark Brannon. "The only way to ensure that you and your business are not underinsured is to have an up-to-date valuation."

Valuations can be arranged for a small cost and you can speak to your insurance advisor to arrange this.

The information contained in this article is based on sources that we believe are reliable and should be understood as general risk management and insurance information only. It is not intended to be taken as advice with respect to any specific or individual situation and cannot be relied upon as such. Towergate is a preferred BPMA provider. For more information about Towergate services for members, visit bpma.co.uk Benefits section. 



CLOSED

Trust the UK's Largest Supplier of Promotional
Bags & Textiles.

Proud Sponsors of Distributor of the Year | £5m+ Award.

DTB[®]

DIRECT TEXTILES + BAGS



RECYCLED COTTON

5oz Long Handled Shopper

Sustainable garments are our forte too. Get in touch!

✉ sales@dtbeurope.com

☎ 01664 822 144

🌐 www.dtbeurope.com

DON'T SLIP THROUGH THE CRACKS

With hybrid working becoming more common, adjust your procedures to ensure your payments don't go missing, says **Mike Collins**



Regular readers to our articles may recall that at the very start of the pandemic, we wrote about how your credit control procedures may have to change to adapt to the differing work patterns of your suppliers.

We commented how the advent of 'flexible' or 'hybrid' home working, while being possibly beneficial for both the employee and the business, can often be detrimental to a supplier's credit control functions.

Most importantly, it can be detrimental to the time it takes to recover your monies.

The Government's ever-changing declarations that you should work from home where possible and then suddenly you shouldn't, has once again led to frustrations and inability to contact the relevant payment personnel, with the by-products being not only a delay in payments but also the inevitable squeeze on cash-flow.

So, what can you do to legislate against these delays and maximise the potential of recovering your monies and maintaining your cash-flow.

1. Make sure that your invoice holds ALL the correct information

- List the customer's information correctly, making sure any goods/service description is accurate, that the price is as quoted and the invoice is dated correctly.
- Include and highlight your complete bank details – bank name, sort code, account number and account name.
- Declare your payment terms and most importantly, the date for payment.

2. Make sure that your database holds ALL the correct information

- Make sure you have not only the customer's contact information but also those of the accounts contact as they may be different.
- Include an alternative accounts contact who can arrange payment, just in case your primary contact becomes ill.
- Have a contact to escalate the matter to, such as the FD or MD and have both the company and personal contact information for them.

3. Have a ledger to hand to see what invoices are owed... and action it

- Move into the modern age and email all of your invoices and statements. Don't trust the Post Office to do your job for you.
- Be proactive with your ledger – don't delay when an invoice is overdue. If the invoice is fair, it deserves to be paid.
- If there's a legitimate query, rush to resolve same. Don't give an opportunity to delay payment any longer than is necessary.

Don't worry if your current processes don't include all of these. Simply adding something to your procedures makes them better than before.


Alternatively, if you are already experiencing these delays and are being forced to spend more and more time on your essential credit

control functions, help is at hand through your retained BPMA service partners.

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

to credit management.

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

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



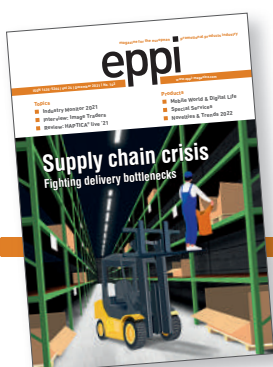


Mike Oxley
CEO of Prominate UK

eppi magazine remains at the forefront of developments and contributes towards international exchange. Learning about the different approaches to our industry directly benefits myself and my business.

Do you have an exciting contribution?

Contact: info@eppi-magazine.com



magazine for the
european promotional products industry

What's new?
eppi
has it!

Q & A

WITH THE EXPERTS

Claiming tax credits could be one of the most profitable uses of your time this year. But how do you do it?



Research & Development Tax Credits (usually referred to as R&D) are probably not the words that are guaranteed to secure attention but with areas such as tax relief few and far between, *PM* has been following up on R&D for the industry with experts, CBTax who conducted a question-and-answer session with BPMA members in January.

It is believed the promotional merchandise industry has potentially missed out on thousands in claims by not realising a claim could be made. R&D tax credits are a valuable government tax incentive that rewards UK companies for investing in innovation through qualifying projects.

Q. Does this mean only science projects qualify?

A. Research and development qualification to make a claim means those companies that have a scientific or technological uncertainty. In simple terms, the scientific or technological uncertainty needs additional expertise or support and resolve. This means a "competent professional" in the industry should not be able to easily resolve the issue or the advance in science and technology needed to advance the business.

Q. What does this mean for our industry?

A. Many areas can be looked at: iterative bespoke product design development should be considered for claims, manufacturing process improvements to achieve unique product specifications, improve production rates, cost-efficiency, minimise defects, material research and evaluation activities, design and manufacturing process validation

through prototyping, mock-ups and trial-and-error.

Not only that, but collaborative approaches to resolving technical project challenges and internal process improvements (IT systems/ CRM systems) that have increased efficiency/ added capability could also qualify.

Q. Does this only apply to suppliers then?

A. Not at all, in fact every company is encouraged to explore claims. BPMA CEO Carey Trevill noted the Association files a claim each year to look at how they have explored systems and improvements, helping claim back tens of thousands over the years to further invest back into member services.

Q. So how do you go about starting the qualification process?

A. R&D tax credits are calculated based on your R&D qualifying expenditure so to make an R&D credit calculation, you need to identify qualifying expenditure and enhance it by the relevant rate which produces your 'enhanced expenditure'.

Once you have deducted your enhanced expenditure from your taxable profits, or add it to your loss, it will result in either a Corporation Tax reduction if you are profit-making, a cash credit if you are loss-making or even a combination of the two.

Q. Does claiming take a long time?

A. If you're busy and this is something you haven't done before, what can you expect? CBTax's Steve Oakenfull explained after an initial discovery conversation, around an hour and half is needed to look at what claims could work and together with information

your accountant can provide. With SMEs able to claim up to 33p for every £1 spent on qualifying R&D activities, the average claim made by SMEs in the UK was £57,228 in 2018-19. Large companies are able to claim up to 11p for every £1 spent on qualifying R&D activities. The average large company (RDEC) claim in the UK was £632,931 in 2018-19.

Oakenfull reflected on this perhaps being the best hourly rate return most companies will have ever seen so worth investing the time to see what is possible.


Q. But what costs qualifies?

A. Staff salaries, employer's NIC, pension contributions and reimbursed expenses, subcontractor's costs, materials and consumables and software can all be part of a claim.

Q. Is timing important?

A. Yes, preparing a claim before year end will indicate quickly if you can reduce corporation tax for the year ahead and if you've had a loss-making year, make a difference with a cash credit. You can also look at retrospective years, up to two, but there is a time limit, so it's recommended you don't delay see what is possible.

Make sure you take advantage of what's on offer for tax credits and a little time investment could bring a much needed financial windfall after a tough trading period.

BPMA members can access a complementary consultation via CBTax. For more details, log into member section at bpma.co.uk or contact Tom Robey for more information. 

Exhibition Centre Düsseldorf

26-28

APR

22

**The Industry's
Who and How.**
My PSI. Live.



The industry's
big reunion.

Order your
tickets now.
psi-messe.com

The leading European trade show for
the promotional products industry

PSI

Built by



In the business of
building businesses

PSI LOOKS TO SPRING BACK

A move from its traditional start of the year date has given the European show breathing space

Along with so many events and expos, PSI opted to move its three-day show from January to 26-28 April in the face of the Omicron variant which hit the UK and Europe. Hailed as a sensible move by exhibitors, the new show timing sees PSI in the same location but different halls for this year – PSI 2022 will be Halls 1 and 4.

Exhibition director Petra Lassahn was keen to point out the benefits of moving from the usual halls: "We will for the first time have the pleasure of occupying Halls 1 and 4, the most modern halls at the Düsseldorf exhibition centre. And there, PSI will become what it has always been: the most important trade show for high-quality and unusual promotional products in Europe, the largest live event for producers, importers, retailers, buyers – and above all the meeting place of the PSI network."

CONFIDENCE RETURNS

BPMA members have been offered special rates for newcomers and returning exhibitors with PSI fully expecting to take late bookings as confidence in the market grows and Covid variants subside. Visitors can continue to register up to and during the show time.



PSI organisers told *PM*: "There is no deadline for exhibitor bookings – during our last show, we took bookings with only days to go. However, like all show organisers we prefer a little more notice."

The PSI site is ready and raring to go so if you're planning to visit the event in Dusseldorf this year, don't forget to check the latest travel information as a business traveller and plan your days in advance. The BPMA is hosting a lounge at the event to support both exhibitors and visitors so there is a welcome seat and a familiar face on hand.

BETTER LATE...

Lassahn also shared her thoughts on the ingredients for show success.

"The acceptance of plan changes is different today, in 2022 after two years of pandemic. Like so many things in our private and professional lives, PSI

is taking place a little later this year. I am sure that the wait for the spring PSI will be worth it," she said.

"After all, innovations and trends will continue to shape the market in April, convince decision-makers and drive the entire promotional products industry forward. We will rediscover the diversity and innovative spirit of our industry and be impressed by its performance and resilience. And after the demanding daily routine in the conjuncture, we will discover that there has rarely been a better time to inform, motivate and inspire each other. That's what we're committed to, that's what we're working towards with a clear strategic direction – and that's what I'm personally really looking forward to."

Find out more about exhibiting and visiting PSI at psi-network.de/en/

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

As we hopefully start to put the worst of Covid behind us our thoughts look to the future and what market demand will look like, says **Matt Pluckrose**



In terms of promotional technology, it is a bit like a crystal ball until Covid disappears for good but based on consumer trends and lifestyles this is what we believe will be in demand this year.

As working from home or 'hybrid working' looks set to continue, we will see demand for home tech solutions grow. This will range from wired or wireless conference speakers and anti-glare screens, to whole home power banks and smart desks.

Back to the office – for part of the week at least – we will see a new range of post Covid desk items to keep us cool, healthy and safe at work.

Trending on this theme is smart air purifiers, which will become the next promotional hit for many offices, homes, and schools.

These units are sometimes equipped

with Bluetooth or even Wi-Fi enabling them to be controlled remotely. They suck in the air around you and filter it for contaminants – using filters of different grades – right up to HEPA filters.

Such devices can be on an industrial scale or small, personal, and portable making them an ideal business gift/reward or staff welfare gift. Branding adds the cherry to the cake.

The global market for this product category was estimated at around \$11.2bn in 2020 and looks set to grow at a large rate above 10% for the years 2022-30, making this a serious global consumer category.



As Covid becomes less of a focus on our business lives and events open up again, promotional technology becomes a must have. In summary, make sure you are thinking about your clients' events, exhibitions and their promotional tech needs – this is the bread and butter for our industry.

However ignore at your peril the home office and new product categories such as air purifiers that will stay in demand from now onwards in our post-Covid business world.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas

The UK's leading manufacturer of 3D engraved awards & gifts



LASERCRYSTAL

www.lasercrystal.co.uk | 01202 675 000 | sales@lasercrystal.co.uk

GET FEATURED IN Product Media

At Product Media, we love preparing our Special Features to showcase the best the industry has to offer and celebrate innovation and development in the sector. During 2021, we received great feedback from the industry on the fantastic content to promote UK business.

For 2022, we have a range of topics we'll be exploring and welcome contributions across the following topics:

For each special feature, we explore the issue theme, looking for the latest news, opinion and of course innovative merchandise. The 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?

We are already taking submissions for future editions of the magazine. If you'd like to get involved or discuss special feature advertising, contact the editor for more information at editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk.

ISSUE	EDITION	ISSUE THEME*	EDITORIAL DEADLINE	PUBLICATION DATE
42	May-June 2022	Our Sustainable Future	25 Mar	6 May
43	July-August 2022	Writing Instruments/Stationery	20 May	4 Jul
44	September-October 2022	Food & Confectionery	22 Jul	5 Sep
45	November-December 2022	Drinkware & Ceramics	26 Sep	4 Nov



AN INDUSTRY THAT STAYS TOGETHER, *grows together*

The BPMA adjusted quickly to the needs of members during the past two years and is keen to keep adding value in the years ahead

Being part of the promotional merchandise industry over the past 20 or more years means we have seen a lot of change with businesses developing and growing over time and we have watched some of the brightest and best carve amazing careers. For those of you who were around to remember the days when the industry first got going, there are some legends who might see a very different industry today. Part of bringing standards and service to the fore drove the formation of the BPMA, setting out to serve the finest in our industry. Reassuringly hard to get in, it's an Association that has grown in reputation and service to its members, particularly in the last few years.

ADVICE IN TOUGH TIMES

Stepping into the gap when the pandemic hit our shores, the BPMA has provided its members with step-by-step information on everything from furlough to PPE to loans plus more export sessions than most of us have had hot dinners to ensure every business could access the right information fast. Being on hand to answer questions has been paramount.

Starting herself just as the pandemic broke, CEO Carey Trevill told PM: "We understood what was expected and our members have told us the proactive approach we took helped everyone navigate the last two years. Let's face it – it just kept coming so we kept giving all we could. It's been amazing to see how many companies engaged with us over this time and of course to the wider industry when we opened our doors to share information we felt everyone should have."

INVESTING IN THE INDUSTRY

The BPMA Board also took unprecedented steps early in the pandemic to invest some of its resources into supporting members at renewal in June 2020. Giving every member three months off their annual bill and more time to pay meant the universal cash flow crisis didn't translate into members leaving the Association; quite the opposite. In early



2021, the BPMA team approached every member to help them make adjustments in their membership band to ensure the valued benefits of being part of the BPMA club weren't out of reach just down to a tough trading year.

VALUED MEMBERSHIP


Moving into renewals this year, BPMA Chair Haydn Willetts has announced a small increase to membership fees for the coming year.

"Like everyone, the BPMA has had a really tough few years," he said. "The support from members during this time has been extraordinary and we thank each and every one for staying with us. We invested heavily in services for members in light of the economic situation we all faced. Membership here is fantastic value for money and with benefits available to every member worth nearly three times the average membership fee, we have adjusted our fees marginally to reflect the changed conditions. Fees haven't changed for nearly seven years and we believe the adjustment continues to represent not only the right level for members, but the added services every member enjoys."

The peer-to-peer nature of membership at

the BPMA means applications are considered by not only the Board but also references from other members.

Heading membership at the BPMA, Tom Robey said: "The way the industry grows its network and helps its partners is like no other industry. We continued to welcome new members throughout the pandemic and for those who had to step away during tough times, we're starting to welcome many back into the Association. So many companies have supported each other with references and referrals this year; it's been incredible to see how the industry wants each and every business to thrive. The advocacy within membership is quite unique to this industry and not something we see in other sectors to the same degree. With recovery now firmly in our sights, we're on the look out for new members to join us and take advantage of being part of a strong organisation that backs the industry every step of the way."

The BPMA will be at Merchandise World and if you'd like to find out more about joining, please contact Tom Robey on 01372 371 183 or email membership@bpma.co.uk to arrange an appointment at the show or a face to face meeting at your offices. 

BPMA EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Expert industry training

from £200+VAT



> Secure your place today

For more information, course intakes and to secure places, call **01372 371184** or contact **education@bpma.co.uk**.

Courses available to BPMA members only.

bpma.co.uk

Stannodout

MERCHANDISE



Premier Impressions

October, and the UK was seeing Covid restriction relaxations in many places. A trip to the south coast saw the BPMA head down the M23 and a warm welcome from Premier Impressions in Newhaven. Experts in professional branding services, they offer pad and screen printing, digital printing, laser engraving, graphic design, fulfilment and warehousing.

Members since 2000, the company is one of the longest standing BPMA Charter members and the team was running at full pelt with different product lines being printed the day I arrived.

Founded in 1989, Premier Impressions sources products from a range of global market leaders and it has branded at the facility over the years. Exceptional customer experience, value and focus on quality runs deep in the team.

First contact is often made with the office team to gain an understanding of an individual project, with advice provided on the best branding methods and applicable time frames.

Product assessments are warmly welcomed and with the team's vast printing experience, test prints and ink adhesion checks are often performed to ensure the project meets objectives.

Once costs are confirmed and the order acknowledgement received, customers will then be asked for artwork assets (which they can also help with) and it's up to the team to receive, inspect and securely stock the promotional merchandise involved. Production and printing take place with quality control throughout the processes by extremely experienced branding professionals. Goods are then repacked under plain cover and distributed to your clients with updates provided to keep you informed every step of the way.

Speedbird Promotions

November and we were visiting Thetford, Norfolk to see Speedbird Promotions. The business has been a BPMA member since 2009 and provides officially licensed scale model vehicles.

A specialist supplier within the sector, many of us are familiar with the core product. However, less familiar to some of us are the associated products to ensure your client's campaigns stand out.

Scaled rigs and trucks have been provided to events companies, branded and used as staff transport through event venues. They are a great way to market and can in addition be used to move drinks trolleys and receptions throughout a venue. You are sure to be noticed and remembered.

Sea and ocean freight container gifts are proving more and more popular with transport clients. Individual containers can be desk features, and if your client's speciality is in sea and ocean freight then these are the ultimate promotional products that are sure to fulfil the client's brief.

Products include tissue holders, memo pads, power banks, USB hubs, stationery desk holders and USB drives, all in container format to suit many a brief.



“Let’s meet at Merchandise World!”

> Book a meeting

To find out more about why hundreds of Distributors and Suppliers enjoy the support and benefits of membership, please call **01372 371184** or contact **membership@bpma.co.uk** to book a meeting with us at Merchandise World.

bpma.co.uk

BPMA membership is subject to application, credit checks, references and BPMA Board approval. To view our terms and conditions, please visit bpma.co.uk.

LAUNCHING
THIS SPRING



We are proud to announce The Pen Warehouse is now the UK-exclusive supplier of a range of Chili Concept design-led writing instruments.



UK Stock • In-House Branding • Competitive Lead Times • Registered Designs

FIND OUT MORE

sales@pens.co.uk | +44 (0)1252 400270 | www.pens.co.uk

