



WHERE NEXT FOR INDUSTRY EXHIBITIONS?

The sector decides p4



**MERCHANDISE
DOWN UNDER**
A REPORT FROM
AUSTRALIA **P11**



◀ **PSI 2017**
WHAT WAS HOT IN
DÜSSELDORF? **P18**

JUST REWARDS?
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YOUR PEOPLE **P24**



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answer the questions

WELCOME

TIME FOR CHANGE



I am delighted to hear that many suppliers and distributors got off to a flying start with business booming among many I have spoken to. The first show of the year, PSI, was excellent as always with inspiring exhibition

stands and great visitor numbers (see report on page 18). I was particularly pleased with the reaction to UK companies not only in our pavilion but also generally to the British-made theme, something the Briman group has been waving the flag about quite vigorously.

This is definitely the year of compliance for the BPMA which will be addressed in all our six regional events in March and April. Our strategic alliance with Cambridgeshire Trading Standards is a great move forwards in ensuring our industry operates at the highest level. In this issue, we have also addressed one of the big challenges across the industry - staff retention and employee engagement. When I was talking to people about this I was really interested to hear the different ideas in place both across the supplier and distributor networks.

I am also pleased to see our friends from APPA sharing their insight about the Australasian market. The BPMA is now

connected right across the globe. We have loads more initiatives in place including a number of speaker engagements at Marketing Week Live, Prolific North, b2b Marketing Expo and some great ideas brewing for Promotional Products Week. And if that's not enough, a brand-new education programme is being launched imminently.

Overall, it's an exciting time for the industry, with lots of developments in the pipeline. As always, the BPMA is looking to lead and to ensure that our members' businesses are best placed to prosper.

Gordon Glenister,
director general of the BPMA

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



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Merchandise World Survey – Looking to the future

Merchandise World is delighted to say that this new exciting event coming in September 2017 is proving to be very popular based on bookings and visitor interest. With six months to go, more than 110 suppliers are already booked to attend, and there has been enthusiastic support from across the industry for the event being exclusive to 'professional distributors'.

More information about Merchandise World 2017 can be found at merchadiseworld.co.uk.

Now, the BPMA and Sourcing City are also looking to the future. They were very interested to hear the views of their collective members/customers, so they embarked upon an eight-question survey in mid-February. The results were under collation as this article went to press, and full results will be fed back when available.

The BPMA and Sourcing City came together to form the joint venture Merchandise World after both had successfully run individual industry events. It is clear that these two organisations are totally focused on the professional distributor sales channel partnered with professional suppliers, and are always looking to provide whatever support and services that the industry wants.

In recent weeks both organisations have been asked by a good number of suppliers and distributors whether another Merchandise World could be held in the early part of the year.

A decision like this cannot be based on the views of a few, hence they have embarked upon the survey to gauge the feelings of all BPMA members and Sourcing City customers.

UK promotional merchandise continues growth

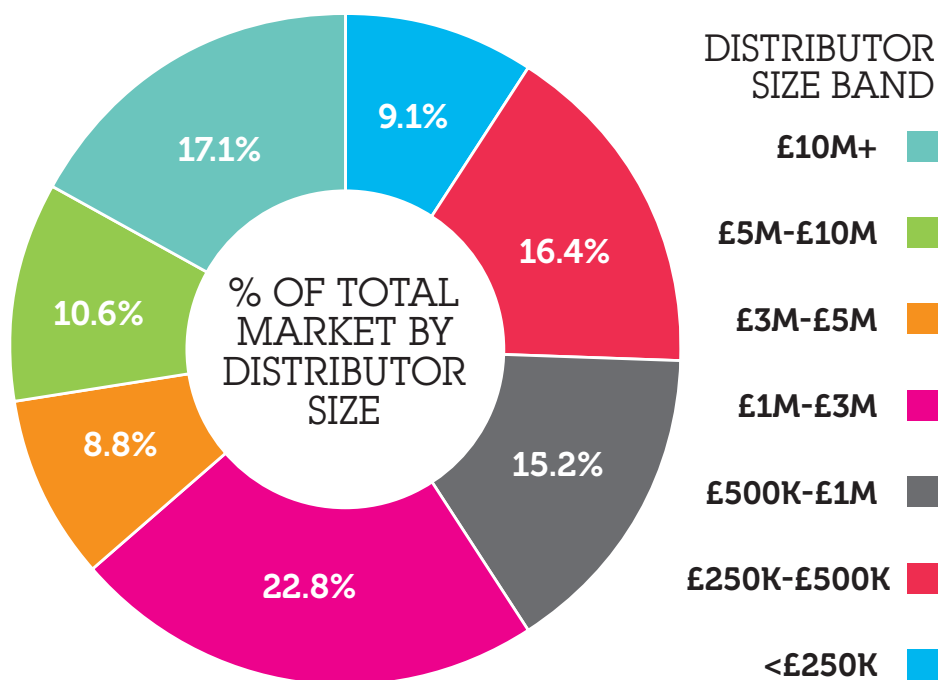
The Promotional Merchandise Industry Market Report has been created by Sourcing City to provide a global picture of the industry today and provides a detailed analysis of the statistics and trends in the promotional merchandise industry in UK and Ireland in the years to 2016.

For the seventh year in succession there has been steady and continual growth in the UK and Ireland promotional merchandise market. The industry is now £50 million ahead of the year before the banking crisis of 2008, and has made an overall recovery of £292m. Sourcing City estimates the total size of the sector to be £966,440,000. The report puts the total number of distributors at 1,975 with 147 distributors responsible for £572m of value.

This year's report contains detailed analysis of all areas of the market including: distributors in both turnover size and geographic terms; an analysis of suppliers; ceased trading companies; acquisitions and mergers, and the top product groups.

The report also contains comment and analysis on the economic and industry overview for 2016, Brexit, CVAs, Vistaprint's entry into the UK market, Web to Print technology and its potential impact on the market, Merchandise World, and the development of Dynamic Highway.

For details of the full report contact www.sourcingcity.co.uk.



PPEXpo becomes Resellex

Customer Focus, the organiser of merchandise exhibition PPEXpo, announced in January that the event would change in 2018 to become Resellex – the reseller expo.

It has also been announced that Customer Focus is offering promotional product resellers a free Click 2 Ship website, under

the channl.com brand. A total of 22,000 Channl websites were created in the US during the last quarter of 2016.

Resellex will be a three-day format with the explicit aim of introducing new reseller sales opportunities to the exhibitors. In addition, two days of the event will

continue to be focused upon the traditional promotional product distributor customers from PPEXpo.

The last day will allow promotional product distributors to invite and host their end buyer customers on accompanied stand visits and to attend a high-class speaker programme.

Resellex will be held at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry in January 2018.

Trading standards and BPMA work together

The BPMA has recently entered into a formal Primary Authority Partnership with Cambridgeshire Trading Standards to provide regulatory guidance and support to members. The scheme is managed through the regulatory delivery team of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

An innovative part of the scheme allows Cambs TS to legally support members who follow any guidance the BPMA jointly issues. The BPMA and its members qualify to be part of the scheme as it is regarded as having "a shared approach to compliance".

The BPMA sees the partnership as a way to both support members and help raise standards across the industry, as well as highlighting any poor practice. While much of the advice will be provided to the association on behalf of its members, individual issues can be managed on a cost basis. The aim is to ensure that all members are operating within the law and selling legally compliant products.

Equally, the association is aware that some organisations may at times be inadvertently non-compliant and it's the intention to raise awareness and support members in resolving any such matters.

Commenting, Trading Standards business hub manager, Mark Oliver (pictured) said: "We are delighted that the BPMA is taking such a proactive and positive role in the field of product compliance and we are very keen to support both the association and its members."

Cambridgeshire Trading Standards will also be sharing insights at the forthcoming BPMA regional meetings in March and April.



UK manufacturers in the Briman group continue to grow

The UK manufacturers' group, Briman has indicated strong growth as more clients look for fast turnaround times. Many members report investment in new machinery and extra staff. One member has grown 240%, and Orchard Melamine took on four members of staff alone.

Kevin Kingham from UK Lanyards, said: "To be honest, the increase in imported costs will only help us. However, the quid per quo here, is if raw materials have to be imported, then there will be an impact for the manufacturer. There has been an increase in the buying British theme that has come from distributors but also because there has been an interest with end users too."

Ian Webb, managing director from Bio Labs has invested in two more label machines and taken on two extra staff. He said that the Brexit vote could be good for UK manufacturing but has some concerns over the economy which may affect promotional spend.

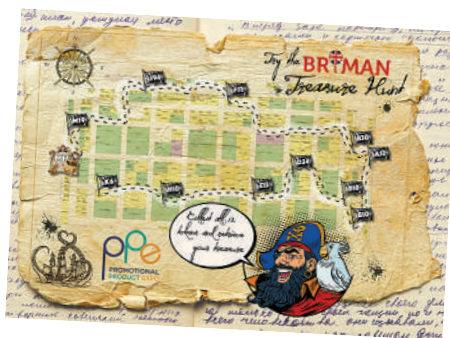
The Briman group offers an opportunity for distributors to promote a UK-made collection. Jamie Gray from Sow Easy on a recent visit to PSI suggested that there was real interest from European clients, who have traditionally thought of UK products as more expensive because of the strong pound and shipment charges but are now finding quick turnaround times and a more competitive marketplace. Many UK

manufacturers also have advanced printing technology allowing for digital printing on promotional products.

Angela Wagstaff, marketing director, Allwag Promotions, winner of the 2016 Briman Richard Dyson award for promoting British suppliers, said: "We have noticed a real interest in our clients to back British suppliers."

There are many advantages of buying British made products. Members of the Briman group must have a minimum of 50% of their turnover coming from British made products. The group remains committed to supporting British manufacturing and promoting best practices within the industry.

For more information visit:
www.brimangroup.co.uk or email
info@brimangroup.co.uk



Briman delivers promo hunt

Mark Alderson, director of First Editions and chair of the Briman group said that the final Promotional Product Expo gave members the opportunity to engage with the audience. Briman organised a treasure hunt where distributors were encouraged to collect different coloured 'pieces of eight' (supplied by Great Central Plastics). These were available on each member's stand throughout the exhibition. With more than 70 distributors completing the treasure hunt over the two-day event, the challenge proved very popular with suppliers and distributors alike.

"It was great seeing how many distributors engaged in our treasure hunt and it offered a great opportunity to explain the benefits of Buying British," said Alderson. "We hope to grow on the success of this challenge and organise similar hunts at future events, including Merchandise World."

Victoria Hall of Synergraphics was the first distributor to complete the treasure hunt.

BPMA official media partner to Sedex

Sedex, the supplier and ethical data exchange, is having its sixth annual conference at QE2 Centre in London, on 5 April.

The Sedex Conference is the organisation's largest annual gathering, bringing together hundreds of Sedex members and business leaders from across the globe to share ideas and learn about the issues that matter to every responsible company. Top brands that have attended Sedex include Bodyshop, Tesco, PWC, Bloomberg, Kellogg's, Waitrose and Virgin to name just a few.

BPMA members qualify for a 30% discount off the ticket price. This offer link can be found on the BPMA events page at bpma.co.uk.

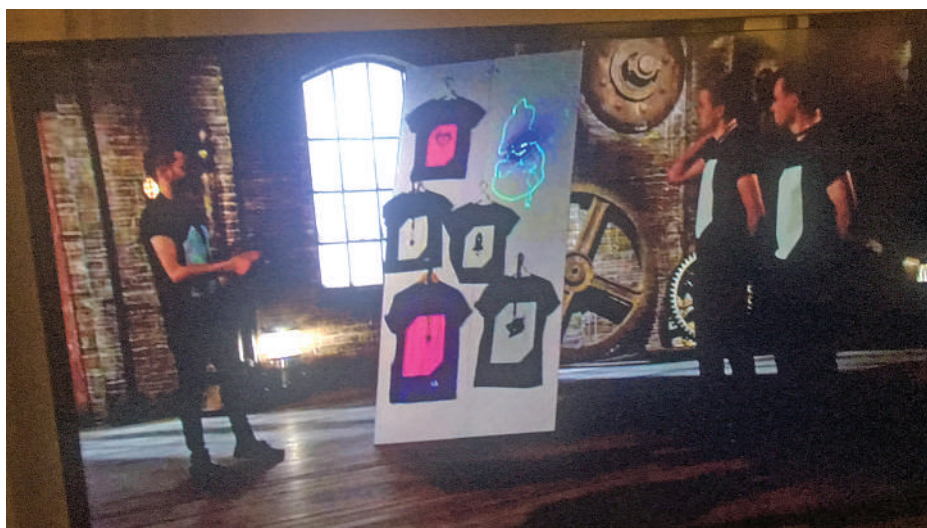


Photo mug investigation

In the last edition of *Product Media*, we covered the issues surrounding false claims made on dishwasher safe photo mugs. This research was based on Far East imported blank mugs with various coatings on them.

UK decorator Keramikos was keen to highlight to *PM* magazine that its Millennium coating had passed the required tests and have presented us with test certificates from Luciden the same organisation that carried out the tests on behalf of the BPMA.

Keramikos commercial director Godfrey O'Donnell, said: "We are clearly behind any organisation or association in striving to improve the image and professionalism of the promotional industry. Testing and compliance of product to the exacting standards required by the end user is not only a way forward in achieving that professionalism but also a way of separating the professional trade only suppliers who are committed to the continued growth and integrity of the promotional industry."



Rob Manley shines with the Dragons

Apparel supplier, Rob Manley, founder of Illuminated Apparel hit our TV screens in January in an effort to gain £50,000 funding from entrepreneurs on BBC's *Dragons' Den* series. While all the Dragons were very impressed by Rob's passion for his cool print design and engaging method of creating personal images on T-shirts, only Deborah Meaden stumped up the cash.

Rob got the call from the producers that his pitch had made the final edit and was being shown on Sunday 14th January. At the time, he was with the BPMA team on the UK pavilion at international show, PSI. Rob told *Product Media* magazine that his phone hasn't stopped ringing since, although in the end he didn't go through with the investment and therefore didn't have to surrender a share of the business.

New trio from Senator

Senator's design studio in Germany has introduced three new pens to its range.

Available to the industry from April, the new pens are an ultra-smooth twist-action plastic ball pen family, called Bridge, available in an array of rich colours, with optional metal nose cone. Polar is a 'luxe for less' metal pen range.

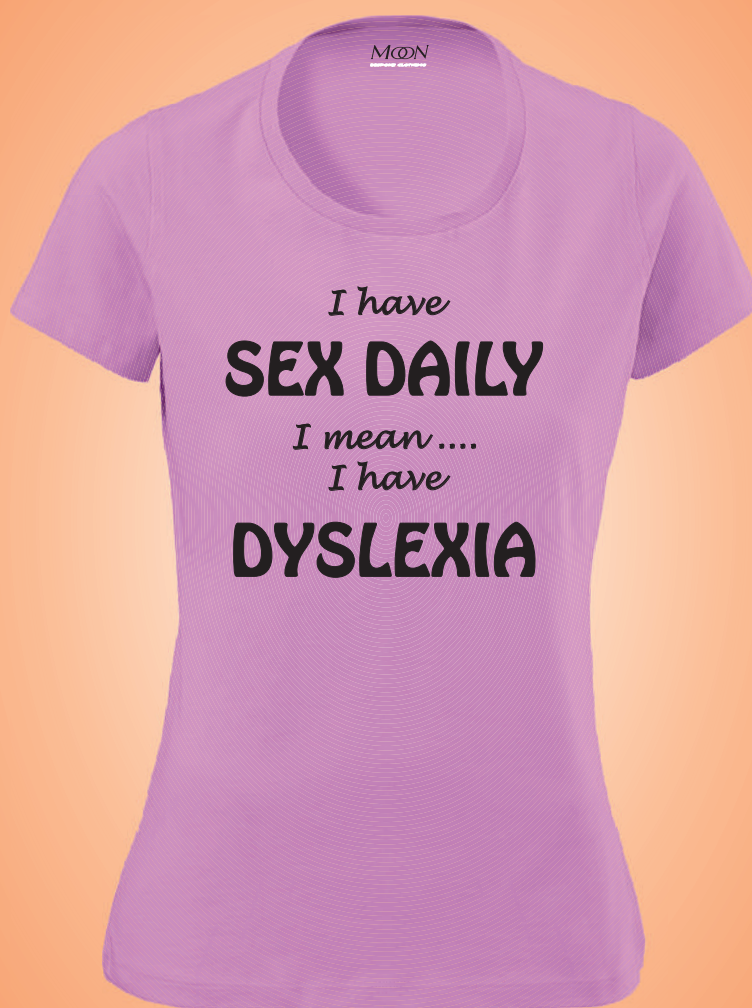
The third pen, the Liberty, is available now with a tactile soft grip. All the products are German-made.

Information on Senator's new and existing product ranges are available in two new catalogues – Senator's comprehensive guide and its handy best sellers mini catalogue.



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ADDING VALUE

The ongoing fight against commodity players in merchandise requires the industry to continually uphold quality and compliance standards, says **Andrew Hill**

Q. In Germany, there is a product safety act. Do you think this should come to the UK?

A. There is a misunderstanding between 'made for single purpose' and 'safe'. In our industry, there are many importers of products who not only ensure that the factories they use are suitably audited, but also comply with the chemical limitations laid down by regulatory bodies such as REACH. They are at the top of the tree, while the branches underneath contain many different variants, bottoming out with suppliers of shoddy product full of unpleasant chemicals.

The 'tree top' suppliers clearly indicate a trail of responsible sourcing, while those at the very bottom merely supply for unregulated demand. In Germany, the Product Safety Act basically ensures that consumers are protected from non-German made imports (German manufacturers need to comply with Federal and EU laws and guidelines so are not fazed by safety legislation) so it follows that, eventually, that protection will apply here (to a much greater extent than it does now). The answer to the question of 'should it come' will be answered 'yes' by the responsible operators in our industry and 'no' by those 'commodity cowboys' for whom it confers unnecessary and unwanted interference.

Q. We've noticed some suppliers and distributors using compliance as a reassuring value proposition now. What's your view on this?

A. In recent years I have witnessed an increase in the



marketing of compliance, not only as a proposition for adding value, but also a way to win new business. This is in line with the growing demand from a number of end-users (primarily from brands who have equity at stake) for manufacturing and product certification. So, the shift has not only been from a reassurance perspective, but also a client-driven demand for responsibly manufactured/sourced product. Companies who are determined to stand out in a crowded field such as ours will already be aware of the real value of compliance and are making significant headway. A quick indicator of this is the BPMA's Charter programme.

Q. How do European distributors compare with UK distributors in their knowledge of key legislation?


A. I can only answer this from an anecdotal perspective. My

perception is that it varies from country to country, dependent upon the impact of the promotional industry in those differing markets. In mature markets where promotional products have been around for a while, knowledge of legislative requirements will have been garnered over a period of time, albeit from a day-to-day trading perspective rather than a proactive desire to be fully informed. As in the UK, the emphasis is on the suppliers to ensure that the products they provide comply with relevant legal requirements. In less mature markets, it is still pretty hit and miss from both the supplier and the distributor perspective.

Q. The BPMA has teamed up with Trading Standards to support companies in becoming more compliant. Do you welcome this?

A. Yes, of course. Our industry needs to continually up its game if our supply-channel model is to thrive. The strength of the supply chain can only be measured against its willingness to grow over the medium to long term, and there are enough seriously interested entrepreneurial operations within our discipline to make this happen. The more time we invest in getting it right the more business will flow into our industry allowing committed companies to flourish. Bodies such as Trading Standards can be used as allies in the development process, allowing our industry to understand and exploit opportunities, rather than being policed for non-compliance.

Q. How can we stop non-compliant products getting through the industry unchecked?

A. The low barrier to entry to our discipline offers a bounty of poorly made and low priced products to battle it out for slim margins. Decent distributors everywhere are faced with the same problem and, as many have told me, it is difficult to know what to do for the best. The fact is that the industry-damaging commodity cowboys will inevitably have a smaller pool to swim in if the suppliers of non-compliant products on which they focus are held to account. The consequence of this is that the perception of, and the spend in, our fantastic industry will grow and benefit us all if we seriously begin to 'de-clutter'. 

Andrew Hill is the MD of Senator Pens in the UK



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USB2U and Pixika team up

Northampton-based branded technology supplier USB2U has become the exclusive supplier of Pixika's PXX design promotional technology products in the UK.

PXX is an international promotional technology products supplier for product areas such as portable Bluetooth speakers and headsets, power banks, USB flash drives, connected devices and mobile phone accessories. It is headquartered in Paris.

Sebastian La Porta, managing director, USB2U, said the deal would benefit resellers. "We hold stock in the UK which allows a fast project turnaround, and we also offer free origination, data upload and delivery. The partnership will also have a positive impact on pricing as we are planning to launch a 'Buying Club', allowing the most active resellers to have access to exclusive benefits, offers and pricing."



Fluid goes Dutch with Sentel

Fluid Branding has opened its first ever European office in Amsterdam, in The Netherlands as it looks to expand on the Continent.

The new office is headed up by sales director, Gert-Jan Sentel, who joins Fluid with 22 years of experience within the promotional merchandise industry, having worked with companies in the industrial and FMCG sectors worldwide.

He said: "I am very excited about this opportunity for both my current and new clients. I am delighted to join the Fluid Branding team and play a part in the company's next phase of expansion."

Miles Lovegrove, managing director, Fluid Branding, said the company's move into Europe was a natural development following 2016's expansion in the UK market. "We identified the need to service our existing clients and grow our portfolio across the EMEA, and where better to do this than Amsterdam, where many companies' European head offices are located."

Lovegrove added: "Our expansion plans ensure we're perfectly placed for our EMEA clients and run alongside our continual commitment to exceptional customer service. We're very excited about the coming year."



Left to right: Fluid CEO, Matt Franks; sales director, Gert-Jan Sentel; MD, Miles Lovegrove



Left to right:
Premier MD, Jamie
Marshall; Blueprint
MD, Mark Wilson

Premier acquires Blueprint in new year expansion drive

Premier Print & Promotions has continued its expansion plans to become the leading provider of print and promotional products in the UK. The Essex firm has acquired Blueprint Promotional Products Ltd of Nottingham for an undisclosed sum. Blueprint will trade under the umbrella group of Premier companies.

With a wealth of experience in print, promotional merchandise and corporate gifts, Premier is one of the UK's largest distributors of promotional products. The Blueprint deal follows Premier's acquisition of The Merchandise House in August 2016 and the recent redesign of its website.

"As we welcome Blueprint into the Premier family, we believe that their expertise in the promotional market will contribute toward our business growth in 2017 and beyond," said Jamie Marshall, founder and managing director of Premier Print & Promotions. "All of us at Premier are looking forward to building a close working relationship with Blueprint's clients and staff."

Mark Wilson, managing director of Blueprint Promotional Products, said: "I know Jamie and his team at Premier have the experience and enthusiasm to take Blueprint's client base to the next level and will serve them very well."

LET'S SHARE THE LOVE

The promotional industries in Australia and New Zealand share many of the aims and ambitions of the UK, says **Maree Lawless**



Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom. Our landscapes and climates may differ greatly, but we have much in common – our love for promotional merchandise for one, and the enthusiasm of our respective industry bodies, the BPMA and APPA (Australasian Promotional Products Association) to raise the profile of our industry.

As an APPA board director on a recent trip to London, I had the pleasure of meeting with Gordon Glenister and many of the patrons of the BPMA. I was overwhelmed at the passion for our industry, and the professionalism with which it was approached. Chatting with Gordon made us realise the extent of our synergies, and the need to open some dialogue.

So, who are we? Formed in 1986, APPA is the only association for the promotional products industry in Australia and New Zealand, and is under the leadership of CEO, Steve Granland, who has been with the association for just over 12 months. Steve's experience with not-for-profit associations is extensive, and he understands the value of communication. As a result, APPA is strengthening its ties with allies like BPMA.

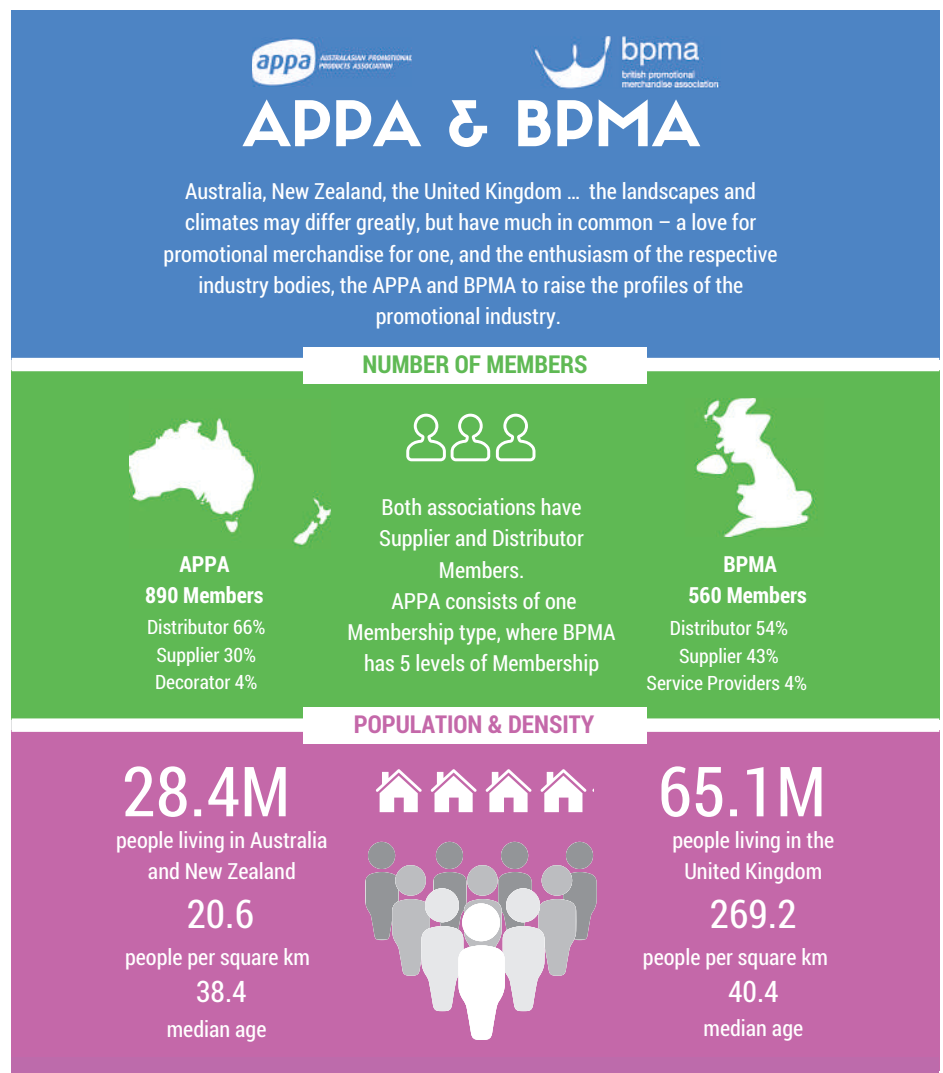
APPA's focus is on building member value, industry growth and influence, setting and maintaining high standards of professionalism, and providing market-driven and leading events and education. On an educational level, APPA's board of 10 directors now includes an appointee who is a professor of marketing at an Australian university. This inclusion allows APPA to work towards the creation of a unit within a marketing degree that focuses on promotional merchandise. For marketing

graduates to enter the workforce with a directly learned knowledge of our creative industry and aspire to work in it would be the ultimate achievement. These same graduates may also enter marketing roles where they will purchase promotional merchandise with a much greater understanding and focus on their value. Similarly, BPMA's industry-specific education focus will continue to promote and validate our industry, and help

in attracting quality candidates. To exchange ideas between our associations on this level can only benefit all.

Communicate. It's what promotional merchandise does, and does well. It's what we all need to do, to continue to grow our industry. We love it when suppliers and distributors connect in the traditional model on which our industries were built, providing quality, creative solutions – solutions that


"Communicate. It's what promotional merchandise does, and does well"



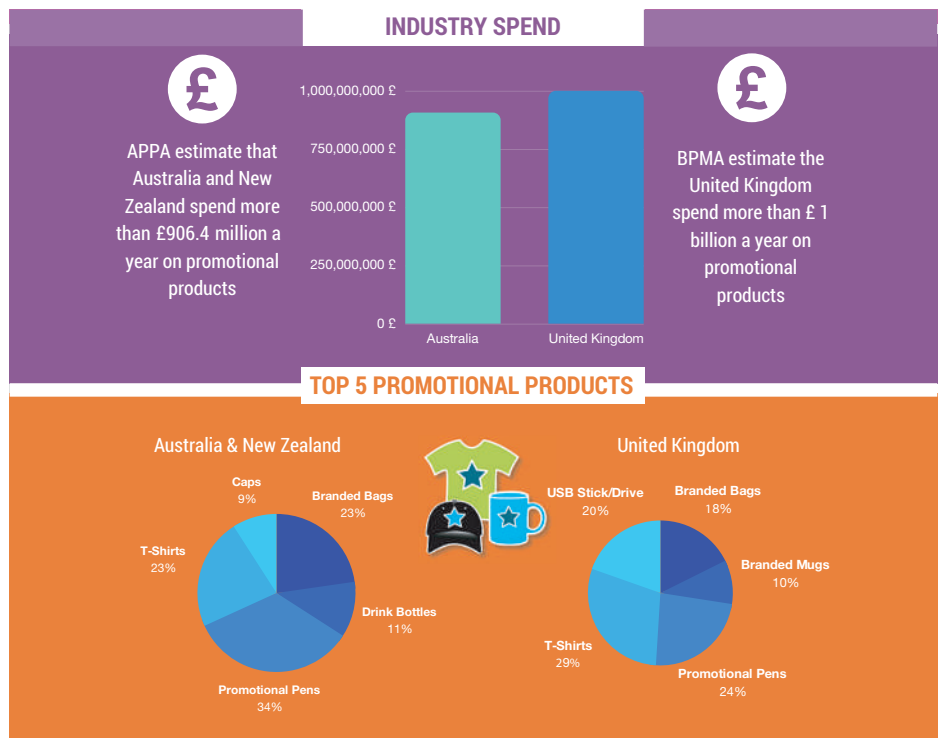
are ethically sourced, and meet safety compliance standards. And through these connections, great partnerships are born that breed more of the same.

Now that BPMA and APPA have made a real connection, we hope to work together in sharing information. We'd like to see our two industry bodies collaborate in helping distributors find regional partners for servicing global accounts; share ideas on our education models; explore new benefits of membership; trade show structures; ethical sourcing standards; product safety compliance; website developments, and more.

For BPMA members who are visiting Australia, we offer an open invitation to meet with us. Tell us about your business, and we'll tell you about ours. Imagine a job exchange board between our countries. You're used to hearing this because you work in promotional merchandise, but the possibilities are endless. Let's explore them together and see if we really can share the love.

For any further information on BPMA's collaboration with APPA, please contact Gordon Glenister (gordon@bpma.co.uk). Steve Granland can be contacted via email (steve@appa.com.au) 

Maree Lawless has been an APPA board director since 2013, and is director of The Works Printing Group, a supplier member of APPA



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ASK CLIVE

This year's colours and styles can come straight off the high street to the promotional sector



As we are now into the new year I thought I would look at how 2017 colours and styles deemed fashionable by the mainstream fashion industry are transposed into the branded clothing market. This year's colours and fashion trends are military style, long

body T-shirts and pockets, with whites and pastilles leading the colour charts.

On the branding and decorating radar the trends are big and bold branding on polo shirts along with this being the year of the slogan T-shirt. Refreshingly, all these fashions can be mirrored in



our marketplace due to our clothing suppliers (wholesaler or decorator) launching and stocking new and exciting products coupled with branding techniques that any good garment embellisher should be able to offer.

The supply chain has at last realised that the promotions market needs to be current

and relevant especially in the clothing market.

All of these 2017 colours and styles used in conjunction with original branding methods can benefit your clients in the marketing of their brand and bring you clothing sales.

Happy selling, Clive
(The branded clothing guru)

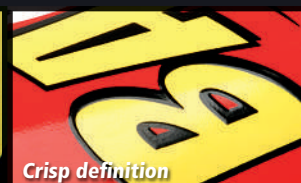
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EUROPE SHOWS THE WAY

The latest PSI show hit new heights, both in terms of visitors and exhibitors, and in the creativity on show





So much for being 55 and showing your age. With six per cent more exhibitors, nearly eight per cent more visitors and a share of international visitors that's climbed to 57%, PSI continued its growth trajectory and once again posted new records at the 55th event. In total, organiser Reed Exhibitions Deutschland counted 988 exhibitors (2016 - 932) and 18,094 visitors (2016 - 16,810).

For the first time, industry customers invited by promotional products distributors were granted access to PSI on the last day of the event. Until now, the show had been reserved exclusively for promotional products professionals.

The event was bursting with the latest creative ideas, such as sweet advertising made from marzipan and produced by a 3D printer, with limitless designs, fully in line with the customer's taste. Or enamel

mugs featuring a vintage look, branded with sandblasted engravings and produced by a young company from Saxony. Or never-before-seen worldwide innovations like the 'Smart Writing Set', which uses an app to merge the writing culture of a notebook with the digital world by transferring handwritten texts to smartphones, tablets or laptops.

"An impressive firework of creativity was ignited – celebrated almost – at PSI; it just gets you in the mood to work even more intensely with promotional products. If you can't find ideas here, you'll have a hard time finding them at all," Michael Freter, PSI's director, said at the end of the three-day exhibition.

Where else can you find sneakers with stylish prints, available for production runs of a single pair? There were children's drawings on bread boxes that come alive as virtual worlds thanks to smartphone-



From top left:

Bio Labs' pampering; branded soap machine; stand out speakers; duck mania; branded biscuits; diaries and notebooks; sales cycle at PSI; branded cool boxes

based augmented reality software. Or textiles with top-quality finishes. Be it in the electronics segment; in the textiles sector; in the classic paper, office and stationery product range, or in the housewares and food area – all four PSI halls were brimming with innovations and inspirations.

PSI drives at the same goal with its Industry Customer Day on the last day of the event. For the first time, industry customers holding invitations from promotional products distributors and specially marked tickets had a chance to attend PSI. More than 1,700 customers of promotional products distributors showed up and were enthralled by the diversity of the promotional products range.

"The Industry Customer Day is one of the most massive campaigns for promotional products that's ever been launched in the history of our sector," said Freter.

The Industry Customer Day concept was developed under the leadership of the trade show task force of the GWW, the umbrella organisation of the German promotional products industry. Represented in the group are promotional products consultants, wholesalers, suppliers, brand manufacturers and the PSI Network.

"We very much welcome that advertisers invited by consultants can see for themselves what kind of a performance our industry is capable of delivering. Because nowhere else does the industry do a better job of presenting itself than here at PSI," said GWW chairman, Patrick Politze.



From top left: anyone for futsal; Briman flies the flag for GB; hot stuff - branded heaters, and even branded beds



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Left to right: get ahead with a hat; VR was big at PSI; massage cushions; posh packaging; AR on lunchboxes; put a cap on it





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Left to right:
thirst-quenching
water bottles; t-shirt
printing; more great
packaging ideas; a
cuddly friend



With record industry sales of €3.47 billion in the past fiscal year, the promotional products industry is a stable fixture in the German advertising market. Nearly half of all companies now deploy promotional products as part of their marketing campaigns, according to the Industry Barometer, the annual survey presented by the GWW.

And the promotional products industry is looking to the future with optimism. The PSI's latest European industry report, for which the PSI Institute surveyed 1,958 companies in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK,

France, Italy and Spain, confirms that notion. Altogether, 76% of suppliers (up from 62% last year) and 67% (up from 60%) of promotional products consultants in Europe recorded year-on-year sales increases in 2016. By contrast, 14% of suppliers (24%) and 15% of distributors (20%) registered a drop in sales. The majority of companies expect sales to grow over the course of the next five years. The figure for suppliers is 87% (up from 84%), and 84% (83%) for promotional products consultants. ^{PSI}

The next PSI Show will take place in Düsseldorf from 9-11 January 2018.



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A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION

How many times have you heard a company boss say that staff are their number one asset? Delivering on that takes a comprehensive reward and recognition programme, says **Gordon Glenister**

Last issue we explored the challenges facing companies in recruiting new staff. This month, we explore the area of reward and recognition.

It would appear that in most instances junior sales staff are paid between £18-25k dependent on experience, and more experienced sales performers, allowing for commission, £35-50k. The very top performers can earn above this. Many sales people can receive commission linked to

achieving gross profit and sales targets. Sometimes this will be based on the overall team/company performance.

Some of the larger distributors will reward their staff more, however often those are linked to bigger sales targets. Those that have lower salaries are often in more remote locations, but focus their retention strategies on looking after their teams in all sorts of different ways. Some of the range of benefits offered to staff are shown in the box opposite.

A recent survey by Capita employee benefits suggested that 44% of employees know someone who has left work through stress. Benefits are not a replacement for a culture that takes account of the wellbeing of staff, but rather an important element of looking after your people.

Companies that create the right culture and values will instil more employee loyalty than those that don't. I have seen instances within member companies of whiteboards showing motivational quotes, key



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values, sales progress, employee of the month, or lead tables all of which can be very successful.

Some companies taking on new starters will link a requirement to pass the BPMA qualification or other relevant qualifications to achieving a successful probationary period. Rewards and pay salary increases are often linked to a successful appraisal and are not necessarily across the board. Employees that have a clearly defined career path are more likely to stay happy.

Most of us want to feel pride in our work, and to be acknowledged for doing a good job. Some companies create their own mini awards for employees often around a year end performance. One supplier boss said they regularly share customer testimonials or special jobs they've done on the internal company newsletter, intranet or notice board.

One distributor summed up their approach. "I am very proud of my staff and their professional attitude. Happy staff = happy suppliers = happy customers."

Long may that ethos continue. 

Popular staff benefits

- Company car (for field based sales staff)
- Flexible benefit programme
- Free training, such as funding for the BPMA programme
- Free uniform
- Job share
- Use of canteen/reduced costs rather than coffee machines
- Chill out/games areas
- Sabbaticals – for extended service e.g. 10 years (one month unpaid leave)
- Flexible hours to suit family needs (on request)
- Contributory pension
- Extra days holiday for extended service
- Box at music venue as staff incentives
- Bonus 'days off' for their holiday
- Interest free loans (particularly relevant for season tickets)
- Team trips to celebrate anniversaries
- Christmas party (funded)
- Early 15 min start every day, but leave at 4pm every Friday
- Quarterly team nights out if targets met
- Themed engaging events, such as Promotional Products Week, Comic Relief, Ice Bucket challenge.

"Companies that create the right culture and values will instil more employee loyalty"

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BREXIT: THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

As we set out towards Brexit, promotional suppliers and distributors should take stock of what they can offer overseas markets, says **Phil Morgan**



As I write this, the Government has just published its white paper for Brexit, setting out the themes of its negotiation goals. I'm not here to offer my opinion on the principles set out, or our negotiation style. What I am still concerned about is how Brexit, and the journey towards it will affect UK promotional product suppliers and distributors.

We have two years to agree the terms of the exit, unpick more than 40 years of policies and agreements, and have all the terms agreed by 27 national parliaments. During the next few years, we have some big decisions to make for our businesses. The value of the pound is already having a big effect on the cost of imported items.

It's a great opportunity to repeat the benefits of buying British. UK manufacturers shouldn't be hit as hard by increased importing costs, since we're generally

bringing in product components, rather than complete products. Head to the Briman Group where you'll find a great selection of UK-manufacturers.

There are fantastic opportunities for British-made products being sold into Europe. We have certainly found this to be the case in discussions with distributors at PSI. The opportunities in Europe are massive when you consider British talent for product design, innovation, quality and creativity, combined with the current value of the pound.

One of the areas where Europe has had a really positive impact is when it comes to compliance and product certification. We have found that the demand for 'certified' products started in Europe, and has become increasingly common in the UK. It's something we can't ignore. If you take compliance seriously, you can offer

your customers peace of mind and boost your business.

As a UK manufacturer and exporter, product compliance has been something we've focused on for some time, and we have a dedicated product management team who are experts in this area. When you're sourcing products, make sure you ask about REACH, SEDEX, ISO9001, COSHH, ROHS, to name just a few standards.

It can cost thousands to establish a fully compliant and certified product range, but it's an investment that is incredibly worthwhile.

So as we continue on our uncertain journey towards Brexit, I'd suggest that UK businesses focus on the areas we can control. Let's champion all things Great, British and compliant!

Phil Morgan is managing director of SPS

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A NEW DIRECTION

Education is the route to greater professionalism, and the BPMA offers a clear pathway to skills development



Raising industry standards and best practice through education and training remains at the heart of the BPMA. It seeks to encourage industry learning and professional development to enhance skills of all individuals working in the industry. This is why I have been working on a development project behind the scenes for the BPMA for quite some time and I can't wait to share it with our members. I have been working with a team of developers and key board directors to launch the education programme on a new platform. The project is now in its final stages and is soon to launch to the membership.

We are taking the qualities of our previous and much loved academy programme and current education programme to offer an even stronger learning platform and resource tool for exceptionally good value.

In an ever-changing industry that is now impacted by Brexit - the biggest single change the industry has ever faced - it is time to revamp the programme to offer a broader range of content to reflect such changes and developments and to bridge skills and knowledge gaps. The new platform will also support learners by offering a

new resource centre where learners can search on a related topic and gain access to exclusive content and support material that is not available as part of standard BPMA membership. Webinars will soon launch too which is something I am really excited about.

The BPMA education programme will continue to offer its members nothing but

"We are taking the qualities of our previous and much loved academy and current education programme to offer an even stronger learning platform and resource tool for exceptionally good value"

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an outstanding value for money, industry-specific training. The education programme retains its free introductory session and factory visits will also return in 2017. The online platform will offer more than 70 videos and PDF topics to study over a range of subject categories including industry fundamentals, product, decoration, product compliance, customer service, sales, marketing, finance, sales management, business management, HR and legal, ethics, purchasing and procurement, and web software and data.

New content will be added throughout the year to complement the existing material and to bridge skills and knowledge gaps and the developments we have seen within the industry. **PM**



To enquire about the new platform and to register yourself or staff visit education.bpma.co.uk or contact daniela@bpma.co.uk

Calling all industry experts

Up to date content from members is crucial to keeping BPMA education current

The BPMA is your trade association. One of the key strands of our raison d'être is education.

As you are no doubt aware we have in place a robust, well-used, and innovative education programme that has been written for the industry by the industry.

To coincide with the new education platform launching in Spring 2017, new content will be released into the programme throughout the year. We welcome input from members with specific areas of knowledge and expertise who would like to contribute and support the programme. It is vital the content of this programme is continuously checked, validated and updated.

We are now calling for new content and would like experts in their field, whether a supplier or distributor to come forward and contribute to

the established industry education programme to help maintain the high standards we have set for the benefit of our members in general and our industry at large. We are particularly interested in content for new on trend product categories, personalisation and new branding applications, sales team training, and social media.

If you are an expert in in these areas or would like to contribute to the only industry training programme by working with the BPMA to write new, relevant and inspiring content, then we would love to hear from you. Suppliers if you have video content from your factories or would like us to video your products being branded, then please get in touch too.

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DON'T FORGET TO MIX IT

As VR stalls, a new hybrid approach, mixed reality, is emerging, says **Matt Pluckrose**



2016 was billed as the big year for virtual reality (VR), with brands including Facebook, Jaguar and McDonald's incorporating it into consumer marketing and promotions. However, 'mixed reality' (MR) is being heralded as the technology to watch for in 2017.

Statista, a statistics and reports site, has predicted active VR users will reach 171 million by 2018, from 43 million in 2016. It also forecasts revenues from VR software to increase more than 3,000% in four years.

Yet sales of VR devices have slowed rapidly. A recent survey suggests sales of the HTC Vive grew below expectations in 2016 and Oculus Rift sales were also slow. Google has claimed that "too many brands are doing VR just to say they are doing VR" and believes it will take much longer for VR to reach the mass market.

Although brands still believe it is important to incorporate VR into their storytelling or as an immersive experience, VR can be restrictive as it disconnects the brand or sales person from the consumer via the hardware.

This is where MR could steal the thunder. The combination of VR and AR (augmented reality) to make MR is starting to turn heads. Microsoft's Hololens technology blends the real world and the virtual world together, so the user still can see the world around them, through special mapping sensors that create the mixed reality.

Brands can get information about what the user is trying to click on so they can update information and follow up opportunities for a better sales/customer experience. The technology also allows the brand to interact with the customer as they are using it via a salesperson.

Microsoft says this technology will change the in-store experience in many ways and allow businesses, such as automotive companies, to build showrooms in smaller, inner city venues rather than large expensive traditional dealerships. Customers will see and drive a virtual car, which they can adapt, while a physical salesperson talks them

through the potential purchase. Microsoft says this prevents the brand from "losing the customer to VR".

However, mixed reality does not mean the end of the VR craze or that marketers should stop investing in the technology. Whether brands deploy virtual or mixed reality comes down to sales and marketing objectives and will be specific to certain industries.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas



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THE MAGIC NUMBER

Credit check scores don't tell you everything about a company you are doing business with, but they are an invaluable tool, says **Mike Collins**



Age is just a number, they say, and when the number is 79, it's an age worth celebrating. However, when 79 is your company credit score, this is also something to shout about. The BPMA is a 79 – what are you?

A credit score of 79 out of 100 equates to one of confidence and low risk potential. Praise indeed.

But how reliable exactly are credit reports and their inbuilt data?

Each and every credit report comes with the caveat that ratings are "based on the latest accounts filed at Companies

House", which means that they are quickly out of date. Accordingly, credit reports should be just one piece of your credit management jigsaw.

Whether you are a supplier or a distributor the same rules apply. The message here is to remind you of the importance of regular credit checking and monitoring of customers as an integral part of your financial safety.

Every new credit account application you receive must start with a credit check to establish whether the potential customer is one that you should work with. Ideally your process must also include a robust set of terms and conditions that customers agree to.

The first rule of effective credit control rule is that you should treat every customer as a potential debtor. Whether a customer is established or new you should always make careful credit decisions. Having the correct tools available and at your disposal to help make that decision is vital.

Just as important, we recommend that every BPMA AccountAssyst client regularly reviews all credit customers as factors change very quickly, both for good and bad.


In today's world, credit checking options are fully automated and readily available. The greatest challenge faced when instigating credit checking is the modest time it takes to complete the process.

However, as industry leaders for the past 10 years, our experience tells us that investing a little time at the outset is far less than the additional time it may take to pursue bad debt when a customer turns rogue.

"The first rule of effective credit control rule is that you should treat every customer as a potential debtor"

So don't delay, start getting your systems right today to protect your business.

Why not see how suppliers see your business when they are considering whether you're worthy to work with. Use this as your first step to creating a robust credit checking facility.

For your complimentary credit check on your own business simply visit bpma.accountassyst.com and click Join Now. Your BPMA membership benefit entitles you to up to 100 free credit reports, as well as access to several other crucial business support tools including new customer account opening, contractual formation with terms and conditions and credit control chasing facilities. 

If you need help understanding credit report content, you can ring Mike on 01274 223190 – we are as always here to help.



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Compliance takes the lead in BPMA regional events

The BPMA is bringing back its popular regional events, with a whole day's activity at six different locations and a wide range of speakers.

Each visitor will receive a business compliance handbook by legal expert Croners and a product safety guide by BPMA partner Intertek. As well as listening to speakers, delegates will have some time to visit experts from Sourcing City, Sourcing Machine, Intertek, the BPMA and many others to help support their business. These will be in the form of 15-minute appointments.

In the afternoon session, members will be able to finalise the industry service level standard. Director general, Gordon Glenister will also start the day with a session on how distributor and suppliers can create the perfect partnership.



New group launched

The BPMA has launched another special interest group, called the CC group to promote corporate clothing, with the aim of helping distributors and end users understand the importance and value of corporate clothing.

An animation video detailing clothing research will also be launched, following the very popular merchandise one that was launched last year. Almost 70 companies took this up.

The CC group will launch an educational website and mini guide in the near future. Many of the leading brands like Fruit of the Loom, Beechfield, United Brands and Trade Decorators are behind the project.

BPMA director general, Gordon Glenister, said: "At our Education Day last year we invited a very special guest from America, Marty Lott, who is the founder of Sanmar a trade clothing wholesaler with over \$1bn of turnover. He reminded us that in the States, most distributors attribute a third of their turnover to clothing but in the UK it's less than 10%. Some of that is due to complexity of choice and branding techniques. The BPMA has long been an advocate of promoting clothing in this space and giving an important voice to this community. *Printwear & Promotion* and *Images* magazines are also very much in support of the BPMA activity here too."

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PUTTING CORPORATE CLOTHING FIRST

Promotional Products Week 2017 – get ready

At a recent meeting of the end user task force, a number of great ideas were being considered for this year's Promotional Products Week (PPW). One idea was the involvement of the Guinness Book of Records for an industry stunt.

No date has been set for PPW, but Product Media has learned that it is expected to be one of the biggest yet and really wants the industry to get behind the activity. If you would like to get involved in the project or find out more please contact the BPMA.

BPMA CALENDAR

8-9 March

Marketing Week Live, Olympia, London

22 March

HAPTICA Live, Bonn, Germany

28-29 March

B2B Marketing Expo Live, 2017

5-6 April

Sedex Conference, QEII, London

19-20 September

Merchandise World, NAEC, Stoneleigh

19 September

BPMA Awards, Chesford Grange

BPMA REGIONAL EVENTS

14 March

Hinckley (Midlands)

23 March

Bristol (South West)

30 March

Epsom (South East)

4 April

Cambridge (East Anglia)

5 April

Leeds (North East)

6 April

Manchester (North West)

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Charter standards – what are they?

It is becoming increasingly apparent that more end users are seeking to purchase campaign product through a recognised supply chain. The BPMA is being contacted by a growing number of end users and marketers seeking guidance on selecting quality distributor companies they wish to invite to tender for their business.

In these cases, where a robust tender process is in place, the BPMA provides details

of its Chartered distributors. The BPMA Charter Status is aimed at increasing the level of professionalism of both distributors and suppliers. BPMA Charter members add essential core values to the supply process, with creativity, safety and professionalism being implicit. All Charter distributors are put forward with the endorsement of the trade association confirming that Charter Members have been thoroughly vetted (annually) and operate their businesses to the highest in

industry standards in business practice and customer service.

Qualities inherent within the Charter Status are qualities reflected and required by a vast majority of businesses seeking to tender out their promotional product business. These qualities are: quality assurance; product conformity; continuity of service and product; ethical and environmental values; financial security, and trust and transparency. These attributes strengthen a robust, professional environment which enables a long-term business relationship to grow and prosper.

The BPMA Charter Status is designed to both develop and, subsequently, achieve the highest standards within our specific niche of the promotional marketing discipline. In a world that is changing fast, where demands from customers are changing just as rapidly, one day all our members will need to operate their businesses to the standard of Charter status in order to be seen as professional and to remain successful.

“Qualities inherent within the Charter Status are qualities reflected and required by a vast majority of businesses seeking to tender out their promotional product business”

Sedex Conference 2017



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What does it take to become a Charter member?

- A Charter Member has had to **earn** Charter status
- A Charter Member can provide **continuity** of supply
- A Charter Member can provide **quality** of supply
- A Charter Member can provide **regulatory certification/documentation** when required
- A Charter Member is interested in the long-term supply chain partnership, not just the next order
- A Charter Member will work with the **customer**, ensuring that the **challenges of the market** are met
- A Charter Member will be constantly scrutinised to ensure **compliance** with **accreditation standards**
- A Charter Member will be periodically re-assessed to ensure **maintenance** of these **high standards**
- A Charter Member is forward-looking and wishes to **challenge** and **improve standards**, and further **develop the market**

"Where a robust tender process is in place, the BPMA only recommends its Chartered distributors"

If you feel your business is ready to earn the Charter status and reach the highest accolade then please contact Daniela Area, Head of Education and Best Practice, BPMA to enquire and apply. Don't be put off if your business is not ready to achieve Charter status, our charter requirements can be used as a guide to help your business grow and be the best it can be. The BPMA is keen to work with all of its members to implement or improve policies and standards, please contact Daniela Arena for support and advice. 



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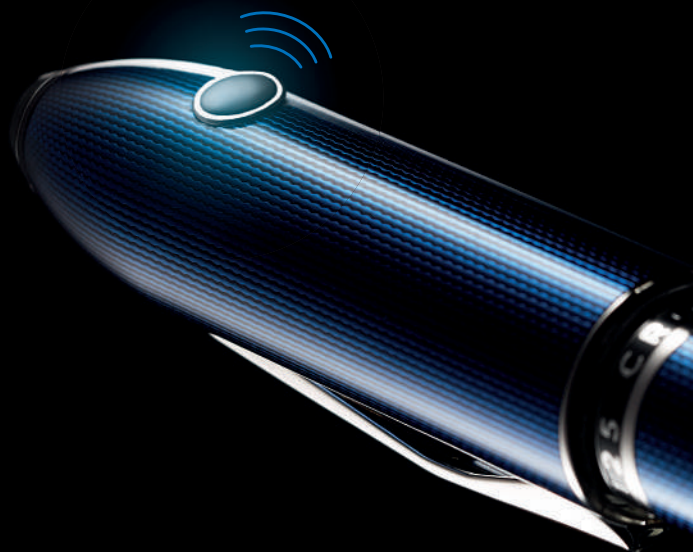
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Ten from two



Nicky Crisp

managing director,
Impamark Promotional Merchandise

What are you reading at the moment?

The Girl in the Ice by Robert Bryndza. I do love a gripping thriller

What's on your iPod?

Quite varied – Adele, Flamenco and Big Band Swing

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

My dad, bless him, always told me you can have whatever you want if you work hard enough

Cappuccino or Latte?

I'm a cortado girl (white espresso) but having recently visited Sri Lanka, I prefer leaf tea always

What makes you feel warm & fluffy?

A glass of cava in the hot tub with the girls

Best place in the world?

I live in Spain and love the outside life, walking among the orange groves at one with nature and my rescue dogs. But luxury wise, the Maldives are amazing

If you could change one thing?

To cure cancer and have my dad back again

How would you like to be remembered?

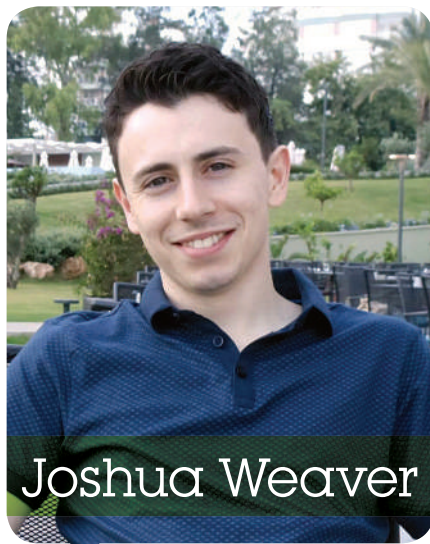
As a reliable and honest friend who lived life to the full

What are you proudest of?

Moving our family to Spain in 2007 against the odds and having the most fantastic life experience and continuing to make my business work in the UK

What's been the hardest moment of your life and how did you get through it?

Losing my dad last January, but the support from my husband along with realising none of us know how long we have, has shown me we have to make the most of every day



Joshua Weaver

company director,
We Are Promotional Products

What are you reading at the minute?

The Road Less Traveled

What's on your iPod?

Mainly disco

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

To embrace change. To always keep the people I love close to me. Music is always the answer

Cappuccino or Latte?

Macchiato

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

First coffee of the day

Best place in the world?

Disneyland

If you could change one thing?

My singing voice

How would you like to be remembered?

As a great musician

What are you proudest of?

My compassion for others

What's been the hardest moment of your life, and how did you get through it?

The hardest moment in my life has been organising my late father's belongings. He had quite a lot of them! I learnt to let go of the things that are not a true representation of the man he was

MOVERS & SHAKERS



Zaklina Camus



Christoph Sunderbrink

European appointments

Goldstar Europe has recruited two new sales managers for the French and German markets.

Zaklina Camus has joined Goldstar's French team as area manager having gained more than nine years' experience within promotional products with Listawood.

Christoph Sunderbrink has joined the company as country manager for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. He has worked within the promotional products market for more than ten years with companies such as Fare Guenther Fassbender GmbH and Karl Knauer KG, looking after the German, Scandinavian, French and Benelux markets.



Roddy retires

Roddy Rutland, managing director and CEO at Headwear UK for 17 years and a stalwart of the industry, has retired. Roddy had been on

leave since October last year, trying to recharge his batteries after a tough period of family bereavement, health issues and pressures of life. He was due to return to the business in early February, but following careful consideration he has decided to take a much-reduced part in day to day operations.

Senior Partner and CEO of the Headwear Group, Peter Barblett, will manage Headwear UK from its Essex offices while it seeks a new CEO.

RAISE YOUR GAME!

REGIONAL EVENTS 2017

***70% of marketers unhappy at some time in buying promotional products based on quality or print**

BPMA events aims to help members raise their game and ensure compliance is foremost

- Listen to industry and business experts 2 keynote sessions
- 121 meetings with BPMA staff and experts via the Business clinic
- Free Business compliance checklist – many businesses inadvertently breaking the law
- Free Product Safety and legal guide – from Modern Slavery Act, Reach, Labelling and more
- Discussion to set a NEW industry service level standard
- Lunch and refreshments included
- Great networking opportunity

Hinckley 14th March

Bristol 23rd March

Epsom 30th March

Cambridge 4th April

Leeds 5th April

Manchester 6th April

Members £25+VAT Non members £60+VAT

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www.bpma.co.uk/regional-events-2017

*Marketing Week survey 2014



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