



EU Referendum How will you vote?

P14 HAPTICA REVIEW



P18 1ST BPMA
MPM PASS

P24 TACKLING
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P34 MODERN
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Welcome



So now in our 6th Issue of Product Media magazine, I am pleased we have been able to cover so many important issues in the promotional merchandise industry. This next

edition is no different, leading with one of the most important decisions the UK has to make, on 23 June - the referendum on Europe.

However, so many are still undecided. There are risks in whatever decision we take. From a business perspective, risk and uncertainty is not good. The question is would the rest of Europe still trade with us even if we weren't in? I would suggest yes, but if we do leave, could that start the

break-up of the Union. It was a question I posed to Dr Liam Fox at a House of Commons breakfast I attended with other trade body heads. If we did leave, how would that affect the pound? If it was more expensive to import goods, would marketers pay more for promotional products? Let's wait and see.

This month sees the return of the bpma Conference on 19 May and the unveiling of the Mystery Shopper and Supplier/Distributor relationship survey which was conducted last month. I think it's really important for us as an industry to create great partnerships and understand where the real pressure points are, so I await the results with interest.

Promotional clothing – oh so undersold! We gave the bpma stand at Marketing Week Live over to advocating the value of promotional clothing and I feel I am on a

mission to improve the understanding of how to sell promotional clothing. It doesn't help with the clothing industry providing far too much choice for both distributor and end user alike. We undertook some great research on how buyers use and buy clothing which we will be sharing soon. Watch this space!

Lastly, I have to say well done to Vicky Crosby for her attaining our first MPM qualification (see page 18). As one of the judges in her final presentation, I am delighted for her. Education remains core to the bpma, and as more and more individuals pass these qualifications, I am pleased to see it's having a profound effect on candidates and companies alike.

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).

British Promotional Merchandise Association

Regus House 1010 Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DP
All phone enquiries: 01223 598488
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

Idego media Ltd
idegomedia.co.uk

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Photography

istockphoto.com



Contents

04 News

A round up of all the latest in the product media sector

10 Euro Referendum

In or out? We present the arguments and get member feedback

13 Ask Clive

Essential's Clive Allcott on the opportunities to be more proactive

14 Haptica

All the buzz and colour from the show that puts the fun into merchandise



18 Education

The first bpma graduate of the MPM scheme gives her feedback

20 Promotional clothing

Are you on trend with this year's gear? Plus, PM's guide to buying clothing

24 Company failure

What steps can the industry take to protect its reputation?

27 Compliance

Don't wing it – find out why compliance matters

30 Technology column

Wearables are set to be big, but what do they do?

32 bpma news

Latest news from and concerning bpma members

36 Phil Morgan column

Anyone can have a great idea, so make sure you harness them

38 Ten from two

The two Karens, McBride and Hughes, answer our questions

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Pensions compliance

Over the next two years, the Federation of Small Businesses predicts that one million small businesses will need to set up a workplace pension under auto enrolment rules - even if they only have one employee. Failure to do so can result in daily fines of £500. Staging dates vary and you can check when yours is at thepensionsregulator.gov.uk.



PF is latest new patron of the bpma

PF Concept joined the bpma as a new patron in March 2016. UK managing director, Tracey Bowen said: "We are delighted to be able to support the bpma in this way and look forward to being more involved in the work the organisation is doing to grow and support the industry."

More new members join the bpma

The bpma is also pleased to welcome the following new members: Macdonald Fyne - multichannel supplier; Print Bureau Ltd - distributor; Leading Edge Marketing & Promotions - distributor; and Hide Stationery T/A Monsieur Notebook - Multichannel Supplier.

National minimum wage impact divides industry

From April, the new national minimum wage was implemented at £7.20 per hour for those workers aged 25+. Retailer Next has said it will have to increase prices to cover the expected £27m cost of implementing the pay rise, but how will it affect the UK promotional merchandise industry?

Some members of the Briman group of British manufacturers said the living wage would have a negative effect on bringing business back to the UK from China where unskilled labour keeps production costs down. It was felt that, not only would those on the minimum wage get a pay rise but those above this level would expect an equal rise to maintain their pay differential.

Almost all distributors *Product Media* asked said it will have little or no impact on the basis they already pay above this rate. Some Briman members agreed: "We have always paid our team well in excess of the £7.20 per hour required. If we assume inflation at 4% and adjust accordingly, we will be paying the required £9 per hour by 2020. If our competitors are



not paying a reasonable wage at present we should become even more competitive over the next four years."

However, some manufacturers felt it would add further cost to the production process in an already tight margin industry. Lee Woodcock, managing director, Foremost Magnets said it was a good idea as it made no sense to support low paid

workers with tax, but added that industry needed support.

"It can only be one part of a wider solution with welfare savings passed back to business as tax relief. Failing to do so will simply cause the cost of living to increase by the amount of extra income that the individual gains and the gap between income and cost of living will remain."

Prime standard puts data security of its customers first

Prime Group has demonstrated how seriously it takes customer data by achieving ISO 27001:2013, the international standard for information security.

ISO 27001 specifies a process for controlling and improving the way an organisation manages its information security. It covers the data-handling of all customer information, including any private/financial data and everything relating to

their customers, such as data required for the personalisation of marketing and promotional materials and communications across multiple channels.

It also means that Prime has systems in place to recover operations quickly in the event of a crash or potential security breach, enabling it to continue working with minimal down-time. The standard is based around continual improvement, so Prime

regularly reviews its information security management system (ISMS).

The 2015 Deloitte Consumer Review found that 84% of consumers think companies should 'be held responsible for ensuring the security of user data and personal information online', and 73% would think twice about using companies 'that failed to keep their data safe'.

Penn is 'hot' Stateside

Sarah Penn, managing director of Outstanding Branding has been selected as one of the ASI (Advertising Speciality Institute) *Counsellor* magazine's 'Hot 25' for 2016.

Published annually by the American trade body that represents the advertising specialty industry, *Counsellor* picked Penn for her strong-willed character and noted, "It takes a certain kind of moxie to start your company in 2009, right in the middle of a recession, and in the UK no less, as Europe really took it on the chin economically."

Penn said: "To have been voted into this hot list is a phenomenal honour – I'm overwhelmed and extremely proud to have even been considered. I consider this to be an honour that reflects the endeavours and achievements



of the whole company – all of #teamOB work so hard to build, maintain and enhance our reputation not just in the UK but also over the Pond, so

I thank the whole team for their support."

Counsellor is distributed to more than 35,000 distributor companies in America.

Sourcing City rejoins the bpma

Sourcing City has rejoined the bpma after a year-long absence. The company left the association in March 2015 over various disputes. It announced it was rejoining in March 2016.

David Long, chairman, Sourcing City, said: "We have always had a solid belief that the industry should have a strong independent trade association, and in the past we have been a proactive supporter of the bpma. Since resigning we have made it clear that we would like our ethical differences to be resolved to enable us to return at some stage, and it is pleasing that we are now doing so. We have always respected the quality people from within our industry who invest their own time and efforts in serving on the board."

New members join IGNITE

Ignite has announced that Roantree Incentive Marketing and Applewhite Gifts have joined the catalogue group, taking it to a total of 32 distributor companies.

Richard Pettinger from Ignite said: "We are delighted to welcome two more quality companies to the group. The addition of Neal, not only as managing director of one of the larger players in the industry, but also in his prominent leading roles within the bpma adds even more experience to the group."

Roantree's Neal Beagles said: "We have been really impressed

with everything this group has to offer and really feel that joining is an important step for us in the evolution of Roantree."

Martin Applewhite of Applewhite, added: "We have been looking for a group to move us forward with a quality catalogue and backup, we feel Ignite delivers perfectly for us in that respect."

Ignite Group will be returning to Warwick Racecourse on 29 September for its annual exhibition and race day. Last year's exhibition attracted more than 100 distributors and suppliers.

Ignite
INCENTIVES GROUP

Further expansions to strengthen Great Central Plastics' service

Great Central Plastics has introduced a purpose built assembly room and recruited a new team of assembly operators due to a growth in enquiries that require assembly as part of the order.

The new development gives Great Central Plastics greater control over all aspects of the manufacturing process and quality control, as well improving its service. The company felt that the timing was right to give this department its own, separate space.

A new addition to the tooling team has also been announced. Gary Sneath has joined the GCP family as an experienced tool maker. With his specialist skill set and wealth of experience, he will enhance the dynamic tooling department.

We Can Brand it resurfaces

Newcastle based company, We Can Brand it, that caused misery for many distributors has set up a new company called Logoservices. (Company Registered Number 09997964). Gordon Glenister, director general of the bpma, has listened to a number of member complaints concerning owner Nick Underwood Lea and warns members to work with reputable bpma suppliers.

Find out how client companies are starting to look at modern slavery compliance on p34.



Mantis shines a light on continuing exploitation in clothing industry

Mantis World has helped raise awareness of women garment factory workers subjected to modern slavery by sponsoring a film that explores the clothing industry.

The True Cost, by documentary maker, Andrew Morgan is about clothing, the people who make them and the impact it's having on our world. While the price of clothing has been decreasing for decades, the human and environmental costs have grown dramatically.

Although the film's focus is on fast fashion, the points raised are relevant to the printwear and promowear industry. Speaking at a debate held after the screening, Prama Bhardwaj, CEO and founder of Mantis World said: "Companies can and should be responsible to account for their actions – we already do that financially and if businesses were made to reveal the environmental and social cost of operations just as they have to fill in a tax return the

impact would be huge. If done correctly the garment industry has huge potential to benefit women in the global economy."

Dr Alessandra Mezzadri, lecturer at SOAS, which hosted the event, said: "This movie shows that poverty and environmental degradation do not persist despite the process of globalisation, but because of it. In fact, it shows how poverty is structured through labour, and manufactured on the same assembly line producing our

ridiculously cheap T-shirts."

Other speakers called for international labour standards to be upheld by garment companies, and for them to play a greater role in changing the system.

Sponsorship raised by the event will go to support charities Asian Circle and Oxfam in helping the Adivasi tribal women in India and to challenge violence against women in the subcontinent and other areas.

Senator awarded for exclusive HD digital print



PROMOTIONAL GIFT
AWARD 2016



Senator's HD digital print has been awarded the 2016 Promotional Gift Award by a unanimous jury who cited its worldwide exclusive print technology as "outstanding".

The company took three years to design, build, and commission a machine capable of printing direct HD digital with a raised 3D finish, the first pen company worldwide to do so.

This exclusive technology produces gradients in very high definition, providing a level of clarity which cannot currently be

matched. It includes an in-built raised surface finish which can give a 3D-like effect to logos and images.

Lynn Corrigan, marketing manager, Senator UK & Ireland, said: "Senator continuously strives to raise standards in the promotional industry and is the only promotional pen manufacturer to be awarded for product and print design. Our customers are always looking for something fresh and exciting to offer their top brands, and we are committed to helping them achieve that."

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▶ See Product Media's
Haptica review on p14

New bpma show – allows distributors to bring VIP guest end users to boost product knowledge

The new, and much awaited, bpma show at Silverstone on 14 September will allow member distributors to bring their top end user customers.

Following feedback from a number of suppliers and distributors, the bpma has decided to allow end users to the show on the understanding they are guests of the distributor and therefore accompanied.

No end user will have access to the show without a distributor. This will be a great way for a

distributor to really walk round with their clients to select a new collection, look at new ideas or understand better what their clients are looking for.

Gordon Glenister, director general, bpma, said: "The show is designed to inspire, engage and be innovative in its approach. We have so many new ideas which we are bringing to the show to help both bpma suppliers and distributors work better together. The end user accompaniment

is nothing new and PSI will be doing just that in January 2017."

Glenister who visited Haptica in Bonn in March added: "Wow what a show – suppliers,

end users and distributors all worked well together. Everyone talks end user pricing and there is confidence in the supply chain."



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Tony Altham
Adgifts Online



It was an excellent event giving fantastic value for money and some very useful information was gained.

Sam Pearson
Storm Graphics



Many thanks once again for a really inspiring conference.

Mick Humphries
The TC Group

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EU Referendum

How will the nation vote?

On 23 June, we will all have a referendum vote on whether the UK stays in or leaves the European Union. **Gordon Glenister** examines the options for Britain

At the time of writing this article, a YouGov poll of voting intentions on the EU referendum showed that 40% wanted to remain in the EU, 37% wanted to leave, and 23% didn't know or wouldn't vote. With the vote so finely balanced, **Product Media** has looked at the arguments on either side of the debate, to help provide some clarity.

There has been and continues to be scaremongering by the media and politicians, and from many I speak to, the views are very split, so I don't for a moment suggest the decision is easy - it's more about which is less risky. If we do leave, there will be a two-year time period to extract ourselves, and negotiate new trade deals. One concern of course is that there will be uncertainty in our economy which is not good for trade and investment. So, what are the arguments on either side?

STAY IN

- There are approximately three million jobs linked to EU trade and £66m worth of investment every day, according to *Full Fact
- It's the world's largest single market with more than 50% of British exports going to EU members. Being in allows us to influence and streamline our trading processes
- Britain may lose some of the negotiating power that the EU has with world powers if it leaves
- Freedom of movement of people – 1.4 million Brits live in the EU with driving licences valid in all EU countries. Positive migration has allowed us to fill many jobs in areas like construction, hospitality, healthcare
- The European Arrest warrant, allows criminals to be brought to justice across the EU
- The EU plays a leading role in world trade, climate change, and development projects
- If we were to leave, there would be increased trading tariffs, which may affect profitability and hurt those organisations heavily dependent on EU trade
- Companies that have benefited from grants and support, would no longer receive such support
- Goods pass through border controls much faster.

LEAVE

- Sovereignty comes back to the UK, giving us power to make our own laws. More than 50% of laws are made in Brussels currently, including the contentious 849 REACH rules which affect garments
- Those in favour of leaving, believe that investment to the UK – currently the highest in Europe - would remain
- Better protection at borders – it's impossible to totally control our borders whilst in the EU
- The EU commission is undemocratic and unelected
- Huge savings of £55m per day inward funding that could be used to build a stronger economy. Last year

the UK contributed £13bn, but received £4.5bn back in spending, creating a net cost of £8.5bn

- Other European countries not in the EU, such as Norway, have done well. We would not be hampered by many restrictions currently in place
- Ever closer control – a 'United States of Europe' with Germany dominating
- Working hours directive will add extra costs to business
- Security – we will still be able to work with other nations on this and still be a member of G7/G20 and Nato.

WHAT DO THE BPMA MEMBERS THINK?

"I will probably vote to stay in the EU. I seriously doubt that we will leave the EU. Unless the out campaign can find a simple and clear argument that makes the majority of people feel that their lives will be improved by leaving. At the moment the arguments are impenetrable and have no bearing on the majority of individuals. In the end, I think that the population will have to make a judgement call which will go something like this:

Leave - Change for potential benefits that are not clearly understood or guaranteed and risk that is poorly defined.
Stay - Don't change, things kind of work don't they?
Don't vote - I can't be bothered.
Or. It won't make any difference.
Or. I don't really understand."

Lee Woodcock, Foremost

My view is that the EU is an outdated overly bureaucratic organisation no longer fit for

purpose. The movement of the entire parliament from Brussels to Strasbourg and back again is a complete nonsense. The inability to sign off accounts year after year is a disgrace. Euro MPs expenses make our own expenses scandal seem rather tame. The recent tragic events in Belgium and France prove that the EEC provides no further safety in security than

My view is that the EU is an outdated overly bureaucratic organisation no longer fit for purpose.

our own security services. Most intelligence emanates from the US not Europe.

Richard Pettinger, Ignite

"Those that think by coming out of Europe we'll avoid all their rules are way off the mark. As an example, we could end up with UK made product safety laws differing from EU ones, so those selling into Europe would then have to conform with two differing standards. The EU is the largest trading area for 90% of exporters in our industry and at the very least we'd still be making our products to their standards in order to continue trading. Having control over our own laws and regulations in this respect will only benefit the smaller UK-centric suppliers. Everyone else will be working to new UK laws and EU ones over which we will have no influence."

Evan Lewis, MD, Everything Environmental

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WHAT DO THE BPMA MEMBERS THINK?

On the EU, opinions are split. The general consensus is that leaving the EU would leave us with a lot of unanswered questions and the country entering the unknown. However, there is a feeling of discontent about the way the EU is run and how much the UK spends compared to what it gets back. I think these feelings mirror most of the population!

Briman group, representing British Manufacturing

"There is power in a union, is all I will say."

Roger Beechfield

In the long term we need to realise that the UK as a market is far more valuable to Europe, especially trade with Germany and France, than they are to us. Think Audi, BMW, Citroen, Mercedes, Renault, VW, and so on. It is vital that a mutually beneficial trading relationship be established firstly with the main

players, France and Germany, then the others can follow.

Anonymous

Personally I think it will be like the Scottish vote and we will all 'bottle it' at the polls - traditionally we vote to keep things the same. In reality there are no trade barriers anymore so I'm not worried about that aspect. Having said that, we have been members for so long I just don't see the point of coming out - it will take years to unwind from all the deals leading to untold red tape and costs. As for the £12bn we pay every year, do you really think we will see any of that? Not a chance! the government will just use it in other areas and we will not feel any effect.

Anonymous

I am constantly annoyed by speculative claims aimed purely at frightening people, such as EasyJet saying cheap flights

will end - what complete and utter rubbish! Cheap flights have opened up local economies superbly, why would anyone want to stop them? As for inward investment, it's better to back an economy that is moving forward than one that has remained painfully static.

Anonymous

The main question is how will trade tariffs affect us all and if we do withdraw the pound will no doubt suffer a short term dip, as is now happening with the uncertainty. It is the currency traders who benefit here. All suppliers importing from the Far East using the dollar will be in a very difficult situation, especially when required to plan ahead. I think we must all be prepared for severe volatility on pricing in the intervening period leading up to the vote and for a couple of years afterwards if we vote to come out.

Anonymous

My heart says leave but I actually don't know yet. Several potential models based on other country's 'deals' for us after leaving are worse than staying in so I'm on the fence on this until hopefully there is more clarity.

Anonymous

The EU delivers far more restrictions than benefits, both legislative and financial.

Anonymous

If we have the courage I believe the UK could fly in the world market, not just in the rather old fashioned and parochial EU.

Anonymous

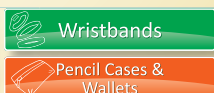
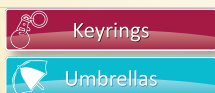
When it comes to the vote, inertia will be the deciding factor.

Anonymous

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Ask Clive

Clive Allcott, the Essential Branding guru, on embroidery.



Q: How can I be proactive in my approach to selling promotional clothing?

The clocks have gone forward and, believe it or not, we are heading through a very wet spring towards what we all hope will be a glorious summer. Now is the perfect time to be brushing up your knowledge on the printed T shirt ready for those festival and leisure enquiries. It's at this time of year that your customers will be looking for those summer promotional items which of course will include clothing.

Over the past few years, and led by retail demands, promotional clothing suppliers are now supplying a wide range of products offering every colour in the spectrum, and in most materials known to mankind. Products with differing neck

lines like boat neck and a raw edged collar, linen and Tencel Tees, even a range of T shirts made with bamboo resin. With this in mind, why not take out your clothing catalogues and enlighten yourself on these new and exciting ranges, ready for those important meetings you have set up with your customers. While clothing has advanced to a new level, there have also been great advances in other printing formats such as the DTG (direct to garment) printing. This form of printing is fantastic for full, complex designs of all colours and is a very good alternative to a transfer print. Ask your garment decorator about DTG and wow your clients with the results.

**Happy selling,
Clive.**



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Right: Dual use products are so effective



Above: Take a photo - different design!
Right: Packaging adds so much value



See it, feel it, use it

European trade show Haptica showcases the strengths of product media in providing tangible representations for brands. **Gordon Glenister** checked it out

Haptica took place in the newly founded World Conference Centre in Bonn and was well received by visitors and exhibitors alike. The show was on the 16 March and organised by WA media. Just under 1,500 visitors were presented, with an array of exhibitors from leading European suppliers in the promotional gift industry.

The show was attended by bpma director general, Gordon Glenister, who was fascinated to see how end users and distributors walked the floor of the one-day show. Visitors also heard about the potential

for products that were 'tangibly different'. Philip Siefer, chief executive of Einhorn Products, entertained more than 200 listeners with his cool and cheeky, yet always tasteful comments on the haptic upgrade of vegan condoms to 'sexy products', that appealed to our sense of touch.

Visitors were also able to find out the communicative potential that other haptic advertising media can produce, in the Best Practice special show. Two Brazilian campaigns were among the highlights of the exhibited examples. In one, dolls that show sunburn, were

distributed by Nivea to children on Brazilian beaches as an edutainment product. Another was the barbecue bible by Tramontina, each page of which doubles up as an accessory for the barbecue, including firelighters, a knife sharpener, and even a cutting board.

While visitors were served coffee specialities and interesting facts about haptic advertising in the Facts and Coffee-to-go-Lounge, they were able to examine this year's 49 award winners in the Promotional Gift Award 2016 exhibition.

The event, which scored highly with both exhibitors and

visitors alike, was brought to a close by the prize-ceremony for the winners of the awards followed by an evening get-together.

▶ The next edition of the Haptica live is scheduled to take place at the WCCB again on March 22, 2017.

All the winners
celebrate

PROMOTIONAL GIFT
AWARD 2016

DAS WAR DER
Promotional Gift Award 2016



Right: Its all about
the BRAND!

Left: Fab products
win awards

Below: Branding on
stands told the story



Above: Amazing designs for bags





Above: Great case studies were shown
Right: Its ALL about colour
Left: Great branding on bags



Above: Cool plants for promoters



Above: Cool phones
Right: Cool note pad



Above: USBs come in all shapes



Packaging that adds value



Above: Inventive packaging
Left: SPS German division



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First among equals

Vicki Crosby, former account manager at Brand Addition and now Fluid Branding Sales Director North West is the first person in the industry to pass the Master in Promotional Merchandise (MPM) level of the bpma education programme. MPM is the highest of the three courses offered in the education programme and is suitable for those with five years or more industry experience. Vicki shared her experiences with *Product Media*.

Q: Why did you sign up to MPM?

There are a couple of reasons. I had studied the very first bpma Academy qualification several years ago, so when I heard that a number of new qualifications had been launched I wanted to be part of the education development. I have always enjoyed studying, particularly if it can aid my own personal growth. Secondly, and more importantly, I think it is vital that our industry is perceived as being professional. I work alongside many design and event agencies that are 'qualified' in their industry, so I feel it is imperative that our customers see us in the same light.

Q: How long did it take you to study?

As I've been in the industry for 20 years, I was able to start at the highest level which requires 500 credits before the exam can be taken. It took on average 1 ½ hours each week over an 18-month period to build up enough points to be able to take the exam, at which point I spent several hours revising over a three-week period. The written assessment was then completed over six months.

Q: How did you discipline yourself to study?

Some weeks were easier than others. I found it worked best for me to sit with my daughter while she did her homework so we were studying together. It was

vital for the written assessment that I set time aside each week to carry out research. My subject was how technology has changed the industry over the past 20 years and my problem was that it was continuing to change while I was writing, so it was important to set myself a completion date, to not only give me something to aim for but to ensure that the content I was writing was still relevant at the time of submission.

Q: What subjects interested you the most?

I had no or little exposure to certain elements of the course, so while they seemed daunting at first, these became the most interesting overall. In particular, ethics and product compliance are hot topics so it was perfect timing to learn about these subjects and I have been able to apply my knowledge already.

Q: What support did you get?

Daniela was a great help, particularly towards the end. I spoke to industry experts about their experiences - Matt Pluckrose is the font of knowledge when it comes to technology products so he was a fantastic help.

Q: Why did you choose technology as a subject?

I wanted to write about something which affects everyone in our industry. There have been huge changes across all aspects of what we do, and we can be forgiven for taking this



for granted. It was surprising, when examined in detail, how significant the changes are.

Q: What did you learn during the course and exam process?

There are continually new things to learn. However, I was actually surprised at how much I didn't know before, that I do now.

Q: Would you do anything differently?

The subject I chose to write about covered far too many

areas and in hindsight I should have narrowed this down.

Q: Did you enjoy the course?

When studying there are always some subjects that are easier than others, but I felt the course challenged me and taught me a lot so it was certainly worth doing and I did enjoy it.

Q: Would you recommend the education programme for industry peers?

Absolutely. I think it is really important that as an industry,

we raise our standards where possible and show ourselves in the best possible light as a group of professionals. We should do this for ourselves and for the clients we support.

Q: What advice can you give the current MPM learners who are preparing for exams?

It is really important to take the time to read the associated documents. There is a lot of extra information in these sections. Take time to read again the things which don't make sense first time around. It's easy to rush through in the aim of building up the credits.

Q: How did you feel when receiving the results?

Relieved! Sitting the exam was a little nerve racking but not as much as presenting my written document. It was fantastic to know I'd passed and I was the first MPM ever!

Q: Was it worth it?

A lot of work went in, but it was all worth it to know I had passed. I couldn't be prouder to know I am the first in the industry and hopefully many more will follow.

Daniela Arena, bpma's professional development manager congratulated Vicki on her achievement.

"Vicki has worked so hard over 18 months to achieve 500 credits and work towards the written submission," she said. "It was a pleasure to work with her and support her with the exam and written submission. We have many working on their written submissions and hope to congratulate more MPM achievers later in the year. We currently have 155 learners on the programme across the TPM, CPM and MPM levels and know that 2016 will see many exam successes."

For details on the bpma education programme contact daniela@bpma.co.uk or visit education.bpma.co.uk

Full marks for Arcadia Corporate Merchandise

At the end of March, the bpma education programme saw Sam McCarthy, Kirstie Woods and Liane Tate from Arcadia Corporate Merchandise take their TPM exam after eight months of studying. The TPM learners sat a timed and invigilated exam answering 30 industry specific questions in just 20 minutes. A score of 80% or more was needed to be awarded the pass.

Kirstie scored an impressive 100% in her exam – the third learner in the history of the education programme to achieve full marks. Sam and Liane scored more than 90%.

Kirstie said: "I signed up on the course to learn about the

different branding methods. Learning made me realise how little I knew about the branding methods and about the products I sell. I was surprised that I achieved 100% as I was sure I had got two questions wrong. After hearing my results, I had a little cheer with everyone on the office and got back to work, although I did have a nice stiff drink when I got home."

Sam said: "The company offered the course to us and it was too good to pass up. I think to be educated in the industry you work in is very valuable. My favourite topic was confectionery, you can never know enough about chocolate

and sweets. When Daniela told me the results I was extremely relieved and really proud of myself in what I had achieved."

The bpma education programme is a flexible learning resource tool which supports and develops the knowledge of bpma members. At TPM level learners are tested to ensure industry fundamentals, product categories and branding applications are understood. As TPM graduates, the Arcadia candidates can now use the TPM letters after their name and use a logo on communications and marketing collateral to show suppliers and customers that they are trained to the industry standard.

bpma Education Day promises to be best yet



Grant Leboff

With a new venue at Whittlebury Hall, and a timing ahead of the new bpma show, the Education Day promises to be the best yet says bpma director general, Gordon Glenister.

"We have some of the best



Kelvyn Garner

line up of speakers we have ever had," he said. "This year we have a strong US presence with Paul Bellantone and Tom Goos along with Chris Piper, Kelvyn Garner and Marty Lott.

Delegates will also be able



Marty Lott

to hear from some favourites from the past including Nigel Risner, Grant Leboff and Steve Head. We are also hoping to see more suppliers attend this even though it is during the show set-up day."



The event takes place on the 13 September.
Find more information at bpma.co.uk.

DRESSED TO IMPRESS

Promotional clothing is a mainstay of product media, but it is being undersold by UK distributors. Are they missing a trick?

A recent survey suggests that among many gift house distributors, clothing still represents only a relatively small share of total turnover. By contrast, our American peers find that on average clothing is around 35% of business.

The bpma is determined to change this through education to end users and also through supporting distributors on the complexities of choice and branding. A major start point was the showcasing of branded clothing on the bpma stand at Marketing Week Live show at the end of April. Secondly, a special focus group has been set up involving brands, clothing distributors and decorators to try and address the under-representation of clothing in the product media mix.

Trends and styles

Amy Brewer, managing director from United Brands says Softshell has been hugely popular as a style, but more and more fashion styles of retail are starting to move into the promotional space. There are opportunities now for styles that are both fashionable and functional, she says, chiding the promotional industry for its love of safe colours.

Product Media's branding guru, Clive Allcott, agrees with this trend for Softshell jackets but suggests that traditionally it would have been embroidered. A fresh option is laser engraving down the side panels of the jacket, offering a bespoke look. Clive suggests that education remains the key stumbling block for progression, from end user through distributors.

Baljit Rai, director of





clothing

Brandmyclothing.com says that he has seen an increase in larger volume orders, clients are looking for shorter lead times and willing to pay the little extra for the high quality.

New looks

Phil Millar, managing director of Creative Apparel says corporate buyers now have the choice from a huge range of different colours across all garment types. The introduction of an extensive pallet on budget garments has allowed businesses to portray their corporate image in a much more exciting way and has allowed suppliers to experiment with new ways for them to express it.

"Gone is the plain black text on the left breast of a white round neck tee shirt, and in its place are vibrant coloured, fitted tees with multi-coloured prints and logos placed on



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shoulders and collars. Raised print, blackboard print and rhinestones are all new ways to help get a message across."

Millar says the challenge is to continue with an innovative approach, to explore new ranges of colours and garments, to develop new embellishment techniques and stay ahead of the customers ever changing needs.

Meanwhile, Natalia Bonner, marketing and merchandising coordinator at Henbury, agrees that promotional apparel is getting ever closer to high street looks. Its latest range includes 21 new fashion forward items, such as Feel Good stretch T's, and drop shoulder slogan tops, for impactful branding.

BTC has added more than 250 new products for 2016 including new brand Comfort Colours, a range of relaxed, easy-wearing basics with a wide colour pallet of weathered earthy hues inspired by nature. It is ideal for hotel and resort gift shops, college wear and concert merchandise.

It also claims to have the best bag collection in the industry with new products from Shugon, Quadra, Bagbase, Jassz, Westford Mill and Nike Golf Plus, as well as exciting new headwear additions from Beechfield and Result.

Choosing the right garment can make or break a campaign.

Duncan Gilmour, MD of garment decorator Screenworks, explains how



Purpose

Thinking about the purpose of your branded clothing order is the first step to selecting the right garments. For instance, if you are planning on purchasing t-shirts for a one-day event, which are likely to be discarded immediately afterwards, then an affordable, basic, low quality product will probably fit your requirements perfectly.

On the other hand, if you need work-wear that will be worn regularly and washed multiple times, then you will want something more robust. Selecting a twin needle stitched garment with neck tapes would be a better value option as this type of garment is likely to be more durable and retain its shape.

Your specialist clothing supplier will have plenty of knowledge and will be able to propose a product that meets the criteria requested by your client. It makes sense to utilise the expertise they can offer.

Fabric quality

It is a common misconception that the heavier the fabric, the better the garment quality - but it is actually the weaving process that can be the defining factor. If you are after a quality product, then a 150gsm ring spun cotton garment, for instance, is often superior to a 180gsm carded cotton yarn.

This can also have some effect on the overall quality of the print. A smooth-feel fabric with shorter fibres can yield a better result, so this may need to be a key consideration.

Styles and colours

Manufacturers are constantly expanding their product lines to include more variety so, if you are looking for something out of the ordinary, start by finding out which ranges offer

the most choice.

Your promotional clothing supplier will be able to tell you instantly if the Pantone matched garment you want is available off the shelf or if you will need to place a bespoke order. If your specifications can't be matched, your supplier will also be fundamental in sourcing a close alternative.

Many clothing projects may require a size range incorporating children's and lady-fit garments as well as a unisex fit. It should be noted that not all brands offer all three options, and if they do it would be prudent to check that the garment colour specified is available in all options.

Stock availability

Manufacturers can only hold a limited amount of stock at any one time, so you may have to allow longer if the garment needs to be ordered in. If you are after a fast turnaround time, speak to your branded clothing supplier about what kind of garments are readily available at any given time, to make sure your order can be delivered when you want it.

A quality supplier will flag this at quotation stage, as there is no point quoting for 5,000 purple t-shirts in a particular make and style if the sizes you require are not available for six weeks.

Fabric type

Your garment choice will be strongly determined by the type of fabric that best fits your needs. For instance, if you are providing branded clothing for a marathon, then choosing a polyester vest will be preferable to a t-shirt that is made out of 100 per cent cotton. This is because polyester has moisture absorption qualities that will keep runners cooler.

Processing and decoration

Certain fabrics respond differently to various decorating techniques and it's useful to know about any limitations before committing to a certain range. Opting for a thin 130gsm t-shirt, for instance, will mean it's best to keep the decoration simple. This is because the process of heat drying an A3 solid branding design front and back could distress the fabric.

Need a one colour logo printed on to a long-sleeve garment for an outdoor event? Then you may want to consider a lightweight jacket instead of a fleece. This is because the deep pile on fleece material can impact the quality of the screen print.

Budget

Finally, with garment prices ranging from under £1 to £50 or more, it's easy for budgets to spiral out of control. It pays to provide your promotional clothing supplier with your budget and let them come back to you with their advice on the garment styles, cuts and fits. It may mean you end up getting new ideas and more for your money.

Your supplier will also be able to use their industry expertise to offer both product advice and decoration techniques, which could give you the edge when pitching for an order.

The process of choosing the right products for your promotional clothing order is important to get right. If you are struggling to source the right solution, then turn to your supplier who will use their experience and expertise to help you prioritise what you need and find a garment that ticks the most boxes.

ALL IN IT TOGETHER

The industry has to work collectively to ensure that failing companies do not sour the reputation of the sector. **Mike Collins** suggests a manifesto for change



Following the recent liquidation of We Brand It (Buyking Limited), the furore continues as to how to protect the industry, its reputation and suppliers from suffering distributor write-off losses.

"Something must be done," is a comment popular on industry forums and in conversation.

Ultimately though the harsh truth is that nothing is being done because everybody passes responsibility to somebody else, rather than take control themselves. However, control can be brought for the benefit of all.

Let's look at the industry and

determine who really does have the power.

The bpma

Commonly following the demise of a distributor or a supplier, people wonder what the bpma is doing. The more pertinent question should be "What can the bpma do to stop this?"

Sadly, The Companies Act and, to some degree, the law allows debtor companies to enter insolvency, then magically rise phoenix-like from the ashes debt free with new, often very similar identities. How can the bpma or any other trade body be expected to change this if the

Government will not do so?

The bpma can do one very important thing – ensure that live members act in accordance with the bpma Code of Conduct. Members who do not should be excluded without hesitation – as happened to We Brand It several years ago.

If the bpma polices its policies and ethics to try and weed out charlatans, these actions will act as a beacon to all.

Software related providers

Like the bpma, it is perceived that industry software providers can do little to help prevent the

problem. I do not agree.

Distributor software providers are like any other business; they rely on sales and monthly fees. When a phoenix company resurrects itself, they too must make a stand and choose not to deal with them. When you burn your bridges, it's time for consequences.

Software providers can play a part in ridding the industry of rogue distributors.

Catalogue groups

In my view, catalogue groups should be responsible for ensuring their own membership is policed, with an inbuilt duty

of care that their distributor members pay suppliers in a timely fashion.

One key role of catalogue groups is bringing distributors together in return for favourable supplier discounts. Should then the catalogue groups not at least try to ensure that their members are responsible payers? It does not sit well if a catalogue group favours distributors without due regard for timely supplier payments.

There are a few steps that can be taken before a member's company insolvency, but when something goes wrong is it not right to expect a catalogue group to exclude a distributor from their membership at the earliest opportunity? If a supplier is satisfied that a catalogue group endeavours to deal only with reputable distributors, polices them responsibly, with remedies to eradicate rogues, then that is all that can realistically be expected.

Financial support providers

In this category we cover credit reporting providers, debt recovery agencies and solicitors (including my own businesses, AccountAssyst and Direct Route).

Providers in this sector do their collective best to pre-warn and prevent sales driven suppliers and distributors alike from exposing themselves to avoidable write-offs. Additionally, they can salvage difficult situations when a business finds itself exposed to a problem account. The virtues of implementing robust credit management processes are hard to overstate, as indeed are the inevitable consequences of failing to do so.

Whilst data is produced and provided in many formats, this information is useless unless acted upon. It is very much in the company's interest to take action upon the information to mitigate exposure by balancing risk against reward.

The conclusion is that although financial support providers can aid in some control elements, they cannot prevent or change situations

that we all morally and ethically disagree with. The industry has to find its own way to control and eliminate rogue distributors.

Suppliers

A major supplier dilemma exists when a phoenix company comes back on to the scene. Having suffered the initial write-off, they are offered the opportunity to partially recover losses by supplying the phoenix on pro-forma terms.

A sale is only a sale when it is paid for, but what about a sale that is actually being paid for before supply? Some suppliers



“The true power to stop this happening again lies within.”

hold their ground on principle, largely because they have the financial strength and capacity to do so, but nevertheless it remains a tricky dilemma. Is a supplier 'shooting themselves in the foot' by not supplying on risk free pro forma terms?

The argument for this is that if you don't, somebody else will. Pro-forma suppliers have nothing to lose and everything to gain, or do they? We know through experience that debtors are creatures of habit and having got away with debt once, they'll be drawn to it again.

Distributors

Without distributors the industry may not exist as it does today. Distributors are the consultants and sales force of many a

supplier. We understand how they generate industry sales but they might also aid an industry clean up.

Distributors are potentially much more powerful in all of this than we might have at first considered. Together they have the collective power to stop phoenix distributors.

My mind is drawn to a situation flagged to me by a supplier some time ago. The supplier originally cautioned as to some of the merits of our product, the Register of Outstanding Invoices (ROSI). ROSI is available through the bpma Credit Management Service offering and provides early warning alerts on businesses that are not paying on time.

The situation in question was that one of the major industry software providers had tabled an idea that suppliers should start providing late payment data on tardy paying distributors to generate an industry report beneficial to suppliers.

One reason the industry support product never took off was an unequivocal written objection from a single distributor which threatened to withdraw its orders from any supplier that signed up to the proposed service.

It is certainly debatable whether the actions of said sole distributor go against the ethics and ethos of the industry working together to protect each other, but it clearly illustrates that were there to be a communicative support tool available, this would provide the information that suppliers could utilise to weed out the distributor charlatans.

Next steps

It has been said that the bpma, the catalogue groups, the software providers, the other support providers and even the suppliers collectively could do more to improve the total working environment. However, the general consensus is that several are unlikely, unable or even perhaps unwilling to do something about the rogues.

I acknowledge that there are a few outspoken suppliers that stand their ground and refuse

to supply phoenix distributors but this may be because of their fortuitous trading position.

So finally back to our original question – how do we stop this happening again?

To be frank, it's very simple.

Imagine the scenario. A small, select group of reputable distributors get together and say to their suppliers "If you supply this particular phoenix company then we're taking our business elsewhere". What would happen?

An approach like this from just a few distributors would force the suppliers to choose between this group of reputable distributors or the pro-forma rogue of a failed reincarnated business.

It is a no brainer. Would any supplier choose to lose, say £100,000 business annually, in order to protect a 'here today gone tomorrow' company turnover of £10,000 per annum?

Yes, it is acknowledged that it is incumbent upon the distributors to ensure they act appropriately at all times and only use their power for the common good when ridding the industry of a rogue phoenix company or a charlatan director. (For examples feel free to contact the writer personally – we could write a book on rogues – see Distributor Failure Analysis of 2013!).

Does coming together to warn off danger damage the industry? Not one bit, after all it is human nature to protect what we care for. The end user still gets their goods, but from reputable distributors. The suppliers continue to receive their orders but with less risk. This attitude leads to fewer write offs, more profits and in turn a more successful cycle of business for all.

However, ideas are no use without action. The true power to stop this happening again lies within. Now is the time to step forward and be a key component in securing your future.

I for one will be on the frontline...are you with me?

Mike Collins is managing director of Account Assyst and Direct Route



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No more wing and a prayer

Compliance is not an issue that can be swept under the carpet. Suppliers have to work to instil best practice, says **Andrew Gorrie**



Gone are the days in our industry where suppliers can 'wing it'. During the past 15 or so years, the EU Commission has systematically introduced new legislation for product compliance. One part is for safety which makes logical sense, but the other part is for the environment which can be misconstrued.

Well known British safety standards have been incorporated into EU legislation but Germany, Holland and France have been the spearhead of new requirements. The REACH regulation which means 'Registration Evaluation Authorisation of Chemicals', was introduced in 2008 and is the most challenging for manufacturers and importers.

The easy part is registering chemicals imported into the EU in amounts of more than one tonne per year. The more difficult part is assessing if a product contains a Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC). There are currently around 168 substances on the list but some are banned such as AZO dyes within garments and phthalates in toys. The difficulty is risk assessing a product because the downstream supply line is so long that one has to go back to the actual chemical companies. Retailers do not want to advertise SVHCs in their products as any public relations person would expect. Laboratory testing is expensive unless it can be amortised over a large quantity.

We have recently had three major corporations request documentation to prove compliance to EU regulations because they have woken up to the fact that if their name is branded on the product, they have to take responsibility.

Ultimately the manufacturer or importer (the producer) would be liable but the first call would be to the name on the product.

Brand Addition imports products as well as buys from local importers, decorators and manufacturers. We have been following mandatory EU compliance testing since the

1990s but sadly a lot of local companies have not, as we have discovered in recent months. Product compliance documents sent to us have been either out of date or meaningless because the vendor does not know the regulations. Sometimes the vendor does not have any compliance documentation.

We have therefore been proactively running workshops to educate suppliers and to persuade them to carry out risk assessments on their products, and these have proved quite successful.

During the past four years, we have had to recall three different products from the market due to non-compliance with EU directives, or quality in one case. One example was a travel adapter which should have complied with a safety test so that two plugs could never be exposed at the same time. Unfortunately, it was possible to have a live circuit exposed with the result that a person could suffer an electrical shock. Product recalls are expensive, time consuming and damage the reputation of the end client as well as us.

Nowadays the risks are too high for non-compliance and we are working with local vendors to persuade them that the old days have gone.

Andrew Gorrie is senior quality manager at Brand Addition



Glossary of Common Terms Used in EU Product Safety

Robert Hinchliffe from Intertek decodes EU compliance terminology

Accreditation: procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks.

CE: European Conformity marking required under New Approach directives but not under General Product Safety Directive. Comprises a small mark depicting 'CE' usually applied on consumer products without any mandatory third party testing.

Certification: procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product,



process or service conforms to specified requirements.

Conformity assessment: Any activity concerned with determining directly or indirectly that relevant requirements are fulfilled.

Essential Requirements: Requirements that represent the core of European Union law around which an effective policy has been developed in matters of safety, health and other measures for those areas covered by the 'new approach directives'.



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Class monitors

Whatever you're up to, there's a wearable that can measure it, says **Matt Pluckrose** of Desktop Ideas



Wearable gadgets have exploded into our marketplace over recent months and are fast becoming the new hot item for promotional marketers. Smart bracelets, watches and glasses are now offered by major technology and sports brands such as SONY, Nike, Apple, Jawbone, and FitBit.

Current growth projections suggest that these products will become as much a part of our everyday life as smartphones and tablets. But do any of us really have any idea how they

work? This month we attempt to answer some of these questions...

How fitness trackers work

Almost all of today's fitness bracelets are based on a three-component 'accelerometer' that measures acceleration (intensity and direction of movement) against three directions referred to as the X, Y and Z axes. Most accelerometers consist of two electrically charged plates and a small counterbalance



in between. When the sensor is still, the counterbalance is located right in the middle. However, once you start moving, the counterbalance moves from one plate to another and the sensor registers the motion.

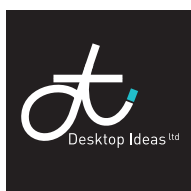
The device needs to have good software to enable this data to be easily viewed and analysed, normally on the user's smartphone. Different gadgets use different algorithms to calculate the gathered data.



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Some count steps or calories, while others such as Nike FuelBand convert data into their own units – fuel in Nike's case.

Communication between wearable and device varies but most are synced with a smartphone via Bluetooth. However, in order to save battery life, Jawbone UP! syncs with an iPhone via an embedded mini jack and earphone jack.

How accurate are wearables?

This varies across devices, but it's clear that modern trackers are more accurate than traditional low cost pedometers. Research across all the major brands has shown some that tend to flatter their users and some are tougher on the user. For example, 0.25 miles is approximately 540 steps on a regular wearable device, but there can be a variance of 20% across devices.

How does a tracker measure calories burned?

The human body is constantly expending calories and your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the sum total of all the calories burned by your body doing these fundamental tasks. It accounts for the majority of calories burned.

Trackers estimate your basal calories using a formula which includes your height, weight, gender and age. Your BMR is the number of calories you need to consume on a daily basis to maintain your weight. If you want to lose weight, you need to burn calories in excess of your BMR. The calorie total that is recorded on your tracker is a calculation of the calories that you burn in addition to your BMR.

Some trackers calculate calorie burns for specific activities. For example, a tracker may apply a different formula to calculate calorie expenditure for cycling than it does for swimming or running. Other trackers attempt to more accurately measure calorie burn by incorporating additional measurements. Fitbit uses an altimeter to enable it to give more credit (more calories burned) to walking up steps than walking on a flat surface.

The essential thing to remember is that if you're trying to lose weight, you need to increase your calorie burn by a designated amount. As long as you're tracking with the same device, you will have the consistency.

Can a tracker assess the quality of my sleep?

Many activity trackers also monitor sleep at a basic level. Trackers and apps measure body movement and are essentially bedtime activity trackers. Most trackers make the assumption that the less you move at night, the better your sleep quality, although there is disagreement as to whether this is valid. The one point that everyone agrees with is that tracking your sleep even with a less-than-perfect device can raise awareness about sleep, which is vital for health.

Wearable Technology is advancing rapidly and undoubtedly is in massive demand both by consumers and businesses that want to reward their staff, clients or stakeholders. It's an area we all need to watch carefully and ensure we are talking to our clients about it before our competitors do.

A fantastic week in the Promotional Merchandise Industry

National Promotional Products Week 12th-16th September

The bpma Education Day 13th September

The bpma Show 14th September

The bpma Annual Awards 2016 14th September

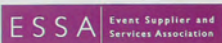


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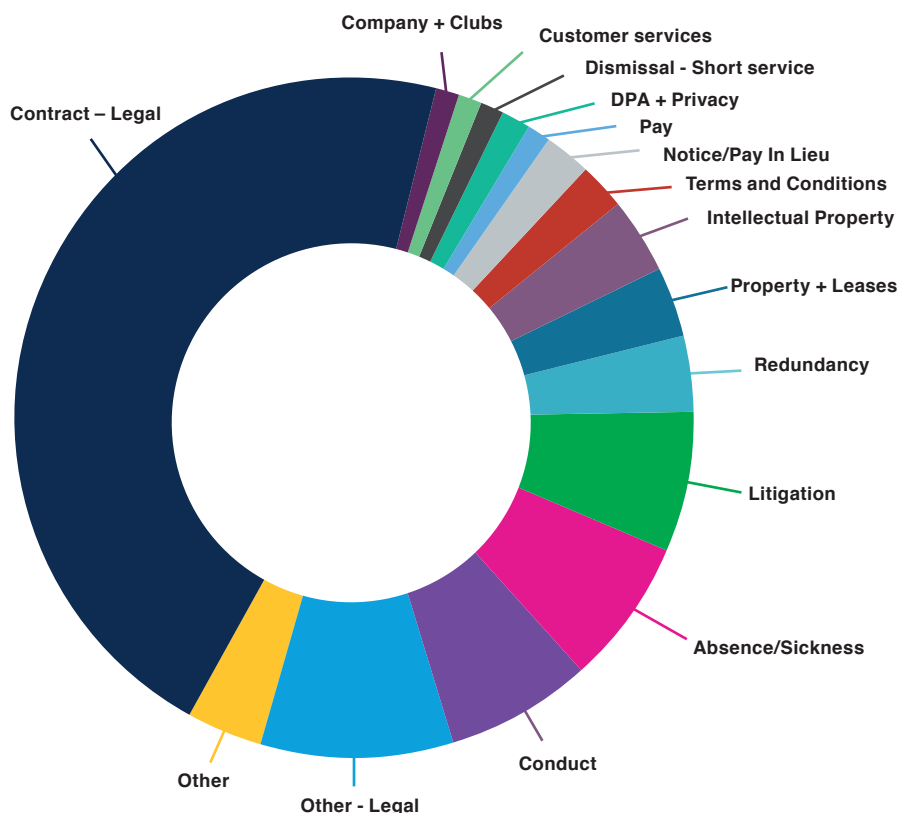
bpma director general, Gordon Glenister was banging the drum in the event industry advocating the use of promotional products at exhibitions. The exhibition masterclass run by the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) was held at Excel in front of more than 400 event managers. Other speakers including renowned social media guru Warren Knight and ex-Dragons' Den star Rachel Elnaugh.

Glenister also spoke at the Marketing Week Live exhibition at the end of April and is planning to run an engaging session at b2b Marketing exhibition later this month.

Contract issues leads usage of members' legal helpline

An analysis of how members use the bpma free legal helpline, has shown what value they place on getting sound advice on such issues as legal contracts, service level agreements, and personnel issues.

Member Paul Preece from Mosaic Marketing said: "I have used the helpline so many times. It has saved me hundreds of pounds in legal fees and helped me with some great advice."



Advertise your job for free on the bpma members job board
www.bpma.co.uk/jobs/promotional-merchandise-industry-job-board

New package could improve cashflow for businesses

The bpma has negotiated a special package with Account Assyst to allow for all members to receive 100 free credit reports. The existing service has already been taken up by a number of members, so those members will get a reduction in their monthly cost dependent on what their usage is. The bpma also supports Direct Route as preferred debt collection agency, offering its members free debt chasing up to £3,000, and then just 2% over this amount.

Membership feedback on this service is always positive. Chasing overdue invoices is a time consuming burden and an unwelcome distraction that takes time away from more productive activities. Outsourcing seriously overdue debtors is never wrong – often when customers are not paying it is simply because they are paying somebody else. Long overdue customers expect to be chased - if you don't they may not end up paying you at all.



A sale is never a sale until it is paid for.

Direct Route has a long history of proven results for members of all sizes and standing. The combined package is worth a minimum of £600 per member, and is potentially worth thousands annually. It is priceless on

occasion and could even prove to be the saviour of your business.

Members should ring Sam or Mike on 01274 223190, quoting their bpma membership number to discuss requirements and activate the free benefit.

bpma job board

The bpma job board is a free advertising site for members, with plenty of activity currently by businesses looking to recruit sales staff.

Roles at the moment on offer include sales agents, sales coordinator, marketing executive, business development executive, account managers and account directors, sales coordinator/ internal account manager, and sales executive. Advertise your job for free on the bpma members job board
www.bpma.co.uk/jobs/promotional-merchandise-industry-job-board



Promotional Product Expo (PPE) and PPD magazine are potentially for sale

Altitude Group Plc, the parent of PPE and PPD, released a statement on 15 April, confirming that it was in early stage discussions to sell its exhibition and publications business.

The statement said: "The Directors of Altitude have noted the recent increase in the Company's share price.

The Company is currently in early stage discussions over the sale of its exhibition and

publications business (the "Potential Sale"), the completion of which would result in Altitude focusing entirely on the technology business.

There is no guarantee at this stage that the Potential Sale will take place. If the transaction is agreed, the Directors expect that it would be classified as a fundamental change of business under the AIM Rules for Companies and require the prior approval of shareholders."

Dates for the diary

May 2016

11-12 B2B Marketing Expo, Excel

19 bpma Conference, Park Inn, Heathrow

September 2016

13 bpma Education Day, Whittlebury Hall, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northants

14 The bpma Show, The Wing, Silverstone, Towcester, Northants

14 The bpma Annual Awards Dinner 2016, Whittlebury Hall, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northants

16 Promote Yourself Day (part of PP Week)

Common membership renewal

In line with streamlining and making its administration process more efficient, the bpma is moving from an anniversary renewal date to a common renewal date of 1 June

2016. All members have been notified of this.
If you have any questions, please contact the bpma team accounts@bpma.co.uk or on 01223 598488.

Modern Slavery Act 2015 – have you been asked to respond?

More distributors are being asked to ensure that their supply chain adheres to the Modern Slavery Act, as big brands and many leading charities look to ensure that their strong ethical values are adhered to. Here is what one distributor was asked recently?

XX has clients who will not work with any supplier that either uses, or does not have the necessary controls in place to prevent the use of modern slavery or human trafficking in their own business or their supply chain.

Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 our clients have a responsibility to make a clear statement of what they are doing to ensure that their business and supply chains are free of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Please provide answers to the following questions to enable us to ascertain how you are managing your responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and if applicable, a copy of the statement that you are required to provide under the Act.

- 1. Do you have or are you in the process of creating either a Modern Slavery Act or ethical policy that covers not only your own operations but those of your contractors and sub-contractors? If so, please provide a copy.**
- 2. Do you have governance procedures in place to ensure compliance to your policy? If so, please provide copies.**
- 3. Do you source or manufacture your goods/services outside of the UK? If so, please detail where and what part of your supply chain takes place in those countries, i.e. manufacturing, warehousing etc.**
- 4. When sourcing goods/services, what due diligence do you undertake to ascertain that your sub-contractors are not using any form of slavery or human trafficking either directly or in its supply chain?**
- 5. Do you undertake regular audits of your supply chain to ensure that suppliers are not using slavery or human trafficking to resource their workforce? If so, please provide details of the type of audit you undertake and whether this differs depending on the perceived risk.**
- 6. Do you have contractual obligations in your contracts with your suppliers to guard against modern slavery in your supply chain? Have you ever terminated a contract because modern slavery or human trafficking has been found in your supply chain?**
- 7. What human resource processes do you have in place to ensure that you do not employ staff directly that could be considered under the Modern Slavery Act as slaves or as human trafficked?**
- 8. If applicable, please provide your Modern Slavery Act statement that you have or will be publishing on your website and with your annual financial accounts.**



So how do distributors with a widening supply chain, meet these requirements. Have you experienced similar requests from clients? Product Media would like to hear from you. Send your thoughts to Gordon@bpma.co.uk

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Creative thinking + creative working = successful business outcomes

Don't leave creative thinking to the creatives. Anyone can give birth to a big idea, says **Phil Morgan**, CEO, SPS



As CEO of an innovative and creative manufacturer, I often get asked where our ideas come from and how we kick-start the creative process. It's a good question. Albert Einstein described creativity as 'intelligence having fun', and that's a great description of our approach.

When it comes to being creative, it's not just about the products, it's about the way we approach production, the way we brand them, the way we market them and the way we work with our customers.

The biggest mistake you can make is to think that all the best ideas will come from your dedicated creative teams. At SPS, we like to involve the whole company. Any member of our team could have that next winning idea, so we encourage and reward great ideas. It's essential to encourage creative thinking across all areas of your business – and it helps everyone to see they're a crucial part of your team.

When it comes to harvesting creativity, it's all about where you seek your inspiration. We follow a range of approaches at SPS, and the great thing is we apply this style of thinking not just to products, but to the ways we operate with customers as a whole. In a nutshell, we like to follow one of the routes below:

Modify

Can we adjust a design to make it better? Can we change the material, branding method or design to offer better value for money? Can we change the way we serve our customers? Following this line of thought led us to the launch of the Brite-Americano reusable coffee beaker, adding full colour print to a popular product.



Adapt

Can we adapt the use of something to serve a greater audience? Can we take an existing design and tweak things to create something new? Can we change our processes to serve customers better? This approach led to the Americano family growing with the Americano Grande, Americano Primo and Americano Medio joining the range as adaptations of the main line

Solve

Do our customers experience problems with products or services where we can create

“Any member of our team could have that next winning idea”

a simple solution? Is there a clear gap in the market for a particular type of product? Are there limitations with certain products where we could offer choice? This approach led to the

creation of the H2O Active range of sports bottles, stepping into a clear gap in the market.

These are just some of the approaches we take when it comes to creativity, and there are many more ways to approach the subject. The most important thing to remember about creativity, is that it's essential. You can't stand still in this market. Our customers and your customers will always demand more new ideas, better processes, and innovative suggestions of how to promote their brand. So if you want to succeed, keep creativity high up on your agenda.

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Ten from two



Karen McBride

Director, Orb Group

What are you reading at the minute?

The Danish Girl

What's on your iPod?

Beirut - No No No

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

I guess that would be time... never rush things and always go with your gut instinct. Don't hold grudges and look after your health

Cappuccino or latte?

Cappuccino

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

My duvet

Best place in the world?

Home with family

If you could change one thing?

Remove hatred from the world

How would you like to be remembered?

She did her best

What are you proudest of?

My son

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

Caring for my dad through cancer and having to prepare to say your final farewells - emotionally brutal!

"never rush things and always go with your gut instinct."



Karen Hughes

Managing director, Prodir

What are you reading at the minute?

A Dance with Dragons, by George Martin

What's on your iPod?

I don't have one

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

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"

Cappuccino or latte?

Cappuccino...no chocolate sprinkles

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

Christmas

Best place in the world?

Maldives

If you could change one thing?

I'd have married an elderly billionaire

How would you like to be remembered?

With a smile

What are you proudest of?

My three sons

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

The death of my son. I don't think anyone really gets over anything like this.

Stormtech gets Erich



Stormtech Performance Apparel has appointed Erich Fischer to the newly created role of general

manager, Europe. With 30 years of experience in the promotional products and sporting goods channels under his belt, Erich will be responsible for executing sales initiatives. He will build upon the market presence established by Stormtech's European sales director, Andrew Kouroushi and his team based in Hertfordshire. Andrew and the team will now concentrate on building and nurturing the UK and Northern Europe region.

Gilt Edged move



Northampton-based Gilt Edged Promotions and sister company USB2U have appointed Mari Daly

as their new marketing manager. Mari, who has worked for more than 15 years in marketing and project management roles across many international organisations, joins as Gilt Edged celebrates its 30th anniversary in business.

Starting as a diary specialist, the company now has a range which encompasses work wear, USBs and corporate gifts. The company merged with branded technology product specialist USB2U last year.

Scott's on Target

Hilary Scott joins Target Transfers, the textile transfer experts based in Braintree, bringing a wealth of marketing experience with her. Hilary has previously worked for Movac Group and also spent 13 years with global brand Avent Baby Products. Hilary will be responsible for the co-ordination of day-to-day marketing activities, raising the profile of Target Transfers and the products and services it provides, while developing and building the in-house marketing function.

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