



The bpma at 50: celebrating half a century of your association P18

P14



**PROMOTIONAL
PRODUCTS WEEK**

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Welcome



Reaching 50 is a big milestone for any organisation so I was delighted we chose to mark it with a fantastic evening in London right in the middle of Promotional Products Week

(PPW). The day started well with Nigel, Daniela and myself promoting PPW to various organisations and commuters, but then in the afternoon, oh did it chuck it down and I had real concerns the celebration cruise might have been rained off. Miraculously by 7pm, the rain had stopped and a boatful of members set off down the river. It really was a superb night and such a lovely way to celebrate our 50th anniversary. It was made even more special by seeing industry personalities like Keith Willis and past chairmen joining us.

The third Promotional Products Week was another great success. Many members

embraced the theme of Promotional Products Invoke Action, providing us with some great images. It was interesting to see how Promo the Panda played a central part of the campaign. This year I was more actively involved in the PR of PPW, and it was great to talk to a number of media professionals and see how they viewed our sector.

Reassuringly some really got behind it and as a result we have had some great publicity. We do, however, face a real challenge in raising our industry to a level of serious interest. Marketers have so many new and exciting issues to deal with that merchandise is not even on their radar. The editor of Marketing Week magazine said to me, "We really need to show the shift in how brands are using merchandise". A reporter from the Financial Times was also rather patronising of his experiences with promotional products. Gill Thorpe from The Sourcing Team responded with a great defence of the article in her blog post.

The research we conducted at Marketing

Week Live and TFM&A was fascinating – we shared this with everyone on day one of PPW. One of the key takeaways was that marketers see "understanding their needs" as the biggest problem for dealing with promotional gift suppliers and more so than price competitiveness. They really want to feel like someone is helping them with innovative and relevant ideas rather than merely sending them a catalogue.

Lastly, I have to say a huge well done to those suppliers that are promoting ranges of products in colour and particularly vibrant ones at that. I truly believe we should be promoting the use of colour as it really does help the product to engage with end users. Well done to Liquid Lens, PF Concept and Impression Europe whose colourful range of products, I thought, really stood out at an event I saw recently.

Gordon Glenister,
director general of the bpma

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British Promotional Merchandise Association
3000 Cathedral Hill, Guildford,
Surrey GU2 7YB
All phone enquiries: 01483 246464
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
Mark Ludmon
Design and Production
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Impamark celebrates 40 years

Impamark Prestige Branded Merchandise is celebrating 40 years as a family-run promotional merchandise business.

Throughout this time, it has been located in the sleepy backwater town of Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex, initially at Dammerwick Farm before moving operations into the town in 1975. They have since been provided services to a wide-ranging client list, including the University of St Andrews, Harrow School, RAF Rugby Union and Rolls Royce.

Managing director Nicky Crisp said: "The company began as a manufacturer of small leather goods, screen printers, gold blockers and engravers. We now operate as a business gift distributor and thanks to technological advances are able to work remotely from our offices in Spain as well as in Essex."

USB2U joins the Gilt Edged Group

Two successful Midlands businesses, both well-established names in the promotional products industry, have merged.

Gilt Edged Promotions and USB2U will be working under one roof in Moulton Park in Northampton with the aim of becoming the UK's leading promotional products supplier.

Together they will generate a combined annual revenue of £8.5m. Gilt Edged and USB2U will continue to trade under their well-known individual brand names, and the team of over 60 people are excited by the opportunities that their shared skill-sets and strengths will bring.

In a joint statement, owners and directors Jonathan Cook of Gilt Edged Promotions and Sebastian La Porta of USB2U, said: "The merger is seen as a natural progression for both businesses and is a perfect strategic fit. We strongly believe that the combined resources will drive further growth and



Jonathan Cook (left) and Sebastian La Porta (right)

development for both our loyal customers and our dedicated staff."

Both businesses boast in-house state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment, enabling them to deliver to tight timeframes and bringing production back to the heart of the UK.

The two companies bring more than 45 years' combined experience in the industry. Gilt Edged Promotions, which is the majority shareholder, began producing promotional products in 1986 while USB2U was established in 2002, supplying more than 1.3m branded USB memory sticks per year.

Orb wins at the COGS

Orb International, a bpma member, achieved Gold for promotional merchandise in the 2015 COGS Awards run by the Institute of Promotional Marketing.

At the ceremony in the Grand Connaught Rooms in London, it won the award for a hugely successful promotion with drinks brand Irn-Bru, beating Tomato Source and Ambient Media Worldwide.

Orb also won campaign of the year at the 2015 bpma Awards with Irn-Bru.



Something to Shout about

Hertfordshire-based distributor Shout Promotional Merchandise delivered another great showcase event at the beautiful Chartered Accountants Hall in the City of London.

The event was supported by 21 suppliers and three speakers including Gordon Glenister, director general of the bpma, and had over 225

pre-registered visitors.

Managing director Carrie Benn commented: "We are absolutely overwhelmed by the visitor feedback from the day."

Shout Promotional Merchandise was founded by Carrie with Francina Stobart 11 years ago and has worked for the likes of Microsoft and the BBC.

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Ask Clive

Clive Allcott, the Essential branding guru, on garment decoration



Q. How can I increase my sales in promotional clothing?

A. This is a good question that I am sure many distributors will associate with. There are so many variations on both clothing and branding that often it's easier to shy away from the clothing sector.

There are two key points to assess when discussing clothing options.

The purpose of the garment? Is it for a promotional event or for their staff or web store?

This will allow you to narrow down the options and make the clothing choice for your client

more specific. (Waterproof, retail style, quality, budget.)

The branding options? There are many options available for branding. However, each process has different benefits. Here are the main processes.

Embroidery: associated with quality branding, limitations to where it can be placed on the garment due to framing.

Screen print: ideal decorating process, allowing Pantone matching and can be up to eight colours or more. Cost effective at 75 to 100 garments.

Transfer print: a processed print ideal for lower quantities and for high-detail prints such

as photographs and product shots.

Direct-to-garment or digital printing: similar to transfer print, but the image is sprayed directly onto the garment offering a softer feel over transfer.

Laser engraving: the new kid on the block, ideally suited to fleece, softshell and denim. Offers a fantastic alternative for subtle branding.

Appliqué: retail-quality feel that was often only available as a bespoke process. This is now a branding option in the UK from the main clothing decorators.

Many obstacles and common challenges are thrown up when

discussing clothing, "What is the largest print size", "Will the jacket still be waterproof after branding", "Where can we print on the garment" etc. One of the greatest resources that you have as a distributor regarding clothing is to use your specialist garment decorator on a joint client visit. As experts in this sector, we can answer many of the questions or objections that arise along with having samples of embellishment techniques that are available to show and discuss with your client.

I look forward to more of your clothing and embellishment questions.



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Wage revelation over Corbyn T-shirts

T-shirts that raised £100,000 for Jeremy Corbyn's campaign to be Labour Party leader were made by workers earning just 49p per hour, according to an investigation by The Mail on Sunday.

The T-shirts cost supporters £10 each, with additional postage at £3.50, but the workers from Nicaragua were paid just 49p per hour for them. In Nicaragua, workers are paid £101 a month for shifts that keep some workers on the factory site for more than 12 hours a day, with breaks.

Some of the T-shirts were made in Haiti where workers are paid a piece rate depending on how many shirts they make, which means some earn as little as 39p an hour.

The factories are run by Canadian clothing giant Gildan which, in a statement,

said: "Gildan is committed to respecting international labour standards. We pay above the industry minimum wage and provide access to on-site medical clinics operating 24/7 and bonuses for food and transport." Jeremy Corbyn did not comment.



Bags from Donlevy Packaging

Bags exempt from plastic bag tax

The Government's tax levy on plastic bags in larger retailers has come into force but what polythene bags are exempt from the tax?

The levy is applied to retailers with 250 employees or more and only for bags that are 70 microns thick or less, with handles, and not having been previously used. Polythene bags that are exempt are returnable multiple reuse bags that must be:

- used to give away free promotional material
- 50 to 70 microns thick. You can count thinner bags as reusable as long as they're thicker than

your single-use bags and the handles are at least 50 microns thick

- at least 404mm (in either width or height) by 439mm. You cannot count gussets in your bag's dimensions, or handles unless they are on wavy top bags.

Product Media magazine asked leading carrier bag supplier Oversolve for their perspective: "Whilst the single-use polythene bag tax is sure to have some sort of influence on the business, I would expect the demand for the reusable carrier bag styles we offer to remain."

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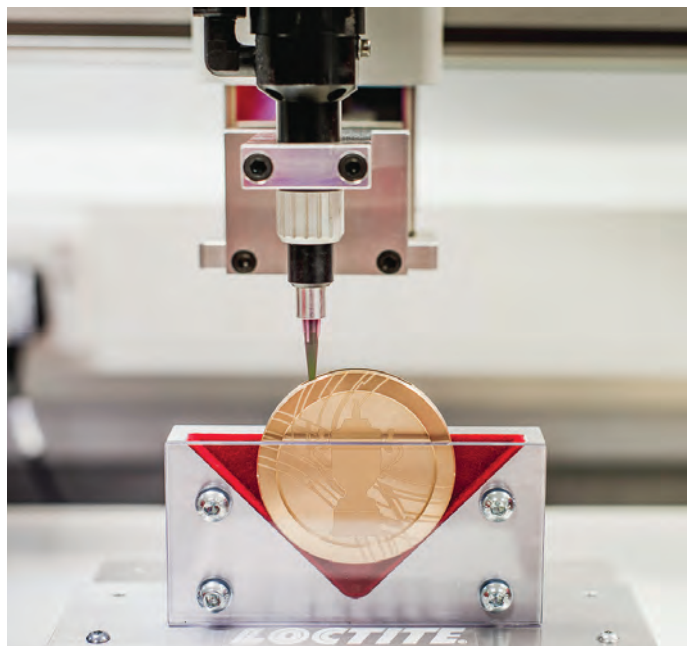
Medals handed out at the end of the Rugby World Cup were the result of months of development in secret by design company Touch of Ginger.

They were briefed to produce three different sets of medals: for the World Cup finalists and winners of the third and fourth place play-off; for the remaining 17 teams; and for the helpers.

Touch of Ginger director Adam Cash said: "The helpers' gifts are for everyone involved in helping to put together what is a huge logistical challenge, so they have something to say thank you to them."

"The participants' medals are for everyone involved in all the teams. Then there is the main event: the finalists' gold, silver and bronze versions."

Fellow director Gary Moore said: "We know that the medals had to be of a certain size and shape and scale. That is key in meeting specific requirements, but then the creative bit is where



we like to think that we've come in with something really rather special. It's about producing something unique."

The medals were machined to

within a fraction of a millimetre from a solid piece of material using techniques more usually associated with aerospace and Formula 1.



Obituary: Dennis Reuben

We are deeply saddened at the passing of Dennis Reuben (alias Dennis Allen) on October 4, 2015 after a courageous fight with cancer. He will be greatly missed by all who worked with and knew him.

He was one of the original founders of the business gift industry when it was in its infancy and remained in it for over 50 years. After selling Premium Pen in 1986, he started again, creating Initial Incentives which today employs over 40 people with offices in four countries.

Dennis's departure undoubtedly will leave a void in the company as his experience and knowledge will be greatly missed let alone his passion for promotional merchandise and always on the lookout for that new innovative product. He will be remembered for his unique sense of humour and infinite patience.

His two sons James and Jon remain in the business to continue his legacy. He also leaves behind his wife and four grandchildren who he was devoted to.

He was an inspiration to us all and we'll never forget the years of fun and laughter we shared with him.

Matt's marathon effort Stateside

Matt Franks, CEO of Fluid Branding and chairman of the bpma, was preparing to run the New York Marathon as Product Media was going to press.

He is raising money for Pancreatic Cancer UK and, although he was running the marathon on November 1, you can still donate via www.justgiving.com/Matt-Franks-NYC.

Matt (pictured) said: "Earlier this year I entered the New York Marathon on a whim, not dreaming of actually getting a place. I got lucky through the ballot - first time - and so the hard work began."

He has been training four to five times a week, steadily increasing his distance with each run. "I've never run this



distance before but I'm confident of finishing.

"I've funded my own entry and travel costs, and decided to run

for Pancreatic Cancer UK. This is an underfunded, aggressive condition that has affected my own family, and those of close friends. Any money raised will help critical research and ultimately save lives."

Adam added: "It isn't the normal way to make a medal and there's been a lot of sleepless nights and head scratching to get this to work because it technically is very, very difficult. They will look different for that reason, although they look very simple and elegant."

He said they were very proud to be involved in the project. "It is immense pride, not just because we were chosen and selected to do the design but because we're doing it for our country."



Factory visit by Daniel Muddle of Sussex Promotions

Calling for content

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.

It is vital the content of this programme is continuously checked, validated and updated and as such we are looking for writers to help maintain the high standards we have set for the benefit of our members in general and our industry at large. If you are an expert in your field and would like to contribute to the only industry training programme by working with the bpma to write new, relevant inspiring content then we would love to hear from you.

New content will be released into the programme throughout 2015 and 2016 and we welcome input from members with specific areas of knowledge and expertise who would like to contribute and support the programme.

To discuss this further, please contact Daniela Arena, professional development manager, on daniela@bpma.co.uk or 01483 246464.

Blended learning approach underpins bpma education growth

The bpma education programme continues to grow, with over 120 active learners on the programme. Daniela Arena, professional development manager at the bpma, comments: "We now offer a blended learning approach on the education programme. Learners can attend an introductory seminar, held in London, and are encouraged to attend a supplier factory visit organised by the bpma. They can also attend a credit-weighted boot camp or similar event.

"The majority of the learning is still delivered online, allowing people to study at a time and place to suit them. To enhance the online learning, we are launching new content within the 14 subject categories into the programme four times a year. New content will be relevant and written specifically for our industry by experts of the field within the industry.

"Moving into 2016, managers and learners can select a training plan offered within the education programme that provides the right balance of face-to-face training and online learning along with selecting a range of study topics that will enhance each individual's skill set, knowledge and development within the industry."

This approach is being well received by the learners, and bpma graduate Bethann Coleman from Hambleside Business Gifts confirms: "The programme is extremely flexible, has a wide variety of content and can be tailored to individuals. It's great to have all content, events and progress tracked in one place and accessible at any time. No matter which level you are at, you have access to all content to help expand your working knowledge, and the quiz section allows you to monitor your progress. The online system is simple to use and encourages you to reach your targets and achieve your goals." Bethann is



Daniela Arena

now working towards her Master in Promotional Merchandise qualification (MPM).

Learners can register and begin their studies at any time and then attend the next available introductory seminar to maximise their learning. Alternatively, learners can register and then begin their studies after attending the introductory seminar.

James Biggin from Steel City Marketing commented: "We have decided to take part in the bpma education programme in order to further develop our staff and to reinforce what we are working on in terms of our values

and culture. The reason for signing up was to ensure the staff at Steel City are up to speed on the industry, techniques and can be real authorities on our industry."

Companies are now using the TPM (Trained in Promotional Merchandise course) as part of an induction programme for all new staff. Progress reports and a learning charter document can be provided to allow you to monitor the development.

Please contact daniela@bpma.co.uk to discuss how the education programme can be of benefit to you and your employees.

"We have decided to take part in the bpma education programme in order to further develop our staff and to reinforce what we are working on in terms of our values and culture."

Factory visits offer hands-on experience

The bpma education programme factory visits were a real success for the summer and autumn seasons and prove to be a highlight of the learning journey. The factory visits have been created to complement the course content for the Trained in Promotional Merchandise (TPM) level qualification, allowing learners to engage with suppliers, see theory in practice and gain hands-on production experience.

Commenting on the benefits of a factory visit, Listawood's sales director Sim Shalom reports: "It's useful to be able to spend time helping learners to gain a better understanding of the many printing and production processes involved in the accurate branding and manufacturing of a wide range of ceramic products and other best-selling items."

Daniel Muddle from Sussex Promotions, who has



Above: Listawood factory visit

recently passed his Trained in Promotional Merchandise qualification, attended a factory visit hosted by Premier Impressions as part of his learning. He says: "I absolutely loved the factory visit: it was great to see the processes that happen after we place an order

with a supplier. It has shown me that the amount of time and preparation and manual labour that goes into each order is paramount. My time with Premier Impressions really did help cement the branding application processes into the mind – I feel more confident when I speak to customers

now." Daniel is currently working towards his Certified in Promotional Merchandise (CPM) qualification.

The bpma are delighted with the feedback and success of the factory visits. "When you are new to the industry, there is so much to learn and take in that seeing it with your own eyes and hearing about printing and production from the experts themselves really helps the knowledge sink in," says Daniela Arena, bpma professional development manager. "We will be launching a factory visit agenda for the programme in spring 2016 and encourage all the learners registering on the programme to sign up and attend at least one regardless of level or number of years' experience."

For further details, please email Daniela@bpma.co.uk and ask what a factory visit can do for you.

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The Pen Warehouse adds 360° laser engraving

Thanks to investment in cutting-edge technology, The Pen Warehouse now offers 360° laser engraving on 118 of its products with a five-day standard lead time.

Traditionally, the laser engraving process has only been able to mark a restricted area on a cylindrical pen. It only has line-of-sight of one side of the barrel and cannot engrave around it. This means it is typically limited to an engraving height of between 6mm and 10mm.

However, technological advances mean the machine can now also engrave around the circumference of the pen at the same time, making the entire 360° of the barrel available for branding.

The barrel is rotated in very small increments as it is engraved, and improved

communication between the stepper motor and the laser head allows a level of accuracy previously unheard of.

The Pen Warehouse has also seen its No-Minimum.co.uk platform prove a hit with distributors, contributing to a sales increase of 68% on the same month last year.

The website allows distributors to order high-quality printed products with no minimum order quantities. The streamlined web-to-print system lets the user choose a product, see a real-time representation of how it will look with their artwork, and then send the order directly to print, all within a few minutes.

Distributors can even get their own easy to set up bespoke website, allowing end users to place orders with little to no intervention on the part of the distributor.

COMPETITION TIME

Every month senator® is giving you the chance to win a top notch gift. Simply identify each of the iconic brands from the image below.

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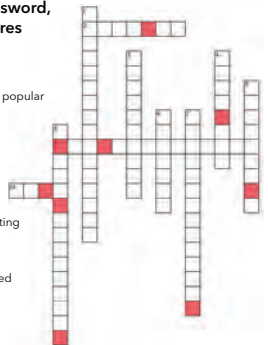
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2. senator®'s new pen family which also shares a name with a popular statue in America.
9. Our original digital print technique.
10. The name of the industry trade association.

Down

1. Patented senator® print technique that produces a contrasting transparent finish on frosted mugs.
3. The name of our new pantone 186 red shade.
4. Best selling senator® pen family.
5. senator®'s patented print technique which produces a raised full colour print.
6. The country in which senator®'s Head Offices are based.
7. The name of the new senator® mini catalogue.
8. senator®'s strapline.



This month's fabulous prize is a contemporary CP1 ballpen from German manufacturer Lamy, presented in a stylish metal Lamy box.

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New twist for Senator pen

Senator is now offering a larger than normal clip print area for Signer Liner, winner of a Red Dot design award.

The premium twist mechanism Signer Liner is now available

from the UK with a 35 x 6mm one-colour print on the jet black clip. It is made from a unique combination of metal and plastic.

Lynn Corrigan, Senator's UK and Ireland marketing manager,

said: "Big brands are always on the lookout for something genuinely unique, so it is no wonder that the Signer Liner is fast becoming our most popular metal pen. For Christmas 2015, it

is the perfect executive gift and 'must have' accessory."

Look out for Senator's 2015 Christmas Metal Pen Collection for offers on Signer Liner and other pens.



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Promotional Products Week 2015 certainly did invoke action

Members of the bpma ran activities across the country to support this year's campaign

The industry got behind the third Promotional Products Week (PPW) in September to raise the profile of promotional products and encourage their use within the marketing mix. Activities throughout the week engendered many thousands of media impressions as member companies swung into action.

It saw the release of new research from the bpma into marketers' attitudes to branded merchandise, which revealed the pen was still respondents' favourite promotional item. See page 37 for more on this research.

The theme of PPW this year was "Promotional Products Invoke Action" which was designed to encourage the sharing of photos of branded merchandise being used, many of which were displayed on the bpma's Pinterest and Facebook pages.

Many hundreds of #PromoThePanda cuddly toys supplied by Ravensden were distributed too, with "panda" appearing in all sorts of locations and photos that were widely shared on social media. The bpma embarked on a week-long campaign to promote buying from a bpma member and why promotional merchandise should be used as a key part of all companies' marketing mix.

Mailing pieces and emails were sent to thousands of marketers and buyers with personalised Cross pens, and phone chargers supplied by Desktop Ideas were sent to a number of media personalities. The bpma team took to the streets of London in support of the campaign, lobbying big



businesses, marketers and the general public at a variety of locations, with PPW clothing sponsor Elevate providing garments especially produced for the occasion.

The culmination of the week was the celebration of the bpma's 50th birthday with an evening champagne reception

and cruise on the Thames – more on this on page 18.

Leading distributor Brand Addition kicked off the week on Twitter using #PPWeek and a morning cup of tea to demonstrate that a free toy in limited-edition packs of PG tips was a desired commodity.

The Sourcing Team held a

showcase event and invited their customers along. A wide range of branded merchandise from key suppliers was available and nearly £1,000 was raised for charity.

Liverpool-based Wildthang ran competitions and numerous email campaigns sharing industry research and was also



involved in a Free Liverpool fundraising concert generating £2,000 for charity.

In Leicester, Everything Branded sent out a customer-wide awareness e-shot followed by daily offers including free selfie sticks and power banks.

London distributor Outstanding Branding charmed the morning commuters at London Bridge station with offers of branded love hearts while raising money for charity. The whole team wore branded clothing with company mascot Clara the cow taking centre stage.

In addition to supporting #PromoThePanda, the BTC Group used branded selfie sticks and other products as part of a wide-ranging awareness campaign.

Great Central Plastics ran a competition inspired by #PromoThePanda. See page 22.

Allwag Promotions of Chelmsford released 2,000 branded balloons as part of a charity balloon race for the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity with a chance to win a free balloon ride.

Many trade suppliers supported the week with product, getting involved in a wide range of activities through promotional merchandise distributors.

Gordon Glenister, director general of the bpma, commented: "We have put a lot of effort into raising the profile of the promotional products industry throughout the week and I am pleased to see so many of our members getting behind this important initiative."



ANC Manufacturing is a leading supplier to Promotional Product Distributors. We are a proud member of the British Promotional Merchandise Association and Giftware Association.

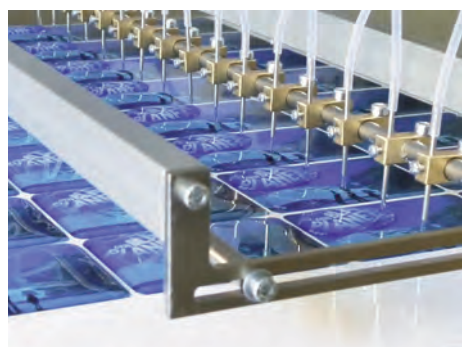
ANC Manufacturing is part of the Ancestors Group, established in 1992. The business has developed and evolved with a solid background and track record in research, design and manufacture for the heritage and corporate sectors. The company has become uniquely placed to service these industries through its extensive knowledge and manufacturing capabilities.

17 different manufacturing processes are carried out on our premises in Folkestone and all can be used to create great products swiftly for the promotional market.



Crystal Clear Polyurethane High Definition Resin Doming

A domed label is simply a sticker with a protective resin coating. The glossy look of the resin gives an eye catching 3d effect to label making, it's a very popular choice to ensure your product and brand stand out. The flexibility of our Crystal Clear resin offers further options to place onto flexible products such as a magnet. This amazing liquid encapsulation that creates a domed magnification of the image whilst also protecting for a much longer life. Our services can include the printing and cutting of the artwork, we pride ourselves on the **High Definition of print** we are able to achieve on our own specially made high quality polyester paper and high resolution inkjet printers.



As well as making your label stand out the resin coating is highly durable, UV resistant and will not scratch or dent, in fact it has a bouncebackability. Dome labels are very durable and are suitable for indoor or outdoor applications and will endure long term use. Domed labels are also referred to as badge labels, 3d labels or 3d stickers, bubble labels or bubble badges and resin labels. Using our dome label facilities in the UK gives you the edge on competitors waiting for longer world-wide deliveries. With our latest acquisition of the newest epoxy machine on the market, we can now offer a faster turnaround with a more cost effective prices than ever before.



What are the Benefits?

This is one label with many benefits and options. These labels can be applied to many different surfaces including rounded or curved. It is a hard wearing, self healing label with means it is scratch and dent proof and looks "as new". The resin provides UV protection ensuring the design will not fade or yellow when exposed to day light. Also providing endless protection against other elements and environments.

Prestigious applications where image is important: IT; Promotional and Automotive Applications (wheel centres, gear shifts, etc); Short or long run applications; Name badges and Asset Labelling; Areas of high impact or areas prone to abrasion.



Labels



Magnets



Coasters



Pill Boxes

What are Dome Labels used for?

Because of the way these labels are produced they are much more permanent and do not show signs of wear and tear. They are a great way to promote branding and products and are often used by equipment manufacturers applying them to their products using the 3 dimensional element for eye catching effect towards the brand.



Name Badges



Seals



Keyrings



Cufflinks



8 bed semi-automatic centrifugal casting machine

Metal Casting (lead free pewter)

We can produce custom items using your designs or we can design for you. The production of all of our pewter products is carried out with a process called Spin Casting or Centrifugal Casting.

Casting Process

Our skilled artist use the traditional method of hand carving out of wax or pewter from original artwork or drawings.

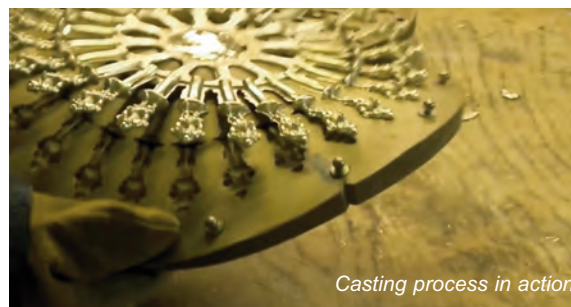
A production mould is then made with the master casting being laid out on a silicone disc and then cured with heat and pressure in a vulcanizer. This rubber mould is then spun in a centrifugal caster while pewter is poured into the centre of the mould resulting in a replica of the master metal design. Once cooled this is then opened up and channels are cut for the molten metal to reach the impressions. These sub-masters are then put in a new production mould and placed into the volcaniser and the above process repeated. The completed castings are fettled and rumbled to remove any sharp edges and imperfections, then polished in a light detergent before being dried in the corn drying machine. All pewter items can be finished in a variety of ways including polishing, to a bright silver colour finish; antiquing to accent the details or plated in silver, gold or other finishes.

Casting Machines



Corn drying machine

We use a modern Semi Automated centrifugal casting machine for our mass production and have several stand alone manual pouring machines for lesser amounts and more intricate work. Per annum we process over 36 Tonnes of Pewter Tin Alloy.



Casting process in action

Assembly

Highly skilled operators assemble and finish every item to exacting standards.

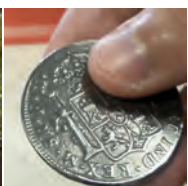
We can produce almost any shape including buttons; pin badges; golf ball markers; tooling; jewellery; findings; figurines; replica coins; medals; belt buckles; charms and Keychains.



Antiqued Rings



Plated Coins



Antiqued Coins



Painted Crown



Figurine



Keyring



Plated Bookmark



Bronzed Figure



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E: michael@ancestorsgroup.com
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Contact us for either more information or to discuss a project you are thinking about. We are more than happy to give advice and help with product development.

THE BPMA CELEBRATES *50 years*

The industry came together to mark the association's half-century milestone

More than 100 party-goers celebrated as the bpma marked its 50th anniversary with a river cruise down the Thames.

The bpma was founded 50 years ago by Samuel Raymond "Nobby" Clarke from Prestige Group after a visit to Chicago where he attended the National Premium Sales Executives show and came away inspired to set up a similar association in the UK.

Founded as the British Premium Manufacturers Association at the Prestige Group headquarters in Holborn, London, the name was changed when Bob Essery, sales manager at Arthur Price of England, was chairman, becoming the British Promotional Merchandise Association to allow premium, travel, merchandise companies and others who did not manufacture in the UK to join.

Members of the bpma board and secretariat were joined by bpma fellows, past chairmen and presidents and many others for an evening cruise along the river to see the lights and sights with the magnificent Thames as a backdrop.

After a champagne reception and barbecue, the chairman of



the bpma, Matt Franks, thanked everyone for coming and shared a brief history of the association, before inviting current president Neal Beagles to try on the recently discovered chain of office which had been especially refurbished and updated for the occasion. The cake was then cut by industry veterans Keith Willis and Paul Beirne before guests

partied the night away.

Matt said: "50 years old and still going strong! It has been an honour and a pleasure to be involved with the bpma in this, our anniversary year, and it's fitting that we are marking the occasion by bringing together so many of our members to celebrate together."

Gordon Glenister, director



**Above: Matt Franks
Left: Keith Willis and Paul Beirne**

general of the bpma, added: "Hitting the 50-year milestone is an amazing achievement for any organisation, especially given the changes in the promotional merchandise industry."

David Lebond, a fellow of the bpma, commented: "As a past chairman and president, it is an honour to be part of this 50th-birthday celebration. The industry needs the bpma." Mike Oxley from Lesmar added: "A great evening on the boat! The bpma is the lifeblood of the industry and a force for professionalism. What would we do without you?"



Debbie Willsmer and Miles Lovegrove



Impression Europe
and TC Group



Angela and
Alan Wagstaff



Viv Blumfield
and Keith Willis



Sarah Penn, Neeta Varia,
and Holly Burgess



Carly Hamrouni
and Lauren Knight

Industry veterans recall 'the good old days'

100% mark-up, £5 origination, £5,000 annual salary.... that must be a long time ago

So what happens when four industry retired figures come together? They talk about the good old days! bpma director general Gordon Glenister arranged for George Hayward, founder of the Page Group, Marion Oxley of Lesmar, Tony Cohen of the Incentive Group and Keith Willis, founder of Dowlis, to come together for lunch and talk about how the industry has changed over the last 50 years as part of the bpma's 50th-anniversary year.

Keith started his career in 1972 with Gale Melville and, before long, headed up the newly formed business gifts division. Don Wood and Keith Willis saw Gale was going nowhere and created a new company out of their names, Don and Willis, which is how Dowlis was formed.

Keith remembers his first order for 50 lighters for RCA. It was probably worth £100 and the origination charge was around £5. They used to go to the Blackpool Gift Fair in February which was huge – it was like the Spring Fair is today.

Interestingly the corporate gift industry today really came out of the gift industry. "It was a lot more established in the States, so we were probably around 10 years behind them," says Willis. "Then of course there was the Mount Royal Hotel in London where the industry would take over a hotel and different companies would have different rooms allocated to them. We did feel sorry for some



Keith Willis, Marion Oxley, Tony Cohen and George Hayward

guys that would be there all day and not see anyone." Back then, of course, the shows were targeting retailers.

Tony Cohen started after leaving college in 1970, initially having joined a manufacturer selling stainless steel. The company Cado Designs was run by Ken Lessons and specialised in branded cufflinks. Some of the original players in the 1970s would have been Industrial Gifts, Symonds Distributors, Venus Products and Bourne Publicity. Early manufacturers would have been Parker Pens, Letts Diaries, Stuart Crystal etc – all retail brands that could be personalised for the

promotional market.

More and more manufacturers started to realise that diversification into corporate gifts was generating more demand and, more importantly, healthy profits. "A 100% margin was not uncommon," says Cohen. "However, it was necessary to offset the purchase of stock that might not necessarily be sold."

Cohen started to realise the low-cost options that the Far East brought to delivering a wider range at competitive prices. Much of this early adoption was from the Jewish fraternity, and the connections even today are still very strong.

Marion Oxley can boast one of the oldest established promotional gift companies with Lesmar having been founded in 1947 so it has four generations now in the gift industry. Oxley remarked that a lot of business connections and associations came out immediately after World War Two.

George Hayward worked for Parker Pens from 1967, originally in the retail sector and eventually starting his own industrial division in the late 1970s. Hayward said that, for many years, distributors operated in isolation and didn't know who their competition was. It was not until he went to a sales conference organised by Parker Pens that he even met his fellow distributors/competitors.

When Glenister asks when the first catalogue group was launched, Hayward says it was the Probus Group which would have been around 1988. In fact, before the first catalogue, you would buy a presentation folder and put inserts in from suppliers' brochures. Burostat was the first real industry catalogue, dealing with around 200 companies, and in its heyday worth around £5.5m. Around the early 1980s, 400 distributors would have taken it. Action Speciality Advertising was another company who would promote its catalogue heavily and would spend a lot of money on lavish incentives – not long before companies like Product Source followed with their cruise ship targets.



Left: bpma publications over the years
Above and below: One of the early trade shows



The traditional leaflet gift presenter



Ian Allchild, Gordon Glenister and Gordon Savage

Ancestors helps bpma mark 50 years

The Ancestors Group, trading as ANC Manufacturing, created a 3D metal bookmark as a gift to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the bpma.

Carrying the association's logo, it was given out to guests on the bpma's anniversary cruise on the Thames, designed to be something that would be kept, have a practical use and be valuable as well as being made in the UK.

A sculptor made a model of the logo, using a silicon mould and casting the pieces in

lead-free pewter onto a brass bookmark template, 24ct gold plating, laser engraving and finally the packaging.

There was no time to get the gift box gold blocked so it was decided to laser-engrave the lid and pad-print the base. The box was gift-wrapped and closed with a high-definition domed decal and placed in a pad-printed bpma-branded gift bag.

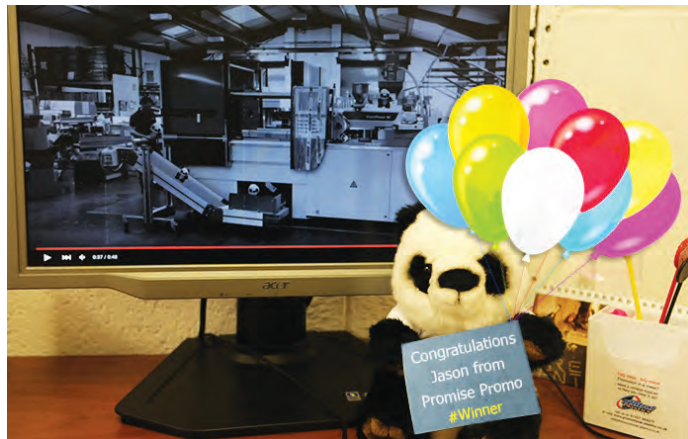
A limited edition of 120 pieces were created in just over one week and all processes manufactured on the premises at Ancestors in Folkestone in Kent.

Ancestors managing director Nicholas Humphery-smith said:

"We were so proud to be asked to provide the gift for the event but equally proud of our staff, their skills and our machinery to create such a great gift in a short time and all in the UK."



Nicholas Humphery-smith



Film role for Promo the Panda

Great Central Plastics demonstrated how promotional products are about fun with the help of Promo the Panda.

The company ran a competition themed around the mascot of Promotional Products Week, offering UK distributors the prize of £250 off their next order. They had to watch a short video and email how many times they spotted the panda.

The competition turned out to be a little more difficult than planned as no one managed to guess the correct answer – he appeared eight times. However, Great Central Plastics decided they should still have a winner so one was picked at random from the emails with the closest answers.

Congratulations to Jason Burke from Promise Promo who was announced winner.

Christmas Wish List

Dear Santa,

This Christmas I'd really love a UK supplier who can offer me quality standard and bespoke plastic products at low MOQ's and in a wide range of colours.

They would need a fantastic sales team who could help me through the whole order process, from the design concept to the amazing end product. Plus they would need competitive tooling prices so I could afford a unique promotion, no matter what my client's budget is.

But most of all, I really need a supplier who I can really rely on.

Love,

UK Distributors

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Process over product

Alex Turner, managing director of Listawood, explains how the best solutions are about more than just product



As a printer over the years, I've seen too many orders going through the system where the process could have delivered so much more than the design chosen. Bland pictures of delivery lorries or shipping vessels, even PowerPoint slides or clip art used as the basis for a promotional product that will have cost the end user many thousands of pounds of jealously guarded marketing budget. This is not something that the ultimate recipient is very likely to retain, which is of course the great strength of promotional merchandise as an advertising medium when targeted properly. Worst of all, the end user might conclude that the blandly branded mugs or diaries that they bought were a waste of money and be turned off from using merchandise in the future.

A recent example was cited to me where a major car company was simply putting their fairly basic logo on a white mug. Yet at the exhibition stand, where the mugs were given away, there were Icelandic themes of the new car being promoted. A suggestion was made that the imagery could be branded around the mug as a transfer print and the "on the road price" printed on the base of the inside. The marketing manager loved it and commissioned it for their next event. No mention of the cost was made!

Conversely, we very often see products going through the factory that even the most jaded amongst us after all of these years and many millions of printed products processed can barely resist digging out of the reject pile and making use of ourselves. So whilst finding the right product for our customers is important, perhaps it's even more important that we



"Full-colour printing can deliver spectacular results if you put the right image on the right product"



consider the product/process combination that will bring out the "magpie" in the target recipient of the item.

Technology has delivered us with a wide range of branding methods. Recent years have seen full colour become far more widely accessible with the development of digital offset presses, toner and dye sublimation-based transfer printing and, perhaps more

importantly, UV and solvent-based inkjet systems that can print directly onto a wide range of substrates ranging from T-shirts to pens or USB devices. So is full colour always the answer? It's undoubtedly an excellent method of producing short runs of any design, due to the lower set-up costs associated with digital, and full-colour printing can deliver spectacular results if you put the

right image on the right product.

However, some products are almost cheapened if decorated this way. Many technology-based products look far better if decorated with a simple one-colour pad print or subtle piece of engraving. Some of the most desirable-looking diaries I've seen are those where the covers have been Pantone-matched with the end user's corporate colours and a simple de-boss of their logo has been discretely placed on the cover.

The custom-colour glazing of mugs and other items of drinkware, decorated with a simple one-colour screen print can look extremely classy and can be used to convey simple marketing messages very effectively.

Get the product and process combination right and the resulting item of merchandise is something that the ultimate recipient will cherish and retain for 2.5 years (the average length a promotional item is kept if useful and relevant), rather than the unwelcome "freebie" alluded to in a recent Financial Times article.

IPPAG looks to the future at 50

Members past and present helped the IPPAG Cooperative celebrate its 50th anniversary in the beautiful setting of Saint-Paul de Vence and Nice in the south of France.

Events included a two-day Open Forum about the future of the Cooperative and the industry, a 2CV rally through the countryside, a pétanque tournament and the 50th-anniversary gala dinner.

Florence Mosnier, IPPAG Cooperative general manager, commented: "We are very fortunate to count such brilliant minds and industry players in

our group and evolving at their sides has been a privilege. Our 50th anniversary is an opportunity to honour the past with the presence of our 'old tigers' and look to the future with our Open Forum meetings exploring the true value of IPPAG."

IPPAG Cooperative chairman Thibaut Fontaine added: "IPPAG is the greatest opportunity for its members coming from all over the world to exchange experiences, good suppliers and develop processes together. For example, we have made social audits in 67 factories in China. We have also more and more global clients we serve all together around the world."

Pictured are IPPAG presidents since 1986: Rosario Circo, George Murton of Worldwide Ideas in the UK, Bob Lederer, Fritz Bauer, Soeren Langhoff and Thibaut Fontaine.



Winning ideas ahead at Trophex

The annual Trophex show is returning, taking place on January 17 and 18 at the NEC in Birmingham – a must-attend event for anyone who works in the trophy, awards and personalisation industry.

Visiting Trophex will help you to diversify and grow your business, look for new suppliers and get better deals, and find out about new innovations and products on the market. See the latest engraving machinery in action via demonstrations, see the latest trends for the coming season and take advantage of special offers that exhibitors will be offering exclusively to Trophex visitors.

Exhibitors will include TheMagicTouch, Glenway Products (pictured) and Gravograph. New companies represented include Radecal Machine Sales, The Pen Warehouse and Sarfraz



Overseas.

It will see the return of the Open Forum Seminars and the Knowledge Centre. Companies signed up to take part include Corel UK, which will run a series of free workshops for engravers on "Power Tracing Tips".

The Pen Warehouse will be running a seminar where they will discuss their web-to-print platform No-Minimum.co.uk.

Visit www.trophex.com for more details and to register.



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Portable power

Matt Pluckrose of Desktop Ideas on 10 things you need to know about power banks

1 A power bank is battery to charge your gadgets and electronic devices. They are generally rated in their battery capacity (milliampere hour or mAh), in their output capacity 0.5-1A (smart phones only) or 2.1-3A (smart phones and tablets) and by the speed at which they charge input voltage/ mAh and output voltage/ mAh – the higher the input rating, the quicker it will re-charge your device.

2 The speed at which the power bank charges your device is unaffected by whether it's a 2A model or 1A

model, assuming it's fit for purpose.

3 An average smart phone has a battery of around 1400-2900 mAh whereas a tablet or iPad has a battery around 8000-12000 mAh so it's important to choose a power bank for the job intended: a basic 1000-2000 mAh model won't be much good for a tablet re-charge.

4 The stated capacity (mAh) of a power bank will never be the actual power



Desktop ideas power bank

delivered. Expect to get about 80% to 90% of that claimed by the manufacturer. Similar to flash drives, some of the capacity is lost in heat and voltage conversion.

5 The battery size (number of cells) of the power bank is directly proportionate to its weight and size. The bigger the battery, often the heavier (less portable) it will be.

6 Power banks are generally powered by Lithium batteries (Li-polymer or Li-ion) and are classed as dangerous goods by airlines. Check carefully with your supplier if they are being exported to a conference, etc as they must be packed and certified ready to fly.

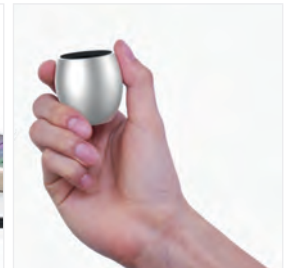
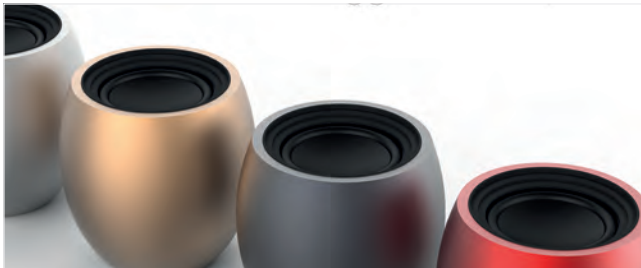
7 Power banks can be very dangerous if made badly. Note EE's near disaster when 500,000 had to be recalled due to overheating. Always check with your supplier

that they have and can, on demand, show you MSDS certificates (UN 38.3) and SDS (Safety Data Sheets).

8 Power banks are currently the fastest and best-selling gadget on the market and look likely to stay that way. They vary in price from around £2 to £100 each, which often is linked to battery size. The cheapest is around 1000-2000 mAh and the largest over 20,000 mAh.

9 Good-quality power banks will have a CPU inside to prevent over-charging, over-discharging and short circuits. Some even have a secondary "smart chip" to act as a secondary guard against the above.

10 The next generation of portable power will feature items such as speakers and torches that serve two purposes: one to re-charge and the other a secondary purpose.



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very soon.

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We have re-designed our quotes and are
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last month.

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bpma

Dates for the diary

December 2015

11 bpma Christmas Lunch,
The Cumberland Hotel, Marble
Arch, London

2016 January 2016

13-15 PSI 2016, Messe Centre,
Düsseldorf, Germany

13-15 PPAI Expo, Las Vegas,
USA

17-18 Trophex, NEC,
Birmingham

20-21 Promotional Product
Expo, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

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

*All dates were correct at time
of going to press.*

New members

The bpma would like to welcome the following
companies into the trade association:

- Best Textile UK Ltd
- Bushey Promotions &
Incentives
- Chase Promotions Ltd
- Clever Printing Ltd
- Far'N'Beyond Ltd

- Imprint Plus Ltd
- National Pen Promotional
Products Ltd
- Onbrand Merchandise Ltd
- Set Office Supplies Ltd
- The Fullworks Ltd

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Promotional Union hands out awards at catalogue launch

PA Promotions and The Pen Warehouse picked up awards at the launch of Promotional Union's new catalogue.

Cardiff-based distributor PA Promotions scooped top prize while the title of Supplier of the Year went to The Pen Warehouse at the event at the Yew Lodge

hotel in Kegworth, Derbyshire in September.

Following the dinner, top magician and mind reader Bryan Gunton had the audience spellbound. Earlier in the day a number of suppliers held a showcase for members of the Promotional Union group to visit.



Above: Ashley Abrahams, Tracey Bowen, Cathy Anderson and John Barratt



Above: Mark Paver, Tom Worland (PA Promotions) and Karen Paver



Above: Nick Clewlow receives award for The Pen Warehouse

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Above: David Kershner
Right: UK-made coasters
from WCMA



Success for Falcon Promotions gift show

Falcon Promotions, based in Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, held another successful exhibition – its first since it was acquired by Fluid Branding this year.

The Business & Advertising Gifts Show was held at the Rowley Mile at Newmarket Racecourse, offering guests a chance to meet around 36 suppliers and take a close look at the business and advertising gifts they offer. Alongside a free goody bag, there was a chance to win an iPad Mini.

Managing director Matt Franks said: "This has been one of the most successful and long-standing regional exhibitions in the country, which is a great testimony to the Falcon team. A number of leading companies from Cambridge make it a must-attend event."



Above: Cool products from Bio Labs



The Falcon Promotions team



Record turnout for Ignite catalogue launch

Record numbers attended the Ignite Catalogue launch which was held at Warwick Racecourse in October. Warmed by the Indian summer, over 40 suppliers supported the showcase in the morning followed by a sumptuous lunch and racing in the afternoon.

Richard Pettinger, managing director of the Ignite Group, commented: "I am delighted with the turnout from our members and how popular this annual event has become. Among the big winners at the event was Mark Lever from Everything Environmental with a win on one bet of £524, then a further £235 on Paddy Power on the same horse. Drinks on you then Mark!"



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Suppliers tee off with Brand Addition

With the Costa del Cheshire weather set fair, the fourth annual Brand Addition Cup at Shrigley Hall Hotel in September proved to be a great success.

The team competition was won by Supplier Victory, while the victor in the individual competition and nearest the pin was Clive Allcott of Essential Embroidery Design. The winner in the long drive was Nicky Gold of Brand Addition.

The most hotly contested competition ended up being over who was nearest the clubhouse off the first tee which was just won by Dorian Tranter of Desktop Ideas, with Steven Royle-Toone of Brand Addition coming a close second.

"Thanks again to all of the suppliers who took part and



showed their continued support for the event," said purchasing manager Helen Brennan.

SC-M goes back to the future

SC-M Creative Merchandise has gone Back to the Future to show how technology showcased in the 1985 film really might exist in real-life 2015.

With today's advancements in charging tech, and a large dose of creativity, SC-M's team are celebrating the virtual launch of the Mr Fusion USB Energy Reactor concept. Powered by domestic waste, it can charge up to 100 USB items or even an electric car in only 10 minutes!

Mr Fusion, invented by Doc Emmett Brown in Back To The Future, gave the DeLorean its 1.21 gigawatts of power just from recycled waste. A product from the Mr Fusion range would be an awesome asset in any office.

OK, so the Mr Fusion Energy Reactor isn't available to buy

just yet but Rebecca Lister of Nottingham-based SC-M says they want to show the importance of creative thinking. "Creativity will always be key to turning heads to make your product or service stand out from the crowd. In a recent bpma survey, 32% of people said that there was a lack of creativity surrounding promotional merchandise. We aim to show that this is simply not the case."



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Fraud warning

Craig Sibbald of Creative Promotions issues a warning to the industry

One of the things I love about this industry is the people. It's an industry full of genuine folk working hard to bring the best range, price and service possible to one another to build their businesses while serving the needs of those around them. It's not often the industry is tarnished by an unscrupulous individual. However, one person has proven a consistent thorn in the side for three years now and it's high time he was driven out the industry for good.

Regular trade press readers will likely know who I'm talking about but for the avoidance of doubt I'm going to say his

name loud and clear.... So take note and inform your colleagues he must be avoided: ALAN WESTON. Affectionately known as @AlanGingeWeston on Twitter, Alan Weston on Facebook and Alan J Weston under various online directory enquiry and directorship listings. It seems he's giving redheads a bad name too, tut tut... Mr Weston!

For three years this man has been cutting a friendly but fraudulent wake through our industry offering "special deals" to distributors via his network of crooked companies. He claims to be a one-stop sourcing shop with a particular penchant for pushing USBs and trolley

coins. In fact Alan Weston has been doing such a great job of offering his wonderful deals that some 30-plus companies have placed business with him, only to firmly regret it shortly after.

Alan Weston prides himself on the ability to source anything from anywhere, which is pretty easy when the products are all a figment of his imagination. Let me make this abundantly clear to readers. If you are contacted by Alan Weston, perhaps under the guise of 8th Wonder Merchandise Ltd, Promoprods Ltd, DNA's Pinky Pawz Ltd or Watch N Play Ltd - DO NOT DEAL WITH HIM! Alan Weston will tempt you in with great prices and lashings of friendliness only to steal your money in a cloak of lies. "But wait a minute, Craig, I thought it's innocent until proven guilty?" He's already been proven guilty in the courts on more than one occasion yet somehow continues to plague our industry. The rinse-and-repeat cycle of this convicted fraudster MUST be brought to an end through a collective effort to drive him out of the industry, preferably to prison where he belongs!

Rewind 18 months and you'll understand the axe I have to grind with this common thief. My own company was targeted by him, he stole £5,000 from our business and, from the conversations I've had with other distributors, we are nowhere near the top of his hit list. More than one distributor has paid this low-life individual over £10,000 – yes, TEN GRAND! When he took our office on a five-grand tour of his fantasy supply chain and cost me two residual spending clients, I decided enough was enough. Unfortunately I only researched his network of companies once orders had been placed but nothing delivered, lesson learned. By the time I uncovered his trail of fraud he was off with our money, but only after spinning a web of lies so horrifying it leaves me in no doubt he is on the sociopath

scale. Mr Weston's excuses for non-fulfilment of orders ranged from family problems, theft by his delivery driver, incompetent couriers, supplier woes and, the most shocking lie of all, the passing of his own son due to a brain tumour. We all experience problems from time to time, however when I saw a picture of his little boy posted on the internet taken a few months after his supposed passing, I felt

“More than one distributor has paid this low-life individual over £10,000”

physically sick. It transpires his excuses, or variations of them, have been doled out regularly to those he's conned in the last three years. There's low, then there's Alan Weston low.

Infuriated by his continual cycle of fraud, I began reaching out to others taken in by him in an effort to build a case strong enough to bring him to justice, again! I contacted the bpma, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Trading Standards and Customs & Excise. He charged VAT on invoices but I doubted the VAT man was receiving those funds. It's taken a long time to get to this stage, however it would seem from the last update given, the authorities are on his case again. I hope it's more than just a slap on the



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➤ **If you are worried about fraud, find your local trading standards at www.tradingstandards.uk or contact the bpma.**

wrist this time. Conviction will not recover the money stolen from dozens of companies but it will hopefully see him face a tougher round of justice this time.

To that end I'd like to request anyone with further information on this man to please contact Leicester Trading Standards directly on 0116 4543200 or email trading.standards@leicestershire.gov.uk. The team at LTS has been hard at work pulling together details from upset distributors so the more information you can give them the better.

With this being an ongoing case it's important we hear from everyone who has dealt with this man, even if you have only received his emails showing intent to supply. Once reported to trading standards please contact me on 0141 332 7471 and let me know your complaint has been logged. It doesn't

matter how long ago events occurred – it's imperative we hear from you to help seal the industry off from this fraudulent character for good.

Before dealing with anyone new, please be sure to check out the bpma bulletin board where you can post questions or request advice from a wide audience of experienced industry professionals. Alternatively why not ring the bpma up? They exist for your support and it only takes one small piece of advice or recommendation to potentially save you your annual membership fee many times over. You could of course avoid a lot of hassle by simply buying from recognised bpma members – this way you know you are in safe hands and dealing only with experienced professionals. Whatever your sourcing strategy, make sure you do it safely!



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LinkedIn forum**

The bpma LinkedIn forum allows distributor and supplier members to speak freely about industry and business issues and share best practice. It continues to grow with 1,000 members. Have your say and get involved.

Some of the most viewed topics include The Sourcing Team's Gill Thorpe's take on the Financial Times article on "freebies" during Promotional Products Week, Grant Silverman sharing his thoughts on online ordering systems and Gateway 3D's Andrew Talbot on the No-Minimum business opportunity.

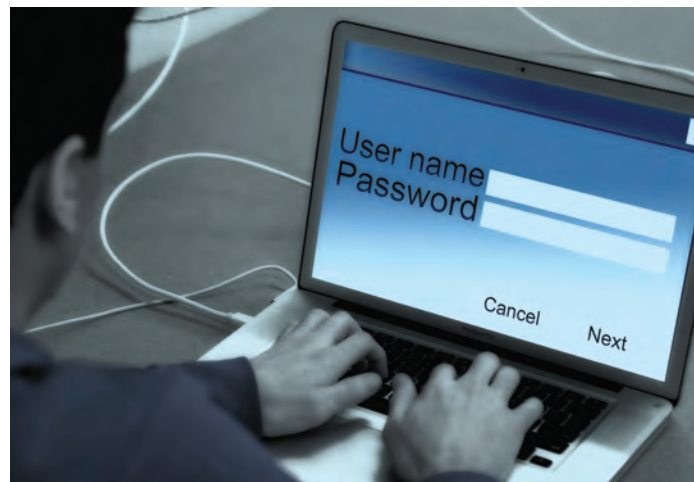


Be protected with passwords

With hackers and scammers on the prowl, digital security is more important than ever, but one basic step you can take is to avoid the most popular passwords. Research continues to reveal that the world's favourite passwords are "password" and "123456", followed by "iloveyou" and "qwerty". Pet names and birth dates are also popular.

According to Wolfpack Information Risk, the best way to create a strong password is to use spaces and/or combinations of upper-case and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters (for example, @ # \$ % ! ?), with a minimum of seven characters.

Alternatively, create a passphrase and add special characters and numbers to it. Wolfpack's example is "Online banking saves me so much time and effort every day". Create



a coded version of the phrase (with letters and numbers) by using the first letter of each word like "Obsmsmt&eed!2014".

Another option is using a "password manager" to generate secure passwords automatically for each service you use. These

typically require you to set one master password that must be entered to unlock the "vault" where you store all your other passwords. The best ones include 1Password, F-Secure Key, Password Manager, Identity Safe, Last Pass, and KeePass.

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The Great British brands abroad

Phil Morgan, the CEO of SPS, offers tips on exporting



It may seem a cliché but, with the massive developments in communications technology, the world really does seem a smaller place, especially when it comes to doing business around the world. There are huge opportunities for taking Great British brands abroad, and a wealth of support to help companies do just that. Chambers of commerce, UKTI and of course the bpma offer a wealth of guidance and support.

As CEO of a British manufacturer, I can offer a few "dos" and "don'ts" when it comes to exporting your products.

DO know where you're going. It

may sound obvious, but select the priority countries you want to target, rather than going after "Europe" as a whole.

DON'T use a blanket approach. You can't use a "one size fits all" approach when it comes to overseas markets, not if you want to get the most out of each country.

DO your research in your target countries. What's the potential? Who are the big players? What are the customers buying? Which marketing approaches are most successful?

DON'T underestimate the benefit of local knowledge and expertise. If you want a serious presence in Europe, it's worth investing in local representatives. You could

select a partner to represent your brand in the new markets, or take the bold step of employing somebody in the area. Each option has its pros and cons, so take some time to figure out the best solution for your company.

DO translate, and do it well! You really can't afford to take shortcuts and "auto translate" functions with your content. Investing in good translations, carried out by native speakers with relevant experience, will make a massive difference for you, and help you to avoid potential offensive or embarrassing translations!

DON'T underestimate the investment you will need to make. To establish a true

presence you'll need to plan for sustained marketing campaigns and relationship development programmes.

DO make the most of the independent and professional support available.

DON'T forget to use the technology at our disposal for meeting with your customers. Conference calls, Google hangouts and Skype make meetings with your Euro partners so much easier!

As an exporter, we've learned a lot over the years. It can take a lot of time, trial and error before things click and you start making progress. But these are all incredibly valuable lessons, which will only serve to make your success even greater.



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Mystery shoppers provide insights into industry

The bpma's mystery shopper programme will help to improve standards, writes **Gordon Glenister**

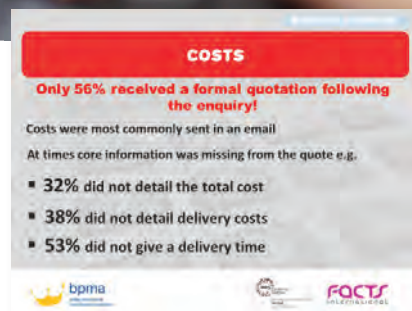
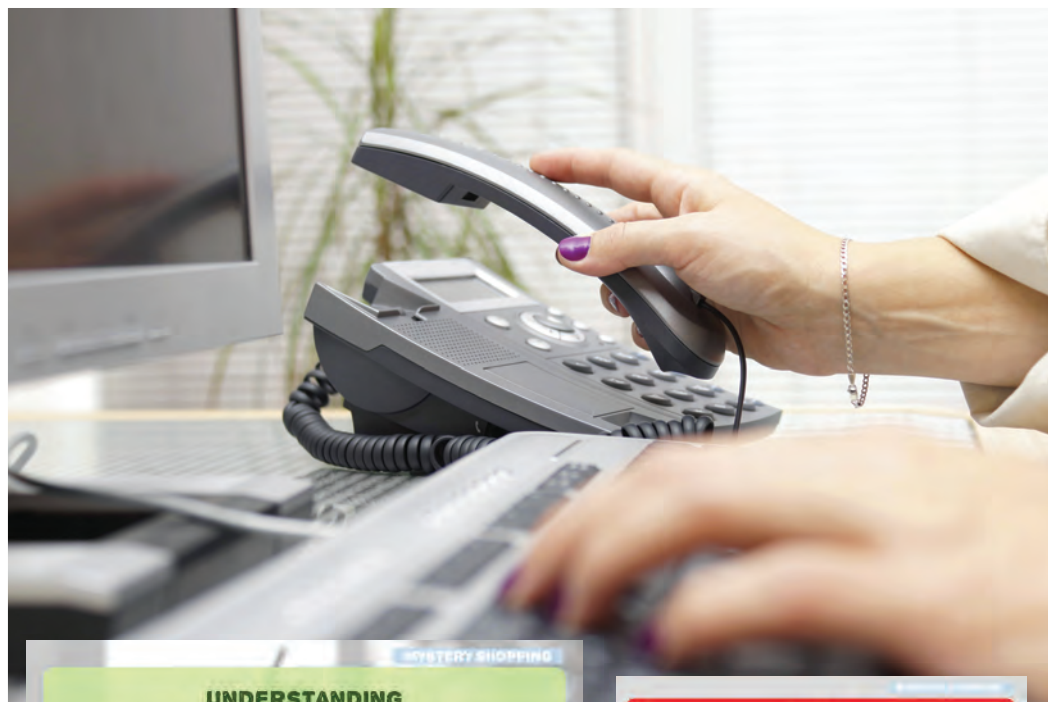
The bpma conducted its first-ever mystery shopper programme in the summer of 2015. In all, 30 distributors were selected by leading researcher Facts International, across a range of turnover bands.

Each distributor was shopped four times, twice on email and twice on the telephone. A number of interactions were measured. With regard to the telephone responses, 73% had their call answered within three rings and 9% went straight to voicemail. At its best, the phone was answered with one ring. At its worst, six calls were made and an answer machine was noted each time. With regard to email quote requests online, 34% of those didn't receive any form of reply. At their best, emails were personally addressed, customers thanked for their enquiry and the details of their request relayed back to them. But at its worst, no acknowledgment email was received and no clarification of the request. Following the enquiry, only 56% received a formal quotation. Costs were commonly sent in an email.

The researchers also found out varying levels of information collected at the first point of contact. Only 43% asked for the telephone number, however 81% did ask for the email. There was also a sense that the level of understanding of the requirements of the customer were limited. In fact 55% of those questioned were not asked what the product was being used for. Observations were also made about providing alternatives to suit a particular need: only 39% were offered a better alternative.

Researchers felt that there were some real opportunities for distributors to differentiate themselves.

Shout about compliance. If your goods meet regulations,



make it clear, explain what the regulations mean.

Promote bpma membership and what it stands for. Marketers associate industry standards with quality and compliance.

Train frontline staff. Ensure they are knowledgeable about compliance. Ensure processes such as capturing all the basic details are followed. Build confidence in frontline staff to ask questions and suggest alternatives.





What marketers really think about promotional gifts

Rising demand for electronic goods is among findings in bpma research into marketers' attitudes

The findings from extensive research by the bpma into what marketers think of promotional merchandise were launched during Promotional Products Week in September. Brand awareness is the main reason for using branded merchandise but increasingly they have more specific uses for seminars and conferences.

Two-thirds are now purchasing electronic goods, notably power banks and all manner of USB options. Marketers also believe the key to a successful promotional product is finding something that is both high in quality and memorable in some way.

While the average price per promotional item sourced is

between £1 and £5, there has been a marked increase in those spending over £50,000 per annum. Marketers would spend more if they had larger budgets, suggesting they see the value in using promotional products.

The internet is by far the most important way to source products and suppliers, accounting for 81% of respondents. However, a

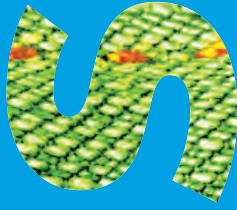
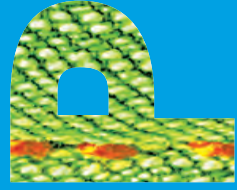
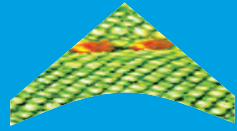
significant number suggested they would return to an existing supplier or ask for recommendations.

The research also discovered that buyers are keen to work with suppliers that understand their needs and requirements as well as offering excellent customer service. These were seen to be more important than price of the goods.

Buyers constantly want to find something different or unique to interest their customers. Many of the respondents recalled real examples of when they have found really great ideas and the impact they had. They also expressed concerns at the general lack of creativity in the offering.

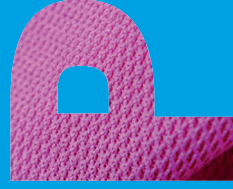
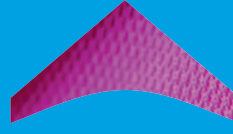
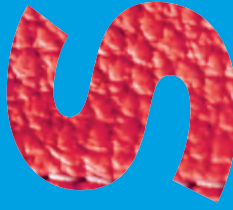
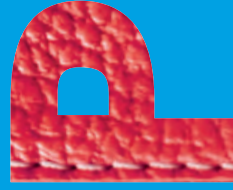
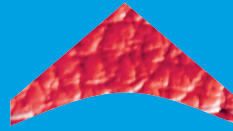
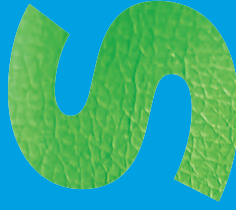
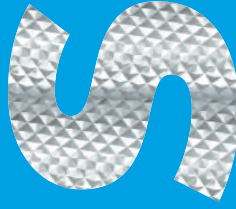
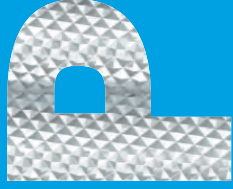
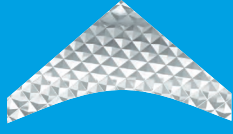
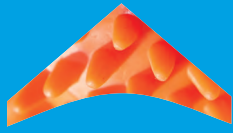
The biggest concern of all from the research was the lack of knowledge of compliance and what it even means. Organisations were almost walking blind and assuming everything they bought complied. A recent incident involving power chargers used by EE for their customers created media attention as a number of them got overheated in handbags.

“Buyers are keen to work with suppliers that understand their needs”



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Ten from two



Natalie Gold

Natalie Gold, sales director at The Carole Group

What are you reading at the minute?

A mixture of 3,096 Days by Natascha Kampusch and Closer magazine – you have to switch off every now and again.

What's on your iPod?

All the girly stuff... Nick Mulvey and Sam Smith are regular favourites at the moment.

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

Never take anything for granted.

Cappuccino or latte?

Neither – can't stand tea or coffee!

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

My gorgeous nephew Zach when he laughs. Failing that, a new designer handbag.

Best place in the world?

When it's sunny, having breakfast on my terrace looking out over rabbits playing in the beautiful grounds (which I don't own).

If you could change one thing?

I would certainly like to cure cancer.

How would you like to be remembered?

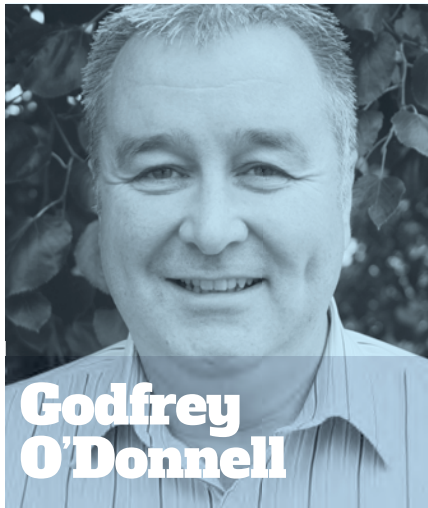
I am always told that I never stop smiling and always seem in a good mood.

What are you proudest of?

At 16 I was asked to join the England Ski Club and qualified as a ski Instructor. That was my earliest memory of feeling proud!

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

At the age of 23, I lost my beautiful mother and best friend. I try to focus on being positive, support my family and being the best person I can to make her proud. You have to focus on the future!



Godfrey O'Donnell

Godfrey O'Donnell, commercial director of Keramikos

What are you reading at the minute?

The Gangs of Birmingham (Peaky Blinders).

What's on your iPod?

U2, Simple Minds, Deacon Blue, Oasis.

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

That you never stop learning, whatever your age. Treat people from all walks of life with respect. It's only a game of football (still learning).

Cappuccino or latte?

Latte.

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

Finola (two years old) and Dermott (nine years old) – my beautiful children.

Best place in the world?

Donegal, or Villa Park on the first game of the season.

If you could change one thing?

Being slim again and having dark hair...

How would you like to be remembered?

As a decent happy lad.

What are you proudest of?

My children – and Aston Villa winning the European Cup.

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

Professionally, the merger of Supreme and Product Source – it was a horrid time for me and also for many many gift houses out in the market. Got through it with a couple of stents and the help of a good surgeon – plus some fantastic people that are still there now.

Sarah moves supplier side

Sarah Cooper has joined supplier Impression Europe as national sales representative after gaining a wealth of industry experience working for several years on the distributor side.

She brings extensive product knowledge as well as a complete understanding of decorating techniques, enabling her to understand the challenges facing distributors on a daily basis and how Impression Europe can help them.

Sarah was keen to move over to the supplier side of the industry but was very selective. "I have found that there is a very big cross-section of service levels from suppliers, in terms of how flexible and responsive they are. Impression Europe struck me as a company that take customer service very, very seriously, and are always very responsive.

"The other big factor is that the directors, Malcolm and Adrian Stephenson, work in the business every single day, and the management team, and all the staff, fully understand the importance of customer service and support and will always go the extra mile try to ensure the distributor has no issues with an order."

Skuttlebutt

Clipped wings at Falcon show

A certain well known personality of the year and mug supplier – mentioning no names – managed to lock his keys out of his car following the Falcon exhibition in September. Fortunately for him, there were plenty of people on hand.



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