



PRODUCTMEDIA

THE **MAGAZINE** FOR THE PROMOTIONAL INDUSTRY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018



Getting down to business p23
Show highlights from
Merchandise World in Farnborough



MEET THE CEO

FIRST INTERVIEW
WITH BPMA'S
JON BIRRELL **P11 >**



BREXIT PREPARATION
THE EXPERTS ADVISE **P18**

HOME ALONE RUNNING A
BUSINESS FROM YOUR HOUSE **P20**

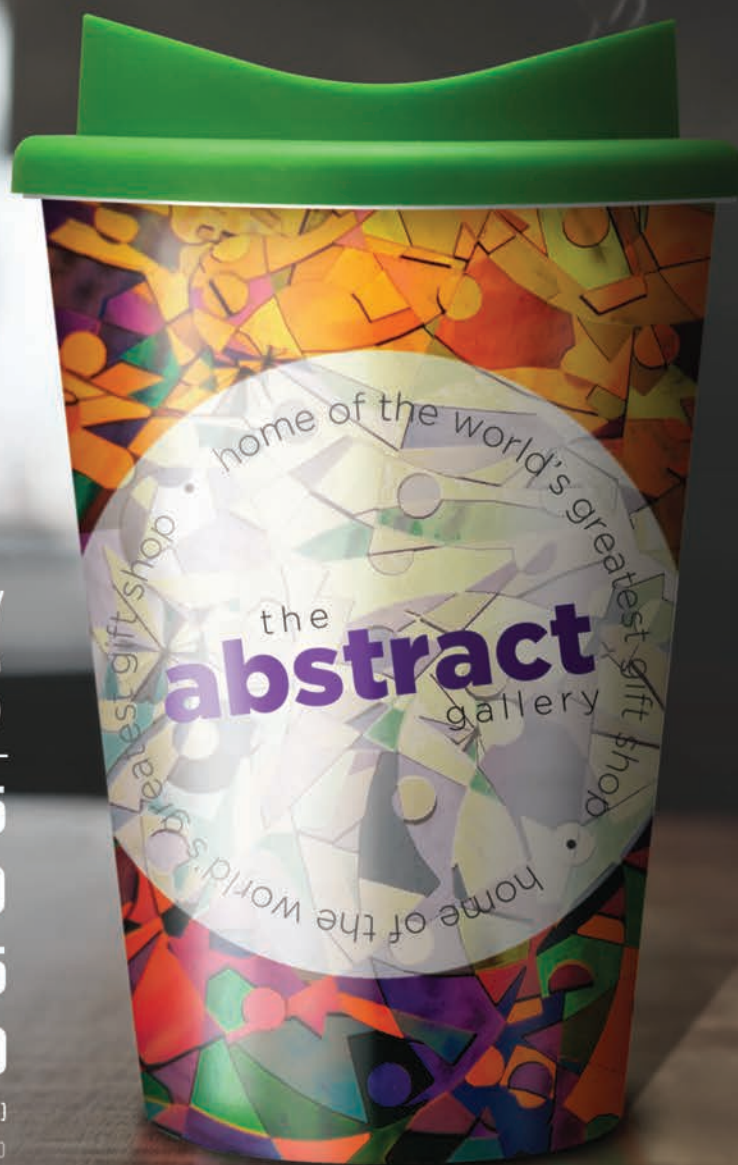
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WELCOME



It was great to see so many members at the Brexit Summit in Farnborough in what proved to be a thought provoking and engaging day. The high quality speakers offered a balanced

view of Brexit from opposing sides as well as offering some valuable insights of what 'might' happen. The industry leaders debate which followed saw six leading BPMA suppliers share their views and perspective on the changes our industry is facing and what they are doing in the future. Exciting times ahead!

Merchandise World September 2018

visitor figures were up on previous years shows and a huge thank you again to everyone who has supported us throughout our MW journey. As you will see later in the magazine, member engagement is still at the forefront of our focus and we constantly draw on the feedback from our supplier and distributor members to ensure we maximise the opportunities to help inspire, connect and educate our membership!

Looking ahead to the January 2019 MW show, this will be the largest Merchandise World event we have put on and there is a real buzz and excitement building for this already which is great to see.

I am really looking forward to welcoming the BPMA's new CEO Jon

Birrell at the start of November. Speaking with Jon about our future plans, we can be assured of fresh ideas on how we communicate as an industry working together and also how we raise the profile of our industry to the wider audience. Jon shares the views of the BPMA board that we need to build on the momentum we have with our Specialist Groups such as the Supplier Conference, Briman Group, Branded Clothing Group and End User Task Force to ensure the BPMA is working hard for the entire membership. More to follow next issue from Jon himself.

Graeme Smith
BPMA Chairman

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



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TMA takes collective approach to promotion

Five leading trade manufacturers of promotional products have formed the Trade Manufacturer's Alliance (TMA) to increase awareness and knowledge of the range of British manufactured products.

Formed in July, the TMA includes WCM&A, First Editions, Great Central Plastics, Ancestors of Dover, and Foremost Magnets. Martyn Wood has been appointed as field sales manager to represent all five brands to distributors, providing a more effective way to introduce a range of products. Wood can also assist in arranging a wide range of support services, such as specific training at client premises and factory tours.

By increasing support to professional distributors, TMA hopes to encourage them to offer British manufactured products confident that they will receive quality merchandise, good customer service, and value for money.

TMA companies are all members of the BPMA and support its aims through increasing education within the industry. They are committed to a stringent set of industry leading service level standards which are displayed on its website thetma.co.uk. This includes more information about print and production techniques plus videos on the individual companies' capabilities.



Wild Thang range welcomes giants

Liverpool-based Wild Thang helped celebrate the 10th anniversary of the city's year as European Capital of Culture, welcoming back the giant street theatre puppets to Merseyside.

More than one million people witnessed the event titled 'Liverpool's Dream' with Wild Thang the official merchandise supplier in conjunction with Culture Liverpool. It produced a merchandise range including printed T-shirts, limited edition hand screen-printed A2 posters, and water bottles.

"Having been involved in the trilogy of events in 2012, 2014 and now 2018, this is one of Wild Thang's proudest merchandise projects," said Andrew Derryhouse, Wild Thang managing director. "I am just as proud of the Wild Thang team who put together the range and worked towards some very tight deadlines to get it on the shelves in time."

New facilities boost Gift Innovations

Irish-based Gift Innovations has expanded its business with new facilities in Limerick City to meet a growing demand for corporate promotional products.

The company has invested to provide showrooms and to facilitate its growing storage and fulfilment requirements for clients. Gift Innovations works with some of the largest multinationals in Ireland as well as local SMEs, delivering gift solutions to recognise, reward and retain employees and customers. The company now employs five people.

Managing director, Ann Lyons, said: "We have been tracking the growing influence of employer branding and how more and more organisations are using promotional products to

promote themselves to customers and employees. To ensure we remain relevant and offer the best promotional products to our clients, we have attended international tradeshows, invested in sourcing software and joined the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA). Providing a personalised service is very important to us, that is why we have also opened our new showrooms to give clients the space to view our wide range of product samples."

The company offers a range of promotional products, working closely with clients and suppliers so the right products are sourced, branded appropriately and delivered on budget. With its new storage facilities, it can store products and fulfil delivery on-demand.



MERIT CLOSES THE DOOR AFTER THREE DECADES

Merit Promotional Clothing Ltd, the firm formed by former BPMA chairman Liz Karn, has announced it will close on 31 December 2018.

The family-run business was started by Karn 31 years ago with Richard Charlesworth joining five years later. Karn will retire and Charlesworth will move on to new challenges away from the industry.

In a statement, Merit said that over the years it had benefitted from some amazing staff. Special mention was made of Nikki Griffiths and Jeff Hill, whose efforts helped make Merit a huge success over the years. The company has remained profitable right up to this managed ending.

Goldstar offers customised digital catalogues

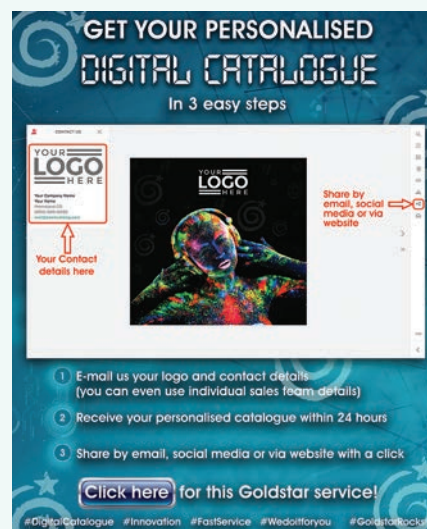
Goldstar has launched a customised digital catalogue service providing customers of the pen specialist with their own personalised digital catalogue, including their own logo and contact details.

The catalogue can be produced typically within 24 hours and can even carry contact details of individual sales staff.

After receiving a logo and contact details, Goldstar will create the personalised catalogue and send a link that the distributor can then email, embed on their website or share via social media.

Colin Loughran, general manager of Goldstar, said: "Finding new, better, inspiring ways to help our customers to market pens is in the Goldstar DNA. Knowing how personalisation and customisation make something special and distinctive, we immediately thought

that this would be a great innovation to pioneer. We're delighted to be offering it."



Prize winners treated courtesy of Promo Trade

Suzie Kean from Geiger BTC was the first winner of a new weekly prize draw for Promo Trade customers. Kean won an experience day, dinner and an overnight stay for two after being selected randomly.

Every week Promo Trade has a prize draw to win a different experience, such as a supercar driving day, a

spa day, tickets to Oktoberfest, or a Michelin star meal for two.

For the next giveaway, five lucky winners were rewarded with a supercar driving experience day. To be entered into the prize draw all they had to do was place an Express Order within the time frame specified.

The five lucky winners were not only congratulated by email and via a telephone conversation, but they had a golden envelope delivered to them which contained all the information as well as their ticket for the day. The winners were Darren Henry (Positive Media), Sean Dwyer (Juice Promotions), Sarah Harris (Merchandise Ltd), Ian Glass (U Name It), and Tobias Milliken-Smith (Print Run), who was named best driver.

The driving experience took place at Prestwold Race Track and each winner got to drive five different supercars, including the McLaren 720s, Lamborghini Aventador S, Audi R8, Ferrari, Nissan GTR, Porsche and the Ariel Atom. On the day the top speed hit was 136mph.

Promo Trade Experiences competitions run every week.



Jones and Mahre join PPAI board

Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) has announced the election of R. Renée Jones, CEO of A Creative Touch and Bill Mahre, president of ADG Promotional Products to the PPAI board of directors. They will begin their four-year terms immediately following The PPAI Expo 2019 in January.

"We had four outstanding candidates who were willing to give their time to serve the Association," said Mary Jo Tomasini, PPAI immediate past board chair. "Our industry is far better because of the exceptional volunteers who give their time, experience and passion to help grow and protect our industry."

Jones has worked in the promotional products industry for more than 15 years and is an active PPAI volunteer.

A member of the Product Responsibility Advisory Group (PRAG), Mahre is an active member of Upper Midwest Promotional Professionals (UMAPP) and also lends leadership and volunteer skills to a number of community organisations.

The board of directors is the governing body for PPAI and plays a major role in directing its strategic activities, adopting policies and approving budgets to carry out the work of the Association.

Racing certainty for Ignite

Ignite group returned to Warwick Racecourse for its tenth year last month when around 100 supplier and distributor members attended the morning exhibition. The group then moved to the Kingmaker Suite in the main grandstand for a three-course lunch and networking while watching the afternoon's racing.

Richard Pettinger, director, Ignite, said: "I couldn't believe that the spectacular weather was in our favour yet again. With a great group of distributors and several interesting new suppliers as well as our regulars in attendance it was a superb day."



GUEST BOOK

"Once again a fantastic day spent with suppliers and fellow distributors. Great networking with new and existing suppliers and a lot of fun had by all."

Andy Ducksbury, Prominate

"We met a range of new distributors, engaging conversations and super feedback on our new Seedstick shapes. The hardback catalogue also looks fabulous."

Jamie Gray, Sow Easy

"It was great to meet up with the suppliers and the other Ignite members to catch up on the latest products as well as having a lot of craic into the bargain."

Carl Desmond, Partridge Pear Tree

"The Ignite Exhibition is a fabulous place to mix business with pleasure, a short sharp exhibition which is a great opportunity to showcase new products to the Ignite members and have real business conversations."

John Barrett, PF Concept



Product of the Month - Emergency Car Tool

Have you ever considered what would happen if you were trapped in a car following an accident? It's not the jolliest of thought experiments to be sure, but accidents do happen.

This is the thinking behind the emergency car tool, a product supplied by Chilli Promotional Products. The handy tool promises to offer everything you might need if the worst should happen. At only 11.5cm in length, it nevertheless packs a punch, containing a razor sharp blade to cut seat belts as well as a carbide tip to break windows.

Furthermore, the tool has a super bright COB (chip on board) two-function light with a steady and flashing option, allowing you to summon assistance, as well as light up your surrounds. It also features an LED light.

The tool has a black plastic body that can be pad print branded with caps in three translucent colours.



Allwag 20 year celebrations help next generation

To mark its 20th anniversary and to thank valued suppliers and partners for their continued support, hard work and commitment, Allwag Promotions hosted a party inspired by blockbuster movie, The Greatest Showman.

Held at the picturesque Lion Inn in Chelmsford, Essex, more than 100 guests were greeted on arrival to an array of circus-themed acts, including fire dancers and a snake charmer, before being treated to a three-course meal. While drink flowed throughout the evening, the entertainment continued; from traditional sideshow games to sword swallowers plus an escapologist who managed to free himself in a

record-breaking time.

Angela Wagstaff, director of Allwag Promotions said the celebration was a night to remember. "It was amazing to see everyone enjoying the evening, with so many fabulous comments about our team. We want to say a massive thank you to everyone who came and generously donated fabulous gifts and bought plenty of raffle tickets."

Allwag's guests helped raise £1,500 for Kids Inspire, the company's nominated charity of the year. The Chelmsford-based organisation helps disadvantaged young people turn their lives around to build their futures.

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Snow Dome



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Branding Options: Digital
Print Area: 62 x 70mm

5-Day
Lead Time

Full
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Digital

Large Picto Bauble



Product Dimensions: 84 x 98mm
Branding Options: Digital
Print Area: 80mm Diameter

5-Day
Lead Time

Full
Colour
Digital

Snowflake Ornament with String



Product Dimensions: 104 x 104mm
Branding Options: Digital
Print Area: 70 x 45mm

5-Day
Lead Time

Full
Colour
Digital

Hand Warmer Bottle



Product Dimensions: 75 x 125mm
Branding Options: Digital Transfer
Print Area: 45 x 55mm

5-Day
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Digital

Vienna Foto Mug



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LOOKING FORWARD

With **Jon Birrell** joining the BPMA as CEO this month, *Product Media* met up to hear some of his plans

The recent announcement that Jon Birrell is to join the BPMA as CEO was greeted with great excitement by the industry, and the Farnborough Merchandise World show was the first chance for many to acquaint themselves with the new man.

Product Media met up with Birrell ahead of his official start in November to find out a bit more about him and his plans for the Association. Clearly enjoying the buzz of the show, Birrell reminisced about his own experiences at one industry exhibition where a lucky encounter led to a large order when the representative of a Swiss company spotted Victorinox luggage on Birrell's stand. The Swiss flag logo was bang on brand resulting in a £185,000 order there and then.

ALL ROUNDER

Most recently, Birrell was marketing director for BTC Group, which merged with US merchandise and clothing company Geiger earlier this year to form GeigerBTC. However, his career includes stints with brands, suppliers and distributors. "It has helped me understand all three areas and the complexities of this business, which is something I hope will stand me in good stead at the BPMA," he says.

Having studied marketing and business, Birrell's early career saw him working for brands such as KLM, DKNY and Pearson TV, before moving into the merchandise

sector with playing card company Carta Mundi. "It introduced me to the make-up of this industry as I had to understand who we were selling to and understand distributors and catalogue groups. I quickly realised the importance of the supplier/distributor relationship in the supply chain."

A CHANGING INDUSTRY

His 10 years at BTC coincided with huge dynamism in the sector, not least due to digital. "When I joined BTC it was around the time that the iPhone launched and the world changed," he says.

Birrell's role encompassed adapting the company to the changing nature of the business in the digital age, implementing a data led approach, as well as working on tenders for BTC. He was also heavily involved with BTC's ethical trading initiatives, joining ETI and SEDEX, and ran ethical trading workshops, including working with the BPMA.

The BPMA role came up at the right time, when he was seeking a new challenge. "This is an opportunity to step into a role in an industry that I know and love and have been part of for 17 years. It was too good an opportunity to turn down," he says. "It's a big job with big shoes to fill, but I think I bring something new to the association."

A challenge, he says, is to raise the profile of the industry with end users, making it an essential part of the

marketing mix. At the same time, the BPMA must continue to communicate the value of membership, he adds.

End user engagement is a clear priority, says Birrell. "There are clearly great campaigns that make use of merchandise as a core element of the strategy, such as Coke's selfie sticks. You had a digital campaign with a digital brief and it used a tangible product to generate a huge amount of social noise. I loved how the merchandise delivered the 'call to action' for this very successful digital campaign."

MERCHANDISE WORKS

Highlighting such campaigns will allow the industry to give a better indication of its ROI and cost per impression, he maintains. Education also remains high on the agenda. Birrell praises his own experience of BPMA education. "I attended one of the Education Days and got so much from it. Straight afterwards my team was gathered in the bar with our laptops bashing out a mission statement – it was real Jerry Maguire stuff."

Asked about his ambitions for the BPMA in the next five-years, he says he would like to get closer to the proportion of merchandise spend of the US. "We have a £1billion industry and I'm keen to investigate how to increase our spend per capita, as well as improve our market perception."

It looks like there's plenty for the new CEO to be getting on with. **PM**



The Birrell CV

Nov 2018 – CEO of BPMA

2008-18 – marketing director, GeigerBTC

2005-7 – international account manager, Incentive Group/Corporate Express Promotional Marketing

2002-5 – sales manager, Carta Mundi

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AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

Belgium is a small market for promotional products, but its centrality and linguistic adaptability make it a keen exporter. By **Till Barth**

What is 'typically Belgian' is far less tangible than in the case of other nationalities. The country between France and the Netherlands uses three languages – French, Dutch and German – and is shaped by many different cultures.

First and foremost, it is a versatile country with a rich history and culture, an international country, the domicile of NATO and the EU, perhaps even the most European country in Europe. Furthermore, a country with a lively economy in general and a lively promotional products industry in particular.

As in many European countries, there are no reliable figures on the size of the Belgian promotional products market. The Belgian Association of Promotional Products (BAPP) has about 160 member companies, around half of which are distributors, the other half being suppliers (including some suppliers from the neighbouring European countries).

In 2015, Belgian companies invested around €3.8 billion in advertising, compared with €19bn in Germany and €4.8bn in the Netherlands.

Although Belgium has a varied economic landscape, is the home of two of the most important harbours in Europe, Antwerp and Zeebrugge, as well as a host of major industrial companies, such as AnheuserBusch Inbev, the largest brewery group in the world, its advertising market is small. The promotional industry is also correspondingly small.

Although some of the biggest European distributors are located in Belgium, the 'mid-field' is very sparse, and there are many very small companies. That has advantages in terms of communication, because many customer contacts are non-bureaucratic. On the other hand, it has an impact on the order volumes – the average order quantities in Belgium are low.

Furthermore, the competition is tough, so

companies have to specialise and to adapt in order to retain business. According to a survey of 220 Belgian industry users by Dutch market research company, OneQuestion, in 2014, innovativeness was the top priority for many

promoting companies in Belgium. Price came second on the list. Because of the small domestic markets, Belgian suppliers focus strongly on exports – export shares of more than 80% are commonplace.

Close business ties exist to the partner states of the Benelux region, but many Belgian suppliers are also well-established in France, Germany and beyond.

As well as competitive products, competence in languages is an advantage. Multilingualism is obligatory for Belgian companies and part of everyday life in Belgium. Everyone speaks the two national languages and bilingual websites and communication material are standard.

With the exception of the French-speaking, but economically strong region of Brussels, the French part of Belgium, Wallonia, has a weaker economy. As a result, many Belgian companies generate a major share of their turnover in Flanders, in the North.

On a political level Belgium has relied on a culture of compromise and negotiating for over a century. There is not one national party – politics, the government and administration follow a decentralised, regional principle. This is on the one hand a text-book example for democratic

organisation, but nevertheless leads to crises and conflicts on the other hand. After the new elections in 2010 that had been pulled forward, it took an incredible 541 days until a new state government was formed.

In Brussels, where the Flemish and Walloon governments are forced to cooperate, the structural problems become particularly evident: The responsibility is divided up instead of dealing with the tasks jointly. With 1.14 million inhabitants, the region around the capital city, Brussels, has 19 lord mayors.

"Belgian suppliers focus strongly on exports, and export shares of more than 80% are commonplace"

More recently, the terrible terrorist attacks that rocked the Belgian capital city on March 22, 2016 had massive economic consequences due to the uncertainty following the attacks. However, the Belgian economy has since recovered and many industry players as well as the BAPP are reporting a positive market development.

With its prolific work that breeds many good initiatives – also on a European level – the Belgian association is the best proof that cooperation can work. Within the BAPP, the Flemish and the Walloons are working together on shaping the future and are jointly putting projects into action to bring the promotional industry forward.

This article is edited and updated from a version that appeared in eppi magazine

ASK CLIVE

A new technique offers the ability to burn your brand into the minds of consumers. **Clive Allcott** explains



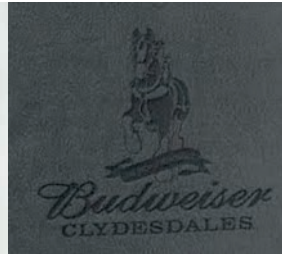
Looking for something new to try with your client's logo? Why not check out one of the hottest and latest decoration trends in logo apparel – laser engraving. This popular technique uses laser technology to burn a logo or design right into the fabric of a garment. The end result differs by fabric but is always a precise, clean mark offering solutions to complex logos and designs.

Predominantly for use on polyester products such as fleeces and soft-shell, it also has a strong branding look on denim items. The laser machine burns the top layer of fabric resulting in a darker, tonal mark on polyester garments, and lighter branding on denim shirts where the process removes the pigment as it burns the fabric. Darker to medium-coloured,



smooth fabrics achieve a more distinguishable design than light or pale fabrics.

Since laser engraving produces an upscale, tonal mark it is appropriate for many of your clients and brands. As the branding is based on a flatbed operation, unique decoration placements can be achieved to bring extra attention to the logo and satisfy high impact branding and advertising needs. These can include oversize left or right chest, large verticals down side



vent and sleeves, the fronts and backs of collars, full-front over zips, or hip areas. Laser engraving can also be used in conjunction with traditional forms of branding such as embroidery to make

a finished garment look fully bespoke. The detail of branding offers incredible solutions.

Laser engraving is priced competitively between print and embroidery pricing since set-ups and operating charges are usually based on the overall design size. Next time you're talking to your garment decorator ask them for specialty samples and swatches to promote this trending decoration technique to your client.

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ARE YOU BREXIT READY?

The BPMA's Brexit Summit gave delegates food for thought as the deadline approaches



With the UK due to leave the EU on 29 March 2019, there are still many question marks hanging over Brexit and what it will mean for business. The day before September's Merchandise World saw the BPMA assemble a panel of speakers who would present a practical update on where we are, where we're heading, and what's likely to happen next.

Allie Renison, head of Europe and trade policy at the Institute of Directors (IoD) gave a round up of what faces businesses. "It's hard to say how bad a no deal situation will be, and companies cannot take that risk – they have to have contingency plans," she said.

No contingency

However, it's a message that is not being heard. BPMA research showed that only 37% of member companies have made contingency plans, which is more than the 32% of IoD members who have done so, admitted Renison. "How do you plan for the unknown?" she asked.

For now, she advised companies to talk to freight forwarders and customs operatives to help smooth future requirements on cross border movements. "Intermediaries know how to reduce the paperwork and produce cost savings. Talk to them now because they will have a lot of work by next March."

Some in the room questioned whether UK firms could be at a disadvantage when it came to pan-European tenders. There was a feeling that UK firms could be seen as risky.

Whatever the situation come March, Lesley Batchelor, director general of the Institute

of Export & International Trade, reminded delegates that the EU will remain the UK's biggest market. However, issues like rules of origin will become more confusing. Batchelor used the example of a Hitachi train manufactured with components from multiple countries and crossing borders multiple times to indicate the level of complexity ahead.

Companies needed to focus on practicalities of the impending changes, she said. "We will no longer be working in a free and easy atmosphere we have been used to. It's not just about paperwork – process will be king."

Is it worth it?

During the open floor debate, one BPMA member said that the complexity of Brexit could mean dropping the few European clients that his company had as they would be more trouble than the business was worth.

However, Renison said that change could be staggered to make it easier for businesses to absorb. "You have to start talking to your European suppliers and find out what they think. There are still lots of people putting their fingers in their ears and hoping it won't happen, but it will."

Next up was Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat MP for Carshalton and Wallington, and the party's spokesperson for exiting the EU. A supporter of staying in the EU and of a vote on any eventual deal the government delivers, Brake said any deal the UK got would be worse than it currently has.

He mapped out the likely course of

the various eventualities in parliament, many of which he predicted led to a 'no deal' situation or a second 'People's vote'. Although Brake eloquently outlined what could happen, the complete unpredictability of the ongoing situation was a continuing theme, with just six months to go. "People need to prepare for the possibility of no deal – businesses need to plan."

With so much concern over the looming exit, it was left to millionaire businessman and UKIP spokesman Christopher Mills to put the positive case for the post-Brexit landscape. Companies such as Sanofi, Airbus, Reed Elsevier and ING still want to invest in the UK he said. Predictions of economic doom after the vote had come to nought and unemployment is the lowest for 40 years. "Remainers look to blame almost anything on Brexit, and good news gets sidelined," he said.

Opportunity knocks

As the percentage of UK exports to the EU declines, companies should look to other markets for business. Currently, many UK companies, including BPMA members, have no business in the EU but are hampered by their rules. UK distributors could be the Brexit winners, Mills claimed.

With such conflicting takes on what was likely to happen, BPMA delegates admitted that it was as hard for them to make a call as it was for politicians and pundits. Despite the speakers' cajoling to prepare for next March, delegates suggested important decisions could be put on hold to 'wait and see' what transpired. And all the time the clock ticks. **PM**

QUESTIONING THE FUTURE

Following the Brexit Summit, a panel of suppliers shared their thoughts on how the sector is shaping up

Popular products

The perennial question of clients is 'what's hot?' Juniper's Andrew Langley said premium products such as bespoke notebooks were outshining more commodity items. "We need to add as much value as we can to differentiate ourselves from disruptors. That's why we invested in our notebook builder," he said.

Matt Pluckrose said merchandise trends followed the external market, fitting with increasingly digital lifestyles. "In ten years, tech has gone from being about flashdrives to digital accessories accounting for 10% of promotional spend."

It's not just product, according to Mandy Hastie who said plastic free packaging was the fastest growing trend she had ever encountered. "We are now the biggest user of compostable packaging. The culture is moving quickly in this direction so we have to come up with alternatives."

Senator's Andrew Hill said eco products were in greater demand and were no longer a premium item. "Proof of sustainability and longevity is demanded by customers. It has fallen into our laps, but we had it ready 10 years ago."

Meanwhile, Alex Turner said colour increasingly leads. "Two or three years ago we had a lot of white mugs, now you can have colour inside and outside. It looks fantastic and more retail-y, which means people hang on to them for longer."

Challenges

The summer's high temperatures led to challenges for businesses, but what else was troubling the industry? The ongoing uncertainty surrounding Brexit is an issue said Pluckrose. Just in time ordering and delivering could be affected, which was a problem given customers' Amazon level expectations. "Clients are not planning ahead much and we are not seeing a dramatic change in lead times," he said.

Price pressure remains high which can lead to a drop in the quality of the product chosen, even when you are more likely to get repeat business with a better product, said Mark Alderson.

Langley agreed and said Juniper is expected to create brand new products that bear comparison with the high street at a fraction of the lead time. "I ask a lot of



questions and get called out for that but if you're trying to create a distinct brand with visuals and pricing, you have to if you want to differentiate."

Managing expectations

Factory visits help people understand, and this is something the BPMA has helped facilitate.

Hill said that Senator tried to accommodate clients demands for quick turnaround where possible, but there are limits. "We have had quick ship for 10-20 years but with same day despatch we only do it on a small number of items or quality suffers. We need to be open with clients and advise them better."

Quality remains a touchy subject and some audience members questioned whether there had been a higher incidence of poor quality printing over the summer 'silly season'.

Langley said Juniper's ISO regime meant he could look at incidences of complaints to see if summer represented any spike. "I was a cynic about it, but it has allowed us to measure and monitor and has driven greater efficiency."

Angela Wagstaff of Allwag Promotions said that doing a client a favour can lead to them expecting that service to be the norm. "There is pressure and lead times are decreasing. Sometimes you just have to just say that something is not possible."

Plastic, not fantastic

Matt Franks of Fluid Promotions questioned whether the growing demonisation of SUP could threaten the whole of the sector. "We




Straight talk: industry players faced questions

work in a pretty dirty industry and a lot of what we do ends up as landfill."

Turner said distributors should point to products that can do a job rather than talking down the whole sector. Pluckrose said the right product can have huge longevity.

With great confusion around plastic recycling, Alderson said First Editions has created its own guide to plastics to help out with some of the ambiguity around the issue. If a company sold an item, should it have a duty of care to recycle it? Some think so.

At any rate, the questions from clients will continue. Thankfully, the Leaders Debate showed an industry already addressing the issues and looking at how to tackle them. 

The panel

- **Mark Alderson** – First Editions
- **Andrew Hill** – Senator
- **Alex Turner** – Listawood
- **Mandy Hastie** – The Sweet People
- **Matt Pluckrose** – Desktop Ideas
- **Andrew Langley** – Juniper Products

HOME IS WHERE THE WORK IS

More of us now spend part of our working lives at home. *Product Media* looks at the pros and cons

Almost a third of people now work from home at least one day a week, according to a survey by Virgin Media in 2017. BPMA members are no exception and a straw poll found many different styles of combining your home with your place of work.

Our poll of a few members and associates showed that in most cases people are working longer hours than

they did in the workplace and generally don't stop for lunch. On the positive side, they reported that they generally have fewer interruptions and can concentrate more. It can be more convenient with big savings on both time and travel costs. One BPMA staff member used to commute to London, a round-trip of four hours that cost £5,000 a year.

Diane Jaggard from the Encore Group has worked from

home for 15 years. "I have a spare bedroom kitted out as an office, so it's a dedicated workspace. I need this for the discipline of still 'going to work,'" she said. "I am a very disciplined person and I think you need to be to work alone and at home."

Promonet's David Dawson has worked from home for almost 10 years. He too said he works for longer, but appreciates the added flexibility, for example dropping the

children at school is easier without a long commute.

"Sometimes people think that because you work from home your business is small," said Dawson. "But rather than paying excessive office rent, I decided to spend the money on an extension with the purpose of a ready-made office that can house three members of staff."

Steve Ward, managing director of Business Gifts UK worked from the family home



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before getting the business's first premises. He said: "It created far greater flexibility for us when the children were young, but it was more difficult when we decided to recruit staff, as there is an enormous amount of trust required when bringing people into your home space."

Promark Promotions' managing director Andrew Rosenberg, said you have to balance pros and cons. "If I want to pop out to do something I don't need permission. But then I can end up working later in the evening or at the weekends. As more and more people email, the number of telephone calls I make are less,

so it can get lonely at times."

He added: "When the children are on holiday it means you don't have to take time off but it can be a distraction particularly if they are young. Going on holiday is difficult though, you never feel you can leave the business."

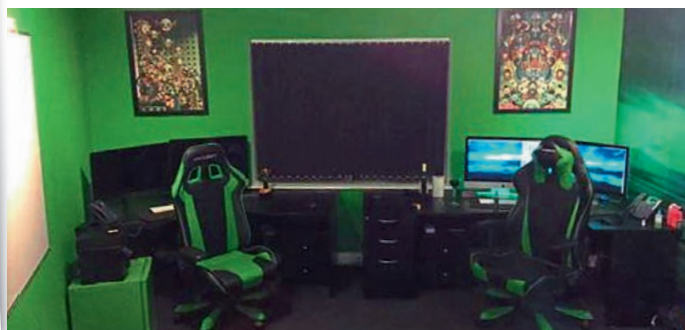
Isolation means it can be hard to bounce ideas off other co-workers, however technology lends a hand. The BPMA's Daniela Arena had for many years worked from home and at times found it challenging when the offices moved to Cambridgeshire. However, with Skype she is visible all day on the big screen



like a virtual employee.

Arena commented: "I wouldn't have been able to effectively manage the team without this. It works really well and it's been hugely rewarding. Before we did this, I used to go to a local coffee house just to have a change of scenery and people around me. You do have to be careful that you don't have interruptions around you such as dogs barking or kids crying as this can portray an unprofessional image."

Although she admitted sometimes missing the social side of an office, she said: "All in all, it's been worth it." **PM**



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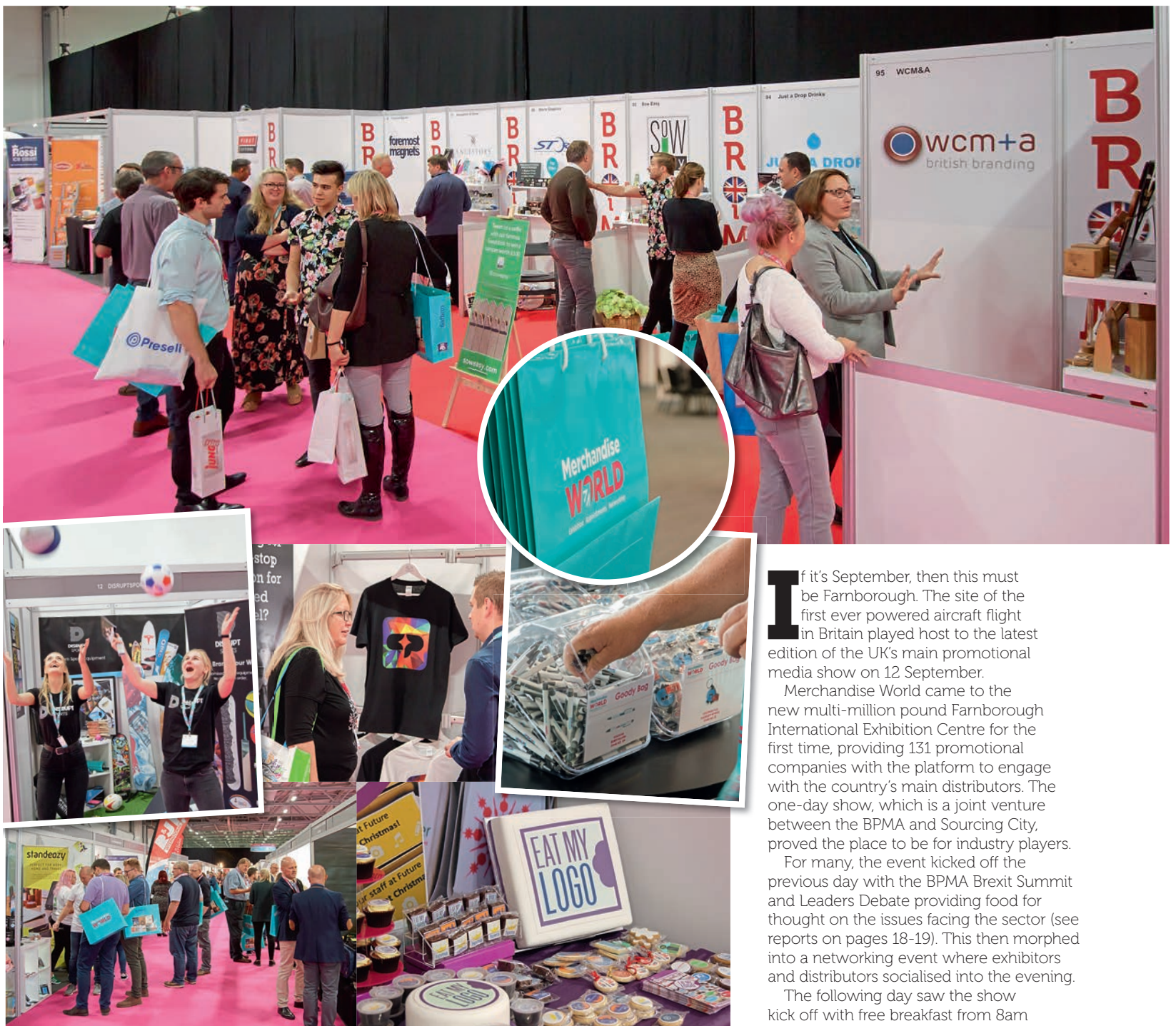
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TAKE OFF AT FARNBOROUGH

The merchandise industry headed to the home of British aviation for September's Merchandise World



If it's September, then this must be Farnborough. The site of the first ever powered aircraft flight in Britain played host to the latest edition of the UK's main promotional media show on 12 September.

Merchandise World came to the new multi-million pound Farnborough International Exhibition Centre for the first time, providing 131 promotional companies with the platform to engage with the country's main distributors. The one-day show, which is a joint venture between the BPMA and Sourcing City, proved the place to be for industry players.

For many, the event kicked off the previous day with the BPMA Brexit Summit and Leaders Debate providing food for thought on the issues facing the sector (see reports on pages 18-19). This then morphed into a networking event where exhibitors and distributors socialised into the evening.

The following day saw the show kick off with free breakfast from 8am

Cover stars

Product Media again offered visitors the chance to get themselves on the cover of the magazine with its photobooth. Did you make the cut? See all the covers at <http://product-media.online-1.co.uk>



First timers

As well as the many well-known companies in the merchandise sphere, there were 25 first-time exhibitors, including

- Arc'teryx Equipment
- Best of British Beer
- Bivalvia UK
- Boosters
- Brightways Concepts
- Eastrop Trading
- Farhi
- Filo
- Gate8 Luggage UK
- Jenova
- Just Pads
- Kingly
- Master Italia
- Planet EcoBags
- Ratnali Jewels
- Rhino Range
- Saxoprint
- SCX Design
- Sow Easy Promotions
- Squezyball Merchandising
- Stone Marketing
- Strideline
- Swag Distribution
- Tradeconthor
- WacPack

served to the early bird exhibitors who zoomed down to Hampshire to get their stands ready for the visitors. With more than 500 visitors pre-registered for the show, the opportunities to do business ahead of the crucial Christmas period were all too good to be missed.

Goody bag stands greeted the steady stream of visitors who arrived at the custom-built venue. This year's swag included snazzy Just Pads notebooks, sweets from Kalfany, and the must-have item, branded socks from US visitor Strideline. The company was one of a number of international visitors to the show, indicating the growing reach of the Merchandise World brand and the importance of the £1 billion UK merchandise market. Other international exhibitors included Bellytray from the Netherlands, Turkish textiles brand RSN Exim, and Spanish reusable bag company Diseños NT.

British manufacturing was represented yet again by the Briman Group, which exhibited on a joint stand. Participating companies included WCM&A, First Editions, Sow Easy and Foremost Magnets.

Nearby, the Branding Zone gave visitors an up-close view of the latest branding

techniques. These included clothing company Screenworks demonstrating embroidery, Ancestors showing its casting abilities, and Kalfany inviting visitors to make their own jelly sweets. Listawood and Sharon Lee hats were also in attendance.

Visitors could browse the exhibitors on the show floor and then adjourn to the food court to hold informal meetings. Free lunch and tea and complementary cakes powered them throughout the day and free massages were also on offer for those who were finding it all a bit too stressful.

Show organiser Liz Young said: "We've had a successful day at Merchandise World. We've had over 400 visitors through the door and it's been a steady flow of new distributors for our supplier customers. What's been really exciting has been the number of new suppliers we have been able to introduce – we've had 25 new suppliers. Using Farnborough International has been really well received and visitors have been well taken care of."

Don't miss out

More than 1,000 visitors attended Merchandise World at Silverstone in January 2018, and from the interest and support being shown by professional distributors the visitor numbers are predicted to be higher on 30-31 January 2019 at NAEC Stoneleigh.

The original floorplan is now 99% sold with 202 exhibitors booked or reserved. As a result, additional floorspace has been created and is now on sale.

If you haven't signed up, give Liz, Andrea or Ella a call on 0844 504 5006 or email: info@merchandiseworld.co.uk
Get more information at merchandiseworld.co.uk.





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PLASTIC CONFUSION

Businesses want to do the right thing about plastic, but information can be confusing

Credit: WRAP

The past few years have seen a growth in interest around the issues relating to plastic. The 'Blue Planet' effect has seen growing awareness of the implications of using plastic, particularly single use plastics.

In the merchandise industry, this has manifested itself in clients asking questions about the sustainability of many products and their packaging as they seek to minimise their use of plastic and increase recycling.

With questions being asked about plastic and the environment, merchandise companies are on the spot regarding how sustainable the products they sell are. The answers aren't always straightforward.

LABELLING

There are a variety of recycling symbols to be aware of. Flexible packaging has a range of symbols or descriptions explaining how recyclable materials are, how to prepare it (for example, by rinsing), and when to check locally about recycling. Not all packaging will have a recycling label but this doesn't mean you can't recycle it.

Other symbols exist which provide different, and very specific information. For example, the Mobius Loop (shows an object can be recycled, but not that it has been or will be), and the Green Dot (the producer has made a financial contribution towards recycling, but does not necessarily mean that the product it is on is recyclable). Compostability is also covered by various labels, and

note that industrial compostability is very different from being able to throw something into your scraps bin at home.

Plastic resin codes are the triangular symbols found on many products, indicating the type of plastic they are made from. They range from 1 to 7, with each representing a different level of recyclability.

DOING MORE

In terms of recycling levels, Germany has the highest levels in Europe with around 62% of plastics being dealt with. The UK sits at about 39%, which is better than many countries but shows the room for improvement. The government has focused on plastic bags in recent years, but single use plastics are in its sights.

However, as yet there is no definition of what this might cover. While European nations are working hard to cut plastic waste, it is interesting to note that the country contributing the most to plastic pollution in the oceans is China, which is of course where many merchandise items are made.

So, what about alternatives? Although plastic has been demonised, all materials come at a cost. Even natural products like bamboo leave an environmental footprint – it has to be processed, produces waste of its own, and requires land to grow on. Looked at in the round, plastic can sometimes be the more environmental choice. For example, we recycle glass, but it is heavier and

therefore costs more to transport.

DECISIONS

There are many variables when it comes to deciding what materials to use in a merchandise campaign. Plastic gets a tough time at the minute, but it is also an incredibly useful material that is used for many different purposes. It is sterile, strong, flexible, and it can be recycled in many cases. Deciding on whether it is the right choice for a campaign will come down to the individual business. The good news is that there is more information available now than ever, allowing businesses to make an informed decision.

Some terms

RECYCLABLE - a product that can be diverted from the waste stream and that can be collected, processed and returned to use

DEGRADABLE - to breakdown to a specific extent within a given time. i.e. susceptible to changes in molecular structure, consequent changes lead to disintegration of the material

OXO-BIODEGRADABLE - Is degradable from oxidative and cell-mediated phenomena, either simultaneously or successively

BIO-DEGRADABLE - capable of being decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms into CO₂, methane, water and organic compounds or bio mass

A TIME TO SAY THANK YOU

Christmas still represents a golden opportunity to cement relationships, says **Tim Cadel**

As we enter the last quarter of the calendar year, and for some the financial year, we should take time to review the last 12 months and identify those who have made a significant difference to our business.

Who are our stand out, loyal and valuable customers? Which members of our team, across the business, have made outstanding contributions? From our numerous suppliers, who has unfailingly delivered however unreasonable our demands on them have become?

Christmas is the perfect time to say, 'thank you.'

So how do we say thank you?

Today, there are more rules than ever about corporate gifting and any excesses are simply not allowed. This however, provides promotional merchandise with

a golden opportunity to supply appropriate gifts.

Branded Christmas gifts can convey the corporate message 365 days a year. Despite the challenges from electronic alternatives the diary and calendar markets are alive and well.

Which item can most of us not live without? Our phone and tablet charger. Chargers, conventional or solar, for UK use or worldwide, can be branded



80%

The proportion of people who said that receiving a branded gift made them feel 'appreciated', making merchandise the most powerful advertising medium for saying thank you.
(BPMA research)

and gifted and they are in use every day of the year.

Individual personalisation of any gift raises the perceived value to the recipient as this gift is unique to them. Staff names, franchise holders, hotel guests, club members, customers, and society members all present the opportunity to individualise the gift. Year dating also makes

the gift relevant to the occasion and provides a reminder of that special moment.

Christmas is coming and it is still the perfect opportunity to say thank you to those who make a difference to your business. Merry Christmas.

Tim Cadel is the co-founder of Festive Promotions

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IN THE HOT SEAT – DAVID LONG

THE LONG VIEW

In more than 30 years in the merchandise industry, **David Long** has built businesses, created teams and had a lot of fun. And he's not finished yet



Q. What have been the milestones in your career?

A. My early management career was in the blue-chip corporate arena latterly with Thorn EMI. In 1987 I joined the now defunct, but legendary, Bourne Publicity. At the time it was the largest distributor in the UK and an exciting innovator that everyone looked up to. In 1990 I joined Dowlis Group as managing director and with a great team we grew the company from £1.9 million to £13m turnover in 12 years, firmly establishing it as the largest independent promotional merchandise distributor in the UK. In 2002 I decided I wanted my own business and Dynamic Image was founded. I was joined by a very experienced team and the initial distributor business grew to £1.6m, before being sold three years later to focus on the pioneering services that we had been creating for the trade. In 2005, as Sourcing City, we were the first to launch an online trade sourcing service in Europe. We went on to launch the world's first trade sourcing app and created the industry's first appointment based national VIP networking event in SC Marketplace. Today, Sourcing City is the leader in business management software with Promotional Office, provides an industry news

service, sales lead generation, trade websites, and organises Merchandise World, which is jointly owned with the BPMA and has had excellent support from the industry.

Q. What have been your greatest achievements to date?

A. Over my career I have worked with great people, and together with those teams, we have innovated, and all made substantial achievements with a fair share of fun along the way. Personally, in the past two years I have lost 8.5 stone (54kg). I now train daily, and I am as fit now as I was in my thirties. At 61 years of age I completed my first sprint triathlon in July. Proof that anyone can achieve whatever they want, but only if they want it enough.

Q. What are the main challenges the industry faces?

A. Many are concerned about Brexit, but from a business point of view I am not one of them. I do think the Government has performed poorly in delivering what the UK voted for, but ultimately, I have faith that the quality and resourcefulness of British business leaders and their teams will overcome the hurdles and come through it with a positive outcome.

Q. What's the latest on Dynamic Highway?

A. It's coming, and after three years of development we are very close. The whole project has proved more complex

(and expensive) than even we thought, and to be frank it is disappointing to not have launched by now. However, it will only launch when we are confident it will deliver above everyone's expectations. When complete, Dynamic Highway will revolutionise how data is shared, managed and transferred across the industry. It will bring major benefits to all distributors and suppliers that choose to get involved.

Q. How will the industry be different five years from now?

A. It is clear that the internet and technology will constantly change the industry. However, I think it is important to remember that

many customers still want the expertise of distributors for creativity, support and negotiation, all of which cannot be delivered online. So, while those that trade online will face increased competition in a growing market, I see little concern for distributors who are great at working in an account management/consultancy style. **PM**

What I've learned

I have learned many lessons in my time and made my fair share of mistakes. But, if you never make a mistake, you are not trying hard enough. The five key tips I could offer are:

- Always be open and honest in all you do – and never stop trying or caring.
- Get great people around you that have the skills you don't have, treat them fairly and reward them well.
- When building a team, remember that a great attitude and good ability always beats great ability and a poor attitude.
- Accept people have different abilities and ambitions, but do not accept people not caring.
- The most valuable asset of a company is its reputation. Everything that everyone does affects your company reputation. Small actions have great effects.



ABILITY TO DELIVER
CONTRACT BRILLIANT SERVICE
DISCOUNT & OFFERS CONVENIENCE
PRICE HIGH QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE
QUALITY OF PRODUCTS
LOYALTY SCHEME RELIABILITY

WHAT DO END USERS THINK?

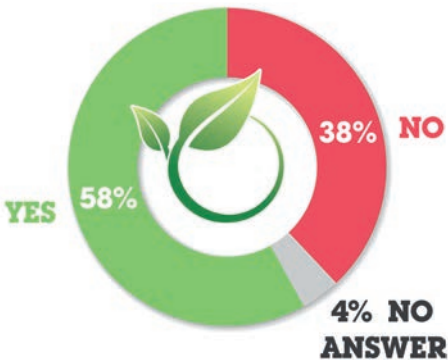
The BPMA's latest burst of end user research provides useful insight for suppliers and distributors

With new BPMA CEO Jon Birrell putting end user engagement front and centre of his strategy for the association, it's timely to look at what they think of promotional merchandise. The BPMA carried out its latest research into end users' perceptions at exhibitions Marketing Week Live and B2B Marketing Expo.

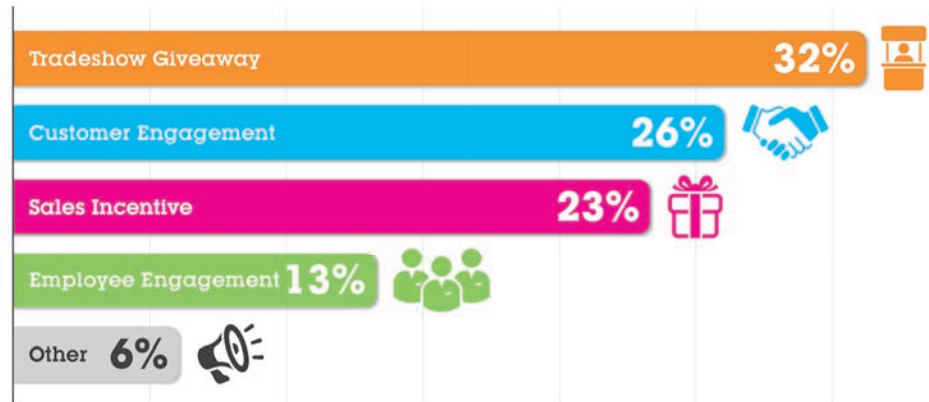
Uses of promotional merchandise
When it comes to how merchandise is used, answers were perhaps coloured by the location of research with trade show giveaways the most common answer, from 32% of respondents. Customer engagement was named by 26%, with sales incentives (23%) and employee engagement (13%) the next most popular uses.

Purchasing drivers
The most important factors when purchasing merchandise are price, product usefulness, relevance to campaign, lead times and uniqueness. Interestingly environmental considerations, although mentioned, were bottom of the list and compliance ranked down the field as well.
When looking for a merchandise supplier, 55% go straight to Google, although trade exhibitions ranked highly with 29% naming them. Catalogues were named by 13% of respondents.
The majority of respondents (71%) researched what product would be suitable before a campaign, and more than three quarters (77%) appreciate or expect creative input from their suppliers.

Has the news about the environmental impact of plastics influenced your future decision on purchasing plastic promotional products?



How do you currently use promotional merchandise?



Popular picks
More than three quarters (78%) said that they have kept an effective promotional product for a long time. Technology is increasingly what is seen as effective with chargers and USBs topping the list of items that are judged so and retained for a long time. However, evergreen products also featured including, including notebooks, mugs, pens and cuddly toys.

Reduce, recycle, reuse
Interestingly, 58% of answers said that news on the environmental impact of plastic had affected future purchases of plastic promotional items, while 38% said it didn't.



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Research

When it comes to alternatives, recyclability scored highest closely followed by products that are environmentally friendly. Biodegradable, wood and reusable products were also named as alternatives.

Supplier choice

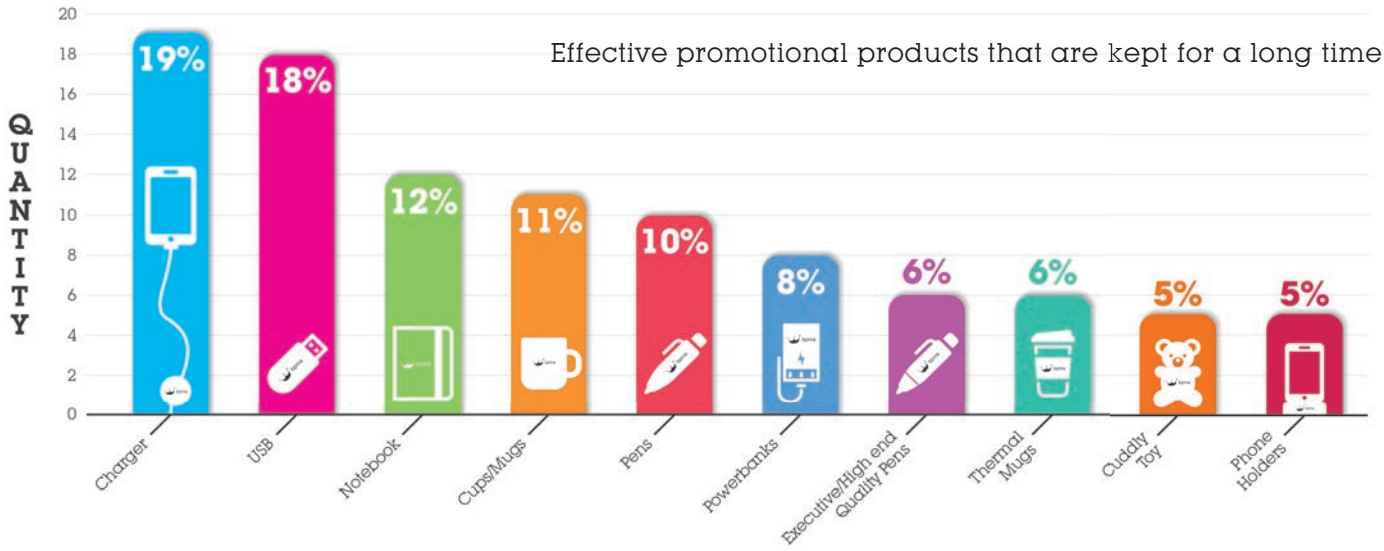
Only 44% of respondents said they had a regular promotional merchandise supplier, with 56% saying they did not, indicating a lack of loyalty or the opportunity to gain new business, depending on your perspective.

A range of reasons were given for remaining loyal to a particular supplier, including brilliant service, the ability to deliver, price, reliability and a loyalty scheme.

Asked if there was anything that annoyed them about buying merchandise, more people (161) said no than yes (112). By far the most common complaint was lack of quality, followed at a lower level by a lack of innovation, and too many emails from potential suppliers.

Tendering is common for larger contracts according to 40% of respondents, although 16% don't use them, and 31% didn't know whether they did.

Finally, there was good news for BPMA members, as 56% of respondents recognised the association's logo. With the industry worth £1 billion, it is encouraging that its professional body has a solid level of awareness, although there is obviously room for improvement.



WHAT'S HOT THIS YEAR?

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SUSTAINABLY BRITISH

Briman Group companies are taking the responsibility for responsible production seriously, says **Mark Alderson**

With more than £243 million of goods being imported into the UK by sea and air, the large carbon footprint caused by international sourcing is clear to see. UK manufactured products not only have a reduced carbon footprint but with many Briman members investing in environmentally friendly schemes, their benefits to the environment are far reaching.

These projects come in many forms, ranging from simple ideas such as reducing the volume of single use plastic, to large projects involving the installation of bio-mass boilers and solar panels.

In 2011, Great Central Plastics installed a 132-panel photovoltaic system on its factory roof. The system displaces 13,653kg of CO2 per year. Managing director, Tony Philips, says: "In real terms the solar panels account for approximately 33% of our power requirements."

WCM&A took a slightly different approach to reduce its emissions in 2015 when it installed a biomass boiler. This highly efficient system works at an incredible 90% efficiency and uses a carbon lean energy source. The company's Jules Adam comments: "We source all our biomass pellets from local suppliers, ensuring 100% UK origination."

Many Briman members have engaged in dynamic recycling policies, none more impressive than Adpads. On average, Adpads recycle more than 33 tonnes of paper each month, which equates to a saving of 561 mature trees. A different approach to the recycling problem has been undertaken by First Editions. Since 2016, all its waste plastic has been given new life through its transformation into guttering by a local business.



As Sow Easy's environmentally friendly seed sticks grow, the plants absorb CO2 and other pollutants from the atmosphere. UK Lanyards has removed single use plastic from individual product packaging, while Orchard Melamine has installed a new efficient CNC machine which has reduced waste energy in the form of sound and heat.

Sourcing UK made products has many environmental benefits. Please contact individual Briman members directly for more information on these and many other initiatives.

Mark Alderson is chairman of the Briman Group.

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NEW FOR 2019

Hot footing it back from the Far East, **Matt Pluckrose** brings news of the latest in tech



So, the annual technology fairs have now hit Hong Kong and after around 60k steps on my activity tracker we have finally finished and are ready to start work on launching the latest gadgets for 2019, but what is trending?

Totally new concepts were thin on the ground, but it did highlight some popular trends in technology. Probably the single most popular technology concept is 'true wireless stereo' (TWS) or the ability to pair two Bluetooth audio devices to each other to create wireless stereo. Most popular items at the show with this feature were micro BT earbuds and travel speakers.

Wireless charging continues to be very current and there will be plenty of buying options. However, quality, usability and safety are concerns at the low end and consumer demand, compatibility and a slower than expected uptake is still a question for many. It's one to watch closely for 2019 though.



Fast charge PD adapters and in-car chargers will become a big part of our 're-charging' world. The fast charge delivered by PD enabled devices will become popular as cars become info/entertainment centres as driverless

cars revolutionise our world.

Alexa and smart home entertainment systems are growing in popularity with Amazon selling Alexa to many factories in China. With Google, Apple, Microsoft and Amazon battling it out on the retail market this looks a tricky area for merchandise in terms of price competitiveness and margins.

Bluetooth 5 is now live and expanding rapidly into many new products and service areas. This new standard is bringing far greater wireless transmission distances between gadget and host device. This coupled with the ability to pair up to 10 or more devices to one host device opens the door to many new and improved speakers, trackers, heart rate monitors, headphones, and earbuds.

With so many cool tech gadgets for 2019, make sure you don't get left behind.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas

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BE IN IT TO WIN IT

The BPMA industry awards are fast approaching. Find out how to enter and vote using the online voting system

On 30 January 2019, the BPMA and more than 300 industry peers will celebrate achievement within the promotional merchandise industry, rewarding the commitment, outstanding service and continued professionalism of our members.

Daniela Arena, BPMA head of education and best practice says the BPMA Annual Awards are the most prestigious in the industry. "Not only are the awards

from the trade association rather than a commercial entity, but finalists and winners are voted for by BPMA members."

The BPMA Annual Awards use a transparent online voting system allowing members to vote and have a panel of experienced external judges for the entry-based Marketing Campaign of the Year Award.

"Every member has the same opportunity to enter (subject to criteria) and each member has the same voting rights," says

THE 2019 CATEGORIES

- Supplier of the Year up to £2m
- Supplier of the Year £2m plus
- Distributor of the Year up to £500k
- Distributor of the Year up to £2m
- Distributor of the Year £2m - £5m
- Distributor of the Year £5m plus
- Marketing campaign of the Year
- Supplier Unsung Hero

BPMA Awards

Arena. "These really are the industry awards that mean something because your fellow industry peers have voted for you or external judges in the marketing community rate you and your work. Winning an award this way is one you and your staff can be proud of."

There are two types of award categories, awards that members are automatically entered into by the BPMA with members voting, and entry-based awards with an external panel of judges voting. "Repeat winners see the value in winning an industry award and enter each year, they put a lot of thought and planning into their entries and the standard of entries grows each year. We would love more members to enter the awards this year," comments Daniela.

How does the voting system work?

All staff within member companies have access to the online voting system. Members log in and vote on the award categories they are eligible to vote on. Distributor members vote for supplier and service

partners, suppliers vote for distributors and service partners, and service partners vote for both. The voting process is completely transparent with the finalists and winners determined solely by the number of votes and points associated with the votes. Member companies cannot vote for their own entries in any of the awards.

BPMA Supplier and Distributor of the Year Awards

Members are automatically entered into this award based on the annual turnover details they have supplied to the BPMA. It is the member's responsibility to ensure they are entered into the correct turnover category. When voting begins, members log in and place their votes for each turnover category selecting their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice. Each member of staff within a member company can vote once.

BPMA Marketing Campaign of the Year Award

This is an entry based award open to distributors. If an integrated marketing campaign delivered on creativity and

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innovation, as well as return on investment, then this is the award to enter. The award entry must include at least three different digital components, all of which have been executed online to promote a product or service. Campaigns could include online advertising, viral marketing, email marketing, and integrated on and offline campaigns. Entrants should demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign in generating business directly or indirectly. Judges will be looking for ROI or tangible business benefit.

BPMA Supplier Unsung Hero of the Year Award

This award has been created to reward and recognise office-based individuals in the customer services or sales support team, who have gone the extra mile for distributors. Distributors will vote for this award in the online voting system.

BPMA award winners will receive a winner logo, certificate and photo plus a comment from the BPMA to add to press releases and emails. We encourage all BPMA members to take part in the industry awards for 2019 by entering awards and of course by voting too.

For more information about any aspect of the awards, contact Daniela Arena
daniela@bpma.co.uk

Award winners will be announced at the BPMA Annual Awards Dinner on Wednesday 30 January 2019, during the Merchandise World Show. Visit bpma.co.uk/ events to book tickets. 

The Twelve Gifts Of Christmas



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AVOID A CHEERLESS CHRISTMAS

The festive period can upset payment schedules and leave businesses with cashflow issues. Make your preparations in good time, says **Mike Collins**



It's November. The nights are drawing in, the mornings are becoming frosty and it becomes a time for reflecting on our summer hols and those days in the sun that now begin to feel like a very long time ago. Then suddenly the 'cash flow itch' reminds us that it's only one more month until the dreaded 'C' word.

"What's Christmas really got to do with cash flow?" we hear you ask.

Most people's payment terms (or perhaps their monthly payment chasing cycles) tend to dictate that invoices raised in October fall due for payment at the end of November, so primarily it is these invoices that will be your Christmas cash flow.

November in the credit control department is all about getting your diligence done to set yourself up for a stress-free run up to Christmas and a genuinely enjoyable period away from constant emails, or similar.

The following three steps should help you prepare to best effect.

Step 1

Do the extra diligence checks on both any new customers and indeed any existing customers that have large orders either anticipated or in process.

Secure up to date credit checks and take some time to investigate customers through search engines. You need to know if any adverse business news about the company you're entrusting your cash flow exists, so that you can act quickly wherever may be necessary. Hopefully, this won't be required of course.

Step 2

Take extra care to ensure the information that you put on your invoices is accurate.

If anything is wrong with the invoice, it may only come to light once you are chasing it, which may be once the holiday season is starting to bite. Any sort of unnecessary delay might result in your customer's own cash flow drying up as quickly as your own could.

Step 3

Take some extra time to speak personally with your customers' purchase ledger clerks.

Business is all about building good relationships. You're more likely to get paid in the Christmas rush when a customer likes you, or more importantly understands that you need paying. The more proactive you are the better.

Follow these simple tips when it comes to monitoring your purchase ledger and you'll already be several steps ahead when it comes to enjoying the holiday season.

If we think about things logically then most business operating on credit tend to have approximately three weeks only (at best) to get monies in during December. When we balance this situation up against the fact that overheads during the same month can

arguably amount to the equivalent of five weeks overheads going out (with Christmas bonuses and staffing dinners and so on) then it is little wonder that ill-prepared companies find their coffers empty come Christmas Eve, with no sign of respite until well into the first week of January. As we've said, this can be best managed with a little simple preparation.

For further advice and guidance as to how to avoid the holiday period having an affect your credit control procedures as well as any other discussion with regards risk and recoveries in general, don't hesitate to contact us, your approved BPMA credit management provider.

We're always there to lend a hand.

Mike Collins is managing director of AccountAssyst and Direct Route



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SOUNDING GOOD

Putting a customer on hold needn't mean putting them off. **Mark Williamson** explains the importance of call handling for the promotional products sector

The promotional products industry knows the value of a good first impression. After all, the sector helps businesses capture attention through branded items. However, savvy businesses owners in the sector also recognise that it's not just about how your company looks but also how your company sounds.

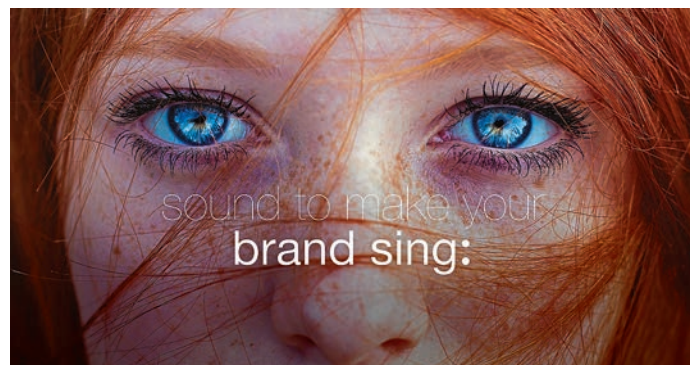
The telephone is often the first point of contact for inbound sales leads, with research finding that almost half of consumers still prefer to get information over the phone rather than online.

Yet businesses still aren't recognising the link between caller satisfaction and its impact on the bottom line. A study by PHMG has found 73% of Brits won't do repeat business with a company if their initial call wasn't handled to satisfaction.

A golden opportunity

It is inevitable that at least some callers will be placed on hold. The typical UK business has been found to keep callers waiting for an average of 33.48 seconds per call.

Instead of leaving customers listening to irritating beeps or even nothing at all, on-hold marketing converts 'dead air' into a valuable



marketing opportunity. A bespoke audio branding production consisting of creative script, professional voice artistry and exclusive music turns hold time on its head to help reinforce brand image. More than half of consumers feel more valued if they hear tailored voice and music while on hold.

These messages enable direct communication with an engaged audience, working as a subtle promotion. They can provide information about new product lines, seasonal offers or statistics detailing the advantages of promotional products. Callers can be made aware of what sets your business apart from the competition.

Phone calls can make or break a customer relationship. Rather than focusing solely on how they look, businesses in the sector would be well advised to consider how they sound as well.

Mark Williamson is sales and marketing director at PHMG. 

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NURTURING DIVERSITY

Diversity training can be viewed with suspicion, but there is a business case for it

The term 'reverse discrimination' essentially means a majority group is discriminated against in favour of a minority group. If a programme assigns blame, or makes any group feel guilty, then the training is bad.

The purpose of diversity training is to encourage inclusivity and equality among all groups. Encouraging communication, learning to listen and speak with one another, regardless of difference, is more helpful than dividing employees and highlighting their differences.

The Other Side

A recent article in *The Spectator* claimed diversity training is 'hokum'. Straight, white men are supposedly so afraid of being labelled racist, sexist, or homophobic that

they actively favour hiring employees from minority groups. So, is this now a 'level-playing field'?

The gender pay gap report this year highlights that women are by no means dealing with equal standards in the workplace. The few firms that have published ethnicity pay gap figures show that those of BAME origins are paid less, and occupy fewer senior positions. The National LGBT Survey also shows a considerable amount of discrimination in the workplace.

Diverse Hiring

Hiring based on gender, ethnicity, or sexuality is a form of bias, but so long as the decision to hire isn't based on those factors alone, there is no harm in doing so. If anything, it is beneficial to business, as CEO of Tyche

Leadership Consulting, Nikki Watkins explains:

"A recent report by McKinsey indicated that the top 25% of companies in terms of gender diversity were 15% more likely to see financial returns than their peers, while for firms excelling in ethnic diversity, the figure was more like 35%."

Diversity training is simply a means to reinforce this, and create an atmosphere that all employees can be comfortable in.

Talk to an Expert

For further advice on diversity hiring, discrimination or any other HR issues, please contact the Business Support Helpline which is included with your BPMA membership.

Call 0844 561 8133 today quoting membership number 81685.

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SUPPLIERS, SHOW US YOUR BEST



Entries for the Merchandise World Promotional Product Awards 2019 are now open



Class of 2018: Xindao, SPS and Rossi Ice Cream were winners

The BPMA is pleased to announce that it will be overseeing all entries to the Merchandise World Promotional Product Awards 2019.

The Merchandise World Promotional Product Awards provide exhibitors with the opportunity to gain recognition and promotional opportunities for the latest and most exciting products.

New for 2019, all BPMA members can enter their first product into an award category free of charge. Additional products will be charged at £50+vat. For non-BPMA members to enter, the first entry will be £150+vat with additional product entries at £50+vat.

ENTRY PROCESS

The entry process is slightly different this year. Entries must be received by Monday 19th November 2018, and should an entry be shortlisted the BPMA will contact you and request a product sample for the judging process.

Results will be announced prior to Merchandise World in January 2019 to enable winners to promote their winning products before, and at Merchandise World.

Daniela Arena, head of education and best practice for BPMA said: "There are some great products out there and we want to make them award winning. Winning awards

for your products gives your business a great marketing and PR opportunity and helps your product and business stand out over others. As the saying goes, 'you have to be in it to win it' so we encourage all January 2019 Merchandise World exhibitors to take part. It's easy to enter."

CATEGORIES

Each of the 10 product award categories will have a Platinum, Gold and Silver winner. They are:

- Desk product of the year
- Pocket product of the year
- Executive product of the year
- Edible product of the year
- Eco product of the year
- Promotional pen of the year
- Promotional bag of the year
- Technology product of the year
- Most innovative product of the year
- Textile product of the year

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

PRE SHOW:

All shortlisted products will feature in *Product Media* magazine and on Sourcing City News.

Winners will be notified prior to Merchandise World, so that they can feature winning products and the award logo in

their marketing before the exhibition.

AT THE SHOW:

All Platinum, Gold and Silver award winners will be displayed with the supplier name, stand number and product description.

Winners are notified prior to Merchandise World, so that they can feature winning products and the award logo on their stands.

Platinum Award Presentations will be made on winners' stands at Merchandise World on the first day (30 January 2019).

POST SHOW:

All winning products will feature in *Product Media* and on Sourcing City News.

All winning products receive an 'Award Winner' logo which suppliers can use for their own marketing and promotional purposes before, during and after Merchandise World.

Winners could ask catalogue groups who feature their products to the winner logo next to their product entries. 

For more information on how to enter and to download your entry forms visit merchadiseworld.co.uk/mw-awards
Any queries, please contact:
Daniela Arena 0203 875 7942 – daniela@bpma.co.uk

GETTING STARTED

BPMA Member Orientation events are the perfect introduction to what the association can do for you

The BPMA held its Member Orientation seminar on 27 September, where 19 individuals from member companies attended.

It was the first seminar to be presented by BPMA's membership manager, George Turnbull (pictured right) who delivered an engaging afternoon that informed and educated members.

He said: "The seminar gives our members an insight of what to expect from the industry, while gaining tips on how to make the most out of their business and what pitfalls to watch out for. I ran through the benefits you can receive from the association and what

sales tools the BPMA can provide to help communicate the message to your customers."

Turnbull said he had thoroughly enjoyed delivering his first presentation. "The sharing of ideas, frustrations and advice between members shows that we are creating and working within a community. Everyone who attended found the event to be extremely beneficial. It inspired them to implement new plans into their existing model."

Member orientation is a half day seminar that is free for members to attend. It is targeted at new members to the association, those looking for a refresher, and new staff within established member companies. 



WHAT THEY SAID

"Very interesting and informative, but broken down so it's easy to remember and take in."

Eloise Neathey, Willsmer Wagg

"I am a newbie to the promo world and found today very useful for moving forward with confidence. Good Job George."

Ed Cooling, Redbox

"Very informative, excellent day of going into more depth. I look forward to many more."

Rhian Williams, UKOS

"Great content, highly informative. Recommend."

Henry Chow, Marke Creative Merchandise

"Great Investment of time for myself and team."

Nathan Ridgard, SWAG Distribution

Visit bpma.co.uk/events for dates of upcoming Member Orientation seminars or contact

George@bpma.co.uk to register your interest in attending



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If you have any stories for **Product Media Magazine**, send by email to: editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk

BPMA members make a show at PSI

A host of BPMA members are set to attend January's PSI show to showcase British merchandise suppliers. Companies that have booked stands include Pen Warehouse, Calverley, WCM&A, First Editions, Liquid Lens, Goldstar Europe, Everything Environmental, CHX, Bio Labs, Orchard Melamine, Ravensden, Stormtech, and Cotton Ridge.

The European trade show for the promotional products industry takes place in Düsseldorf from 8 to 10 January 2019. The 2019 show is more strongly

emphasising the classic promotional products business. Halls 9 to 12 will feature an array of promotional merchandise from cups and lighters to pens and fancy new products.

Highlights include PSI FIRST, which will present the combined innovative power of the industry as well as the new Marketing Innovations special area in Hall 12, an area that provides PSI distributors and manufacturers with new opportunities to draw attention to their services.

For the first time, the new trade show



PromoTex Expo and viscom will showcase the potential of promotional textiles and visual communication alongside PSI. Together, the three trade shows will offer a comprehensive overview of the world of advertising and selling.

Introducing – Jo Group

Let's meet one of the BPMA's newest members

Give us a snapshot of the business.

The origins of the company stem back to 1967. We are bespoke manufacturers of products for the retail, promotional and corporate markets. Supply us with a budget, a purpose and a demographic as well as any ideas, art packs and branding guidelines you may have and we will do the rest. The included design, prototyping, production, testing, inspection, compliance, delivery and logistics.

What made you join the BPMA?

Pressure from Gordon, and a desire to engage with the marketing community.

How's business at the moment?

The business is in an exciting development phase at the moment, introducing some new

innovative products which we are unveiling later this year. We are also launching a new coffee merchandise brand called W10 and are exhibiting at trade shows across the world with our new products.

What is your favourite promotional product?

Meerkats, as they are the most successful promotional campaign the UK has ever seen.

What trends are you noticing?

The nation is gradually moving away from single use plastics. Reusable and eco products are a massive trend that is changing consumer behaviour.

Give us a prediction for the year ahead?

A latte levy in the autumn Budget.



More COGS success for Pro-Ad

BPMA member Pro-Ad has won a silver award for promotional merchandise campaign of the year at the 2018 Institute of Promotional Marketing (IPM) COGS Awards. The award follows on from Pro-Ad's success last year, when it took home both gold and silver accolades.

Pro-Ad scooped its latest prize for work to design and produce a promotional pack to support energy provider SSE's health and wellbeing campaign. The pack included a branded gym bag, runner's recovery pack and a bespoke notebook which encouraged users to record their daily step count, water intake, and sleep. It promoted SSE's mental health awareness message by encouraging people to talk. Pro-Ad delivered the

pre-prepared packs to more than 50 sites nationwide. Nearly 5,000 SSE employees took part in the campaign.

Pro-Ad's chairman, Carlo Nardini, said: "It's fantastic that our team continues to be recognised for their excellent work to provide our clients with the best quality of service and innovative promotional merchandise solutions tailored to their needs."

He added: "We want to keep improving our services and with this latest award we look forward to representing the best of North East businesses both here in the UK and further afield."

IPM COGS awards highlight the business contributions made by support companies to the success of promotional campaigns.



If you have any stories for **Product Media Magazine**, send by email to: editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk

Scam alert

The BPMA would like to warn the industry of a potential scam.

It looks as though a potential scam or series of scams are underway using King's College London, East Anglia University and possibly other universities and other contact information.

The scam requests that the recipient quotes for 16GB UK Twister USB drives for a quantity of 5,000 or 6,000 pieces. The email is said to come from procurement officers within universities.

Members should check paperwork for any discrepancies, such as two fonts being used on a purchase order. Also, check the name and billing address, and the supplier set up form which may make references to other universities.

Be vigilant and extra cautious with RFQs and invitations to quote from universities as the criminals may use fraudulent domain names.

BPMA CALENDAR

2018

8 November

Senator factory visit, Harlow

14 November

Listawood factory visit, Kings Lynn

2019

8-10 January

PSI, Dusseldorf

29 January

BPMA Education Day, Chesford Grange Hotel

30 January

BPMA Awards, Chesford Grange Hotel



30-31 January

Merchandise World, NAEC, Stoneleigh

27-28 March

B2B Marketing Expo, Excel, London

6-7 March

Marketing Week Live, Olympia West, London

Woodward reveals sales secrets at NSA18

The BPMA has partnered with a new event for sales people by the National Sales Academy. BPMA members can get 20% off tickets for NSA18, a one-day event at Coventry's Ricoh Arena on 28 November, the day before the National Sales Conference 2018, also at the Ricoh.

NSA18 is designed for sales executives and account managers who want to further their careers. It is a personal development day presenting an original programme of speakers and a practical toolkit for sales excellence.

Keynote speaker, Sir Clive Woodward, England's World Cup winning rugby union coach, will describe 'The DNA of a Champion'. Sir Clive will explain the three characteristics that he believes all true champions must demonstrate to become an elite performer. Delegates will discover: the importance that mindset and attitude can have on performance; how to capture and share knowledge to deliver high performance, and how to train to perform better in pressure situations.

Other key themes addressed at NSA18 will include: social selling in a digital age; how storytelling sells more products, and reframing 'selling' to 'buying' in the customer experience.

Steve Lindsey, managing director of conference organiser Lincoln West, said: "NSA18 has evolved in response to feedback from sales leaders attending our flagship event, the National Sales Conference. Sales directors and managers tell us they need to recognise the training and motivational requirements of their 'hungry' future potential sales champions – and that's a gap that NSA18 will fill."

Tickets for NSA18 are priced at £295 but BPMA members can claim their 20% discount by using the code **BPMASAYER**. Book five tickets and receive a sixth free of charge.

For more information or to reserve places call Tom Ward on 01732 525950 or visit www.nsacademy.org.uk



BPMA new members

- Total Promotions T/A Total Clothing
- KitKase Ltd
- Safe Kids Walking T/A AT Promotions
- KK London Designs
- Paul Sticker SA
- Branding Focus
- Mistore T/A Face Media Group
- Direct Trade Bag Company Ltd T/A DTB Europe

Farrahs has rejoined the BPMA since the last edition of Product Media was published

The BPMA has not renewed the following companies

- Amore Bakeries
- Winning Moves
- Logo International
- Imprint Plus Ltd
- Capital Marketing & Promotions
- Marker AD
- Brand Republic



If you have any stories for Product Media Magazine, send by email to: editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk

Ten from two



Jules Adam

business development director, **WCM&A**

What box set are you watching and what's next?

I should probably say something like *Poldark*, but *The Walking Dead* is my box set of choice. Nothing like a bit of zombie-action to get your head out of the day-to-day

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

X Factor. It's total brain-fudge to switch off to with a glass (or two) of wine

What was your first job in promotional merchandise and what did it teach you?

Sales administrator for WCM&A. It taught me that no matter how well you think you have done there is always room for improvement

Best piece of advice you've been given?

Never let a lack of experience stop you from pushing yourself to try new things, not just in business, but life in general

What's the view from your office?

Sheep

How do you relax outside of work?

I don't, I have an 11-year-old daughter

Where would you like to be right now?

With Autumn here, it would have to be anywhere on the Amalfi coast

How do your colleagues describe you?

Firm but fair, problem solver, can-do attitude, up for a laugh, emotional

What has been the toughest decision you've had to make, and how did you make it?

To be me, and not what I think people want me to be. (Don't tell him, but it took the love of a good man to get there. Thank you Simon)

What's top of your bucket list?

Seeing gorillas in the wild. I guess I should get over my fear of bugs first though



Grant Ashworth

director, **U Name It Promotions**

What boxset are you watching and what's next?

The Purge at the moment, followed by the second series of *The Exorcist* on Amazon

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

It has to be *Strictly*

What was your first job in promotional merchandise and what did it teach you?

It's this business. I've tried to find out what others do and then do it better

Best piece of advice you've been given?

Never give up

What's the view from your office?

The sales team

How do you relax outside of work?

Wine

Where would you like to be right now?

I'm perfectly happy where I am right now – I enjoy the business

How do your colleagues describe you?

You had better ask them

What has been the toughest decision you've had to make, and how did you make it?

Red or white? I drank both

What's top of your bucket list?

A cycling tour in Japan and going to the Olympics 2020

People



New face at USB2U

USB2U gave new trade account manager Richard Short his first outing as a

member of the team at October's Merchandise World Exhibition in Farnborough. Having worked in various IT sales roles over the past 17 years, Short is working with the trade team in seeking out new business opportunities and developing relationships with existing clients within the promotional product market.

He is working alongside Andy Gossage, trade development manager, and Liam Smith senior trade account manager, to provide promotional product resellers with the tools they need to support their client base and supply a wide range of branded tech products.



Daniels for Midocean

Alex Daniels has joined Midocean as account manager for UK

and Ireland tasked with driving sales in these markets.

Daniels has joined at a key stage in the development of the company. Midocean recently announced a new print facility in Poland and has benefitted from new ownership to provide operational and financial stability. This allows it to offer product from both European stock holding and its Far East made to order service, with a print service in Europe.

Family Business

Trade golf supplier Tomlinson Golf has appointed James Tomlinson as sales manager following a period of sustained growth.

The 26-year-old James brings senior management skills and experience from the commercial transport and building industries. He will work alongside his father Mark, in all aspects of the business, with an emphasis on sales and business development.

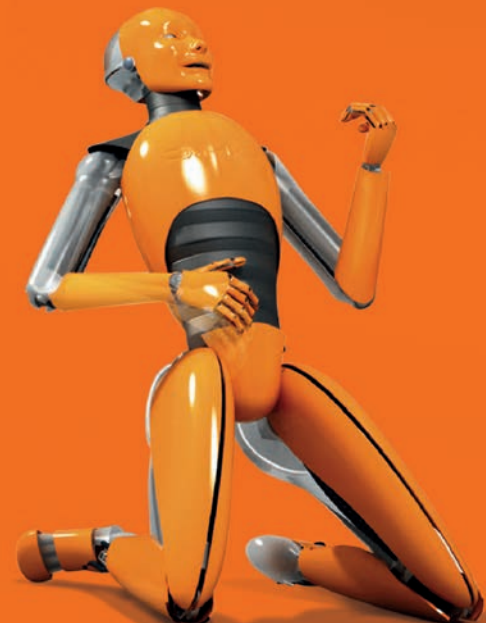
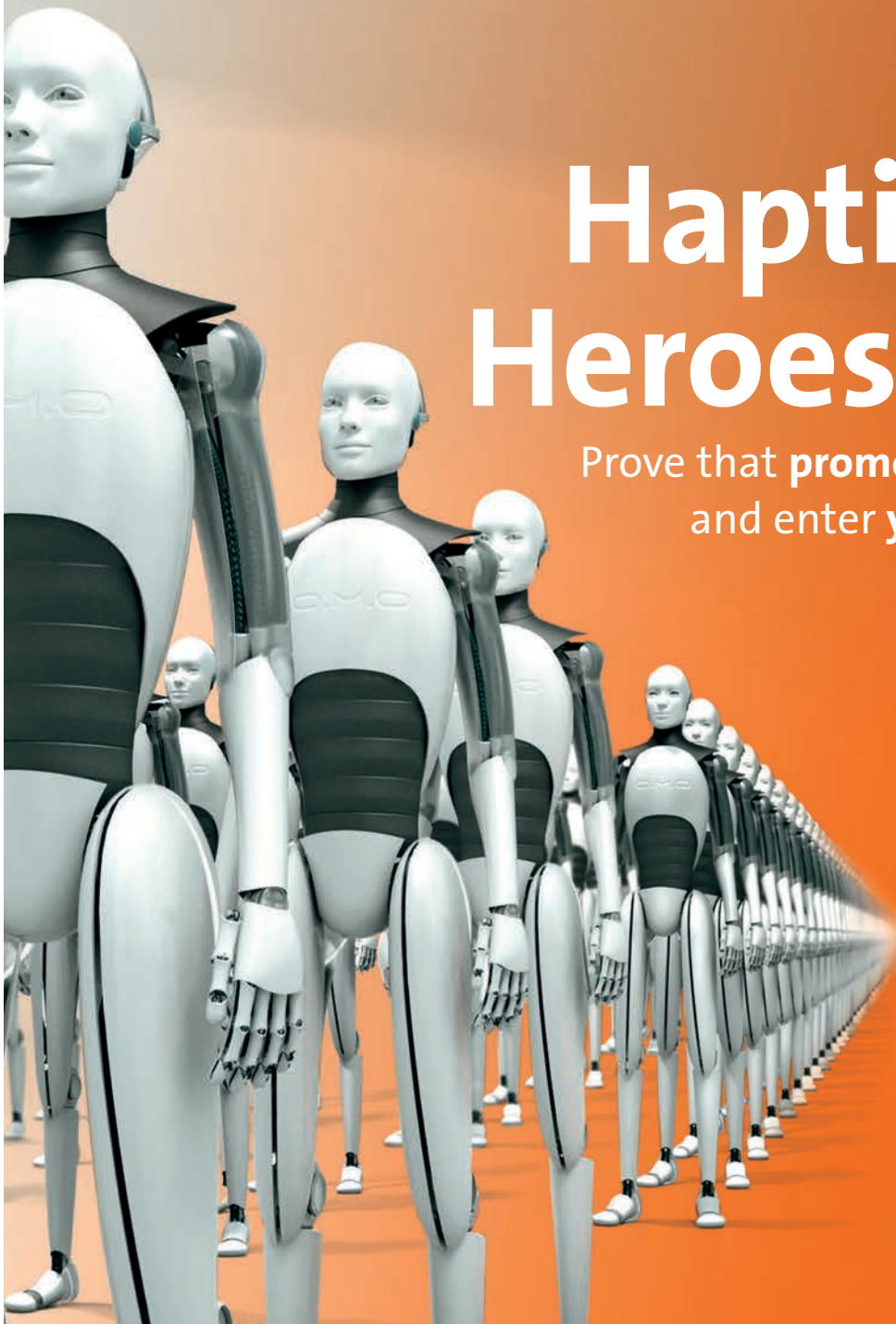


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Albion Ballpen

Full Colour Print

5-Day Lead Time

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- Full colour wrap print to entire barrel



Electra Touch Ballpen

Laser Engraved

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- Designed for larger branding area



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