



PRODUCTMEDIA

THE **MAGAZINE** FOR THE PROMOTIONAL INDUSTRY

SEPTEMBER 2017

**Merchandise
WORLD**



**PROMOTIONAL
PRODUCTS WEEK**

**INNOVATION
MEETS
APPRECIATION**

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Merchandise World and Promotional
Products Week – previews inside



GOING DUTCH
MERCHANDISE
IN HOLLAND
REPORT **P11**



< REFLECTING ON SAFETY
ARE WE DOING ENOUGH? **P35**

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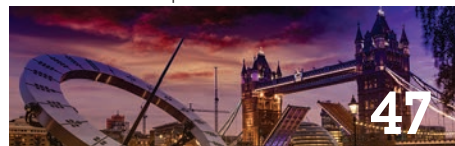
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Richard Mack and Tim Cadel answer the questions



WELCOME



Well, the biggest and most anticipated event of the year is almost here. The BPMA and Sourcing City's combined exhibition Merchandise World will be held on 19-20 September.

The enthusiasm for the event is evident, not just among our joint members, but from the many others keen to visit it.

In this issue, we've taken a look at the whole exhibition sector and what works well from an exhibitor, and also from a visitor's perspective. Over the years I have visited and exhibited at hundreds of events across the world. In an age where people's time is at a premium, exhibitors need to really

consider how they communicate with their audience and be more inventive, more creative and engaging to the visitor. Some people do it really well, others just leave it so late and cobble together products and put them on a stand. It's such a shame when we work all year to get customers, and over the course of two days they all come to us. So, I urge my fellow exhibitors to really go for it in two weeks' time and make the visitors feel like a million dollars.

Another important event coming up is Promotional Products Week, which is later this year, in the first week of October. I am truly delighted to be supporting the Alzheimer's Society and with what I hope will be the greatest campaign ever, called THANK

YOU! This is on the back of previous research the BPMA has conducted on the link between appreciation and gifting, which found that it is one of the few advertising mediums that allow you can say thank you. I really hope as many of the suppliers and distributors do get involved, after all we only have one week to do it.

My thanks go to all the partners and sponsors for their support. Branded clothing remains an opportunity to drive more business, so a big thank you to those suppliers and brands that have helped create the branded clothing guide. Each visitor to Merchandise World will receive one.

Gordon Glenister,
director general of the BPMA

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



British Promotional Merchandise Association
British Promotional Merchandise Association Avenue Business Park, Brockley Road, Elsworth, Cambridgeshire, CB23 4EY.
All phone enquiries: 0203 875 7942
www.productmediamagazine.co.uk
www.bpma.co.uk

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

Design and Production
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New scam shows worrying sophistication

News reaches the BPMA of a worrying potential new scam. Chris Weeks, owner of sourcing company, A&R Direct was approached about an order, and takes up the story.

"Recently I received an overseas enquiry from our website. It was for a quantity of 3,000 thermal mugs to be printed with a logo of an event taking place in 2020. Artwork was attached and I checked the basics, that the event was happening and that the company existed. These all being in order I proceeded to get the job priced up.

The various emails with the 'client' also amended the artwork, which all pointed towards it being a proper job. Although I was highly skeptical all the way through, eventually an order was placed.

A few days later I received an email to say that their accounts department had made a mistake and sent too much money (around £60,000 too much) and could I please refund the balance. Having been wary of the whole enquiry from the outset, I said that I was on holiday and would have to sort it out upon my return, which was true.

When I got back from holiday I had a call from the bank asking if I was expecting a cheque from overseas. I said that I was but I was quite wary of it. The bank told me the cheque had been passed on to the fraud department. I asked how long it would have taken for them to identify it as a fake and remove the money credited to my account and was told that that could take up to six weeks.

The point is that this was a much more involved scam that only fell apart when they were basically too greedy. If this had been for the correct amount and they asked to cancel and return their payment then it may have worked although I should imagine that we would all check with the bank that the money had cleared before sending it back. So as ever beware out there, if business wasn't hard enough, we now have quite well-educated scammers wasting our time and trying to take our money."

Have you heard of this scam, or been targeted by it? If so, the BPMA would like to hear from you.

SPS hosts national debate broadcast

Blackpool-based SPS hosted BBC 5live's Drive radio programme in the lead up to the recent general election.

As a British manufacturer with more than 300 employees on-site, SPS was able to channel the thoughts and opinions of local people. The radio team broadcast from the SPS factory, as their 5live branded notebooks were printed on-site.

As well as SPS employees, local Blackpool-based residents and businesses were invited to join in, giving an insight into the thoughts and feelings of people in the area ahead of the national poll.

With presenter Tony Livesey hosting, the separate grouped interviews and the sometimes-heated open debate were interesting and informative, showing the diverse range of concerns and issues affecting voters in the Blackpool South constituency.

The broadcast covered key points from the political parties' manifestos, including funding for the NHS, security concerns after recent terrorist attacks, Brexit negotiations, and arts, heritage and culture. The live broadcast, billed as the Marginal Mystery Tour, was aired two days before the general election.



PURPLE CLUB INDUSTRY SUMMIT

Almost 50 suppliers and distributors attended the latest Purple Club summit at the Cricklade Hotel & Country Club on 27 July to discuss important issues facing the merchandise industry.

The discussions were varied, in depth and lively, focusing on things that mattered to the 48 attendees. There was discussion around web to print portals, whether the distributor-supplier dynamic is stable, and why the industry should support the BPMA. Other issues included compliance, the order information a supplier should receive, and supplier service and quality.

All Purple Club members will receive the Purple Club Summit report, which is a summary of all the discussions that took place.

The Purple Club was established by Sourcing City and is open to any professional distributor company or recognised industry supplier, whether they use the other services of Sourcing City or not. It offers various benefits on Sourcing City services and has an on-going programme of new member benefits and initiatives.

Mid Ocean Brands raises the bar on compliance

Mid Ocean Brands has stepped up its compliance best practices by making all product test reports, certificates and declarations of conformity (DoC) available online. The documents are downloadable from any product page, allowing customers to send them directly to their end users.

Patricia Varela, portfolio director, Mid Ocean Brands said that the company has had a dedicated team working on compliance for many years, incorporating it into buying processes. "What is new, however, is that we recognise the need for

customers to have all relevant documents instantly available and have now added these online in our web shop, so all our customers can easily access them."

Varela added that the market is starting to value compliance more highly and that Mid Ocean Brands is looking to improve practice further. "We believe compliance is extremely important and we feel that distributors share this opinion," she said. "However, end users do not always, yet, appreciate the added value strong compliance brings to the promotional product sector.

By sharing all documents with our customers, we hope it can help them stress and reinforce this importance to end users. Together we can take the next step in professionalising the promotional market."

The transparent step allows customers to see and use test reports that are available. The company hopes it will become the norm among suppliers, so that every distributor is able to include a test report with quotations and the promotional market builds a reputation for being a leader in compliance.

Watson steps up to US role

Rob Watson has been promoted to managing director of Outstanding Branding North America, in New York City. Watson's recent hire as global chief marketing officer of the company helped establish the US business while continuing growth in the UK market. In less than a year, the US business has seen exponential growth.

"It is evident that Rob's strong leadership, coupled with a vast knowledge of the industry made him the perfect candidate to run our US operations," said Outstanding Branding chief executive officer, Sarah

Penn. "Rob will continue to lead our marketing efforts in the US, UK and Hong Kong, but his major role will be to further advance our position in the US marketplace."

Watson said: "Outstanding Branding invests in its people – it's the difference between having a job and having a career. The company's culture believes that if you create a dynamic environment filled with transparency and growth opportunities, then the investments made in people will help to advance the company far beyond any of our competitors."



... MEANWHILE IN THE UK, OUTSTANDING BRANDING GOES 80s STYLE

Distributor Outstanding Branding took on an 80s theme at its summer party which was held at the Theobalds Park Hotel, Cheshunt.

Earlier in the day the OB team ran a series of team building events, before more than 50 suppliers and staff dressed in some amazing costumes, including sales director, Andy Thorne as Mr T. Andy and Sarah thanked both the team and suppliers for all their support over the year.



Pen Warehouse supports charity children's event

The Pen Warehouse has supported its local Rotary Club in providing children with a fun day out.

The Aldershot business was invited to attend the KidsOut day, organised by the KidsOut charity in conjunction with more than 600 Rotary Clubs throughout the UK. The aim is to bring some happiness to the lives of disadvantaged children, giving more than 29,000 kids a great day.

Amanda Deallie and Grace Mitchell of the company visited the event held at Aldershot Rugby Club. The fun-packed day featured face painting, a bouncy castle and a petting zoo. Other activities included a barbeque, balloon race and a disco. For many of the children is was the first time they had experienced such things and a rare opportunity to forget about disability, poverty and abuse.

Deallie said: "the Aldershot KidsOut day was a huge success, with over 700 children getting the chance to take part in a variety of activities. It was fantastic seeing so many kids enjoying themselves and the Pen Warehouse is proud to play a small part in supporting our local Rotary Club."



Industry players ready for league battle

Football fans in the promotional merchandise industry have a choice of fantasy leagues to join this season. Everything Environmental



sponsors and runs the PROMO industry fantasy football league through Skysports. Last season's winner was Glyn Harry of Pathway Incentives, with the runner up Graham Leach of Impress Ipswich.

You can join this year's fun at Fantasyfootball.skysports.com with the PIN 8317346. Mark Lever at the company is the league chairman. Meanwhile, promotional gift house, AMT Trade, is gathering support for its promotional merchandise industry league. Industry players can sign up and the winner at the end of the season takes home £100 of Amazon vouchers and a leather vintage football.

You can join AMT Trade's private league at fantasy.premierleague.com, using the code 662215-171780, or call Ben on 01483 459310 for help in setting up.



Briman keeps it family

The Briman Group are something of a family affair as this picture shows. The recent meeting, which BPMA director general Gordon Glenister attended, featured four father and sons who run businesses that extol the virtues of British manufacturing.

The family companies are: Orchard Melamine (Gary and Ben Chamberlain);

Sow Easy (Steve and Jamie Gray); Ancestors of Dover (Nick and Mike Smith), and Great Central Plastics (Tony and Kiron Philips). First Editions' Mark Alderson, was also present, but without dad Brian.

Briman also has a mother and daughter business, Sanders Badges, run by Annabel Apperley and her mother Sue Moth.

Brandinc doubles US sales

The US office of merchandise company, Brandinc has been ranked eighth in the fastest-growing distributor 2017 award list by the Advertising Speciality Institute (ASI). This is the second year running it has achieved the distinction, out of 23,000 US distributors.

The company, which has an office in London, positions itself as a pioneer in progressive merchandising solutions, providing a holistic range of integrated services and a turnkey solution. The ranking is on the basis of sales growth of 100% between 2014-16.

SoBe Promos was the fastest growing US distributor during this period, with sales growth of 452%.



New business manager at Gopromotional

Gopromotional has appointed Martin Walker as its new business development manager to enhance relationships with existing customers and new prospects at a time when sales enquiries are at an all-time high for the Yorkshire business.

Gareth Parkin, managing director, Gopromotional, said: "Martin has a winning mentality and proven track record to enhance and help to cement our client relationships both on and offline, and we look forward to a very exciting future."

Walker added: "The company clearly has an unparalleled passion and desire to succeed and be the very best at what it does. Combined with a great vision for where it wants to grow with a key focus on building relationships with existing customers, it is very refreshing within the online sector."





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q&a

SHOW AND TELL

With exhibitions currently on suppliers' minds, **Andrew Hill** ponders the pros and cons of these high-profile marketing opportunities

Q. How and when do you decide whether to exhibit?

A. From a supplier perspective, exhibitions are always difficult to call in terms of footfall expectation unless, of course, there are precedents to fall back on. These statistics provide an idea of likely attendance, and will help determine the level of investment you make.

Q. What if this sort of information is not available?

A. If it's a new exhibition, then it's down to 'gut feeling'. When the BPMA had its first autumn exhibition last year, Senator felt it had the makings of a 'goodie' and we decided to go with a one-off design and build which reflected our faith. It turned out to be a good decision.

Q. Are you doing the autumn show again?

A. Yes, and we are anticipating



a higher footfall. As the visitors will be primarily BPMA members, we can be assured that we will be spending time with some very keen distributors. We will be bringing along a new themed stand to Stoneleigh, and we are also working on concepts for the new Merchandise World show at Silverstone in January.

Q. What are the main considerations for exhibitors?

A. The cost-value element

will depend on what your main objectives are. For example, if you are a small supplier exhibiting for the first time, then your primary objective will be to present your products to as many people as possible, and so the real value to you will be inversely proportionate to the overall cost. More mature suppliers may have specific goals and a pre-profiled target audience, thus the cost may be high in relation to the real value. For most of us, the benefit of an exhibition lies somewhere between these two examples. Direct return on investment can only be calculated over a 12-18-month post-show timeline.

Q. What are the hidden costs?


A. These inevitably come in the form of staffing, accommodation and sustenance, transportation, exhibition materials, and the impact on the company back at base. It is in these areas that it is easy to

overspend, thus it is better to accrue exhibition costs separately rather than be faced with unforeseen overheads post-event. This is best achieved by having a fully costed exhibition itinerary and sticking to it.

Q. Do exhibitions still have a place in the digital world?

A. As we all know, internet trading has its limitations and those companies who wish to connect with their supply chain should make sure that a good exhibition is on the calendar. An hour or so discussing and deciding pre-show who you wish to see, and why, can bring advantages that last for some time. Each show can be approached in different ways and by different members of staff, and there are always key products, messages, and services which can be profitably exploited.

Q. Finally, what is Senator's theme for Merchandise World?

A. Well, that would be telling wouldn't it! Suffice to say, at Senator we recognise how important it is for our products to be a trusted vehicle for advertising. Our customers certainly appreciate this, and it has resulted in some remarkable statistics, recently confirmed by Marketing Week magazine. So, if you are venturing along to Stoneleigh, then please come by and find out more. 

Andrew Hill is MD of Senator Pens in the UK



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Success recognised

Winners were awarded and preparations made for the coming year at Advantage Group's latest business event

The Advantage Group returned to Sopwell House Hotel and Country Club, St Albans to celebrate its 18th annual catalogue launch and business awards dinner.

A record attendance ensured a fun, lively atmosphere with the Group Member of the Year award picked up by Outstanding Branding. Arcadia Corporate Merchandise and Stay Sourced, the group's most consistent award winners, collected Highly Commended positions, while Concept Incentives, Mojo Promotions and Willsmer Wagg were Commended.

The Best Catalogue Cover of the Year award went to Response Marketing with Integral Promotions picking up the Best Use of Website.

A special recognition award was presented to the newly-retired Andy Goffin, for his services to the group over the years. Long-time friend and group member, Gill Thorpe, presented this.

On the supplier side, The Pen Warehouse scooped the top prize of Group Supplier of the Year, with Adco Products and The Umbrella Company being recognised as Highly Commended. Bizz Badge, Strive Badges and The Sweet People were each Commended.

Day two of the event saw the new Advantage catalogue launched, with many members and suppliers citing it the best yet. The members meeting also featured a well-received education session, entitled Tech Talk, by Desk Top Ideas MD, Matt Pluckrose.

A busy product showcase followed the meeting, with more than 40 key suppliers exhibiting their ranges, and engaging with the members in attendance.



GOING DUTCH

Promotional merchandise companies in the Netherlands are raising the bar on professionalism. **Product Media** found out more

Platform Promotional Products (PPP) was established in 2002 as an umbrella organisation for the Dutch promotional product market. Its members consist of both suppliers and distributors. With about 250 companies, the members of PPP represent approximately 75% of the Dutch promotional product market.

PPP strives for further professionalisation of our business. We therefore provide a high level educational programme (the PPP Academy) which is recognised by more and more companies and end-users. "PPP offers certification to its members as well."

A members-benefits programme provides tools like general terms for members, low-priced airline tickets, PSI entrance tickets, and tickets and discounts for our National Trade show: De Leveranciersdagen.

Together with several stakeholders, both on a national and European scale, we see it as our daily task to set the standards for a professional promotional products market.

Academy

Twice a year PPP organises an educational programme for both members and non-members. During four days, members and their employees can get professional courses with several relevant subjects. Topics at the PPP Academy include printing techniques, sales promotion, knowledge on materials, and safety-regulations. In addition, PPP organises additional sessions on special topics.

De Leveranciersdagen

For several years, PPP and Portaal Uitgevers have hosted the National Trade Show, De Leveranciersdagen. This event takes place in the largest trade show complex of the Netherlands, De Jaarbeurs



in Utrecht. It is a show for dealers and traders only, which is very interesting for all suppliers of promotional products who want to promote in the Netherlands

Public affairs

PPP strives for optimal sharing of market-relevant information and regularly surveys the market. Together with our international and national stakeholders we work towards a professional business climate, through certification and self-regulation via our Code of Conduct.

CSR

In 2015 PPP introduced the CSR Promotional Products certificate (CPP), the international standard for CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) within the promotional product branch.

Raising awareness

PPP and BAPP (Belgian Association of Promotional Products) have started a



The Dutch market

Size - €900 million


About 1,000 companies
(20% supplier, 80% distributor)

Most popular products:

- Bags (cotton and foldable due to the banning of plastic bags)
- Ballpoints
- Electronic gadgets
- Promotional textiles
- Drinkware
- Lanyards
- Notebooks
- Mugs
- Sunglasses

joint media campaign with the theme of 'Promotional products make brands stronger.' The campaign is an initiative of the Dutch branch organisation and is conducted by the members, distributors and suppliers of promotional products. The aim of the campaign is to make companies use promotional products more often as an advertising medium.

PPP on tour 2017

This year PPP organised The PPP On Tour Strategy Sessions in four locations in Holland. These interactive discussions with colleagues asked the question 'Is your company future proof?' 

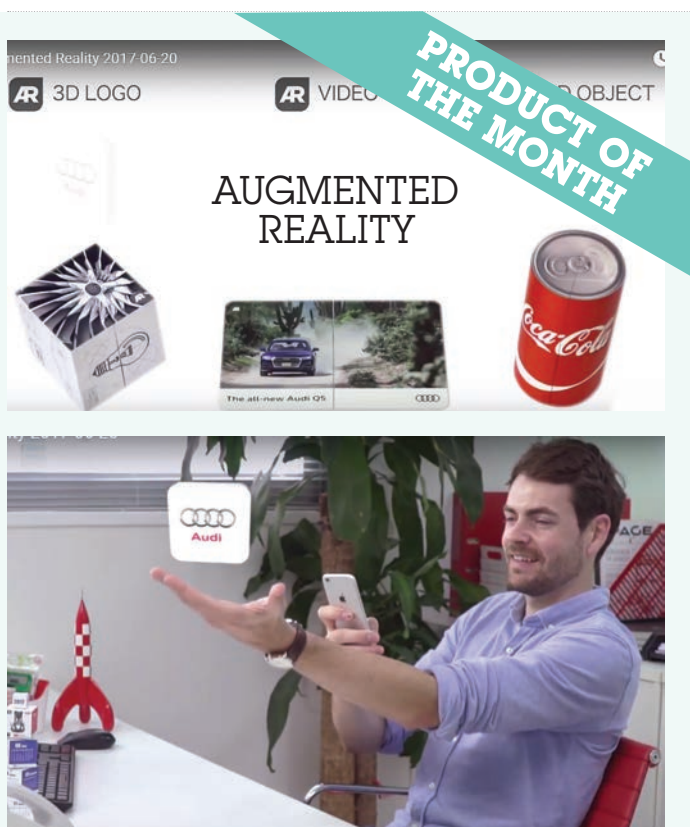


Magic Concepts Amazing Media

Barely a month goes by without a new digital service or game coming to market. The problem with many of these items is that they lack the tactile nature of promotional merchandise such as pens, stress toys or mugs. Because digital media exists online, it is hard for it to have the same playful intriguing ways. AR produces a digital overlay to something that you are looking at in real life, typically through a mobile device. Pokemon Go is a good example, where you can track down cartoon characters in your real-life environment.

Magic Concepts has brought AR to the promotional world. The company has many imaginative folding puzzles that it offers to the market, such as its Magic Tile, Magic Cube and Magic Can. The company is now able to offer AR to the products to make them even more engaging. So, for example, a brand could AR enable a spinning logo that would sit atop the Magic Cube, something that the recipient can play with and share via social media. The technology also allows a video to be played through AR and a 'solid' object to appear to the user.

Bizz Badge represents that company in the UK and is excited about the possibilities for this new technology.



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ASK CLIVE

A new BPMA clothing website promises to answer all the questions you were too embarrassed to ask, says **Clive Allcott**



One of the most common discussions I have on my travels around the country visiting various distributors concerns how they and their staff struggle to sell branded clothing. It becomes apparent that these concerns are mostly led by the number of choices of both clothing and decoration methods. They express that it's difficult to sell with confidence when you're not completely knowledgeable about the processes and range of garments available.

Over the last few articles in *Product Media* we have addressed some of these issues and offered solutions to assist in the sales of promotional clothing, however to educate fully we would need a complete edition solely dedicated to branded garments.



With the amount of information that is needed to educate and inform our distributor base, Gordon Glenister (BPMA), myself, and a number of major clothing brands and clothing wholesalers have been creating a go to website that will deliver all this information for you - bpmaclighting.co.uk.

The branded clothing website will go live before the Merchandise World show, allowing you full access to the information so that we can gain your feedback at the show. It has been designed so it can be used as a selling tool that can be viewed by either a distributor or be sent to your end users to educate and assist them.

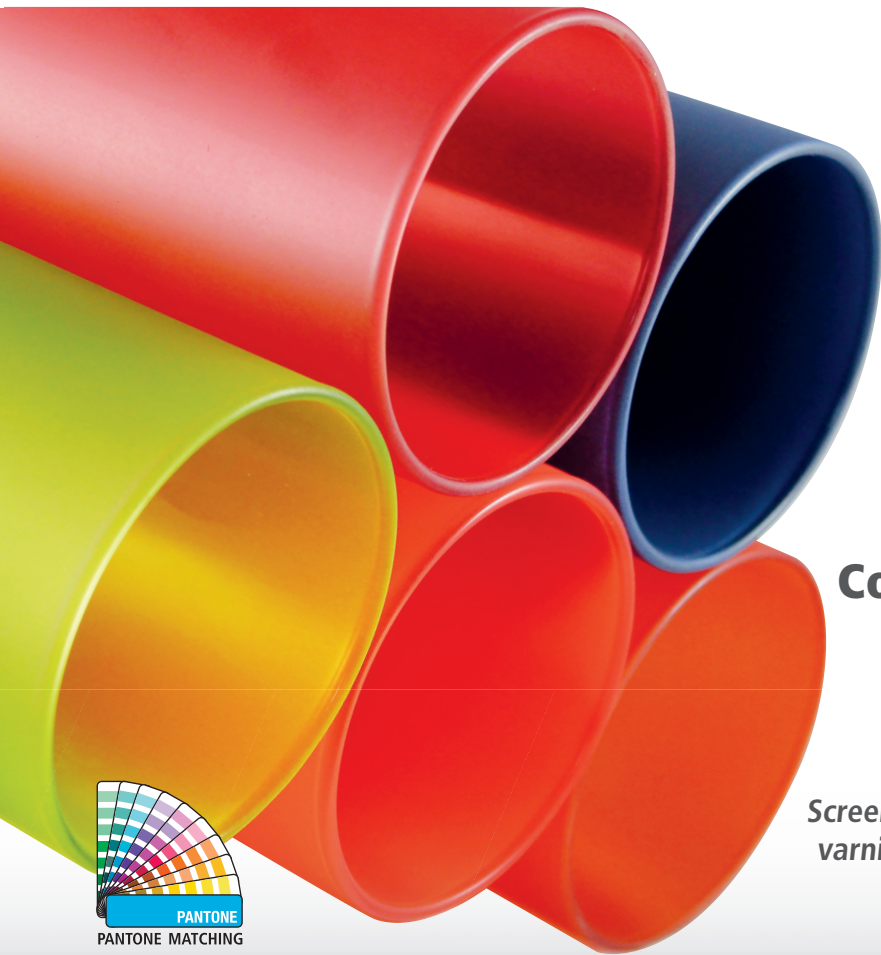
With a selection of navigational tabs, the website

offers videos of branding methods, a photo gallery of successful branded clothing projects, research and sourcing guides as well as links to clothing products. We even have a useful information tab which houses such items as a Pantone reference guide, washing instructions by imagery and a full A-Z glossary of terms used in the clothing and branding arena.

This is a huge step forward for the industry which we hope you will use to the full. This is a product that can be used for the training of staff, customers as well as a valuable reference guide.

Please let us know your feedback and happy clothing sales.

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AWARDS DINNER



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"I was ecstatic that we won '**Distributor of the Year**' in 2016. It showed me what I had always known about my team, that they go above and beyond what is expected. This award is recognition of their efforts and I'm so pleased for them."

Angela Wagstaff, Allway Promotions

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What distributors want

Paul Green, director, Galpeg explains why he will be at Merchandise World

What I look for in a great show is the opportunity to keep abreast of trends and latest product ideas. Having been in the industry for more than 30 years, I am constantly surprised by the continuous improvements in branding methods and new concepts around familiar products. The resurgence of the popularity of the notebook is one such example.

A show such as Merchandise World should provide visitors with the best opportunity to discuss in detail, see and touch the products and hopefully find new creative ideas to propose to their existing and new customers. I understand that there will be an area dedicated to branding processes, which is ideal for building on one's knowledge as well as one dedicated to new innovative ideas. The show is the perfect event to visit ahead of the busy buying period up to Christmas.

Suppliers are key to developing a distributor's business and a show such as Merchandise World will be the perfect place to meet new suppliers and build on existing relationships.

The waiting is almost over for the first ever Merchandise World. For a sector that is blessed with more than a few trade shows, it's worth underlining why Merchandise World is different

Rather than just being another day out of the office for the sector, Merchandise World aims to be the industry's own platform for showing off the best in merchandise ideas, inspiring visitors to see what is really possible with promotional products, and letting them experience something of the buzz that we all feel working in this great sector.

The show has been developed by the BPMA and Sourcing City putting their collective heads together and user experience that combines the best of last year's BPMA Show and the Sourcing City Marketplace – a show that really brings the industry to life.

Merchandise World will have more than 200 suppliers exhibiting when it opens its doors on 19 September, with 70% using the online

pre-booking system that will make seeing who you need to see slicker and quicker.

The show will feature 'Branding World' where five trade suppliers will demonstrate branding techniques in a live environment, an ideal opportunity for office based teams and new starters to see what the industry can do. Meanwhile an Innovation Alley will feature great product ideas from recent years of Briman-sponsored student design competitions.

Merchandise World is endorsed by a range of trade groups and organisations, including Advantage International, Ignite Incentives Group, Page Partnership, Promotional Union, Encore Catalogue Group, Advertising Gift Federation (AGF), Recognition Express, ASI, PSI, BPMA, Sourcing City and Purple Club. All members of the endorsing trade groups and organisations qualify for free entry.

Leaders and team members from around 2000 professional distributor companies have been invited to the show. Visitors must have a



promotional merchandise turnover of more than £100,000. It's a great opportunity to build business, make connections, and find new ideas. *The Product Media* preview gives a taster of what will be happening – see you on 19 September for the real thing.

The pick of Merchandise World exhibitors

British manufacturing is celebrated by the **Briman Group**, which is organising a Briman Treasure hunt at Merchandise World. The prizes are all British made, naturally, and one lucky winner will win a £100 Amazon voucher.

Distributors will be encouraged to visit all Briman member stands during the event. Each Briman supplier is armed with a different argument on why distributors should buy British made products. Distributors successfully visiting all 15 stands will be rewarded with a Cadbury's Treasure Chest (collected from the BPMA stand) and entered into the overall prize draw.

Briman Group suppliers manufacture a minimum of 50% of their products in the UK and promote the benefits of buying British.

Juniper has upgraded its original notebook builder website, an online interactive sales tool, which allows distributors and their clients, to build a visual of a bespoke notebook from millions of variations. The site builds up an image of the material, colour, trim and paper requirements, producing an image and specification sheet. This can instantly be saved



Making the most of the show

With so much potential business at the show, the BPMA is keen that its members make the most of the opportunity and really push the boat out when exhibiting. Here are some ways to make your show experience really work by planning it well

1. Send out an email to your customers explaining that you are visiting an international fair and on the look-out for new products. Ask if they would like you to look at anything specific, so you have a working shopping list.
2. Arrive early, if you are only planning to be there for a day, traffic can delay you and you need plenty of time to work the show properly. Also, you'll get a car park space closer to the venue, which makes a difference if it's raining
3. Bring as many of your team as possible. Different takeaways can be shared with colleagues more easily. If you are worried about staff cover, split the days, so one team can visit one day, the other team the next day. They can also see close-up the many different branding techniques, and take photos and videos.
4. Download or check out the exhibitor list which can be found on www.merchadiseworld.co.uk.
5. Plan meetings with those you want to see through the online appointment system.
6. Make sure you have a pocket pad to take any information down, or you can record details on an app. There is a Merchandise World Show app. But consider using Viva Video or Vidco and download an Augmented Reality App
7. Make sure your mobile/iPad is fully charged, and bring a charger, so you can take photos of ideas. Don't forget to connect to wifi on arrival.
8. Make a short video from your phone with the best products of the show. Add a personal introduction and send it to your clients. There are many apps you can use to edit.
9. Enter competitions and engage with exhibitors that promote themselves well.
11. Look at some of the greatest product concept designs from students from leading universities in Innovation Alley.
12. Visit the BPMA stand and plan which talks you want to listen to. These are aimed to help you really promote your business. Speak to one of our many experts on hand. If you are not a member, you will be required to do this anyway.
13. Use social media during the show and connect with your clients on the move. Follow Merchandise World, BPMA and Sourcing City for lots of show updates before, during and after.
14. Bring plenty of business cards.
15. Bring your visitor badge for swift entry into the exhibition hall.

From top top:
discover branding techniques at the show; Juniper notebooks make a colourful appearance

The BPMA has worked with the Association of Exhibition Organisers (AEO) to produce a guide to buying merchandise for events

FaceTime

HOW TO SOURCE

It is important to consider the target audience, your objective is and how your audience can use the merchandise after the event. There are thousands of suppliers and suppliers of merchandise.

WHAT CAN HELP?

The BPMA (British Promotional Merchandise Association) is the industry body representing the promotional gift industry. All members are credit checked and sign an industry code of conduct.

www.bpma.co.uk



Has the supplier you've chosen got valid customer testimonials, won awards or does it go above and beyond with a helpful, efficient service?

Should there be any issues, the BPMA has a mediation service to help support buyers.

www.bpma.co.uk

Some organisations have in-house design services and can provide speculative ideas before your order is placed

QUESTIONS YOU WILL NEED THE ANSWERS TO

- WHAT** message do I want to get across?
- HOW** many items do I need?
- WHAT** budget do I have or require?
- WHEN** do I need the products? Don't leave it to the last minute!
- WHERE** do I want them delivered?
- DO** I want an off-the-shelf or bespoke option?
- DO** I need, and have time for, a sample before purchasing?
- WHAT** colour do I need – will it work with my branding?
- HOW** many colours in my logo? How does this affect cost?
- WHAT'S** my call to action?
- IS IT** eye-catching enough and does it reflect the brand?
- WHAT** format do I need to provide artwork in? – ideally in EPS format

Visit our website if you want more guides and helpful tips to make your exhibiting activity a great success:

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What visitors hate about exhibitions

1. Too much clutter and too many messages. It takes an average of five seconds to walk past an exhibition stand and it's a turnoff if they can't get the message instantly.
2. Loud music.
3. Exhibitors who eat, are hungover, use their phone or work on their laptop on the stand.
4. Pushy salespeople - exhibitors who stare at visitors asking if they can help can be off-putting. It's better to turn around and face your stand with the visitor alongside, and offer them a free gift.



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Merchandise World essentials

- **Where** – NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire CV8 2LG
- **When** – 19-20 September 2017
- **Why** – more than 200 promotional suppliers will be exhibiting covering the gamut of merchandise. Qualified professional distributor companies can pre-book meetings with exhibitors, and see live demonstrations at Branding World
- **How** – visitors can register at merchandise-world.co.uk Don't forget Merchandise World at Silverstone in Jan 31-1 Feb 2018. The start of the year sister show is expected to sell out its exhibitor space. A smaller venue than Stoneleigh, booking demand has already taken swathes of the show floor, and if all exhibitors at Stoneleigh decide to go to Silverstone, it is possible not everyone will be able to fit in.



as a JPEG or exported to PDF.

Variations include internal pockets and pen loop options, contrast stitching and paper options. Juniper can supply from 25 pieces made in the UK for express delivery, or mass production on the same choices from the Far East at a price advantage.

Crystal Galleries is showcasing its Acrylic Awards, which combine the flexibility of full coloured printed acrylic with an optical crystal base. They offer something completely unique to a brand without the high costs and long lead times traditionally associated with bespoke awards.

Pop to the stand and see them as well as the CGi Colour3D decoration technique which combines stunning sub surface 3D images and 2D logos with digital print. This technique is great for a variety of occasions such as recognition awards, commemorative items and financial tombstones. Following investment in technology and training, the company can decorate more items than ever before with CGi Colour3D.

Great Central Plastics will be showcasing both a standard and bespoke product range. It is joined by Kristen Kong, a recent graduate of the Royal College of Art, London.

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Exhibitors' checklist

Top exhibiting tips from Ultima Displays

✓ **1. It's not just about size, it's what you do with it that matters**

Spending all your money on a huge stand space in the exhibition hall isn't always the most cost-effective way to get noticed. A smaller pitch can save money on floor space and invest instead in attracting attention by building tall or using the airspace above your stand.

✓ **2. Bring less, say more**

Showcasing every product you offer on stand or bringing all the literature you've ever created, isn't the best way to deliver exhibiting results. It can be counter-productive. By bringing less, you can utilise your stand space more effectively with eye-catching

graphic design, educational engagement tools, animation or videos of your product in action.

✓ **3. Befriend the organiser**

Once you've purchased your stand space, don't let your relationship with the organiser end there. Work with them to leverage pre-show exposure, such as providing detailed company information, images and case studies for your online exhibitor profile, or using the show's hashtag or Twitter handle to connect with their audience. Where relevant, see if there's a deal to be made booking a speaker slot to increase awareness of your presence and to demonstrate your company's expertise.

✓ **4. Extend the value of engagement tools**

Incorporate tools, apps, and content developed for the show throughout the rest of your marketing campaign. For example, install them in your showroom or reception

area, or put them on your website, to educate and engage further prospects.

✓ **5. The silent sales person**

It can be expensive to take an extra person out of the office for the duration of the event. So instead, why not take a 'silent salesperson' in the form of your stand's graphic design, or by using digital information kiosks. You can maximise the impact of your graphic design by spelling out your USPs capturing interest and holding attention until a member of staff is available.

✓ **6. A bespoke look for less**

If you exhibit infrequently or are new to exhibiting, hiring elements of your stand is a great way to avoid hefty fabrication and storage costs usually associated with custom builders. By customising these hire elements and mixing with bespoke finishes and branded graphics, you can still exhibit whole-heartedly with a bespoke looking stand.



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While studying for her masters, Kristen specialised in creating art by reusing found objects and waste materials. For a number of her pieces Great Central Plastics provided Kristen with waste materials that she will be displaying at the show in 'Innovation Alley', sponsored by the Briman Group as well as on the Great Central Plastics stand.

German confectioners, **Kalfany**, is showing its Novelties 2017 range, which includes energy drink flavoured power, and fruit gum containing caffeine and taurine. It also has Christmas novelties, such as hot chocolate in three different flavours, a premium fruit gum advent calendar, and top-sellers like My M&Ms. As if that wasn't enough, it is going to show its new web2print tool, for ordering top-sellers directly online in quantities starting at 500.

Visitors can also meet Rebekka Pies, who

is newly responsible for sales in the UK.

Incidentally, anyone looking to stay friends with our European neighbours should visit **Visit Berlin**, the city's convention and events bureau, Who can talk through options in the German capital.

Back on the subject of yummy things, **Popkakery** has an exciting new range. Apparently, it's no longer just about the sweets and treats, but now offers 'Pop Power' energy balls. Its original recipes, 'Coconut & Oat' and 'Cashew, Cacao & Raspberry' are the first arrivals, and promise little bombs of delicious, and highly nutritious, goodness for those on the go.

The new flavours provide an excellent boost and an irresistible snack for guests in the office lounge, or attendees at an event. The packaging can be customised to show off brands or logos.

Still hungry? Well, **The Sweet People** is launching personalised luxury branded chocolate. The artisan chocolate brand, named 'Chocolate', is on show at Merchandise World. Working closely with independent chocolatiers, the new range features a beautiful Christmas collection and a selection of personalised,



gifted chocolates for all occasions. The new

collection boasts Belgian chocolates, fluffy mallow Walnut Whirls, salted caramel caviar and moreish honeycomb pralines.

Luxury Thank You gifts suitable for a variety of occasions all year round will also be on show.

The Leather Business will be exhibiting its stock range, manufactured in its own factory with a choice of leathers and PU offering options. It will also be promoting its five-day service for bespoke manufacture including Pantone colour matched leather and deluxe packaging options together with a new PU range, The Prestbury Collection.

Mid Ocean Brands and **More than Gifts** are both at Merchandise World where they will be launching an end of year catalogue, More Than Christmas 2017, which has around 90



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new items many of which will be on view at the show. The company can also speak about its Your Choice Bespoke range of items.

Those festive folk at **Festive Promotions** are launching their brand new festive essentials, a range of seasonal goodies with a flat rate pricing structure for the top ten most popular items. These include poppers, baubles, crackers, wooden decorations and snow globes. How much more festive do you want?

Oldeani has a brand-new range of great looking, great sounding Bluetooth speakers. Follow the sounds to its stand and take a look at the new models including the powerful dB Decibel 15W speaker, the stand out Vadar with its polished zinc casing and the waterproof Rock, perfect for outdoor enthusiasts. There are also new Bluetooth ear phones and a super practical, hi-tech Bluetooth keyboard, perfect for travel. Book an appointment to see the new products and receive a free gift and discount voucher.

Headwear specialist **Product Zone** has expanded from working exclusively with sports clubs and charities into the workwear, promotional and fashion markets. Key clients are UK fashion houses, retailers, professional sports clubs, supermarkets, fast food chains and charities.

The company has a bespoke project management approach with ethically sourced, Far East produced, high quality headwear. Its range includes six-panel caps, snapbacks, trucker caps, campy caps and

The BPMA theatre will be delivering the following sessions at Merchandise World			
		Tuesday	Wednesday
BPMA	Small Business Clinic LIVE! Our expert panel will be on hand to provide answers to your most pressing industry questions, helping you with anything from, finance, marketing, HR, training and employment law to apprenticeships, contractual disputes, intellectual property and compliance. You may also have questions in relation to some of the most topical issues of the day, including the implications of Brexit and the risks presented by the rise of cybercrime.	11.00	11.00
Full Works	Add an additional six figures to your company turnover by implementing corporate webshops. Learn the simple 5-step process creating and managing global merchandise stores.	11.30	14.30
Sedex	Why Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) can help you reach more customers and grow your business.	10.30	12.30
Sykes	The Magnificent Seven – reasons to outsource your fulfilment.	13.00	14.00
Ultima Displays	Making an Impact with Portable Display Solution - We share some great ideas to make your brand REALLY stand out!	10.00	3.00



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knits, as well as accessories including belts, socks, backpacks, holdalls, wallets, gym bags, scarves, snoods and gloves.

The **SPS Premium Brand** stand will be showcasing items from the Moleskine and Parker pen range. You'll get to take away a free Moleskine gift from the stand. These iconic brands are perfect for use as corporate gifts and are increasingly popular to show appreciation to customers, employees and suppliers at Christmas.

As experts in designing, manufacturing and branding promotional merchandise, the SPS team can also guide visitors through the process of creating custom-made products. Its team of expert tool-makers and designers, means it can deliver custom-shaped promotional products at very competitive prices, on quick lead-times and from only 250 pieces. To find out more, visit the SPS Ideas Lab.

USB2U is showing off the latest tech gifts it has available from UK stock providing quicker product distribution. It also has exciting news about the launch of its new trade portal which aims to make life a lot easier for trade clients by giving them the ability to track their orders in one place; download any marketing collateral they may require, and find out about the latest trade offers.

Visitors to the stand can pick up the must



have 'Get Out of Jail Free Card' for a free upgrade to its UK rush service, ready for the Chinese National Holiday season in October. A competition gives those who visit the stand a chance of winning a Bluetooth headset.

There are more gadgets from **Desktop Ideas**, including an internet wireless speaker with official ALEXA software (a first for the industry), a gadget that allows you to control your barbecue by phone, and BALights that turn your bike spokes into a digital display system. That's without even mentioning its range of wireless chargers, Bluetooth sunglasses, and waterproof speakers. Check them out in its new catalogue.

Xindao will also be offering a range of gadgets, including a wireless charger that is also a lamp. Other new and funky items from its range include a 5w speaker with LED display to create your own desktop disco. On a more serious note, it is showing an anti-skim shield that protects contactless cards from being compromised by ruthless baddies. These can be built into card holders and wallets. PM

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PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS WEEK SAYS 'THANK YOU'

This year's Promotional Products Week aims to raise awareness of the importance of recognition, as well as raising money for the Alzheimer's Society

Promotional Products Week (PPW) starts this year later than previous years and runs in the first week of October. This is to accommodate distributors finding products and ideas at Merchandise World in September.

The BPMA's chosen charity is the Alzheimer's Society, and we are planning to beat last year's £11,000 target for Pancreatic Cancer. The theme is simply THANK YOU! recognising the importance and relationship of appreciation connected with gifting.

To show how much we value your membership, each BPMA distributor will be receiving a special Thank you gift box kindly sponsored by Elite Packaging along with a personalised Cross Pen and Belgian chocolate from The Sweet People. Inside the box is a guide to appreciation featuring 10 trade sponsors. The idea is to stimulate distributors into promoting acknowledgement particularly during the pre-Christmas build-up.

The gift suggestions are of a higher value than more commonly used products, which is often associated with gifting. We are encouraging the whole trade to get behind thanking their customers, their staff, their friends, their family and uploading photos on social media and the Promotionalproductsweek.co.uk website. The only requirement is that

there is a branded gift in the photo or video.

At the same time, we hope that our members make a donation to help the fight against the awful disease of Alzheimer's. The BPMA has set up a Justgiving page which is justgiving.com/fundraising/bpma-say-thank-you.

Distributors will be able to Overprint the gifting guide, source packaging ideas, and consider buying products from the trade sponsors at reduced prices, and mail this to their clients. This doesn't preclude other trade suppliers getting involved, as we want the whole industry engaged.

Gordon Glenister, director general of the BPMA said: "I am delighted that our end user group came up with the strategy behind this year's event and I am really excited that this could be the biggest yet. Other major partners, associations and media outlets will also receive gift boxes to promote the week."

Find out more about this year's Promotional Products Week at the Promotionalproductsweek.co.uk website

Thank you to this year's PPW sponsors: AT Cross, The Sweet People, Oldeani, Desktop Ideas, Whisk Hampers, Juniper, SPS, Ravendsen, Crystal Galleries, Corporate Executive Gifts, Elite Packaging, Sykes

Follow PPW

Promotional Products Week is the only clear spotlight on promotional products targeted towards the end user buyer. September and October is a key period for many organisations buying for events, conferences and Christmas gifts.

Promotional products are one of the best advertising media that can engage all the senses, create brand loyalty and enhance customer appreciation. There are so many great ideas on the market today and we urge buyers to engage with BPMA members and share with us your great success stories of products and campaigns.

Keep up to date with PPW and the activities of BPMA members on social media. Don't forget to use the #ThankYouPPW when posting messages.

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CHARLES ALEXANDER DISTRIBUTION GROUP'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

A chat with Charles Alexander Distribution's Managing Director, Paul Rowlett, about where he sees his company going.



Paul Rowlett, Managing Director of Charles Alexander Distribution, is looking forward to the future of his rapidly growing organisation, but is making sure to look back to appreciate the past.

Since 2010 Paul has built Charles Alexander Distribution from a one-man operation, trading out of his wife Jennie's bedroom, to one of the leading promotional product distributors in the United Kingdom. Jennie Rowlett is now operating as the group's Chief Financial Officer. The group has also landed across the pond with the launch of EverythingBranded.com.

The American east-coast based company has got off to a great start and Paul and the team are looking forward to seeing where the journey takes them. Moving in to their new Leicester-based headquarters was what the group needed to continue growing. The new offices house Charles Alexander Distribution's brands EverythingBranded.co.uk, Printed4You, YourProductsBranded and EverythingBranded.com.

"As a company, we've never been one to just be happy with where we are at," Paul said. "We are always looking to grow and improve as an organisation. We're always looking for new suppliers to work with, new customers to meet and greet, and new areas to explore.



Charles Alexander Distribution recently hosted a suppliers' open day at the new office. A number of the group's core suppliers came to showcase their best and brightest promotional products at the new headquarters.

"Over the last few months we've hired a lot of new staff, so this open day was a great opportunity for us to introduce some of the new staff to some of our core suppliers. It gave us a chance to provide on-the-job training to them, while also introducing them to the people they'll be working with.

"It also gave us a chance to thank the suppliers for working with us over the last seven years. It's not just the suppliers

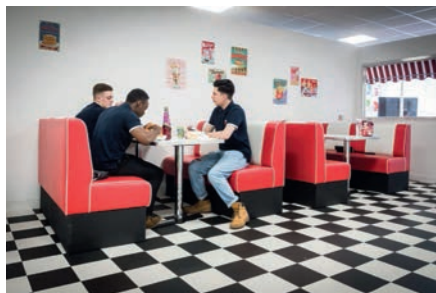
who came to the event, either. We've had a great relationship with many suppliers in the industry over the years, and we really couldn't have got to where we are without those relationships.

"We are pleased that the faith they showed in us in our early days has been repaid. Our offices are open to all of our suppliers, so please get in touch if you're interested in visiting."

One of things Paul really believes in is having a work force who really want to spend time at the job. His goal in creating this new office space is to make a place where the employees enjoy being.

"I have always had the ambition to create a working environment where people are happy and the job isn't a daily chore. I've been happy to fill the offices with fun things, so when the teams are having their well-earned breaks, it's a fun, friendly and social atmosphere.

"We're really proud of our staff retention levels and we think that the working environment is a key part in that. I'm also a big believer in that happy staff give the best customer service. Achieving the best customer service possible is a key element of where we're going as a company, and the office is a great way of helping that along."



As part of the group's expansion plans, Charles Alexander Distribution have hired a new Director of Group Operations. After a six-month search, Paul hired Chris Pitts to head up the day-to-day running on the company.

"We brought Chris Pitts on because the company was growing so well after the office move that we really needed another set of eyes and ears. All four of the brands were expanding at a rate where bringing Chris on was a must. He's still new to the role but it's made a great start and we're looking forward to seeing where he can help us go."

Chris comes with a wealth of sales and operational experience, spending the last eight years building, supporting and directing various sales teams.

He said: "Joining the Charles Alexander Distribution Group, at this very exciting time in its history, is a fantastic opportunity to help grow all of the business units."

"When a company is in this stage of its growth, it is essential



to implement core structure around process and correct procedure. This will help build the ever-increasing sales teams with the correct values and company ethos to drive a

consultative sales approach and exceptional service to our clients.

"The group pride themselves on being the 'best in class' for the industry both at home in the UK

and abroad in the US. We will look to grow further over the remainder of the year and for 2018 our plans will continue to drive an exceptional client experience when trading with us.

"It's been a great experience learning a new industry. I had nice welcome from the BPMA's Gordon Glenister over the phone and we had a very productive chat about working with them closely."

To celebrate their seven years of growth, Paul and the Charles Alexander Distribution team are showing their appreciation to their hard-working staff, as well as their supply chain, by organising the inaugural Christmas company awards.

Paul said: "The Christmas company awards is something we've wanted to do for a long time and I think we're at a point where we can put on a great show. We will be sending out the invites to our suppliers in August and we hope that everyone can make it. All are welcome and we hope it'll be a fantastic evening."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR CHARLES ALEXANDER DISTRIBUTION GROUP?



Chris Pitts - Group Director of Operations

will aim to fulfil our clients' needs on a more personal basis.

"Our new Leicester-based office helps us achieve this too. It's a nicer and more relaxed place for prospective clients and customers to come and visit. We are looking forward to working to achieve our goals while working closely with the BPMA.

"Finally, we are planning on expanding our American operations to the west coast in early 2018, together with dedicated local agents based in the States. Our initial venture into the American market has exceeded our expectations so we're looking forward to this expansion.

"We hope that our company's future will be as successful as the last seven years and myself and the team truly thank everyone who has played even the smallest part. We couldn't have done it without you."



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A QUESTION OF SAFETY

Reflectors are used as safety product, but not all are made to the same standard, says **Matt Lake**

Personal reflectors have been around since the 1960s when they were first made in Finland by a small company that manufactured plastic plates and kitchen wear. The company, Talmu, was the descendent of Safety Reflector Finland Oy, the principle supplier of our company, Scanglo.

Since then, reflective products have grown and diversified. They are made all over the world and in both prism and soft reflective forms. They are a responsible product and a great vehicle to carry a responsible message. That's why they have their own CE standard EN13356 to pass.

As the product is mainly targeted at children, it is a question of safety, responsibility and ethics that standards are not flouted or ignored. However, a growing number of products that claim to be reflectors have no CE certificate to demonstrate that they have passed testing.

Testing standards

Our prism reflectors pass the minimum standard by a long way. The Finnish manufacturers ensure that the reflective values are such that a blank product can carry up to a third of its surface area in print and still pass. I feel aggrieved that some distributors are being offered vastly inferior 'reflectors'.

Soft reflectors, including slap wraps, are a very specialist area because the reflective surface material is often made to a size to reflect to the standard. When it's printed, the reflectivity is reduced accordingly. We only offer soft reflectors with printing beneath the surface for this reason. There are many poor and misleading 'soft' products in circulation.

There are good reflectors and suppliers out there, but distributors can't tell which is which? It would be great if the product portal sites and catalogue groups could demonstrate their responsibility



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SUPPLIERS TO TRADE AND RETAIL

Reflecting on reflectors

Visibility accessories have become more popular in recent years because of the safety benefits they can bring. Consumers have an expectation they will perform to a safe standard. The products are not generally dangerous in themselves. The biggest risk is for consumers using accessories when out walking or jogging on poorly illuminated streets and having 'tags' with little or no reflectivity.

Standard EN13356:2001, which applies to reflective accessories for non-professional use, identifies three types of accessory:

- Type 1 - Free hanging, such as reflective hangers or dangle tags
- Type 2 - Removable, such as slap wraps and arm bands
- Type 3 - Mounted, such as adhesive stickers.

A number of European countries have uncovered sub-standard products many of which came from countries outside the EU. There is a lack of understanding from businesses about the standard and its applicability. The use of high visibility products is mandatory in some (northern) EU member states during particular seasons of the year.

Our advice to members of the BPMA would be to 'reflect' carefully when sourcing visibility accessories. We would recommend asking for written confirmation that the reflectors meet the standard. In the absence of any assurance, we would advise making it clear that the products were a novelty item. Also consider the amount of branding added as this could affect the retro-reflective performance of the material.

There is a grey area in determining what is or isn't a visibility accessory. An arm or leg band probably would be, but a key ring is a 'maybe'. Given that it is reasonably foreseeable that consumers will still use both of them in the dark, I personally would not use non-compliant visibility accessories unless they met the standard. The reputational risk for a business giving away these items is such that given an awareness of the facts they too would probably request compliant products.

Mark Oliver, is trading standards business hub manager, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trading Standards

method has to be at least 10cm long to allow the reflector to swing. It will be recommended products should reflect on both sides, to ensure 360° visibility.

Scanglo sells into retail where the product must conform to be considered. That's what we would love for this market also. We want to work with others in the industry to push for better standards and regulation of this very specialist section of the business gift market.

These products have been developed to prevent pedestrian road traffic deaths and injuries. This makes them very different to a diary or a pen. If these fail it's embarrassing for the supplier or distributor. When reflectors fail it is potentially more serious.

Matt Lake is director of Scanglo



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- Recruitment process
- Redundancy and dismissal
- Employment Contracts
- Flexible working
- Holiday requests
- Consumer protection

For advice on any of the above, or any other HR and employment law matters, don't hesitate to call your dedicated line on **0844 561 8133** and quote your scheme number **81685**.

DATA DEADLINE



Impending data legislation is an opportunity to build consumer trust and get ahead of the competition, says **Melissa Chevin**

In just under a year's time the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into force, giving individuals the ability to manage who has their data and what they do with it. It's easy to view this simply as more red tape, but to do so is to miss an opportunity. Data is one of your most valuable assets and this changing legislation presents an opportunity to review and enhance your procedures and get ahead of the competition by guaranteeing privacy and building the trust that consumers hold dear.

Here we give you an overview of the main themes

of the legislation and the areas you may need to action.

First, be aware that the definition of 'personal data' is broader than previously and includes posts on social media sites, computer IP addresses and work email addresses that contain an individual's name. The Regulation makes no distinction between data in a work or private context. For some organisations, namely public authorities and those engaging in regular large-scale monitoring and processing of sensitive data, the appointment of a qualified Data Protection Officer (DPO) will be mandatory.

Going forward, consent for data use must be

documented and be given explicitly by the individual for a specific purpose. Your programmes must also comply with the concept of 'Privacy by Design,' with an awareness of who is able to see and interact with your customer data at the heart of your planning. There are new requirements for data breach notifications, with the regulators and the individual having to be notified within 72 hours, and systems must be put in place to comply with the 'Right to be Forgotten' whereby individuals can ask you to delete their personal data and stop using it.

Organisations found in breach of the Regulation

will face significant fines of up to four per cent of annual global turnover and so now is the time to start planning (if you haven't already started). For more detailed information or to address specific questions, please do email melissa@bpma.co.uk or contact the BPMA regarding forthcoming training courses covering this issue.

To ask future questions of the clinic, contact Melissa on the email above.

Melissa Chevin is marketing director at Globefish Consulting and a BPMA board director
melissa.chevin@bpma.co.uk

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DREAM BIG AND INNOVATE

Innovation is only a solution to a challenge if it adds value to the customer, says **Phil Morgan**



When it comes to promotional merchandise everyone wants something new and innovative, to advertise their brand. But what does innovation really mean?

If you look for a definition of innovation on Google, it will come up with more than 300 million results. I believe that the best definition of innovation is turning an idea into a solution that adds value from a customer's perspective.

As promotional merchandise suppliers, that's exactly what we should all be striving for. If innovation is just coming up with a new product or concept, without any idea on how it benefits the customer, then inevitably that product will fail. As suppliers, we need to talk to and listen to distributors, to find out exactly what the end user is looking for. It might be that we need to innovate by improving upon an existing product, or it may be that we

need to come up with a completely new promotional product to meet the end user's needs. But either way, it all starts by striking up a conversation and 'thinking outside the box' to come up with an idea.

So, what happens then? Well we take this rough idea, refine it, experiment with it and eventually turn it into a real product that meets the customer's needs. Once the product is ready to launch, we then give our distributors the tools to effectively market it to end users.

But what if your customer's requirements are completely unique? You need a supplier you can work with, to create imaginative products that have a purpose, but are designed solely for your customer's brand. Well that's when it's time to go bespoke. Don't worry, that's not as scary, time-consuming or as costly as it sounds. At SPS, we have a dedicated team of tool-makers that can turn something from your customer's imagination, into real

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Phil Morgan is managing director of SPS



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NEW EDUCATION PROGRAMME PROMISES FLEXIBLE LEARNING

This month sees the launch of the BPMA's enhanced programme.

The BPMA education programme is launching on a new platform this month.


The new online learning platform has a modern feel and offers a simple and easy user experience that will help, support and prompt each learner throughout their course and annual access.

The BPMA's head of education and best practice, Daniela Arena said: "The BPMA have been working on this platform alongside building a new integrated CRM system and new website, and it's been a long time coming for the education programme. We have new content, more communication triggers for the learners

and a manager's area so that they can log in and see the progress and activity of their team members. I would like to encourage anyone who is interested in the education programme to visit the BPMA stand at Merchandise World for a demo."

Daniela pointed out that the programme offers exceptional value for money to business owners. It is the only UK promotional merchandise course, written by the industry for the industry.

Director general of the BPMA, Gordon Glister, outlined the importance of nurturing talent. "Everyone who runs a company knows that people are the most important asset to a business. Properly run organisations place a great

deal of emphasis on recruiting and the interview process in order to build their talent base," he said. "Unfortunately, often the investment in people stops there and with time the business is left with a dissatisfied under-performing team. The BPMA education programme, is a fantastic offering and benefit to BPMA members. The range and detail of content across several subject categories really delivers the promise that there is something in the programme for everyone. It frees manager's time up as staff can train themselves on key areas, the learners feel invested in and they become part of the education programme community too." 



TPM in detail

BPMA Members can develop their staff's industry skills on the Trained in Promotional Merchandise course (TPM). The course includes:

- Free Introductory seminar (London) Friday 8th September or Friday 6th October 2017
- Supplier factory visits – Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018
- 12 months access to the online study platform
- Mandatory content includes an introduction to the industry, screen printing, artwork, origination & proofing, and customer service
- Elective study – access to more than 75 videos and PDF content

across 14 subject categories

- New content is launched four times a year.

Categories include: product, decoration, customer service, sales, product compliance, marketing, and many more. Assessment is by an online invigilated, timed multiple-choice question exam.

For more information about the education programme and to register interest please contact daniela@bpma.co.uk or visit her on the BPMA Stand at Merchandise World 19-20 September.

What is the BPMA education programme?

The education programme is designed to empower students and promotes best practice within the industry. The programme offers a three-tiered continuous learning platform, catering for all levels of experience.

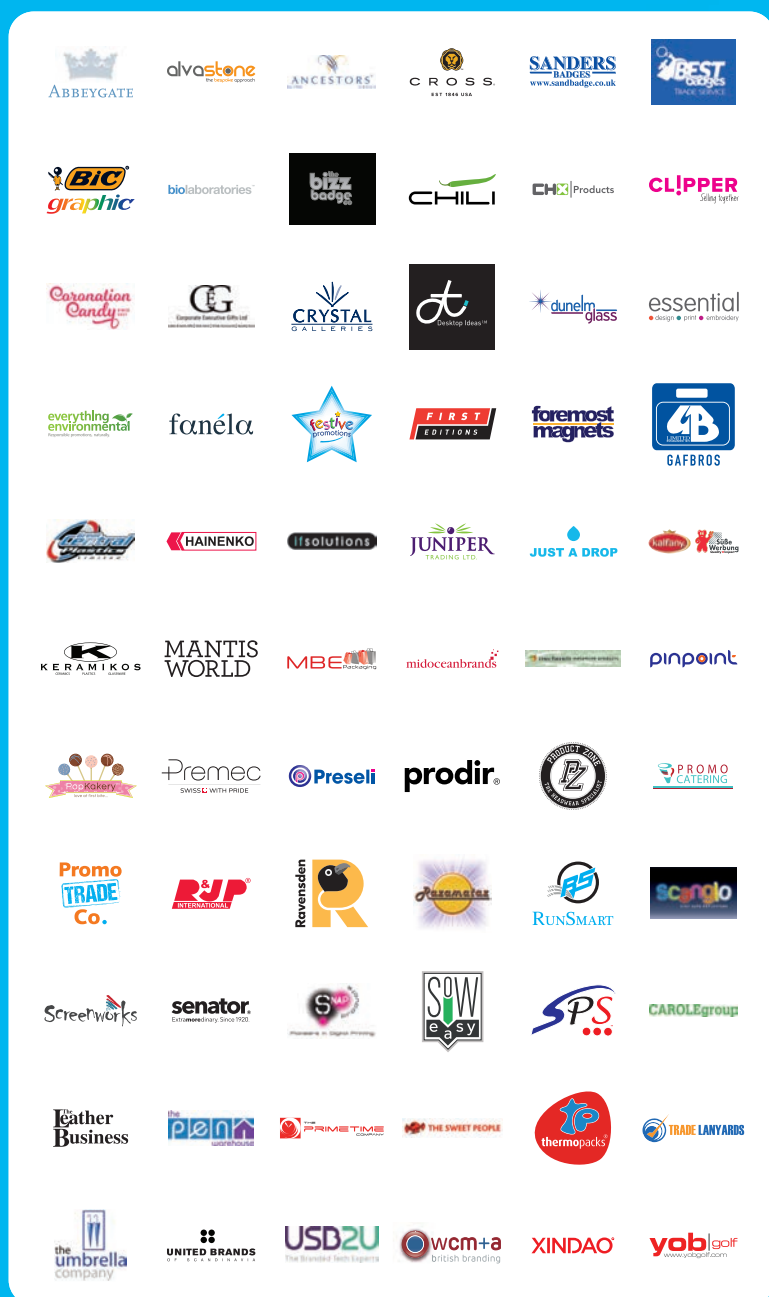
It offers 14 subject categories and there are more than 75 videos supported by short PDF reading material available for delegates to study from. While there is some mandatory content, delegates will be expected to study at each level, delegates can pick and choose videos and topics they want to study, tailoring their own professional development journey. The more credits gained, the closer the delegate is to taking an online exam and achieving one of the three qualifications.

Typically, a delegate studying at TPM level, committing to one-hour study a week can achieve the TPM qualification within three to six months.

On passing the exam, the delegate is awarded a logo to use for email signatures, business cards, and so on, and they can use the letters TPM after their name.

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For a full list download your voucher pack at www.bpma.co.uk

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OK COMPUTER

Artificial intelligence, deep learning, and robotics are all set to change our lives, and our gadgets, says **Matt Pluckrose**



Artificial intelligence (AI) has been around us for years, but we just don't always realise it.

If you turn on StreetView in Google Maps, there is a great chance that the faces of people have been blurred by AI. AI is also helping to fight crime through street security cameras automatically recognising faces to help security forces. Smart (AI) consumer webcams installed in many homes for home security also use the same technique to automatically distinguish family members from potential burglars.

Great computing power

Artificial Intelligence is a collective name for different types of machine intelligence, where algorithms or a series of computer instructions, analyse problems, solve them and learn from data.

The term AI dates to the 1950s and became common when chess computers defeated chess champ Garry

Kasparov, in 1997. As computers became more powerful, they could calculate all kinds of moves from start to finish and win.

Smart, smarter, smartest

Facial recognition uses 'Machine Learning'. These are self-learning algorithms and they can, to a certain extent, learn from the data you provide them. Let the computer see a billion cat photos and it will learn to recognise cats.

A modern smart webcam does exactly that. You put it in your house and every time it sees your daughter or son, it will ask you to confirm which family member it is. After a few days, the webcam will have learned to recognise the whole family. However, if your daughter enters the house wearing a new hat, then the webcam suddenly does not recognise her, so it uses Deep Learning computers, which can learn in a similar way to the human brain.

The 2011 Watson Supercomputer defeated the two best human champions in the TV game Jeopardy. Google's AlphaGo defeated a top player in the Asian board game Go last year. Deep Learning computers also have more serious applications. IBM Watson helps cancer research to develop better treatment methods by analysing clinical studies and is also deployed in self-propelled cars.

AI has been forecasted to be integral to the global economy with an estimated \$15-30 trillion attributable to its contribution between now and 2025. Technology which touches us all to this extent cannot be ignored and will further rapidly expand the desire and demand for AI gadgets and technology which can be tailored to marketing applications and brand enhancements.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas

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DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

How much do you know about the clients you are working with? It's time to ask a few questions, says **Mike Collins**



Regular readers will know AccountAssyst is all about member education. We love imparting our knowledge. Hopefully you can then act upon this knowledge, rather than reacting to difficult situations that could have been avoided.

We also love clichés. Clichés are an example of working smart. They 'tell it as it is' in just a few words. One of our favourite clichés that resonates in the world of debt recovery is 'Better the devil you know'.

Our previous articles have touched upon the importance of knowing who you're dealing with. When extending credit to customers, we've spoken about the essential processes of account opening forms, conducting credit checks and completing full diligence before supply.

But did you know that these same recommendations should also be put into effect in dealings with suppliers, especially when working overseas?

Our advice is to treat all supplier engagements with the same care you would a new customer.

Even though you may not be providing credit, securing an 'approved supplier set-up form', contract or similar from the outset defines what is expected of both parties. The more information you have the better, especially when encountering problems down the line.

Secure credit checks and monitor suppliers, both domestically and overseas, to constantly keep focus (particularly relevant when advancing monies up front).

Complete full due diligence and ask plenty of questions. Who are the owners, where are they from, what other interests do they have? Effectively, in who are you investing your trust, reputation and money?

There many examples of UK businesses transacting with overseas suppliers, that initially

appeared to be reputable, only to subsequently find that they were in breach of human rights, or even worse.

On a more direct level, suppose the goods do not turn up, or when they do, they are sub-standard and not as ordered. We have all heard the other fatal industry stories, and yet some still choose to take risks for that extra small margin?

If you can only deal with a supplier, then seek to manage risk. Limit exposure by reducing transactions into smaller chunks or advance smaller sums up front, with balances only upon satisfactory delivery.

Chasing extra profit can very easily end in disaster and the loss of a customer. The time and cost of pursuing or remedying overseas supplier problems are notoriously draining and frustrating. As we said, try to act on the information to hand, rather than react to a problem.

We love the maxim 'better the devil you know'. We'd like to think we have a good relationship with the BPMA membership and therefore they won't mind us making them 'the devils' in this context. The point is that the BPMA members include more than enough UK and European based quality proven suppliers to allow all dealings to be kept 'in-country' and negate the risk of overseas exposure in the pursuit of slight marginal gains. Members conform to a Code of Conduct and there is comeback under UK law if the contract between parties is correctly formed.

We've all spent lots of time, effort and money building safer relationships with reputable proven companies. Using these links to work together to reduce industry risk is much better than chasing risk-filled profits. (The Blind Side case provides all the evidence you need to confirm this to be the case). **PM**





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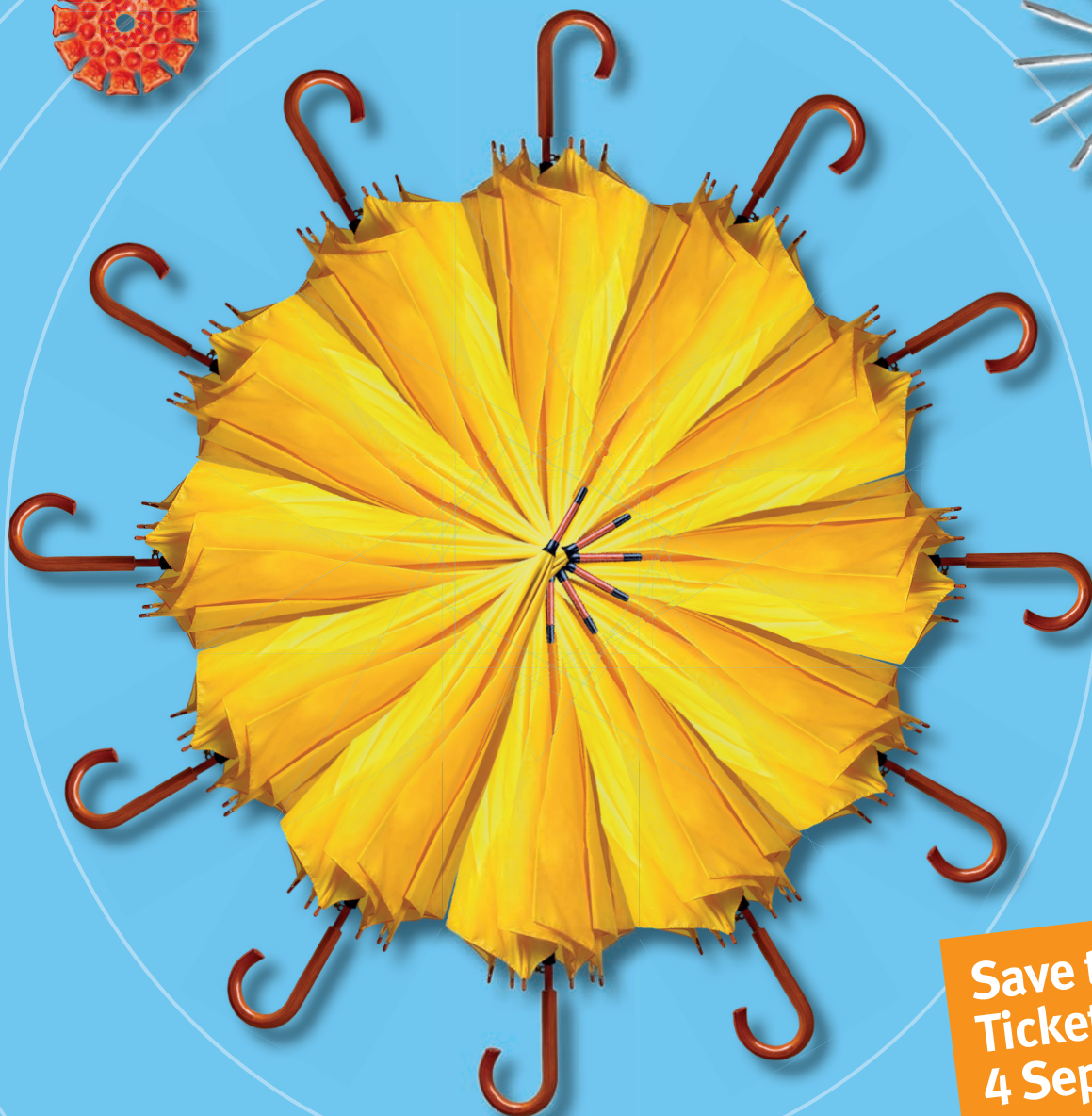
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BPMA Christmas lunch returns to Guoman

The BPMA is delighted to announce that it will be holding the popular and well-attended Christmas Lunch on Friday 15th December from 12-4.30 pm and welcomes all industry members to join it at this prestigious event.

After two years away from the much-loved venue, the event will be held back at the Guoman Tower Hotel, St Katherine's Dock, London. The afternoon starts with a Welcome Drinks reception, followed by a 3-course meal, a goody bag full of gifts kindly supplied by the event sponsors, and entertainment will also be provided, alongside a charity raffle. Not only is this a great way to network with industry colleagues, it is a perfect opportunity to reward and thank your staff for their hard work, as well as thanking customers.

Individual tickets are priced at £90+vat, with a table of 10 tickets at £850+vat. For more event details please contact the BPMA team on 020 3875 7942.



New guide to sourcing merchandise for exhibitors

The BPMA has been working with FACE TIME the educational and research arm of the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) to launch a new guide to merchandise for exhibitors.

BPMA director general Gordon Glenister was also present at the launch at the AEO Event Masterclass which was held at the NEC. There were more than 450 delegates listening to a range of speakers. The guide encourages organisers to buy from BPMA members.

BPMA launches new industry standard

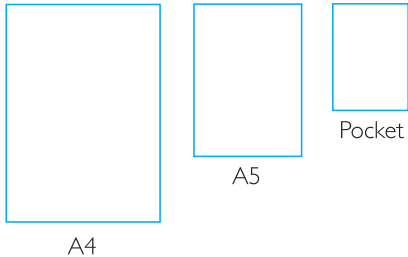
September's Merchandise World will see the launch of the new BPMA industry service level standard. This has been a long-time coming and involved more than 100 distributors and suppliers.

The plan is to encourage BPMA members to work to the highest level of best practice through the enquiry, order and delivery stages, said director general Gordon Glenister.

"This has arisen because a number of distributors have been frustrated by service and quality levels dropping, and suppliers with a lack of information provided by distributors at enquiry level at a time when lead times are becoming squeezed more than ever. This also re-affirms why throughout the supply chain businesses should be buying from professional companies backed by a code of conduct and standard."

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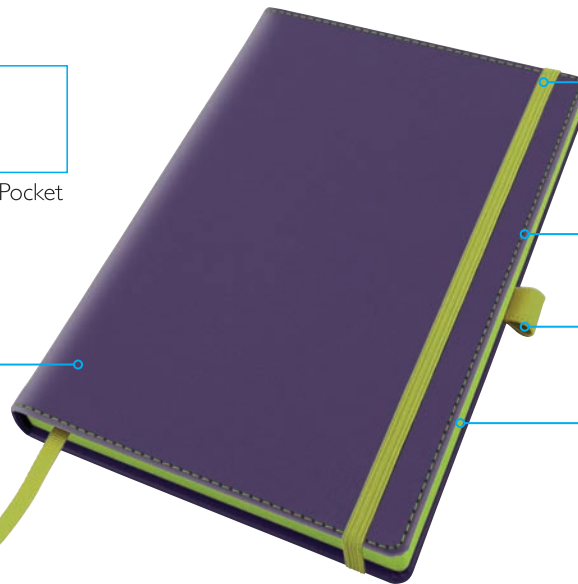


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- Select from 22 colours



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Select stitch option

- Choose from 22 colours

Select pen loop option

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Select paper option

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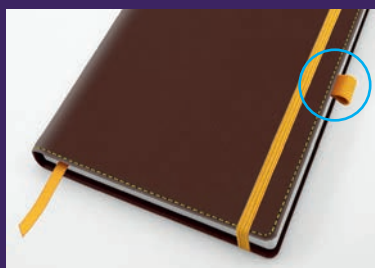
2: Choose elastic width and colour



3: Specify ribbon and colour



4: Do you want stitched edge?



5: Select pen loop and colour



6: Paper edge colour options



BPMA CALENDAR

19-20 September

Merchandise World, NAEC, Stoneleigh

19 September

BPMA Awards, Chesford Grange

28 September

Golf Aid, The Bedford Golf Club

2-6 October

Promotional Products Week

4 October

A night of Luxury Brands, Conrad Hotel, St James London

4-5 October

Festival of Marketing, Tobacco Dock, London

10 October

Promotional Showcase, Marriott Hotel, Leicester

11 October

Promotional Showcase, Village Hotel, Solihull

17 November

BPMA Member Seminar, CIPR offices, Russell Square, London

2018

9-11 January

PSI Dusseldorf

14-18 January

PPAI Las Vegas 2018

30 January

BPMA Education Day

January 31-1 February

Merchandise World 2018, The Wing, Silverstone



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

Ten from two



Richard Mack

Managing Director
RT Promotions

What are you reading at the minute?

The latest one from Lee Child - totally addicted to all of his novels

What's on your iPod?

A mash-up - my 500 greatest hits - plus enjoying re-visiting Pink Floyd's back catalogue

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

Don't put a blue print on to a yellow background - it'll bite

Cappuccino or Latte?

Flat white please

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

Sunday mornings on the sofa, bacon and egg sarnie and tea, with Lewis Hamilton on pole

Best place in the world?

Spa Francorchamps (F1) with a cold beer and Lewis on pole and the threat of intermittent rain

If you could change one thing?

The offside rule

How would you like to be remembered?

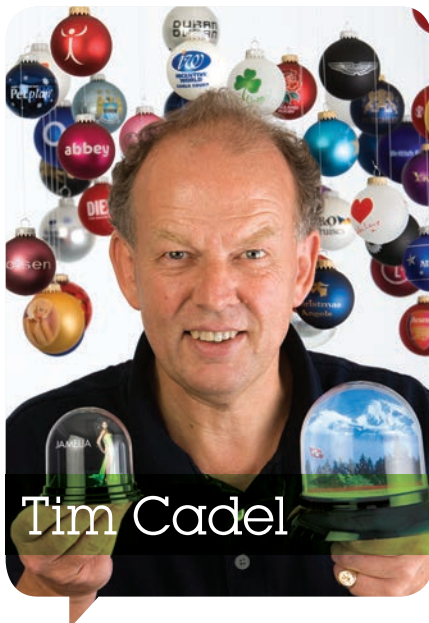
How does he manage to be FIRST out of the taxi, but LAST up to the bar?

What are you proudest of?

My two kids of course....

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

Time to be serious - losing my mum to Alzheimer's was pretty tough and raw. I got through it by love for her, and with the support of friends and family



Tim Cadel

managing director,
**Co-founder,
Festive Promotions**

What are you reading at the minute?

Fifty Places to Bike to before you die

What's on your iPod?

I don't have one but my vinyl collection includes the likes of Pink Floyd, Genesis, Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder, Phil Collins, Van Morrison, Dire Straits, Supertramp, and Gipsy Kings

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

Never give up, believe in your vision, and keep going

Cappuccino or Latte?

A nice cuppa tea (Clipper Fairtrade please)

What makes you feel warm and fluffy?

My teddy bear - now 61 years young!

Best place in the world?

I like the seaside and sunshine so anywhere that combines the two, from the Abel Tasman National Park to Zanzibar

If you could change one thing?

Bank marketing - an oxymoron if ever there was one

How would you like to be remembered?

Mr Baubles

What are you proudest of?

My daughters Emma and Lucy, and founding Business Baubles (now Festive Promotions) in 2003

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

The loss of family and friends, particularly those who have gone far too soon. We owe it to them and ourselves to try to live life to the full

David Tauber Passes Away

We are sad to hear of the passing away of David Tauber after a battle with cancer.



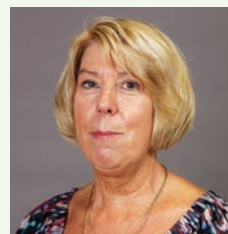
Many will have known David from Totnoll Promotions, which he started in 1977 and then sold 20 years later.

David was fascinated with the Apple Mac in the mid-80s and recognised its leading-edge capabilities. At Totnoll, he developed software to run the business more efficiently. Having sold the company in 1998 at the age of 67, instead of retiring, he decided to develop the software into a saleable product for promotional distributors.

Many large distributors have used and continue to use the software to this day. This second career was more of a hobby than a business for David, allowing him to indulge in his passion, keep in contact with many of his friends from the industry and offer distributors software to improve the running of their business.

Obituary - Sue Schroder

Crystal galleries has passed on news of the passing of Sue Schroder



on 2 August after a brief illness. Sue was known to many people throughout the industry and had been a valuable member of the Crystal Galleries team until she retired in 2014.

Her contribution during the 19 years that she worked for Crystal Galleries was beyond measure and she made many friends with suppliers and distributors alike.



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