



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

What can our industry do to
be more sustainable **P18**



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WORLD **P28 >**



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WELCOME



It's show time again. Merchandise World is just around the corner at a fabulous new venue in Milton Keynes on 11 September, and this time we are introducing the new Eco World, enabling suppliers to

show the latest sustainable products in their range. Suppliers, be sure you know all the eco credentials regarding your products as distributors will be asking.

Going deeper into sustainability, I recently reached out to some of our members asking what they are doing regarding sustainability within their businesses. I was pleased with the level of response and that many are already on the journey making improvements towards a more sustainable future.

I'd like to hear about everyone's news, views, initiatives and achievements in this area for us to share in future issues of the magazine and the new Product Media newsletters. I was very impressed

with BIC Graphic following a visit to its factory in Tarragona, Spain - you can read more about in on page 46. The factory runs on 100% sustainable energy and BIC pens are recycled into outdoor furniture for use in schools.

As an industry, we need to look at the entire life cycle of the products we sell, from the raw materials to the end of life options, alongside the sustainability of the businesses that manufacture and supply them.

Come and talk to the BPMA at the show as we'd love to catch up. We'll also be running a few sessions on the stand and this year we have a special member-only lounge. You can also meet the BPMA team the night before the Merchandise World show and connect with other suppliers and distributors. For more details please go to bpma.co.uk/events

BPMA members are also welcome to attend the association's AGM which will commence at 5pm on 11 September, straight after the show ends. Learn more about what the BPMA

has been up to from our Chairman, Angela Wagstaff, on page 49.

Moving on to research and the BPMA has been working with company CEOs and industry associations across Europe on a collaborative research piece looking at the size and structure of the European promotional products market. Find out more on page 8.

I have also visited PPAI to look at how we can collaborate with our friends across the pond, as well as Canada and Australia. In these uncertain economic and political times for the UK, it's important that we cement and enhance the UK's position in the global promotional merchandise arena.

I'd also like to remind BPMA members of the £400 discount we have negotiated with the Institute of Export for those members requiring a Brexit Healthcheck. Contact me for more details.

We look forward to seeing you all in Milton Keynes for Merchandise World.

Jon Birrell
BPMA CEO

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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European distribution to Brexit-proof GeigerBTC



Following recent global contract wins GeigerBTC has opened a distribution centre and office in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Ideally located for goods arriving from all points of the compass, the centre will act as a hub for deliveries throughout Europe and the Middle East.

The office will also serve as a central point for customs clearance. The location inside the European Union simplifies compliance with value-added tax requirements for EU customers outside the UK, according to Geiger.

Frank Murphy, managing director,

GeigerBTC, said: "Having our own distribution centre and office in Rotterdam enables us to further improve services to our many clients with operations in EMEA. This also protects our clients and us from any potential consequences of Brexit, if and when it happens."

Jo-an Lantz, president and CEO of Geiger, said: "Clients are demanding global services for their merchandising programmes, with local marketing support. The ability to provide a global supply chain is critical, and the new Rotterdam location supports our international strategy."

Personnel changes at PF Concept

PF Concept has promoted Rob Durant as its new sales director within the UK team.

Durant started his career with the company 14 years ago and has worked his way up through the company's sales structure. He will report directly to CEO Phil Morgan and work alongside the other UK directors at PF Concept UK.

The appointment comes as the Blackpool-based company's sales and marketing director, Tracey Bowen leaves the business after 13 years. Bowen took the decision to leave the company after 18 months of weekly travelling to Blackpool following PF Concept's acquisition of SPS in December 2017. She is seeking opportunities closer to home.

PF Concept UK has also announced the departure of Richard Hope-Jones, the business development director based at its site in Banbury. Hope-Jones joined the company in 2015 when it acquired High Profile.



Impamark celebrates 50 in Spanish style



To mark 50 years in business, Essex-based merchandise distributor business, Impamark flew staff to Spain for a weekend Fiesta celebration. 2019 sees the 50th Anniversary of

Impamark as a family-run business. The award-winning merchandise company has been based in Burnham on Crouch since 1975, providing promotional products to clients including University

of Aberdeen, Essex Wildlife Trust, Harrow School, University College London, University of St Andrews, Rotary Watches, Scottish Scouts, Sandhurst Trust and Queen's Club.

Formed in North West London in 1969, founder David Thurgood and his wife Anne ran the company until retirement in 2006 when their daughter Nicky Crisp took over as managing director. She set up Impamark's second office in Spain where they are currently based.

Impamark has been a member of the Advantage Catalogue Group for several years and has consistently been ranked in the Sourcing City top 25 Distributor of the Year Awards. It has been an accredited members of the BPMA for more than 10 years.

In the past 18 months, the company has moved to a more eco-friendly stance, including launching its Happy Turtle brand to reflect this positive change of direction.

Crisp said: "We have a great team, both in UK and Spain, with a wealth of industry knowledge and experience. I would like to thank our fantastic supplier base and loyal clients, many of whom we have worked with consistently for over 20 years."



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



World record is in the bag

A new Guinness World Record set by eco bag retailer, Cotton Bag Co, enlisting the help of Wiltshire primary school children to decorate the World's Largest Jute Bag on International Plastic Bag Free Day.

Cotton Bag Co's record-breaking jute bag measured at 22.5m wide by 14.6m high, more than double the size of the previous record.

Students from Fitzmaurice School helped teams from Cotton Bag Co and digital marketing agency, Varn, to decorate the bag with messages and images promoting sustainability.

Managing director, Jon Marling said: "We make every effort to figure out how we can support sustainable solutions using environmentally friendly materials that are easy to reuse and recycle such as jute, cotton, or paper. It has been a really fun project and we are proud to have accomplished it."

This record follows a previous record that was obtained by sister company Paper Bag Co in 2015, which saw it create the World's Largest Paper Bag.

The bag is to be cut up into smaller squares and given to the children so that they can make their own smaller bag or pencil case from the material.



New site strengthens BabyUSB

Tech promo specialist BabyUSB has relocated to larger premises in Slough to boost its offering of in-house branding, warehousing and express services.



The new HQ gives BabyUSB a dedicated branding and warehouse facility, and the company now holds UK stock of its most popular USB drives, including the light-up logo and eco collections, as well as power banks, twisters and cables.

Kashif Siddiquei, managing director, BabyUSB said the move was exciting for the company. "Our new headquarters gives us more flexibility to service our customers with quick turn-around and lower MOQs than ever before, so now is the perfect time to take advantage of our fully-compliant, branded USBs and other tech-based promotional solutions."

The company also recently celebrated becoming a member of the BPMA.

Women fly the flag for Lionesses

An all-female team created a special St George's flag to support England's Lionesses in their World Cup game against Norway.

The team at Northern Flags designed, printed and hemmed the three metre flag before hoisting it up an eight metre pole outside the print company's offices in Leeds. The flag flew for the duration of the World Cup outside the company's offices.

Claire Taylforth, general manager, said: "Northern Flags is proud that 70% of its workforce are women, which is highly unusual in the print and manufacturing industry. After watching the women's team fly through to the quarter final, the girls wanted to show their support and use their extensive design and print knowledge."

Using '#Lionesses' as inspiration, a Lioness's head matched to the England's away kit was placed behind the England Cross, alongside the tag line 'Lionesses. Pride of Britain'.

This isn't the first time the company has flown the flag for an England Team. For the World Cup last year, a waistcoat-inspired flag was made, in homage to that worn by England manager Gareth Southgate.



Print technique brightens up bottles

TheMagicTouch is offering its image transfer process to decorate and personalise trendy vacuum bottles that many consumers are using to cut down on their single use plastic consumption.

Using the latest in white-toner technology together with the established CPM transfer paper, full colour designs can be applied using a traditional mug press. The process, unlike sublimation, is able to register white and therefore full colour imaging is possible on any colour bottle. These increasingly popular products can now be decorated with the added marketing advantage of a minimum of one order.

The bottle style design incorporates an insulated food grade stainless steel layer with an insulated liner that enables the bottle to maintain hot and cold drinks for up to 12 hours.

Jim Nicol, managing director, said: "These products make real sense and will be part of our lives for many, many



years to come. Until now the choice of technology available to decorate different colour mugs and drinks bottles has been restricted either to traditional screen/pad printing or more recently using UV printers. However, what we offer is an affordable, quick and very durable solution assisting customers to increase the range of products possible using the TMT/ OKI white-toner technology."

Waste not want not with Pigra

Pagani Pens brand Pigra has launched Pigra Vita, a plastic pen made completely from the company's own recycled production waste.

With four pen models and three services packages to choose from, Pigra was launched by the Italian company in January to provide a simple, fast and stylish way for companies to get their brand into everyone's hands.

Pigra Vita pairs perfectly with another eco-sustainability milestone, the Floating Ball Lead Free refill from Pagani Pens' component manufacturer Premec.

... as Prodir opts for stone age

Swiss pen brand Prodir is now offering its QS01, QS20 and QS30 models in a new variation called Stone, featuring casings produced with a mineral-enriched material to reduce the amount of plastic by 60%.

The minerals also make the writing instruments heavier in the hand. The high quality look and feel is further emphasised through standard options such as metal clips and select varnished casing colours like metallic Graphite, Silver, Copper, Gold as well as Coal, Red Quartz, Cobalt and Dolomite White.



Training day is one for the diary

Galpeg organised a training day to improve product and branding knowledge among members of its Associate group.

The special event, hosted in July by the Promotional Supplier Partnership (PSP), was staged at the Cambridge headquarters of notebook and diary specialist Plusfile, which is home to the company's dedicated branding and warehouse facility.

As well as the chance to pick up new ideas and see the latest best-selling products from the 12-strong supplier group, Associates also got the chance to try their hand at blind-

embossing their very own notebooks.

Richard Andrews of Promotional Works said: "It was fascinating to talk to each supplier and see new products and services. I've got some really good special offers and innovative products to propose to my clients off the back of this event."

Galpeg MD Paul Green said: "I'm really grateful to PSP for hosting this event for us. We had a great turn-out on the day and received really positive feedback from Associates and suppliers alike. It was definitely one not to miss."

Expansion for Eat My Logo

Chorley-based Eat My Logo is set to move into a new home in September 2019 following an extensive refit of a new 8,600 square foot premises it has leased.

Due to the growth of the branded baked goods business, the 13-strong team has outgrown its current 2,700 square foot bakery.

Eat My Logo was launched five years ago by Andrew and Ruth Poar after a local business came into Ruth's celebration cake shop asking for logo branded cupcakes. The company now manufactures tens of thousands of logo-ed cakes and biscuits each week that are sent to hundreds of business locations across the UK and Ireland.

Andrew Poar said: "Our business is growing fast and orders are getting bigger and bigger so we are really excited about the move to our new premises. As the new site is three times larger than our current premises it gives us massive scope to continue the business expansion."



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BRITAIN SECOND IN €15BN EUROPEAN MERCHANDISE MARKET

The promotional product industry is booming according to the first research project of its kind investigating the European market.

An analysis of expenditure on advertising over the past few years has shown that from year to year, companies in Europe are spending more money on promotional items. In 2018, €15 billion was invested into promotional products in Europe.

Explaining the project, Michael Freter, managing director of Promotional Product Services Institute, said: "It all started when a meeting of industry CEOs and membership associations from across Europe came to the conclusion that there was no reliable indication of the size and structure of this industry on a Europe-wide level.

"These like-minded companies and industry bodies, including the BPMA,

decided to collaborate and invested in the first research project of its kind."


The research shows that Great Britain is in second place in the top 10 with its expenditure on promotional products. The research also discovered that companies here invest €1.76bn in promotional items.

In Britain, 30% of the expenditure is carried out by small companies with up to nine employees, with 23% accounted for by companies in the size category from 250 employees. In a country comparison, the per capita expenditure of €54 is substantially below the average. Of this, €11 per person in employment goes on textiles, with €9 on electronics and €8 on office items.

Commenting on the results, Jon Birrell, CEO of the BPMA, said: "With all the worry and concern over Brexit, it's encouraging to see the importance of

the UK market in relation to the rest of Europe. I have also been delighted to hear some success stories from UK suppliers seeing a significant growth in exports."

The highest-selling countries are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden. In 2018, the companies in these top 10 countries in Europe invested just under €12bn in promotional products, making up 80% of the total European promotional product market.

To view the full research results in more detail, head over to the BPMA website www.bpma.co.uk, log in and go to the Resource Centre. If you have forgotten your login details, don't worry, just call the BPMA on 01372 371184 to confirm your member username or reset your password. 

EUROPEAN TOP 10 MARKET SIZE

UNITED KINGDOM



more than 50 employees

GERMANY



POLAND



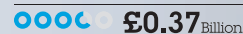
NETHERLANDS



FRANCE



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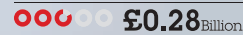
BELGIUM



SPAIN



AUSTRIA



*Exchange rate (€1.12) correct as of 11.06.2019

BPMA secures PSI grant funding

The BPMA is able to inform suppliers that the Department of International Trade (DIT) has awarded the trade association with 18 grants of £1,500 for eligible suppliers wishing to exhibit at PSI 2020.

BPMA head of education, Daniela Arena said: "I am delighted that the BPMA has yet again secured grant funding of £27,000 for the UK promotional merchandise industry. The BPMA is an accredited Trade Challenge Partner for the Department for International Trade's Tradeshow Access Programme. Each year we bid for funding to support suppliers and to help them export their products and services with the ultimate objective of increasing the exporting potential of our industry here in the UK."

The £1,500 grants are specifically for the PSI 2020 Trade show in Dusseldorf and are available to eligible SMEs who are primarily new to export or do not have a long history of exporting.



The grant can go towards the cost of the stand, exhibition graphics and marketing material. Grants are available to BPMA members and non-members.

She added: "When combined with the packages offered by PSI to exhibit at the show, particularly the first time exhibitor package, this grant makes the much-talked about PSI show a worthy

investment for any supplier looking to build upon their export business."

The BPMA will work with the grant participants to support them in export growth with the build up to the show and offer support during the show. For information on the funding or the PSI show, please contact daniela@bpma.co.uk



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IN THE HOT SEAT

IAN ROSEWELL, PROCUREMENT INTERNATIONAL

After more than 38 years at the helm of one of the UK's leading rewards and incentive fulfilment businesses, Ian Rosewell, CEO of Procurement International is stepping down.

The family firm, founded by his father Victor Rosewell, has been a mainstay of the UK rewards, recognition and incentives industry. In fact, Victor was instrumental in the set-up of the BPMA in 1965.

Ian Rosewell will not be totally lost to the industry. He is becoming non-executive chairman and handing over executive responsibilities to general manager successor, Andy Bell.

"Over the last couple of years, I have been fine tuning what the business structure will look like once I retire," says Rosewell. "I want there to be a seamless transition."

Retirement presents the opportunity to re-engage a love of black and white photography with a Leica camera, as well as spending time with family and a new dog, doing more motorcycle rides around Europe and getting his plane back in the air.

Product Media caught up with him to rewind the past four decades.

Q. What have been the main challenges over 40 years?

A. The biggest challenge is managing our more than 150 vendor supply chain particularly as forecasting demand is something of a black art. Managing stock levels is challenging and that's why our purchasing team has been our most heavy area of investment, to help us identify and maintain supply of the latest must-have rewards in a portfolio of 5,000 products.

Q. What are the biggest changes during that time?

A. Where do I start? The business operates globally which has meant that it has had to try and be as robust and adaptable as possible to the numerous seismic shifts in the macro economic and political landscapes. There have also been several notable technological changes – the most obvious being the internet. The world and our marketplace became a lot more accessible overnight. It also became more visible which has led to many new entrants and an increase in competition. What has not changed is that our clients need a good service.

Q. What are you proudest of in terms of the business?

A. There have been many challenges, but by being innovative and agile we have continued

to grow from strength to strength in the supply of premium merchandise to the rewards and recognition industry and now regularly ship to programme participants in more than 125 countries annually.

Apart from long-term success and reputation, it would be the culture that I have created. We truly practice what we preach in that we have a very long-serving and loyal back bone of staff that helped me build the business. I am also exceptionally proud of all my work colleagues, who are a dedicated bunch who have risen to any challenge we face.

Q. How have you ensured that the business remains in good shape?

A. It was a forward-thinking decision to future proof our business by investing more than £300,000 in new IT-software. We are now seeing the benefits with more efficient processes and data benefiting all our customers.

Secondly, we took early action on Brexit and within six months Procurement International BV in the Netherlands was formed. Our wholly-owned subsidiary commenced operation early in 2018 fulfilling all the premium brands we currently offer to intra-EU participants to ensure continuity of service no matter what Brexit brings us. This was another substantial investment but one we considered necessary to protect our scheme participants domiciled in the EU.

Q. How do you think the merchandise industry will change?

A. I don't think that the industry itself will change too much however I do expect consumers' demands and expectations to continue to put pressure on suppliers to be able to deliver solutions very quickly. In our personal lives we all benefit from retailers promising next day delivery and I expect this to cross over into business expectations as it becomes the 'norm'. PM

40 years young

Procurement International Ltd celebrated 40 years since Victor Rosewell started the company with an afternoon at the 'Battle of the Proms' event in Highclere Castle, the setting for Downton Abbey. Along with the music, there were displays by the Red Devils parachute team, and a Spitfire, followed by birthday cake and a glass of fizz.



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ASK CLIVE

With Merchandise World taking place this month, **Clive Allcott** advises you to plan to get the most from the event



As a seasoned attendee and exhibitor, it's only fair to pass on my top tips for getting the most out of your visit. You have one day, so use it wisely.

1. Spend your time researching before the show and categorise into sectors and targets. Work out what suppliers are there and make your appointments - don't expect to be able to 'grab' them on the day. Show your boss what you have timetabled and that you've really thought about your reasons for attending and get their feedback.
2. Network, network, network. There's never a better place to get your face known and build 'brand you' than being surrounded by your peers. Remember, people buy people - your enthusiasm will win them.
3. Prepare for each meeting you have scheduled. Is it



just a 'getting to know you' meeting, or are you looking for alternative suppliers, more technical advice, education on processes and new techniques? Bring live quotations along.

4. Make sure you're positioning your business as best it can be. What accreditations do you have that should be displayed? What Eco products do you sell, How do you make people realise you are a safe pair of hands? Our company thinks hard

about what we want our stand to convey. What's going to make visitors stop and interact? Clothing is always our focus and I make sure that I am up to speed on all new developments before the show.

5. Break down who you're aiming at by category. Each area needs its own specialised approach and you to be knowledgeable and eloquent about that market. Clothing represents up to 30% of the promotional

market, so think what you can offer each sector in this field.

6. Have your supplier's spend figures by category to hand. Nothing impresses a supplier more than the business that is available for them.
7. Make sure you're selling your business as best it can be. What accreditations do you have that should be displayed? How do you make people realise you are a safe pair of hands with a solid track record?
8. Follow up with suppliers that you're interested in getting to know better, or invite them to your offices to meet colleagues who will also be interested in the product range/s.

Mostly, make sure you enjoy the day. It will fly by and you need to use every second to your advantage.

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A hand holding a smartphone against a mountain background. The hand is wearing a red sleeve and a white perforated wristband. The smartphone screen shows a photo of a lake and mountains, with 'HDR' and 'PHOTO' settings visible. The background is a blurred mountain landscape.

Yeah, nature's great, but...

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RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

What is merchandise doing for sustainability?
We asked, and the industry answered

Hardly a week goes by without another announcement about how companies, governments and organisations are seeking to leave less of a footprint on our planet.

Intercontinental Hotels recently pledged to remove the 200 million miniature plastic toiletries it uses annually, by 2021.

Brewers, Carlsberg and Guinness are just two of the beer companies who are getting rid of plastic rings that hold four-packs together.

Supermarket Waitrose has said that its popular free hot drinks promotion is now only available if you bring your own cup, to cut down on single cup waste.

And don't forget the plastic bag tax that since 2015 has seen single use plastic bag consumption in the UK plummet by 90% - and it's still falling.

Let's just remind ourselves of why this is important.

Globally the production and use of plastic continues to rocket - 381 million tonnes were produced in 2015 compared with just two

million tonnes in 1950. Much of this is single use and not recycled - it can take up to 1,000 years for plastic to decompose in landfill. It enters our oceans and pollutes them. It is also a colossal waste of a finite resource.

As the examples above show, the world is waking up to the problem. But what about the merchandise industry? It is a sector that could be accused of aiding and abetting consumer's love affair with cheap, disposable plastic, with its own use of this versatile, but increasingly demonised material.

What is the sector doing?

We asked, and the answer seems to be 'quite a lot'. While the following examples are not exhaustive, they give some idea of how merchandise companies are rising to the challenge with new products and processes.

But before we all start patting ourselves on the back, it is worth bearing in mind that this is just the start of what could be a paradigm shift in the way that the industry operates. Read

Andrew Langley's thoughts on page 24 for an insight into some of the tough questions ahead.

However, the longest journey starts with one step, and the BPMA is taking the lead with a new Sustainability Group established to act as a forum to debate these issues. Anyone interested in finding out more is urged to contact jon.birrell@bpma.co.uk.

Growing demand

As head of the Advantage catalogue group, Lawrence Angelow has noted a growing interest in sustainable products, and has been printing on responsibly sourced paper with biodegradable inks for a number of years. He has enhanced the Eco section this year and it kicks off the catalogue by appearing at the front. Products are also changing, he says.

"We have dropped plastic bags from our selection, replacing with paper, and also bottled water as it is supplied in a single use plastic bottle. I anticipate that our Eco section will grow again next year as awareness



from the same supplier which has full FSC and PEFC certification to prove a responsible supply chain.

Meanwhile, Boosters has chucked the plastic with its recyclable and reusable Tin-It range of UK sourced and manufactured confectionery. Tin-It features a selection of local and well-known UK manufactured brands such as Walker's Nonsuch Toffees, Swizzels Retro Mix, Fox's mints and fruits, Furniss Cornish biscuits, and Cornish clotted cream fudge.

and product availability is heightened."

AMT Marketing says there has been a 20% increase in eco products and a massive shift away from the single use promotional items or plastic cups which ends up in landfill. In view of this change in customer demand, the company has decided to build a specific website to explain a large range of eco promotional products.

Green initiatives

More and more merchandise companies are seeing the value of 'going green'. In 2018, Firebrand Promotions instituted Project Green in recognition of the developing business demands and requirements around the environment. The business pledged to stock more eco-friendly and sustainable products and to practise what it preached by using these sorts of products for its own giveaways and marketing activities.

Firebrand's showcase event, AWOM3, in April this year had a specifically green focus, says Paul Oakley, sales and marketing director. "We welcomed over 100 clients to our AWOM3 customer innovation event at Mercedes Benz World. The theme was 'Going Greener' with all suppliers tasked with considering and presenting the latest sustainable product and branding solutions."

The next edition of the industry's own show, Merchandise World, on 11 September, also has a sustainable theme with a new element in Eco World, showcasing the best in green products and practices.

One exhibitor, MidOcean Brands has nominated certain products Greener Choice. These are items that meet a number of criteria such as being made from recycled materials, sustainable or biodegradable materials, or with natural materials such as wood, bamboo and cork.

Plastic free

Plastic may be a dirty word for some clients, but it doesn't have to be. There are biodegradable products out there, some that are quite surprising, such as Xoopar's Mr Bio Cable from Desktop Ideas, a 3-in-1 charger that is also recyclable.

Bags are one of the biggest problems in merchandise, but Oversolve has just launched a bag made from 100% potato starch, which is like a polythene bag without any polythene. It is 100% compostable and a great alternative to the plastic bag.

Of course, not all merchandise is plastic. Briman member WCM&A not only uses hardwoods for badges, merchandise and awards, but ensures that these come

Logistics

With transport accounting for a great deal of the carbon footprint of any product, a more sustainable approach to logistics is being offered by many businesses. Preseli is committed to keeping the environmental impact of its activities to a minimum, while continuing to provide a quick, reliable, competitive and quality service. This includes using Carbon Neutral air courier services and offering the option of sea freight alternatives.

The courier, UPS, calculates transportation CO₂ emissions, that Preseli counterbalances via various verified emission reduction projects around the world including the Garcia River Forest project in the US, landfill gas projects in China and Colombia, and other projects involved in reforestation, wastewater treatment and methane destruction.

Unnecessary packaging

Another bête noire of those in search of green nirvana is excessive packaging. All of WCM&A's name and promotional badges are sent out using completely plastic free packaging, which is certainly unique in the UK, and probably the world, says managing director Simon Adam. The company has developed recycled card packaging that can itself be recycled.

"All other badge suppliers use some sort of poly bagging and it's completely, totally and absolutely unnecessary and simply ends up in landfill. We're talking millions of name and promotional badges supplied in the UK every year from either UK or overseas manufacturers and everyone else poly bags them."

Fleqs has also been focused on removing single use plastics where possible since the turn of the year in 2018. This included no longer offering cellophane wrapping as default, which has removed an estimated 10,000m² of single use plastic from the production process.

Gilt Edged has also stopped individually bagging branded clothing to significantly reduce its plastic usage. It is also asking its sales team to reduce their paper usage by 75% by the end of the year.

Factory production

Many merchandise suppliers are recognising the improvements to be made in their production facilities. Pen company, Senator has a long-standing

sustainability standpoint. As well as designing all pens to take refills and introducing biobased plastics, the entire electrical energy for its 20,000m² plant in Gross Bieberau Germany has been obtained ecologically from renewable raw materials for years – the only company in the industry to do so.

WCM&A's factory aims to be as sustainable as possible and is assessed every year through ISO14001 accreditation. All heating comes from a biomass boiler using pellets made from waste material from the pallet industry. A new 465m² extension will be completely LED lit.

CHX recently completed the installation of solar panels on its factory, cutting the amount of energy taken from Grid to manufacture. So far this year, it has had 12 complete days when it has been totally energy self-sufficient.

Closed loop manufacturing has been introduced with the recent introduction of a machine, that takes all waste from the manufacturing process, regrinds it and puts it straight back into the production process within 45 seconds.

Also, in the West Country, PenCarrie has installed solar panels as well as adopting a 'zero-to-landfill' policy. Last year it sent 90,552kg of waste for processing. 79,887kg was recycled and 10,685kg was used for RDF fuel (Refuse-derived fuel) to make electricity. The company harvests rainwater for vehicle washing and last year, re-used 289,620 cardboard boxes, meaning 347,544kg of cardboard didn't go straight to waste.

Reuse it

Trophies and awards company Special EFX works extensively in aluminium of which 70% is recycled metal. The company then employs a number of different finishes, such as nickel or gold plate to create dazzling effects. It makes innovative use of recycled plastic, bottles and remnant metals for manufacturing award components and complete awards or plaques.

Plush manufacturer, Ravensden is committed to reducing its environmental impact both within UK operations and manufacturing overseas. It has held ISO-14001 since 2011 and since July, all of its plush uses recycled PET polyester stuffing. It has also now removed all plastic beads from plush ranges.



What's new?

Necessity is the mother of invention, and merchandise companies are innovating with alternative products. Bagco currently has a range of recycled cotton, which is made from recycled cotton and rPET (recycled plastic bottles). All samples are sent in paper bags with minimal packaging for orders – one cardboard box and this is the box that the goods are packed in from the factories. The company also makes a donation to Plastic Oceans for every recycled bag sold.

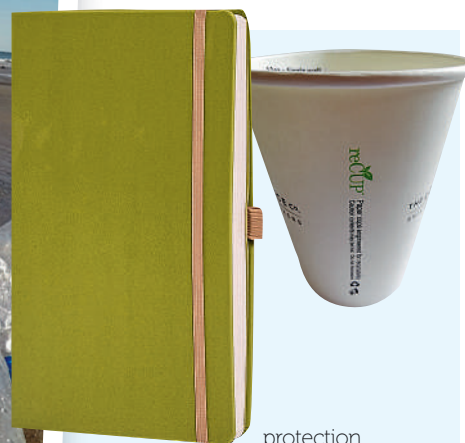
It's not really new, but Dunelm Glass is promoting a range of glass bottles as classy alternatives to plastic. They can be branded and are one of the original recyclable products, either through direct reuse as in milk and beer bottles, or for other bottles, or building materials.

Cupprint has developed reCUP, an innovative cup made to go through standard recycling with paper and card and not a specialist waste stream. The reCup Double Wall was awarded AAA certification by the Institute cyclos-HTP in conjunction with the German Green Dot scheme – the first and only paper cup to achieve this classification. Cupprint business development manager,



Edward Pincock, says: "Consumers are more mindful of plastic usage and turning to paper cups as a more sustainable alternative. The reCUP uses an EarthCoating mineralised liner that breaks down easily in regular paper pulping processes, meaning customers are demanding it as a more easily recyclable cup."

Inspired by origami, Paperwallet, supplied by Swag Distribution, is an eco-friendly wallet, crafted from part-recycled materials and the unique material of Tyvek, which is 100% recyclable. Additionally, it is lightweight, durable, waterproof and available with RFID



protection.

With more than 38.5 million plastic bottles and around seven million disposable coffee cups used in the UK every day, there is a growing demand for reusable promotional drinkware. Listawood's new range of thermal bottles and flasks utilise state of the art production techniques to offer a level of personalisation from as little as 30 bottles, despatched in just 48 hours.

Castelli has introduced the The Appeal collection. Made from apple peel, vegetable fibres and FSC certified sustainable pulp, Appeal is crafted from patented and pioneering technology for an innovative sustainable paper goods option.

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Merchandise
WORLD STAND 97



Process improvement

The Leather Business has just launched a new range of recycled leather products, The Reco Collection featuring 10 of the best-selling lines manufactured in a unique way. Natural latex avoids using chemicals to stick fibres together.

As well as using biodegradable poly bags, when despatching orders, the company reuses all of the packaging and avoids foam or other non-recyclable materials.

Meaningful Merchandise

"We are only reducing throw away plastics if we create something that is going to be kept and used," says Adam Moody, founder and CEO of Far 'n' Beyond.

The agency prompts clients to consider whether their promotional products are providing value. "A £4 powerbank is probably not going to last very long or work very well. Instead, by spending £10 or more can change the product into a powerbank with a premium battery that has enough power to fully charge the recipient's phone and last a long time. It becomes desirable and valuable."

Moody also urges clients to consider branding and whether a product is something they would want to use themselves. Reining in contact details and focusing on the branding and design can make a product something that people desire.



Every little helps

As well as monitoring its processes on a regular basis to improve its carbon footprint, and introducing more environmentally friendly and recycled products, pen company Hainenko has looked companywide for improvements.

Wherever possible, recycled cardboard is used for packaging and transportation is through Dachser Logistics which has an ecological approach using low-emission commercial vehicles, recycling management process and green IT awareness. In addition, all company cars are either hybrid or electric and public transport is used wherever possible.

Meanwhile, Sussex Promotions has been an active supporter of Charity Trees

Confused about plastics?

Great Central Plastics offers an overview of each eco option:

- **Recycled material** – material that was previously used on another product. GCP chips waste products back into granular form to make products. Pros – it massively reduces waste. Cons – recycled material is not food certified and cannot be moulded in transparent plastic.
- **Recyclable material** – Pros - the most popular choice due to full flexibility with regards to colours and finishes and the product can be chipped into granules to use again. Cons – it's virgin material and therefore not from a sustainable source.
- **Biodegradable material** – Pros - an additive to the base material makes the product biodegradable. Cons – more expensive and makes printing much more difficult to achieve.
- **Plant based** – Pros - from plant based sources and therefore sustainable and food grade certified. Cons – more expensive and can only be used with certain products as it is more difficult to mould with.

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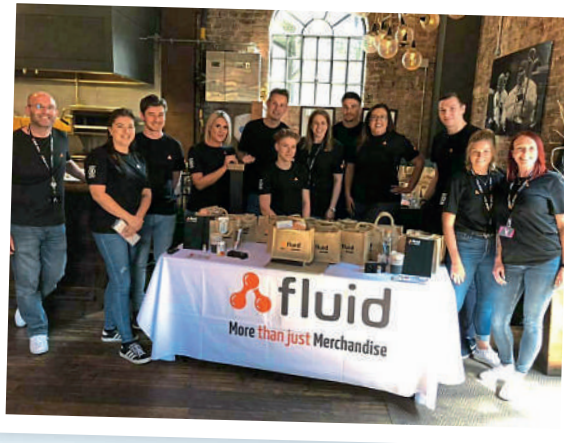
Fluid gains B Corp status

Fluid Branding recently enhanced its efforts to be an environmentally responsible operator by achieving B Corporation status.

Becoming a B Corp means that it is part of a global community using business as a force for good. Certified B Corporations are legally required to consider the impact of their business practices and decisions – not only on shareholders but on stakeholders too, like workers, suppliers, consumers, the wider community and, also the environment.

MD Miles Lovegrove said: "Achieving it is an acknowledgement of the ethos that runs through our business and is embedded in our DNA; to be exceptional for the business, the wider community and ourselves."

The achievement is the latest




example of Fluid's recognition of the importance of sustainability in merchandise. In 2006, it launched 'Eco Incentives' as an environmentally-led sub-brand, and when it became clear that the range was not a niche but more of a central part of its ethos, it was merged into the core brand. Fluid also went on to achieve Carbon Neutral status and ISO 9001 and 14001 accreditation.

for Life since 2008, planting more than 500 trees since then. Clients are invited to donate a tree through its grove by adding £5 to an order.

Don't stop

There are many wins for businesses when they adopt sustainable practices, but it is important to keep on improving once the low hanging fruit has been gathered. Castelli has looked across its business to put sustainable processes in place, covering areas including energy, manufacturing, packaging and marketing. However, it is committed to being even better by producing a list of key sustainable aims for the future, such as automation, solar energy, and charging point for electrical vehicles.

Like many seemingly intractable problems, it can be easy to despair when considering some of the worst examples of pollution, despoliation, and waste brought about by our rampant consumerist lifestyles. The environmental challenge is certainly tough and it will require action on many fronts to address lifestyles, consumer expectations, industrial processes and practices, and cultural norms. There is no one magic bullet, but we can see that the merchandise industry is not ignoring the issues. It is addressing them in lots of different ways, which is important because battling to save the planet will take many forms. And it is a battle in which we can all play a part. 

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THE SUSTAINABILITY MAZE

As the BPMA launches its sustainability group, **Andrew Langley** looks at some of the tough questions merchandise has to ask



Let's be honest, our industry faces a major challenge to convince some, that we don't just make products that are disposable, ending up in landfill or requiring expensive and specialist (and often unavailable) recycling.

The ultimate sustainable solution is to not make anything at all – hardly very helpful to our trade.

We have all seen the rush to 'eco' and claims about green materials abound. The issue though is that much of what is claimed is opinion and not fact, and based on one aspect of sustainability, that can actually be contradictory to other factors.

I wanted to make a few points to

start a dialogue in the trade, about how we can communicate better, between end user and distributor, and down the chain to the supplier.

What kind of sustainable?

Ask any supplier for their reaction to an enquiry for "something sustainable" and you can hear the groans a mile off. Do they mean, using recycled materials, or can be recycled, or do they mean low carbon footprint or biodegradable? The list goes on.

But let's first look at the intended product use, its lifecycle, rather than just the materials that are consumed.

Which is better, a quality product that will last and get used for years to come, but that has no obvious green credentials, or, a throwaway item made from something purporting to be green?

For my sector, let's look at leather.

As long as mankind eats meat, we will have hides, which represent less than 5% of the value of the beast – it is the ultimate bi-product. We can send hides, to landfill or use them to create beautiful long lasting and cherished products. If we use synthetics, they will consume more energy and chemicals to make. When it comes to disposal, imitation leather will be discarded sooner, and takes longer to biodegrade.



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So, is leather not sustainable?

People will make their own minds up, and Juniper has introduced ELEather, which is taking leather waste and forming it in a low energy, low impact and low carbon way. We also are introducing at Merchandise World in September a Biodegradable PU, and notebooks that are made from 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

Mission to inform

We are also revamping our product guidelines, datasheets and marketing materials to try and help distributors navigate through the maze of what their client really wants.

Like all globally sourced products our trade has been driven by price reductions in the recent past leading to arguably unsustainable solutions. This may have to change.

It is also true to say we have seen in very broad terms three kinds of customers out there:

1. Don't care – want the cheapest.
2. Do care, but price reluctant – so want a good story that resonates but won't look too closely or ask too many questions.
3. Do care and will pay and will demand and expect credentials and evidence.

Unfortunately, not many of us are chemists or experts in recycling. How do we sum up the differentials and merits between supposedly clean or renewable-based fad materials, that require heavy energy manufacturing or adding dirty compounds for them to work, produced on the other side of the world, against say, UK made and sourced traditional materials that have no specific claim?

Which is better, a product that will last but has no green credentials, or a 'green' throwaway item?

What should we make of technically recyclable materials where there are no facilities to handle specialist recycling, and so they go to landfill anyway?


It is a minefield that distributors are faced with every day and something the BPMA's new Sustainability Group wishes to focus on. Sharing best practice, finding ways to measure success and communicate this to the wider world is a key part of what

we do at the BPMA. Member suppliers and distributors who want to get involved should get in touch with the BPMA office.

Be inquisitive

From my point of view, I think that suppliers like me need to up their game on information and marketing materials, and distributors need to ask more questions and challenge their clients on what they really mean and feed back to their suppliers.

Our industry's broader challenge ultimately might not be how green is your product, but activist groups demanding why any product is justifiable. That is a whole new world of scary.

Andrew Langley is owner and MD of Juniper, and a BPMA board director. 

How are you navigating the sustainability maze?

Product Media wants to hear your experiences in future issues.

Contact us at editor@productmediamagazine.co.uk.

To get involved with the BPMA Sustainability Group, contact the office on enquiries@bpma.co.uk



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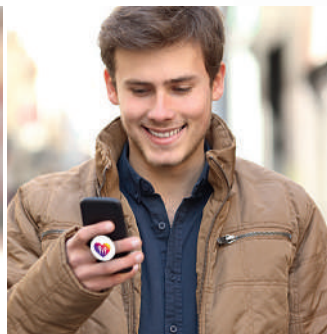


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MERCHANDISE WORLD KICKS OFF IN

Milton Keynes is the latest venue for the UK's leading promotional merchandise event, this month

With summer coming to an end and the crucial pre-Christmas period looming, the merchandise industry will be looking forward to planning for a profitable and lively few months.

This year's peak season Merchandise World event will be held at the Marshall Arena in Milton Keynes on Wednesday 11 September. The 30,000-seater home of football's MK Dons is also home to the 3,500m² Arena, which is the largest indoor space in the area, and makes it an apt venue for the UK's leading promotional merchandise trade exhibition.

Now established as the place for the industry to come together in February and September each year, Merchandise World is a unique concept which combines a traditional exhibition, a networking event and optional appointments. With the UK and Ireland promotional merchandise market spend in excess of £1 billion, more than 1,000 professional distributors

have made it their business to attend previous Merchandise World events.

All sales and administration teams, management and directors from professional distributor companies from across the UK and Ireland are invited. Visitors can choose to informally take in the latest and hottest products from the industry's top suppliers in a traditional exhibition format, or they can hold business review or planning meetings by appointment with exhibitors. There is no limit on the number of company personnel able to attend from any invited distributor company, and they do not have to be members of the BPMA, Purple Club or Sourcing City.

As always, this year's event has some new twists. As well as its debut at the stunning new venue, Merchandise World is recognising the growing importance of sustainability to the whole industry and its customers with the introduction of Eco World.

This issue of Product Media is dedicated to

how the merchandise industry is responding to the demands for greater accountability and environmental awareness, and Eco World is a reflection of this trend. Eco World will highlight the latest environmentally friendly products available and guide visitors through what can be a confusing area.

The show is also doing its bit for the planet with the Merchandise World app. There will be no printed show guide, but all show information is on the app. To download your copy, simply visit your phone's app store and search for Merchandise World.

Branding World will also be in operation with leading suppliers demonstrating how a range of products are branded. Always a favourite with visitors, Branding World allows you to ask detailed questions

MK

EXCLUSIVE BPMA MEMBER NETWORKING EVENING

Join the BPMA, exhibitors at Merchandise World and distributors at this social networking evening.

Refreshments and light bites will also be provided.

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Time: 7.30pm

Email: Daniela@bpma.co.uk to join the guest list

about how specific branding techniques are achieved, what they can deliver, and what other options are available.

In total, professional distributors can bring their teams to see more than 125 leading industry suppliers, giving them a distinct advantage as the industry approaches the peak selling season. The show will contain the industry's latest and hottest products just in time for the 'golden quarter'.

David Long, CEO and founder of organiser Sourcing City said: "We are very excited about September's Merchandise World at Milton Keynes. The venue is excellent and we have already had some excellent feedback from distributors looking forward to discovering new products at Eco World and for new staff members to learn at Branding World. There is no doubt that seeing the latest products first gives a competitive edge. For whatever reason you come, we will do all we can to make it a valuable experience."

Merchandise world is jointly owned by the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA) and Sourcing City. Visitors to the show are invited to attend the **BPMA's networking drinks reception** at the Marshall Arena as the perfect precursor to Merchandise World on the eve of the show.

The show is also set to be the venue for the **BPMA AGM, which will be held at 5pm after the show closes** and will give industry members the opportunity to hear from their trade association, as well as catching up with colleagues from the industry.



Merchandise World essentials

Where - Marshall Arena Stadium, MK Stadium Way, Milton Keynes MK1 1ST

When - 11 September 2019. Doors open at 08.00 for the traditional MW free breakfast to fortify you for the day ahead. The show runs from 09.00-17.00.

Why - 125 promotional suppliers will be exhibiting covering the gamut of merchandise. September is peak selling period for the industry when everyone involved with sales in professional distributor companies wants to see the new and best-selling promotional products.

How - visitors can register at merchandiseworld.co.uk. There is a free station transfer shuttle bus to and from Milton Keynes Central station every 30 minutes between 08.00-17.30 on the day of the show. Free airport transfers from Luton Airport are available by prior arrangement. Call **0844 504 5006** for details.



Reusability is the focus for CEG

CEG Collection is showing a range of eco-friendly alternatives at Milton Keynes. These will include re-usable high quality metal telescopic straws which offer a better user experience than paper alternatives, stylish metal travel personal cutlery, metal lunch boxes and pill boxes plus stainless steel ice cubes to save water.

All CEG Collection metal products have inherently strong sustainable features as they offer longevity and have base materials that are fully recyclable. Furthermore, the laser engraved branding does not taint the product. Richard Curtis, MD said the company is also modifying standard product packaging to reduce the elements of plastic. "On the packaging classified as transportable protection, we will either be moving over completely to recycled card or will continue as with our gift boxes to source from sustainable well managed forests."



Stand 50
cegltd.co.uk

Listawood reduces waste

Listawood is using Merchandise World as an initial launch platform for an innovative, new and eco-friendly alternative to single postal polystyrene mailing cartons for ceramic mugs; the standard form of packaging for decades. The company has also announced a high level of reduction in consumption of single-use plastic; both in its manufacturing facilities and by supplying an exciting new collection of eco-friendly products. Of the more than five trillion plastic bags produced every year, fewer than 1% are recycled. After trials, Listawood has eliminated the use of all plastic bags from its ceramic mug orders; saving more than 7.5 million bags a year. As well as reducing plastic waste in its production plant, Listawood is introducing new products to help distributors offer environmentally friendlier alternatives for their clients. This summer sees an extension to its their range of extremely high quality stainless steel travel mugs.

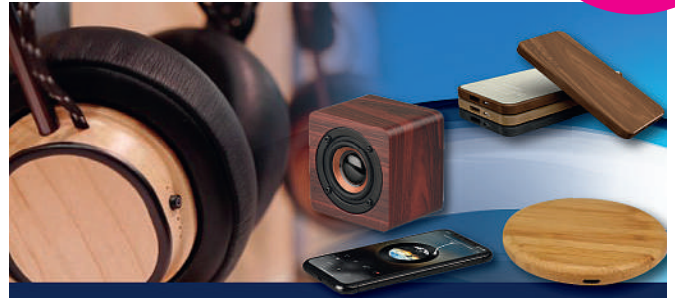
Stand 1
listawood.com



Baby USB brings sustainable tech

The Slough-based tech supplier is bringing faster charging, NFC ready, sustainable technology to Merchandise World. Visitors can expect a mix of products from best-selling chargers, in-ear phones and travel accessories, as well as the latest bamboo collection, for brands with eco-friendly values. Baby USB will also be unveiling the next generation of branding capability, available on the complete light-up-logo range at the show.

With a recent move to larger premises, BabyUSB can now offer UK stock holding, low MOQs and in-house branding as part of its service platform.



Bamboo pens set eco-trend

The Pen Warehouse has added three new sustainable products to its eco-friendly promotional writing instrument range. New for 2019, the hand-machined bamboo Contour Bamboo and Garland Bamboo ball pens have been introduced alongside the Supersaver WE pencil. All three products are made from at least 70% sustainable material.

Bamboo is a sustainable perennial evergreen flowering plant that looks, feels and behaves like wood. Harvesting occurs between three to five years after which the bamboo plant regrows. This can be contrasted with wood where tree maturity rates are measured in decades and no regrowth occurs. Distributors seeking the latest eco-friendly promotional trends can also take advantage of Snap Products' wide range of recycled products, from ice scrapers and desk stationery items to outdoor Frisbees and boomerangs. A suite of eco-themed digital marketing materials is available to support sales efforts, including the latest popular custom catalogues and editable e-mail templates, available through the new online Marketing Hub.



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BEELINE AND LALTEX REIGN AT ADVANTAGE

As it enters its 20th year, the catalogue group recognised outstanding industry performance



Caption - Winners from top left: Peter Welch (right) of Beeline; Jo Shippen and Debbie Simpson of Hatters; Desktop Ideas' Sion Jones; Amo Singh of AD Merchandise; Laltex's Chris Nelson

The recent Advantage Group launch event and awards dinner saw Beeline Promotional Products pick up the top prize of Group Member of The Year as voted for by the suppliers.



Peter Welch, Beeline MD was thrilled to collect the award and commented: "We were totally unexpected of this accolade but absolutely delighted and extremely proud to be in receipt and would like to thank all of those who voted and the tremendous support that our fantastic suppliers offer us."

For the second year running, Laltex Promo won Group Supplier of the Year, with account manager Chris Nelson on hand to receive the award.

Other winners in the Group Member awards were AD Merchandise and Outstanding Branding which were both awarded Highly Commended. Commended positions went to Mojo Promotions, Pinfold Promotions and Stay Sourced.

Desk Top Ideas and Crystal Galleries were Highly Commended suppliers, with Strive Badges, The Sweet People and Xindao being Commended.

Best use of an Advantage website was won by bluefishpromo.com and Catalogue Cover of the Year went to Hatters Promotions for its excellent 25th anniversary design. Data Champions for provision of accuracy and timing went to Bagco.

This year's exhibition was extended to include 50 leading industry suppliers, making it a full and exciting day for the group members.



Next year's event will be a special 20th Anniversary edition of Advantage and planning is already taking shape. It is sure to be an occasion not to miss. **PM**



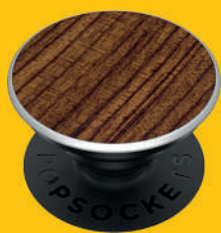
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EXCELLENCE REWARDED

Suppliers and distributors got their just rewards at PAGE group's awards event



Allwag Promotions was named Distributor of the Year in the over £3m category

Chris Witt of BH1 Promotions picked up Gold for the distributor with a turnover of less than £1m



Hambleside Merchandise's Jennie Scott and Suzie Munday were Gold winners for £1-3m distributor



PAGE group has hosted its annual conference, tabletop exhibition and awards dinner at Brandon Hall Hotel & Spa in Brandon, Coventry.

The catalogue group's conference was attended by PAGE members with director Brian Hayward welcoming new members and addressing the latest, well-received PAGE catalogue and other support facilities offered by PAGE. The conference was then followed by a tabletop exhibition where 44 featured suppliers showed off their products that had been selected for the new catalogue.

In the evening, the awards dinner was attended by around 130 dinner guests including the top UK business gift suppliers and distributors. The awards evening opened with an introduction about current market conditions from Hayward.

Suppliers recognised

Scores for supplier service and efficiency are taken from the PAGE monthly and annual surveys to determine the winners. The 2018



Gold Supplier of the Year went to The Pen Warehouse

Gold Supplier of the Year Award went to The Pen Warehouse and was collected by Matt and Helen Dyl.

Supplier Silver awards were presented to Sarah Allison and Yvonne Blackhurst of the Bizz Badge Company; Chris Nelson of Laltex Promo; Jules and Simon Adams of WCM&A, and Taylor Sargent of Pinpoint Badges & Promotions.

Distributor awards

This year the distributor awards were split

into three categories based on turnover and scored by the suppliers, recognising their professionalism in the promotional products industry.

In the under £1,000,000 category the Gold was awarded to Chris Witt of BH1 Promotions. Silver awards went to Blair Carroll of Boosters; John King of T. King Associates, and Adrian Roberts and Parm Thatal of ASP Promotions.

Jennie Scott and Suzie Munday of Hambleside Merchandise won the Gold award in the £1-3million distributor category, with Andrew Nash of Sussex Promotions, and Robin Lyon-Smith and Ian McCord of Purple Company (UK) picking up Silver awards.

Finally, in the over £3,000,000 turnover category, the Gold award was presented to Angela Wagstaff, Sarah Kemp and Stacey Clarke of Allwag Promotions. The Silver awards went to Lloyd Simpson of LSI, and Jo Ly of One Stop Promotions.

After dinner, the crowd was entertained by British comedian Roger Monkhouse with his hilarious observations of people in the room. As ever, the event involved a serious amount of networking with a late night for many. **PM**

TRAIN AND RETAIN

Failure to help staff achieve their best drains a business of its potential, says **Daniela Arena**

Research carried out in 2018 indicated that 40% of millennials who don't receive the necessary on the job training to become more effective in their role will leave their positions within the first year.

That's quite a high percentage, but it's not only the modern workforce that ranks training and development opportunities in the workplace so highly. In a national survey of more than

400 employees spanning three generations (baby boomers, millennials and Generation X), 70% of respondents expressed that the training opportunities available to them play a huge influence in their decision on whether to stay in their current role. So, no matter how big or small the business, training and development is one investment your business simply cannot avoid to make.



Cheaper to retain

The pressures of everyday business weigh on shoulders of all professionals, and business owners feel like they can't afford to invest in their employees as much as they'd like. When businesses take this viewpoint, they fail their employees and ultimately their company because the backbone of every company is its employees.

Any organisation's main focus should be on refining and retaining talent. In most cases, it is more cost effective to invest in a robust training and development programme for staff than it is to continuously expend resources when replacing employees who have moved on.

By ensuring every member of your workforce has access to training and development opportunities, from day dot, you ensure every member of each team in your business is as skilled as they could be. You attract and keep all the best candidates, and you also build a strong work culture unafraid of innovation, change, failure and success. Employees take the bull by its horns and run with ideas, instead of running away from problems.

Improved ROI

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) asserts that organisations that offer comprehensive training programmes achieve 218% higher income than companies that fail to implement an effective employee development-focused training plan. The BPMA not only offers three e-learning training courses within the education programme but will now offer a series of seminars and webinars throughout autumn 2019 and spring 2020 for you to take advantage of for yourself or for staff members.

We recently held a mental health seminar and will be running a product safety and compliance seminar on 16 October and intend to host further seminars and webinars for our members. Education remains at the heart of what the BPMA offers its members. We want to continue offering value for money, relevant training for all business types within the industry.

We would love to hear from members to understand what subjects they would like us to educate on. Get in touch with daniela@bpma.co.uk with your training and development requests or to book a demo of the education programme.

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THE CREDIT DIAGNOSIS

If you've ever wondered what a credit control company actually does, **Mike Collins** can explain



Regular readers know that Account Assyst/ Direct Route (AA/DR) is all about using its knowledge, experience and expertise to guide and educate others. Each of our articles is packed full of helpful hints and tips, to aid every BPMA member in running a successful credit control process, minimising exposure and risk and in doing so, maximising both payments and success.

However, through recent conversations with various different BPMA members, a repeated question was asked.

"You clearly know loads about the credit industry but what exactly is it that you do?"

A valid question we thought.

What gives us the credibility to advise on such matters? The answer is simple. The discussion points we convey are challenges that we come across on a day to day basis when talking with prospective clients to understand and evaluate their needs.

The same challenges occur time and time again and because of this, we've devised a diagnostic questionnaire to help illustrate to clients how we can find solutions to those challenges.

Let us take you down the path of a typical client meeting.

Bloggs & Co Limited's MD Mr Bloggs, has requested a meeting to discuss how he can use the free BPMA Credit

Management Benefit Package to improve credit control, minimise payment delays and maximise cash flow. Team AA/DR starts with the diagnostic questionnaire, below.

As you can see, simply running through our day to day questionnaires with our clients allows us to understand the pitfalls and frustrations all businesses can suffer when it comes to delays and issues in their credit management.

It is this understanding that allows us to help others by

passing our knowledge and expertise through articles such as this. Hopefully this explains, both why we help others and how but should you need to learn more about how AccountAssyst and Direct Route can help your office to resolve any issue in the credit and debt management process to make your life easier, then call one of the team now on 01274 223 190 or contact admin@directroute.co.uk.

Mike Collins is managing director, Account Assyst

A few key questions	Some client responses	The solution
Do you operate an electronic account opening form?	<i>We email a paper copy to each new customer</i>	With AA, the account form is automatic
Do you suffer delays in people sending them back?	<i>Often, we're always having to chase up account forms</i>	The AA form must be completed to be submitted
Do you have strong terms and conditions to protect you?	<i>We had some years ago but not sure if they're any good</i>	Industry standard terms are included for you to use
Do you always get credit reports on new customers?	<i>We've got a facility but we keep forgetting to use it</i>	New applicants are checked automatically for concerns
Do you keep checking or monitoring existing customers?	<i>Nope, as long as they're still ordering, we're happy</i>	All opened accounts are constantly in our sights
How do you keep aware of customers not paying others?	<i>How would we possibly know who's not paying who?</i>	AA partners with ROSI, the early debt warning system
Do you have a rigid process for chasing overdue invoices?	<i>We have someone who does it from time to time</i>	An automatic credit control system is available for all
If you suffer from a bad debt how do you pursue same?	<i>We either close it or send it to the solicitors to issue</i>	Direct Route provides zero cost debt recovery
Do you have solicitor's fees while they're working?	<i>We have to pay them for their time, no matter the success</i>	DR fee basis is simple, 'no win – no fee'
Is it fair that it costs you to get overdue monies back?	<i>Not really but what other options are available</i>	DR passes costs for acting to the debtor, not the client
Do you pay further fees when issuing court action?	<i>Of course, you can't not pay the courts and solicitors</i>	Many DR clients have court fees paid for no risk



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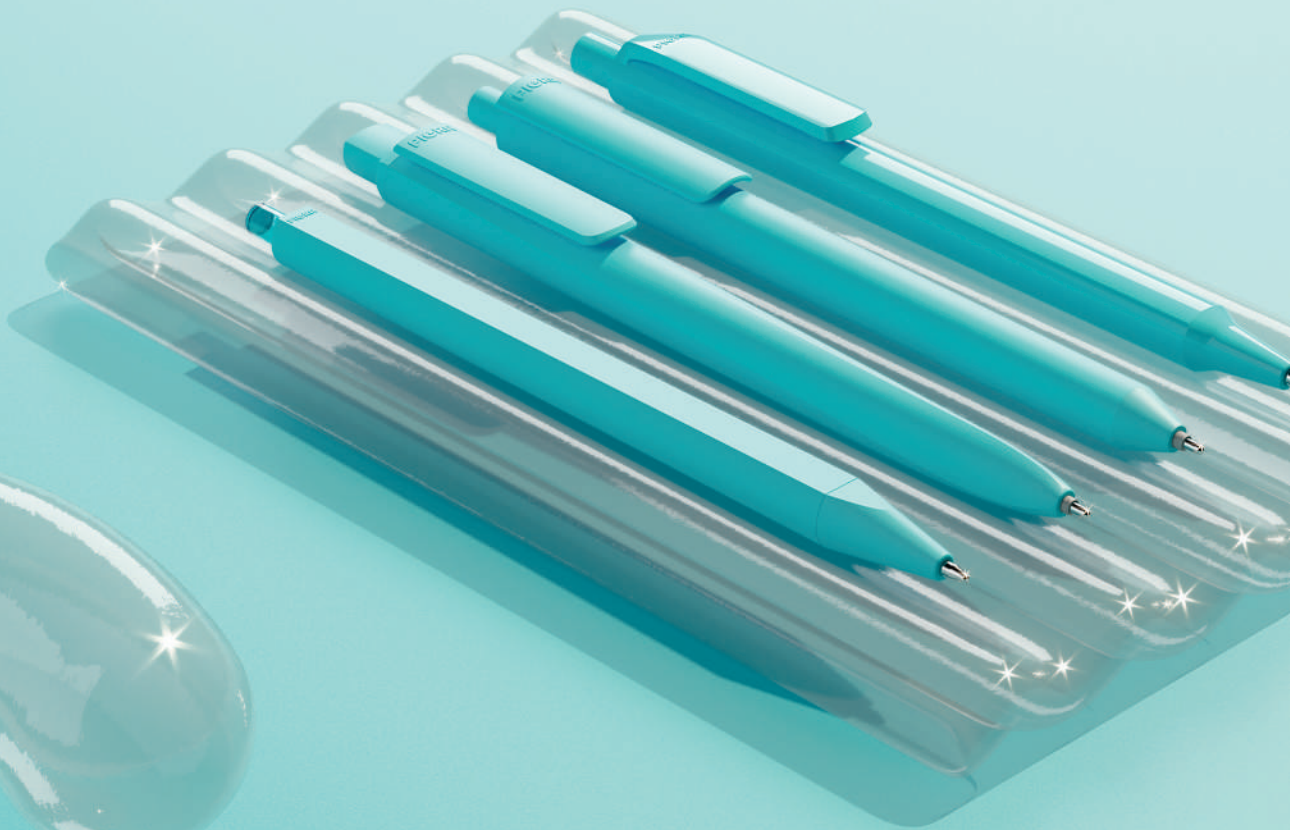
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CUTTING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Transportation is a significant contributor to the carbon cost of products. Buying closer to home can help says **Mark Alderson**

The need to reduce their carbon footprint, for both environmental and financial reasons, is being recognised and taken seriously by a growing number of businesses. The future and sustainability of manufacturing relies upon our ability and willingness to make decisions that reduce unnecessary waste, limit excess shipping distance and consider more than just the short term bottom line.

Experts at The Carbon Trust use a detailed analysis to determine a company's carbon footprint. Emissions can be significantly reduced by up to 27% by simply purchasing products manufactured in the UK.

No going back

The UK government has set out ambitious targets and strict guidelines to reduce the carbon footprint created by the UK power sector. Between 2006 and 2017 emissions generated during the production of power were reduced by 55%. This was a direct result of a move towards renewable energy sources, with over 30% of all power now coming from this sector. Using clean energy allows UK manufacturers to produce products with a significantly reduced carbon footprint.

UK-made products not only benefit from cleaner energy sources but also gain from more efficient production facilities. With many of the most highly polluting manufacturing processes banned in the EU

and with significant investments into low energy machinery, it is easy to limit the carbon footprint of UK made products.

Localised sourcing

A product's carbon footprint significantly increases when subjected to excessive transport miles. In 2018, 28.9% of all greenhouse gases emitted were as a result of petroleum fuelled transport methods. It is clear to see where a significant volume of this is generated, with nine out of ten items being shipped halfway around the world on board some of the biggest and highest carbon emitting machines on the planet. It has been estimated that just one of these container ships, the length of around six football pitches, can produce the same amount of pollution as 50 million cars.

The solution to reduce your carbon footprint is simple - buy locally!

- All figures were accessed from The National Institute of Statistics, The Carbon Trust and British Plastic Federation websites on 21st July.

Mark Alderson is chairman of the Briman Group. 



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Create the difference

Dancing cups or particularly communicative ballpoint pens? Regardless of what makes your product something special – it deserves to be in the spotlight. The Promotional Gift Award has been distinguishing haptic promotional products that stand out from the crowd since 2003. The creativity label that is conferred by an independent jury of experts thus creates that certain difference – in the perception of the target group. The award ceremony at the HAPTICA® live, on March 18, 2020 in Bonn (Germany) attracts additional attention.

Register your creations for the Promotional Gift Award 2020 now and profit from the favourable early bird rate (180 Euros) up until August 31, 2019!

All information, the terms of participation and application forms can be found at:

www.promotionaward.com

Entry deadline: November 30, 2019



PROMOTIONAL GIFT
AWARD **2020**

LASTING FASHION

By making gradual improvements throughout their processes, manufacturers can improve sustainability, says **Louis Georgiou**



More than two billion T-shirts are sold each year and the production of each one uses 3,500 litres of water - five trillion litres of water in total each year.

Right now, sustainability is one of the textile industry's biggest challenges and we are making steps to tackle it head on. People will always need clothing, but it is our responsibility as a clothing provider to make sure the options available to them are sustainable.

So, what are we doing?

In terms of the product, we are constantly looking for the most forward-thinking brands in the market. We have partnered with Neutral, a Danish brand with sustainability at its core to bring better clothing options to the UK promotional market - all Neutral T-shirts are made from 100% organic cotton and use only 67 litres of water in production.

As a company, we recently bought



a machine that reclaims the screens used for screen printing within a completely self-contained environment, recycling the solutions used and cutting waste put down the drain by 99%.

We are now looking at ways we can improve upon this and have ideas that we will be implementing over the next 12 months to recycle 100% of our water use in the pre-production screen making process.

Within our print department we have moved more of our production to water-based inks which have many

advantages over plastisol inks. Primarily they are not made from harmful chemicals, and as they are water based, the inks seep into the fabric leaving a much softer to the touch final print.

Then there is plastic. It is standard within our industry to bag all garments in a single use polybag. We know this cannot continue. We have been trialling different solutions and we are now integrating carbon neutral sugarcane-based poly bags into our offering. They are carbon neutral and 100% recyclable.

Overall, this is just the start and we know as a company we have much further to go, but we believe that if we each start doing our bit today, over time that will build into a massive change across the industry and our collective impact will be dramatically reduced.

Louis Georgiou is marketing manager, Essential Embroidery Design & Print

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THE RISE OF ECO-TECH

Sustainable promotional technology is a growing reality as the lifecycle of gadgets is addressed, says **Matt Pluckrose**



The trend for promotional products to be more sustainable is spreading. Certain product types have become so popular that suppliers struggle to keep them in stock, such as reusable bottles, stationery and even confectionery.

This is also affecting gadgets and technology. Products such as charging cables, power banks and wireless speakers are incredibly popular and can deliver brand awareness for years. But can they be eco-friendly?

Case for change

Many technology items require a mix of lithium batteries, wires, chips and other internal components which are hard to recycle and dispose of. However, there is a trend to change the outer casing to more sustainable materials which can be better recycled at the end of the product's life.

Switching case material from plastic to bamboo or FSC managed wood sources helps with the biodegradable properties and also makes for a very soft and desirable finish. Other natural materials finding favour are cork, leather, eco fabric, and paper-wood composites.

Ocean friendly

A trend to watch is products that are made from recycled plastic, often PET bottles cleared from the sea. Other materials such as recycled metals and regrind silicone also offer safe and sustainable options.

Choosing materials that break down sooner over time is also an option and major companies from the US are producing bio additives, such as BioSphere, which dramatically speed up the degrading process of plastic from 100 years to 3-5 years. Other materials becoming popular are recyclable

aluminium and stainless steel.

Pack it in

Companies are also looking to reduce the amount of PVC used in their products and switching packaging to paper from FSC managed sources and stopping single use plastic in cable ties, covers and protective films, as well as eliminating foam in packaging. Smaller gift boxes reduces the carbon footprint of transport and many suppliers now send products by sea freight rather than air.

To conclude, gadgets can be more sustainable and are 100% still the desirable item for many marketers. By asking the right questions and making the right choices we can still help our planet.

Matt Pluckrose is managing director of Desktop Ideas 

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WRITING THE FUTURE

In June, BPMA CEO, **Jon Birrell** was invited out to BIC Graphic's factory in Tarragona, Spain, to see first-hand how it is tackling sustainability

A household name, BIC became synonymous with quality and reliability in 1950 with the launch of the BIC Cristal, the first high quality ballpoint pen at an affordable price.

BIC took its first step in the promotional sector 50 years ago in 1969, the same year Neil Armstrong took his first step on the moon. In the 1970s it launched the iconic BIC Lighter and BIC Shaver, and today sells 32 million BIC products every day worldwide, 20.2 million of which are stationery products.

BIC is known for pens, but sees itself as selling solutions. To modernise and future

proof the company, BIC has invested heavily in new systems that enable it to process orders straight from web to print. Launched in March, the technology eradicates the need for manual intervention. The investment ensures clients receive a seamless service as the demands for online solutions increase and lead times shorten.

After 50 years specialising in printing and customisation techniques, including pioneering digital printing in the European merchandise sector, BGE remains committed to innovation.

In 2018 it invested heavily in a new



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SUPPORTING



factory layout designed to improve its production process, and new offices designed to give employees the best working atmosphere while facilitating teamwork from quote to delivery. In May this year, BGE implemented new digital printing capabilities, through the Britepix Digital process to enable well-known products such as 4Colours and Media Clic to feature greater customisation through vivid and rich digital printing.

As far back as 2003 BIC also recognised the importance of environmental responsibility and set up its sustainability development programme. This consisted of three main principles, the first of which was to minimise the use of raw materials and transition to new eco-friendly materials. Secondly, to reduce environmental impact by measuring and monitoring the impact from its products, factories and logistics. Finally, it focussed on building day-to-day relationships based on trust through employee engagement and promoting initiatives that support local communities.

Looking to the future, BIC's vision of 'Writing the Future, Together' involves five key commitments for 2025:

- Fostering sustainable innovation, improving the footprint of BIC products.
- Acting against climate change, using 80% renewable electricity across the group.
- Committing to a safe working



environment, with zero accidents across all operations.

- Proactively involving suppliers, for the most secure, innovative and efficient sourcing.
- Improving lives through education, improving learning conditions for 250 million children.

BIC Graphic Europe's facility in Spain already uses 100% renewable energy, along with the French factories and headquarters, and a facility in Brazil.

It is refreshing to see BIC recognising the importance of the environmental impact from the entire product life cycle, from raw materials and production methods through to packaging and distribution. Once delivered to the final end user, BIC has considered the durability of the products and the end of life of the item.


Particularly impressive is the Ubicuity

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Since introducing a sustainability programme, BIC has achieved:

- 24% reduction in energy consumption per ton of production in the last 10 years.
- 90% of cardboard packaging comes from certified and/or recycled sources.
- 85% reduction in water consumption per ton of production in the last 10 years.
- 83% of plastic packaging material is PVC free.

initiative that enables BIC pens to be collected and recycled into a range of outdoor furniture. Since 2011, BIC's recycling branch partner TerraCycle has collected 33 million writing instruments in Europe. A bench is made from 4,800 pens, while a table uses 16,300

With a list of memberships and certifications, including SEDEX, BSCI, ISO9001, ISO14001, Ecovadis Gold recognition and PSI Sustainability Award winners, BIC's progress to its 2025 target looks promising. It is pleasing to see them taking the lead on such important topics. 

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For many of us, work is a major part of our lives. It is where we spend much of our time, where we get our income and often where we make our friends. Having a fulfilling job can be good for your mental health and general wellbeing. Equally we all have times when life gets on top of us - sometimes that's work-related, like deadlines or travel. Sometimes it's something else - our health, our relationships, or our circumstances so it is vital that we protect what we value by addressing and promoting good mental health at work.

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JUST THE JOBS

Steve Jobs epitomised the Apple strapline to 'Think Differently', says **Melissa Chevin**



Steve Jobs once famously asked: "Did Alexander Graham Bell do any market research before he invented the telephone?"

Now, I'm not saying to never do any research, but Jobs was right in recognising the vital role instinct has to play in running a business.

As far as the Apple CEO was concerned, if he liked something, others would too. That might strike some as rather presumptuous, but I have found that in my own business, intuition is a useful barometer in deciding what other people might want.

The way I see it, there's a good chance that others like me, in a similar demographic, have similar problems which need solving.

Throughout his career, Jobs held on to that fundamental belief and trust in his own taste – and he was invariably proven right.

Build relationships in person

Despite being all about technology, Steve Jobs much preferred face-to-face meetings when it came to doing business, believing them to be superior.

He wanted to hear directly from people rather than simply reading their words on a screen. Jobs appreciated the nuances which come through during 'in person' conversations;

subtleties which electronic platforms just cannot convey.

Such communication doesn't necessarily have to take place within any formal structure, either. Informal chats during a walk or over lunch can help minimise miscommunication, thus reducing frustration and eliminating the time necessary to repair any damage caused thereby.

Marketing is critical

It's hard to believe now but between the times Steve Jobs left and returned to the Apple fold, the company really didn't do much in the way of marketing. As a result, its products just weren't on many people's radars.

When Jobs returned, he transformed Apple into a massive marketing machine, asking: "How can we sell a product if no-one knows about it?"

The lesson for our own industry is pretty obvious, but I'll spell it out. You can offer the most sensational, innovative and desirable promotional product in the world, but if you don't tell anyone, no-one's going to buy it.

Melissa Chevin is BPMA board director and marketing consultant with GF Consulting and can be reached at mchevin@gf-consult.co.uk



www.productmediamagazine.co.uk

LET'S GO TO WORK

BPMA Chairman **Angela Wagstaff** outlines what she's been up in her first few months in position, and how members can get more involved



It's been a hectic nine months both in our industry and at the BPMA. Taking on the role of Chairman, having been Vice Chairman for the past two years, has not only meant getting more involved with the team but also with engaged members and the wider reaching trade association network both in the UK and in Europe.

Juggling the voluntary role of Chair for the BPMA, my own business, and my family can be tough at times, especially with two teenage daughters.

Teamwork

My first challenge as Chair has been recruiting and training our new CEO, Jon Birrell. Running the BPMA is just like running your own business except 'death by committee' can slow things down compared to being able to make your own instant decisions. Once you get your head around that you learn not only to be patient but far more organised. Working with Jon has been so refreshing. It's a great opportunity to challenge everything the BPMA does, to understand more and to develop what else can we do to better our industry, an industry that no one knows exists until they get into it. Gaining member feedback, opinions on where the industry is at and suggestions of what we should be doing has been enjoyable and thought-provoking.

My first initiative has been the BPMA's recent Mental Health Awareness workshops, which were not only well received but also made me realise the importance of a strong work/life balance. Attending these workshops helped me to put a workplace wellbeing programme in place in my own business to make a positive difference. We have followed this through by supporting MIND as our chosen charity for events, allowing the industry to back a national charity that benefits all ages and people close to our hearts.

Another important part of my role as Chair is recruiting and mentoring our new Board



members, Haydn Willetts, Helen Brennan and Andrew Langley. Each has brought new skills and experience to the BPMA as well as strengthening our dedicated Board. This is allowing us to develop our focus groups to tackle key challenges and create new initiatives

A huge highlight for me was when our local MP and now Home Secretary, Priti Patel, accepted an invitation to visit Allwag Promotions. She came to visit me at our offices in Essex and we were able to talk about a range of issues that affect our industry, including the benefits of British manufacturing in our industry sector and what support was available from our government, as well as the potential impacts of Brexit, and how the focus on sustainability will have a great impact on the sector.

In contention

Now that Jon has settled into his role, our next project is to revitalise our education programme as knowledge is the key to success. We want to continue to promote our industry to ensure promotional merchandise is a serious contender in the wider marketing arena and for marketing professionals to understand the benefits of spending their budget on tangible promotional products and to help us recruit



new talent and grow new businesses in our industry.

Getting involved with the BPMA is enjoyable, although I prefer to get on and do things







rather than talk about them. But we need far more engagement from all our members especially those that have such great ideas, forthright opinions and truly care as they too can make a difference. I'd like to invite our members to get involved with one of our focus groups, either existing ones such as Briman, The Clothing Group or End User Group or those created this year, such as the Sustainability Group, the Next Generation Group, the Research Group and Education group.


There's plenty of work to be done. Come and join us!

To find out more about how to get involved with any of the BPMA groups, contact the BPMA executive team on 01372 371 184 or angela.wagstaff@bpma.co.uk



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DO THE RIGHT THING

Managing staff mental ill health is increasingly part of a boss's role.

Jodie Hill offers some practical tips



Sometimes, managers are less confident in dealing with an employee with a mental health issue compared to a physical illness; however, it's important to approach all forms of ill health in the same way. The priority is to support an employee's return to work, enabling them to perform at their best.

The role of the manager

This is key to encouraging strong performance and supporting employee wellbeing. A manager should be approachable and set realistic targets and monitor staff achievement. Having regular one-to-ones helps to identify any challenges at an early stage. A manager should tailor their management style to suit the different needs of each employee.

Spotting the signs

Early identification of mental ill health is important. Look out for:

- changes in usual behaviour, mood or how they interact with colleagues
- changes in the standard of their work or focus on tasks
- appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn and reduced interest in tasks they previously enjoyed
- changes in appetite and/or increase in smoking and drinking
- increase in sickness absence and/or turning up late to work.

Not everyone will exhibit obvious signs, so regularly ask employees how they are and create an environment where staff feel able to be open and honest. If an employee seems to be experiencing mental ill health, take the lead and arrange a meeting as soon as possible to talk in private. The conversation should be approached in a positive and supportive way. When team members become aware that a work colleague is experiencing mental ill health, they may find it distressing and a manager should be prepared to support the team more.

Absence due to mental ill health

An employee experiencing mental ill health may need to be absent from work for a period of time because they are too ill to work or medication prevents them from safely carrying out their work.

To support an employee while they are away from the workplace, a manager should:

- agree when and how regular contact will be maintained during the absence
- be positive, professional and supportive at all times
- agree what the employee would like their work colleagues to know about their absence
- not pressure the employee to return to work
- encourage a phased return
- use occupational health where practicable to look at ways the organisation can support the employee to return to work.


Returning to work

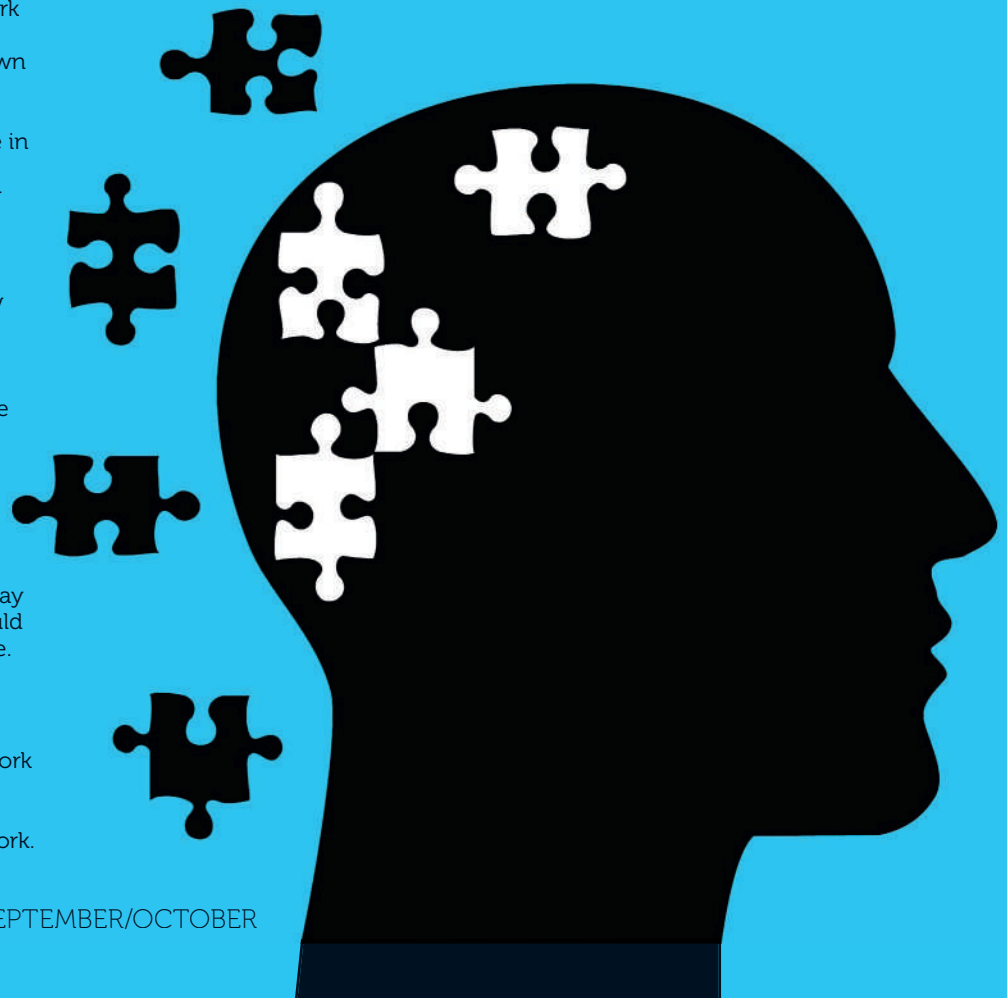
When an employee is ready to return to work, it's important to ensure that they feel supported and understand what will be expected of them on their return. A manager should consider meeting

them away from the workplace before they return to discuss their return and alleviate any concerns they may have.

A return-to-work interview provides a good opportunity to:

- welcome them back to work
- check they are well enough to return
- update them on any workplace news
- discuss their absence and any worries about returning to work
- confirm their working arrangements and any plans and adjustments that are in place
- allow them to ask questions.

Jodie Hill trained as a barrister, cross-qualified as a solicitor and is the founder and managing director of Thrive Law. Jodie has specialised in employment law throughout her career, and has a keen understanding of this complex legal sector, together with all HR related issues. 



BPMA CEO explains the merchandise effect at EPIC

On 3 July 2019, more than 300 marketers from across the brand, creative, print and production industries gathered for EPIC/2019 at Congress Centre, London.

EPIC, which stands for, Everything's Possible; Integrated Communications, is a ground-breaking initiative backed by the IPIA, The Independent Print Industries Association. Its aim is to bring the industry together to have a cohesive conversation about integrated communications, exploring what is possible in a mixed media landscape.

Headlined by 'Find Your WHY' co-author, Peter Docker, part of Simon Sinek's Igniter leadership team and Mark Wright, winner of BBC's The Apprentice and founder of Climb Online, attendees found inspiration and motivation through the line-up of speakers and panellists driving home the need for purpose behind their messages.

Karen Fraser MBE kicked off the conference with research from Credos and The Advertising Association on consumer trust. It delivered sobering reports from in depth consumer interviews on how the advertising and marketing industry needs to consider its role in responsible messages. Together with loyalty insights



and purchase behaviours from Scott Logie, REaD Group and a glimpse into the world of the influencer from social specialist Rupa Shah, HashtagAd, delegates built a picture of market trends and potential.

Bringing an emotional connection into the conference was essential and Jon

Birrell, CEO of the BPMA helped delegates understand the reasons why our cognitive ability for brand recall is dramatically enhanced when a physical item is delivered into the mix, citing the massive increase in market share for brands such as Compare the Market linked to quirky toy characters that quickly earned a place in our hearts and minds.

EPIC/2019 has helped deliver the first step in the changed conversation marketers want to explore. With a sold-out conference this July, 2020 dates will be released shortly. Marketers can find out more and register for updates on epicthinking.net.

PRODUCT SAFETY & COMPLIANCE SEMINAR

The BPMA have teamed up with SGS to host a new seminar for Autumn 2019.



So join us at this exclusive event on Wednesday 16th October

Time: 9.30am - 3.30pm

Venue: SGS Ashby, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire

- 📌 Toy Promotional Products - EU Legal Requirements
- 📌 An Introduction to The General Product Safety Directive and Risk Assessments
- 📌 Managing Quality and Performance

PLUS A product testing laboratory tour!

➤ **BPMA Members attend for just £50^{+vat}**
Non Members £200^{+vat}

Very limited availability only. To book your tickets email Georgie@bpma.co.uk



T's & C's: Due to the venue, this seminar is available to a maximum of 12 people only, 1 person per company only. Open to BPMA members on a first come first serve basis. Non members can also register to attend. Bookings cancelled after the 23rd September will not be refunded.



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

BPMA member news

Welcome to the following new BPMA members:

- Apparel Fresh
- Easy Print T-Shirts Ltd
- Colorway Graphics
- Source Productions
- Premier Clothing
- Action Promote
- Jack Nadel International Ltd
- The Brand Alchemist
- Ultimate Branding
- Affinity Merchandise

Celebrating 10 years as BPMA members:

- Perfect Promotional Products Ltd
- BH1 Promotions
- Gelt Gifts Ltd
- Autograph Promotional Gifts Ltd
- Jute Trading Ltd
- U Name It Promotions
- R & JP International
- Speedbird Promotions
- Sunray Import Ltd T/A Chili Concept
- Regalzone
- Stupid Tuesday
- Foremost Magnets
- Pro-Ad Ltd



Celebrating 25 years as BPMA members:

- HMA Creative
- Beaumont PPS Ltd
- Johnson-Baker & Co Ltd



BPMA CALENDAR 2019

10 September

BPMA Networking Evening, Stadium MK, Milton Keynes

11 September

Merchandise World, Stadium MK, Milton Keynes

BPMA AGM, Stadium MK, Milton Keynes - 5pm

3 October

BPMA Member Orientation Seminar, Fetcham, Surrey

16 October

BPMA Product Safety & Compliance Seminar

Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire

13 December

BPMA Christmas Lunch, Guoman Tower Hotel, London

2020

7-9 January

PSI, Messe Dusseldorf, Germany

12-13 February

Merchandise World, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

12 February

BPMA Annual Awards Dinner, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

Introducing: Jack Nadel International



Can you give us a snapshot of the business?

Jack Nadel International (JNI), a leader in brand merchandising, was founded in 1953 by American philanthropist Jack Nadel and has 23 offices in the USA with a global turnover of \$130 million. Operating as a separate Limited company, JNI in London is headed by CEO International, Elizabeth Venz, handling business originating outside the USA. The international head office in London oversees regional offices in Amsterdam, Athens, Sydney, Hong Kong, Delhi and soon Kenya – covering EMEA, India and APAC. Aside from a global team, a key differentiator for JNI is a single-platform with integrated logistics that provides a seamless e-commerce experience for customers wanting an end-to-end global solution for all their branded merchandise needs. From bamboo speakers to bio-degradable pens, organic cotton clothing to Tumi bags, JNI sources, warehouses and expedites orders everywhere.

What made you join the BPMA?

When we became aware of the improved benefits, networking opportunities and other industry support it was the natural decision to join.

How are things going for your business?

The company has been in strong growth for a couple of years having increased revenue by 35% in the past year alone. This is the result of our genuine global solution to multinationals and a culture of being completely customer-led. Also, we have a 20-year history of working with our US colleagues and are able to capitalise on deep institutional experience.

What is your favourite promotional product and why?

There are many innovative, eco-friendly products launching all the time. This is a sector which we think is very important for the industry to champion. Educating clients is a process but interestingly right

now we are getting a lot of orders for bamboo straws.

What trends are you noticing?

The biggest trend, or change, we are seeing is a nod to products that help reduce waste, are recyclable and are made from natural alternatives to single-use plastic items, such as stainless steel or bamboo straws, biodegradable pens, cork coffee tumblers and items made from natural materials. We seem to have reached a tipping point in cultural attitudes towards eco-friendly and sustainable products. While this isn't yet showing significantly in our sales figures, I think sustainability is going to become the norm, rather than an aspiration.

Give us a prediction for the year ahead in merchandise?

We'll see the underlying sustainability trend gather steam, with great new products coming to market. But in the immediate term the main challenge we face is the continuing Brexit uncertainty.

BPMA CHARTER

THE ULTIMATE IN INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

The BPMA Charter Status is designed to both develop and, subsequently, achieve the highest standards within our specific niche of the promotional marketing discipline.

BPMA Charter members are perceived to add essential core values to the supply process, with creativity, safety and professionalism being implicit.

WHAT DOES THE BPMA CHARTER STATUS REPRESENT?

- Trust and Transparency
- Financial Security
- Quality Assurance
- Product Conformity
- Product & Service Continuity
- Ethical/Environmental Values
- Premium Commercial Competency

➤ Become a BPMA Charter Member

enquiries@bpma.co.uk for more information

bpma.co.uk/membership/charter-status





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

Ten from two



Kiran Somaiya

Managing Director,
Chili Concept

What boxset are you watching and what's next?

Jack Ryan. I'll probably start the next series of The Good Wife soon

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

I love my ice-cream. You can't beat a tub of cookies and cream

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

It was as a promo USB supplier. I've learnt that customer service in our industry is key especially when managing client expectations. Gaining overall knowledge of the industry is also important

Best piece of advice you've been given?

Always treat people how you wish to be treated

What's the view from your office?

Leicester city centre. Directly opposite our building is a gym that I stare at and sometimes think about using

How do you relax outside of work?

Spending time with family and friends

Where would you like to be right now?

In the Maldives

How do your colleagues describe you?

Pretty relaxed with a brain full of useless knowledge

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

Starting my own business. I looked towards family who were already in business for inspiration, and wanted to have a go

What's top of your bucket list?

To climb Mount Kilimanjaro



Fred Goozee

Client Experience Manager
Outstanding Branding

What boxset are you watching and what's next?

I have just finished Stranger Things, and I loved it. I will be watching the new season of Peaky Blinders

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

Nowadays my girlfriend has me house trained, but at university, I would drink juice straight from the carton

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

Production co-ordinator at Outstanding Branding. Being in the frontline helped me develop strong relationships with our supply chain

Best piece of advice you've been given?

It's got to be Wear Sunscreen by Baz Luhrmann. Look it up

What's the view from your office?

We are based in Borough, so if you look up you can see The Shard

How do you relax outside of work?

I walk my dog around Wimbledon Common every night

Where would you like to be right now?

I am currently semi-obsessed with visiting different countries in the former Yugoslavia. Top of that list is Montenegro

How do your colleagues describe you?

I have just asked Becci and she said I was energetic, so take from that what you will

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

Which dog to choose from a Greek rescue centre – I wanted to take them all home. I ended up with Caspar because he is part Spaniel, and can keep up with me

What's top of your bucket list?

The 2,200 miles Appalachian Trail. It takes more than six months to complete

People

Galpeg backs experience

Four experienced players in the promotional products world have joined the family of distributor Galpeg.

Brian Bent, trading as Marmalade Merchandise, is the newest member of Galpeg's associate programme. He has previously worked at Bourne Publicity, Dowlis and most recently GeigerBTC.

Meanwhile, Galpeg's support team has added three experienced industry figures to its roster in the form of Adell Coppock, Natalie Bateman and Allison Evans. The eleven-strong back office team now has a combined industry experience of more than 100 years.

Galpeg MD Paul Green said: "I'm delighted to welcome such strong industry players to our line-up of associates and support staff."

GeigerBTC appoints Ferrer

GeigerBTC welcomes Victoria Ferrer into the team, as account director, bringing a unique combination of experience and energy to focus on building and maintaining client relationships in the UK and EMEA.

Ferrer has worked within the promotional merchandise sector for more than ten years, supporting the growth of global clients. She also owned her own promotional merchandise distribution company in Dubai.

Senior account director, Gary Gable said: "We are delighted to welcome Victoria into our expanding team. Her wealth of experience in the industry will be an invaluable asset to our major clients, and her lively and outgoing personality is the perfect fit for our great team."



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