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# Promotional Times™

*Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image and Profits*

The goal of our newsletter is to help our clients grow their business. Promotional products can increase awareness, name recognition and lead generation. Awards and premiums will improve customer loyalty, employee morale and productivity.

## *Summer/Fall 2011*

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## *How to Manage Your Online Reputation*

**M**anaging your brand reputation online is crucial. Even if your company isn't active in social media, your customers and prospects are — and they're talking about you. What's more, today's customers give more credibility to what their peers are saying on blogs, industry discussion forums and review sites than they do to your advertising and marketing efforts.

The first step is to monitor what's being said. Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) is a free, easy tool that emails you an alert whenever a term you select, such as your company name or your competitor's name, is used online.

Next, respond to positive comments by saying thank you and including a link back to your website or helpful content. Respond to negative remarks by saying that you'd like to understand and resolve the issue. Then contact the commenter directly.



Finally, work to proactively build a positive online reputation. Create professional accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube and post photos, videos, helpful tips and other engaging content people will value. Award fans and commenters with exclusive offers and rewards like t-shirts, hats and fun products related to your business. Then spread the word about your online presence by printing your URLs on useful items such as mouse pads, USB hubs, mouse pads, pens and note holders.



You can also use bloggers to help build your reputation. For example, Wishbone sent influential "mommy bloggers" two gift baskets, one for the blogger to try (and write about), and one to give to a reader. Each basket had a logo'd salad spinner, storage container and vegetable peeler, along with a gift card and three bottles of Wishbone salad dressing. This was a great way to get others talking about their products online.

We can help you with items that will spread a positive image of your company and its online efforts. Contact us today!

#### ROUTETO:

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## An Employee Perk that Really Pays Off

There's an easy, low-cost perk you can offer employees that boosts productivity as well as morale: coffee.

According to a recent study by Alterra Coffee Roasters, 38% of American office workers say they can't live without coffee. They drink an average of three cups a day, and 65% drink it at work. Further, 30% said they drink coffee at work because it helps them focus and increases their productivity.



With gourmet coffee shop prices rising, your staff will appreciate this benefit even more. Be sure to include those who don't drink coffee by offering tea, hot chocolate and hot cider, too.

Remind staff of the perk with branded coffee pots, mugs, travel tumblers, logo'd napkins, coasters and USB warmers. Create a lasting impression with clients by keeping extra mugs on hand to give to office visitors.



Whether you plan to start offering your employees this benefit or want to "perk" up your current coffee program, we can help with the accessories you need. Start your program today!

### Lagniappe

(a little something extra)

## Quotable Quotes

"The past is a ghost, the future a dream, and all we ever have is now."  
—Bill Cosby

"Business is never so healthy as when, like a chicken, it must do a certain amount of scratching around for what it gets."  
—Henry Ford

"A two-year-old is kind of like having a blender, but you don't have a top for it."  
—Jerry Seinfeld

"Guilt: the gift that keeps on giving."  
— Erma Bombeck

## Saving Green by Going Green

Introducing eco-friendly measures in your office can benefit more than just the environment. Reducing your consumption of energy, water and office supplies can also cut your operational costs. So here are some ideas for greening your office and adding some "green" to your bottom line:

- **Create a "green team."** Put a team of employees in charge of brainstorming ways to cut consumption and monitor usage. Make it fun with special badges, pins or hats.
- **Post reminders.** Use posters, signs and magnets to remind employees to conserve water, turn off the lights when they leave a room, and switch off computers, printers and other equipment when not in use.
- **Stock up.** Instead of disposable cups, plates and utensils, stock the breakroom with reusable or biodegradable items, and choose towels and napkins made from recycled paper. Hand out reusable water bottles and give employees USB drives to reduce paper and ink use.
- **Spread the word.** Promote your green efforts among employees with tote bags, pen holders shaped like recycling bins, pocket sliders with conservation tips, and erasers, stress relievers and jar openers with the recycle logo.
- **Create a contest.** Reward the department that reduces its office supply use the most. Prizes can include bamboo photo frames and organic cotton t-shirts.



Your efforts can build a more positive image of your company with clients and prospects, too. Be sure to let them know about your initiatives through the use of green promotional products.

### Product Spotlight...

## Dress 'em in Style: Corporate Apparel

Logo'd apparel is a great way to turn your employees into brand ambassadors, whether at tradeshows and events or on sales calls.



When it comes to shirts, focus on comfort and convenience. Polo shirts in performance fabrics that wick moisture or provide sun protection are great for golf events, company picnics, and anyone who spends time outdoors. Employees will appreciate the ease of non-wrinkle fabric in long-sleeve shirts, especially when traveling for tradeshows and meetings.

For a dressier look, include a nice tie for the men and a scarf for the women. These can be



ordered in your brand colors or with your logo, and make a thoughtful incentive or executive gift. Accessories like watches, bracelets and earrings will also be appreciated.

Finally, don't forget about outwear. Your employees will wear windbreakers and jackets with microfleece lining on weekends and around town, giving you maximum brand exposure while keeping them warm and dry.



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## Time for Tradeshow Success

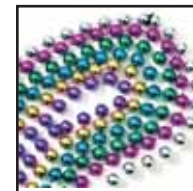
Ista North America, a utilities services company, faced a huge challenge as it planned for its biggest tradeshow of the year, in New Orleans. The budget already smaller than most of their competitors' had been cut by 10%. The show was a day shorter than in previous years. And their complicated services couldn't be summed up in a quick sales pitch. The company needed a way to attract high-quality leads to its show booth and then keep them there as long as possible.

According to Exhibitor magazine, the company sent its top clients and prospects a pre-show email offering a shuttle ride from the airport to their hotel. Those who signed up were sent a branded luggage tag and were met at the airport by staff wearing a logo'd t-shirt. Riders were given Mardi Gras beads, cold washcloths, drinks and



snacks while staff used the 30-minute ride to talk about their services.

At the show, the



company handed out sunglasses to fit its "Look" and "See" show theme. Ista also gave out more luggage tags, with prizes awarded to attendees who were spotted with the tags in the show



aisles. The exhibit included several activities and games to keep attendees engaged and in the booth, where staff could interact with them.

Ista reported that this was its most successful show ever. Attendees spent an average of 30 minutes in the booth

— triple the time spent in previous years — and the company generated 42% more leads.

Ask us how we can make your next tradeshow a big success. Call Now!

## The Riddler

### YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A FREE GIFT

**Q:** You throwaway the outside and cook the inside. Then you eat the outside and throw away the inside. What did you eat?

Note: The first five people to correctly answer the riddle will win a free gift. Email, call or fax your answer (see form on back). Answer to last issue's riddle: A River.

## New and Unique Products

Here's our latest roundup of some of the newest and most unique promotional products available:

• **Light it Up** — Having a flashlight on hand is as easy as carrying your cell phone, thanks to this convenient cell phone light. It has an adhesive strip to easily attach to cell phones, PDAs and other gadgets.



• **Stay Flexible** — This full-size flexible keyboard rolls up, so it's easy to use on the go. But it's also waterproof and can even be rinsed off, which makes it especially ideal for restaurants, medical facilities and dental offices (and anyone who has ever spilled something on their keyboard)!



• **Promote in Style** — These four-color cards include a promotional item for extra impact. They are available in single or double fold, with mini chocolate bars, dental floss, lip balm, mint tins, mint cards, lollipops or chocolate coins. It's a great way to dress up your brochure, introduce new products, drive traffic to a website, offer a special or coupon, list services, provide a take-out menu, and much more.



THOUGHTS OF SEASONAL CHANGES

Summer is the time when one sheds one's tensions with one's clothes, and the right kind of day is jeweled balm for the battered spirit. A few of those days and you can become drunk with the belief that all's right with the world.

~Ada Louise Huxtable

Do what we can, summer will have its flies.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

A life without love is like a year without summer.

~Swedish Proverb

There shall be eternal summer in the grateful heart.

~Celia Thaxter

In summer, the song sings itself.

~William Carlos Williams



Dear Addy,

ANSWERS TO YOUR PROMOTIONAL QUESTIONS

Q: We're interested in creating a customer loyalty program for our car wash. Can you help?

A: There are a number of great promotional products you can use to reward your customers and generate



repeat business. Show customers you care by giving them useful items they can keep in their car, such as sunglasses cases, bag grips, first aid kits and car shades. You can also create a punch-card program where repeat visits earn customers rewards of increasing value, from car coasters to tire gauges, auto safety kits, coolers and trunk organizers.



Q: What's a good way to show our support of our local school sports teams?



A: Flags or pennants in the school colors are great for booster clubs and parents. But why not display your support to the whole school — and their families? Fill backpacks or insulated lunch bags with book covers, pens, rulers, pencil kits, and buttons featuring the school mascot.



NEED HELP? SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS.

Please copy and fax or mail your request

Do you enjoy reading our newsletter? Call, fax or email us with your comments.

This Newsletter Provides Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image and Profits.

Want to make your next promotion a success? Please contact us at:

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I need: literature, pricing, samples of these Products:

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Address (if different from addressee):

Phone/Fax/Email:

Riddle Answer: