

Promotional Products

THE PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS OPPORTUNITY

Promotional products are items branded with a company logo, slogan, or motto. Also known as swag and promotional merchandise, they are generally distributed by organizations to their clients, prospective customers, and employees.

The promotional products industry stands out because it doesn't manufacture the items that it sells. Firms will purchase magnets, calendars, mugs, T-shirts, and a wide range of other products, which are then customized to meet the needs of a client.

The industry is comprised of two different types of businesses:

1. Suppliers that customize the products
2. Distributors that take orders from customers and work with suppliers to create products

MARKET SIZE

According to the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), 2021 promotional products sales in the U.S. reached \$22 billion.

TYPES OF PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

There are many types of promotional products. Here are key categories and examples:

- **Drinkware:** Water bottles, flasks, beverage sleeves, tumblers, mugs, thermoses, stadium cups, pitchers, decanters, glassware
- **Wearables:** Footwear, sunglasses, aprons, gloves, vests, robes, scarves, baseball caps, flat bill caps, visors, bandanas, headbands, uniforms, shirts, outerwear
- **Writing:** Pens, pencils, markers, highlighters, stylus pens, erasers
- **Events:** Balloons, tents, flags, banners, signage, table covers, napkins, lanyards, badge holders, wristbands
- **Home:** Appliances, utensils, placemats, oven mitts, potholders, cutting boards, measuring devices, coasters, bottle openers, magnetic clips, garden tools, barbecue grill sets, flashlights, mats, night lights, candles, fly swatters, ash trays
- **Buttons & Badges:** Embroidered patches, button pins, name badges, clothing magnets
- **Games & Toys:** Playing cards, stuffed animals, coloring books, puzzles, stress relievers, piggy banks
- **Technology:** USB drives, phone cases, popsockets, cell phone wallets, phone stands, power banks, Bluetooth speakers, headphones, wireless earbuds
- **Travel/Travel Accessories:** Passport cases, toiletry cases, luggage tags, garment bags
- **Pet:** Litter scoops, leashes, collars, pet carriers

KEY USER MARKETS

- Education
- Financial
- Healthcare
- Non-Profit
- Construction
- Government
- Associations
- Real Estate
- Automotive
- Professionals: Doctors, Lawyers, Accountants

ENTRY INTO THE SEGMENT

There are two ways to enter the promotional products market — either as a supplier or distributor. For those looking to become suppliers/producers of promotional products, there are various processes for customizing items, including printing, etching, and embroidery.

Here is list of key methods for producing promotional products:

- Embroidery
- Etching
- Screen printing
- Heat-transfer printing
- Pad printing
- Embossing and debossing
- Digital printing
 - UV
 - Eco-solvent
 - Dye sublimation
- Flexography
- Foil stamping

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

- Assess the opportunity to sell promotional products to current customers.
- Consider entering the market as a distributor to test the waters and learn if moving to in-house production will be a profitable option.
- Choose products carefully and start by offering a limited number of products.
- Use the resources of associations serving producers and distributors of promotional products.
- Read industry publications, including *Promo Marketing* magazine (magazine.promomarketing.com).
- Visit promotional product suppliers at the PRINTING United Expo.

LEARN MORE ON THE SHOW FLOOR*

*List may not include all related exhibitors. For a full list, download the PRINTING United Expo mobile app.

About Promotional Apparel

- Apparel Zone — C8915

Screen Printing

- Brown Manufacturing Group — C10019, C8025
- GPE A. Ardenghi SRL — C10537
- GSG — C7724, C7925
- Lawson Screen & Digital Products — C7630
- M&R Printing Equipment — C6918
- ROQ US — C9707
- Vastex — C1011

Digital Printing

- Durst Image Technology — N1043
- Kornit Digital — C7507
- Mimaki — C8123
- MUTOH America — C10124
- Ricoh DTG — C6431
- Roland DGA Corporation — C8030

Heat Transfer

- Advanced Innovative Technologies — C10707
- B-Flex America — C7530
- STAHL — C8724

Embroidery Technology

- MEEVO — N1171
- Melco International — C10515
- Ricoma Embroidery Machines — C9107

Direct to Shape/Object

- Direct Color Systems — C5724
- ECore Printing — C11011
- ImPress Systems — N2209
- Inkcups — C9939
- LogoJET — C10015
- LSINC Corporation — C6115

Providers

- Empire Screen Printing — C9648
- Fiberlok Technologies — C11017
- Innovative Digital Systems — C11115
- Stouse — N623