

**ONE  
INDUSTRY.**

**ONE  
PURPOSE.**

**ONE  
VOICE.**

**PUBLICITY TOOLKIT**



**WEEK**



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## **PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT**

Resources in this toolkit include "How-to" instruction as well as detailed plans, tips and tools. Information specific to different types of event strategies is available for easy access.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Whether used as a standalone medium or part of an integrated communications campaign, promotional products are one of the most effective forms of advertising. Promotional products are a sensory medium. Adding a message to a product turns an ordinary message into a marketing experience an audience can smell, taste, see, hear and touch. They are the most tangible and long-lasting form of advertising with inherent attributes like no other, fulfilling a brand's need for social, intellectual, and educational engagement and entertainment. The promotional products industry offers incredible products and creative client services—and combined they are invaluable! Given all this, the promotional products industry should have no difficulty developing a strong buy-in from buyers and the general public and enjoy incredible support and recognition, right?

While study after study shows that promotional products are a highly cost-effective and efficient advertising medium, getting support in a tangible form is often a challenge. The reason for this is simple: the buyer does not understand the actual (intrinsic and economic) purpose and value of the medium. The buyer and general public often do not regard promotional products as a mainstream advertising channel and doesn't know what they can do for them, and correspondingly, how they can be used to garner a strategic advantage.

Public relations and communications are essential in bridging the gap. Beyond promoting the industry, public relations is about making the industry's mission relevant and important to our target audience. As with all mission-driven initiatives, Promotional Products Work! Week will work best when it is carefully planned and directly related to the goals of each organization as well as the industry.



## 10 IDEAS FOR PROMOTION

### **1. Recruit every member of the organization to the public relations team.**

Conduct a mini-training session or brown bag lunch to make sure everyone can articulate the organization's key messages for Promotional Products Work! Week. Consider printing a 30-second event description or "elevator speech" that includes your key messages on a laminated card for all team members to keep with them as a reminder.

### **2. Do a communications audit.**

Put together a list of all your existing communications tools and assets such as newsletter, website, blog, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, email signature, news release(s), printed collateral or paid advertising. Create a communications plan and publishing schedule to publicize your PPW! Week schedule of events. Add the Promotional Products Work! Week messaging and graphics (See PPW! Week [Resources](#)) to each and begin to publish according to your communications plan.

### **3. Create a destination-based event for a business gathering.**

Host a hospitality function that includes an open house, facility tour, lunch and learn or meet and greet. Invite customers, clients, prospects, vendors, suppliers, government officials or local dignitaries. Present the Promotional Products Work! ADvocate™ presentation to distributors and buyers; make an important announcement; or host an awards and recognition reception. You benefit by getting key opinion leaders and influencers to your event, facility or office!

### **4. Leverage your organization's vendor relationships.**

Those who do business with you are your natural supporters. They might be happy to sponsor a program or event in exchange for recognition or logo placement on your website or in a news release. Try asking them!

### **5. Mine your data and share your knowledge.**

Consider tabulating sales data to identify success metrics and trends. Reveal fashion tips, favorite colors, case studies, sales tips, etc. Or conduct your own customer survey and share the results with the media and your customers or prospects.

### **6. Take advantage of Promotional Products Work! Week**

Offer special contests, promotions or celebrations, and invite the media to cover the kick-off or conclusion. Make the events as visually interesting as possible, and make sure the broadcast media as well as print media know what you're doing, such as a cause for kids, product donation, benefit for the police and/or fire departments, food drive or other volunteer project in your community.

**7. Remind your community—and the media**—that your organization is an important contributor to the city and state. Quantify the impact in the form of commerce, jobs, taxes, citizen support at the local, state and national levels (refer to the PPAI [Little Black Book](#) for your state's statistics). **Consider compiling a press kit that includes a company backgrounder, executive bios, fact sheet, company history and a Promotional Products Work! Week news release. Distribute it to the local media.**

**8. The media love to cover local angles for national awareness events.**

Jump on the bandwagon by hosting events on each day during Promotional Products Work! Week. Because news activities tend to ebb and flow, one of your best chances to get coverage from a variety of media is to host a variety of events that appeal to reporters with different interests such as business, marketing and media, community, fashion, government and legislative and charitable efforts.

**9. Network—get out into the community and take every opportunity to let people know why Promotional Products Work! Speak for the industry.**

Practice your “elevator speech” and use it whenever you have the chance. Make ADvocate presentations to high school marketing classes, colleges and universities, civic groups like Rotary International and Kiwanis Club, as well as more specialized local business organizations. Research where the key influencers are involved in the community, and target their events.

**10. Look for unique milestones, anniversaries and individuals to commemorate or recognize.**

Perhaps your local government official or legislator is a dedicated champion of business, or your organization is celebrating a meaningful milestone or anniversary. Human interest stories are always popular with the media.

# USING THE PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS WORK! WEEK CAMPAIGN

Promotional Products Work! Week is celebrated every year on an annual basis.

Most of the ideas below can be adapted for events during PPW! Week, or for any year-round implementation. Get your entire company and community involved.

The following suggestions should help you get started.

- Announce Promotional Products Work! Week to your organization, your clients and customers, community and the media.
- Use or customize the Promotional Products Work! Week promotional materials with your logo.
- Give personalized products to all visitors who come into your office or facility during the Week!
- Ask your mayor to read a proclamation about Promotional Products Work! Week and thus officially announce Promotional Products Work! Week. A sample proclamation is in the kit.
- Develop a calendar for your Promotional Products Work! Week events and send it, along with a news release, ahead of time to your local media. Remember to develop and distribute a release describing each event.
- Make appointments to see in person the right people at the most important media outlets you want to promote your efforts.
- Distribute your Promotional Products Work! Week materials and invite your employees, customers and community to reply with a list of reasons why promotional products work by filling in a line in the email.
- Wear, display or distribute your Promotional Products Work! apparel and products and urge your employees and clients to participate. Add your company's name to the items if you wish.
- Using your schedule as the guide, adapt and distribute to your local media—newspaper, bloggers, social media, radio, and television—the news release(s) in the kit. Try to add a few specific details about how promotional products add value for advertisers and marketers and your company contributions to the community in each release. Add pictures, too, if you have them.
- Write and distribute additional releases for your favorite reasons Promotional Products Work!
- Encourage clients to write a letter, paragraph or phrase about how promotional products work for them. Find a way to share these remarks in writing or orally. Select some of the client remarks to submit to your local newspaper as letters to the editor (with the writers' approvals, of course) or as part of a news release or a regular blog column.
- Conduct a photo/video contest inviting clients to enter creative photos or videos of Promotional Products at Work, at Home, at a Sporting Event or at a Concert.
- Plan special events around the whole Promotional Products Work! Week campaign. Make them fun and festive.
- During the celebratory period and year-round, feature one or more reasons why Promotional Products Work! each day. Include the specific reasons on a calendar that you can print and distribute to your clients and the press.
- Continue your PPW! Week campaign throughout the year.
- Hold an event in your office/facility that will interest your clients and appeal to the visual media—an event that will make good video and pictures. Consider a timely exhibit of antique or vintage promotional products from your company collection.
- Partner with other local organizations to plan, implement, and cross-promote events.
- Request an ADvocate speaker (or become an [ADvocate](#)) to talk about how and why promotional products work to local groups.
- Conduct a workshop or just an informal tour or meet and greet, for more in-depth knowledge about some of the products offered in or by your company.
- Pitch a good story idea to a local newspaper or business journal, radio or public broadcasting station—a panel discussion, a fundraiser, a regular product announcement about what's new or trending.
- Use the *PPAI Research and infographics* as part of your Promotional Products Work! Week campaign.
- **No doubt you will think of other ways to bring Promotional Products Work! Week to your community's attention. Please share your PPW! Week suggestions and your success stories. Send them to [PR@ppai.org](mailto:PR@ppai.org), and the PPW! Week Committee will share them with others.**



# MEDIA RELATIONS

In many ways, the press is the same as the public. What you tell the press, you tell the public if your message is posted, printed, or broadcast by the media. Of course, working with the media involves a specific set of skills and tools. This section is designed as a review and action checklist that will help provide many of the tools available to you to get your Promotional Products Work! Week message out through the media.

This section will cover some essential, such as:

- writing press releases
- submitting letters to the editor
- submitting guest newspaper columns
- attaining editorial board visits and supportive editorials
- creating media lists
- cultivating relationships with the media
- interviewing techniques
- issues management

In short, this section provides a comprehensive series of how-to guidelines that will make even the most seemingly difficult aspects of media relations attainable.

## News Releases

### Considerations

- Be sure to communicate the uniqueness of your story. What sets your event apart from others in your community? Give the media an angle to interest them in your news.
- Is your story timely? Be certain there is some aspect of your news that makes it of interest now, whether it's an event, new products, or a significant recognition or award.
- Is your story visual? Describe any local color, decorations, community partners or dignitaries that will be part of your program. This "flavor" will help your news or event appeal to photographers and television stations. For radio, highlight special speakers or interview opportunities.
- Be aware of deadlines. Magazine deadlines can be as much as three months before the publication date, television three weeks, weekly publications two to four weeks and daily papers one to two weeks for feature stories or calendar listings.
- Consider the news value of your story idea. Will a general audience care about the news you're announcing? Will the media outlet see it as an appropriate story for their readers or viewers? Remember, you have to get through the reporter's and editor's "filters."
- Determine your audience. Are you trying to reach the local community? Or, a smaller segment, such as your legislators, or clients? Consider all of the publications in your community as targets for your news, not just the daily paper and television stations.
- Consider translating your media materials in Spanish as well as English if your program will be presented in a bilingual format. In most cases, English materials are accepted by Spanish-language media outlets.

### The following elements should always be included in a news release:

- Contact information—make sure you include a name, phone numbers (office and mobile, if possible), and an email address for the media to contact with questions.
- Who—include the name of your organization, executives, quoted sources, sponsors, speakers, etc.
- What—the name of the event, a description of the announcement, what your news is about
- When—day of the week, dates, and times (if applicable to your news)
- Where—include the physical address and directions
- Why—describe the need for the new program or event
- How—this may include where information may be found such as a website, Facebook, Twitter
- Headline—the title of the release
- Date—the date you are sending the news release
- Boilerplate—a paragraph at the end of the news release that describes your organization and its mission, possibly ongoing initiatives, and includes the name, location, website and phone number



# SAMPLE RELEASE

(company logo)

For more information, contact: (name)  
(XXX-XXX-XXXX) office; 123-456-XXXX mobile  
(email address)

(Month) XX, 2014

## One Of The Oldest Advertising Industry Media Celebrates Global Awareness Event—Promotional Products Work! Week

**(Company Name) Hosts Community Events, (PPW! Week dates)**

(CITY), (ST), (Month XX, 2014 — (company name) ([www.your url.com](http://www.your url.com)), (very brief company description), joins thousands of promotional products businesses around the country hosting special events, partnering with local businesses, and volunteering at and donating to neighborhood nonprofits and schools to celebrate [Promotional Products Work! Week](#), sponsored by [Promotional Products Association International](#).

(paragraph describing your PPW! Week activities)

(Executive quote)

The \$18.5 billion promotional products industry with its more than 33,741 businesses—97 percent of which are small businesses—and 498,853 professionals will work to create awareness for the value promotional products deliver to advertisers and marketers; as well as the positive impact promotional products businesses have on the U.S. economy, job creation and community enrichment.

Consumers love promotional products! PPAI research clearly demonstrates the power of the advertising medium as the most cost-effective way to reach a targeted audience in a tangible, long-lasting and memorable manner. In fact, 88 percent of people can recall the company and brand on their promotional product and 50 percent have a favorable impression of the advertiser, while 83 percent of people like promotional products and 47 percent keep them for more than a year.

Additional information, including information about local events, can be found at (company website).

**About (company name)**

(brief boilerplate/company description)

###

[Promotional Products Work! Week Logo](#)  
[Promotional Products Work Research Infographic\\*](#)

\* [Source](#): Promotional Products Association International: 2012 Promotional Products—Awareness & Usage Study, 2011 Sales Volume Study; Why End-Buyers Choose Promotional Products & Other Media; Effectiveness Of Promotional Products As An Advertising Medium; The Key Ingredient to Integrated Marketing

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OR CONGRESS

## Considerations

A letter to the editor can be an effective way to advocate for the industry and give your company's perspective on legislative issues. Be sure to state your contributions to the local economy, jobs and community. TIP: Use PPAI's Little Black Book to get the industry facts for your state.

All newspapers prefer short letters (about 100 words—no more than 150 words) that express a firm opinion about a topical issue, using local examples clearly and concisely.

Most daily newspapers accept letters online or through their website. Other newspapers receive letters by email.

It's very important to include your name, address, telephone number(s), and email address for verification—you can ask that the newspaper not print your contact information. However, they must be able to use your name; newspapers will not print anonymous letters.

## SAMPLE LETTER – To Editor

Dear Editor,

Did you know that there are nearly 33,741 promotional products companies in the United States generating \$18.5 billion in annual revenues and employing more than 498,853 Americans? More than 97 percent of the businesses in the promotional products industry are considered to be small businesses—and face the challenges unique to this business category. I am writing to familiarize you with the use of promotional products in advertising and marketing, the promotional products industry and my local business.

In the state of (State), there are more than [\[number of companies from LBB\]](#) promotional products companies employing some [\[number of employees from LBB\]](#) workers and generating more than [\[state revenue from LBB\]](#) in annual revenues.

Promotional products are logoed or imprinted items that educate, recruit, highlight safety awareness, support worthy causes, and encourage healthy living and lifestyle choices. Promotional products recognize and reward employee achievements and inspire action. Promotional products are used to celebrate milestones, sign legislation and reinforce critical messages.

Viral, mobile, highly targeted and inexpensive, promotional products are the only advertising medium capable of engaging all five senses. Adding a message to a tangible product turns an ordinary message into a marketing experience the audience can see, touch, hear, smell and even taste.

Promotional products are proven to be one of the most effective media available to advertisers. Because promotional products are tangible, useful and highly targeted to the audience they reach, 47 percent of consumers retain them for more than a year, delivering the highest rate of reach, recall and return on investment in the advertising industry.

Promotional products are the most cost-effective method for small and large businesses to market their products and services. These products are often used to reinforce personal relationships with customers, clients and prospects. In this period of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to provide a personal connection.

I am happy to talk with you about the effectiveness of promotional products and the vibrant business community I represent. I can be reached at (phone and email).

Sincerely,

(company executive)

# SAMPLE LETTER – To Congress

[Congress Person's Name and Address]

[Date]

Did you know that there are nearly 33,741 promotional products companies in the United States generating \$18.5 billion in annual revenues and employing more than 498,853 Americans? More than 97 percent of the businesses in the promotional products industry are considered to be small businesses—and they face the challenges unique to this business category. I am writing to introduce you to the use of promotional products in marketing, the promotional products industry and my business.

I am both a member of the promotional products industry, a small business owner and your constituent.

Promotional products are logoed or imprinted items that educate, recruit, highlight safety awareness, urge organ donations, and encourage healthy living and lifestyle choices. Promotional products recognize and reward employee achievements and inspire action. Promotional products are used to celebrate milestones, sign legislation and reinforce critical messages.

Viral, mobile, highly targeted and inexpensive, promotional products are the only advertising medium capable of engaging all five senses. Adding a message to a tangible product turns an ordinary message into a marketing experience the audience can see, touch, hear, smell and even taste.

Promotional products are the most cost-effective method for smaller businesses to market their products and services. These products are often used to reinforce personal relationships with customers, clients and prospects. In this period of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to provide a personal connection.

In the state of (State), there are more than [\[number of companies from LBB\]](#) promotional products companies employing some [\[number of employees from LBB\]](#) workers and generating more than [\[state revenue from LBB\]](#) in annual revenues.

If you have questions about promotional products, the industry or my business, please feel free to contact me.

Please keep the unique needs, challenges and interests of the promotional products industry in mind when considering legislation that could hamper the success of this dynamic business sector.

Thank you.

[Your Name and contact information]

## How-To: Take Action

PPAI is asking the promotional products industry to **'Protect The Industry'** and **'Keep Promotional Products Working'** by contacting their members of Congress during **Promotional Products Work! Week**, February 25-March 1, 2013.

- [Join PPAI Leaders Without Leaving Your Office—Write A Member Of Congress](#)  
Ask them to keep the unique needs, challenges and interests of the promotional products industry in mind when considering legislation.
- Learn [how to advocate](#) for the industry.
- Be a part of the conversation—[on Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#), [#PromotionalProductsWork](#), [#PPWWeek](#), [@PromoProductsWk](#), [@PPAI\\_HQ](#) and at [www.PromotionalProductsWork.org](#)

# PROCLAMATION REQUEST LETTER

[Recipient Name]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [Mayor/Governor/Other Elected Official name]:

As we approach the inaugural Promotional Products Work! Week, (PPW! Week dates), we ask you to honor promotional products companies and professionals and their contributions to our (city/state).

Promotional Products Work! Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek ways to engage in their community.

Enclosed you will find a sample proclamation and more information about Promotional Products Work! Week, which is sponsored by Promotional Products Association International, founded in 1903, and (your company name).

[company name] plans to celebrate Promotional Products Work! Week in [name of your city] by [insert SHORT description of your planned recognition events]. We invite you to join our celebration of promotional products industry and its professionals at [insert information about your event].

If you have any questions, please call [local contact]. We would be honored to have you participate and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[your name]  
[title, company's name]

## A SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Below is a sample proclamation that your member of Congress or other local official may use to declare (PPW! Week dates), Promotional Products Work! Week in your community.

**Whereas** the week of (*PPW! Week dates*), is Promotional Products Work! Week, and the theme is “Promotional Products Work! for (city or state)”; and

**Whereas** the Promotional Products Association International, founded in 1903, through its sponsorship of Promotional Products Work! Week, has educated the public, policy-makers, and community about the strength of promotional product businesses, many small family-owned and operated, their contributions important to our (city or state) through workforce, volunteerism, revenue and community partnership; and

**Whereas** the promotional products industry is comprised of 33,741 companies, 97 percent of which are small businesses, and 498,853 professionals; and

**Whereas** small businesses form the backbone of our local economy, generating jobs and improving the quality of life for citizens; and

**Whereas** the City of (city) (or) State of (state) supports the efforts of local small businesses and recognizes the critical role they play in our community; and

**Whereas** Promotional Products Work! Week is a global campaign to cultivate business for promotional products companies and professionals in our community; and

**Whereas** Promotional Products Work! Week will stimulate economic growth locally for promotional products businesses and promotional products professionals; and

**Whereas** promotional products companies and professionals are vital to our future as an entrepreneurial and productive nation; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, [ name and title of your elected official ],** on behalf of the (city/state) and the citizens of (city/state), do hereby proclaim (*PPW! Week dates*), **Promotional Products Work! Week** in [city or state].

**In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the (City/State) to be affixed this (date).**

---

Signature

[ Insert City/State or Other Official Seal ]

# GUEST COLUMNS/EDITORIALS

## Considerations

A guest column is a longer (roughly 500-word) advocacy piece. Because newspapers have different policies and amounts of space for guest columns, it is best to check with your newspaper before drafting a column. Depending on the topic you wish to write about, consider who might be the best messenger. You might want to ask your top executive to write the guest column, rather than a staff member.

## SAMPLE GUEST EDITORIAL

### Why Promotional Products Work

(Hint: They're More Than Just Products)

If you, like millions of others, watched this year's Super Bowl for more than the game, you know the power of advertising backed by money and research; companies pitch brands and slogans that attempt to leave a lasting effect on the consumer. Many like to believe those messages don't have much impact, but evidence overwhelmingly points to the power of persuasion.

It may be subtle, but persuasion by advertisers shows levels of success that prove television, radio, mobile and the Internet can—and do—draw consumers to their brands. They must compete not only with each other across traditional media for the hearts, minds and dollars of the consumer, but they must compete with outside stimuli once the consumer walks away from the television, shuts down the computer or drives past a billboard.

What does leave a lasting impression is the promotional product. A \$18.5 billion industry, promotional products are designed for staying power, and industry research has proven their power as an effective advertising medium.

A new study just released by Promotional Products Association International conducted among travelers at New York's La Guardia Airport revealed new insights into promotional products' value and effectiveness. Of the travelers surveyed who could recall receiving a promotional product in the previous 12 months, 88 percent could recall the name of the advertiser and 85 percent have done business with an advertiser as a result of receiving an item.

Imagine being able to craft a message one time, and see that message spread to an audience of hundreds, thousands and even millions. Now imagine that message being delivered by a t-shirt, a pen or a beverage cup. Promotional products professionals work with Fortune 500 companies and top ad agencies to create experiences people love through a product they can actually use.

The same study by PPAI reports that 82 percent of respondents possess at least one and as many as 10 promotional items, with 81 percent keeping them because they are useful. What's more, 53 percent said they use these products at least once a week and even more—47 percent—said they keep promotional products for more than a year.

Powerhouse advertisers aren't the only ones who earn a mighty piece of the advertising pie; from mom-and-pop to mid-sized companies, promotional products professionals apply research-based technical expertise to deliver the hottest products and production techniques to their clients' campaigns, improving their reach and boosting their bottom lines as well.

What comes to mind when you think of the color PINK? How about a red lapel ribbon? Or a yellow wristband? Promotional products work because they leave a lasting impression in the hearts, minds and hands of recipients. The messages live on because the products are memorable, unique and personal. They are the only sensory medium that gives the consumer a tangible memory of a relationship to the brand. Promotional products are shown to build communities of like-minded consumers with a shared sense of brand loyalty.

# CREATE A MEDIA LIST

Because media contacts are constantly changing, one of the easiest ways to ensure an accurate media list is to research the media first-hand. Read. Watch. Listen. PPAI also has resources available upon request.

## Who to Contact

At television stations, the assignments editor should be your first choice. Also, contact morning and noon show producers if you are interested in being or placing a guest on a daytime talk show. Some stations and newspapers may have a reporter assigned to covering local/small business, marketing and media, manufacturing, or community events.

At radio stations, contact the news director and talk show producers or hosts.

At magazines, contact the editor or managing editor. If your news is an event, send it to the calendar editor.

At daily newspapers, depending on your news, contact:

- Section editors (metro, marketing and media, business)
- Community/nonprofit reporters
- Photo editor
- Editorial page editor (for advocacy and issues)
- Calendar editors (for events)
- Society columnists (if planning a fundraiser or VIP event)
- Education reporters
- Online content editors

At weekly and college newspapers, you will usually contact the editor. Most weekly newspapers are small publications with very small staffs.

# HOW TO CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDIA

## Become Helpful, Friendly and Accessible!

Respond quickly to questions from the media. Have a designated spokesperson for your region, company and tell others to notify the spokesperson promptly if reporters call. Reporters are nearly always on deadline and need answers quickly.

Attend media briefings. In larger cities, professional associations and newswire services often host “get to know the media” events. Get on the mailing lists and consider joining organizations such as the local public relations society, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Boards.

Gain an understanding of the media you want to encourage to cover your business. Read the newspapers, watch the local television news programming, and listen to the radio stations to which you will be sending information.

From time to time, send an article, news tip, or book suggestion to a reporter that you think they’d be interested in based on their past stories but that doesn’t have anything to do with your business. They will come to view you—and your company—as a resource.

Take a reporter or editor to lunch. Don’t go with a particular story in mind but bring background materials on your company and the industry and find out what types of stories they are interested in for future use.

Participate in media-sponsored events such as races, food drives or other causes. If possible, partner with the newspaper to put on one of their events or provide company volunteers to help. It’s a good chance to get to meet the reporters, editors, and producers and to cultivate a relationship.

Always be honest with reporters. It is essential to your credibility.



## **What NOT to Do**

- Don't send a news release to a number of editors and reporters at the same publication. Often, if reporters don't want to use the information, they'll pass it on to others who might be interested.
- Don't call reporters or editors to ask if they received the release. Most newsrooms get hundreds of releases each day, and they can get very cranky answering phone calls asking "did you get my news release?"
- Don't bury the most important information in your release—always put it in the first paragraph. Make sure all of the necessary details are in the release.
- Don't send reporters or editors information not in their purview. For example, don't send the community editor information about your new product launch.

## **Using Media Relations Tools: How and When**

In addition to the news release there are other media relations tools that come in handy in various situations.

### **The Pitch Letter**

If you don't have timely, hard news to announce, you may want to consider a pitch letter to generate coverage. These letters (today, they are almost always emails) are designed to sell a story to a specific reporter and give him or her story ideas. The email should be brief and to the point, beginning with your story idea and why you think this reporter and his or her media outlet would be interested. Supply a sentence or two of background information on your industry, business or event. Finally, offer to help the reporter conduct research, coordinate interviews and photo opportunities, and answer any questions he or she might have.

### **Media Alerts**

Media alerts serve as a follow-up or sometimes a replacement for a news release. They are condensed versions of news releases limited to one page that spell out the details of your event or announcement. They are formatted with headings such as "who" "what" "when" "where" and sometimes "why," "visuals," and always "contact." Media alerts are often sent a day or two before an event to serve as a reminder or as a standalone piece if an entire release isn't warranted (for example, a simple photo opportunity).

### **Fact Sheets**

These one- to two-page documents provide the media with a quick reference about your organization and the industry. Fact sheets are often used to supplement a news release by including statistical information, such as how many employees or volunteers your organization has, when your company was established, how many people you serve, and how you contribute to the business community. Download the Promotional Products Fact Book [here](#).

### **Biographies**

Biographies of key leaders such as your board of directors and executives are often needed for speaking engagements and as media background information. Bios should be short, factual pieces, no longer than one page. Biographical information should include areas of expertise, formal education, length of employment with the company or the trade, related experience and any unique information about community service or outside interests, especially if they might be newsworthy.

### **Backgrounder**

As the word implies, backgrounders are simply documents that provide background information about your organization or a particular issue you are addressing or initiatives your company is undertaking. You might also include information about your company's history, facts, products and industry.

### **FAQs**

The Frequently Asked Questions tool has become ubiquitous on websites and is also a handy tool for companies to have as part of their media materials. The question and answer sheets should include accurate, general information that may be most commonly asked about your company or business. Think creatively and include questions that provide the opportunity to list answers to common questions or address specific issues. Tell your company's story.

# SAMPLE PITCH LETTER

The “Pitch” Letter (Email)

**From:**

**Sent:**

**To:**

**Subject:** Promotional Products Work: The Facts

Hi XXX,

Did you know that there are nearly 33,741 promotional products companies in the United States generating \$18.5 billion in annual revenues and employing more than 498,853 Americans? More than 97 percent of the businesses in the promotional products industry are considered to be small businesses—and face the challenges unique to this business category. I am writing to familiarize you with the use of promotional products in advertising and marketing, the promotional products industry and my business.

I am both a member of the promotional products industry and a member of our community.

Promotional products are logoed or imprinted items that educate, recruit, highlight safety awareness, support worthy causes, and encourage healthy living and lifestyle choices. Promotional products recognize and reward employee achievements and inspire action. Promotional products are used to celebrate milestones, sign legislation and reinforce critical messages.

(company name) is a top employer in (city or state) with more than XXX employees who work and live in (city).

For future stories, if you'd like a spokesperson on (company's) position on related-issues, please contact me at, (email and direct phone).

Thank you,  
(name)

(Company,  
Address  
Phone  
Cell  
Email  
Website)

# MEDIA TRAINING

Media training involves practicing communicating messages effectively when you are the designated spokesperson or when training others to speak on your behalf.

## Interview Do's and Don'ts

### Do's

- Ask the reporter what will be covered in the interview so you (or the appropriate person) can be prepared.
- Know the points you want to make before your interview. What are your two or three key messages? Make sure you get them across early and often.
- Use the inverted pyramid technique in phrasing your statements and responses—make the most important point first.
- Do your homework. Read stories by the reporter or watch interviewer's technique with other guests (if television) before your interview or appearance.
- Use positive body language. Lean forward, make eye contact, and use your hands to gesture.
- For television in particular, speak in short, quotable phrases—preferably no more than 30 seconds.
- Make sure you understand a question before you answer.
- If you can't answer a question, explain why (briefly). If it's a print interview, find the information and get back to the reporter by their deadline.

### Don'ts

- Don't engage in an argument.
- Don't use profanity, professional jargon, or make off-color jokes.
- Don't speak off the record. Never say anything you don't want to appear in print or on the air.
- Don't speak from personal opinion—you are the company's or industry's spokesperson.
- Never say "no comment."

## INTERVIEW QUESTION TRANSITIONS AND TECHNIQUES

One of the most effective techniques that interviewees can use to help retain control of an interview is called "bridging." Verbal bridges allow an interviewee:

1. To steer a reporter back to relevant topics and key messages.
2. To move away from off topic subjects and back on to key messages.
3. To end every answer to every question with a strategic message.

### Bridging Techniques

When used appropriately, the following "bridges" can serve as effective tools of verbal control:

- That's not my area of expertise, but I think your audience would be interested in knowing that . . .
- Let me just add that . . .
- That reminds me . . .
- Let me answer you by saying that . . .
- That's an important point because . . .
- What that means is . . .
- Another thing to remember is . . .
- If you look at it closely, you'll find . . .
- I don't know. But, what I do know is . . .

## Flagging Techniques

You can give the reporter verbal clues about important comments so that you can stress key elements in your message.

- The most important point here is ...
- The underlying cause ...
- The ultimate goal is ...
- The real issue is...

## Hooking Techniques

You can let reporters know upfront you have several points to make, and you can use this technique to direct the discussion. Also, it lets the listener know you have several elements to cover.

- The first of the three elements involved in this issue...
- There are two primary rationales...
- We really have three important reasons for pursuing...

**Effective messages** are spoken in the language of the listener; in other words, the message means something to the person with whom you are communicating. Present information in terms of benefits to the listener. Don't just flash tons of statistics that may or may not click with the listener and only have meaning for you.

**Memorable messages** must include one or more of the following elements (know your audience when using any of the following):

- Light humor and for issues management only. Be aware, though, what is funny to you may not be funny to someone else. During times of issues management, humor rarely is effective.
- Alliteration
- Play on words
- Emotionally charged words
- Repetition

**Memorable and effective** messages also should fall under one of the following categories:

- Logical
- Authentic
- Action-oriented
- Believable
- Measurable
- Strike a nerve
- Timely
- Visionary

**Effective messages** are delivered clearly, directly, and empathetically. Never be condescending. Professional assistance with message development and media training is a prudent investment. People who know the most about an issue often find it the most difficult to create an effective message. Helpful hints:

- Determine what is the most important piece of information
- Ask yourself, who cares?
- Why do they care?
- How does the message fit into your overall branding?

# HOW TO BE AN INDUSTRY ADVOCATE

## What is an ADvocate™?

A certified, industry-trained speaker supported by PPAI and ASI to communicate and distribute the industry's information. It is an ongoing public relations effort that includes research, strategic market planning, writing, coaching, promotion, monitoring and evaluation.

## What is the purpose of the ADvocate program?

The [ADvocate](#) program should be considered a continuous and ongoing effort targeted to local colleges and universities and business and community groups aimed at:

- Educating audiences about the benefits of promotional products.
- Motivating people to work with highly qualified promotional products professionals.

This public relations effort is also particularly helpful in creating a face-to-face outlet to reach key audiences with the organization's messages as well as to dispel misconceptions about the promotional products industry.

Speakers can provide more personal contact than a news release that may or may not carry the planned message. The industry representative also can respond to specific audience questions, permitting members of the community to hear the message without media interpretation and clarifying fine points.

## KEY MESSAGES

- ☐ Promotional products work well as a standalone advertising medium or part of an integrated communications campaign.
- ☐ Promotional products are one of the most effective forms of advertising.
- ☐ Promotional products are a multi-sensory advertising medium.
- ☐ Adding a message to a product turns an ordinary message into a marketing experience an audience can smell, taste, see, hear and touch.
- ☐ Promotional products are the most tangible, long-lasting and cost-effective form of advertising.
- ☐ Promotional products impact consumers through a social, intellectual, educational and entertaining form or engagement.
- ☐ Promotional products are unique and customizable.
- ☐ Promotional products are a mainstream form of advertising.
- ☐ Promotional Products Work! Week is a celebration by the promotional products industry to raise awareness about promotional products as an advertising medium and the benefits of working with highly qualified promotional products professionals to develop and produce innovative advertising and branding strategies.
- ☐ In the U.S., the promotional products industry is a \$18.5 billion industry with more than 33,741 businesses—97 percent of which are small businesses—and 498,853 promotional products professionals.
- ☐ The promotional products industry has a positive impact on the U.S. economy and contributes (# of companies, sales revenues and jobs; refer to the PPAI [Little Black Book](#)) to the State of (state).
- ☐ Consumers Love Promotional Products!

## RESEARCH

- ☐ 88% of people recall the advertiser on promotional products
- ☐ 62% recall the message
- ☐ 85% did business with the advertiser after receiving a promotional product
- ☐ 83% of people like promotional products
- ☐ 81% keep them because they are useful
- ☐ 8 out of 10 people owns 1 to 10 promotional products
- ☐ 53% use promotional products once a week or more
- ☐ 47% keep promotional products for more than a year

# PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS WORK! WEEK POST-A-PIC

In anticipation of Promotional Products Work! Week, PPAI is sponsoring PPW! Post-A-Pic. As you may have read in *PPB* and *Newslink* and other announcements, promotional products companies everywhere will be celebrating. This opportunity allows you and us to gather information about PPW! Week activities. It is a “pic”ture or video a day of your company events and provides a forum for sharing what happens around the country.

We want to make sure hundreds of promotional products companies participate, as all of the information we collect will demonstrate **Promotional Products Work!**

To upload your pics or videos each day, please visit the Promotional Products Work! Facebook [page](#).

Thank you, in advance, for helping us make Promotional Products Work! Week a success! We look forward to finding out what happens during the week and look forward to sharing it with the entire industry!

## **How does Promotional Products Work! Week Post-A-Pic work?**

Promotional Products Work! Week is designed with days designated for open houses, factory tours, meet and greets, speaking on behalf of the industry, volunteering for or donating to a good cause, reaching out to your legislators and thanking your customers. Document it all in pictures and video.

1. Let clients and staff know you'll be taking “pics” of the week's activities.
2. Collect data, stories, pictures and video.
3. Upload that information to the Promotional Products Work! Week Facebook [page](#). Be sure to upload your information.

## ***What then?***

The promotional products industry benefits from the ideas and information gathered to create a bigger and better event and your story and images may even be featured in *PPB* magazine or *Newslink*. All the information is accessible to promotional products industry.

## **Easy Ways to Make Promotional Products Work! Week Post-A-Pic a Success for Your Company**

1. Share the results with staff, clients and the community.
2. Use the images, quotes and comments that you collect in your annual report.
3. Feature your participation and your customers in your next newsletter.
4. Share your results with your board, regional association and professional organizations.
5. Highlight the results on your website and share to the PPW! Week Facebook page.
6. Make a slideshow and run it at your next company or corporate event.
7. Make bold signs with your customer comments and display them throughout the office/facility.
8. Turn your results into a handout you can use when you visit media, legislators and other parties.
9. Track your results and efforts.
10. Use your handout as a standard resource sheet for your company.
11. Send an email information piece to clients, customers, business groups, and business partners featuring customer quotes.
12. Let your Facebook Friends and Twitter Followers know about your participation in PPW! Week Post-A-Pic.
13. Develop your own slideshow or Web page featuring the comments and photos.
14. Ask if your media outlets, Chamber of Commerce, professional organization, city or county government website can feature the statistics, the comments or the slideshow.
15. Design a graphic customer comment “word cloud” or infographic in color and print promotional handouts and share them with your customers and prospects.

# **16. Have Fun.**





**Promotional Products Work! WEEK**

**NOTES**

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# PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS WORK!

## Advertising Recall:



**88%**

recalled the advertiser

**62%**

recalled the message

## Eight In Ten Consumers Own A Promotional Product



## Top Reasons Why Promotional Products Work:



- Useful
- Attractive
- Informative
- Desirable
- Sentimental
- Fun

## Advertiser Influence:



**59%**

have a more favorable view of the brand

**85%**

did business with the brand after receiving a product



## Where Promotional Products Work:

Kitchen

**91%**

Workspace

**74%**

Bedroom

**55%**

## Top Five Product Categories Recalled

**41%**

Wearables

**35%**

Writing Instruments

**19%**

Drinkware

**15%**

Sporting Goods

**13%**

Pocket/Purse Items

## Top 5 Buyers

Education

Financial

Not-For-Profit

Health Care

Construction

## They LOVE It!

**47%**

of people keep promotional products for a year or more

Sources: Promotional Products Association International: The Influence of Promotional Products on Consumer Behavior; 2011 Sales Volume Study; Why End-Buyers Choose Promotional Products & Other Media; Effectiveness Of Promotional Products As An Advertising Medium; The Key Ingredient to Integrated Marketing

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