Mapping Out The Modern Consumer

2017 Consumer Study
A Get In Touch!™ project
This research project was created in 2016 as part of the Get In Touch! campaign, a $1.5 million industry branding initiative focused on raising awareness of the power of promotional products and elevating the position of promotional consultants. The results of this research can and should be used in support of the Get In Touch! campaign and the industry effort to help spread the promotional products message. Results will also be made available to the industry by PPAI in easy-to-use customizable tools. For more information about the Get In Touch! campaign, go to ppai.org/events/getintouch

**THIS STUDY CONFIRMS** U.S. consumers view promotional products as an important role in advertising. Consumers like promotional products. Consumers keep promotional products. Consumers have spoken and they praise promotional products as the leading advertising vehicle for brands.

In 2015, promotional products shared almost seven percent of the advertising market in the U.S. alone, at $21 billion; however, Promotional Products were **Ranked Highest** by consumers across all generations as the **MOST EFFECTIVE** advertising vehicle.

These findings also reinforced the results of previous consumer studies by pointing out that promotional products innately possess the qualities consumers value and are built to succeed across the board in reach, recall, resonance and reaction performance metrics.

This is good news for brands, marketers and the promotional products industry.

*Details about this study’s participants and methodology can be found on pages 14 and 15.*
Roughly eight in 10 admit to looking up the brand after receiving a promotional product, and 83% said they are more likely to do business with brands they’ve received promotional products from than brands they have not received promotional products from.

When asked to rate which advertising channels provide consumers with an incentive to take action, all generations regarded promotional products as most effective.
In 1992, PPAI launched a pioneering series of consumer studies as the industry’s first assessment of the role of promotional products within consumer lifestyle and behavior. While previous studies are commonly identified as airport intercepts, the 2017 Consumer Study is the first quantitative analysis of its kind. This new methodology expands upon previous findings and is designed to better measure the performance of promotional products among consumers to enhance our understanding of their role as an advertising channel.

Advertising has a tough job. While aiming to increase recall and improve resonance, advertising is also working to reach the majority of your target market at the right time—the moments that influence consumers’ decisions—all to encourage action. Advertising channels, such as promotional products, are the mediums brands use to communicate branding and messaging to consumers to accomplish marketing goals. But with so many options, how do brands choose their advertising channels?
Fortunately, brands can use key metrics to compare advertising channels and to guide campaign initiatives such as increasing awareness, solidifying a memorable impression, encouraging a favorable perception and ultimately inciting action. In this study, key metrics are used to evaluate the value of promotional products as an advertising channel as well as to compare promotional products to other advertising channels—providing you with solid sales tools.

**Five key metrics** were used to assess the value and weight of options used by survey respondents regarding each promotional product component: Reach, Recall, Resonance, Reaction and Relativity.

- **Reach**: Do promotional products elevate brand reach to deliver adequate exposure to recipients?
- **Recall**: Do promotional products produce high brand recall to generate recipient awareness of the brand?
- **Resonance**: Do promotional products enhance brand resonance to transfer a favorable attitude to recipients?
- **Reaction**: Do promotional products stimulate reaction to influence change in recipient buying behavior?
- **Relativity**: Do promotional products gain relativity against other advertising channels to satisfy recipients?

The Modern Consumer In The Driver’s Seat
REACH

The power of promotional products cannot be disputed as they drive an undisputed level of brand exposure. They not only reach their target audience, but they also provide opportunities to reinforce branding and messaging with increased exposure across the following performance metrics.

FREQUENCY OF EXPOSURE

The majority of consumers are exposed to promotional products most of the time each day; however, the average Millennial said they are in contact with a promotional product at all times.

LENGTH OF EXPOSURE

The longer a promotional product is kept, the more impressions it makes on the recipient and anyone else who is exposed to the recipient using the product. The majority of consumers keep a promotional product between one and five years. Women may keep a promotional product up to 10 years, whereas men may keep a promotional product for 11 or more years.

RANGE OF EXPOSURE

Eight in 10 consumers choose to pass along a promotional product if they don’t keep it for themselves, which ultimately furthers the brand’s reach.
RECALL

Branding has everything to do with identity; who you are and what kind of products and services you represent. Successful messaging then creates a voice for brands to connect with their target audiences and create a memorable consumer experience. The call to action then directs recipients to take action, thus enabling brands to directly interact and engage with consumers, capturing a response rate and measuring quantifiable results. Promotional products effectively deliver high recall between all three strategic advertising objectives.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

When prompted with an unaided question, 83 percent said they recalled at least one brand and 23 percent recalled at least one message from a promotional product they received; however, if aided (or given options*), nine in 10 on average correctly recalled branding, and eight in 10 recalled messaging characteristics, which indicates that consumers are not always aware they are being advertised to when given promotional products.

So what type of ‘call’ best resonates with each generation?

**OPTIONS:**

- **BRANDING**
  - Company Name
  - Logo

- **MESSAGING**
  - Slogan
  - Tagline

- **CALL TO ACTION**
  - Website
  - Social Media Handle
  - Contact
  - Directional
  - Social Media Hashtag

Millennials best recalled social media.

Generation Xers best recalled directional calls to action, or statements with definitive instructions.

Baby Boomers best recalled points of reference such as website domains or contact information.
Promotional products allow brands to directly affect consumer lifestyles and maximize recall by organically integrating into everyday routines at work, home or play. Where promotional products are kept also indicates emerging product trends for brands to consider. Promotional products used in the kitchen and carried on one’s person are ideal for promoting to a general audience. However, if the target audience is gender-specific, one might consider particular product categories within that segment. For example, one might consider promotional products used in vehicles for men (e.g. car charger) versus a product generally kept in the bathroom for women (e.g. nail file).

Interestingly, one in two consumers said they walk around with a promotional product such as a wearable item or a pocket product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Self</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Carrier</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Space</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Space</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</table>

*Categories are weighted and may not equal 100%
Master marketer Seth Godin once remarked, “It is impossible to market at people any more. The only choice is to market with them.” Advertising that creates resonance helps consumers to identify with the brand on a personal level and provides the foundation for an enduring brand relationship. Promotional products are a proven channel for brands to generate a more favorable impression across all consumer audiences.

Emotions are at the heart of the relationship between brands and consumers, subconsciously steering buying behavior. Promotional products resonate with consumers, driving consumers back to the brand. In fact, according to the 2015 Nielsen Consumer Neuroscience Internal Study, advertising that produced the best emotional response generated a 23-percent lift in sales volume.
Advertising is designed to challenge consumer perceptions of a brand, and 82 percent of consumers agreed that their impression of a brand positively changed as a direct result of receiving a promotional product.

### 10 REASONS RECIPIENTS OWN PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Understanding why an individual chooses to keep a promotional product received provides key insight into which features are most valued by recipients. Unlike traditional advertising vehicles whose sole purpose is to communicate a message, promotional products not only bring value to brands by effectively connecting with recipients but they also play a functional role within consumer lifestyles.

Promotional products prominently display advertising, but they are found to be useful to a majority of consumers including a stunning 92 percent of the Silent Generation. Among Millennials, 48 percent said they kept promotional products because the design fit their style and/or personality, and both Generation X (42 percent) and Baby Boomers (48 percent) said the product was enjoyable to have.

*Categories are weighted and may not equal 100%

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Useful To Have</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Enjoyable To Have</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Fits Style/Personality</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Memorable Value</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Favorable Message</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Easy To Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Supports Brand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxury</td>
<td>Extraneous To Have</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Cause Alignment</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Conversation Starter</td>
<td>10%</td>
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### PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS YIELD FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS OF BRANDS

Advertising is designed to challenge consumer perceptions of a brand, and 82 percent of consumers agreed that their impression of a brand positively changed as a direct result of receiving a promotional product.
**REACTION**

“We don’t want people to buy a brand, we want people to buy into a brand, to make it part of their lives,” Stan Richards, founder of The Richards Group, once said. Advertising channels are the most important tool used by brands to reach a targeted audience, ensure that it resonates positively so that, most importantly, it generates the desired reaction. Promotional products are the optimal source to elicit a strong connection with recipients, spark interest, inspire action and effectively gain and retain consumers, ultimately enhancing brand loyalty.

**BRAND ALLURE**

Roughly eight in 10 (79 percent) consumers said they have looked up a brand after receiving a promotional product. Promotional products drove the most interest among Millennial recipients, 87 percent of whom were curious enough to take further action.

**BRAND FAVORABILITY**

With the overwhelming selection of brands today’s marketplace offers, the average consumer might appear more elusive or erratic than ever in their decision-making. However, one might argue that the right advertising vehicle has the power to shift brand favorability and ultimately influence a consumer’s buying decisions—and that’s exactly the case. In fact, 83 percent of consumers said they are more likely to do business with brands from which they received promotional products over other brands.

**BRAND LOYALTY**

Results indicate that consumers who receive promotional products are more likely to increase loyalty to the brand.
Advertising has experienced some major milestones. With the emergence of the printing press in the 1440s, television in the 1940s and the latest advancements in technology, brands have been presented with an endless stream of opportunities to deliver their message. Today, brand strategy relies deeply in ad relativity insights when weighing where to invest advertising dollars in order to make data-driven decisions. Luckily, promotional products stand out as the consumer’s choice in brand communication.

**IDEAL ADVERTISING QUALITIES**

*Categories are weighted and may not equal 100%

It is important to understand the wants and needs of a consumer in order for an advertising vehicle to be successfully received. When asked what advertising qualities (not limited to promotional products) were important to them, the majority of consumers preferred visually appealing ads that clearly deliver a message. Promotional products are built to do just that with their physical and tangible features.

**MOST EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING CHANNEL**

When asked to rate which advertising vehicles provide consumers with an incentive to take action, promotional products were regarded as most effective by all generations.
Today’s consumers are exposed to an expanding, fragmented array of touch points; however, there’s a growing sensitivity to the idea that consumers are trained to be blind to advertising. The market for consumer awareness has become so competitive that attention can be regarded as a currency in the world of advertising. The rising cost of this element is reason enough for brands to consider their return on investment, such as which ad vehicles have a higher probability of being received by consumers. Promotional products are better received & less avoided by consumers than any other advertising vehicle.

*Categories are weighted and may not equal 100%
About This Study

METHODOLOGY

The 2017 PPAI Consumer Study was conducted using an online panel fielded through Survey Sampling International (SSI) September 22-23, 2016, with more than 1,000 consumers (n=1,042). Respondents were given a brief background before beginning the questionnaire. The average completion time ranged between 5-15 minutes.

INCIDENCE RATE

Percent of respondents qualified to participate in a survey based on sample conditions* had received promotional products in the past six months, indicating a continued upward trend

89%

Benchmarking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Incidence Rate (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>62%</td>
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*SAMPLE CONDITIONS:
2016: Consumers who have received one or more promotional product(s) in the past six months
2012 or prior: Consumers who have received one or more promotional product(s) in the past 12 months

WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

By Generation

- Millennials (43%): 18-34 yrs. old
- Gen Xers (35%): 35-50 yrs. old
- Baby Boomers (19%): 51-69 yrs. old
- Silent Generation (3%): 70 yrs. or older

By Gender

- Men (50%)
- Women (50%)
PPAI Research has released industry sales data since 1965; however, its bearing to the industry began gaining momentum in 1985 following a shift in the Association’s initiative to broaden its reach and impact in the promotional products industry. Today, PPAI Research provides a wide range of resources to support its members and the promotional products industry at large, as well as brands.

The 2017 PPAI Consumer Study is available to all active members of the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) with rights to use and reproduce, subject to proper citation. Content and graphics must not be altered or distributed for sale. No other use is permitted without the expressed written consent of PPAI.

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