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The PPAI Ad recall study was first conducted in 1992 with the goal of understanding how promotional products are used to support PPAI’s members in their business growth efforts. The study was repeated again in 1999, 2004, and 2012. The results from the latter installment of this research are reported here.

**Approach**

For the 2012 study, conducted November 13 - 27, 2012, data was obtained by intercept interviews with adult travelers at La Guardia Airport, N.Y. The main screening criteria to qualify into the study was the requirement of being in possession of (on their person, at home, at work or in the car/truck) at least one promotional product that they have received in the past 12 months. A verbal and visual description of representative promotional products was presented to respondents. The survey, consisting of 22 questions, was programmed online and administered by personal interviewers using electronic tablets.

The questions included in the survey are grouped in three major areas:

- **Promotional Product Recall**
  - Types of promotional products recalled
  - Number of promotional products recalled, up to four items
  - Recall of advertisers and their message

- **Usage of Promotional Products**
  - Number of promotional products owned
  - Why, for how long and where promotional products are kept
  - How often promotional products are used

- **Relationship to Advertiser & Business Impact**
  - How promotional product are received
  - Prior familiarity with advertiser
  - Perceived advertiser intention by being given promotional products
  - Impressions about advertisers after being given promotional products
  - Business conducted with advertisers after receiving promotional products
Sample

A total of 679 travelers were approached at La Guardia Airport, N.Y. of which 500 qualified for the survey. Travelers came from 35 states, but as expected a large proportion (37%) came from New York State, given the airport’s location. A similar distribution was observed in the 2004 study at the Dallas Fort Worth Airport, with 36% of the sample coming from Texas.

Other states with more representation in the sample in this study are Florida (10%), Illinois (9%), Texas (6%), New Jersey (5%), Connecticut (4%) and North Carolina (4%). Overall, these seven states (including N.Y.) represent nearly 75% of the total sample.

The sample includes 57% men and 43% women, and the majority are between 21 and 50 years old (73%).

Most respondents (78%) were employed (full-time, part-time or self-employed). The rest included full-time students (11%), retirees (5%) and homemakers or unemployed (3%).

One in five respondents who were employed had a managerial position. The most common business sectors represented in the sample are Marketing/Advertising/PR/DM (23%), Financial Sector (9%), and Medical/Healthcare (9%). See Demographics sections for more details.
Recall of Promotional Products

- Seven in 10 consumers recalled receiving at least one promotional product in the past 12 months. A similar finding was observed in previous studies. Among those who recalled receiving promotional products, 70% recalled receiving two or more items.

- Recall of the advertiser and message behind the first promotional item recalled are very high. While 88% recalled the advertiser from a promotional product received in the past 12 months, 71% recalled advertisers on a newspaper or magazine read a week before, which speaks to the power of promotional products to support brand recall.

- Financial services, retailers, apparel brands and electronics manufacturers are the most commonly recalled advertisers of promotional products. The most often recalled promotional product categories include:
  - Wearables (41%): Including Shirts (22%), Caps/Headwear (11%), Outerwear (6%) Other Wearables (2%)
  - Writing Instruments (35%)
  - Drinkware (19%)

Main Takeaways

Promotional products have a high reach and potential for top-of-mind recall and are an excellent medium to increase and sustain brand awareness.

Unaided brand recall is a brand strength indicator as it depends on strength and organization of memories and their accessibility. It is affected by:

- Interference of other product information
- Time since last exposure
- The number and type of external retrieval cues

Promotional products can be used to minimize time gaps in exposure occasions and provide external cues to help brand recall. They should be provided on a regular basis, have a clear connection to the brand, and should be relevant to the consumer.
Main takeaways

Promotional products are often present and used in consumers' daily life. By providing useful promotional products (not only as references for contact information) that can be integrated in consumers' life in an organic way, advertisers can increase their reach and potential for creating and maintaining brand awareness.

Promotional products should be thought as “gifts for family and friends” to extend their relevancy beyond target users to facilitate passing them to others and thus increasing their reach.
Main Takeaways

It is undeniable that promotional products have a positive impact on attitudes and behavior. The use of promotional products has a strong correlation with both customer acquisition and retention. Advertisers should use this medium in a strategic way to foment loyalty, create awareness and increase new trials.

Advertisers and promotional products distributors should monitor cultural and socio-economic trends to be able to anticipate which items could be more appealing, useful and easily integrated in consumers’ daily lives. Such items would create and support favorable impressions about the advertisers and provide cues for brand recall when purchasing decisions are made.
Detailed Findings
Recall of Promotional Products
73% of consumers have received promotional products in the past 12 months

This finding is similar to that of other studies conducted by PPAI in past years: 2004 = 71%, 1999 = 72%, 1992 = 62%

How many promo items are recalled?

- 30% recalled only 1 promo item
- 38% recalled 2 promo items
- 20% recalled 3 promo items
- 12% recalled 4 promo items
What is recalled about promo items received in the past 12 months?

- 88% recalled the advertiser
- 62% recalled the message

Most frequently recalled advertisers:

- 14% Financial Services
- 9% Retailers
- 6% Apparel Brands
- 5% Electronics Manufacturers

71% of those who read a newspaper or magazine a week before recalled an advertiser.
Which promo items received in past 12 months are recalled?

- Wearables: 41%
- Writing Instruments: 35%
- Drinkware: 19%
- Sporting Goods/Leisure Products/Travel Accessories: 15%
- Personal/Pocket-Purse Products: 13%
- Bags: 13%
- Recognition Awards/Jewelry/Clocks/Watches/Key Chains: 12%
- Desk/Office/Business Accessories: 12%
- Housewares/Tools: 11%
- Food Gifts: 7%
- Electronic Devices & Accessories: 6%
- Calendars/Planners: 5%
- Computer Products: 5%
- Health & Safety Products: 5%
- Buttons/Badges/Ribbons/Stickers/Magnets: 2%
- Other: 10%

Respondents were asked to recall up to 4 promotional items received in the past 12 months.
Usage of Promotional Products
Why are promo products kept?

Usefulness is the most common reason to keep a promotional item.

- Useful: 81%
- Attractive: 14%
- Reference for contact information: 12%
- Quality, valuable item, collectible: 5%
- Has sentimental value: 2%
- Other: 3%

How many promo products are owned?

- 1 - 5: 58%
- 6 - 10: 24%
- 11 - 15: 8%
- 16 - 20: 4%
- More than 20: 6%

82% own 1 to 10 promo products.
Why are promo products kept?

**Top 3 Most Useful Categories**

- **100%** Computer Products
- **100%** Health & Safety Products
- **91%** Writing Instruments

**Top 3 Categories Kept Because of Attractiveness**

- **24%** Sporting Goods/Leisure Products/Travel Accessories
- **21%** Housewares/Tools
- **19%** Wearables

**Top 3 Categories Kept Because of Contact Information Reference**

- **33%** Buttons/Badges/Ribbons/Stickers/Magnets
- **29%** Electronic Devices & Accessories
- **23%** Computer Products
## Why are promo items kept?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Attractive</th>
<th>Contact Info Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Products</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety Products</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Instruments</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Gifts</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Pocket-Purse Products</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendars/Planners</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewares/Tools</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting Goods/Leisure Products/Travel Accessories</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk/Office/Business Accessories</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearables</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinkware</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry/Clocks/Watches/Key Chains</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Devices &amp; Accessories</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttons/Badges/Ribbons/Stickers/Magnets</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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Respondents were asked to evaluate the first promo item they recalled.
How often are promo products used?

- 7% use promotional products several times a day
- 17% use them at least once a day
- 29% use them at least once a week
- 24% use them at least once a month
- 10% use them at least once in six months or once in the past
- 13% never use them

53% use promotional products once a week or more often.

Used once a week or more...

**Top 3 Categories Recalled**
- Writing Instruments: 60%
- Wearables: 38%
- Drinkware: 50%

**Top 3 Categories Most Frequently Used**
- Calendars/Planners: 85%
- Computer Products: 85%
- Electronic Devices & Accessories: 82%
How often are promo products used for contact information?

1% Several times a day
1% At least once a day
11% At least once a week
13% At least once a month
8% At least once in six months or once in the past
65% Never

35%
Have ever referred to promotional products for contact information

Categories Often Used for Contact Information Reference*

65% Electronic Devices & Accessories
57% Jewelry/Clocks/Watches/Key Chains
54% Computer Products

*At least once in the past or more often
For how long are promo products kept?

47% keep promo products for more than a year

Time Among Those Keeping Promo Products for Up to 2 Years

- 23% for about a month
- 16% for about six months
- 13% for 7 to 12 months
- 29% for more than a year
- 18% for at least two years

40% say it depends on the product
Where are promo products kept?

- Home: 54%
- On person: 24%
- Work office outside the home: 11%
- Car: 5%
- Home office: 3%
- Other: 1%
- Don't know: 2%

1 in 4 walk around with promo products on or with themselves

What happens to items not worth keeping?

- Trashed: 21%
- Filed away & ignored: 42%
- Given to someone else: 36%

Many discarded items continue to promote when given to someone else
Relationship with Advertiser & Business Impact
Where are promo products received?

- At a business establishment: 33%
- Tradeshow/conference/convention: 15%
- By mail: 12%
- At work from employer: 10%
- Sport event/show/fair/charity/fundraising event: 10%
- From a salesperson making a call: 9%
- Retailer/service provider: 6%
- Other: 2%

58% receive promo products at business establishments or events.

What was the advertiser’s intention?

- Advertise, promote product, business: 55%
- Thank you for my business: 16%
- Give a purchase incentive: 10%
- Reward employees/Company celebration: 4%
- Apologize for bad service: 1%
- Increase awareness of health issues: 1%
- Other: 5%
- Don’t know: 8%

65% are aware that promo products are used for advertising and to motivate purchases.
Impact on perceptions about advertiser

88% were familiar with the advertiser before receiving a promotional item

Impression of Advertisers After Receiving Promo Items

59% had a more favorable impression of the advertiser after receiving a promotional item

- 22% Significantly More Favorable
- 37% Somewhat More Favorable
- 37% Neutral
- 1% Somewhat Less Favorable
- 0.4% Significantly Less Favorable
Promotional products improve the impression of the advertiser among both familiar and unfamiliar consumers.
Promotional products have a positive correlation with customer retention and acquisition.

- **55%** Had done business with the advertiser **BEFORE** receiving promo item
- **45%** Had **NOT** done business with the advertiser **BEFORE** receiving promo item
- **85%** Have done business with the advertiser **AFTER** receiving promo item
- **11%** Have done business with the advertiser **AFTER** receiving promo item
Demographics
Demographics

**Gender**
- Women: 43%
- Men: 57%

**Age**
- 21-35: 41%
- 36-50: 33%
- 51-65: 19%
- Over 65: 7%

**Employment**
- Employed full-time or part-time: 70%
- Full-time student: 8%
- Self-employed: 11%
- Retired: 2%
- Homemaker/Housewife/Househusband: 5%
- Not currently employed: 1%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

Base: All Respondents=500
Demographics

Business Sector

- Media, Advertising, Marketing, DM, Sales Promotion, Design, PR: 23%
- Financial Services/Insurance: 9%
- Medical/Healthcare: 9%
- Retail: 5%
- Communication: 5%
- Entertainment, Film, Music, Museums, Theme Parks: 5%
- Food/Beverage Establishment: 4%
- Legal Services, Accounting: 4%
- Charities/Associations/Action Groups: 3%
- Real Estate: 2%
- Transportation: 2%
- Construction/Contractor: 2%
- Government: 2%
- Property/Building Management: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Prefer not to say: 3%

Base: Full-time, part-time or self-employed=440
Demographics

Job Titles

Manager/Supervisor/Director/Senior Level Management (CMO, COO, CFO, VP, Senior VP, etc.) 19%
Consultant 8%
Banker/Broker/Financial Advisor/Rep/Manager 5%
Physician/Dentist/Nurses (LPN/RN/Charge Nurse) 5%
Owner/CEO/President/Principal/Entrepreneur 4%
Specialist 4%
Mechanic/Welder/Technician/Installer 4%
Sales Representative/Sales Staff 4%
Attorney/Paralegal 3%
Engineer 3%
Analyst 2%
Secretary/Administrative Assistant 2%
Agent (travel, insurance, etc.) 2%
Builder/Contractor/Construction Worker 1%
Buyer/Purchasing Buyer 1%
Trainer 1%
Driver/Chauffeurs/Truck Drivers 1%
Counselor 1%
Other 21%
Prefer not to say 9%

Base: Full-time, part-time or self-employed=440