



## A Three-Dimensional Medium for Engaging Communications

Of the key factors involved with Enterprise Engagement, communication represents a critical component. No level of engagement, however high, can translate into beneficial performance unless people are encouraged to do the right thing. Every engagement campaign – whether it’s aimed at consumers, channel partners, salespeople, or employees – depends upon effective, multi-media communication to keep everyone “on message.”

By their vary nature, promotional products can provide a powerful boost to any communication effort in several ways:

- They help cut through the clutter by increasing the impact of traditional communications
- They provide long-term reinforcement because people hold on to them.

- They improve recall and positive impressions about a brand.

Empirical evidence and other research confirms what those who use promotional products know by instinct: they have unique attention-getting and residual communication value – even more important in today’s digital era, where opportunities for actual physical or face-to-face communication are growing increasingly less frequent.

Let’s look at some of the various ways that promotional products

contribute to effective communication, based on research studies by various universities funded by Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), Irving, TX.

### STAYING POWER

In an extensive, random survey of business travelers conducted by researchers at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, 71% reported having received a promotional product in the past 12 months. Of that group, more than one third had the item on their person – a coveted location for advertising that gets seen regularly – and 52% said they did business with the advertiser after receiving the promotional product.

Of those who had *not* done business with the advertiser, almost

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**The Enterprise Engagement Alliance (EEA) is a coalition of companies and associations dedicated to the idea that engagement is an enterprise-wide endeavor that “begins with people and ends with profitability.” The EEA’s primary mission is to research and promote the importance of engaging people in business, including customers, employees, channel partners and managers. The organization’s first research project, “The Economics of Engagement” was released in June 2009 and is available at: [www.incentivecentral.org/pdf/Final\\_Economics\\_of\\_Engagement.pdf](http://www.incentivecentral.org/pdf/Final_Economics_of_Engagement.pdf). Contact [info@enterpriseengagement.org](mailto:info@enterpriseengagement.org) for more information.**

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**An EEA White Paper**

half stated they would be more likely to do business with the organization that gave them the item. Also, 73% noted that they used the promotional product at least once a week, and 45.2% used it at least once a day. And in terms of staying power, 55% generally kept their promotional products for more than a year.

In an era when most advertising exists only electronically, or in print media products that are quickly thrown away, promotional products stand out as a unique communications medium with long-term retention value.

**POSITIVE PERCEPTION**

In a study entitled *Promotional Products' Impact on Brand/Company Image* conducted by Georgia Southern University, participants were divided into two groups. After completing a pre-test, one group received an imprinted promotional product that reflected the company's image. The other group received nothing. A post-test survey, conducted approximately a month later, asked questions to determine the groups' image of the company – a restaurant located in a college town a few miles from a university campus.

The study found that promotional product recipients held a more positive image of the company than non-recipients, and the group receiving the promotional product was significantly more likely to recommend the business to others than the group that received nothing.



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**IMPACT ON REFERRALS**

The ability of promotional products to help generate referrals was supported by a study at the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University, assisted by Rick Ebel, former Marketing Communications Director of PPAI and principal of Glenrich Business Studies in Corvallis, OR.

Researchers compared response rates on a referral program that used a promotional product with an identical program that didn't use a promotional product. They found that an offer of a promotional product or an offer of a promotional product plus eligibility in a sweepstakes drew as many as 500% more referrals than an appeal letter alone. In

addition, offers of promotional products were substantially more effective than enclosing free promotional products with an appeal letter.

**CONCLUSION: COMMUNICATION COUNTS**

Given the relatively low cost of promotional products, their impact in terms of getting peoples' attention and reinforcing positive impressions seems clear. Any organization seeking breakthrough methods of communication should include a well-designed promotional products campaign on their list of engagement tactics.