GLOBAL ADVERTISING SPECIALTIES IMPRESSIONS STUDY

V.3

A cost analysis of promotional products versus other advertising media

Released at the 2012 ASI Power Summit

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GLOBAL
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The ASI Ad Impressions Study was first launched in 2008 by ASI's research team to give its members powerful data that proves that ad specialties are a high-impact and cost-effective ad medium.

Through thousands of live and online interviews with businesspeople in key cities in the United States, Canada, France and the U.K., the study gauges consumer perceptions of promotional products and how they influence buying decisions; highlights the popularity of key promo product categories by demographic group (such as age, race and gender); reveals the cost-per-impression of top advertising specialty product categories; and shows the cost-per-impression of promotional products compared to other forms of advertising media, like radio, TV and Internet advertising. The study is conducted by ASI every two years.

How We Did It

For the 2012 study, conducted from July through September of 2012, ASI's research team hit the streets and interviewed consumers in 12 cities: New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, Dallas, Philadelphia, London, Paris, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Respondents were asked questions about the promotional products they had received, including how many they had, how they used them, why they kept them, and their impressions of the advertisers that gave them the items.

Further, an online panel survey was conducted among recipients of advertising specialties in those same geographic areas to augment the sample from the man-on-the-street interviews. All respondents were at least 18 years old. Combined with the in-person interviews, there were 4,468 completed surveys for this study.

ASI's research team polled nearly 5,000 consumers in 12 cities: New York, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, Dallas, Philadelphia, London, Paris, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

How This Report is Organized

This report contains three sections:

- **"Product Popularity"** (Pages 3 to 17) highlights the most popular promotional products by category, and includes detailed demographic breakdowns by geography, gender, race, age, income and political affiliation. For example, on the "Product Spotlight: Writing Instruments" section on page 4, you'll note that women are significantly more likely than men to own a logoed pen or pencil, and Republicans are much more likely to own a branded writing instrument than Democrats or Independent voters. This section will be a helpful tool for distributors to use in guiding their clients toward products that will be the most impactful in their marketing efforts.
- **"Recipients' Views on Advertisers"** (Pages 18 to 20) reveals important information showcasing how long businesspeople hold onto logoed items; what they do with items they don't wish to keep; and how many total promotional items they own, broken out by a variety of demographic groups. This section provides hard data to combat objections from buyers who may think that promotional items are "throwaways" or "afterthoughts" in a marketing campaign, and may not understand their true value.
- **"Promo Products vs. Make an Impression"** (Pages 21 to 22) highlights the industry products that deliver the best cost-per-impression and compares the cost-per-impression of ad specialties to other forms of media, like Internet and radio advertising. This is a great tool distributors can use to convince end-buyers to allocate more of their marketing dollars to promotional products.

While this report includes the study's highlights, ASI members can go online at *asicentral.com/study* for a research tool which will allow them to gain access to the full study data.

Note: All demographic breakdowns (age, race, gender, etc.) reflect U.S. consumers only. Respondents from other countries are respresented as a whole.

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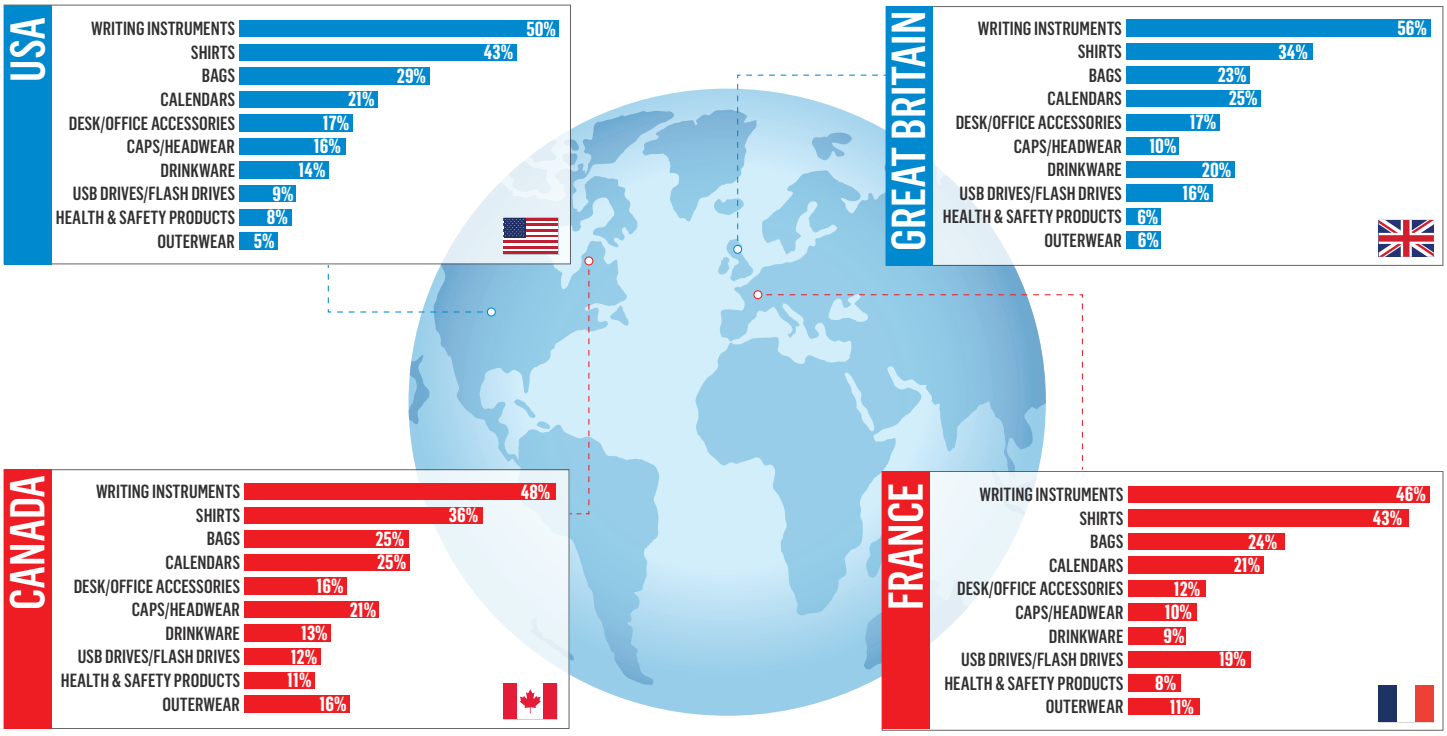
Section One

Product Popularity

For this section, respondents were asked to provide up to three promotional items they had received in the last 12 months. Promotional items were defined as items that include pens, T-shirts, mugs, calendars, or any items that have a logo or message from an advertiser on them; they are usually given away for free to consumers in hopes of positively influencing their purchasing preferences or their attitudes toward the advertiser.

As the chart below reveals, writing instruments were the items most commonly cited, as nearly one-half (49%) of promotional product recipients reported getting at least one in the last 12 months. There are also significant differences by country, as revealed on the chart.

Most Popular Products By Category



▸Key Takeaways

On the next 10 pages, the product categories are further broken out to show their popularity by a variety of demographics. As an example, on the "Product Spotlight: Calendar" page, it is noted that calendars are most popular among consumers over 45 years old, and more popular among women than men; on the "Product Spotlight: Bags" page, there is data showing that Asian consumers have the highest incidence of bag ownership.

Distributors can use these highlighted differences to recommend the best products and ideas to their clients, keeping in mind the targeted audience.

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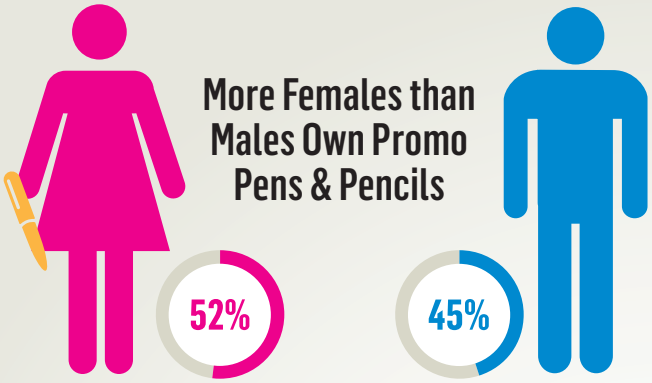
Product Spotlight: Writing Instruments

More Females than Males Own Promo Pens & Pencils



60%

of Caucasian consumers own branded writing instruments – 12 percentage points more than any other ethnic group.

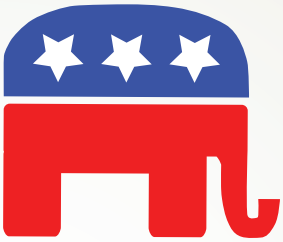
50% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN LOGOED WRITING INSTRUMENTS

Seeing Red

Republicans are more likely to own a promotional writing instrument than Democrats or Independents.

62%

of Republicans have them in their homes or offices.



55% of Independents and 53% of Democrats make the same claim.

Sign Here

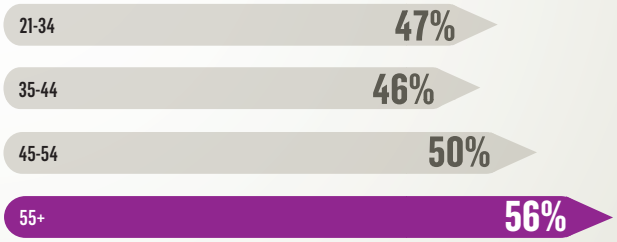
The Founding Fathers used a fountain pen to sign the U.S. Constitution, and today, Philadelphians still exhibit their love for promo pens and pencils.

66%

of consumers in Philly say they own a branded writing instrument, vs. 50% in the U.S. overall.

Better With Age

Although writing instruments are favorites among every age group, they're most popular with older consumers.



Income Gap

Consumers earning $100,000+ are the least likely to own a promo pen or pencil.

less likely to own a promo pen or pencil than those who make less money

<$50,000 = 51%
$50,000-$99,999 = 53%

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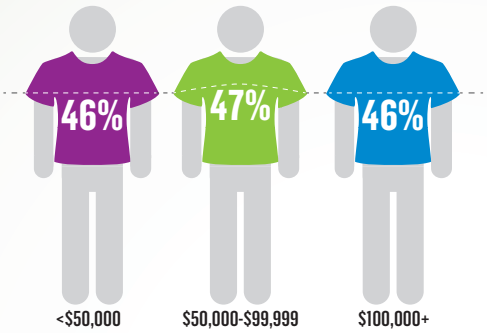
Product Spotlight: Shirts

43% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A PROMOTIONAL SHIRT

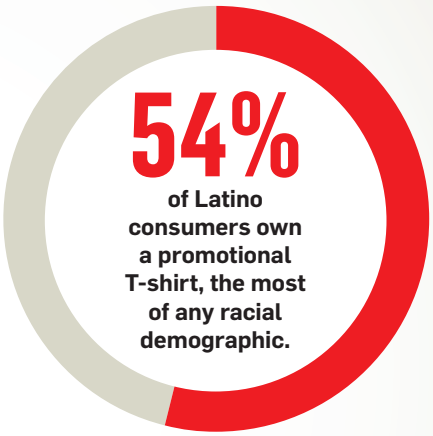
Everyone Loves A Free T-Shirt!

Across all income levels, the percentage of consumers who own a promotional T-shirt remains about the same.



Latino Market Magnet

Have clients that want to target the fast-growing Hispanic sector in the U.S.?



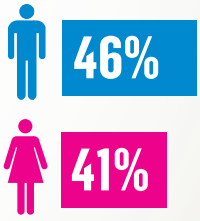
TEXANS Wear It Well

Of the 12 global cities that researchers polled consumers in, Dallas leads the way.

50%

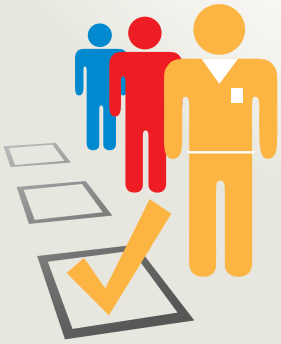
of consumers in Dallas say they own a promotional T-shirt vs. 43% in the U.S.

More Males Own Promo Shirts Than Females



The Voters Speak

While many members of each political party say they own a promotional T-shirt, Independents lead the way.

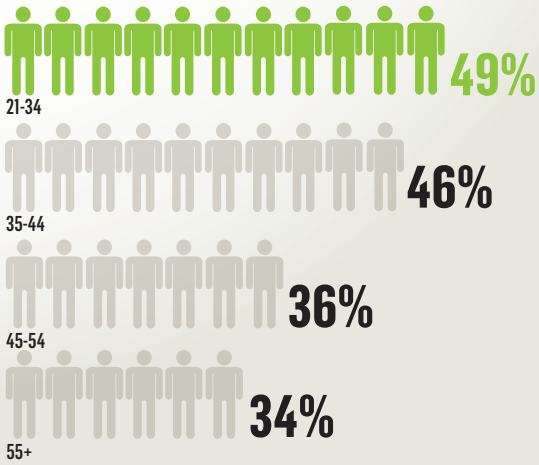


48%

of Independents say they have a logoed shirt at home. Only 44% of Republicans and 39% of Democrats make the same claim.

GO YOUNG!

Younger consumers are more likely to own a promotional shirt.



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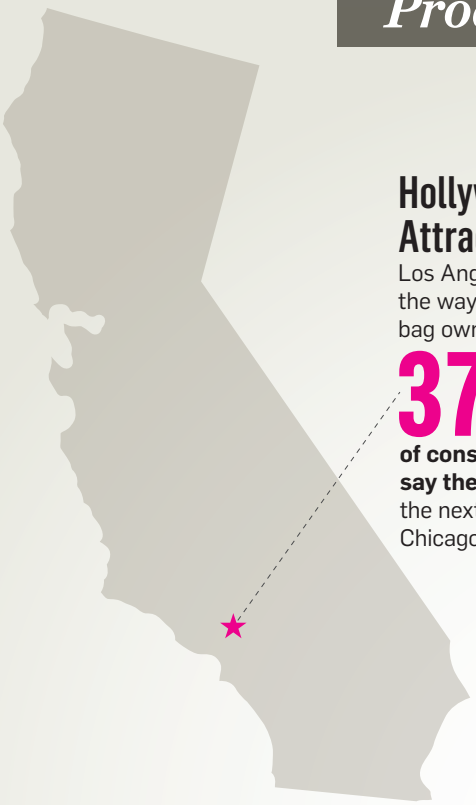
Product Spotlight: Bags



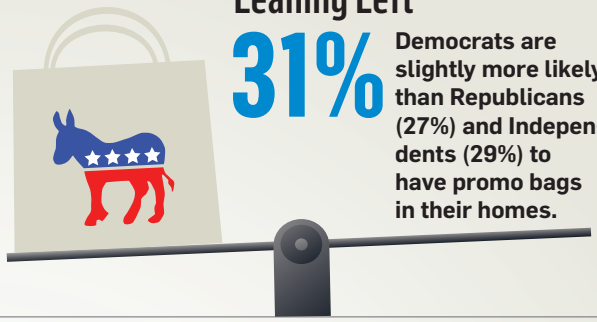
Hollywood Attraction

Los Angeles leads the way in promo bag ownership.

37%

of consumers in LA say they have one – the next highest is Chicago with 36%.

Leaning Left



31%

Democrats are slightly more likely than Republicans (27%) and Independents (29%) to have promo bags in their homes.

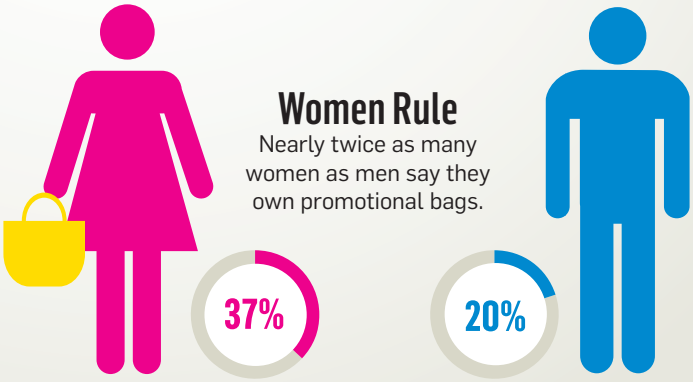
Low-Income Targets

People with household incomes of less than $50k are the most likely to own promotional bags.

29% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A PROMOTIONAL BAG

Women Rule

Nearly twice as many women as men say they own promotional bags.



Age Matters

The 55+ crowd is most likely to own a logoed bag.

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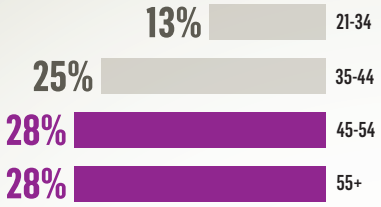
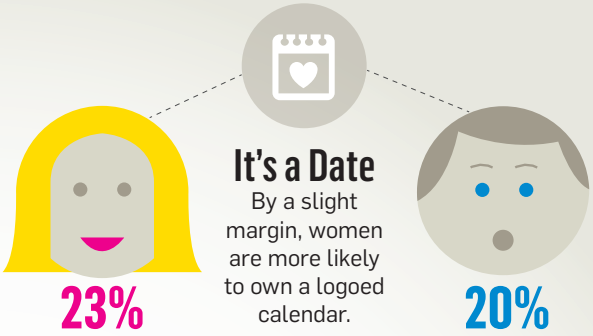
Product Spotlight: Calendars

Go Older

Have clients targeting older demographics? Calendars could be the solution.

As consumers age, they're more likely to own a promotional calendar.





It's a Date

By a slight margin, women are more likely to own a logoed calendar.

21% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A PROMOTIONAL CALENDAR

Northern Exposure

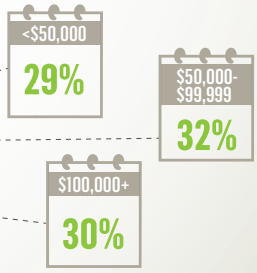
Consumers in Montreal are most likely to own a logoed calendar.

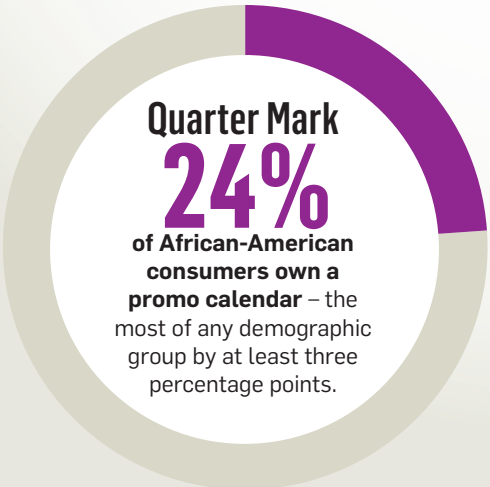
37%

of them say they have at least one at home or in the office.

Flexible Income

Calendars appeal to consumers of all income levels.

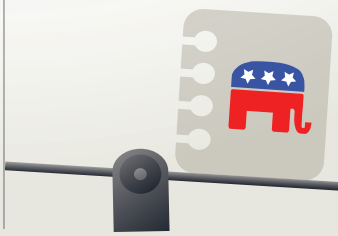




Quarter Mark

24%

of African-American consumers own a promo calendar – the most of any demographic group by at least three percentage points.



To the Right

23%

of Republicans own a branded calendar, compared to 21% of both Democrats and Independents.

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Product Spotlight: Desk Accessories

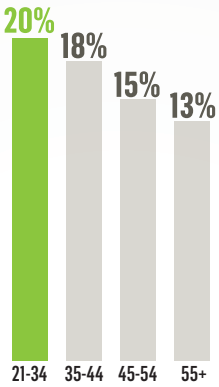
Inspector Gadget

Women are more likely to own a promo desk accessory in their offices than men, by a margin of

20% to 14%

Office Toys to the Young

Younger consumers are more likely to have a branded item on their desks.



Go Low

The lowest-income earners tend to be the most likely group by financial breakdown to own a logoed desk accessory.

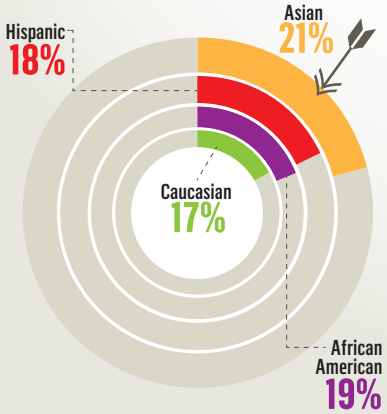
22%

of consumers making less than $50k per year own one.

17% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A LOGOED DESK ACCESSORY

The Right Target

Have clients looking to attract Asian consumers? You may want to suggest going with a desk accessory or office item.



My Kinda Town

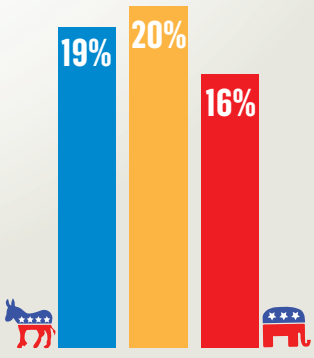
Chicago leads the way in desk accessory ownership, with

21%

of consumers there saying they have logoed items in their offices.

In the Middle

20% of Independents own office and desk accessories, just trumping Democrats at 19% and Republicans at 16%.



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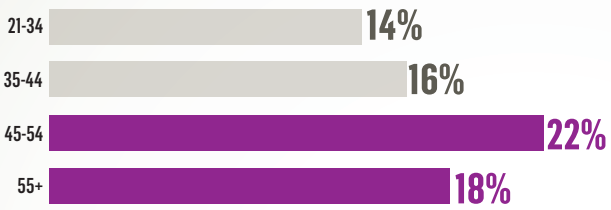
Product Spotlight: Hats

16% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A PROMOTIONAL HAT

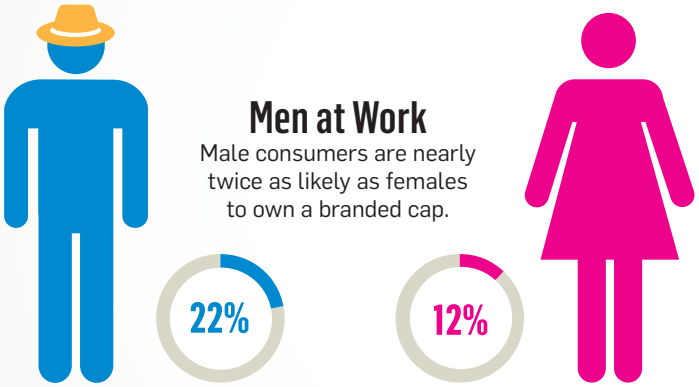
Age Neutral

While caps are popular among all ages, those 45 and older are most likely to own one.



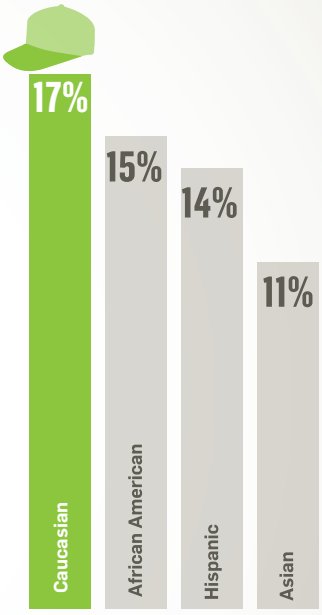
Men at Work

Male consumers are nearly twice as likely as females to own a branded cap.



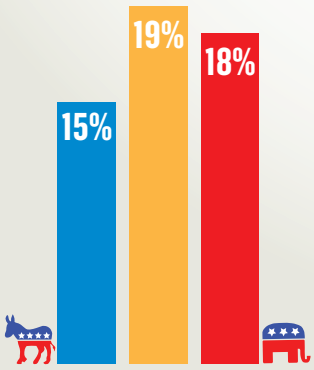
Wear it Well

Caucasians are the most likely demographic group to own logoed caps.



Trending Red

While 19% of Independents and 18% of Republicans own promotional caps, only 15% of Democrats have a branded hat at home.



Protection from the Cold

They must need to keep their heads warm up north.

25% of people in Toronto and **21%** of all Canadians own promo caps.

Priced Right

Caps appeal to all income groups, but those earning between **$50k and $100k own the most hats.**

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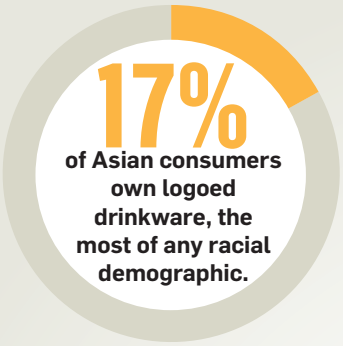
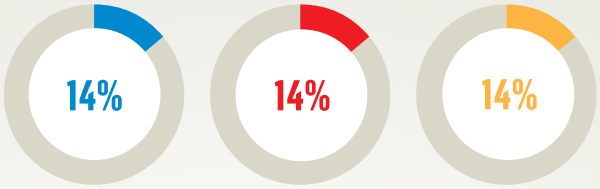
Product Spotlight: Drinkware



A Close Race

Members of the three major political parties are all similar in their preferences for drinkware.

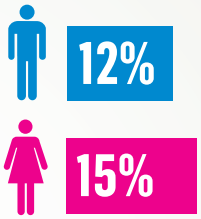


of Democrats, Republicans and Independents each own at least one item in this category.

Mugs for the Middle

Mid-income consumers are slightly more likely to own branded drinkware than those at other income levels.

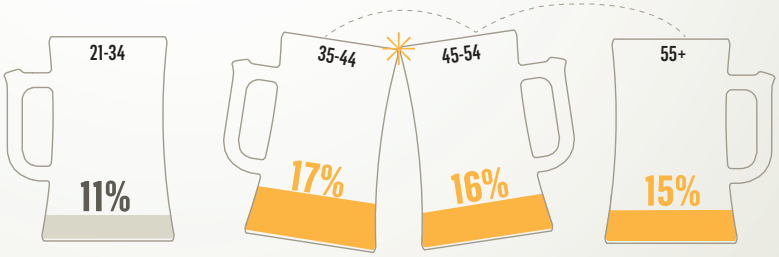
14% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN BRANDED DRINKWARE



More Women Own Logoed Drinkware than Men

Cheers!

Gen-Xers and their Older Counterparts Own More Drinkware Than Those Under 35



Drink Up, Philly!

Of the 12 global cities surveyed, Philadelphians love their logoed mugs and glasses the most.

21%

of consumers in Philly own promotional drinkware.

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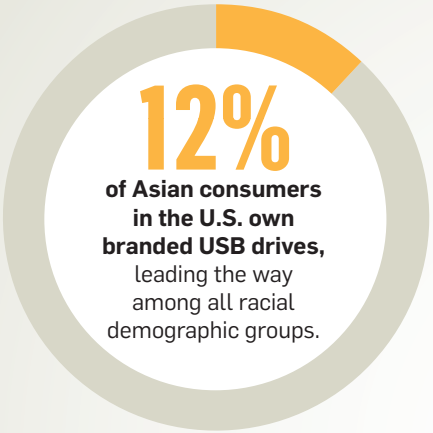
Product Spotlight: USB Drives

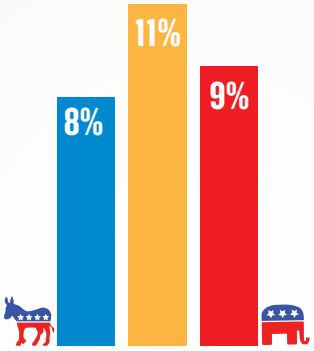
9% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN A LOGOED USB DRIVE



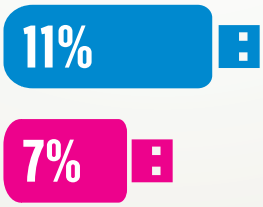
of Asian consumers in the U.S. own branded USB drives, leading the way among all racial demographic groups.

Independent = Techie?

More Independent voters own branded USB drives than Democrats or Republicans.

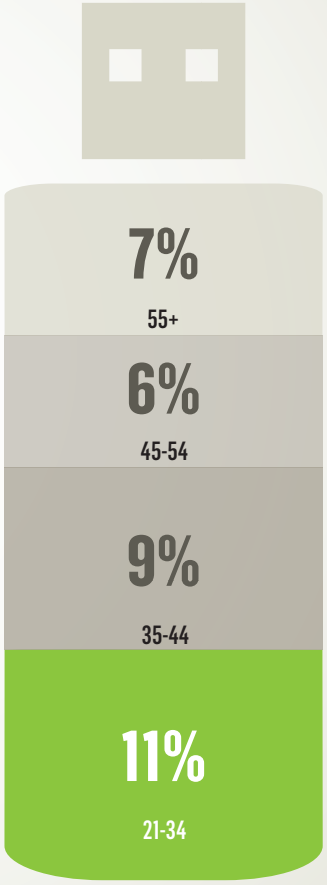


Men are More Likely to Own a Branded USB Drive Than Women



Trending Young

Younger consumers are more likely to own a promo USB drive than their older counterparts.



Merci!

Parisians are far more likely to own promotional USB drives than consumers in other cities:

27%

of them own them, versus 9% of U.S. consumers.

Upscale Tech

Six-figure earners are more likely to own a logoed USB drive than those in other economic groups.

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Product Spotlight: Health & Safety Items

More Women Own Promo Health & Safety Products Than Men

10%

6%

Cashing In

Higher earners are the safest.

$100,000+ 14%

Most likely to own branded health and safety products

<$50,000 = 8%
$50,000-$99,999 = 8%

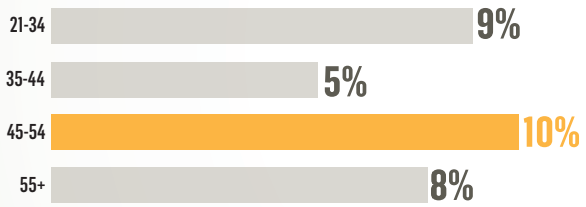
Safe, Healthy Cities

11%

of consumers in Dallas and Montreal own promotional health & safety products, vs. the U.S. average of 8%.

Health Conscious

Middle-age consumers are the most likely to own a branded health or safety product.

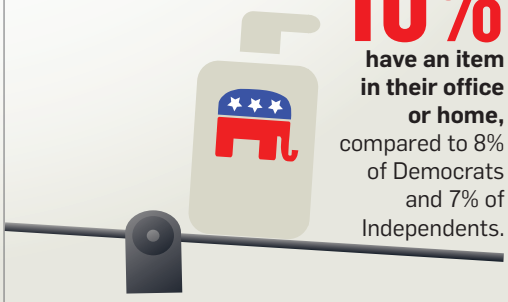


of African Americans own logoed health and safety items, the most of any racial demographic.

8% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN PROMOTIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PRODUCTS

To the Right

Republicans are the most likely to own a promotional health or safety item.



10%

have an item in their office or home, compared to 8% of Democrats and 7% of Independents.

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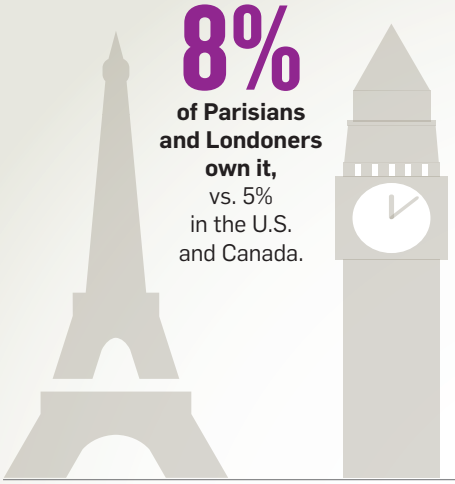
Product Spotlight: Outerwear

European Chill

Of the 12 global cities where researchers interviewed consumers, Paris and London led the way in outerwear.

8%

of Parisians and Londoners own it, vs. 5% in the U.S. and Canada.



More Men Own Promo Jackets Than Women

6% **4%**

Big Bucks

Higher earners are more likely to own a promotional jacket.

5% OF U.S. CONSUMERS OWN PROMOTIONAL OUTERWEAR

Split Votes

6% **of Democrats own promotional outerwear,** while 5% of Independents and 4% of Republicans make the same claim.

Zip It, Youngster!

Young consumers are slightly more likely to own promotional outerwear than older consumers.

7%

of African Americans and Hispanics own logoed jackets.

5%

of Asians and

4%

of Caucasians keep them in their closets.

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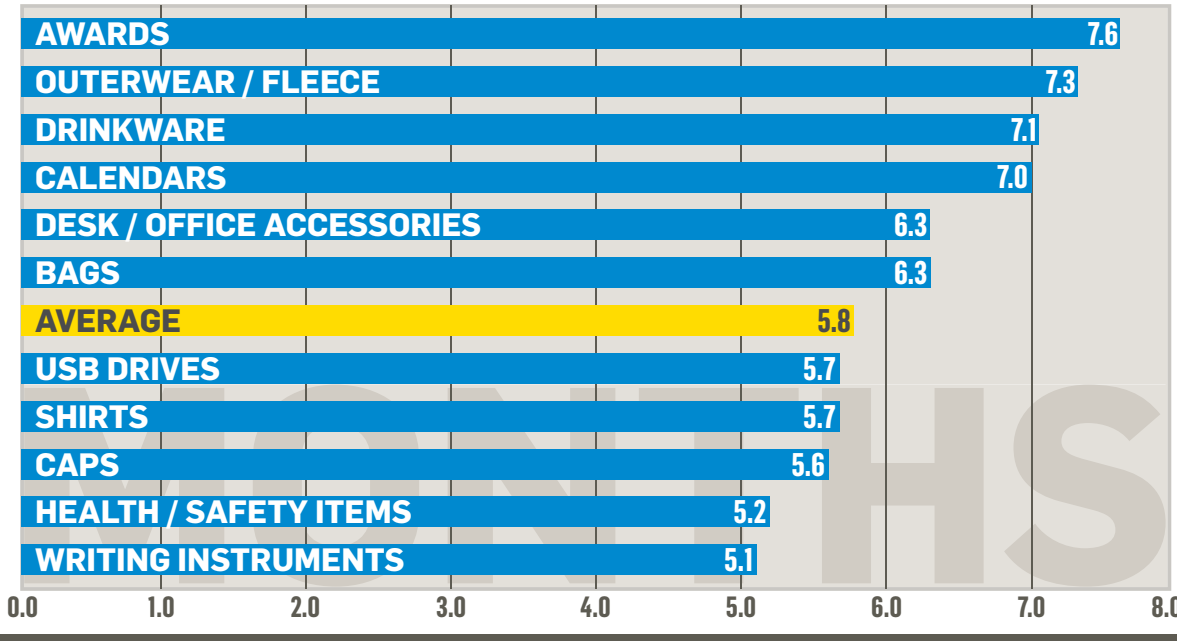
Staying Power

In addition to identifying the logoed items they had kept, respondents were asked how long they had kept the item that they received within the last 12 months. On average, ad specialty items are kept for nearly six months in the U.S., slightly less time than in other countries. Awards are typically held the longest, for about eight months. Writing instruments are held the shortest amount of time, at just over five months. The length of time items have been kept has stayed about the same since the survey has been conducted.

Number of Months Promotional Items are Kept



On **average**, respondents have an item for **5.8 months**. Awards are typically held the longest at 7.6 months, while writing instruments are the shortest at 5.1 months.

▸ Key Takeaway

- One of the advantages promotional products have is that just one item can deliver a message for a far longer time period than other forms of advertising. Advertisers can reinforce their brand or a call to action for an average of nearly six months, and even longer on some products such as outerwear or mugs.

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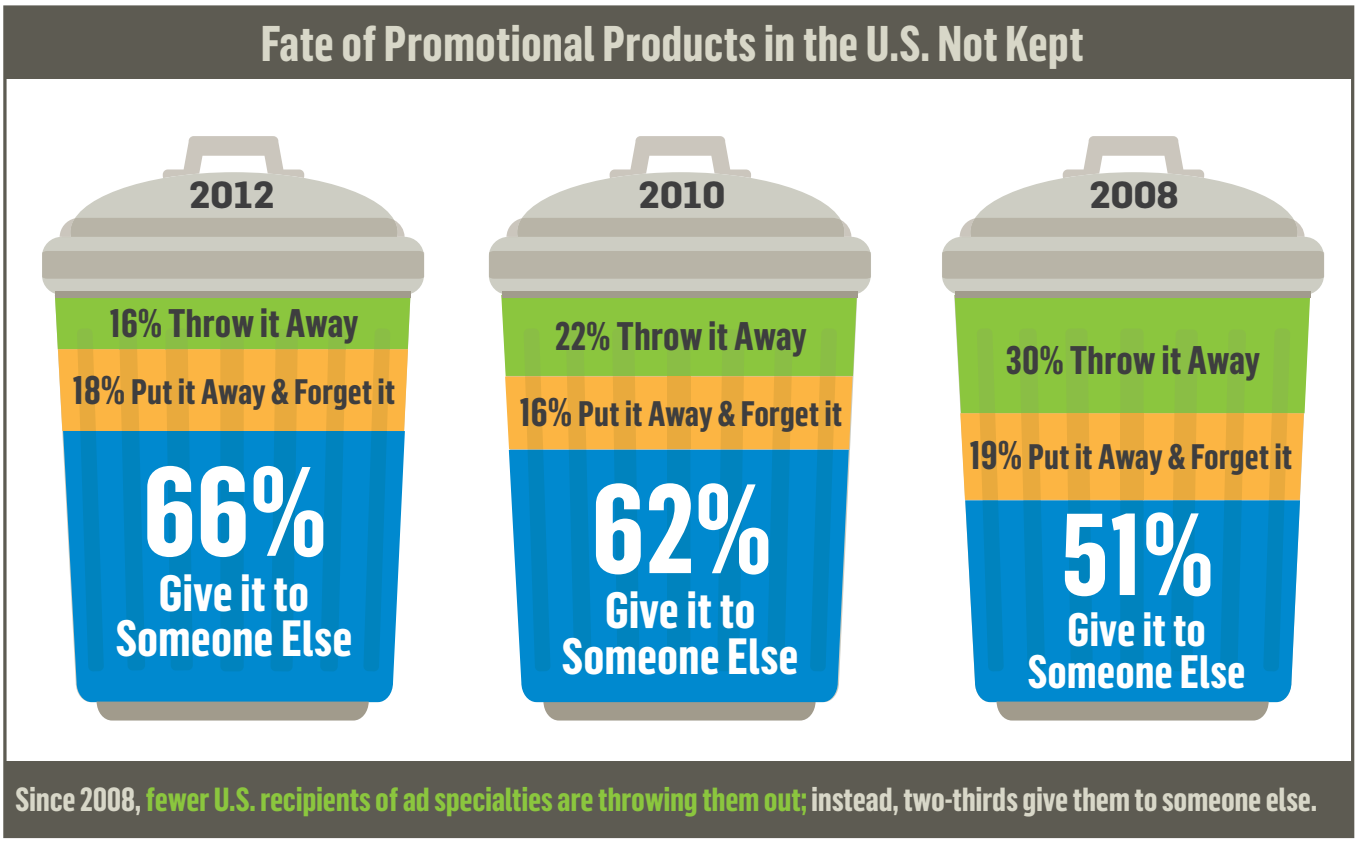
Not for the Garbage

Are promotional products that recipients decide not to keep destined for the trash? Not likely. In this year's study, 66% of the respondents in the U.S. said that when they receive a logoed item they don't wish to keep, they give it to someone else. This is up 15 percentage points from 2008, while those indicating they throw the item away dropped nearly in half, to 16%. About 17% say they file the item away and never notice it again.



▸Key Takeaways

- Promotional products are not simply thrown away. Items are kept because they're useful, or given to someone who can use them. Advertisers' messages often go beyond the initial target.
- As awareness of recycling in the U.S. has become more prevalent, so has the desire to pass along unwanted promotional products.

Usefulness is Key

Consumers will be much more likely to keep a promotional product that is useful, according to the survey. About eight in 10 (81%) of product recipients indicated that an item's usefulness is the primary reason to keep it. In addition, 23% of recipients said they kept an item because it's attractive, and 26% say they keep a promotional product simply because it's "enjoyable to have." In particular, items like writing instruments, USB drives and calendars are more frequently kept because they're useful. Items like awards are kept by 61% of recipients because they're "enjoyable to have."

▸Key Takeaway

The practical applications of promotional products should be stressed. If the product isn't useful then a consumer is much less likely to keep it, with the exception of awards and items like calendars and magnets, which are often also kept because they're attractive and/or contain useful information, such as phone numbers or website addresses.

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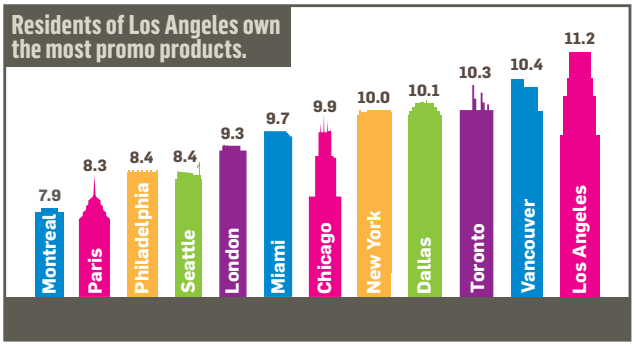
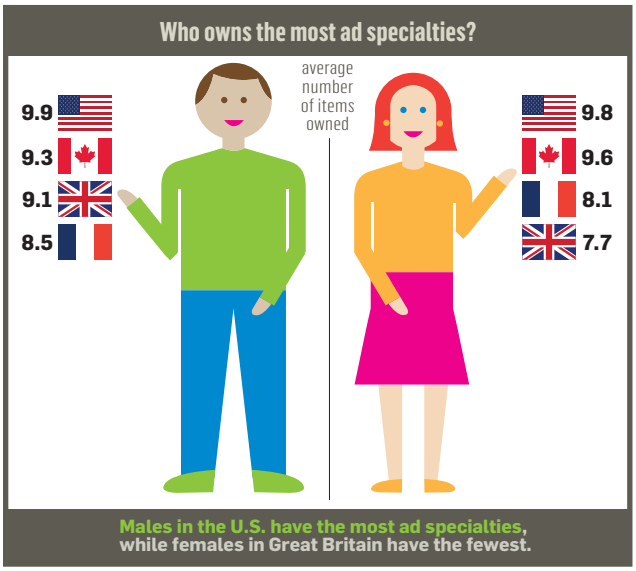
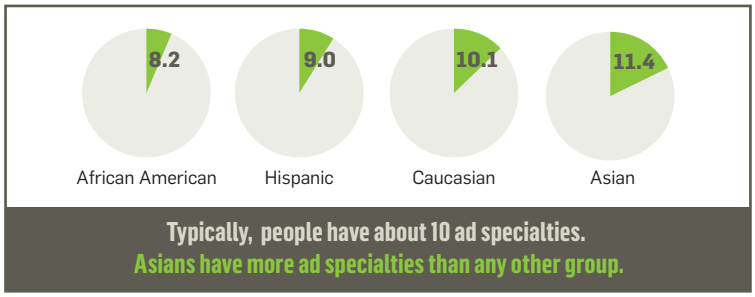
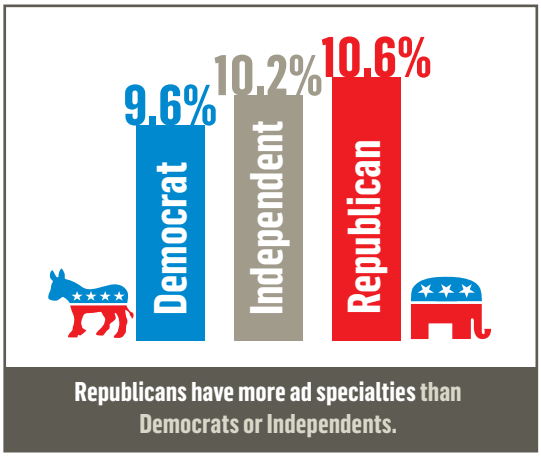
How Many Items do People Own?

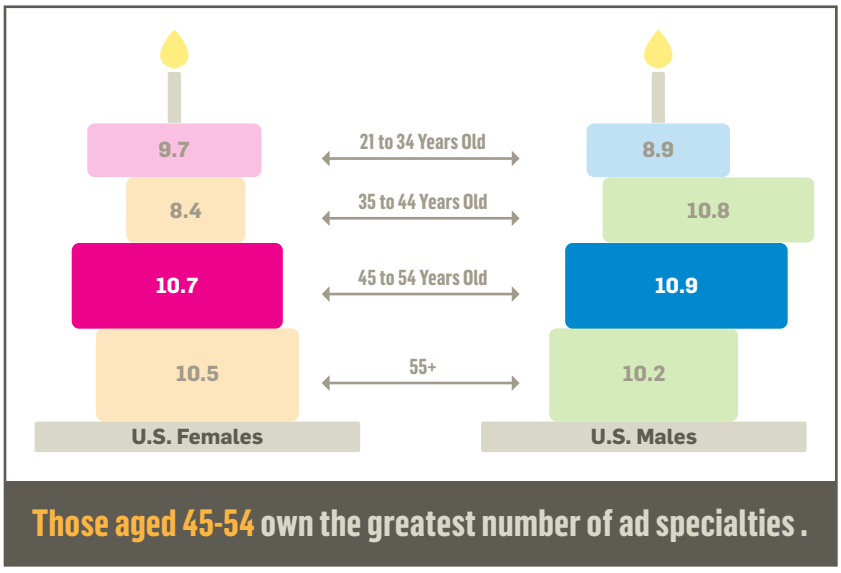
In the study, respondents were asked how many logoed items they currently had in their homes and/or offices. As indicated in the accompanying charts, people in the U.S. own an average of 10 promotional products. But the number varies according to U.S. city, country, gender, race, income, age and political affiliation.











▸Key Takeaway

Knowing the target audience can help any marketing initiative be more successful. While promotional products are widely valued, some groups have more than others, either by interest or opportunity.

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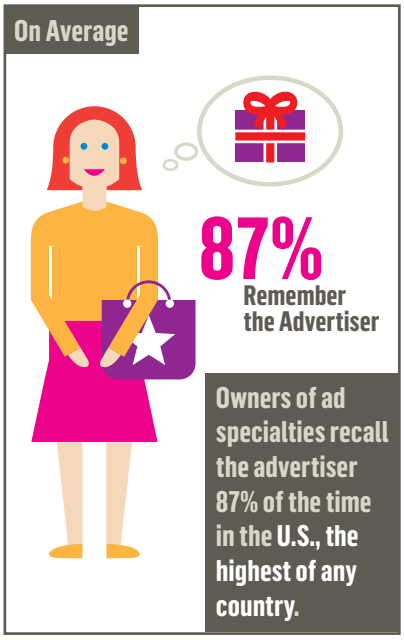
Section Two

Recipients' Views on Advertisers

For this section, we asked respondents whether they could identify the advertisers on the promotional items they currently owned. The result: Nearly nine in ten (87%) recipients of promotional merchandise can identify the advertiser on the item. This has been consistent since 2008. As the chart below reveals, of all major product categories, outerwear has the highest recognition of all promotional items: 97% of respondents who have logoed outerwear can name the advertiser on the items. Wearables as a whole maintain a very high advertiser awareness rate.



Key Takeaways

- Distributors who have clients looking to get their company or brand's name in the marketplace have a compelling reason to suggest advertising specialties as a marketing solution: Promotional product recipients clearly remember the advertisers on the items they receive.
- Part of the reason why outerwear has a commanding advertiser recall is that consumers receive fewer jackets and other outerwear items than they do other popular promotional items. And in interviews with our on-the-street researchers, it was obvious that businesspeople consider jackets to be expensive, which helps ensure that they'll keep them and wear them repeatedly. Distributors looking to present clients with an item of high perceived value that has high advertiser recognition might consider outerwear as an option.

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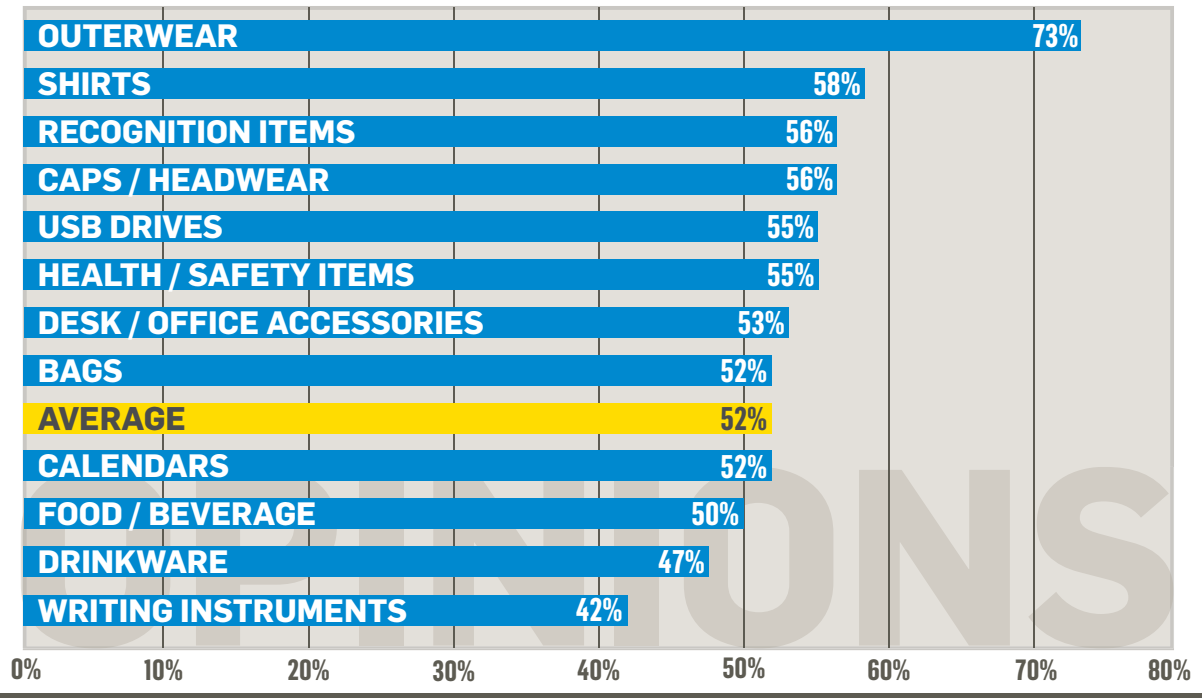
Swaying Opinions

In this section, we also asked consumers their opinions of advertisers who gave them a logoed item. Over one-half (52%) of the time, ad specialties leave a more favorable impression of the advertiser. This trend was seen across all countries.

How Recipients Feel About the Advertiser



52% of recipients feel more favorable about the advertiser after receiving an item.

Outerwear leaves the most positive impression of the advertiser, as nearly three-quarters (73%) of branded outerwear recipients had a more favorable impression of the advertiser. Drinkware and writing instruments deliver the lowest percentage of positive impressions (47% and 42%, respectively).

▸Key Takeaway

All categories of promotional products generate favorable impressions of the advertisers as a whole, combating some buyers' objections that promotional products do not sway consumers' minds. However, some of the most popular items in the industry, such as writing instruments, generate the lowest percentage of positive impressions. This is likely because of the commodity nature of the items. Products that stand out even in the most common categories (such as a multifunctional pen or a mug that changes colors when liquid is poured into it) are the ones most likely to generate goodwill toward the advertiser.

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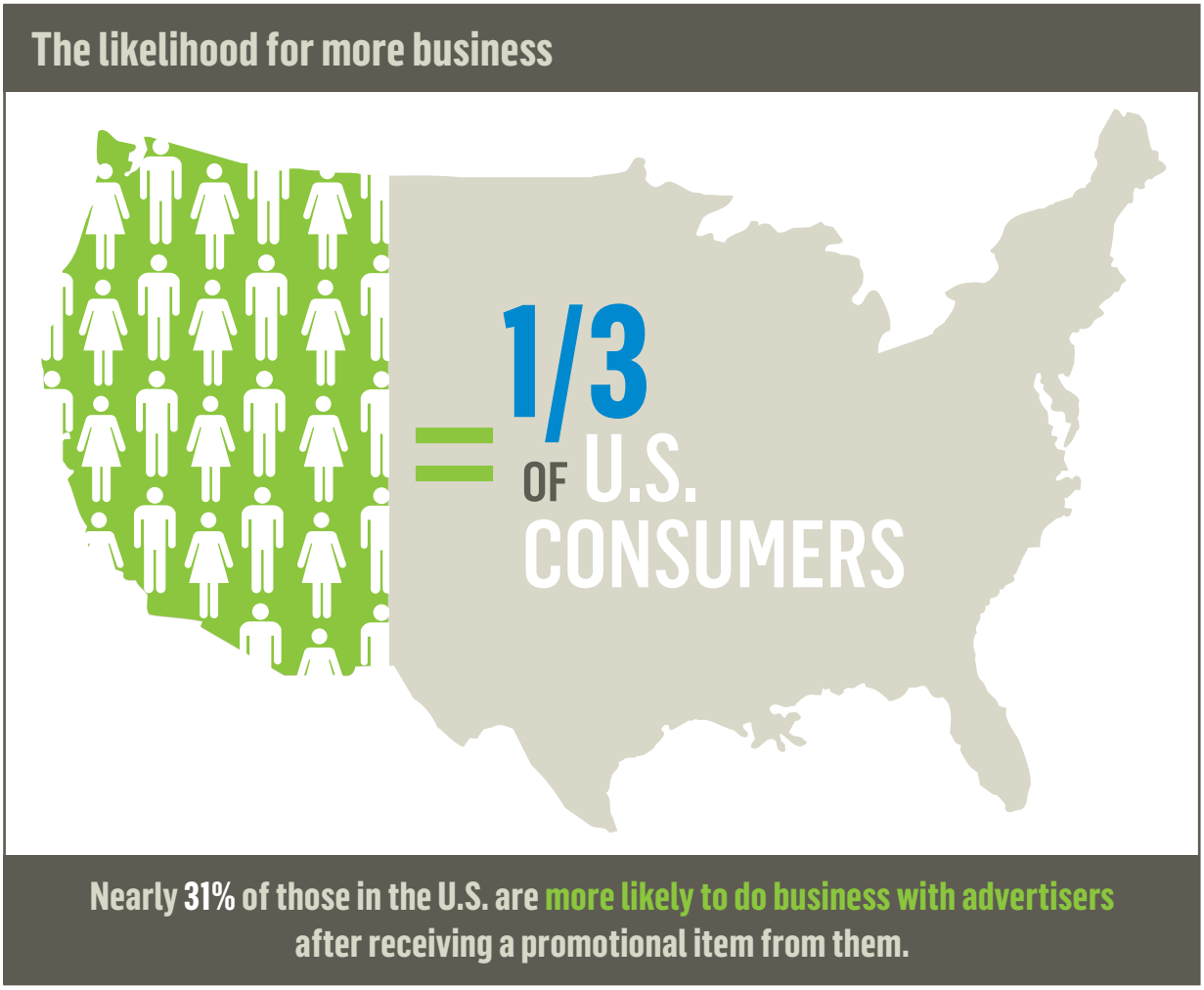
Ad Specialties Generate New Business

When consumers were asked how likely they were to do business with an advertiser they hadn't previously done business with after receiving an item, about 31 percent said they were more likely to do business with them in the future.



Some items generate even more goodwill from consumers: For example, about 53 percent of recipients of logoed outerwear said they'd be more likely to do business with an advertiser; recipients of USB drives were 43 percent more likely to do business with an advertiser; and bag recipients were 42 percent more likely.

▸ Key Takeaway

The uniqueness of outerwear and USB Drives likely contributes to their ability to generate future business. Items like consumables and health and safety products need to be closely tied with the advertiser in order to be as effective as other promotional products.

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Section Three

Promotional Products Make an Impression

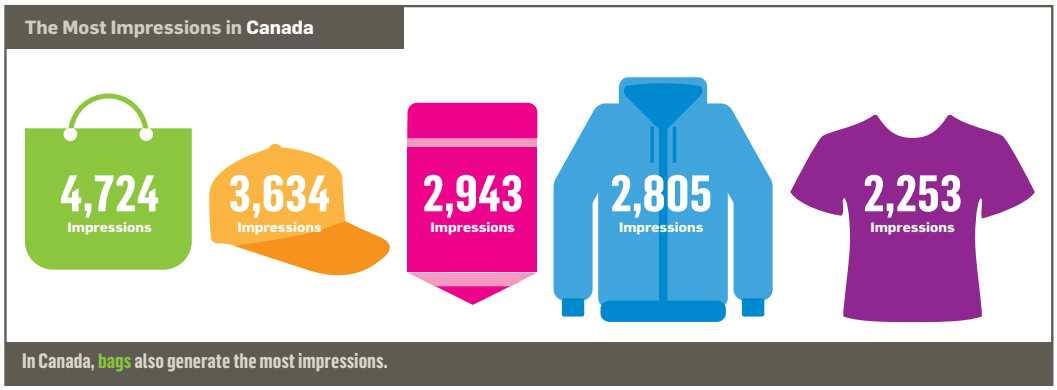
For this section, we attempted to determine the average number of impressions each promotional product receives. The number of impressions a product makes was derived from multiplying how long a recipient has the product to how many people he comes into contact with each month while using it. In the U.S., we again saw that bags generated the most impressions – 5,732 – of any item in the study. That's because bags are frequently used, often in public places where they can be seen by many people. Other items that deliver extremely high numbers of impressions in the U.S. include caps, writing instruments, outerwear and shirts.

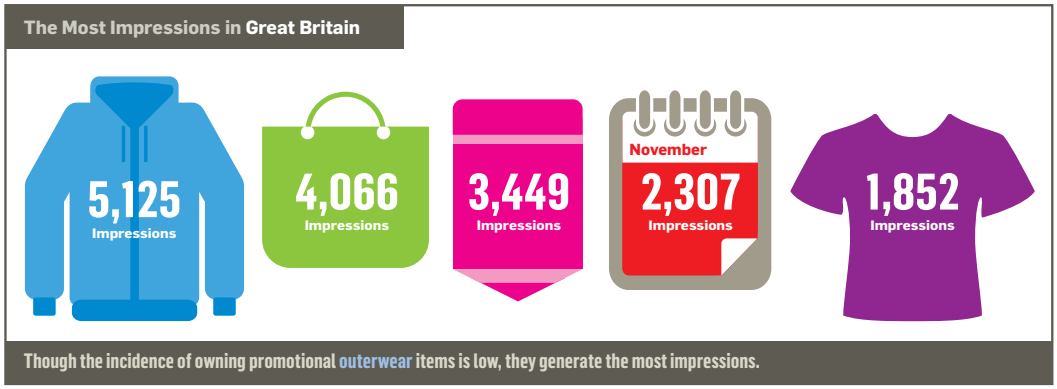
The following charts illustrate the top products, by country, that deliver the most impressions:

▸Key Takeaway:

Items that create the fewest impressions tend to be those intended mostly for one person, such as health and safety items, USB drives and consumables. The value of these items is more in the connection they make with the user than the total number of impressions generated.

Distributors should work with clients to determine the goals of their campaigns and the connection they want to establish with the intended recipient before selecting the right vehicle to deliver the message.





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The Cost-Effectiveness of Ad Specialties

According to the study, advertising specialties are less expensive per impression than most other forms of media. The investment in advertising specialties is modest, more targeted and more achievable for smaller businesses than other forms of advertising.

As the following chart illustrates, promotional products have a lower cost-per-impression in the United States than prime-time television advertising, national magazine advertising and newspaper ads, and a similar CPI to spot radio and Internet advertising.

▸Key Takeaway

Promotional products deliver the same or a better ROI than other forms of media. But when one considers the prohibitive cost of producing radio or television commercials or the cash outlay to buy sufficient Internet advertising, promotional products offer the best value. Promotional products can also be used to more closely target the intended message recipient than mass media.

Further, even smaller companies can achieve as high an ROI as major corporations by using advertising specialties because even a modest investment delivers superior results.

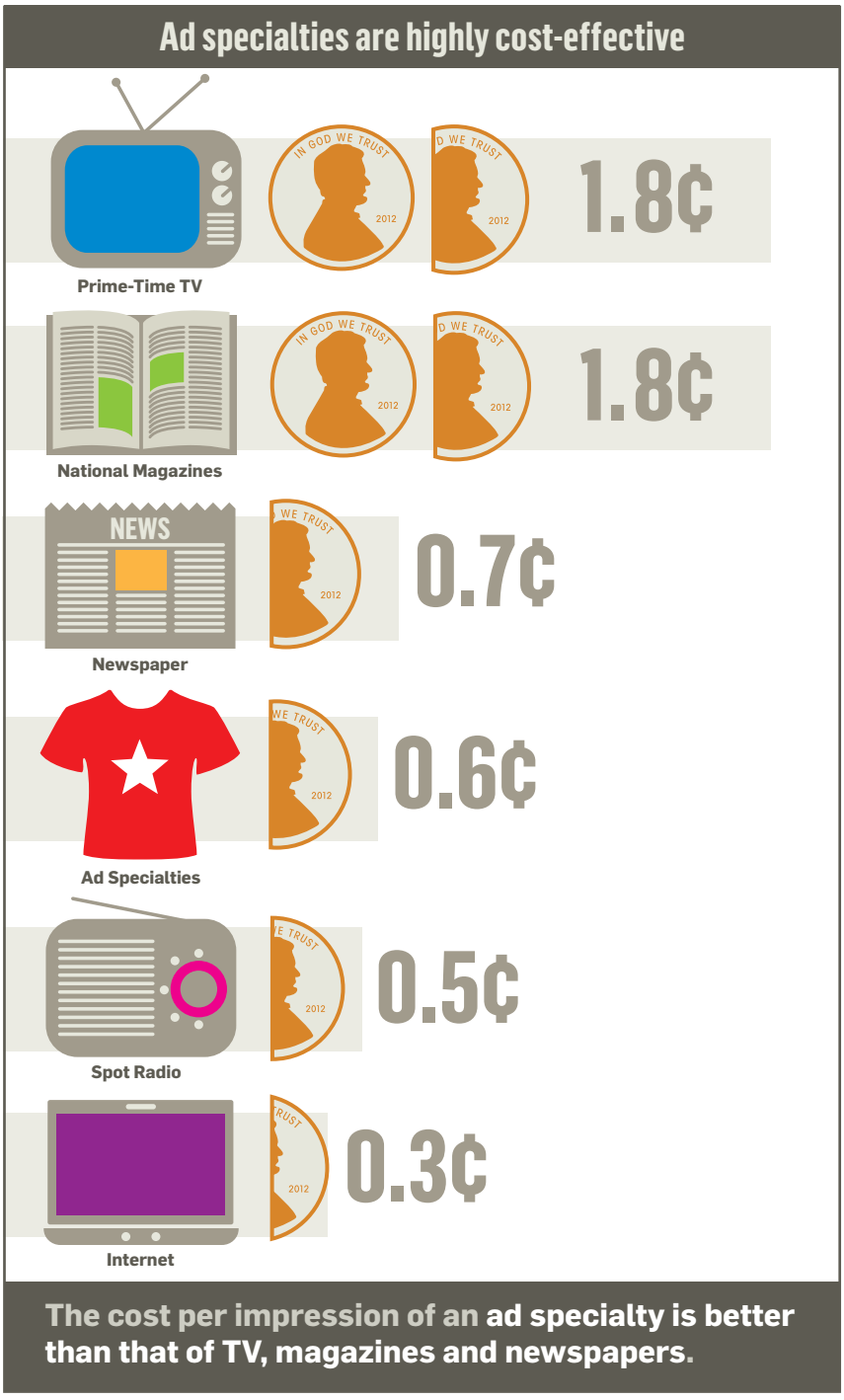
Conclusion

Advertising specialties occupy a unique space in the advertising and marketing world. Unlike other forms of media, where the advertiser's message is seen as an interruption in what the consumer is trying to do (i.e. watch a TV program or surf the Internet), ad specialties are used by consumers to achieve a goal, like drink coffee, write or wear a shirt. And because the products are kept and used repeatedly, the advertisers are remembered, as is illustrated by the extremely high advertiser recall of most types of items.

In addition, the cost-per-impression is comparable or better than the cost of other forms of media, and even the smallest marketing budgets can achieve big-budget results using advertising specialties.

For More Information

To gain access to the full study data, plus downloadable PDFs of the charts in this study, visit *asicentral.com*.



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Demographics

The following is a breakdown of the demographics of all survey respondents who indicated they currently owned promotional products.

Gender	%	Count
Male	44.9%	830
Female	55.1%	1,017
Total		**1,847**
Age		
21 to 34 years	45.9%	852
35 to 44 years	22.4%	416
45 to 54 years	18.9%	351
55 to 64 years	10.4%	193
65 years and over	2.4%	44
Total		**1,856**
Race		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7%	13
Asian	11.5%	214
Black or African American	8.7%	162
Hispanic or Latino	7.8%	145
White/Caucasian	67.6%	1,254
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	5
Other	3.4%	63
Total		**1,856**
Country		
United States	60.0%	1,113
Canada	24.7%	459
Great Britain	8.4%	155
France	7.0%	129
Total		**1,856**

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Demographics continued

Political Party	%	Count
Democrat	43.8%	482
Republican	21.3%	235
Independent	18.0%	198
Other	3.2%	35
Not registered	13.7%	151
Total		**1,101**
Cities		
Chicago	6.6%	116
Dallas	8.1%	142
London	8.6%	150
Los Angeles	8.0%	141
Miami	8.8%	155
Montreal	8.6%	151
New York	8.7%	153
Paris	7.7%	135
Philadelphia	7.5%	131
Seattle	9.8%	171
Toronto	8.4%	147
Vancouver	9.1%	160
Total		**1,752**

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