

Todd's 7 Cornerstones for Maximizing Branded Gear Impact

1. THE GIFT MUST BE USED TO CREATE BRANDING IMPRESSIONS!: Surveys show 82% of people decide to keep a promotional item based on usefulness. The next closest response was attractive at 29%. No use equals no impact, so it's essential to clear the useful hurdle in selecting an item. A good provider can help put the odds in your favor by sharing critical statistics about how promotional items best create brand impact.

2. PLANNING AHEAD INCREASES OPTIONS AND IMPACT: With the massive To Do Lists everyone has, promotional items are typically fairly low on the list and often ordered last minute. There are thousands of effective, quick turn items, but planning ahead increases options to create some "Wow!" moments. Ex. Custom woven dress socks have consistently created exceptional response, booth buzz and "Wow!" moments. Plan ahead 6 to 7 weeks with a \$5 per piece budget, and the result is a memorable home run.

3. START WITH THE DESIRED OUTCOME IN MIND: It's easy to get distracted by the almost 1,000,000 branded product options, but it's critical to remember they are a means to an end. You want to maximize the desired results or outcome from your budget. Carefully consider the result you want to achieve whether it is desktop presence, buzz at the booth, reinforcing a theme, commemorating 50 years in business, etc. Clarity of the desired outcome is essential to maximizing the results.

4. GREAT IDEAS REQUIRE GREAT INFORMATION: Most of my clients are very busy marketing and event professionals who either don't have the time or desire to surf the web for hours to find ideas. They'd rather have me provide proven ideas, so they can focus their energy on venue, speakers, booth, etc. Invest 5 to 10 minutes with your provider in sharing key factors such as target audience, desired outcome, ideal budget, in-hands date, location, etc. to receive targeted, high impact ideas. Invest the time upfront to maximize your end results.

5. WORK WITH SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS EVENTS: There are many people who can provide branded items, but most don't specialize in events. The event, meeting and trade show space is a different animal entirely from other markets, so choose wisely. Having specialized in this space for over 20 years, I understand the unique demands my clients face and deadline nature of events. In the same way I'd be useless to a pizza parlor, garage or real estate agency, extensive event experience allows me to easily work in sync with my event clients.

6. RECEIVE ANSWERS TO THE #1 QUESTION AND AVOID THE #1 COMPLAINT: The top question I'm asked is some form of "What's new and/or really working right now in branded gear?" The top complaint is "I want more proactive new ideas & my provider's ideas are tired and stale." It's important to be informed of trends in branded gear and what's generating consistent impact across various price points. Being ahead of the curve in branded gear can significantly ramp up the buzz, usage and branding impact. Ask a perspective provider how they globally and individually share trends and ideas with their clients.

7. GLOBALLY STRATEGIZE A COHESIVE BRANDED GEAR LINEUP FOR MULTIPLE TOUCHPOINTS: Many companies have multiple uses for branded gear such as trade shows, VIP events, employee appreciation, etc. Taking a global look at the uses and touchpoints allows the opportunity to maximize the impact of the overall budget through special buying programs, quantity breaks and other strategies. A good provider should be able to help with specific recommendations after a meaningful discussion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR GNP VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TODD FRANKFORD: Todd's primary objective is to make it easy for his branded gear clients to receive creative ideas and buying strategies that achieve their desired outcome and increase branding impact. In addition to over 20 years' experience in assisting marketing, event and collegiate professionals with their branded gear needs, Todd was a Certified Business Coach. As an owner of a globally ranked Top 100 coaching practice, he assisted many companies across a variety of industries to drive increased sales and marketing results. *Todd may be reached directly at 717-695-6865 or ToddF@BrandedGear.com*

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