

10 Tips To Use Giveaways More Effectively

Walk around any trade or consumer show and you will be able to collect a bag full of advertising specialties, or giveaway items all designed to promote. But look a little more closely. How many really do an effective job? How clearly do they get a message across? Is the message sufficiently visible? Is the giveaway useful or unique enough that you would want to keep and use it? All these questions, and more, need to be considered before jumping into the giveaway game.

Everyone enjoys receiving a gift, even if it is "just a little something." Gift giving creates a favorable impression. It can build goodwill, be an incentive, communicate a message and create awareness.

When thinking about advertising specialties for your next show, consider the following ten questions:

1. What do you want to achieve by giving away a premium item?

Your giveaway items should be designed to increase your memorability, communicate, motivate, promote or increase recognition. It is important not only that the message have an impact, but also the premium itself.

2. How will you select your premium item?

There is a multitude of different items you could consider as a premium. However, which one will best suit your purpose? To select the right item, you need to decide your objective. Do you want it to enhance a theme; convey a specific message or educate your target audience? A clear purpose should help make your selection process easier. A promotional specialist can also help you make an effective selection. Remember that your company image is reflected in whatever you choose to give away.

3. Whom do you want to receive your premium?

Having a clear objective for your premium item will also help you decide who should receive it. You may consider having different gifts for different types of visitors. You might have different quality gifts for your key customers, prospects and general passers by.

4. How does your giveaway tie into your marketing theme?

Is there an item that naturally complements your marketing message? Have the message imprinted on the item and make sure that your company name, logo and phone number appear clearly. An important aspect of any gift is to remember who it was from long after the fact.

5. What is your budget?

The price range for premium items is enormous. Quality, quantity and special orders, all impact the price. Establish a budget as part of your exhibit marketing plan. Consider ordering the same item for several different shows. The greater the quantity of your order, the lower the individual unit price.

6. What must visitors do to qualify for a gift item?

There are several ways to use your premium effectively. For example, as a reward for visitors participating in a demonstration, presentation or contest; as a token of your appreciation when visitors have given you qualifying information about their specific needs; as a thank you for stopping at the booth. Avoid leaving items out for anyone to take. This diminishes value and has little or no memorability factor.

7. Will your giveaway directly help your future sales?

Consider handing out a discount coupon or a gift certificate that requires future contact with your company for redemption. Consider premiums that will help generate frequent visits to customers and prospects, such as calling you for free refills.

8. How does your premium item complement your exhibiting goals?

Premiums can be used to prequalify your prospects. One company uses playing cards. Prior to the show, they send "kings" to their key customers, "queens" to suppliers, "jacks" to new or hot prospects. They request that the cards are brought to the booth in exchange for a special gift. When the cards are presented, the booth staff already know certain information about the visitor. They can then act on their previous knowledge and use time with the visitor more productively.

9. How will you inform your target audience about you giveaway item?

A sufficiently novel or useful giveaway can actively help to draw prospects to your booth. So make sure your prospects know about it. Send a "tickler" invitation with details of the giveaway, or create a two-piece premium, sending one part out to key prospects prior to the show and telling them to collect the other half at your booth.

10. How will you measure the effectiveness of your premium?

Establish a tracking mechanism to measure the success of your giveaway. If it is a redemption item, code it so that you know it resulted from the show. Post-show follow-up could include a question about the premium - did visitors remember receiving it and how useful was the item. After the show, critique your giveaway with your exhibit team: Did it draw specific prospects to the booth? Was it eye-catching enough to persuade passers by to stop? Did your customers find it useful? Did it project the right corporate image?

There are plenty of exciting premiums for you to choose from so that you can avoid the usual pens, pencils and keychains. Make your premium work for you and it will be money well invested.