



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS PROSPECTING & SALES PLAYBOOK

EDUCATION

EDITION

SCHOOL GEAR



PROMO IDEAS



How to **win education clients** and turn everyday orders into **repeatable revenue.**

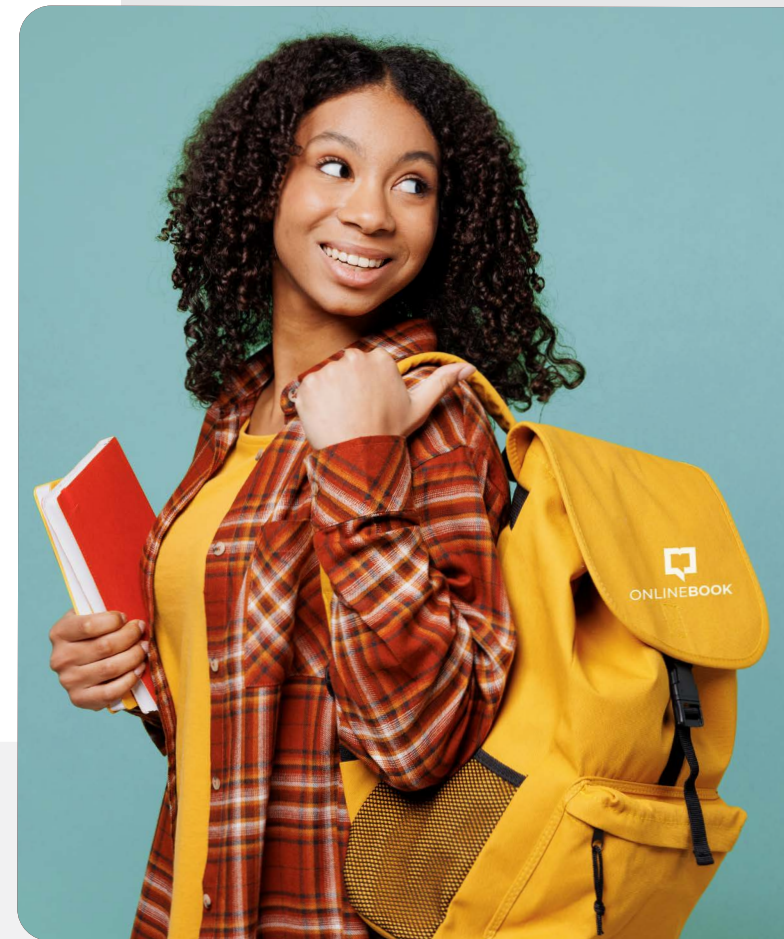




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EDUCATION

EDITION

BACKPACKS, JOURNALS AND MORE

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

Education is one of the most consistent and community-driven end markets in promotional products, spanning buyers from K-12 schools and districts to colleges, universities and education foundations.

According to ASI® research, education represents a meaningful share of industry spend within a promotional products market that reached \$27.7 billion in total sales in 2025.

This playbook shows you how to break into the education sector, win business and turn everyday needs like staff apparel, student gear, fundraising and school programs into consistent, repeat revenue.



ON-THE-GO DRINKWARE



EDUCATION ACCESSORIES



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POSITIONING: HOW YOU WIN IN EDUCATION



What education buyers care about

✓ School pride & community engagement

✓ Consistency across grades, teams or campuses

✓ Easy ordering for busy administrators

✓ Budget predictability and cost control

Your positioning statement

“

I help schools and education organizations use branded products to build school pride, support students and staff and simplify ordering year after year.

”



Education buyers don't want "swag" – they want programs that work every semester and are easy to manage and repeat.



SCHOOL ACCESSORIES



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YOUR IDEAL EDUCATION PROSPECTS

BEST TARGETS ✓

- Public & private K-12 schools
- School districts
- Colleges & universities
- Charter schools
- PTAs/PTOs
- Athletic departments
- Education nonprofits & camps

BUYER TITLES ✓

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Athletic Director
- Activities Director
- Communications/Marketing
- PTA/PTO leadership
- Operations/Purchasing



Rule of Thumb

If they manage students, staff or events, they are buying promotional products every school year, often across multiple programs and departments.



HOW TO FIND EDUCATION PROSPECTS



Build a target list

Set a weekly goal to identify 30-50 education organizations to prospect.



Where to find prospects

- **Google** (search terms like “elementary school,” “high school,” “school district,” “college athletics,” “PTA”)
- **School district websites** (staff directories, school listings)
- **Athletic department pages** (coaches, booster clubs, team contacts)
- **PTA/PTO directories**
- **Local school calendars and event listings** (fundraisers, sports, events – a goldmine)
- **LinkedIn** (industry = education)



What to track for each account

- **School or organization**
- **Type** (K-12, district, college, athletics, etc.)
- **Buyer role**
- **Size**
- **Likely program** (spirit wear, events, athletics, fundraising)



STEPS TO REACH EDUCATION PROSPECTS



DAY 1 - EMAIL



Subject: Quick question about school events or spirit wear

Copy and paste this!

Hi [Name],

I work with schools on spirit wear, event kits and programs that make ordering easier for staff and families.

Quick question: Who typically handles items for school events, athletics or student programs?

Best,
[You]

DAY 3 - FOLLOW-UP EMAIL



Reference a specific upcoming or recurring event (back-to-school, graduation, field day or athletics). Keep it short and tie it to how other schools are simplifying these programs.

DAY 7 - CALL



“ I work with schools to simplify spirit wear and event programs, from athletics to school-wide events. Who’s the best person to speak with about that? ”

DAY 12 - FOLLOW UP



- **Share one specific program idea, not a list of products**
- **Tie it to a common school need** (events, athletics, fundraising)(e.g., graduation kits, field day bundles or spirit wear programs)



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DISCOVERY CALLS: WHAT TO ASK EDUCATION PROSPECTS



Goal

Uncover recurring school moments, not one-time needs.

Core questions



- 1 "What events or programs happen every year?"
- 2 "How do you handle spirit wear or school programs today?"
- 3 "What's challenging about ordering or managing these today?"
- 4 "Who else is involved in approvals or decisions?"
- 5 "Would it help if approved items were always available in a simple online store?"

Key buying triggers



These are the moments when schools are most likely to plan, order and reorder programs:

- ✓ Graduation
- ✓ Back-to-school
- ✓ Athletics seasons
- ✓ New student orientation
- ✓ Teacher appreciation
- ✓ Fundraisers



Education success comes from **aligning promo**, with the academic calendar, not one-off requests.



WHAT TO SELL TO EDUCATION BUYERS

1 Spirit Wear Programs

- Apparel for students, staff and families – [See our suggested starter Product Collection in ESP+](#)
- Supports school pride and community engagement
- High reorder potential throughout the school year
- Always available through a branded online store – [View a sample Education ESP+ Store](#)

2 Event Kits

- Prepackaged items for key school events (field day, orientation, open house, graduation)
- Simplifies planning for staff and administrators
- Standardized and repeatable each year

3 Athletics & Clubs

- Team apparel and gear
- Booster club and fan giveaways
- Championship or event merchandise
- Consistent branding across teams and seasons

4 Teacher & Staff Appreciation

- Appreciation weeks and recognition programs
- End-of-year gifts
- Items that support morale and retention
- Easily repeated each school year

5 Fundraiser Programs

- PTA and PTO led programs
- Spirit wear or themed merchandise
- Designed for easy ordering and distribution
- Repeatable annually with consistent results





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HOW TO PRESENT TO EDUCATION BUYERS



⊗ Never pitch products alone.

✓ Pitch programs tied to school moments.



Simple proposal format

- **Program name**
- **Audience** (students, staff or families)
- **When it runs**
- **Quantity**
- **Budget range**



Example

"8th Grade Graduation Kit – 120 students – \$15-\$25 per kit – Ordered through company store

This program-first approach simplifies decisions for busy school buyers and makes programs easier to approve and repeat.



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HOW TO OVERCOME COMMON OBJECTIONS



"We have a tight budget."

"Totally understand – most schools do. That's why we structure these by grade or event so you can control the spend."

"Parents usually handle that."

"That's common. I often work directly with PTAs or parent groups to help standardize and simplify the process."

"We've had issues with vendors before."

"I hear that a lot. That's why I recommend setting up a simple online store – it makes ordering more consistent, easier to manage and repeatable year after year."



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YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS IN EDUCATION

MONTH 1



- Target 40 schools or education organizations
- Book 8-10 discovery calls
- Close one event or spirit wear program

MONTH 2



- Expand into athletics or staff appreciation
- Introduce repeatable program or online store

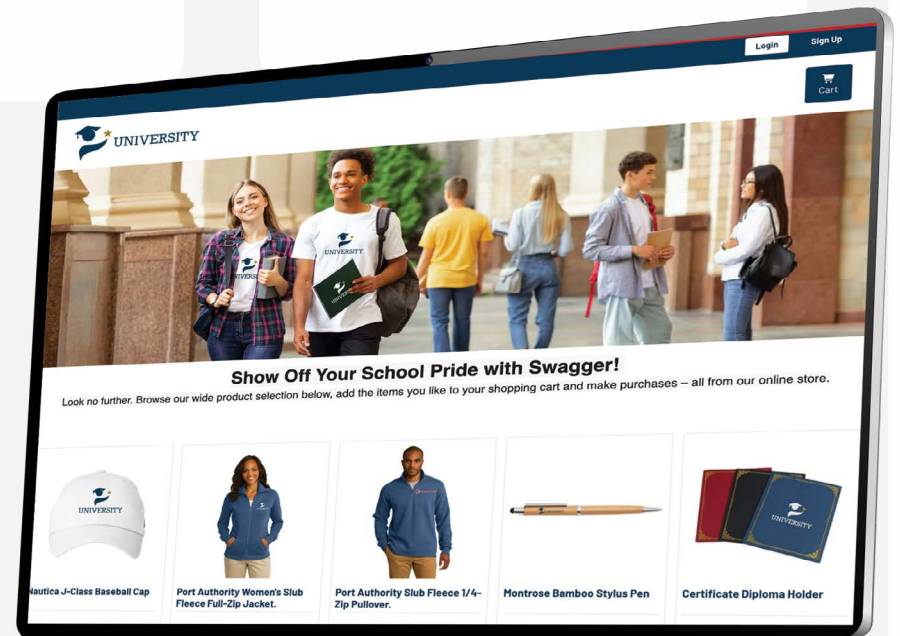
MONTH 3



- Lock in a yearly calendar of programs
- Get referrals to other schools or PTAs/PTOs



This is how successful distributors move from single orders to **repeatable, program-based education accounts.**



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WHAT NOT TO DO



⊗ Don't pitch luxury items.



Do

Focus on affordable, practical items that fit school budgets.

⊗ Don't ignore school calendars.



Do

Align programs with key school events and seasonal moments.

⊗ Don't overcomplicate approvals.



Do

Simplify decisions so approvals are quick and straightforward.

⊗ Don't treat schools like corporate buyers.



Do

Focus on student experience, school pride and community impact.

⊗ Don't make ordering harder than it needs to be.



Do

Make ordering easy with a simple school store for staff and families.





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THE BOTTOM LINE



Education promo works when it

- Aligns with the school year
- Builds pride and community engagement
- Is easy for staff and parents to manage
- Repeats every semester or school year through standardized programs
- Simplifies ordering through a company store



Become the distributor who makes school programs easier to manage and repeat, and education can become one of your most reliable, long-term verticals.

Need more?

Bookmark our exclusive [Education Industry Hub](#) on the ASI member site.



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