



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS PROSPECTING & SALES PLAYBOOK

RETAIL

EDITION



IN-STORE GIVEAWAYS

PROMO IDEAS



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





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DRINKWARE, TOTES AND MORE



ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

Retail is one of the most visible and fast-moving end markets in promotional products, spanning buyers from local boutiques and franchise locations to regional chains and national retailers.

According to ASI® research, retail 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 retail sector, win business and turn everyday needs like branded merchandise, in-store promotions and customer-facing programs into consistent, repeat revenue.

ON-THE-GO DRINKWARE



RETAIL GIVEAWAYS

What retail buyers care about

✓ Driving traffic (in store and online)

✓ Customer loyalty & repeat visits

✓ Speed, consistency and scale

✓ Brand visibility beyond the store

✓ Easy reordering and inventory consistency across locations

Your positioning statement

“ I help retail brands use promotional products to drive loyalty, increase repeat purchases and extend their brand beyond the store. ”

★★★

Retail promo works best when it's tied to customer behavior and buying moments, not random giveaways.



BRANDED APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES



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YOUR IDEAL RETAIL PROSPECTS

BEST TARGETS



- Regional retail chains
- Franchise systems
- Specialty retail (apparel, food, fitness, beauty)
- DTC brands with pop-ups or events
- Multi-location service retail (gyms, salons, quick serve brands)

BUYER TITLES



- Marketing Manager or Director
- Brand Manager
- Franchise Marketing
- Customer Loyalty or CX
- Operations (for rollouts and execution)



Rule of Thumb

If they focus on repeat customers, promotions or brand moments, they are buying promotional products year-round.





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HOW TO FIND RETAIL PROSPECTS



Build a target list

Set a weekly goal to identify 25-40 retail companies to prospect.



Where to find prospects

- **Google Maps** (search terms like “boutique,” “retail store,” “franchise,” “coffee shop,” “fitness studio,” “salon”)
- **Franchise directories** (franchise listings, brand websites)
- **Shopify and DTC brand directories** (online brands, emerging retailers)
- **LinkedIn** (industry = retail)



What to track for each account

- **Brand name**
- **Number of locations or channels** (retail, e-commerce, pop-ups)
- **Key buyer role** (marketing, branding, operations)
- **Likely program** (loyalty, product launches, seasonal promotions)



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STEPS TO REACH RETAIL PROSPECTS



DAY 1 - EMAIL



Subject: Quick question about brand or loyalty programs

Copy and paste this!

Hi [Name],

I work with retail brands on promotional programs that drive repeat visits and extend brand visibility beyond the store.

Quick question: Who typically handles items tied to loyalty programs, store openings or seasonal promotions?

Best,
[You]

DAY 3 - CALL



“

I help retail teams drive repeat visits through loyalty and seasonal promo programs. 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 retail moment** (launch, seasonal campaign, loyalty) (e.g., grand opening kits, loyalty rewards or seasonal promotion bundles)



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DISCOVERY CALLS: WHAT TO ASK RETAIL PROSPECTS



Goal

Connect promotional products to traffic or revenue, not just merchandise.

Core questions



- 1 "What drives repeat visits or purchases today?"
- 2 "Do you run seasonal or promotional campaigns?"
- 3 "How are those programs executed across locations or channels?"
- 4 "What's challenging about maintaining brand consistency at scale?"
- 5 "Would it help if approved items were always available in a simple online store?"

Key buying triggers



These are the moments when retail companies are most likely to need and reorder products:

- ✓ Store openings
- ✓ Loyalty programs
- ✓ In-store and online integration
- ✓ Influencer or brand launches
- ✓ Seasonal campaigns



Retail success comes from tying promotional products to clear business outcomes, not standalone merchandise.





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WHAT TO SELL TO RETAIL BUYERS



1 Customer Loyalty Programs

- Spend-based rewards and branded merchandise – [See our suggested starter Product Collection in ESP+](#)
- Limited edition merchandise tied to promotions or campaigns
- Drives repeat purchases and customer engagement
- Always available through a branded online store for easy reordering

2 Store Opening Kits

- Staff apparel and customer-facing giveaways
- Creates a consistent brand experience at launch
- Repeatable for every new location

3 Seasonal Campaign Kits

- Campaigns tied to key retail moments (holiday, back to school, summer)
- Supports promotions and in-store or online traffic
- Easy to replicate annually across locations

4 Employee Brand Ambassador Gear

- Branded apparel and gear that extends the brand beyond the store
- Turns staff into visible brand ambassadors
- Especially effective for franchises and multi-location brands

5 Pop-up & Event Merchandise

- Short-run merchandise for pop-ups, launches and events
- Creates urgency and exclusivity for customers
- High-impact, limited-time programs popular with DTC brands





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HOW TO PRESENT TO RETAIL BUYERS



⊗ Don't pitch "swag."

✓ Pitch campaigns and programs tied to business outcomes.



Simple proposal format

- Campaign name
- Objective (traffic, loyalty, awareness)
- Locations or volume
- Timeline
- Budget range



Example

"Spring Loyalty Reward Program – 25 locations – \$20-\$30 per unit – Ordered through company store"

This campaign-first approach simplifies decisions for retail buyers and makes programs easier to scale and repeat across locations.



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HOW TO OVERCOME COMMON OBJECTIONS



"We already have giveaways."

"Makes sense – most of my clients did too. I usually help turn those into structured programs tied to repeat visits or campaigns."

"Too many locations to manage."

"That's exactly where this works best. We set up a simple company store so approved items are easy to order across locations, keeping everything consistent and scalable."

"We need ROI."

"Totally. That's why we tie these to store openings, loyalty programs or limited-time campaigns that drive measurable results."



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YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS IN RETAIL

MONTH 1



- Target 40-50 retail brands
- Book 8 discovery calls
- Close one campaign or opening kit

MONTH 2



- Expand to seasonal or loyalty program
- Introduce repeat ordering or a company store

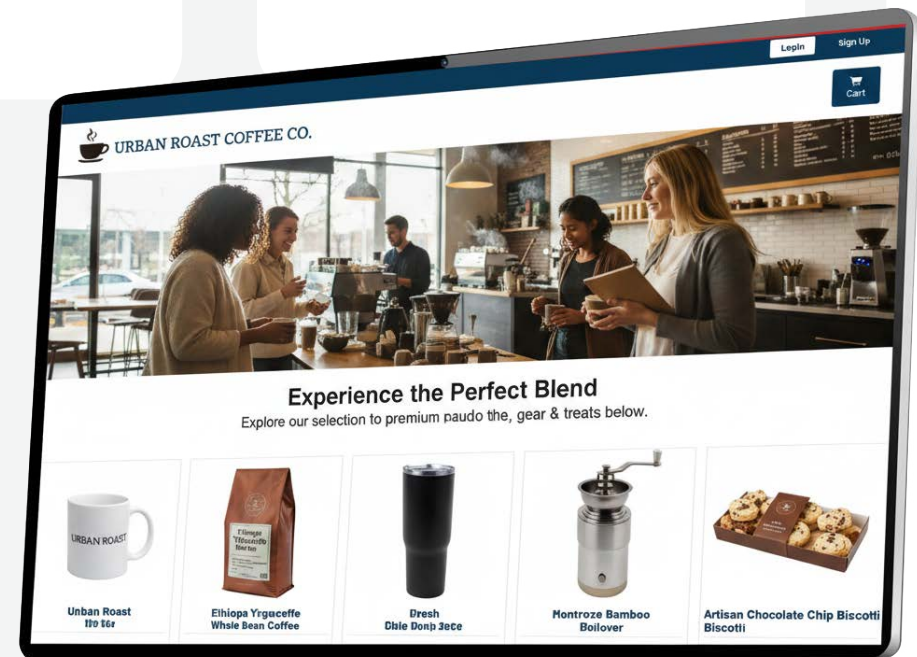
MONTH 3



- Replicate program across locations
- Ask for introductions to franchisees or brand team



This is how successful distributors move from one-off orders to **scalable, program-based retail accounts**.



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WHAT NOT TO DO



⊗ Don't lead with cheap giveaways.



Do

Focus on quality items that reflect the brand and drive customer engagement.

⊗ Don't ignore brand standards or guidelines.



Do

Align every item with the brand's look, feel and positioning.

⊗ Don't pitch without a campaign or promotional hook.



Do

Tie every product to a specific campaign, launch or customer moment.

⊗ Don't treat retail like corporate gifting.



Do

Focus on programs that drive traffic, loyalty and repeat visits.

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



Do

Simplify ordering with a company store for easy rollout across locations.





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THE BOTTOM LINE



Retail promo succeeds when it

- Drives a clear customer action
- Feels on brand and aligned with campaigns
- Scales cleanly across locations
- Repeats every season through structured programs
- Simplifies ordering through a company store



Become the distributor who turns campaigns into repeatable programs, and retail can become one of your most reliable, long-term verticals

Need more?

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



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