



## PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Not sure what it means?  
We've got you covered.**

The promotional products industry has many of its own unique terms, so we've compiled this glossary of some commonly used ones.

This glossary is designed to help you develop a better understanding of both products and imprinting methods.



## #

### 4-Color Process

A system where a color image is separated into four different color values by using filters and screens (usually done digitally). The result is a color separation of four images that reproduces the original color image when transferred to printing plates and printed on a printing press with the colored inks cyan (blue), magenta (red), yellow and black. These four colors can be combined to create thousands of colors.

## B

### Bleeds

Printers cannot print right to the edge of a paper sheet. To create that effect, the printer must use a sheet that's larger than the document size. The printer prints beyond the edge of the document size (usually 1/8), then cuts the paper down to the document size.

## C

### Camera-Ready

Artwork that's black and white and has very clean, crisp lines that make it easy to scan and suitable for photographic reproduction.

### Coded Pricing

Industry codes are letters attached to a pricing list (retail) so that distributors know what they'll pay suppliers. It's a code designed so end-users cannot identify the markup on the items they buy.

## Colorfill

Screen printing an image and then debossing it onto the vinyl's surface.

## D

### Debossing

Depressing an image into a material's surface so that the image sits below the product surface.

### Die-Casting

Injecting molten metal into the cavity of a carved die (a mold).

### Die-Striking

Producing emblems and other flat promotional products by striking a blank metal sheet with a hammer that holds the die.

### Distributor

A business or person that purchases promotional products from suppliers and sells them to their end-buyer clients. They make up the middle portion of the supply chain.

### Drop Shipment

When a supplier ships directly to the end-buyer. An order shipped to more than one location may be charged a fee for each additional destination. Many distributors require white-labeling (hiding the supplier information).

## E

### Embossing

Impressing an image in relief to achieve a raised surface.

## Embroidery

Stitching a design into fabric through the use of high-speed, computer-controlled sewing machines. Artwork must first be "digitized," which is the specialized process of converting 2-dimensional artwork into stitches or thread. A particular format of art, such as a jpeg, tif, eps, or bmp, cannot be converted into an embroidery tape. The digitizer must actually recreate the artwork using stitches. Then it programs the sewing machine to sew a specific design, in a specific color, with a specific type of stitch. This is the process known as digitizing.

### End-Buyer

A business or person who is in need of promotional products to market their brand, business or event. They make up the bottom of the supply chain and have a direct line to consumers.

### Engraving

Cutting an image into metal, wood or glass using one of three methods: computerized engraving, hand tracing or hand engraving.

### EQP (End Quantity Pricing)

This is when the highest quantity price (or lowest price) is offered for any size order. This provides a large discount for the distributor and is usually a limited-time offer.

### ESP®

The industry's #1 business platform where you can find inspiration, search and order products, stay organized, and send marketing emails to your customers or prospects.

## Etching

Using a process in which an image is first covered with a protective coating that resists acid, then exposed, leaving bare metal and protected metal. The acid attacks only the exposed metal, leaving the image etched onto the surface.

## F

## Fulfillment

Supplier or distributor inventories stock for a buyer and fills orders.

## H

## Hot Stamp

Setting a design on a relief die, which is then heated and pressed onto the printing surface.

## I

## Imprint Area

The area on a product with specific dimensions in which the imprint is placed.

## L

## Laser or Foil Stamp

Applying metallic or colored foil imprints to vinyl, leather or paper surfaces.

## Less Than Minimum

The fee charged for ordering 50% fewer items than the quantity listed in the minimum or first column. This option is not always available on all products.

## P

## Pad Printing

A recessed surface is covered with ink. The plate is wiped clean, leaving ink in the recessed areas. A silicone pad is then pressed against the plate, pulling the ink out of the recesses and pressing it directly onto the product.

## Pantone Matching System (PMS)

A book of standardized colors in a fan format used to identify, match

and communicate colors in order to produce accurate color matches in printing. Each color has a coded number indicating instructions for mixing inks to achieve that color.

## Paper Proof

Impression of type or artwork on paper so the correctness and quality of the material to be printed can be checked. The least expensive is a regular black and white faxed paper proof.

## Personalization vs. Imprinting

All items should be available to be imprinted (logoed) with a client's logo, team name, etc. Personalization means that you can do individualized imprinting – meaning each item can get its own unique imprint. Imprinting is when all items in an order will receive the same imprint. Here's an example: A baseball team wants mugs with their team logo (imprinting), BUT they also want each individual mug to have a player's name and jersey number on it (personalization).

## Pre-Production Proof

An actual physical sample of the product itself produced and sent for approval before an order goes into production.

## Promotional Product

Practical products that are branded with a logo, mascot, slogan, company info, etc., and often given with no implied action/reaction intended from the end-user.

## Q

## QUR

This acronym means "quote upon request." The pricing for the product is not posted and you need to reach out to the supplier so they can provide a customized price quote based on your product.

## R

## ROI

Return on Investment

## Run charge

Extra fees meant to help with the costs associated with printing your items. The cost of production can include materials, equipment setup, time spent on the project and more.

## S

## Screen Printing

An image is transferred to the printed surface by ink, which is pressed through a stenciled screen and treated with a light-sensitive emulsion. Film positives are put in contact with the screens and exposed to light, hardening the emulsion not covered by film and leaving a soft area on the screen for the squeegee to press ink through. (Also called silk screening.)

## Setup Fee

The cost associated with the creation of a die, plate, screen or other fixture that's used to print your logo on your desired item.

## SKU

These product numbers are not required in ESP and are only used if a supplier has them. SKUs (stock keeping units) allow vendors to automatically track the movement of inventory.

## Spec Sample

A product sample printed with a potential client's logo/slogan information.

## Supplier

A business or person that makes, imports or manufactures a good or product that can be imprinted and sold as a promotional product. They make up the top portion of the supply chain.

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