



# Promo Industry 101: What to Do When You're New

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Executive Director  
ASI Corporate Accounts

January 4-6, 2025

# Hello!



- 14 years in the ad specialty industry
- Has helped hundreds of distributors grow their business selling promo products
- Main focus and passion is sales & sales training

# Agenda

- 1 Industry Overview**
- 2 Top Markets & Products**
- 3 Best Practices**
- 4 Business Planning**
- 5 Tools and Resources**
- 6 Questions**

# Industry Overview

# Industry Overview



## 1. What are promo products?

Any item with a name, slogan, or message

## 2. Who buys promo?

End-buyers – people, businesses or organizations looking to promote their brand or company

## 3. Why promo products?

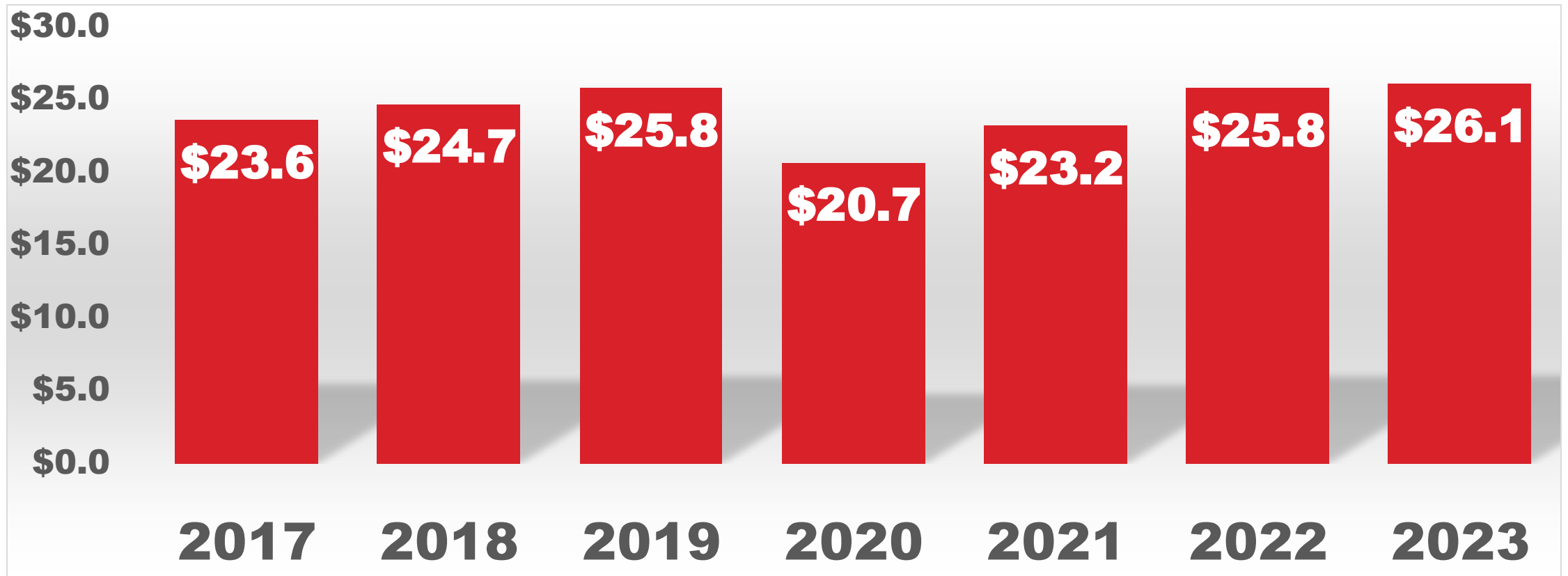
Promotional Products are the most highly rewarded form of advertising

## 4. How large is the industry?

Any Guesses?

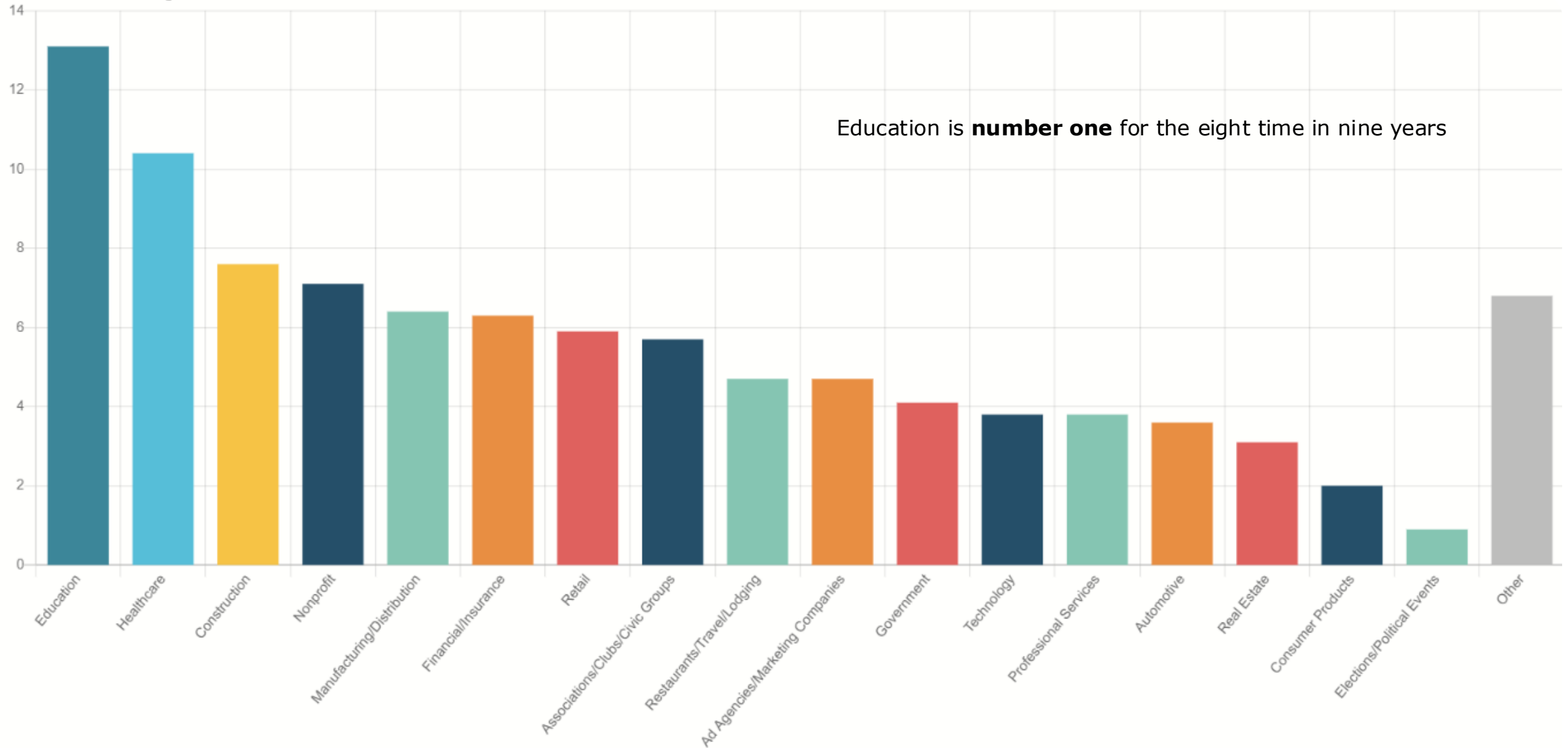
# Industry Sales

\*Annual Sales in BILLIONS



# Top Markets & Products

# Leading Industries



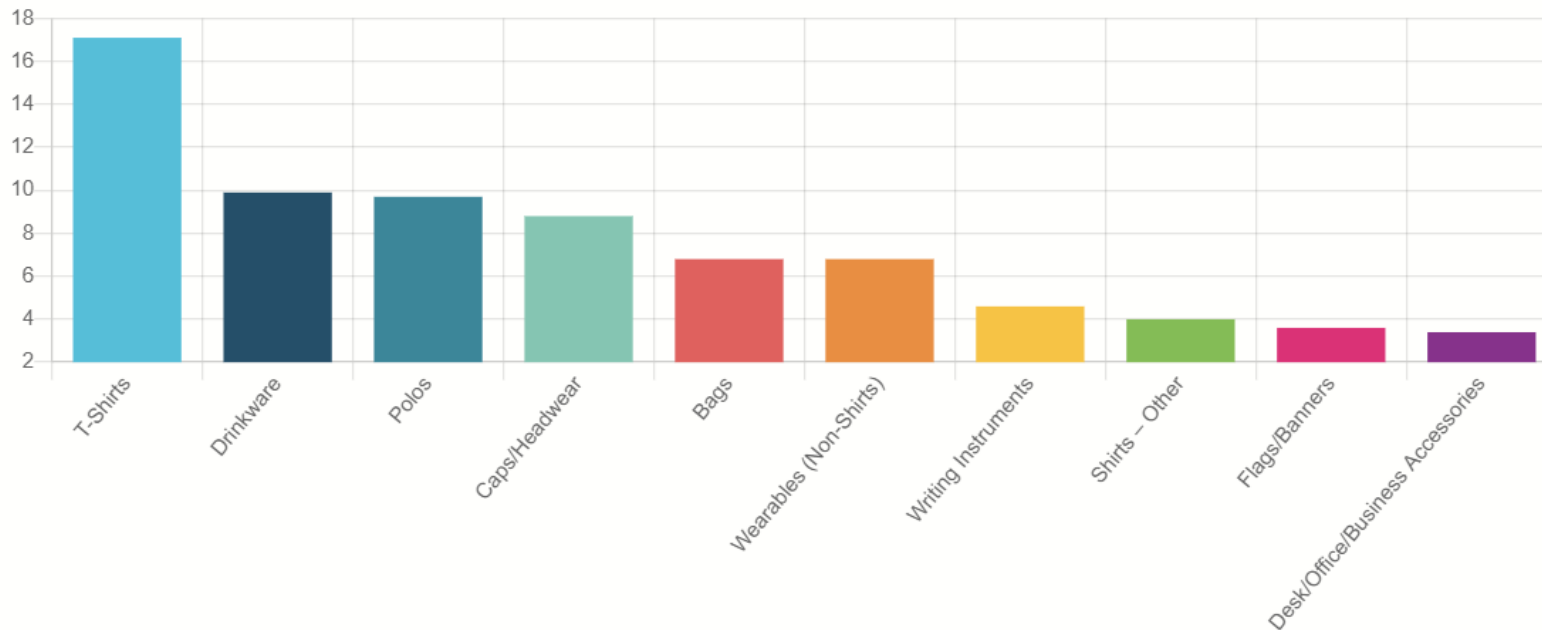
Education is **number one** for the eight time in nine years



# Product Category - Sales

## TOP 10 PRODUCT CATEGORIES

(As Percentage of Overall Promo Products Sales)



## AND THE REST

Health & Safety **3.3%**

Buttons/Badges/Ribbons/Stickers/Decals/Emblems/  
Lanyards **2.9%**

Electronics/USBs/Computer-Related Products (Non-  
Mobile Tech) **2.6%**

Blankets/Towels **2.4%**

Recognition Awards/Trophies/Jewelry **2.2%**

Mobile Tech Accessories **2.2%**

Housewares/Tools **2.1%**

Calendars **2.0%**

Books/Cards/Postcards/Stationery/Giftwrap **2.0%**

Magnets **1.5%**

Food Gifts & Bottles of Water **1.2%**

Other **0.9%**

# Industry Profile: #1 Education



## Buyers

- Colleges
- Universities
- Private Schools
- Public High Schools
- Elementary schools

# Targeting Education



## Apparel

Sweatshirts

T-shirts

Hats



## Office Supplies

Pens

Highlighters

Notebooks

Rulers

Calendars



## Sports

Uniforms

Water Bottles

Pom Poms

Rally Towels



## Awards

Paper Certificates  
with Seals

Tenure Plaques

Trophies

# Industry Profile: #2 Healthcare



## Buyers

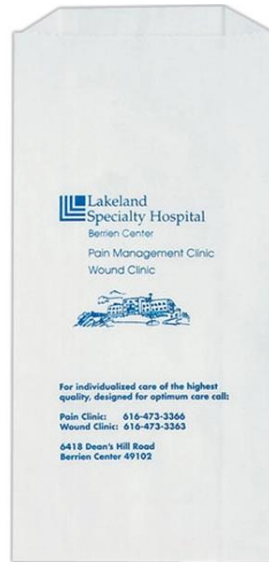
- Hospitals
- Nursing Homes
- Physical Therapists
- Dentists
- Pharmacies
- Urgent Care

# Healthcare Industry Product Ideas



## Dentists

Toothbrushes  
Floss  
Stickers for kids  
Dental care travel  
kit



## Pharmacies

Business card  
holder  
Prescription bags  
Calendars  
Drinkware



## Nursing Homes

Mini pill cutter  
Pens  
Tote bags  
Pill box



## Physical Therapists

Hot and cold packs  
Massage balls  
Back brace  
Stress reliever

# Industry Profile: #3 Construction



## Buyers

- Home Builders
- General Contractors
- Corporate Builders



# Construction Industry Product Ideas



## Safety & Health Programs

Completion certificates  
Awards  
Corporate gifts



## Customer Appreciation

Food promos  
Branded blankets  
Kitchen essentials



## Apparel and Headwear

New hire T-shirts & uniforms  
Logoed headwear



## Sales Incentives

High-end promo  
TV's  
Watches  
iPads

# Member Tips for Construction Industry Targeting



1. Reach out in the off season
2. Best Value, quality product & quick turnaround
3. They love centralized purchasing
4. Think long term with these clients



# Industry Profile: #4 Manufacturing



## Buyers

- Toys
- Auto
- Food
- Electronics
- Wholesalers

# Manufacturing Industry Product Ideas



## Uniforms

Industrial shirts & pants, High visibility clothing, Jackets, Hats, Gloves, Corporate office

### Apparel



## Recruitment

T-Shirts, Hats, Writing instruments, Magnets



## Signs & Displays

Front door mats, Feather flags, Signage



## Safety Gear

Face shields, Hard hats, Safety glasses



## Incentives

Performance apparel, Trophies & awards, Corporate gifts & incentives

# Industry Profile: #5 Retail



## Buyers

- Retail stores
- Supermarkets
- Clothing stores
- Department stores
- Convenience stores
- Superstores

# Retail Industry Product Ideas



## Wearables

Hats, Aprons, Name tags, Lanyards, T-shirts & Polos



## Signage

Store signage, Banners, Sale signs, Stores displays, Floor stickers



## Bags

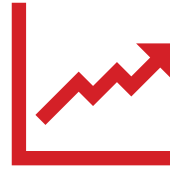
Reusable, Paper, Recycled

# Member Tip: Consider ESP+ Stores



## What

A company store is an online store you can set up to manage orders for a specific client, market or event.



## Why

Consistent and increased sales  
Easier to track orders, order aggregation  
Automatic payments  
Enhanced client relations



## How

Employee stores: Branded merch, Uniforms  
Employee Incentive Programs  
Pop-up stores  
Consistent branded signage



# ESP+ STORES

Build & launch branded  
client stores with ease.



Employee  
Recognition

Team  
Gear

Company  
Apparel

Fundraising  
Shop

Healthcare  
Industry



Visit the **ESP+ Stores Booth #348.**



Scan to learn more.



# Best Practices

# Pay Attention to Trending Products



Stanley Quencher





# Self Promos

Promotional products you give away to promote your own business

Don't give

Give



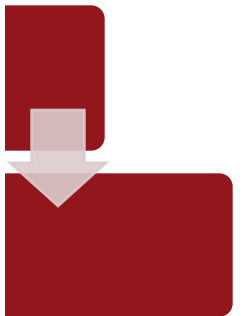
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# Self Promos

## ASI Best Distributor Self Promo 2023



WHOOPLA's (asi/522701) tiki bar summer swag kit includes a bottled infusion kit (101457-000) now carried by Gemline (asi/56070), an engraved bamboo straw (20-6721) from Totally Bamboo (asi/91565), a Lewis bag, an engraved wooden mallet, custom hibiscus syrup and drink accessories, all in a self-sealing box from CompanyBox.

# Self Promos

## ASI Best Distributor Self Promo 2024



**"You can't throw a bunch of random stuff in a box. When you can tie everything together, it makes for a much better experience."**

**John Vo, WHOOPLA**

- Campaign Cost \$4,000 for 85 kits sent to VIP clients and prospects who had been unresponsive
- WHOOPLA gained 3 new clients that spent \$33,000 on initial projects
- Over \$20,000 in additional kitting projects came in that can be attributed to the campaign
- Overall the summer swag kit brought in over 1,225% ROI



# Self Promos

## 2022 ASI Promo Campaign Award: Best Distributor Self Promotion

“We wanted to show a targeted audience what they could do with their brand.”

*Heather Comerford, 1338Tryon*

- Targeted Males 40-60
- Mailed 30 boxes out to male dominated industries like trucking and technology
- Sent to customers and prospects



# Self Promos

## 2022 ASI Promo Campaign Award: Best Distributor Self Promotion



Sent out just over 30 boxes



3 prospects became customers



One client wanted to use the same 5 products with their own branding



Another prospect set up an online store



A C-Suite-Level client set up the same box for their sales team in 2022

# Best Practices for Selling Promo



1. Understand the type and quality of promotional products to meet your clients' needs
2. Show samples
3. Look for repeat orders
4. Look for upsell opportunities

# Power of Referrals

1. Asking for referrals is an easy form of lead generation
2. Best place for referrals is from your current customers
3. Add a line to POs, invoices, email signatures
4. Offer a discount or free gift as a thank you
5. Remember: timing is key! Make sure to ask for referrals after checking in and the customer is happy with the order they received



## Important to Note:



“Once you have a contact within the organization, such as a safety manager, you can ask for referrals to other departments such as human resources”  
–*ASI Distributor*

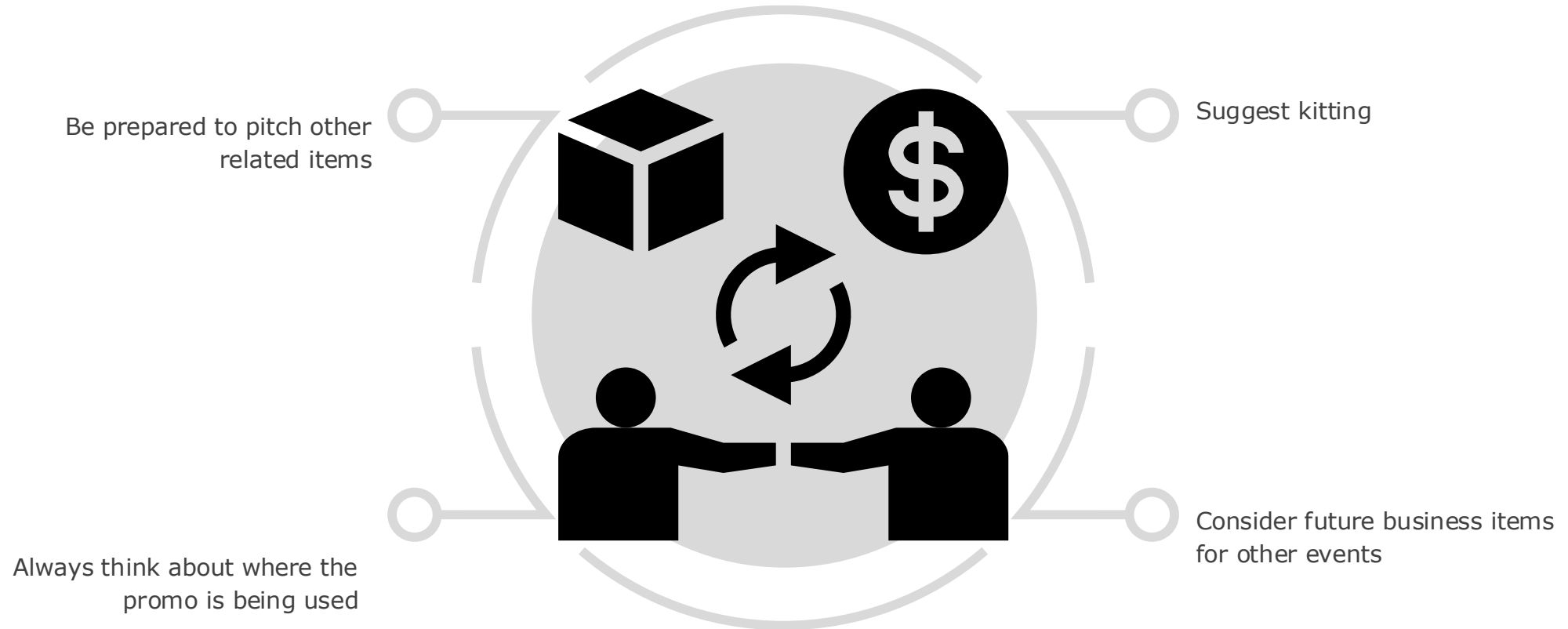


# Be Proactive



1. You won't sell what you don't pitch
2. Pick 3 products to pitch to every customer and prospect every month
3. Look for prospects, practice cold calling
4. Set goals, run contests

# Upsell When Possible



# Kitting and Custom Packaging

## ASI Media Selects Packaging As Its 2022 “Product Of The Year”

*Packaging delivers a surefire “wow” factor, making it an essential first step in the branding experience*



# Diversifying Your Client Base



- Look at your customer base and identify at least 5-10 markets where your business comes from
- Consider targeted emails or postcards with promo product suggestions to help branch out
- Add clients in more vertical markets that have significant sales potential



# Target a Specific Client

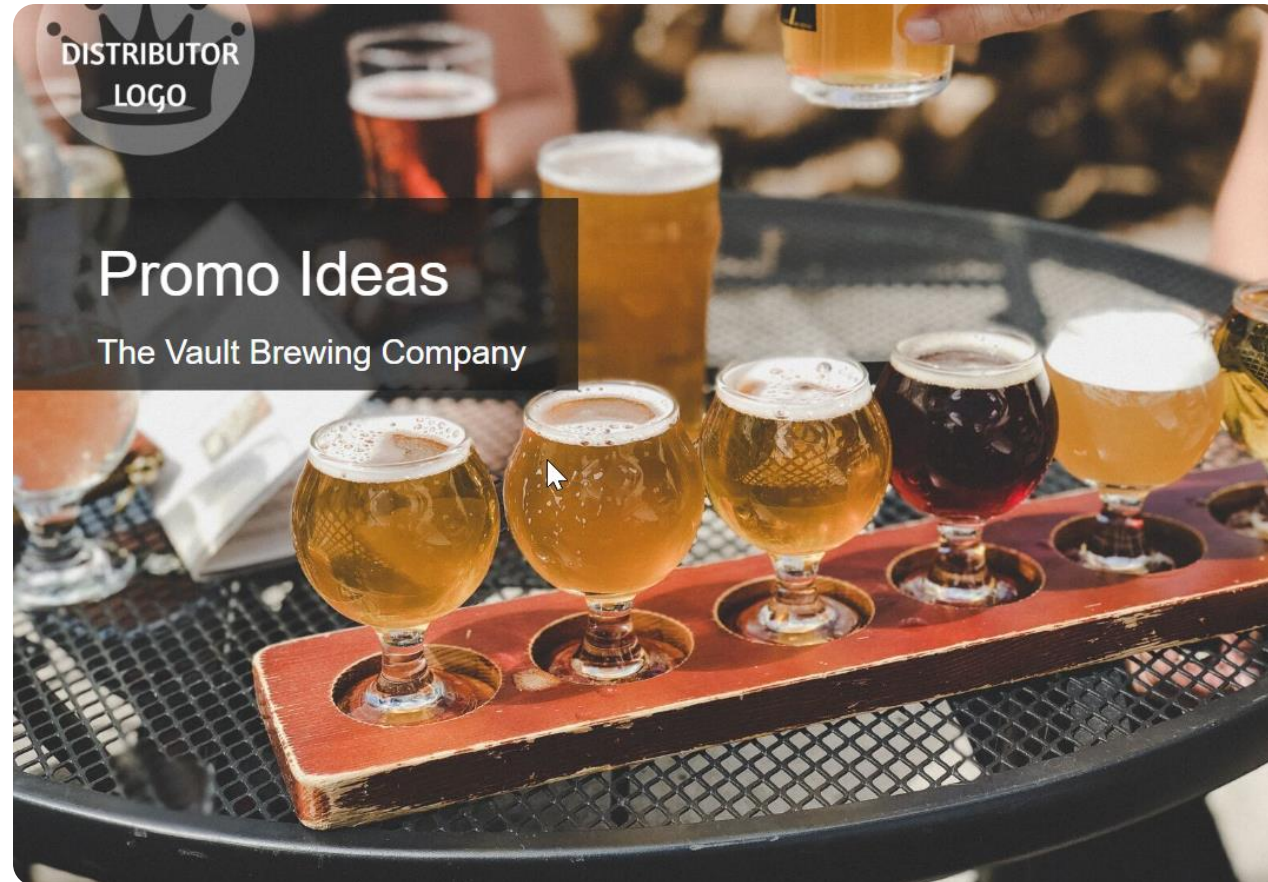
**“If a customer of Jason’s likes the branding they see in his shop, they’re more likely to support the promo company that he partners with. It’s a natural referral system.”**

Jessica Joyce, Fully Promoted Towson

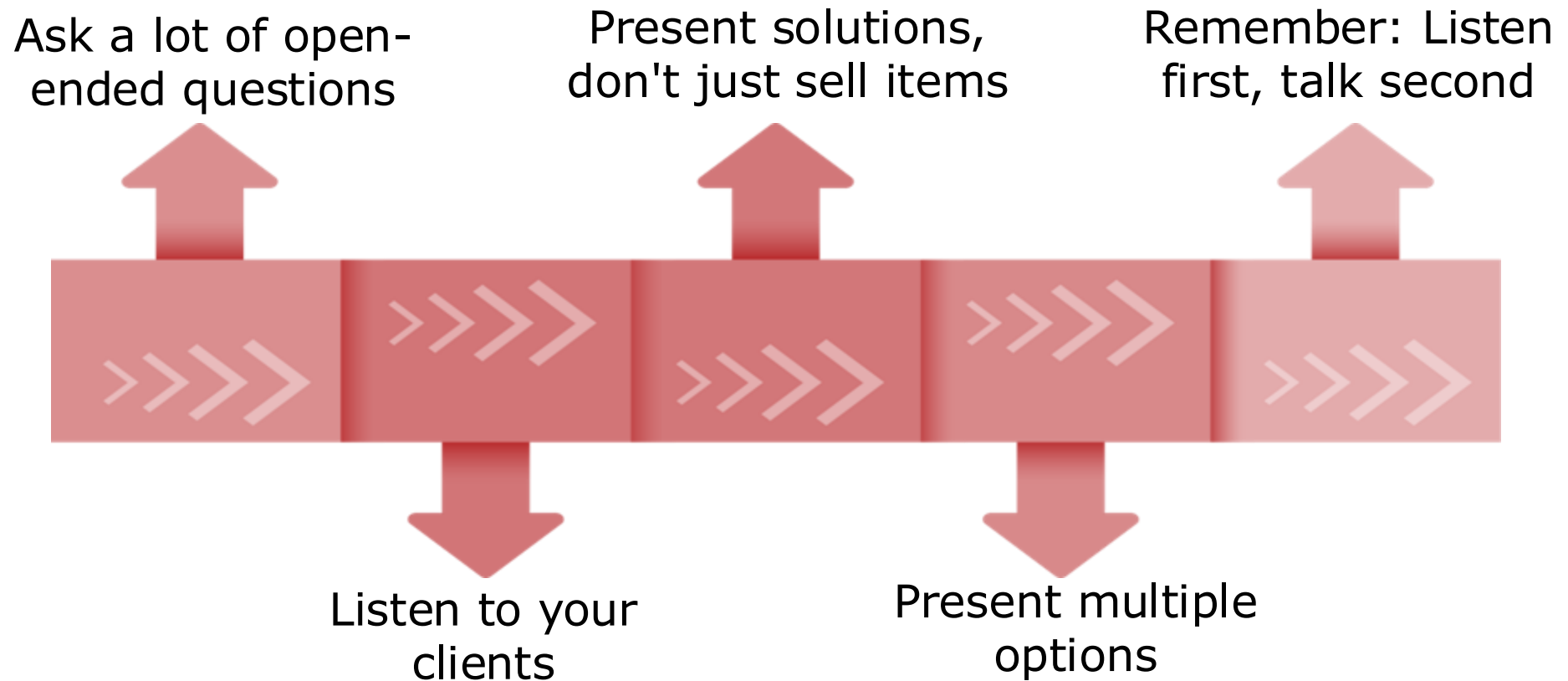
- Spec samples branded for them
- Be creative
- Be strategic



# Target a Specific Industry or Business Type



# Use a Consultative approach



# Good Questions to Ask Your Customers

- Do you have any employee incentive/recognition/wellness programs?
- How do you get new customers, leads, social media followers?
- What do you do to retain your current customers?
- Do you have any new products or services coming out this year?
- How do you thank customers for a referral?
- Are you involved in sponsoring/participating in any charity events? (i.e., golf outings/non-profit walks or runs)?
- How do you increase donations and sponsorships?
- How do you thank employees and customers around the holidays?
- Do you buy promotional products today to help market your business? If we were able to offer this to you, would you look for us to provide these products?
- How do you market your business?
- Do you do tradeshow?
- Who else in your organization uses ad specialties?



# Best Practice Sales Approach



## Williams & Associates

asi/360450

Bert & Anne Williams.  
Counselor Magazine Family  
Business of the Year 2016

# Best Practice Sales Approach



## 6 Points to a Good Promotion

1. Goal/Objective
2. Target Audience
3. Theme
4. Distribution Method
5. Budget
6. Program/Promotion/Item

# Never Stop Prospecting



## PR Visits

Tip:

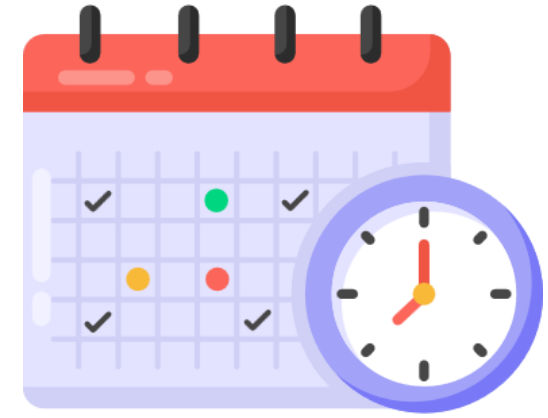
Going back to prospects that might say no to print, could say yes to promo



## Sales Calls

Tip:

That last call of the day could be the one to make your sales goal



## Follow-up

Tip:

Create a repeat order plan to help increase sales

# Business Planning

# Making a Business Plan

## Have a plan

There's one thing every successful business has in common – they have a plan.

## Know your target audience

The sooner you know your target market, the easier it will be to maximize your marketing dollars

## Consider your products

Make sure to include popular items, like pens, mugs and tumblers. More niche products will limit your reach



## Analyze your current business

Take inventory of what's working and what needs improving.

## Grow your social presence

Show your personality through images and video and make sure to engage with your followers.

## Put plans into action

Build a day-to-day structure that works best for your business. Use a marketing calendar to help keep you organized.

# Tools and Resources



# Additional Resources



## State of the Industry

<https://members.asicentral.com/news/strategy/july-2024/2024-state-of-the-industry/>

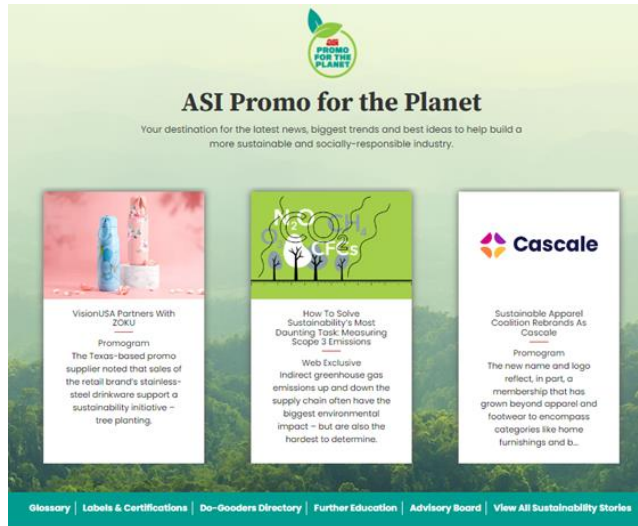
ASI's exclusive research reveals client buying habits in eight markets and across multiple demographics.



## End-Buyer Research Series

<https://members.asicentral.com/research/end-buyer-research-series/>

# Additional Resources



## Promo for the Planet

<https://members.asicentral.com/promofortheplanet>



## Product Hub

<https://members.asicentral.com/news/product-hub/>



## ASI News

<https://members.asicentral.com/news>

### LATEST NEWS

**The Bright Side: Koozie Group's First Sponsored Service Dog Graduates Training**

**The 2025 Trade Show Planning Guide**

**The Exit Strategy Blueprint: 9 Steps To A Successful Sale**

**A Strategic Guide To Buying DTG Equipment**

**This Week's New Suppliers: Get New Promo Now**

**The Bright Side: Kaeser & Blair Raises \$10,000 For Employee Family In Need**

# Questions?

# Need More Help/Support?

Contact Customer Service to Speak with  
your Customer Success Manger

**1-800-546-1350 option 1**

**customerservice@asicentral.com**

**Download Recording of this session**





**Share your feedback  
on the session with us!**



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