



The Navigator

The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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CONSULTING CORNER

Straight answers to tough questions related to owning and operating a small business.

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What do you get out of giveaways?

In short, it depends on their intended purpose.

Promotional gifts to existing customers and employees can be a nice reward for loyalty. They can also be used to build company morale or support community activities. Customers often expect to receive promotional freebies and some companies consider giveaways a necessary cost of doing business. These gifts reinforce the customer relationship. Consequently companies should only give away items or services of value, not simply free junk!

As a marketing tool, promotional products can help a business to strategically market its name, products or services to target markets. Giveaways targeted at prospective customers should be directly tied into a company's corporate brand and customized to its target market. Used effectively, promotional items serve to keep a company and its message in front of its target market. Freebies can provide sales aids to build goodwill, break the ice, and serve as door openers. However, unless the giveaway is extremely clever or it ties in well with the company's corporate brand, it is unlikely that it will support a company's marketing objectives.

Consider this: Everyone loves giveaways. No one minds throwing them away. We all seem to receive an endless supply of pens, calendars, coffee mugs, ice scrapers, key chains, and refrigerator magnets. All proudly display the company's logo and contact information. But do these items stop people in their tracks? Do they get the undivided attention of the

company's prime prospects? Does this marketing vehicle send a message that inspires confidence or creates credibility? Does it generate good will? Does it generate an unconscious sense of obligation to buy? When was the last time you purchased from a company whose giveaway you have received?

There are literally thousands of promotional products on the market. What can you do to stand out from the crowd while staying within your budget? You may want to consider hiring a marketing consultant to develop a theme appropriate to your budget and to assist you in tailoring your promotional product to your pitch. If you can't afford a marketing consultant, then approach a promotional products consultant. Keep in mind that the giveaway doesn't have to be expensive to fully represent your company and its message. For example, a financial reporting and tax consulting firm gives away a small chocolate bar that is imprinted with the text found on the upper left hand corner of the Federal Tax Form 1040. A manufacturer of a cooling device gives away a thermal bag that could easily hold a six-pack. A small computer repair shop uses a screen sweeper as a giveaway.

Think impact! Go forth and promote.

Ruth Sheets of Ducks in a Row Consulting provides strategic business consulting to start ups, fix ups, and build ups to turn business pains into business gains. With an operational and marketing focus Ruth works with companies in various stages of transition to launch new products and services, target new markets, eliminate barriers to business viability, and establish and achieve business goals. To obtain more information about Ruth Sheets and Ducks in a Row Consulting please visit www.ducksinarowconsulting.com or call **978-463-2264**.

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