

Chapter 1: It's Time to Put on Your Selling Shoes!

Hi, I'm Don Sanders, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to the \$25 billion promotional products industry¹! If you have attended recent shows, you'll definitely notice me—I'm the guy in the fancy, bright colored shoes. They are one of my many trademarks, but the reason I stand out goes beyond the shoes. I've discovered a formula that is the key to success in this industry, and I want to share it with you.

For more than three decades, I've sold more than \$24 million of promotional products. I've appeared in industry publications more than 250 times. I have won numerous awards, have made more than 125 speaking appearances, and been featured in more than 800 newspaper articles. I'm proud of my accomplishments, but what I'm most proud of is mentoring other distributors like you.

Before we dive into tips and strategies that will help you reach your goals, I want to give you a little background on how this crazy, fun industry began.

The History of the Industry

1789

The first successful promotional products were buttons created for George Washington's presidential campaign.

Early 1800s

Wooden specialties, calendars and the Farmers' Almanac were introduced, all including advertising messages. As the years passed, more and more imprinted products began to show up in people's pockets and on desks.

Late 1800s

Jasper Meeks, a printer in Coshocton, Ohio, became the father of the industry when he started printing burlap bags with advertising messages for Cantwell Shoes. His logic was that children would use the bags to go to school and potential buyers would see Cantwell's advertising copy. Meeks soon started the Tuscarora Advertising Company, believed to be the first promotional products company.

Then, he faced a competitor, Henry D. Beach, who began printing the products that Meeks featured: caps, aprons, bags, card cases, calendars, fans and hats for horses. Both men realized the value of imprinted metal signs and began marketing them as well. Fun fact: signs they created for soft drink and beer companies are valued by collectors today.

Other printers started marketing promotional products. Demand increased substantially when Thomas Murphy and Burke Osborne of Red Oak, Iowa, began adding photographs and paintings to calendars.

1894

Murphy and Osborne had 94 employees, with 14 traveling salespeople selling upward of three million calendars. Murphy sold his interest to Osborne, and the company eventually moved to Newark, New Jersey. Letterpress printing sent the calendar business worldwide, and factories opened in Toronto, London and Australia.

1904

Suppliers joined forces when 12 promotional manufacturers aligned themselves to address issues that would help the industry expand.

1914

The first trade show took place, with 32 exhibitors.

1928

Promotional products became known as an efficient advertising medium, after 132 suppliers now worked together, to increase Sales and after World War II, things really took off.

1966

The membership of what is known today as Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) reached 1,211 members.

Present Day

Things have grown considerably since that time and according to a recent Industry Study, current product sales are now more than \$25 billion annually. There are countless distributors operating now and more than 3,000 suppliers are offering products. Today, Distributor Central offers technology services, marketing platforms and education to help cultivate success and community within the thriving industry. Numerous regional shows are held each year, several major trade shows and multiple hosted-buyer events.

Ready to get started in the industry? Looking to refresh your skills? Here's some essential information that can take your sales and profits to the next level.

¹ASI 2016 Quarterly Sales Survey



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TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE MONEY SAVING OFFERS!

\$40 REBATE COUPON

- * Offer good on an order of \$500.00 or more (product & tooling only).
- * Limit one offer per sales person, per order.
- * Not to be combined w/any other offer or quote.
- * Coupon must be attached to order.
- * Offer expires 12/31/20.
- * Use code: DS-2020-40

FREE DIE COUPON

- * Free Die up to \$80.00 net value.
- * Minimum 2nd column qty.
- * Limit one offer per sales person, per order.
- * Not to be combined w/any other offer or quote.
- * Coupon must be attached to order.
- * Offer expires 12/31/20.
- * Use code: DS-2020-FD