

# Advertising Specialties Impressions Study

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**A cost analysis of promotional products  
versus other advertising media**

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# ASI's Advertising Specialties Impressions Study Final Report

## Background:

In June and July of 2008, a team of interviewers surveyed 465 businesspeople in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Philadelphia on behalf of ASI regarding promotional products they had received. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how advertising specialties influence end-users' purchasing decisions; determine the number of impressions of popular advertising specialties; and analyze the Cost Per Impression (CPI) of advertising specialties compared with other popular advertising media.

Further, during October 2008, an online panel survey was conducted among recipients of advertising specialties to augment the non-wearables sample from the in-person interviews. Results have been combined in the report where appropriate. There were 213 completed Web based interviews, for a total of 678 completed surveys for this study.

Respondents were asked if they had received any promotional products in the last 12 months. Most respondents were business/professional people (84%) and all were age 21 or older.

## Summary of Conclusions:

- **Instant recall:** More than 8 out of 10 (84%) respondents remembered the advertisers of the promotional products they've received.
- **Very impressionable:** 42% of respondents had a MORE favorable impression of an advertiser after receiving the item. And nearly a quarter (24%) said they are MORE likely to do business with the advertiser on the items they receive.
- **It's all business:** Most respondents (62%) have done business with the advertiser on a promotional product after receiving the item.
- **Pens are in:** Writing instruments are the most-recalled advertising specialty items (54% of respondents recall owning them), followed by shirts, caps and bags.
- **User-friendly:** The majority (81%) of promotional products were kept because they were considered useful.
- **Staying power:** More than three-quarters of respondents have had their items for more than 6 months.
- **Bag it!:** Among wearables, bags were reported to be used most frequently with respondents indicating that they used their bags an average of 9 times per month. They also deliver the most impressions: Each bag averages 1,038 impressions per month.
- **Most impressive:** The average CPI of an advertising specialty item is \$0.004; as a result, marketers get a more favorable return on investment from advertising specialties than nearly any other popular advertising media.

## Detailed Findings

### *Where promotional product items are kept:*

- Over one-half (56%) of promotional products are kept at home and over one-quarter (28%) at the office.
- The majority of shirts (83%) and recognition-jewelry (83%) are kept at home.
- Over two-thirds (63%) of desk/office/business accessories are kept in the office.

#### Where Items are Kept

	Home	Office	Car	Person
TOTAL	56%	28%	6%	10%
Shirts	83%	7%	1%	9%
Recognition-Jewelry	83%	8%	0%	9%
Caps	77%	5%	6%	12%
Other Wearables	72%	17%	0%	11%
Bags	57%	24%	4%	15%
Calendars	55%	42%	1%	2%
Recognition-Awards	54%	46%	0%	0%
Other	50%	19%	10%	21%
Glassware/Ceramics	48%	43%	9%	0%
Writing Instruments	38%	38%	9%	15%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	31%	68%	0%	1%

### *Commonly owned advertising specialty items:*

- The most commonly owned promotional products among all respondents were writing instruments (54%) followed by shirts (45%) and caps (31%).

#### Items Owned

Writing Instruments	54%
Shirts	45%
Caps	31%
Bags	29%
Glassware/Ceramics	23%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	17%
Calendars	17%
Other Wearables	4%
Recognition-Jewelry	3%
Recognition-Awards	3%
Other	26%

## Wearables

### Usage:

**How often do you wear/use the item per month? (Asked to those who had shirts, caps, other wearables and bags)**

- On average, bags were reported to be used most frequently with respondents indicating that they used their bags 9 times per month.

**Average Number of Times Used per Month**

Shirts	Caps	Other Wearables	Bags
4.32	6.06	4.62	9.33

### Contact:

**About how many people would you say you come in contact with when you are wearing the item? (Asked to those who had shirts, caps, other wearables, bags and recognition-jewelry)**

- Among recognition jewelry received, over one-third (38%) indicated that they did not come in contact with anyone when wearing it. One-quarter (25%) were reported to be seen by 26-50 people.
- Out of shirts, caps and bags, a little below one-quarter (23%) were seen by 26-50 people when the item was worn or used.
- On average, bags were seen by the most people (111), followed by shirts (84) and caps (79).

**Number of People in Contact With When Wearing/Using**

	Shirts	Caps	Other Wearables	Bags	Recognition-Jewelry
0	9%	13%	0%	11%	38%
1	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%
2-5	13%	6%	23%	9%	0%
6-10	6%	6%	23%	8%	0%
11-25	18%	22%	46%	11%	13%
26-50	23%	23%	0%	23%	25%
51-100	11%	13%	8%	15%	0%
101-500	9%	7%	0%	14%	13%
More than 500	7%	8%	0%	10%	13%
AVERAGE	84	79	14	111	78

**Number of Impressions:**

Impressions were calculated based on the number of times items were worn or used per month and the average number of people that came in contact with the user.

- Bags made the highest number of impressions (approximately 1,038 per month) followed by caps (approximately 476 per month).
- Among non-wearables, writing instruments made the most impressions, with 363 per month.

**Number of Impressions/Month**

	Impressions
Bags	1038
Caps	476
Shirts	365
Writing Instruments	363
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	294
Glassware/Ceramics	251
Calendars	227
Recognition-Awards	221
Other	192
Other Wearables	64

**Length of Time an Item Is Held:**

- The average length of time a wearable was held among respondents was nearly 7 months.
- Bags and Other Wearables were kept for an average of 9 months and Glassware/Ceramics items were kept for an average of 7 months.
- Over three-quarters (81%) of advertising specialties had been owned for less than one year.

**Length of Time Respondents Have Item**

	One Month or Less	2-3 Months	4-6 Months	More Than 6 Months But Less Than A Year	More Than A Year	Average (# of months)
TOTAL	19%	20%	17%	26%	19%	6.9
Other Wearables	6%	11%	17%	28%	39%	8.7
Bags	11%	6%	20%	21%	42%	8.6
Other	8%	19%	18%	18%	37%	7.8
Calendars	8%	11%	18%	58%	4%	7.6
Recognition-Awards	35%	7%	7%	16%	34%	7.4
Caps	7%	15%	24%	38%	15%	7.1
Glassware/Ceramics	9%	19%	22%	24%	26%	7.1
Shirts	7%	20%	18%	45%	10%	6.8
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	36%	17%	12%	18%	17%	5.7
Writing Instruments	22%	37%	21%	12%	8%	4.3

## Non-Wearables

### ***Frequency of Use:***

***How often do you use the item? (Asked to those who had writing instruments, glassware/ceramics, desk/office/business accessories and other promotional products)***

- Nearly one-third (32%) of glassware/ceramics items received were used once per week and another one-quarter (25%) were used once per day.
- 40% of writing instruments were used at least two times per day.
- On average, writing instruments were used most frequently per month (approximately 64 times per month).

### **Frequency of Use**

	<b>Writing Instruments</b>	<b>Glassware/Ceramics</b>	<b>Desk/Office/Business Accessories</b>	<b>Other</b>
Never	5%	9%	36%	8%
At least once in the past year	4%	3%	5%	7%
Once in 6 months	4%	6%	4%	8%
Once per month	8%	10%	7%	19%
Once per week	20%	32%	13%	21%
Once per day	19%	25%	15%	24%
2-5 times per day	20%	10%	10%	12%
More than 5 times per day	20%	5%	9%	2%
AVERAGE PER MONTH	64	33	50	25

### ***How often do you wear/look at it? (Asked to those who had recognition-awards)***

- Nearly two-thirds never look at their recognition award/trophy.

### **How often Wear/Look at Award/Trophy**

Never	64%
At least once in the past year	10%
Once in 6 months	4%
Once per month	5%
Once per week	7%
Once per day	6%
2-5 times per day	2%
More than 5 times per day	2%

### ***Frequency of Use (continued)***

#### ***About how many people see a calendar in a month?***

- Among calendars received, 45% were seen by 2-5 people per month.
- The average number of people who see a calendar in a month is 5.

Number of People Who See a Calendar Per Month	
None	8%
Just owner/One	21%
2-5	45%
6-10	8%
11-15	7%
16-25	7%
More than 25	4%
AVERAGE	5

#### ***Do you have the item displayed? (Asked to those who had recognition-awards and calendars)***

- The vast majority (76%) of calendars received are displayed.
- Conversely, only 24% of recognition awards are displayed.

	Item Displayed	
	Calendars	Recognition-Awards
Yes	76%	24%
No	24%	76%

#### ***Are you able to identify the advertiser of the item?***

- Respondents were able to identify the advertiser the vast majority of the time (84%).
- Wearables were the most often cited product where the recipient was familiar with the sponsor.

Ability to Identify Advertiser	
	Total
TOTAL	84%
Other Wearables	94%
Bags	90%
Caps	89%
Shirts	87%
Writing Instruments	85%
Recognition-Awards	85%
Glassware/Ceramics	84%
Other	84%
Calendars	69%
Recognition-Jewelry	69%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	67%

**Why do you keep the item you received?**

- The majority (81%) of promotional product items were kept because they were considered useful.
- Receivers of wearables items were more likely to keep these items because they were considered attractive.

**Reason for Keeping Item**

	Useful	Attractive	Refer to information like phone numbers	Other
TOTAL	81%	26%	3%	24%
Bags	91%	34%	0%	20%
Writing Instruments	91%	12%	5%	18%
Other Wearables	89%	39%	0%	17%
Glassware/Ceramics	86%	26%	6%	24%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	83%	14%	3%	17%
Calendars	77%	31%	6%	16%
Other	77%	15%	7%	19%
Caps	76%	37%	1%	32%
Shirts	74%	39%	1%	33%
Recognition-Jewelry	31%	38%	0%	54%
Recognition-Awards	23%	15%	0%	69%

**Was the advertiser familiar to you before you received the item?**

- The majority of respondents (83%) were familiar with the advertisers of the promotional product items they received before receiving the item.

**Familiar With Advertiser Before Receiving Item**

	Total
TOTAL	83%
Other Wearables	89%
Caps	86%
Bags	86%
Shirts	85%
Recognition-Awards	85%
Writing Instruments	84%
Glassware/Ceramics	83%
Other	81%
Calendars	77%
Recognition-Jewelry	77%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	70%



***Had you ever done business with the advertiser before you received the item?***

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents of total promotional product items received indicated that they had done business with the advertiser before receiving the item.

**Done Business With Advertiser Before Receiving Item**

	Total
TOTAL	65%
Recognition-Awards	83%
Other Wearables	72%
Bags	72%
Other	70%
Glassware/Ceramics	69%
Recognition-Jewelry	69%
Shirts	66%
Caps	66%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	62%
Calendars	61%
Writing Instruments	58%

***Which of the following best describes your impression of the advertiser after receiving the item?***

- Among respondents of all promotional products received, 42% indicated that their impression of the advertiser had become either significantly or somewhat more favorable after receiving the item.
- This was especially true among receivers of bags with over one-half (53%) reporting that they viewed the advertiser more favorably.

**Impression of Advertiser After Receiving Item**

	Significantly /Somewhat More Favorable (net)	No Change	Significantly/ Some-what Less Favorable (net)
TOTAL	42%	57%	1%
Other	57%	42%	2%
Bags	<b>53%</b>	47%	0%
Shirts	49%	49%	2%
Caps	45%	55%	0%
Other Wearables	44%	56%	0%
Glassware/Ceramics	39%	61%	0%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	35%	62%	3%
Calendars	31%	69%	0%
Writing Instruments	30%	68%	2%
Recognition-Awards	23%	77%	0%
Recognition-Jewelry	18%	82%	0%

**Since receiving the item, have you actually done any business with the advertiser?**

- Among respondents of all promotional products received, 62% indicated that they had done business with the advertiser after receiving the item.

**Done Business With Advertiser After Receiving Item**

	<b>Total</b>
TOTAL	62%
Recognition-Awards	77%
Other Wearables	72%
Shirts	70%
Bags	68%
Caps	67%
Glassware/Ceramics	65%
Other	64%
Calendars	59%
Writing Instruments	53%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	52%
Recognition-Jewelry	31%

**If no, how likely would you be to do business with the advertiser after receiving the item?**

- Among those who had not done business with the advertiser after receiving the item, nearly one-quarter (24%) reported that they would be significantly or somewhat more likely to do business with the advertiser in the future.
- About three-quarters (74%) indicated that receiving the promotional product item would not change their likelihood to do future business with the advertiser.

**Likelihood of Doing Business With Advertiser After Receiving Item**

	<b>Significantly/Somewhat More Likely (net)</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Significantly/Somewhat Less Likely (net)</b>
TOTAL	24%	74%	2%
Recognition-Jewelry	38%	57%	5%
Calendars	36%	61%	4%
Other	31%	66%	3%
Recognition-Awards	27%	73%	0%
Bags	26%	74%	0%
Writing Instruments	23%	76%	1%
Shirts	21%	74%	5%
Caps	14%	86%	0%
Other Wearables	0%	100%	0%
Glassware/Ceramics	0%	100%	0%
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	0%	100%	0%

**When you receive a promotional product you don't plan to keep, which of the following best describes your action?**

- After receiving a promotional product they don't plan to keep, a little over one-half (51%) of respondents indicated that they give the item to someone else.
- About one third (29%) throw the item away and 20% file the item away and never notice it again.

**Action After Receiving Promotional Product You Do Not Plan to Keep**

Give the item to someone else	51%
Throw them away	29%
File the item away and never notice it again	20%

**Approximately how many promotional products do you own?**

- Over one-third (35%) of total respondents indicated that they owned between 1 and 5 promotional products. On average, respondents owned about 10 promotional products.

**Average Number of Items Owned**

1-5	35%
6-10	29%
11-15	16%
16-20	8%
21 or more	12%
AVERAGE	9.8

**Total Impressions/Cost Per Impression:**

- The cost per impression of ad specialties is very low, with fractions of a cent per impression.

**Impressions summary cost**

	Total Impressions	Avg. Cost	Cost Per Impression
TOTAL			0.004
Caps	3380	\$ 6.00	0.002
Bags	8927	\$ 15.00	0.002
Writing Instruments	1561	\$ 3.00	0.002
Calendars	1725	\$ 5.00	0.003
Glassware/Ceramics	1782	\$ 8.00	0.004
Shirts	2482	\$ 13.00	0.005
Other	1498	\$ 8.00	0.005
Desk/Office/Business Accessories	1676	\$ 12.00	0.007
Other Wearables	557	\$ 9.00	0.016
Recognition-Awards	1635	\$ 35.00	0.021

**Cost Per Impressions of Other Media:**

- Advertising specialties are less expensive per impression than nearly any other media.
- For a modest investment, an advertiser can reach cost per impression with shirts (\$0.005) that are very similar to Syndicated Daytime TV (\$0.006), for example.
- Prime time TV is nearly 5 times as expensive as ad specialties in total.

	Cost Per Impression
Prime Time TV (1)	\$0.019
Syndicated (Day) TV (1)	\$0.006
Cable TV (1)	\$0.007
National Magazine (1)	\$0.033
Spot Radio (1)	\$0.005
Newspaper ad (1/2 page BW) (2)	\$0.019
Billboard (city/national) (2)	\$0.003

(1) Source: 2008 The Nielsen Company

(2) Source: Los AngelesMobileBillboards.com

**Demographic Information**

- Over one-third (36%) of respondents were aged 21-34 and 31% were aged 35-44.

Age	
21-34	36%
35-44	31%
45-54	23%
55-64	7%
65+	4%

- Over one half (57%) of total respondents were male and 43% were female.

Gender	
Male	57%
Female	43%

- 39% of total respondents reside in New York

State of Primary Residence	
New York	39%
New Jersey	15%
California	15%
Illinois	14%
Pennsylvania	7%
Other	11%

- 59% of respondents were interviewed in New York.

City of Interview	
New York	59%
Chicago	15%
Los Angeles	14%
Philadelphia	12%

- Professions varied among respondents. The most frequent professions reported were Education/Teacher (8%) and Medical/Healthcare (6%).
- 8% of respondents interviewed were unemployed/retired/homemaker and another 8% were students.

Primary Business/Profession	
Education/Teacher	8%
Unemployed/Retired/Homemaker	8%
Student	8%
Medical/Healthcare	6%
Financial Services/Investment Banking	5%
Sales	5%
Waiter/Waitress/Bartender	4%
Accountant	3%
Attorney/Legal Services	3%
Advertising/Public Relations/Marketing	3%
IT	2%
Television/Media/Publishing	2%
Hotel/Restaurant	2%
Construction	2%
Insurance	2%
Retail	2%
Engineer	2%
Manufacturing	2%
Real Estate	2%
Other	29%