



Good, Better, **BEST**

Presenting low-, medium- and high-end choices often encourages clients to purchase outside their professed budgets. It's simple psychology, folks.

BY SHANE DALE

Customers don't always know exactly what they want. So give them options. They love options, which could also fatten up your own commissions.

Case in point: Rachael Rose, field service manager with Regency Office Products (*asi/306196*), was contacted by a company that claimed to want only a low-end promotional product

for its safety promotion, as its budget was allegedly a mere \$200. At first, she sold them 500 logoed stickers that resembled a yield sign. The total sticker order was \$184.

But Rose convinced her client's reps that they could afford what they perceived as medium- and high-end safety items by presenting the products for

an entire safety program. "I presented a safety cone, a hard hat, a hammer, safety stickers, magnets and chocolate hard hats," she says. "By the time I had finished presenting my findings, the customer was purchasing the sticker at budget, the safety cones a little above budget, and the chocolate hard hats significantly above budget."

The cones cost \$680 for 500, while the hats cost \$725 for 500. While this added up to just \$1.36 and \$1.45 per unit, respectively, Rose's accomplishment was no small feat. After all, she convinced her client to spend a total of \$1,492 on that order – about seven times higher than their initial budget.

Rose's winning strategy, and one you should adopt,

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is to always move slowly but surely up the price ladder, and offer a program instead of just a product. “I always go with something right at the customer’s budget, something a few dollars above, and something significantly above,” she says. “I find that customers are so open to new and creative ideas that if you can bring a significant value to their promotion and create a true campaign for them, the dollar amount is no longer a concern.”

The Psychology Behind It

When it comes to convincing his clients to go over their professed budget, Bruce Jolesch, senior vice president of PXP Promotions (*asi/297068*), doesn’t take “no” for an answer.

He, like Rose, has found it very useful to always provide ideas in a variety of price points for a client, even when they ask for items in a specific range. “Sometimes, a higher-priced item may be on sale, but

other times a client may find additional budget dollars because you found something appropriate for their theme or event that warrants additional spending.”

Jolesch says clients have an inclination toward spending more than they anticipated for three main reasons: 1. They want products with a higher perceived value; 2. They will spend more money for packaging of the product if you ask them about it; 3. and the biggie: They actually have more money

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IDEAS GET LOW

Monitor Calendars

Cost: 50 cents

Why: Calendars that can be stuck onto a computer monitor are an inexpensive way for end-users to keep the attention of their prospective customers in a long-term way, says Barbara Burcham, owner of Ad-Specialties & More Ltd. (*asi/113357*). “They have the year at a glance, and the whole logo is in the middle,” she says.

In particular, Burcham’s finance-related clients love these calendars, but she says that they are appealing to any number of clients.

Possible themes: Special events (save the date); relationship building/employee morale (it’s going to be a great year); self-promotion (great ideas brought to you 365 days a year).

Toothpick Dispensers

Cost: 50 cents

Why: Burcham estimates that she has sold 200,000 logoed toothpick dispensers from Gold Bond Inc. (*asi/57563*).

There are three reasons these make great ad specialty items, she says. First, there’s room for a large amount of information, including a company’s contact information.

Second, they’re small enough to make them easy to ship to potential customers. “It’s a very easy mailer,” Burcham says.

Finally, they’re functional. “People keep them in their purse, so they’re always handy. People want to give out something that people are going to use, and this is a really useable item,” she says.

Possible themes: Restaurant promotions (pick us as your favorite place to dine); accountants (at tax time, pick our brains); self-promotion (we want to be your #1 pick).



Lip Balm

Cost: 99 cents

&

Hand Sanitizer

Cost: \$1-\$2

Why: Lip balm is an item that people will carry with them, and it’s great for folks who love the outdoors, says Greg Smith, owner of Thread & Ink Designs (*asi/344314*). “It’s a real eye-catcher for recreationalists and that kind of thing,” he says.

Lip balm can be used by outdoor enthusiasts during all seasons. “In the Rocky Mountains, people like to go fishing, water skiing, mountain biking. It’s one of those items that can be used year-round. Plus, it’s a nice, easy trade show giveaway. You can have a nice bowl of lip balm at your booth and people can take from that,” Smith says.

Best of all, lip balm is a “universal” product that is used by men, women and kids.

Likewise, hand sanitizers can be used by everyone and are equally practical. “If a customer doesn’t provide a logoed sanitizer, the end-user will most likely go to Walgreen’s and buy one anyway, so why not make an impression and logo it?” asks Rachael Rose, field service manager with Regency Office Products (*asi/306196*).

There is also a variety of options in packaging, which allows Rose to more effectively cater to the needs of her end-users. “For instance, if it’s a doctor’s office, I will suggest a hand sanitizer where the bottle is dressed like a nurse or doctor, with the company’s logo,” she says. “If the customer has a long message to deliver, I will suggest the spray sanitizers instead.”

Possible themes: Health care (an ounce of protection); travel and tourism (take it on the run); special events.

<p>2010</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>JANUARY</th> <th>FEBRUARY</th> <th>MARCH</th> <th>APRIL</th> <th>MAY</th> <th>JUNE</th> </tr> <tr> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 2</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td> <td>1 2 3</td> <td>1</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td> <td>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</td> <td>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</td> <td>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td> <td>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</td> <td>6 7 8 9 10 11 12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</td> <td>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</td> <td>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</td> <td>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</td> <td>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</td> <td>13 14 15 16 17 18 19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</td> <td>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</td> <td>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</td> <td>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</td> <td>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</td> <td>20 21 22 23 24 25 26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</td> <td>28 29 30 31</td> <td>28 29 30 31</td> <td>25 26 27 28 29 30</td> <td>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</td> <td>27 28 29 30</td> </tr> </table>						JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3	1	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5 6 7 8 9	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	6 7 8 9 10 11 12	10 11 12 13 14 15 16	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	11 12 13 14 15 16 17	9 10 11 12 13 14 15	13 14 15 16 17 18 19	17 18 19 20 21 22 23	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	18 19 20 21 22 23 24	16 17 18 19 20 21 22	20 21 22 23 24 25 26	24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	28 29 30 31	28 29 30 31	25 26 27 28 29 30	23 24 25 26 27 28 29	27 28 29 30	<p>AD-SPECIALTIES & MORE, LTD. 2340 N. Interstate Dr. Norman, OK 73072</p> <p>Making your Business Unforgettable with Promotional Products and Corporate Apparel!</p> <p>www.ad-specialties.com 405.364.7579 • 405.364.7764 fax 800.364.4786 • sales@ad-specialties.com</p>						<table border="1"> <tr> <th>JULY</th> <th>AUGUST</th> <th>SEPTEMBER</th> <th>OCTOBER</th> <th>NOVEMBER</th> <th>DECEMBER</th> </tr> <tr> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> <td>S M T W T F S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 2 3</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td> <td>1 2 3 4</td> <td>1 2</td> <td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td> <td>1 2 3 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td> <td>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</td> <td>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td> <td>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td> <td>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</td> <td>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</td> <td>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</td> <td>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</td> <td>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</td> <td>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</td> <td>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</td> <td>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</td> <td>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td> <td>17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td> <td>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</td> <td>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 26 27 28 29 30 31</td> <td>29 30 31</td> <td>26 27 28 29 30</td> <td>24 25 26 27 28 29 30</td> <td>26 29 30</td> <td>26 27 28 29 30 31</td> </tr> </table>						JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4	1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	3 4 5 6 7 8 9	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	11 12 13 14 15 16 17	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	10 11 12 13 14 15 16	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	18 19 20 21 22 23 24	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	25 26 27 28 29 30 31	29 30 31	26 27 28 29 30	24 25 26 27 28 29 30	26 29 30	26 27 28 29 30 31
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then they told you about.

Naturally, it's important to consider the theme when talking price points. As we went to press, Jolesch was working on a dinner for 150 senior executives and their spouses, so items like personalized pens and paperweights, as well as etched wine

glasses, would be a good fit. Along with the higher-end gifts, he is planning to suggest a simple note card, which, despite its lower price, will still pack a powerful punch with a sincere expression of appreciation.

As with the aforementioned safety program con-

cept, Rose also creates an environment with her clients in which the price of her ad specialty items is a secondary factor. "I prefer to focus on the value the product will bring to the table to help the customer's message be delivered and goals be attained," she says. "For instance, if my customer's goal is to

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IDEAS

IN THE MIDDLE

Blankets & Throws

Cost: \$15-\$35

Why: The industry produces a number of logoed blankets and throws that end-users love, says Bruce Jolesch, senior vice president of PXP Promotions (*asi/297068*). "Kanata Blanket (*asi/63723*) has a whole assortment of blankets that we've used as a mid-point idea with success," he says. "They can be used anytime a client has a baby, and we've also seen them used for visits in the hospital."

Possible themes: Real-estate programs (a warm welcome); insurance promotions (we've got your covered).



Desk Clocks

Cost: \$30-\$40

Why: Hank Bezrucik, promotional coordinator with Office Resource Center (*asi/357451*), says a personalized desk clock is great for recognizing an employee for outstanding service or an anniversary with the company, and it's something that the employee will keep. "You can have a little plate put on it that can have the person's name and maybe the name of the company and service dates," he says. "That's real impressive to customers, for sure."

Bezrucik knows how effective these clocks are because he still has his own personalized clock from 1974 in his home, and he says they remain a top seller among corporations that want to acknowledge individual achievement within their company. "You can give them out as Christmas gifts for different companies, but in this instance I'd say they're used primarily for individual employees," he says.

Possible themes: Anniversary; milestone achievement; employee and client loyalty; relationship-builder (make time for us).

Barbeque Sets

Cost: \$20-\$40

Why: Three-piece and six-piece barbeque grilling sets are the epitome of a fully functional promotional item, according to Jolesch. "It's something that you can use during football season as a tailgating promotion," he says. "You can use it during the holidays as a business gift, and you can use it in the summer as a continuity program. You can give them a chef's hat, an apron, and then a three-piece barbeque kit."

Many big-name suppliers, including Gemline (*asi/56070*), Leed's (*asi/66887*) and Logomark (*asi/67866*), sell barbeque equipment, Jolesch says, adding that people who receive such an item will not soon forget it. "It's just one of those items that has become very, very popular as a gift," he says. "If it has a corporate logo on it, people will remember where they got it."

Possible themes: Culinary school recruitment; new homeowner program; special events; employee incentive.



Pocketknives

Cost: \$30

Why: Bezrucik says it's not just men who carry high-quality pocketknives these days. "It seems like everybody is always looking for something to cut with. If you're in an office and you can't find your scissors, and a package comes in and is bound with that heavy twine, a pocket knife is useful there," he says.

The difference between a medium-end and low-end knife is the material from which they are made. Better material in the medium-end knives leads to greater longevity, and therefore, expanded advertising capabilities. "The low-end looks nice, but generally it's going to have a plastic backing to it, and that plastic will crack or discolor, whereas the wooden features on a medium-end knife are going to last you a long, long time," he says.

Possible themes: Camping; "cutting-edge" promotions.

retain their client, I will ask them what the value of that client is to them. A \$20 item no longer seems so expensive when the return is \$2,000.”

Kathy Richard, sales director for Credeur's Sports & Specialties (*asi/170993*), says presenting items at different price points – even if some of those items are out of her clients' price range – actually serves to assure her clients that she is on top of her game. “Because our business is so competitive, there will always be someone out there who will lowball your client just to get their foot in the door,” she says.

The WOW Factor

Scott Alterman, vice president of The Ice Box (*asi/229395*), takes the good, better, best approach to a whole new level. In fact, he has broken down the price points for his promotional items into six categories: good, better, best, special, different and wow. “If someone calls up and says they want mugs, our first response is, ‘Here are some of our company's recommendations at six different price points,’” he says. “There are more options for them and more options for us to upsell them.”

“But if I offer low, mid, and high pricing to my customers, it lets them know that I have done my research thoroughly and I'm giving them the best possible choices.”

And if push comes to shove, Richard can always

fall back on her low-end items. “Sometimes, a client's budget is cut at the last minute or is reduced, so if I offer low prices on a given item, the sale is still possible,” she says. ▲

Shane Dale is a contributing writer for Advantages.

IDEAS

HIGHER GROUND



Golf balls

Cost: \$16-\$64

Why: Golf balls have always been a great corporate gift, but they've recently become quite the popular promotional item for big spenders, says Greg Smith, owner of Thread & Ink Designs (*asi/344314*). “You can get them the medium range because of the price range of golf balls, but with the golf tournaments and a lot of the corporations that we work with, they often use those more expensive balls for their own corporate events, or they like to give them away to their customers,” he says.

Perceived quality is huge when it comes to golfing gear, as most golfers are constantly seeking to obtain some sort of advantage over the competition. This is why the higher-priced balls are more popular, Smith says. “They tend to go to the more expensive, especially if it's for someone a little more seasoned in golf.”

Golf balls are one of those items that often come as a package deal, according to Smith. “They give a hat, golf shirt and then maybe a sleeve of golf balls,” he says. “It's a good way to package something for their own customers.”

Possible themes: Tournament prizes; business builders (we go the distance; keep your eye on the green); team building.

Personalized Pens

Cost: Low-end up to the \$200 range

Why: “I'm a big believer that a personalized pen is something that people keep,” says Bruce Jolesch, senior vice president of PXP Promotions (*asi/297068*), who gets his pens from A.T. Cross (*asi/47520*).

These pens can come with a corporate logo, a person's name or both. And the fact that these are brand-name pens makes a world of difference in the buyer's mind, according to Jolesch. “Anytime you're dealing with a brand, it's a high-perceived value by definition,” he says.

Possible themes: Employee loyalty; anniversary; customer incentive; sales incentive (write more business).



MP3/MP4 Players

Cost: \$50-\$115

Why: Most electronic promotional items are considered high-end, but logoed MP3 and MP4 players in particular make fantastic giveaways, Jolesch says. “It's a very nice recognition gift,” he says, adding that the price of the player depends on its memory capability.

The success of the iPod has made these kinds of portable music devices popular, but distributors have had to stick with MP3 and MP4 players instead of iPods as ad specialty items because “Apple doesn't make their products available to the promotional product industry very easily,” Jolesch says.

Due to the price of these devices, they are generally used for targeted promotions instead of as a wide-ranging giveaway, Jolesch says. “It's also more of a business gift than it is a generic promotion,” he says.

Possible themes: Music-related promotions; teen-targeted events; business builder (hitting the right notes).

Leather Items

Cost: \$45 and up

Why: High-end logoed leather items make great gifts and may include luggage, such as a travel bag or a ladies' tote bag, which typically cost over \$45. Men's dresser valets, passport wallets and picture frames can also come in leather. “The Barrington Group (*asi/38675*) does beautiful high-end leather stuff that can be \$100 and up, depending on the quality of the leather,” Jolesch says.

However, distributors should remind clients who don't want to spend over \$100 that they don't need to go that high to please their customers and employees. “People love the smell of leather and there again is a high-perceived value,” Jolesch says. “People think it costs more than it might.”

Possible themes: Incentive travel; corporate gift programs.

