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Promotional Products Effectiveness Study: A Summary

Is there a place for offline marketing in an online world?

Some pretty interesting info from PPAI, a promotional products industry trade association I came across recently. Granted, it is skewed a bit since it was published by a trade group, but there are still some good takeaways.

In an effort to better understand the effectiveness of this medium from the consumer's perspective, PPAI designed and conducted a study which was fielded through MarketTools Inc. in San Francisco, California, to evaluate the action, reaction and relationship of promotional products and their recipients.

The final sample consisted of a panel of 1,005 consumers who recalled receiving a promotional product in the past 24 months. If they had not received a promotional product in the past 24 months they were screened out of the sample. All questions were answered by 1,005 respondents.

The Reach:

- Of an audience consisting of the average American consumer, a little less than half (44% or 1,005 people) reported receiving a promotional product in the last 24 months
- What's more, 90.4% reported either currently owning or possessing a promotional product received within the last 24 months

The Response:

How do recipients feel about receiving a promotional product? Why do they think they were given the item? What actions do they take? These are crucial questions every advertiser should know and understand, as the answers can have a dramatic impact on their ROI.

How they feel:

- 83% of respondents like receiving a promotional product with an advertising message
- 48% would like to receive promotional products more often
- 30% like receiving personalized promotional products (i.e. with their name/personal info on it)
- 25% like getting promotional products to refer to the advertiser's contact info if needed
- 38% feel promotional products serve as a constant reminder of the advertiser
- 49% are not bothered by seeing a corporate logo on a promotional product
- Only 2% dislike receiving promotional products

What they think:

- 73% of respondents think they were given a promotional product to promote a service, a product or a message
- 63% think it is to create brand/company awareness
- 63% think it is to serve as an advertiser/business service reminder

- 56% think it is an expression of gratitude for business/ action taken
- 53% think it is to solicit support for a cause
- 32% think it is to create good will
- 26% think it is to spread awareness of safety issues
- 25% think it is to commemorate person/event/occasion
- 23% think it is for prevention education
- 16% think it is to urge action
- 13% think it is in recognition of an achievement
- 3% think promotional products are a waste of money
- 2% other

The Impression:

When it comes to promotional products, advertisers want to know that 1.) the method is effective and 2.) that the cost over time doesn't outweigh the results. So, the question is: What is the cost per impression when it comes to this particular method of marketing? Consider this: More than half (58%) of respondents keep a promotional product anywhere from one year to more than four years. Even if the recipient uses the item only once per week, that's a minimum of 52 impressions made over the course of a year with the possibility of more than 208 during a five-year window. And, this doesn't factor in the countless number of impressions made by others who view the promotional product when in use by the recipient.

In general, how long do you keep promotional products you receive from companies?

- 21% keep the promotional product more than 4 years
- 10% keep the promotional product 2-4 years
- 27% keep the promotional product 1-2 years
- 21% keep the promotional product 6-12 months
- 15% keep the promotional product 2-5 months
- 6% keep the promotional product 1 month

There is a lot more to this study than what I have listed above. The main takeaway here is that if an organization uses promotional products that serve organizational marketing objectives, there can be a positive impact.

In our rush to market via the latest and greatest channel, we sometimes forget that offline advertising still works. It works even more effectively if combined with online marketing activity. The cost per impression (especially over time) is extremely low which is key with most clients, especially as we see more and more ad hoc marketing budgets and upper management demand measurability of all marketing activities.

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