

Bright Ideas

The year's smartest sales secrets and top tips

Compiled by Christen Gruebel
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Find luggage that lasts: Ballistic nylon wears well, drum-dyed leather will keep its color and YKK zippers are the highest quality—all are indicators that luggage will last through a lifetime of heavy handling.

—Jamie Cimino, president, Canyon Outback Leather Goods

Understand what women want: Avoid purchasing a man's shirt in a smaller size for women. Go for women's apparel that is cut to fit in slimmer or curvier silhouettes.

—Taraynn Lloyd, marketing director, Edwards Garment

Bring logos up to date: People are moving away from left-chest logo prints toward more interesting spots, including the sleeve, bottom hem or collar line.

—Paige Cannon, director of marketing, Alternative Apparel

Embellish where appropriate: When using apparel embellishments, really thin fabrics aren't good options because the glue can seep through the shirt. Also, the apparel must be able to withstand 350 degrees of heat.

—Brittney Haar, director of sales and marketing, In Your Face Apparel

Do a taste test: To determine whether or not your coffee promotion is high-caliber, turn down the heat. Low-grown (re: low-quality) coffee bitters as it cools.

—Richard Salzman, president, Richard's Gourmet Coffee

Go one step further this holiday season: Personal touches on holiday greeting cards—"homemade" embellishments, a handwritten note—are a great way to show clients you care.

—Charley Johnson, vice president, SnugZ USA

Make them look good: With the rise of open kitchens in restaurants around the country, a chef's uniform is more important than ever to reinforce a brand's message.

—Girisha Chandraraj, vice president of marketing, Broder

Manage your time: Offer more value for the money with multifunctional watches that do more than just tell time.

—Jennifer Grigorian, director of advertising/marketing, Sweda Company

Maximize marketing on a button or badge: Simple verbiage, a two- or three-color palette and a lot of white space will get the message across.

—Dino Bartolomei, vice president, Adco Litho Line

Facilitate corporate giving: Speak to mid-level managers and find out what they think will motivate their staff.

—Heather McCloskey, president and founder, McCloskey Partners

Appeal to every decor style: With kitchen and housewares, a modern aesthetic appeals to a broader audience. It lacks elaborate ornamentation and is less likely to clash.

—Antonia Pappas, senior product development manager, The Magnet Group

Be transparent with eco-friendly terms: The term "green" has no true definition, and so, saying you're a "green" company or have "green" products isn't entirely accurate.