

Promotional Products

Promotional Products Magazine
Essential information for suppliers and distributors

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Eco-Drive



Fundraising in Australia for schools and clubs is becoming increasingly professional and well organised. The old-style home bakes and craft stalls are now being challenged by gala events, branded products and slick sponsorship proposals. Mandy Stevens, Managing Director of Direct Publications Pty Ltd explains.

Promotional products are an emerging trend in Australian fundraising and, handled in the right way by both community groups and product suppliers, can be a very effective and profitable alternative.

Schools and clubs are looking to promote themselves with a consistent professional image – and this 'branding' revolution is no longer simply the domain of private schools and elite

THE BUSINESS of fundraising

sporting clubs. A school with a strong profile is in a better position to attract very important support from local businesses. The perception is likely to be that a well-organised school is in a better position to promote the business to the school community.

Promotional products are a way for schools and clubs to raise money while at the same time reinforcing their branding. Popular branded products range from the traditional caps and key rings to memory sticks, silicone wristbands and watches. An increasingly sought-after product is the lanyard, which is used to carry flash drives, pens, locker keys and passes, while printed or embroidered shirts and caps are as in demand as ever for sporting teams and clubs.

The profit margins that are available from promotional products are also an attractive feature of the choices to be made. Most fundraising programs range from a 15-40% profit margin, whereas, depending on the choice of goods, promotional products can provide a mark-up of greater than 100%.

The major deterrent for many schools and clubs is the up-front cost involved in purchasing promotional products. Structuring a deferred or a periodical payment plan can ease this burden and break down the barrier to entry. This option should only be entertained where the products are to be used for a concerted fixed-period fundraising campaign and not where they will be used as stock for a uniform or gift shop. Turnover should be reasonably likely in order to minimise risk to the provider under this model.

Promotional products can also simply be bought by schools or clubs and sold in an informal manner, or a promotional product company can take the time to set up an established fundraising program. This may involve providing order forms, posters and a structured reward system.

A reward system involves having certain prizes available when targets are reached. It is frowned upon in some circles to provide incentive prizes directly to children that are anything other than nominal in value as it is thought that this encourages an inappropriate level of competitiveness and can lead to unsafe practices such as door-to-door selling. A

preferred approach is to offer nominal prizes to children such as stickers and then offer a larger prize to the organisation if a global target is reached. This prize can then be used for a participation prize draw or a raffle.

In addition, other tools that can assist in the marketing of promotional products include providing some standard wording that can be inserted into newsletters and flyers. This can greatly assist those organising the fundraising – often time-poor volunteers. Packaging can also help, for example counter displays or carry cases that are designed to make it easier to sell products. ■

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