

WINTER 2021

amplify

4imprint®

Promotional products.

Remarkable results.

Diverse and inclusive workplaces

A seat at the table for everyone, p. 6

Surprisingly sustainable

Recycled giveaways change from bottles to branded merchandise, p. 12



Selling branded merchandise

Turning swag into a revenue stream, p. 22

Have you ever noticed how powerful an experience it is when someone really listens? True listening isn't just hearing, it's understanding. And that can be transformative for individuals and organizations.



Kevin,
with 4imprint
30 years

In our [cover story](#), we talk with two customers leading the charge to create more diverse and inclusive organizations. One of their most important pieces of advice—ensuring the voices involved in decision-making represent the group you are trying to reach. Listening—hearing diverse points of view—is a crucial step.

Listening can be equally powerful outside an organization. In [Lasting Impressions](#), you'll meet a machinery dealership that found inspiration for a Father's Day photo contest from customers who call their tractors, snowplows and other equipment "baby." And, in our [Trend story](#), a drum store owner and gourmet deli owner share

how selling branded merch turns their customers into brand ambassadors—and how they decide which merch to sell.

Listening. It's a powerful tool for any journey of improvement—and amplify® is no exception. If you have ideas for us, we want to [hear them](#). Who knows what your ideas might inspire!

Happy listening!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kevin Lyons-Tarr".

Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO
4imprint

Are you finding clever, new ways to reach customers? Tell us your story.
Email 4ideas@4imprint.com.



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Strong like Mom

amplify® offers an unmatched glimpse into real-life ways you can use promotional products to gain remarkable results.

We'd love to hear your feedback! Please send questions, comments or concerns to 4ideas@4imprint.com.



Read our [Cover Story](#) to learn how organizations ensure they hire a diverse team and foster a culture steeped in inclusivity.

Meet this month's featured contributors



Suzanne Worwood
Senior VP Merchandising
4imprint

Suzanne Worwood, with 4imprint since 2000, loves finding and sharing exciting new products. In the [Product Highlight](#) story, she showcases rPET products that, in a prior life, were actually plastic containers—but after being recycled are now blankets, umbrellas, T-shirts and more. Check out the innovative products Suzanne has found.



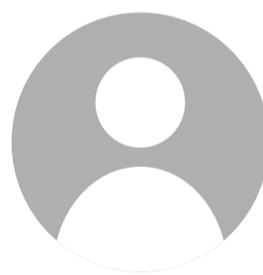
Erika Wegner
Social Media Manager
4imprint

In this issue, Erika shines a light on our [Swag Master](#)—The Imagine Society. She shares how its strategic use of nonprofit giveaways helps the Society develop leaders, break down barriers and support its community. Erika has been with 4imprint for 13 years and coordinates 4imprint's social media communities.



Cheryl Sina
one by one[®] Coordinator
4imprint

Strong Like Mom—those poignant words are printed on onesies given to expectant mothers who are battling placenta accreta during pregnancy. In this issue's [Remarkable Moments](#), Cheryl showcases pictures of the proud new mamas showing off their remarkable babies in these unique promotional items. A 21-year member of the 4imprint team, Cheryl has coordinated the *one by one*[®] program since its inception in 2006.



You!

People LOVED going to events—and getting fun swag bags was the extra cherry on top! We've needed to reimagine how events look these days, but that doesn't mean we have to give up the coveted swag bag. In [Overheard](#), customers share how virtual event swag bags are giving their events the #SwaggingRights they were hoping for!



#SwaggingRights®

These virtual event bags are holding attention



4

Jill

Our school created gift baskets to deliver to our senior students along with their diplomas and gowns this year. These tumblers were a perfect addition to our senior sendoff.



4

Samantha

In response to the current global situation, the McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service transitioned programming to meet current social distancing requirements. Over the course of the summer, approximately 450 "Family Gardening Bags" were distributed to the residents of McCracken County.



4

Cathy

Our face-to-face conference this year went virtual instead. Normally, we gather with 250+ women across the United Brethren denomination at one location. This year, we provided goody bags to our attendees, and gave them 2 ways to join in - online through a YouTube® live event, or through a Zoom® link. Over 25 of our churches held watch parties; over 200 women registered for a goody bag. We believe we reached far more women this year than in the past. Thank you for helping us with our first-ever virtual event.



Check out our Pinterest® board for other [virtual event swag](#) that has earned #SwaggingRights.



Diverse and inclusive workplaces

By Ann Timms

A seat at the table for everyone





“Diversity” and “inclusion,” although perfect dance partners, describe two distinct ideas. According to [Great Place to Work®](#), an authority on workplace culture, diversity refers to the make-up of an organization’s people whereas inclusion is about valuing and integrating both the presence and contributions of each and every subgroup. A diverse and inclusive workplace is one that makes everyone “feel equally involved” and “supported in all areas of the workplace”— regardless of “who they are or what they do for the business.”

Or, as Doanie Perry of the Developmental Disabilities Division at Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority (ImCal HSA) says with a quote from Vernā Myers:

“Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”

ImCal HSA manages and provides behavioral health and developmental disability services to citizens of five Louisiana parishes.

“In order to get to know someone, they have to be part of your group. And in order for them to be a part of your group, they have to be invited,” Perry said. An invitation allows the value of including all individuals in workplaces, schools and society to unfold.

Promoting diversity and inclusion: A win-win

Research shows there are many benefits for workplaces that embrace diversity and inclusion. A McKinsey & Company® May 2020 “Diversity Wins” report found that diverse companies are more likely to financially outperform their less diverse counterparts—those with [gender-diversity by up to 25%](#), and those with [ethnic diversity by up to 36%](#). And Great Place to Work found that [diverse and inclusive](#)

[workplaces have a 5.4 times higher retention rate](#)—and their employees report deeper trust and commitment to their workplace.

“When you feel more part of an organization, society or group, you’re more productive,” Perry said.



Whether your organization has just dipped its toes in diverse and inclusive workplace practices or has been actively implementing them for years, these actions are a step in the right direction:

1

Ensure diverse representation of talent

2

Cultivate inclusive leaders

3

Create an inclusive culture

4

Be authentic

1 Ensure diverse representation of talent

Diversity encapsulates race, ethnicity and gender. “Today, the term diversity means so much more—from first-generation students to single mothers to American Sign Language speakers,” says Stephanie McGrew, MHA, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator at A.T. Still University (ATSU), Kirksville, Missouri.

ATSU is a four-time winner of the [Higher Education Excellence in Diversity \(HEED\) Award](#), which recognizes colleges and universities for their outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“Our university works toward bringing in a more diverse population to help limit the health disparities in underrepresented groups,” says McGrew.

“You have to reflect the population you’re trying to access. And the best way to do that is by having a diverse group of people sitting at the table helping to make decisions for the subgroup you are trying to reach.”

Organizations looking to diversify their talent pool may benefit from adopting

recruitment best practices. Among them: removing biased language from job descriptions and being transparent in your postings by letting candidates know you’re looking to diversify your workforce. To reach a diverse candidate pool, [post opportunities in places focused on serving diverse populations](#), like alumni associations, networking groups, and colleges or universities that serve diverse students and provide targeted internships and scholarships to attract underrepresented students.

“ATSU has created the Graduate Health Professions Scholarship (GPS) for those historically underrepresented students whose financial disparities limit their ability to get a secondary degree,” says McGrew. “Our GPS scholars gain hands-on experience and are on the frontlines educating and promoting the vision of our University.”



2 Cultivate inclusive leaders

Good leadership is crucial to diversity and inclusion initiatives. And despite the old adage, a good leader is made, not born. To drive home awareness and underline the importance of inclusive leadership, [some companies require every level of management to undergo unconscious bias training](#). Others rely on insights from diversity and inclusion teams to help train managers to better lead diverse teams. One way to accomplish this is through scenario training where leaders are presented with real-life situations. Scenarios may include providing an accommodation for a worker with a disability or supervising a single parent with childcare issues.

“Rather than perceiving what someone might need to succeed in their work environment, you need to have one-on-one conversations because everyone is different,” says Perry.

And, that extends to taking note of every opportunity. For example, ImCal HSA heeds this advice when promoting its services with branded promotional items too. “Rather than choosing a promo product that only markets our organization, we choose products that benefit the community we are serving,” Perry explained. “Click pens (those without caps) are appreciated by some of our clients with physical limitations that prevent them taking a cap off a pen.”

3 Create an inclusive culture

Creating an inclusive culture, where all stakeholders feel it is safe to express themselves and voice concerns in a transparent way, is paramount to attracting and retaining diverse talent. When employees know their contributions are heard and valued, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc., they are:

9.8x
more likely
to look forward to
going to work

3.6x
more likely
to take pride in
their work

5.4x
more likely
to want to stay at their
company long-term

Source: www.greatplacetowork.com

The [McKinsey & Company “Diversity Wins” report](#) recommends that companies establish “norms for what constitutes open, welcoming behavior” and organizations “build a culture in which all employees feel they can bring their whole selves to work.”



4 Be authentic

Authenticity is key in building a diverse and inclusive workplace. “Building trust can be complicated and it is not always easy. People must perceive you as authentic,” McGrew said.

“Groups of diverse people who offer a diverse perspective—that’s when the fruits of your labor come back to you,” says McGrew.

ATSU takes promoting diversity to the next level. In fact, they incorporated the term diversity into their slogan: Diversity means more than HUE. The organization shows its authentic self by investing in staffing and resources, telling that story with branded promotional items.

“The items purchased from 4imprint have helped us build trust in the communities we work within, the schools we collaborate with, and at the various recruitment events in which we participate. Through promotional items, we are able to offer reflective presentation of what our university stands for and our mission of diversity and inclusiveness,” McGrew said.

Diversity and inclusion: Better together

When your company demonstrates it values the presence and contributions of every employee, regardless of who they are or what position they hold, you not only make your company better, you make your team better too. These diverse and inclusive workplace steps can help you make sure everyone feels invited and asked to dance. 4

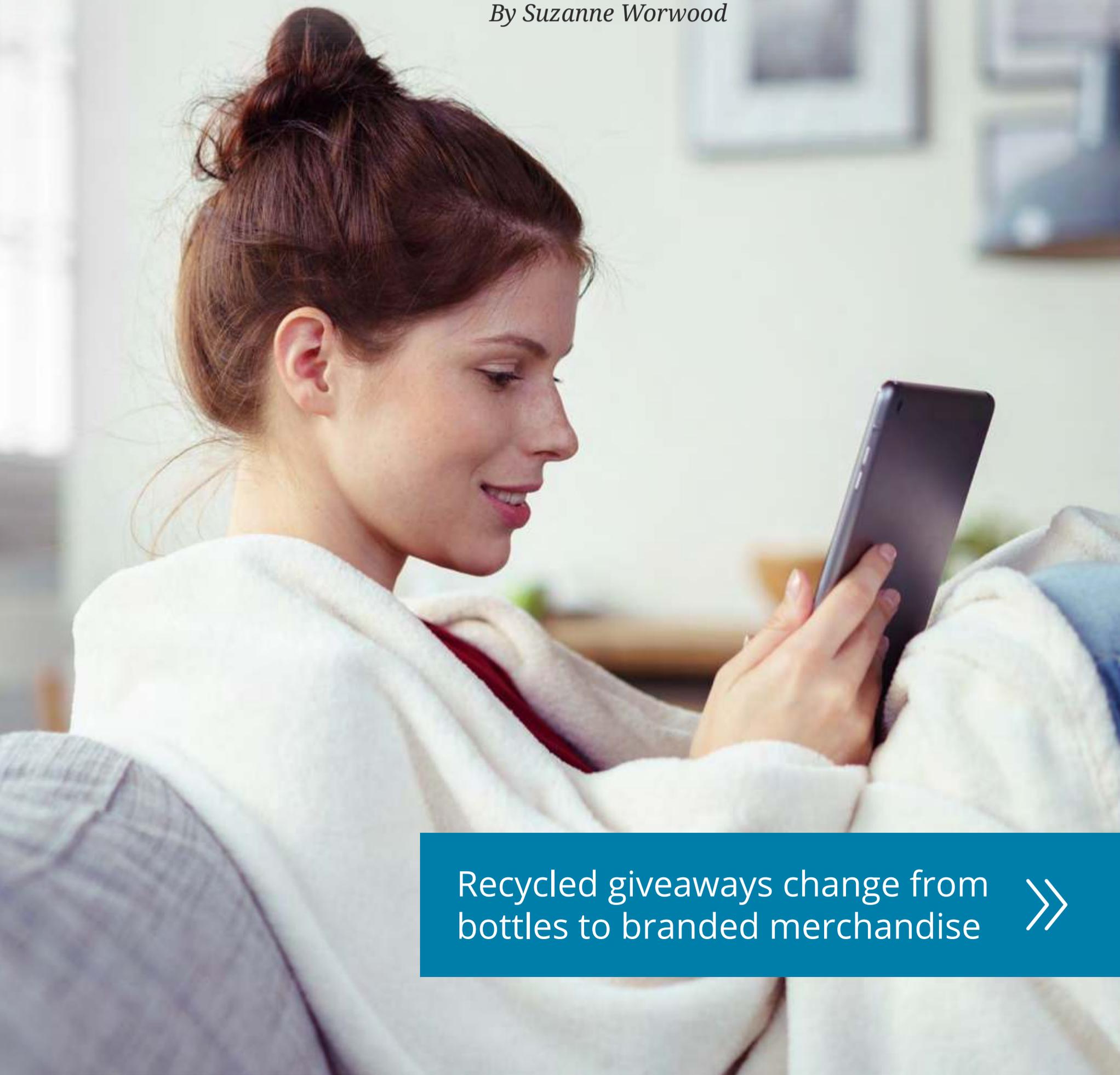
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PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

Surprisingly sustainable

By Suzanne Worwood



Recycled giveaways change from
bottles to branded merchandise



While no one ever confuses a plastic bottle with a shirt, you might be surprised to learn that something you're wearing right now may have been used to hold your favorite bottled beverage. In fact, recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET)—which is made from recycled #1 plastic containers—is used to create recycled giveaways that your customers can wear, carry and snuggle up to.

If you're trying to find the perfect promotional gifts—with an added sustainable twist—for customers, take a look at this unexpected variety of recycled items.

A bottle you can snuggle up to

The RPET Fleece Blanket is made from 100% rPET materials. So the water bottle that once helped keep them cool now helps keep them warm, whether they use it while reading on the couch or take it with them on a picnic.



RPET Fleece Blanket

RPET Mini Folding Umbrella



Water on, water off

The RPET Mini Folding Umbrella is a useful gift for customers on the go. The promotional customer gift that helps them keep water away once helped them keep water on hand.



From carrying iced tea to carrying cool tech

The fabric of the [Reclaim RPET 15" Laptop Backpack](#) was once a bottle that has been transformed into a tech-related gift. This recycled giveaway is sure to be appreciated by anyone who could use a sustainable way to tote their tech.

Rebuilt bottles

The [Recycled Breaker Bottle with Two-Tone Flip Straw Lid](#) takes bottles that once held a favorite beverage and turns them into a promotional gift for customers. These bottles will continue to hold their favorite drinks for a long time.

Recycled Breaker Bottle with Two-Tone Flip Straw Lid



Reclaim RPET 15" Laptop Backpack

Sustainable shirts

The [District® Recycle T-Shirt](#) offers two kinds of reuse: The fabric blend is created from both recycled bottles and reclaimed cotton scraps. This sustainable shirt is perfect for casual staff apparel or as a nonprofit giveaway.



District
Recycled T-Shirt

Made from 100% recycled materials, these custom T-shirts are a great branding tool.

A sustainable surprise

Recycled giveaways multiply your promotional wins. By offering these practical items to your customers, you'll be turning plastic bottles into client connections—while sharing a recycled giveaway they can use again and again. [4](#)

Looking for more information about this topic? Email 4ideas@4imprint.com with inquiries.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Out-of-the-box marketing ideas

By Joshua Grover-David Patterson



Turn cool giveaways into new opportunities





When you want to grab attention for your business, picking an out-of-the-box marketing idea is a great place to start. For [Hiniker](#) in Mankato, Minnesota, that fresh marketing idea began with doing something unexpected during a mid-year holiday.

“We had a Father’s Day social media contest where we encouraged dads to send in photos of their ‘babies,’” Marketing Coordinator Ella Andreasen said. “But in this case, we meant the snowplows and agriculture equipment that we manufacture, not their actual human babies.”

This unique approach to forging customer connections resulted in multiple posts, several very cool photos—and even more marketing opportunities down the road.

Start with a fresh perspective

By putting a fun spin on a holiday that isn’t always getting spun, Hiniker took advantage of an out-of-the-box idea for marketing by focusing on a holiday that fit their target market—one not everyone else was competing for, like Christmas and Halloween. As you think about fresh marketing ideas, [find something unique that ties in well with your brand.](#)

For example, in addition to catching attention on Father’s Day, Hiniker found another “holiday” celebrated by millions of people across the country: basketball season. The company celebrated the college championship tournament by creating a basketball-style bracket of some of their most popular equipment and letting fans vote for the winners.



Connect with charitable causes

Another fresh marketing idea you might not have considered is picking a charity and finding ways to support them. This can be a benefit for both their organization and yours, with [85% of consumers having a better perception of a business that supports a cause they care about.](#)

When deciding how to help your local charity, consider days or weeks that are set aside for doing good. Those may include Random Acts of Kindness Week in February or Giving Tuesday in November. Or contact the charitable organization of your choice and ask them if there is a not-so-recognizable holiday that corresponds with their mission. Get creative with your cause and promote it on your social channels.

85%

of consumers have a better perception of a business that supports a cause they care about.





Get kids involved

One way to bring joy to families is to get children involved. For Father's Day, Hiniker took entries from both dads and their real kids, asking them to share pictures of their fathers using their equipment and the best agriculture or snow removal advice their dad has given them.

There are many other ways to [get user-generated content from kids during the holiday of your choice](#). Have them:

 Write a blog about how their parent uses your product. Publish some of the best on your blog page.

 Create art based on your product or service. Promote submissions on your social platforms.

 Create a video of your product in use and ask their parents to share on social.

Express thanks to kids with these giveaways.



Share visual content

Eighty-five percent of consumers want more visual content from brands, and 92% of viewers who see a video on mobile will share that video with others. Those two statistics add up to one simple recipe:

- 1 Take one unexpected holiday or idea—something like Talk Like a Pirate Day.
- 2 Create a clever, surprising or silly video that advances your brand or promotes your product in a new way.

Mix together to create a shareable piece of marketing content that can help your brand spread far and wide.



High Definition
Action Camera

Encourage customer participation with cool giveaways.

Make use of customer content

Better yet, have your customers create content for you.

Hiniker's Father's Day contest didn't just create great interactions in June—they also created more marketing opportunities for the future.

*“We gave away an HD action camera in hopes we would get more user generated content,”
Andreassen said.*

These cool giveaways, and the pictures they received, were used for other marketing materials that made it possible for potential customers to see their products in action. And customers appreciated the opportunity to show off their “babies.”

A new spin on marketing

When it comes to out-of-the-box marketing ideas, the only limit is your imagination. So pick an unusual holiday, find a great charity, or come up with a hilarious video concept, and you'll soon be building customer connections of your own. [4](#)

Looking for more information about this topic? Email 4ideas@4imprint.com with inquiries.



Creative community care

Feeding minds and feeding families with nonprofit giveaways in NYC

The Imagine Society's goal is to develop leaders, break down barriers and help its community. The organization does it one event at a time. It was the way the team used an event nonprofit giveaway that caught our attention and earned them the title of Swag Master!



★ A branded apron for compassionate volunteers

[The Imagine Society's](#) diverse group of young volunteers work together on a shared mission of creating a better society. Wearing [branded aprons](#) and apparel for its #FoodForFamilies event, the youth united to show compassion to those in need—while learning skills to be future leaders.

★ A quality bag for premium food

People who benefited from the [#FoodForFamilies](#) event did not get a standard food pantry grab bag. The side pocket of the [durable branded tote](#)—not a cardboard box or plastic bag—held an Italian flag and recipe card translated into multiple

languages, indications of the feast that awaited in the nonprofit giveaway. The logo bag was filled with the ingredients needed to make restaurant-quality Pasta a la Bolognese.

★ A multi-faceted mission for a single event

The Imagine Society says its events are a way to open the minds of those involved. This event not only provided food for NYC food pantry recipients, it fostered an appreciation for cultural cuisine. The event also allowed volunteers to work side-by-side with others from diverse backgrounds. With the organization's branding on colorful balloons, volunteer apparel and nonprofit giveaways, events like #FoodForFamilies also generate buzz and educate the community about the organization's mission.

TREND

Selling branded merchandise

By Joshua Grover-David Patterson

Turning swag into a revenue stream





When [Sisters Gourmet Deli](#) in Portland, Oregon, began selling branded merchandise, Owner Michaela McVetty had no way of knowing that her swag would become almost as popular as her sandwiches.

Her first offering, a branded T-shirt, quickly sold out, and season after season, McVetty has added new items to the product line. “There are people who have long-sleeve shirts, a short-sleeve shirt, a sweatshirt, two hats,” McVetty said. “Others will say, ‘I’ve got to get one for my sister or my mother or kid.’ I love seeing how excited people are to rep my brand.”

With the COVID-19 pandemic leading to business restrictions ranging from curbside sales to limiting the number of customers allowed into a building, McVetty is just one of many businesses selling promotional merchandise—with wonderful, wearable results.



Jerzees® NuBlend Crewneck Sweatshirt

Stay warm and cozy with branded merchandise.

Reasons to sell corporate merchandise

While restaurants and other [businesses have recently started selling branded merchandise as an additional income stream](#), there are [multiple reasons to put your brand on something people want to buy](#).

It's cost-effective: The cost per impression (CPI) of branded merchandise can be around 1/10 of a cent—and that's if you're giving it away. By selling merchandise, you promote and profit.

It builds brand recognition: The shirt, hat or tank top you sell or give away not only makes an impression on the wearer, it builds brand recognition with everyone they encounter.

It helps you stand out: Offering promotional merchandise differentiates you from organizations that aren't ready to invest in branded items.



Comfort Colors Garment-Dyed
6.1 oz. T-Shirt

[Drummer's Journey](#) in Moorhead, Minnesota, offers shirts and hats that serve the business and the customers in a variety of ways. Having just opened the store in 2019, they soon found themselves facing the complications of 2020.

“We were just getting started when COVID-19 became a major concern,” store owner Michael Carbone said. “We were hit with mandatory lockdown and had to go curbside. When we came back, we decided that branding was a big part of getting the brick-and-mortar business going again and we embraced that.”



The merchandise has become a revenue stream and an extra incentive for people making a purchase. “Sometimes we just have people who come in and buy a shirt,” Carbone said. “We also include them with package deals when we sell drum kits. It's a nice incentive that allows us to provide a little extra value to the buyer.”

How to choose the right promotional merchandise

Once you're ready to start your branded merch journey, it's time to find the right items. As you get ready to launch your own line, see below for helpful tips to keep in mind.

Make sure your logo is merch-worthy

When it comes to merchandise, a great look can sell itself.

"I had a friend who's a professional designer put together a perfect, simple logo for me, and it's so cute," McVetty said. "I've always ended all my blogs, videos, Snapchat®, Instagram® and now TikTok® videos with 'Peace, love and sandwiches!' and my logo shows that off."

Carbone agrees, "It helps to have a good logo and a good name," he said. "Some people want to support us. Some people just like the way the shirt looks."

To ensure your logo will look great on branded merchandise, [make sure it:](#)



Has a complementary color scheme that looks good with your merchandise choices



Uses readable typography that looks good in any size



Contains memorable iconography that people will want to own

Choose items your customers will love

Much like your other products and services, the best branded merchandise [gives customers what they want or need.](#)

When Sisters Gourmet Deli sold out of T-shirts, McVetty gave some thought about what else customers could use. "I said, 'Wait, it's winter, let's put it on hats,'" she said. "We did a really small order, 36 or something, and they were gone."



The expansion led to other fun ideas that sold out even faster. "I got shirts and tie-dyed them myself," McVetty said. "We did a live video where each shirt was numbered and by the time the event was over, I had sold them all."

Purchase the right amount of merch

Knowing just how many of each item to order can be a challenge, as you'll have to store your swag until you sell or give them away. Luckily, there are some easy ways to estimate how many and which items you need:

1. Ask your audience: Ask what types of promotional merchandise people want on social media or through a simple in-store poll.

2. Limit your initial order: While there are cost savings that come with ordering more items, even a small multiple will frequently come at a lower price.

3. Try preorders: McVetty uses this method to keep extra items from piling up. "I post a picture of the item and preorders now, and when I have enough of them, I'll make an order," she said.

A big branding win

When selling branded merchandise, you might be surprised just how often your brand ends up center stage. "Repping the brand seems to come naturally to our customers. We've even had drummers who wear our shirt every time they're on stage," Carbone said.

And let's face it—fans sharing your brand will always be music to your ears. **4**

Looking for more information about this topic? Email 4ideas@4imprint.com with inquiries.

More revenue-building merchandise ideas

Richardson Trucker
Snapback Cap



Super Kid Comic
Blast Sportpack



Refresh®
Metairie
Aluminum
Bottle



Crossland® Packable
Puffer Vest

Econscious Heathered
Fleece Full-Zip Hoodie



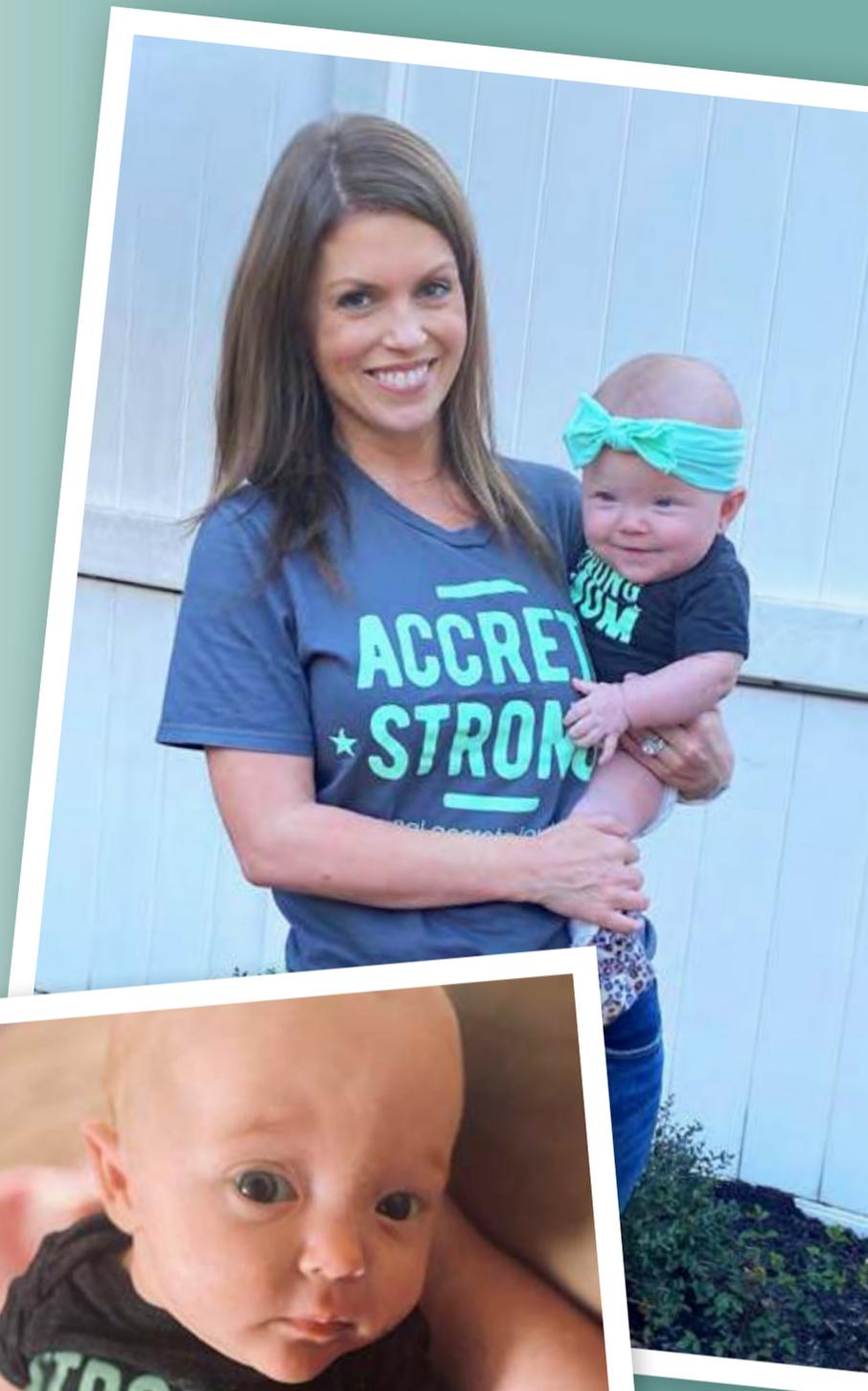
Strong like Mom

By Cheryl Sina

Nonprofit promotional giveaways offer hope in time of need

Placenta accreta, a life-threatening complication that occurs in 1 out of 272 pregnancies, has quadrupled since the 1980s. This alarming statistic is what drives the [National Accreta Foundation](#) to increase awareness and work toward prevention on behalf of moms and babies. To give moms hope and help them focus on having a successful delivery, the organization provides soon-to-be mothers with nonprofit promotional giveaways—baby onesies that say “Strong Like Mom.”

National Accreta Foundation was a 4imprint [one by one](#)® promotional products grant recipient.



Like what you saw in amplify?

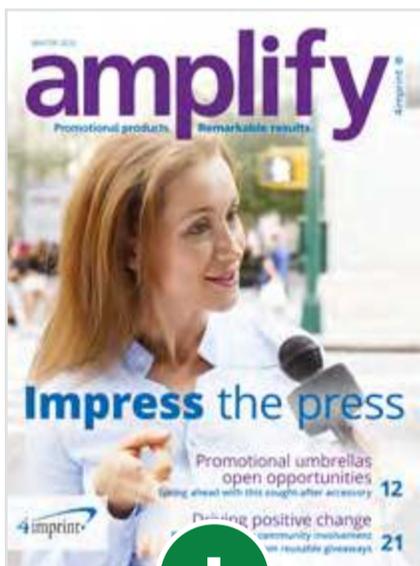
Check out past issues.



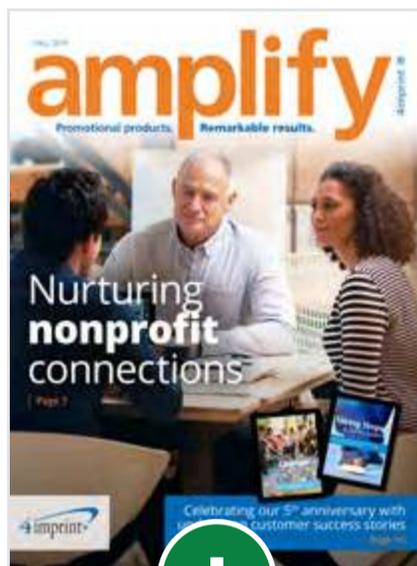
Fall 2020



Summer 2020



Winter 2020



Fall 2019

Learn more about using promotional products in your organization!

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- » Dealer/Distributor Programs
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