

SUMMER 2017

amplify

4imprint®

Promotional products.

Remarkable results.

Five steps to successful brand storytelling



Marketing milestones **17**

Community involvement **21**

Genuine excitement is a powerful emotion.

Have you ever noticed that when someone is genuinely excited about something, they can't wait to tell you about it? And they'll often describe the product, experience or event in such great detail that you start to feel excited about it, too. It's downright contagious.



Kevin,
with 4imprint
26 years

Building excitement

That's the feeling we got when we talked with interviewees for this issue of amplify, as they shared stories of how they use promotional products to build excitement with their customers and prospective customers.

In our cover story, Family Care Services, Inc., explains how they attract prospective foster care families to their booth at community events. Their clever use of promotional beach balls helps introduce families to the idea of providing foster care for a child in need. And, you guessed it ... the more they talk about it, the more excitement prospective families feel.

Celebrating with excitement

Cedar Siding, Inc., tells a similar story. This year, the company celebrates its 30th anniversary. They've launched a clever promotion that does double duty by both marking the milestone and using it to build

excitement (and drive sales) among the distributors who sell their products. And, yes, promotional products play a starring role in the promotion.

If you're looking for ideas you can use to build excitement about your product or service, flip through the pages that follow. As you can imagine, we're pretty excited to share these inspiring stories with you.

Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO, 4imprint



PS: If you have story about how promotional products helped you connect, we'd love to hear it! Email 4ideas@4imprint.com.



CONTRIBUTORS 4

amplify® offers an unmatched glimpse into real-life ways for using promotional products to gain remarkable results.

OVERHEARD 5

T-shirts

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

COVER STORY 6

Five steps to successful brand storytelling



PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT 12

Give better business gifts this holiday season

LASTING IMPRESSIONS 17

Marketing milestones

TREND 21

Community involvement

REMARKABLE MOMENT 26

Honoring fallen heroes

Brand storytelling may be the most effective tool in your marketing toolbox. But are you using it? Read up on how it's done and the powerful difference it makes in building brand loyalty.

Meet this month's featured contributors



Suzanne Worwood
Senior VP Merchandising
4imprint

For those of you pre-planners, the time to be thinking about holiday gift giving is now. Suzanne gives a [Product Highlight](#) on business gifts that keep on giving. Suzanne, the Senior VP of merchandising, has been with 4imprint since 2000.



Mary Curtin
Senior VP Administration
4imprint

Mary, the Senior VP of administration for 4imprint, shares her insights in this issue's [Trend](#) article. She shares how community involvement is not only good for your company and community, but also employee retention and recruitment efforts. Mary started at 4imprint in 1995.



Cheryl Sina
one by one® Coordinator
4imprint

For this issue, Cheryl shares a [Remarkable Moment](#) inspired by the volunteers with Wreaths Across America. Cheryl has been with 4imprint 18 years and coordinates 4imprint's *one by one*® program.



Erika Ferguson
Social Media Manager
4imprint

Erika coordinates 4imprint's social media communities. For this issue, Erika compiled social media content for the [Overheard](#) story showcasing T-shirts that earned people #SwaggingRights. She's been with 4imprint 10 years.



You!

Customers shared images on social media of T-shirts that gave them #SwaggingRights. Their shout-outs were [Overheard](#) and featured here in amplify.



T-shirts that earn you #SwaggingRights

4



Lisa

Our leasing team members in Austin, TX, are wearing their new shirts and checking the progress of our newest development, Aldrich 51.



Amy Benning Baumgardner

Thanks 4imprint on the awesome job on the golf shirts - team [Joe Safety](#) is looking sharp at today's outing!



GW Ballroom

@GWBallroom

We really enjoyed dancing on the mall today in our [#swaggingrights](#) tshirts!



4



Christy

We are selling these shirts at our coffee shop! Once a month we do a surprise promo. If a customer wears it to the store or uploads a photo on the random promo day they get a complimentary coffee! It's our way of saying thanks for investing in our small business! Cheers, Drip-Thru Coffee



Visit our Pinterest page for more [promotional apparel](#) that people are raving about.



Five steps to **successful brand storytelling**



How stories build brand loyalty





When officials at **Family Care Services, Inc.**, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, want to tell their brand story to potential foster and adoptive families, they know how important it is to first capture their attention and then open the door to what are often deeply moving conversations:



How lives are changed by foster care and adoption.



How foster care and adoption give children and adults with special needs a second, or third, chance to make their way in a difficult world.



How foster care and adoption can change families in innumerable and amazing ways.

Their message went to the right people at the right time!



As Family Care Services, Inc., has learned, this type of brand storytelling is one of the most powerful items in an organization's marketing toolbox. Here's how to apply their lessons and others to make brand storytelling work for you.

The staying power of stories

Great stories sear themselves on our brains. They touch us deeply, or make us laugh until our sides hurt. Think of a movie you love. Remember the YouTube® video that brought a tear to your eye? Consider the song that takes you back to a memorable place every time you hear it. All of these emotions are based on the power of stories we tell ourselves.

Now, just imagine if you could harness that power to build your brand. You can!

Research shows audiences want something more than features, something beyond benefits. They're hungry for brands to connect with them on an emotional level.

“Why Our Brains Crave Storytelling in Marketing,” by Fast Company®, details the effects of storytelling on the brain. They include:

1 Neural Coupling

When a story activates the brain, a listener is able to transform the story into their own ideas and experience.

2 Mirroring

People who are listening to the story have brain activity that is similar to one another and to the speaker.



3 Dopamine

When emotions are triggered, dopamine is released into the system via the brain, which makes it easier for someone to remember the triggering event or experience.

4 Cortex Activity

Two parts of the brain engage when a person is processing facts, but a well-told story can engage even more parts of the brain than facts alone.



When done well, brand storytelling allows people to attach their emotional response to the brand that told the story. Check out this well-told brand story by **Water is Life** for a powerful example.

Ready to put the power of brand storytelling to work for you? Here are five steps to successful brand storytelling.

STEP 1 Open the door to conversation.



For Family Care Services, telling their brand story starts with something as simple as a ball. Why a ball? Leaders knew they needed something more than the standard sales piece, something that would unlock that door to their most powerful tool: stories of successful foster care and adoptions. After all, adoption and foster care are decisions of the heart.

“We didn’t think mailings would work. We wanted to talk to people. We wanted to be able to present everything face to face,” says Andrea Adams, Family Care Services, Inc.

“So we started brainstorming ... how in the world do we meet people that are going to want to do this?”

Custom 12" Beach Balls turned out to be the perfect summer promotional items for the event they sponsored.

Fun products get your name noticed!

STEP 2 Meet your target audience where they are.



Finding your target audience and meeting them where they are is paramount. That will also tell you the ideal medium for sharing your brand story. Family Care Services determined that community sponsorships would help them reach the right people—families who already had children and might be open to expanding their family. So, they sponsored community summer movie nights. This is where the logo’d beach balls made a powerful entrance. As the brightly colored promotional items began to appear in the crowd, kids began begging their parents to take them to the Family Care Services table to get one. The event crowd loved them.

Did you hear that? That’s the sound of the door to conversation unlocking. It’s equivalent to the opening credits rolling for your brand story.



12" Beach Ball - Multicolor



STEP 3 Identify your main character.



Brand storytelling should have all of the components of a well-told story. First, you'll want to identify a main character. This could be a customer you serve or a client who benefits from the work of your organization. If you are an adoption or foster care agency, perhaps your brand story features a child in need of a home. Align your brand with a user's point of view. Tell your story using the voice of someone who has an impactful story to tell.

STEP 4 Develop a compelling plot.



Now it's time for the plot. Think in terms of problem and solution. Can you tell the story of how you've made their lives better?

If you lead a foster care or adoption agency, maybe your main character encounters challenges in finding the right family.

To create a plot that's compelling, remember that your audiences want to forge an emotional connection with you and the other brands they support. Successful brand storytelling will both touch and inspire them.

STEP 5 Deliver a cathartic conclusion.



Maybe this is the happy ending that your audiences crave or the achievement of a goal by the main character. If you lead a foster care and adoption agency, perhaps the child finds a forever home with a loving family.

Connect your story to your brand through the plot's catharsis. Remember, your audiences will attach their emotional response to your brand—so make it count.

Putting brand storytelling in marketing to work for you

As human beings, we are programmed to connect with stories. Organizations like Family Care Services, Inc., have compelling stories to tell—stories with heart, lovable characters we can relate to, a plot that pulls at the heartstrings and the catharsis we crave. Through creative use of promotional products, this organization found a doorway through which they can tell their story. And while it may seem easy for an organization that finds loving homes for children to find stories to tell, your organization has stories, too. Tell your favorite:

Stories about how you make a difference in the lives of your customers, clients and connections.



Tangle USB Hub

Keep your customers connected to their lives!

Stories about how your products and services support their happiness, health and well-being.

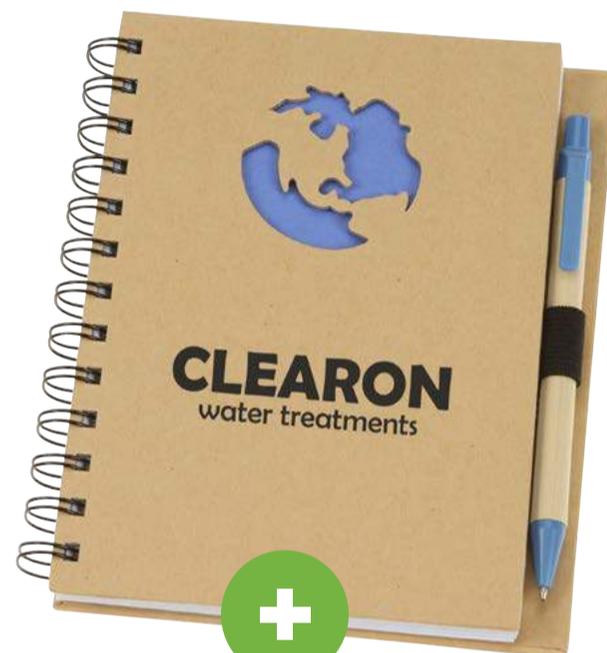
Shed light on your message through wellness.



Reflective Arm Strap

Tell your story while doing good for the environment.

Stories about how your organization is having an impact on the world.



Die Cut Recycled Notebook

You have a story to tell. You just need to find it.

By opening the door to conversation, and shifting your perspective to see the stories happening in everyday life, you're sure to find compelling stories to engage audiences and achieve your goals. Best of all, when you embrace brand storytelling in marketing, science shows you create a lasting impact on your target audiences, one that will have them looking to your brand to help them write their own story. [4](#)



Give better business gifts this holiday season

By Suzanne Worwood

Plan ahead with these memorable client gifts



For planners, the holidays are the best time of year—events to schedule, gifts to select, memories to be made. If this sounds like you, here's a sneak preview of this season's sure-to-be-favorite business gifts.

Tech gifts for everyone

From smart phones to computers, many of your customers, suppliers and team members use tech gadgets all day, every day. Show appreciation with a tech business gift, and it'll be used regularly.

Wireless ear buds are one such gift. With the [Storm True Wireless Ear Buds with Charging Case](#), recipients can listen to podcasts, music or phone calls, and then use the charging case to boost the phone's battery between calls or on flights. It's like two gifts in one.



Storm True Wireless Ear Buds with Charging Case

Don't get caught up in cords; try these True Wireless ear buds.



Color Band Bluetooth® Speaker

With the [Color Band Bluetooth® Speaker](#), take the party to the home, office or even outdoors. Wireless technology makes it easy to listen to music anywhere, while your logo travels everywhere these speakers do.

Sound marketing!

Thirst-quenching thank you

Say thanks with drinkware. These practical gifts are ideal for a hot or cold beverage, making them useful year-round.

For a sleek and modern look, the [CamelBak KickBak Vacuum Travel Tumbler](#) helps insulate a drink for hours. The leak-resistant lid offers two drinking options: one for sipping a hot beverage and another with a faster flow for a cold drink.

Bring a bit of the outdoors inside with a custom business gift basket. Pair [hot cocoa](#) and a gift card with a [Campfire Ceramic Mug](#). This retro-inspired mug provides a unique look that recipients will want to display when it's not being used for drinking.



Embrace the great outdoors

For the adventurous spirits, choose a gift that travels flawlessly.

Pack up the [High Sierra Pack-n-Go 18L Backpack](#) with everything needed for a long hike or a daily workout. With an included clip and exit port for a water pouch, this pack is perfect for on-the-go ventures.

Give them a [High Sierra Pack-n-Go 40L Duffel](#) for their next weekend away. The sturdy backpack can be carried with the shoulder strap or grab handle, and it has a large zippered opening for easy access to contents.

Promoting your brand is as easy as packing a bag!



High Sierra Pack-n-Go 18L Backpack

Take your promotion on the go with this duffel!



High Sierra Pack-n-Go 40L Duffel



Tarpaulin Event Cooler Tote

This is the cooler they'll want to take with them for their next tailgate party or road trip. The [Tarpaulin Event Cooler Tote](#) holds plenty of food and drink. When not in use, the cooler easily flattens for convenient storage anywhere.

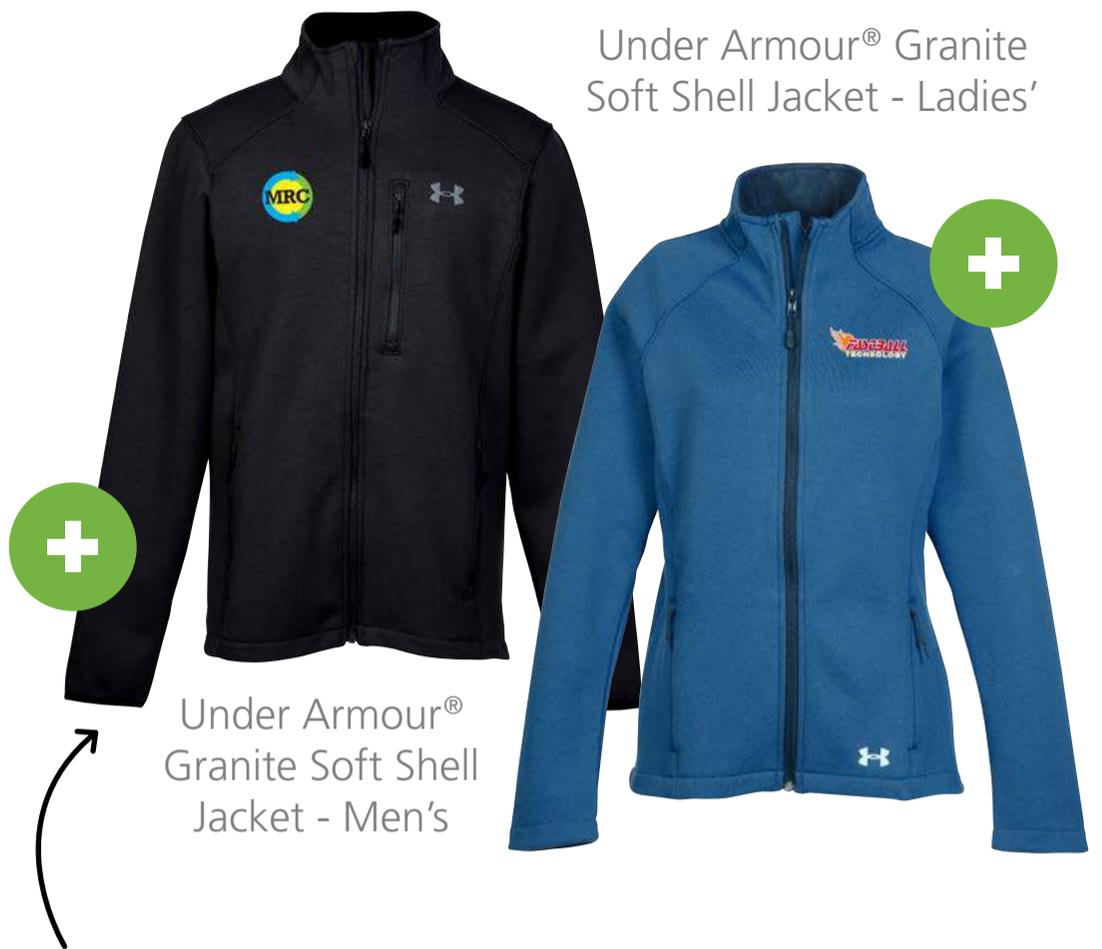
Keep drinks and food chilled for a road trip or tailgate party.



Business gifts with style

Outfit customers or team members with stylish apparel. These clothing items are versatile for both indoor and outdoor use during the cooler months.

Say thanks in style with the [Under Armour Granite Soft Shell Jacket](#). This sleek jacket features Under Armour's water-repellent technology to help keep them warm and dry.



Under Armour® Granite Soft Shell Jacket - Men's

Under Armour® Granite Soft Shell Jacket - Ladies'

Your employees will love these custom Under Armour jackets!



Crossland® Colorblock Fleece Jacket - Ladies'

Crossland® Colorblock Fleece Jacket - Men's

A soft, cozy fleece is perfect for cooler weather. The [Crossland Colorblock Fleece Jacket](#) comes in both men's and ladies' styles and is available in a variety of colors. This fleece will quickly become everyone's go-to staple for layering.

Find a place for everything in the interior pockets and zippered front pockets.

Gifts that keep on giving

These business gifts are sure to make a big bang for the holidays. Say thanks and make an unforgettable impression with high-quality and useful gifts every customer will love. 4



LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Marketing milestones

By Charish Badzinski

A case study, and how to make it work for you





When it comes to celebrating existing customers and generating new leads, there may be no more powerful time than when your organization is commemorating a milestone. In fact, companies that capitalize on marketing their milestones are often able to build upon their organization's existing success.

Call it the power of momentum.

Cedar Siding, Inc., in Rochelle, Illinois, has found a way to translate their 30th anniversary celebration into sales success. But—and this is key—their efforts have been successful because they've developed a creative way to leverage their milestone, one which engages their customers, makes them happy and keeps them coming back for more. So, how can you capitalize on a company milestone, and turn that into even greater success for your organization? Let's take a closer look at how Cedar Siding, Inc., put their milestone to work for them.

Cedar Siding, Inc.: Celebrating 30 years in business, strategically

When it was founded in 1987, Cedar Siding, Inc., committed itself to a philosophy of treating people like they want to be treated.

Now, 30 years later, that philosophy continues to serve them well. Today, the company serves customers in six states: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa. As a wholesale distributor of siding and decking, the company prides itself on taking care of customers and distributing high-quality, factory-finished products that last.

Approaching their company milestone of 30 years in business, they wanted to do something special for their loyal customers, something that would not only show the company's appreciation for their business, but also encourage continued loyalty.

The importance of hitting such a milestone should not be taken lightly.

Just **one-third** of businesses make it past 10 years in operation.



Source: The Motley Fool

When hitting a major organizational milestone, you may think you've already laid the groundwork for business success and be tempted to simply celebrate. But past success is really only a marginal indicator of future profitability. A milestone offers a great opportunity to ensure you hit your next big milestone as well. So here's a great landmark celebration idea: Why not leverage your festivities to jump start your organization's future?

"We were challenged by our general manager back in November/December, who said, 'We're going to celebrate 30 years. Start throwing things against the wall and see what sticks,'" explained Joe King, inside sales manager and marketing coordinator for Cedar Siding, Inc.

Tying milestone incentives to sales strategy

What stuck was an incentive tied to sales. Working with their marketing team, organizers developed a special logo to celebrate 30 years in business. Then the company ordered [Harriton Quarter-Zip Fleece Pullovers](#),

embroidered with the new logo, (as well as other promotional products) to offer as an incentive for clients who ordered 3,000 square feet of siding products (known as "30 squares") with a 30-year warranty finish.

Word of mouth for the promotion has been robust. "We sent out a mass email to all the people on our email list, and printed out fliers, so our sales staff put these on the desks of everyone they sell to," King says.

Show them how your company goes beyond a one-size-fits-all approach!



Harriton 1/4-Zip Fleece Pullover

And here's the kicker. The sales incentive isn't a one-and-done deal. Wholesale buyers who need only a small amount of the product at a time can accrue the total over all of 2017. It's a sales strategy and incentive that will keep customers returning throughout the coming months to earn their gift.

The response to the anniversary incentive and the fleece pullovers has been overwhelmingly positive.

“They all love them, and they say they fit right and they say they’re ready to sell more stuff to get another one.” In addition, Cedar Siding, Inc., is generating enthusiasm for the milestone by handing out custom travel mugs at the company picnic, dropping off custom pens with notebooks and literature at lumber yards, and giving customers and builders on jobsites 30-year anniversary logo caps.

Results worth celebrating, supported by promotional products

The results speak for themselves. King says 30-year warranty siding sales are up by a double digit percentage over last year. Overall sales are up, too, also by double digit percentages. To date, the company has sent out about three dozen of the custom fleece jackets. And redemption forms for the incentive keep coming in.

In the long run, customers who wear the fleece will be reminded of the company’s products and excellent customer service, while also spreading the word by showing off that anniversary logo.

Putting your milestone to work for your organization

No matter what industry you are in, or the size of your company footprint, there’s much to learn from the success of Cedar Siding’s sales strategy. Give customers an incentive they love. Remind them with thoughtful promotional products. Then, tie your customer ‘thank you’ to a sales strategy that matches your milestone. Remember, custom business anniversary gifts that are thoughtful, unique and incentivized can help your customers remember all you do for them and keep them coming back for your next milestone celebration and beyond. 4

“We have our salespeople out there nudging their customers to fill out their forms and get them back to us so they don’t miss out on their free fleece,” King says.

Customers will flip for this custom travel mug!

Custom styling gets your message noticed!



Wolverine Pen



Accent Cap



Atlas Travel Mug - 16.9 oz

TREND

Community involvement

By Charish Badzinski

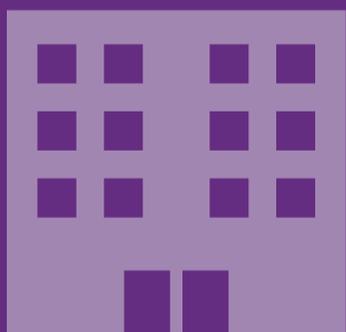
Good for your company, your
community and your workforce





As a leader, you know how important community involvement is for building relationships, raising awareness of your brand and generating leads. And, it turns out it's good business in general. Research shows community involvement—like donations, volunteerism and event sponsorships—not only gets your name out into the community, it helps forge lasting relationships with customers, future business partners and more. Perhaps the most important benefit: Community involvement can be a boon for your recruitment and retention efforts.

In fact, the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship study found that among companies that measured the impact of their community involvement, 90 percent reported a positive correlation between employee engagement and community involvement. In addition, a [PriceWaterhouseCoopers report](#) showed that 86 percent of generation-Y job applicants would leave their organization if its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program started to falter. Other reports show community involvement is just as important to [generation Z](#). [Many studies](#) have shown employee morale and retention increase with a company's community engagement.

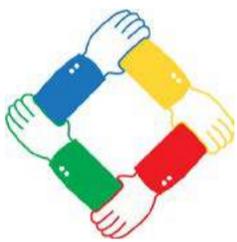


90% of companies
reported a positive correlation between employee
engagement and community involvement.

Source: Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship

Community involvement at work

The bottom line: Community involvement gives employees something to believe in. Your staff and potential applicants want to be a part of a mission that extends to beyond the organization itself. So while your organization embraces community involvement to make a difference for your business and your community, it's also making a difference in the lives of your employees.



Consider [PACE Coalition](#), a publicly funded, non-profit community health organization based in Elko, Nevada. The

organization's mission is to create a healthy community through substance abuse prevention, health and wellness programming, nutrition education and parenting support. Building relationships enables them to reach their key audiences with their resources. As a mission-driven organization, they already present something for potential applicants to believe in. But their community involvement takes it to the next level.

PACE Coalition engages community members by having a presence at community events, such as health fairs, veterans' organizations and social organizations (like Kiwanis), and by sponsoring events like the recent Clean Up, Green Up event in their region on Earth Day. They further involve the community by hosting events themselves, like a recent child safety seat giveaway.



Planning your community involvement:

Whether you are just beginning to think about community involvement or you've had a focus on community involvement for years, there are multiple ways your organization's commitment can take shape:

- ❖ A corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy
- ❖ A formal employee volunteerism program
- ❖ A generous charitable giving initiative
- ❖ Incentives, such as promotional products, for employees who seek out service and networking opportunities
- ❖ A company culture that encourages community involvement of any type
- ❖ A cache of event giveaways to showcase your brand, such as door prizes, swag bags, volunteer logo gear, and silent auction items
- ❖ Community event planning and hosting

Chances are, your organization embraces one or more of these options in some way. But the key to making this a part of your company culture is to ensure your presence in the community is memorable.

“It creates that sense of a community within a community,” said Mary Curtin, Senior VP Administration, 4imprint.

The result is not only that potential applicants see company employees serving in the community, but current employees bond over a common sense of purpose, which Curtin says helps with retention.

Getting started

If you’re ready to start a community involvement program in your organization or enhance the one you already have, here are a few ideas to help extend the goodwill.

Make your brand visible during community involvement with custom clothing and more.

Give custom T-shirts or logo-embroidered polo shirts to volunteers from your organization and you’ll have any number of mobile billboards raising awareness of your involvement. Better yet, your employee volunteers will feel proud to be a part of the organization and rewarded for their efforts.



Make your brand crave-worthy at community events with event giveaways.

Once you’ve decided to support an event, offer up silent auction items and door prizes that showcase your brand and are useful to the winner, so your brand will be in front of them again and again.

PACE Coalition does just that. As an organization based in the desert, Laura Oslund, executive director for PACE Coalition, says they’ve found [lip balm](#) and [water bottles](#) to be reflective of their mission and well-received by the public.



Refresh® Cyclone Water Bottle



Value Lip Balm

“It’s very important to have quality giveaways, and for me it has to interest me before I put that on my table,” explains Oslund.

“People come to your table first and foremost to see what you’re giving away.”
-Laura Oslund



Make your brand memorable with promotional products.

Create a custom event giveaway for all participants or perhaps logo items that showcase your brand for a swag bag. If you're sponsoring an athletic event, consider custom sport bottles or vacuum drinkware, logo workout towels or a custom drawstring sport backpack, which they'll wear for everyone to see.

PACE Coalition says custom notebooks are an extremely useful giveaway during training programs they hold for law enforcement and emergency responders.

"That's something that they'll make good use out of," Oslund explains, "not just something that you put on the side of a desk or in a drawer and never look at again."



Give target audiences a reason to seek out your organization.

Think valuable coupons, promos for online deals, free services and sign ups that allow you to capture contact information. If your big hope is to recruit new employees, be sure to make meaningful connections with those who show interest. Then be sure to follow up to discuss opportunities that fit their skill set.

Community involvement is the gift that keeps giving

There are many positive aspects of community involvement for an organization: building a stronger community, raising awareness of your brand and making a difference in the lives of others. But equally as important is that your commitment to community comes back to you, as goodness so often does, through your organization's ability to hire top talent, retaining the talented workforce you've already amassed. [4](#)

Outfit your team to be visible at community events!

From collared to casual, pick a promotional shirt that fits your team's personality.



Titan Performance Sport Shirt



Hanes® Tagless® LS T-Shirt - Screen

Adult Performance T-Shirt



Honoring fallen heroes

Branded bracelets give peace to those left behind



When service members reach their final resting place, [Wreaths Across America](#) (WAA) is committed to making sure they, and their families, are never forgotten. Since 1992, the mission of WAA, based in Columbia Falls, Maine, is remembering the fallen, honoring those who serve and their families, and teaching children the value of freedom. In 2016, as a part of that mission, more than 1.2 million wreaths were placed by over 800,000 volunteers on veteran graves at 1,228 locations around the nation.

To celebrate WAA's 25th anniversary, one location in College Station, Texas, sought out a tangible way to show families they care. They recently ordered [custom silicone bracelets](#) through 4imprint's [one by one](#)® grant program, which are given to families of the fallen. "It is so touching when the families realize kind strangers, people they don't know, are remembering their loved one and them," explains Ellen Fuller, WAA volunteer co-chair. 📌

