

SPRING 2017

amplify

4imprint®

Promotional products. Remarkable results.

G-Vegas Striders Claim #SwaggingRights



Building Brand Loyalty Amid Mergers and Acquisitions **22**

Brainstorming Ideas that Work **27**

Elevator pitch. Compelling story. Opening line.

As conversation starters go, it's easy to find tips on what to say. It can be much more challenging to figure out how to create the magic moment where the conversation actually takes place.



Kevin,
with 4imprint
26 years

That's where promotional products come in.

Creating Magic Moments

Promotional products help create those moments where prospects, customers and employees will pause for a moment to hear what you have to say. Three of the stories in this issue bring this theme to life:

- In our cover story, promotional products are helping reward volunteers in an organization dedicated to building a healthier community through fitness events.
- In our Trend story, two organizations describe how they used promotional products to introduce new brands after mergers.
- In Lasting Impressions, the clever use of a fun promotional pen is helping a teen suicide prevention program start some important conversations.

Let the Conversations and Connections Begin

As each of these stories demonstrates, promotional products are unique in the advertising landscape. They help create magic moments, where the perfect elevator pitch, story or opening line finds an audience. And that's where the connections begin. Enjoy!

Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO, 4imprint

Personalized click-action pen provides a fun way to get your logo in their hands.



Wild Smilez Pen



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

EDITORIAL BOARD 4

CONTRIBUTORS 6

OVERHEARD 7

Desk Items

COVER STORY 8

G-Vegas Striders Claim #SwaggingRights

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT 12

On Your Mark, Get Set, Giveaways!

LASTING IMPRESSIONS 17

Rewriting the Story

TREND 22

Mergers and Aquisitions

DID YOU KNOW? 27

A New Take on Brainstorming

TOP PRODUCT PICK 31

Top Pick for Tech Connections

REMARKABLE MOMENT 32

Student-Run Store Teaches Life Lessons



Swag helps the G-Vegas Striders motivate their community to live a healthier lifestyle. And thanks to your votes, they've earned #SwaggingRights. See how this group is leading the pack when it comes to branding.

Amplify Your Experience

When you download the Amplify app to your mobile phone or tablet, you'll get access to additional interactive content and tips. Best of all, you'll be updated when each new issue of Amplify is available.



Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc. Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google Inc.

How can you best use promotional products for brainstorming?

Editorial board members share their insights.



The best part about brainstorming is the fun you can have through the process. At the Barbershop Harmony Society, we turn our conference

room into a brainstorming war room, complete with a rainbow of Post-it® notes and baskets of fidget tools. It's the fidget tools we find essential to keeping levity among peers and communication flowing. Items like the [Brain Stress Reliever](#) and [Smart Putty](#) are staples in our meetings. These are serious essentials. We even have [Stress Relieving Adult Coloring Books \(Patterns\)](#) and of course, Play-Doh®. Seeing our company brand on these products enforces the encouragement of the management team to use these items to help staff relax and be free with their thoughts and ideas.

Michele Lee Niec

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO OFFICE, VOLUNTEER & INTERNSHIP MANAGER
Barbershop Harmony Society



I would have a branded bright-colored T-shirt for people to wear when in a brainstorming “stage”. That way, people around the office wouldn’t bother you, letting the creative ideas flow. The specific “brainstorming shirt” would help put you in the right mindset.

Joetta Talford

REALTOR
Talford Realty Group-Keller Williams Realty

How can you best use promotional products for brainstorming?

Editorial board members share their insights.



There are several ways promotional products can be utilized in brainstorming activities. Games and puzzles can be used to encourage teamwork and feedback. Random prizes imprinted with your company logo can be used to reward individuals for participation and feedback. Or, if the brainstorming session is for a new product release, promotional items could be branded that highlight key features of your new product. For instance, if the product is a unique cooler then tie that into a promotional item that reminds them of that feature such as a [USB fan](#) for a smartphone or computer or a logo-branded [Glacier Stainless Vacuum Travel Tumbler](#).



Glacier Stainless Vacuum Travel Tumbler

Susie Brockman

MARKETING LEAD
Ametek

This printed tumbler is perfect for hot or cold drinks!



Promotional products are incredibly versatile! They can be utilized during brainstorming activities to help contributors think outside the box. One activity I have found very successful is taking an odd or unique promotional product and having the group describe it in one or two words. At the end of the process, the group has an unexpected set of keywords and descriptors that can help them think outside the box for the task at hand. It's a great way to get creative juices flowing!

Molly Jaster

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT
Marian University



Meet this month's featured contributors.



Suzanne Worwood
VP Merchandising
4imprint

On your mark, get set, giveaways! Races are the perfect opportunity to make a lasting impression with promotional products. Suzanne gives a [Product Highlight](#) on the items that will make a promo finish come race day. Suzanne, the VP of merchandising, has been with 4imprint since 2000.



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 all the great desk items that earned people #SwaggingRights. She's been with 4imprint 10 years.



Cheryl Sina
one by one® Coordinator
4imprint

For this issue, Cheryl shares a [Remarkable Moment](#) inspired by the students and staff at Susquehannock High School in Glen Rock, Penn. Cheryl has been with 4imprint 18 years and coordinates 4imprint's *one by one*® program.



You!

Customers shared images on social media of desk items that gave them #SwaggingRights. Their shout-outs were *Overheard* and featured here in amplify.



Desk items that earn you #SwaggingRights



NEPA BlogCon @NEPABlogCon

Didn't ya love it?? #swaggingrights @4imprint #NEPABlogCon



4



Robyn

Great quality products and came in a timely manner. Great to work with. These are going to be great at our upcoming recruitment fairs.



Matt Wheeler @MattWheeler

@4imprint Stylus and Light and Pen OH MY!
#coolest item #121619-L #swaggingrights



Seda Taiwan

Take a rest and have a cup of coffee ☺
#imprint #4imprint
#sedamug #SEDA #sedacollege



4



Oliver

Such a simple economical giveaway for tradeshow or a salesperson visit. The beauty of it is that once the coaster lands on a desk, it tends to stay there, and is always a constant reminder of your business.



Visit our Pinterest page for more desk accessories people are raving about.



COVER STORY



G-Vegas Striders Claim #SwaggingRights

By Charish Badzinski

G-Vegas Striders sprint toward community health



Editor's note: In our last issue, we asked readers to tell us which group earned #SwaggingRights for its creative and effective use of promotional products. Meet the G-Vegas Striders, our 2017 #SwaggingRights contest winners.

Amplify Your Experience

When you download the Amplify app to your mobile phone or tablet, you'll get access to additional interactive content and tips. Best of all, you'll be updated when each new issue of Amplify is available.



Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc. Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google Inc.



As a community organization that gets people of all fitness levels moving on their way to a healthy lifestyle, the **G-Vegas Striders** have discovered promotional products are a valuable tool for building brand recognition, fostering brand loyalty and keeping their community motivated about healthier lifestyles.

Motivating Others with Goodwill

The G-Vegas Striders started in 2012 as a running club, but swiftly ballooned into something much bigger, explains Founder Jim Hunt.

“From there it just kind of grew into a community-based, mission-driven organization where we’re doing events and we’re supporting other community agencies and their mission to provide health and wellness initiatives in the community.”

One example: the Greater Gardner Turkey Trot. The race has worked the Gardner, Mass. community into a sweat every Thanksgiving morning for 37 years, but the G-Vegas Striders only recently took over planning the event. While others are planning second helpings on Thanksgiving, the Greater Gardner Turkey Trot is encouraging people to take strides toward fitness and give back. The race is a fundraiser for programs at two high schools and the community food pantry. Funds raised are earmarked for high school track and cross-country teams as well as the purchase of fresh produce for the local food pantry.

“The purpose of creating the group was to create a community where runners and walkers in the area could meet and work out together and help motivate each other.” - Jim Hunt

*We want to see your swag!
Post a photo of your 4 imprint promotional items on Twitter® or Instagram® and include #SwaggingRights*

Promotional Products Inspire Participation

Swag plays a huge role in building enthusiasm for the event, according to Hunt. “We’re very excited about it. Our goody bag usually values at around \$75 to \$100 when it’s all said and done, with all the coupons and gift cards we get from other local business, on top of all the swag stuff that goes into it. So, it’s a great, great gift that they get.” The bag sports a huge treasure-trove of goodies, including branded promotional products from G-Vegas Striders and other community organizations.

Runners this year took home the [Value White Mug](#), perfect for sipping from on a cool Thanksgiving morning. They also received a custom [Stadium Cup](#), a [Value Lip Balm](#), and a promotional pen, among many other promotional products and giveaways..

In fact, the swag bags combined with a \$15 race entry fee motivates many people to lace up their sneakers for a good cause. Participants’ entry fees cover the event budget and they are also invited to make additional donations for charity.



Value White Mug - 11 oz.

G-Vegas Striders filled swag bags with these promotional products!



Value Lip Balm



Stadium Cup - 16 oz.

Last year, the G-Vegas Striders donated



\$5,000



to the community causes they support.

Branded Apparel Makes Organizers Easy to Spot

On race day, goody bags aren't the only place participants will spot the G-Vegas Striders' promotional products. At the race, the G-Vegas Striders' leadership team is easy to locate in the [Bio-Washed Cap](#), a [Knit Beanie with Stripe](#) and branded jackets. The branded apparel makes it easy for participants to spot organizers. And, it's one more way the group can easily draw attention to its community work.

Put solid advertising on top — of their heads, that is.



Bio-Washed Cap - Solid - Embroidered

Knit Beanie with Stripe

Leading the Way in Creative Branding, Fundraising

The Greater Gardner Turkey Trot is just the beginning, leading the pack of events G-Vegas Striders plans, including several road races, walks and even a soup-making contest.

Creative use of promotional products plays a key role in keeping people engaged in the group's work. Hunt says that's the reason they put a lot of thought into the promotional products they choose. "We take a unique approach when it comes to branding and marketing with our business. I actually think I learned about it from watching a TED Talk® one time and that was to know your customer base," he explains.

“So when we're thinking about swag, or just an event to put on, we don't necessarily choose what's going to be most beneficial to the club, we look at what will be most beneficial to the people we're serving.”
- Jim Hunt

“That's how we pick all of our swag items, and that's why we're so successful.”

Seeing the Reward

As a group of volunteers leading a major community-wellness initiative, Hunt says G-Vegas Striders is a labor of love. “We're just there to try to help people live happier, healthier and more active lives. That's where we get our enjoyment and our reward from, when we see people achieving their goals.” [4](#)



PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

On Your Mark, Get Set, Giveaways!

By Suzanne Worwood

Race-day items for a promo finish



Few places are more exciting than a finish line on race day. Cheering crowds greet competitors sprinting against the clock and each other. Promotional products can help organizers make an event successful. They likewise allow walkers, runners and fans to relive the thrill of the finish time and again. For a winning event, choose giveaways tailored to your race.

Giveaways for Runners

High-performance athletes need high-performance clothing. Check out these fashionable fitness clothes that will help put anyone in race-day form.

Fun Run Fashion

When is a race not a race? When it's a run just for fun! Give the gang affordable logo'd Hanes® Tagless® T-Shirts for a joyful jog through the park without an itchy tag scratching at their back. With 44 colors and a wide range of sizes available, they're just the thing for athletes of all ability levels.

Uniform your team with matching screen-printed tees.



Hanes® Tagless® T-shirt



Hair Color Chalk

A great way to have fun and show your team spirit!

Let your true team colors show! Just use the [Hair Color Chalk](#) with easy-grip applicator to instantly add a temporary tint to their hair. With eight colors to choose from, there's one bound to fit their spirit's style.

Give runners and walkers their race packets in the **Drawstring Sportpack**. It's the perfect take-home for race day. And, they'll be reminded of their experience every time they reach for it afterward.

Runners will put these handy bags to good use.



Drawstring Sportpack - 18" x 14"

Contender Athletic LS T-Shirt - Men's



Styles for Contenders

The moisture-wicking **Contender Athletic Long-Sleeve T-shirt** is the perfect gift for finishers. Available in men's, ladies' and youth styles, this performance tee is warm, incredibly lightweight and looks great! Runners will reach for it again and again.



Contender Athletic LS T-Shirt - Youth



Contender Athletic LS V-Neck T-Shirt - Ladies'

Lightweight fabric and a roomy athletic cut makes it the perfect long-sleeved tee for a run on a cool day.



For the ultimate in warmup gear, a [Radar Half-Zip Performance Pullover](#) is an ideal addition to race stores. It wicks away moisture to help keep runners cool, has an antimicrobial finish to ward off gym germs and offers UV protection. Reflective accents provide extra visibility when running at dawn, dusk or after dark.



Radar Half-Zip Performance Pullover

Take a deep breath—this cap will do all the promoting!



Nike® Performance Dri-Fit Swoosh® Breathable Cap

Looking for race-day giveaways beyond the typical T-shirts and hoodies? Participants will appreciate the sun-blocking [Nike® Performance Dri-Fit Swoosh® Breathable Cap](#) on race day and long after they've crossed the finish line.

Cheer Gear

There's team spirit, and then there's wild, boisterous, jump up and down and scream at the top of your lungs while cheering along the race route. These promotional items ensure runners aren't the only ones who'll remember the event.

Help fans easily find and follow the race route with [Vinyl Lawn Balloons](#). These eye-catching inflatable spectacles are made like beach balls, not balloons, so they can be used over and over. Just stake them into the ground and voilà—instant excitement!



Cheer banner can double as a fan to cool down crew on the sidelines.

Spectators will bring smiles to runners' faces with customized handheld [Cheer Banners](#). Race organizers or sponsors can provide these at registration or a pre-race expo. They're small enough to handle, large enough to be seen, and feature full-color printing on both sides, adding some fun along the race course.



No race is complete without the unmistakable clanging of cowbells as the runners pass mile-markers and rally toward the finish. The [Ring-a-Ling Cowbell](#) will be popular with runners and fans alike.

And, they're off!

Choose promotional products that are participant and fan favorites and word will spread about your event throughout the year. Good luck! [4](#)





Rewriting the Story

By Charish Badzinski

Peppy Penerson helps bring teen talk and support



About 15 years ago, Clark County, Washington experienced a devastating rash of teen suicides. This left the community shocked, saddened and wondering how to change the trend.

Today community leaders are rewriting the story by making it easier than ever for teens to find hope—with support from their peers and help from a promotional pen mascot known as Peppy Penerson.

Rewriting the Future for Teens in Crisis

When faced with the crisis of teen suicide, county government officials, faith communities, businesses, local elected officials and youth pulled together and forged a solution. Their goal: Create a teen-to-teen support line, allowing teens in crisis to have frank and anonymous conversations with trained, supportive peers. Thirteen years later, the Teen Talk phone line is still going strong. Today, Teen Talk's email and online chat options give students even greater access to help. The target audience for the Teen Talk line is primarily students ages 15 to 19 in Clark County.

More than
30,000
youth fall into this demographic.



Follow Peppy



Answering the Call

Such a broad demographic makes serving this group a sizable task for the Teen Talk's 18 dedicated volunteers, who range from 15 to 20 years old. Each volunteer trains for 32 hours before hitting the support lines. All told, they take about 100 calls per month from students in crisis, providing essential support and referral services. While Teen Talk line has limited hours (about four hours each weekday), a 24/7 community crisis line bridges the gap for students in need of immediate assistance.

Our volunteers are superheroes!



Leave them gleaming after handing out these custom pens!



Wild Smilez Pen

The Power of a Promotional Pen

Recently, Teen Talk added a new member to their team. Mascot Peppy Penerson is a smiling, feather-haired pen (also known as the [Wild Smilez Pen](#)). It may seem a curious choice as a promotional product for such serious subject matter. In truth, having a fun, gender-neutral mascot like Peppy Penerson has created online engagement with students through social media, spreading the word about the support line and making the service approachable. The concept of Peppy, Peppy's name and persona, and every picture and video of Peppy are all the result of the creative and dedicated work of current and past teen volunteers.



Approachability Matters

Teen Talk Program Coordinator Kris Henriksen says Peppy’s approachability has opened the door to a significant number of new conversations each month. It’s no wonder, considering Peppy has loyal followings on Instagram®, Twitter®, and Facebook®. Fans post photos and video of Peppy doing everything from dressing in costume for Halloween to riding unicorns and snowboarding. The bottom line to Peppy’s popularity is, of course, that the mascot opens the lines of communication and rewrites the future for students who are struggling.

“For us to have another 17 conversations a month through Peppy’s influence is significant, and Peppy is getting more popular quickly for a community our size.”
-Kris Hendrikson

Peer-to-Peer Support

Peppy’s popularity aside, the peer-to-peer support aspect of the crisis line is essential, Henriksen says, particularly when tackling issues like family stress, school pressure, relationships, drugs and alcohol, or personal identity.

“Even if someone can’t fix it, just having someone to listen can be hugely helpful,” she explains. “People really like that they can chat about music or things that happen at school. I think they are the experts. I marvel at their ability to give unbelievable support and compassion, and they take it extremely seriously when they are here.”

Volunteers routinely provide callers with positive peer support and problem-solving as well as referrals. All calls are confidential. In cases where subjects legally mandate reporting to officials, volunteers are skilled at ensuring those students get the help they need.

Peppy Promotions Outside the Classroom

Peppy Penerson is also building awareness outside of the school walls. The mascot is a popular promotional product at resource fairs and events. The giveaway draws in tentative teens who might otherwise be too timid to approach a teen resource center booth. Peppy has also been used during what's known as Challenge Day.

“We facilitate an all-day event where we get 100 students and 25 adults in a room so they can get real with each other about the truth of their lives and who they are. It's powerful and emotional and amazing,” explains Henriksen.

During the course of the day, participants are asked to write a card to someone who means a great deal to them. “I love when they get the pens, and we have 125 people crying and writing cards to people they



care about. And they get to keep the pen. So I see them sticking out of everybody's pockets. It's pretty fantastic,” she says.

More than a Mascot

A memorable mascot and promotional pen is one thing—a mascot that furthers a mission is another.

“Our line fundamentally believes in kindness without judgment. That's what we wake up to do every day when we are here,” says Henriksen. “So I am really glad that a pen could allow such an unexpected, creative way to share kindness and a smile with people.” 4

Looking for a pen with big personality for your organization? Check these out!



Goofy Guyz Handz Pen

Original Bend-A-Pen

Thank You Pen



TREND

A man and a woman are shaking hands in a modern office setting. The man is on the right, wearing a dark blue blazer over a grey t-shirt, and the woman is on the left, wearing a green top and a blue skirt. They are both smiling. In the background, other people are walking, and the office has large windows with blue light coming through.

Mergers and Acquisitions

By Charish Badzinski

Building brand loyalty with promotional products amid mergers and acquisitions.





The branding stakes were high after three Wisconsin credit unions merged in 2014 and launched a new brand and name in early 2015: Verve, a Credit Union. Marketing experts leaned on promotional products to help generate excitement and enthusiasm for this evolution. “Ultimately there were certain characteristics each credit union had that we wanted to hold on to. We really wanted a name and brand that represented our commitment to serving the community and our members,” explained Karrie Drobnick, chief marketing and strategy officer for Verve.

The organization chose Verve, a Credit Union as the new name. Verve means energy and enthusiasm and stands for everything the organization is: enthusiastic, energetic, strong and driven. These characteristics are put to work every day on behalf of those who bank with them. “We looked at it as the optimal time to make the change,” Drobnick said.



Research shows October 2016 was the **busiest month in history** for domestic mergers and acquisitions.

A Growing Trend

Research shows October 2016 was the busiest month in history for domestic mergers and acquisitions. That’s according to “[M&A trends report 2016, year-end edition](#)” on [www.deloitte.com](#). Analysts say 2017 could also be a strong year for making deals. What the data doesn’t show is that rebranding plays an enormous role in the process. Whether onboarding staff from an acquired entity or rebranding the new organization, promotional products can play a key role in building enthusiasm and excitement for your organization’s evolution.

Rebranding, 25 Years Later

For Eden & Valders Stone Company, rebranding is a recent undertaking, even though Eden Stone Company acquired Valders Stone & Marble, Inc. 25 years ago. After living with a dual brand for more than two decades, the company discovered it was confusing for sales reps, who wondered which custom logo shirt they should wear, and customers, who didn’t realize the companies were one and the same. “It was always an issue for ordering giveaways,” explained Barry Gesell, owner/president of Eden & Valders Stone Company. The solution was to create a newly combined logo and brand.

Establishing Common Ground under a Single Brand

The logo and brand were the first step toward getting staff to think as one, a move vital to the brand's success. "From the ownership view, we are one," says Gesell. "And when anybody says, 'Those guys over there...' I just point to the logo and say, 'It's us now. Rather than we and you. It's all us.'"

Finding common ground was equally as important at Verve.

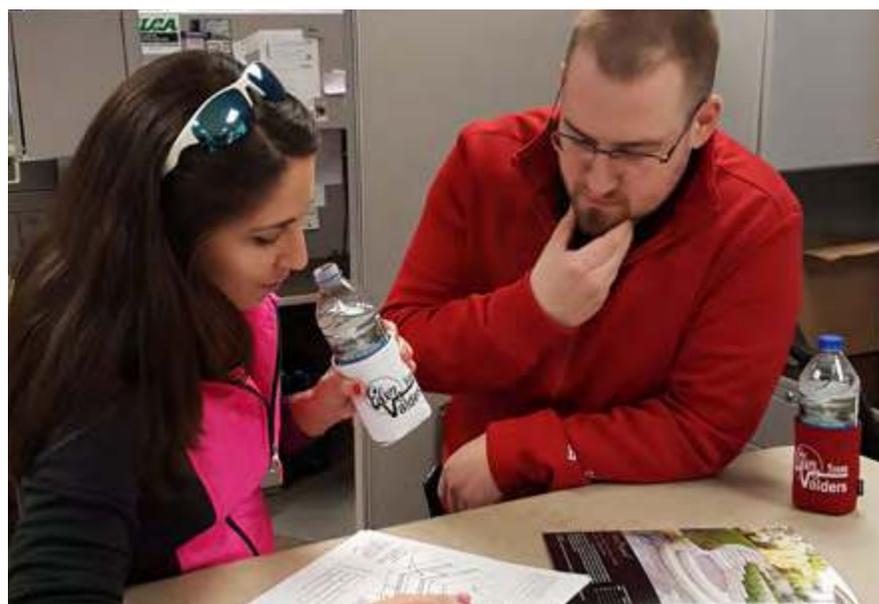
"We knew the first thing we needed to do was to get our team excited and on board."
-Karrie Drobnick

"Not only are they members as well but they interact with members on a daily basis," Drobnick said.

The solution: Verve hosted a launch party and a fashion show featuring new branded apparel. With a diverse workforce, it was important to find a variety of custom apparel to suit varying tastes. Team members received vouchers to select the styles that worked for them and were coached on incorporating the new color palette into their wardrobe.

Launching a New Brand

What do you do with leftover promotional products? Eden & Valders Stone Company used them to their advantage.



They placed the old Eden logos on one side of the table, the Valders logos on the other, and the new, combined-logo promotional products in the middle. That allowed the team and customers to see the merging of the two organizations and become familiar with the new brand. Staff wore new logo shirts on the trade show floor, opening the door for a conversation with attendees. Among the promotional products sporting the new logo: the [Collapsible KOOZIE®](#) and the [Carpenter Pencil](#).



Collapsible KOOZIE®

Carpenter Pencil



The Verve brand was launched in its community with a flurry of events, including a brand ambassador evening where attendees received a branded [Double Old-Fashioned Glass](#) or [Stemless White Wine Glass](#) and a luncheon where attendees got a [Sweet Spot Lunch Cooler](#) emblazoned with the new logo. Now with about 60,000 members and 15 branch locations throughout Wisconsin, Verve continues to

build brand loyalty in its communities through the use of promotional products.

But the key, says Drobnick, is the strategy used to intentionally embody the brand. They don't just give away logo T-shirts, they shoot them into the crowd with a T-shirt cannon. "Verve means energy," says Drobnick. "We're always looking for ways to amp up our approach."



Stemless White Wine Glass



Sweet Spot Lunch Cooler



Double Old-Fashioned Glass

Branding Tips for a Merger or Acquisition

If your organization is considering rebranding after a merger or acquisition, keep these tips in mind:



Communication (and pacing) are key.

Rebranding can be a long process with unanticipated challenges. “Depending on the size of your company, if you think it’s a big undertaking, it’s probably bigger,” says Gesell. From rebranding business collateral to websites, vehicles, email signatures, promotional products and more, experts advise breaking the project into smaller sections to make it more manageable.



Build excitement internally first.

“You can never underestimate the team member buy-in aspect,” says Drobnick. “Things are going to change, and even if it’s for the better, it’s still change. The more we can help our team members be enthusiastic, the easier it is to smooth that conversation with our membership.”



Consider consulting with your promotional products supplier.

Gesell says there were challenges in stitching the logo they initially created. “We wanted to marry the two companies together. That was our end goal.” After talking with vendors and a slight redesign, it was all systems go.



Be ready to really embrace your new brand as a strategic move.

“Don’t make a minor change,” suggests Drobnick. “If your new brand doesn’t align with your North Star, then I say don’t do it. You can just run campaigns and improve the brand you have today. Only do it when it makes a strategic difference for you.” ⁴

Promotional products perfect for promoting a newly merged brand:

Nike® Performance Dri-Fit Heather Polo



Outdoor Sail Sign - 11'



Closed-Back Fitted Table Cover - 8'

Showcase your new branded look in the community!



A new take on Brainstorming

Traditional Brainstorming



- 1 Alex Osborn, the “Father of Brainstorming,” was an Advertising Executive.



- 2 Alex Osborn introduced the concept of brainstorming to the world in New York City.



- 3 The term “brainstorming” was coined in the 1950s.

Source: Harvard Business Review – Why Group Brainstorming Is a Waste of Time

A method to the madness

While a traditional brainstorm was meant to be informal and unstructured, it had four main rules:



- 1 Generate lots of ideas.



- 2 Prioritize/rank ideas.



- 3 Build upon and refine ideas.



- 4 Refrain from criticism.

Source: Harvard Business Review – Why Group Brainstorming Is a Waste of Time

Why the traditional brainstorming method *is* madness



Quantity \neq Quality

Generating **LOTS** of ideas does not necessarily lead to a good idea.



Anchoring

Early ideas tend to greatly influence the rest of the brainstorm.



Social anxiety

Introverts and those with lower confidence may worry about how other team members will view their ideas.



Dominating personalities

In most traditional brainstorming sessions, a handful of people do **60-75%** of the talking.

There have been countless studies on brainstorming methods. Time and again, the outcome is the same ... traditional brainstorming doesn't work.

But why?



Social loafing

Some participants may **not put in 100%** if someone else (the dominating personality) will do it.



Production blocking

Only one idea can be shared at a time. Studies found the **number of ideas per person decreases** as group size increases.

Source: Fast Company – Brainstorming Doesn't Work; Try This Technique Instead

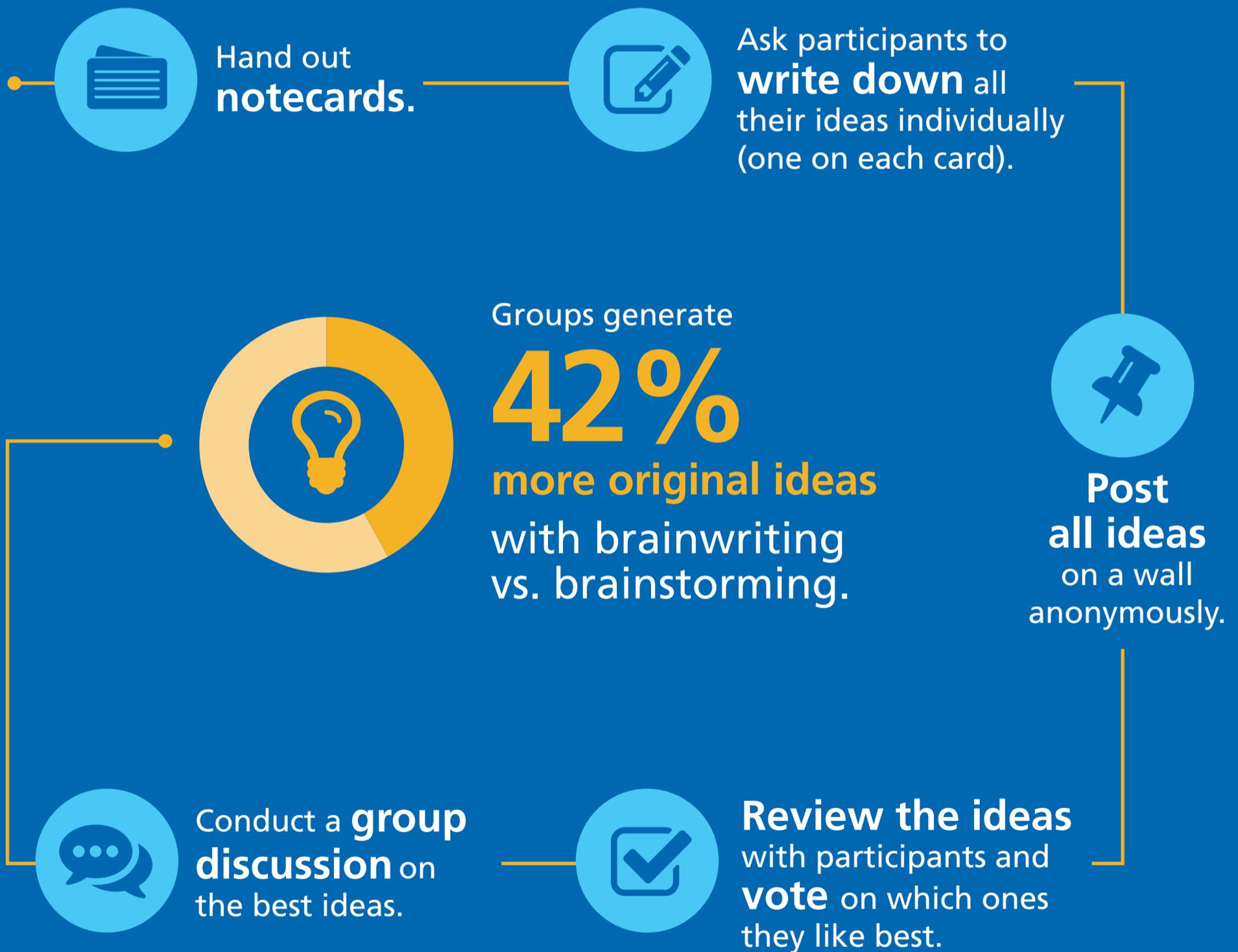
Harvard Business Review – Why Group Brainstorming Is a Waste of Time

Brainstorming 2.0

There's still hope. Brainstorming processes just needed a reboot from the early 1950's approach. Try these methods in your next team brainstorm.

Brainwriting

This approach takes into account many of the issues identified previously:



Source: Fast Company – Brainstorming Doesn't Work; Try This Technique Instead

Six Thinking Hats®

When having a group discussion about the ideas presented, consider giving people specific roles to play. The Six Thinking Hats method can help a group better analyze ideas produced.



The White Hat calls for **information known or needed.**



The Yellow Hat symbolizes **brightness and optimism.**



The Black Hat is **judgment** - the devil's advocate or why something may not work.



The Red Hat signifies **feelings, hunches and intuition.**



The Green Hat focuses on **creativity; the possibilities, alternatives and new ideas.**



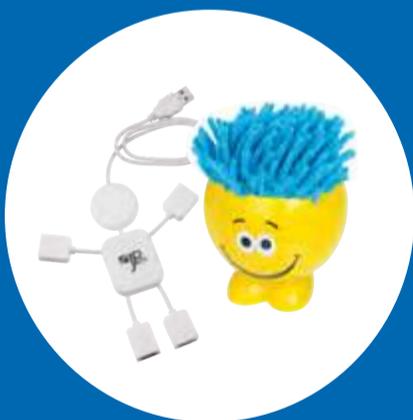
The Blue Hat is used to **manage the thinking process.**

Source: The de Bono Group – Six Thinking Hats

Forbes – Why Most Brainstorming Sessions are Useless

Keep it fun and engaging

Use promotional items as a way to keep things fun and entertaining.



Hand out small promo products as an **incentive for participating**—one “prize” for each idea/notecard.



Have branded hats or stress balls to give each person with a **“Six Thinking Hats”** role. It will be a colorful reminder of how they are contributing.



Supply notepads, sticky notes and writing utensils to **jot down key points or ideas.**



Top Pick for Tech Connections

When it comes to tech gear and staying connected, you've got plenty of options. But which products are most sought after? We paired two of our most popular products and pulled the sales numbers. Here's what we found...



On The Go Charging Kit

VS.



Accent 4 Port USB Hub

The Accent 4 Port USB Hub was ordered 53% of the time!



Student-Run Store Teaches Life Lessons

By Cheryl Sina

Students with intellectual disabilities are learning valuable life lessons through work in an unlikely classroom: a school store. Known as Susky Station, the store is located at Susquehannock High School in Glen Rock, Penn. With every ring of the cash register, students gain confidence and relate to their peers while learning market research, product development, customer service and more. The store sells both snacks and promotional product swag—including logo'd tote bags and apparel, some of which were ordered with help from a 4imprint *one by one*[®] grant. The store is outfitting students with school pride as well as a sense of personal accomplishment. And that never goes out of style. 4

