

7 Things You Really Need to Know About Promotional Products before You Invest a Single Penny

By **Mo Yusuff**

Tip 6

Tip 6. Planning

Probably the un-sexiest bit when it comes to investing in promotional products, but get the planning right and you'll save yourself so many headaches.

The trick is to plan early and avoid leaving everything to the last minute.

A big problem is whenever you're organising an event or an activity that requires promotional products, it's very easy to leave them until last and then you end up limiting yourself to what you can have.

Forewarn your promotional consultant that something's coming up in a couple of months' time and get him to start the ball rolling.

Make sure you order everything to arrive ideally two weeks before the big day so if anything does go wrong you have time to fix it.

You may know standard lead times already but just in case you don't, here's a quick summary:

- Stock items, that's products actually held in the UK take anything from 1 to 3 weeks to decorate and deliver but do make sure there's stock available when you actually place your order.
- For bespoke items, that's something made from scratch, you need to allow anything from 3 to 4 weeks for small air freighted items like lanyards, badges and keyrings and up to 8-12 weeks for sea freighted items such as clothing and bags.
- Most suppliers also offer a 3 to 5 day express service too for last minute stuff, but be careful. Sometimes when they say 3 days, for example, what they actually mean is they will despatch 3 days from approval of visual and it can take them a day or two to send you the visual.

Here's a quick checklist:

- Plan early ...decide when you want them and then work at least a week in hand if you can.

- Choose a supplier you can trust...don't buy on price alone but rather with someone who you know will look after you.
- When you place your order, send them your artwork and make sure they confirm acceptance of your order, receipt of your artwork and that they can meet your deadline – it's so easy to email everything over and then three days later discover they didn't receive it.
- Make sure your visual is received and approved quickly and if it's not received within 3 days chase them and get them to reconfirm your deadline can still be met.
- Call your supplier two days before the despatch date to make sure everything is going according to plan and just to give you peace of mind that your order will be on time.

We're almost there now. The next and final tip will explain my three golden rules. The three things that, if you follow, you'll hardly ever go wrong when you invest your hard earned cash on promotional products.

Coming next...

Tip 7. Mo's 3 golden rules