



# Shop 'Til You Drop

How to appeal to storefront and online retail clients with high-end giveaways, store packaging and employee uniforms

By Colleen McKenna

**M**ALLRATS HAS ALL the makings of a classic '90s college comedy. A giant suburban mall as the epicenter of youth culture? Check. Fickle breakups? Check. Best friends who go out on a limb for each other, often to absurd and comical ends? Check. Parents with bizarre jobs that interfere with their children's lives? Check. (Is there anything more embarrassing than being a contestant on a dating show run by your father?)

Do you know what else the movie has? Promotional products. Lots of them. Dating show paraphernalia, retail store bags and general mall signage. Go to any mall today and you will see many of the same items, plus a few more high-tech ones. Online retailers are getting in on the action too by hosting promotions to encourage shoppers to sign in online instead of driving to a store. This tactic varies from standard retail promotions, but both storefront and online retailers have the same promotional goals: finding and retaining customers.

Promo Marketing reached out to a distributor—Jeff Holt, vice president of marketing for Image Source—and a supplier—Mike Szymczak, co-owner, OrigAudio, Costa Mesa, Calif.—to find out how to approach both online and storefront retail clients and how to keep their business once you get it.

**Promo Marketing:** How do you attract a retail client?

**Jeff Holt:** Initially, we attracted retail clients through existing relationships and referrals. After establishing a track record for successful promotions with a few known retailers, it's possible to turn those successes into case studies that showcase expertise in their environment—thus attracting new clients.

**PM:** What is the difference in promotional needs and budget between small boutiques and national chain stores?

**JH:** The budget and frequency of promotion are clear differences between large retailers such as Zumiez or Nordstrom and smaller boutiques. Possibly the biggest difference, however, is the specific goal. Where smaller retailers typically look for promotions to generate immediate transactions, larger players are oftentimes

more focused on campaigns that are geared toward brand recognition.

**Mike Szymczak:** Small boutiques can have more of a personal touch on the items they select and in some cases can pay attention to the quality levels as well. This can also hinder them as they will generally require the minimums on any sort of product they select and cannot take advantage of volume discounts.

Whereas national chain stores need to be more budget-conscious and pick products for a general consumer, lacking that personal connection with their customer. For suppliers and distributors, however, they always would prefer to get that national chain account because of the massive volume potential.



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**CASE STUDY: A HIGH-END GIFT WITH PURCHASE LEADS TO HIGH REVENUE**

Mike Szymczak, co-owner, OrigAudio, Costa Mesa, Calif., listed a few promotions OrigAudio has done for retail clients: headphones for a national shoe store, customized electronics for small gift shops and speakers for a retail chain. He also offered a specific case study of a promotion OrigAudio worked on for a national brand.

"We were part of a GWP [gift-with-purchase] program utilizing our Fold N' Play speakers, and the account is able to word all of their advertising as Free iPod Speakers with any purchase of \$XX.XX and more. This gave them a very high perceived value giveaway and drove sales for the promotional weekend roughly 260 percent more than the weekend prior. The program was so successful that they did the exact same thing the following year."

**PM:** How do you address these differences?

**JH:** As with any client, it comes down to understanding the brand attributes of the retailer and the unique target audience of each. The more knowledge of the company's particular business you have, the better the chance that the promotions you tailor for the retailer will create a meaningful brand connection and, ultimately, result in a successful campaign that achieves the desired results.


**PM:** What types of promotions do you do for retail clients?

**JH:** We help our client partners create all sorts of promotions and collateral items. This can range from pre-sell premiums that help generate excitement and demand for an upcoming product or service launch, to gift-with-purchase items that help drive action at point-of-sale. We also are involved with signage, packaging, displays, retail associate uniforms and identity pieces such as name badges and lanyards, to name a few.

**PM:** Have you worked with online retailers such as Zappos.com? How do their promotions differ from storefront retailers?

**JH:** Online retailers operate in a completely different space than brick-and-mortar stores, so the promotional

strategies and tactics will differ. However, the goal always remains the same: connect with customers, deliver a brand experience and help move a prospect toward a sale. Online promotions will oftentimes have a greater reach since these campaigns will be seen in any location that customers connect with that retailer online versus having to be at the physical store to see and redeem the offer. Online campaigns can be very successful in helping retailers create a detailed customer profile due to the nature of the web-based transaction. These profiles allow their marketing departments and promotional partners create segmented campaigns that can spur incremental sales, crossover sales, repeat purchases and even reactivate lapsed.

**MS:** [Online retailers] have the most flexibility out of small or national chains. They can mandate promotions every hour if they wanted to. They have the ability to reach out to their customer base with the ease of an email that hits them right in the palm of their hand. E-commerce stores are now cutting out the middlemen (Groupon/Living Social) and offering the same discount deals directly to their consumers in order to maintain margin and still please their consumer base. 



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