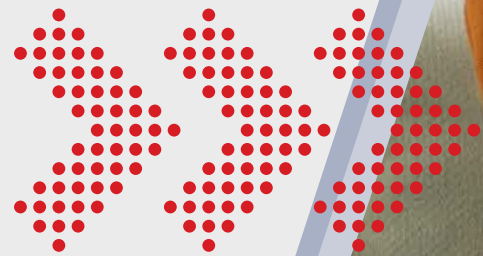




Keys to Success:

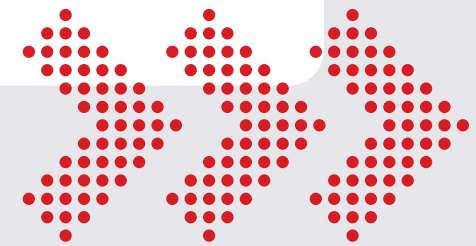
Strategies for Growing Your Promotional Products Business





 **As a distributor,** you've become acquainted with the power of the promotional products industry, which has boomed to a \$26.1 billion marketplace in 2024. With our newly revamped [ESP+ platform](#), it's easier than ever to maximize your business efforts through product research, order management and so much more.

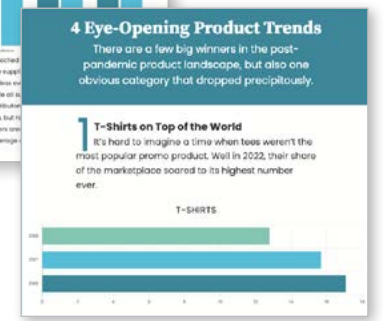
Still, no matter if you're an established distributor or one that's just getting started in the industry, there's always room to expand, especially when the industry itself is growing every year. That's why we've compiled these useful tips for success in selling promotional products.



➤ The Power of Promo

The promotional products industry has proven to be a resilient one. After sustaining a pandemic-related revenue dip in 2020, the industry has rebounded with a vengeance, bouncing back to pre-pandemic sales in less than two years, thanks in large part to a return to in-person events and an increased demand for branded merchandise. According to the comprehensive data set compiled in [Counselor® Magazine's State of the Industry Report 2023](#), promo is back no matter what metric you use to quantify it. Through inflation, labor challenges, sourcing diversification, digital technology adoption and other social and economic shifts, promo products remain as reliable as ever.

As a distributor, you have surely seen the windfall of this success to some degree. The median number of orders for a distributor was 335 in 2023, and with an average profit margin of 37%, each order has a significant impact on your bottom line.

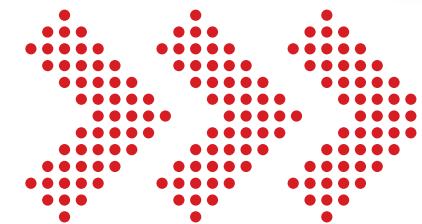


➤ **Secrets to Sales Success**

Even if you were satisfied with your 2023 numbers, there are many ways to keep clients happy in 2024 and beyond:

▶ **Buy More Now & Save**

Make an effort to upsell product options to clients by highlighting price breaks for higher quantities. When you visit a Product Detail page on ESP+, you'll notice the price of an item goes down considerably when buying in bulk, so getting a client to commit to more up front is a win-win-win: suppliers secure large orders up front, while distributors and end-buyers see extensive cost savings per item. And by shifting your clients' mindsets toward the future, you'll ensure their business for a longer period of time.



► Bundle Products Together

Though this tried-and-true sales tactic seems obvious, that's for good reason – it works. Here are just a few examples of bundling related products for some of the promo industry's top markets:

- **Education:** While pitching classic education items to schools (pens, notebooks, backpacks), consider bundling T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and other apparel to cater to the athletic program and all other aspects of campus life.
- **Healthcare:** Hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices and other healthcare institutions are in the market for all sorts of products year-round, so bundling items ranging from tech accessories to apparel to stationary will go a long way in aiding their promotional efforts.
- **Finance:** Banks and financial institutions are always in the market for low-cost items like pens, as well as luxury gift items. You can also pitch promotional signage and other printing needs for grand openings.
- **Nonprofits:** Charitable operations are prime for bundling products because they have a diverse set of needs, including apparel, tote bags, tumblers, lanyards/badges, safety items and much more.





► **Don't Be Afraid To Raise Prices**

One of the biggest takeaways from State of the Industry is that end-buyers are not deterred by rising prices. With inflation affecting everything from everyday groceries to gas prices, end-buyers are getting used to higher prices for just about everything and show no signs of slowing down when it comes to investing in promotional products.

Since you are likely paying more from the suppliers than ever before, it's essential to reflect those markups in your end-user pricing. Even with industry-wide price increases in 2023, distributors saw a 3.3% sales increase in Q1 and a 5.6% sales increase in Q2. As long as you continue to offer top-notch customer service and high levels of transparency, your customers will remain loyal.



► **Lean Into Packaging & Fulfillment**

You spend a lot of time and resources making sure that you offer your customers top-notch products and services. Doesn't it stand to reason that you'd put similar care into making sure those products get to them safely, efficiently and with a personal brand touch?

There are plenty of ways to stand out with your packaging and fulfillment services. One of the most popular in the e-commerce space is a discount code to be applied at checkout for first-time users which can offer free shipping, 10-25% off orders or both. This marketing tactic has gained traction because it gives the buyer big incentives to start using your service. Then, once you have their contact information after that initial order, it's easier to follow up to earn more of their business.

You can also make your appreciation known by including inserts like thank-you cards or personalized notes to your orders. These are an easy and inexpensive way to add a personal touch to your offerings, which can go a long way in building brand trust.

A few simple tweaks to your packaging and fulfillment offerings will go a long way in improving customer loyalty and driving repeat business.



**10%
OFF**

THANK YOU!

▶ **Make the Right Connections**

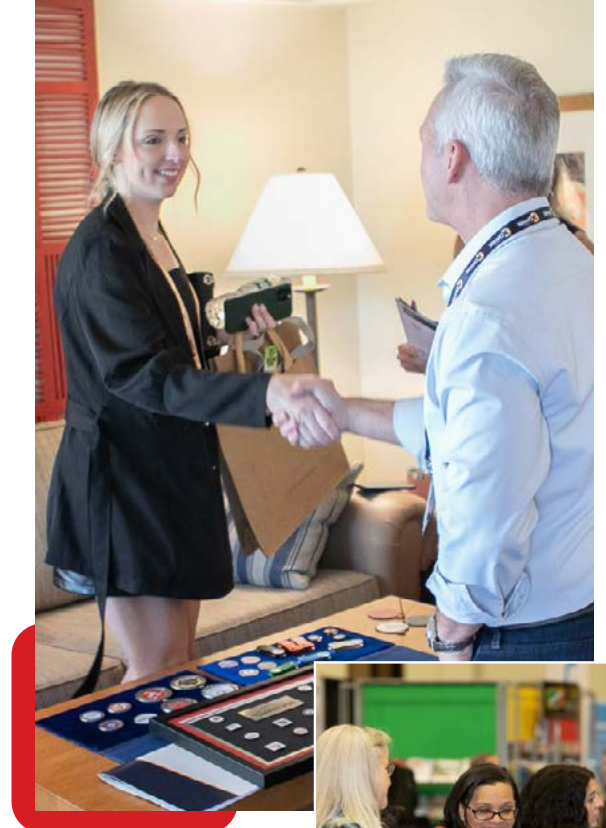
Even more important than how many connections you're making in a given year is the type of connections you're making to improve your business. One of the best ways to find the right suppliers to help drive your company forward is by attending one of the many events ASI® has throughout the year.

At fASIlitate, our four hosted-buyer events located in different regions every quarter, distributors who sell \$1 million annually are able to foster high-level supplier connections in private one-on-one meetings. Similarly, ConneX™ utilizes AI matchmaking technology to link up like-minded suppliers and distributors. And, of course, ASI Show® Orlando, ASI Show Fort Worth and ASI Show Chicago exhibit the promotional products industry on a huge scale.

By networking at these events and providing outstanding customer service all year long, you'll be able to curate a trustworthy client list that's ready to spend.

▶ **Use ASI's 2024 National & Global Holiday Marketing Calendar**

Clients can easily connect with their customer base on social media thanks to this helpful resource. In addition to traditional holidays, there are unique dates to celebrate every month to help spice up any marketing campaign.



➤ The Importance of Branded Merch

The resounding effects of the promotional products industry hinges on one key factor – the undeniable power of branded merchandise. As outlined in the [2023 ASI Ad Impressions Study](#), the effectiveness of promotional products has never been greater.

Unlike traditional advertising, promotional products do not represent a fleeting moment in time but a daily reminder of your brand through useful, everyday items. The average promotional product is held onto by the end-user for more than a year, with some of the most popular products (apparel, drinkware, bags, tech items) receiving thousands of impressions throughout their lifetime.

No matter what market you're catering to, no matter what type of products you want to align your brand with (Made in the USA, sustainable, etc.), there are end-users out there ready to invest.



➤ The ESP+ Advantage

Finding the promo products your customers need is essential to the success of your business, and with ESP+, it's easier than ever.

Every aspect of ESP+ was specifically designed so that it's the only tool you need to manage your business. Provide optimal value to your customers with streamlined order processing, customer communications, product tasking and so much more.

Here are just a few of the ways ESP+ makes your life as a business owner easier:

- ▶ **Mobile responsiveness** – ESP+ allow you to provide everything your clients need from the palm of your hand. Everything is quickly accessible, displays clearly on all mobile devices and provides a state-of-the-art user experience.
- ▶ **Find products fast** – We designed ESP+ with the fastest search algorithm in the industry. With a modern user interface that puts the most relevant and trending products front and center, your clients will have no trouble getting what they need.
- ▶ **More than just product search** – In addition to product search, ESP+ allows you to organize and simplify tasks and communication with clients and suppliers into a single interface that automatically updates order status. The Client Portal, Project Management tool and orders are all easily accessible, making ESP+ truly a one-stop shop.



We hope these tips will help you become an even more powerful promotional products distributor.



If you have any additional questions on how to implement these strategies, contact us at ASI any time.

View a demo to see ASI's ESP+ marketplace for yourself. You can source promo products and manage your customers' orders all in one place.

Ready to join ASI? Get started now.