

Theme-Branded Mugs Aid in Message Retention and Increase Likelihood of Reaching Sales Goals for Exclusive Adidas Accessory Licensee, Agron, Inc.

■ Challenge: Finding hip, functional promotional products for quarterly sales meeting giveaways.

Getting a message across is one thing; getting a message to stick, quite another. Psychologists, marketing communicators and others who study message retention tell us that messages stick best when we create connections between the new information to be retained and the information already existing in long-term memory.

The team at Agron, Inc. believes strongly in the power of promotional products to aid in message reinforcement and retention; Agron is the exclusive accessory licensee for Adidas America and one of the largest suppliers of sports and children's products to retailers like Modells, Dicks and Kohls.

Each year, Agron sales representatives gather for three sales meetings, each with a theme or key message related either to a new technology or product to push in the upcoming quarter or new sales or service techniques to help the firm's sales machine increase efficiency, productivity and revenue. During each meeting, the team gives theme- or message-related promotional products to help sales reps remember the new thrust until the next meeting—without constant reminders from management. The team has learned that products like pens and mugs work well because people continue to use those products, which keeps the message in eye-view and top-of-mind. The strategy works, tipping the scales favorably: the Agron team says reps are ten percent more likely to remember their message to the next meeting when message-related promotional products are used.

"Who's the boss?" was the theme of one recent sales meeting, with the boss being the end consumer. This message was to remind sales reps that, while retailers may have opinions about what they should be selling based on historic data, it is the consumer who should drive what the retailers actually carry. Sales reps are thus instructed to educate retailers on external research that identifies future consumer wants and trends rather than to simply fill orders based on retailers' sales histories.

■ Solution: 11-ounce budget mug reminiscent of one made famous in TV show "The Office".

In their search for a promotional product for the upcoming sales meeting, the team again considered pens, notebooks and mugs, all of which are easy on the budget and functional, all of which they've given in the past. However, the team has also found that products with "wow factor," those considered hip, cool or unique, quickly become the "new favorites" and replace similar items given in the past. This time, the team selected the 11-ounce Budget Mug in white, which, when branded with this quarter's "Who's the boss?" message, reminded them of the "World's Best Boss" mug made famous by actor Steve Carrel in the hit show "The Office." This added recognition factor would increase message retention even more as it would work to connect new information—this quarter's "Who's the Boss?" theme—with information on the famed Office mug already secure in most people's long-term memory. This particular mug provides long-lasting promotional value and comes with a free second-side or wraparound imprint, in optional gold or platinum if desired.

■ Result: Message-branded mugs remind team of "The Office," help to meet sales goals again.

Promotions Specialist Omer Cohen managed the Agron team's order from start to finish, ensuring delivery in time for the January meeting in the Los Angeles area. Both the team and staff enjoyed their new mugs, which immediately brought actor Steve Carrel and his show "The Office" to mind, and have done their duty to help reps remember their message and meet sales goals for another quarter.



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