

ADVERTISING FOR

REAL



ARGUMENTS FOR USING HAPTIC ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING FOR



In the age of digitalisation and standardisation of marketing content and processes, haptic advertising is the last Gallic village in the Google, Meta and X empires. Brands and target groups alike are yearning more than ever for forms of advertising that convey content authentically, for direct, real life contacts, for sensory touchpoints and individual means of expression. Haptic advertising and merchandise provide all of this and the best thing of all: There are no ad blockers for promotional products. They can't be clicked away. Haptic advertising is highly accepted and well-appreciated – it is the only form of advertising that recipients say thank you for and in the case of merchandising actually pay for.

This booklet collects arguments, supported by current survey results, which demonstrate why it is REAL promising for brands to focus on REAL advertising.

REAL UNIQUE



IMPRINT

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REAL EMOTIONAL

Promotional products have an emotional effect: They surprise, evoke joy, create moments of pleasure and arouse desire. Commissioned by the German promotional products association, GWW, the market research institute, september, investigated the emotional effect of promotional items using measurements of implicit bodily reactions and in-depth psychological interviews. The outcome was impressive: The emotional impact in the three purchase-relevant categories of attractiveness, relevance and popularity is much higher than for a successful TV spot. Haptic advertising makes hearts beat faster.





REAL TRENDY

Can you reach a target group that is primarily active in the digital world with ballpoint pens, lanyards and porcelain cups? You can. In 2025, a research team from Kassel University interviewed Gen Z survey participants about their attitude towards promotional products: Over 80% of the respondents are pleased when they receive promotional gifts and consider them to be a “good thing” and over two-thirds actually use them. This allows brands to become part of the everyday routine of digital natives.



REAL COMMUNICATIVE



"What have you got there?" Products are a great conversation starter – whether at the trade show booth or in the corridor at the office. Promotional products have immense communicative potential, provide a stage for storytelling and create connections between brands and people.

REAL EFFICIENT



Companies only have to spend 0.25 US cents to achieve a contact with advertising on a cap (according to the 2023 Ad Impressions Study by the ASI). The manageable investment costs are due to multiplier effects and the long lifespan of haptic advertising.

REAL TANGIBLE



By touching something, we become familiar with it. Haptics researchers have proven that in marketing, haptics creates a sense of connection, attracts attention, increases purchase intent and also triggers a perceived sense of ownership. What I touch, I also own.

REAL SUSTAINABLE

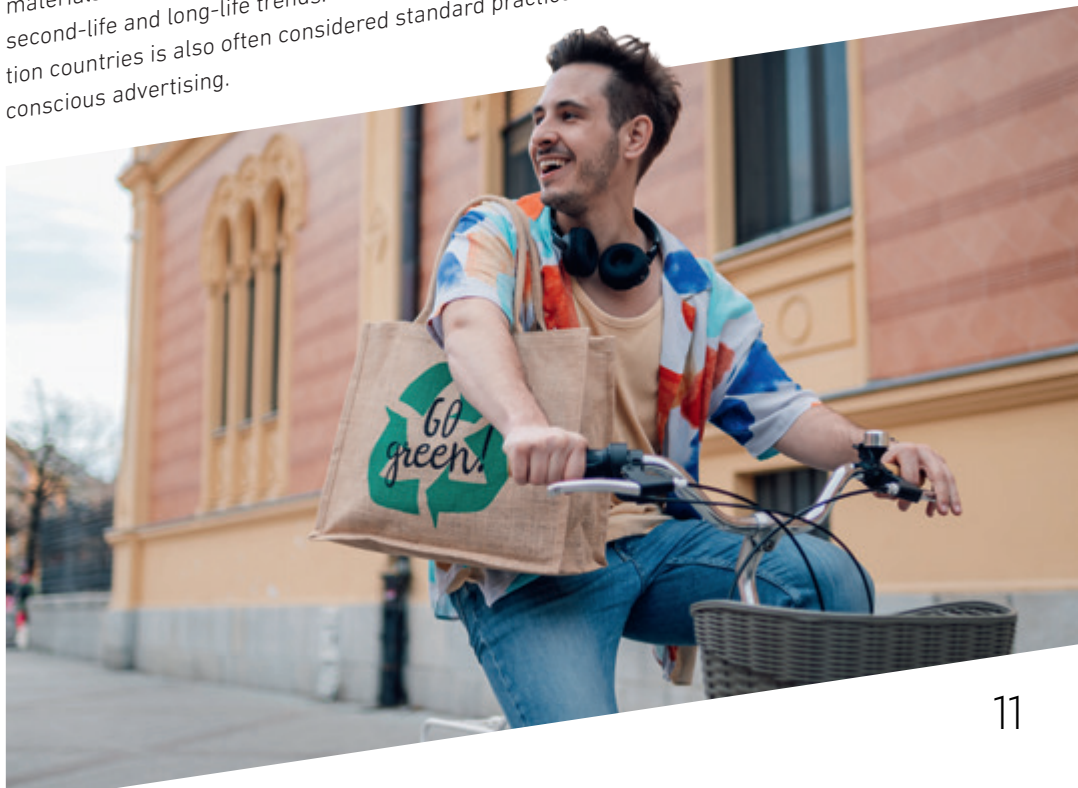
In the light of ESG reporting requirements and increasingly critical consumers, brands are under pressure to also evaluate their marketing activities from a sustainable point of view. In comparison to other media, haptic advertising often performs significantly better than other forms of advertising.

A study carried out this year by the independent British climate platform, 51toCarbonZero Ltd., reveals that, measured by emissions per brand recall, promotional products rank second only to, or on a par with, outdoor advertising. Per impression, promotional merchandise generates up to eight times



fewer CO₂ emissions than digital advertising. And whilst digital advertising increasingly focuses on energy-intensive technologies such as AI, the promotional products market offers numerous products that perfectly match the respective sustainability strategy of the advertising company.

The industry offers certified products and items made from alternative materials and caters to the "Made in Germany" trend as well as to the second-life and long-life trends. Social engagement locally and in the production countries is also often considered standard practice. This allows for REAL conscious advertising.



REAL PRESENT



Merchandising and haptic advertising place logos where they will be seen – in the everyday lives of their target groups. In this way, brands become known and are included in the relevant set for future purchasing decisions.

REAL DURABLE



Calendars, Swiss Army knives and cabin trolleys are inherently long-lasting promotional items. But even mainstream promotional products achieve impressively long lifespans. According to the 2019 GWW Promotional Products Effectiveness Study, two-thirds of all tangible promotional items are used by their recipients for longer than a year and 40% are even used for two years or more.

REAL SALES-BOOSTING



The American researcher, Alice Kendrick, demonstrated as early as 1998 that free gifts influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the effect is greater and longer lasting than that achieved using discounts. A more recent study (2023) by the researchers Hudík, Karliček and Řiha also concludes that the value perceived by buyers for the free gift exceeds the actual costs by a factor of 2.4.

REAL

IMAGE-ENHANCING

When brands implement promotional products, they pursue various goals. One is omnipresent: brand building. According to a study by the Polish industry association, PiAP, 91% of end users utilise promotional items to improve their image. And it works: Companies that implement promotional products increase their popularity (Advertising Effectiveness Study by GWW, 2018). Due to the intensity of the contact, the brand consultant, Olaf Hartmann, considers promotional merchandise "perfectly suitable for targeted brand building."





REAL IDENTIFICATION-BOOSTING



You are what you wear. Anyone, who carries a shopping bag bearing a prominent logo down the high street or drives to work wearing a football jersey, becomes a brand ambassador. The emotion researcher, Oliver Spitzer, distinguishes three stages in the relationship between brands and consumers: flirtation, romance and committed relationship. In a committed relationship, conspicuous brand placement is permitted, even desired. Merchandise then becomes an expression of absolute identification with brand values, transforming commercially courted target groups into emotionally engaged fans.

REAL EFFECTIVE

American consumers agree: When it comes to motivating target groups into taking action, haptic advertising is the most effective. Across all generations, promotional items topped the rankings in the 2017 PPAI Consumer Study, pushing TV, print and online advertising further down the ladder.

REAL MEMORABLE

Are you familiar with this? A cool commercial aired on TV, but you can't remember, who it was from. Haptic advertising, on the other hand, leaves a lasting impression, firmly anchoring the brand name in the brain. The PPAI Consumer Study determined a recall rate of 90% (aided) and 83% (unaided), while the Promotional Products Effectiveness Study by GWW also ascertained a recall rate of 78%.

REAL EYE-CATCHING

Especially when combined with catchy slogans, promotional products make excellent ambassadors – which is why they often play a leading role in campaigns aimed at conveying values or launching charity initiatives. Must-have promotional products arouse desire and make it easier to interest target groups in specific topics. In fundraising, tangible promotional items are an extremely popular and successful tool and when worn, they trigger a snowball effect – just think of the AIDS ribbon. Tangible promotional products thus represent awareness in two senses of the word.



REAL INDIVIDUAL



As you like it! Whether it is a yoga mat with a leopard print or rhinestone-studded mugs – small print runs, special customisation and packaging options or custom-made items in your brand's CI ensure that promotional products stand out from the conformity of mainstream marketing.



REAL PERSONAL



That belongs to me! Individual name engravings or prints transform a promotional item into a personal token of appreciation. You cannot get any closer to your target audience. The recipient takes ownership of the item, values it more highly according to the endowment effect described by many researchers and associates stronger emotions with it.

REAL APPRECIATIVE



Speaking of attention: In times of skilled labour shortages, promotional products are indispensable in employer branding as a token of appreciation and are used for anniversaries and special occasions, as bonuses or in onboarding kits. As various studies have shown, managers, who combine the presentation with a compliment, increase the impact.



REAL

ATTENTION-GRABBING

An ankle snack holder or a potato-shaped winter jacket – brands from Pringles to Aldi pull off real PR stunts using unusual promotional and merchandise items, which also generate wow effects and buzz on other channels like social media. In his book entitled *Haptic Advertising. Merchandising. Licensing.*, Prof. Dr. Michael Kleinjohann summarises the current state of research on the advertising effectiveness of haptic advertising and concludes that clear “scaling and multiplication effects can be demonstrated in the form of word-to-mouth propaganda.” Promotional items and merchandising are “simply something people like talking about.”





REAL CUTE



Those, who want to arouse emotions, should show pictures of puppies. Or use haptic advertising. Not only can it be incredibly cute, but it also comes across as “particularly appealing,” as two-thirds of the respondents in the 2018 GWW Promotional Products Impact Study indicated.

REAL USEFUL



Recipients not only appreciate promotional products, they also use them (91% according to the 2016/17 GWW Promotional Products Impact Study), with 54% even saying they use them “very often.” Advertising brands thus secure a place in the (professional) everyday lives of their target groups and prove themselves to be “friends and helpers” in numerous situations in life.

REAL CONNECTING



Teamwear is the tangible expression of a good relationship between employees and the employer brand. It significantly enhances team spirit, eliminates hierarchies and ensures recognition. This is helpful at the workplace itself, but also at trade shows, on business calls or when participating in events with a specific set of values – such as Christopher Street Day.

REAL GRATEFUL

"Give and you shall receive." These words, attributed to Pope John XXIII, not only outline the theological significance, but also the fundamental human need to show gratitude for the efforts of others. The phenomenon, known in sociology as the principle of reciprocity, is the basis on which promotional products work. Recipients are not only grateful for the gift, but also demonstrate this through desired actions (contacting the sender, participating in promotions, granting permission for data usage, repeat purchases, etc.). That this is not merely wishful thinking has been repeatedly proven in academic research.



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