

Steel City Marketing celebrates 30 years in promotional gifts

Steel City Marketing in Sheffield is celebrating 30 years as a distributor in the promotional gifts industry in June and with a re-brand and new Directory launch currently taking place, the business continues to look forward as well as remembering the past.

Peter Biggin, who set the company up with John Ibberson, says "When the company was initially started in 1980, it specialised as a distributor of business gifts manufactured in Sheffield, such as knives, tools and torches. Within a few years, the nature of the business evolved as the demand for a greater variety of promotional items increased."

Just like Steel City Marketing, the promotional gifts industry has developed significantly over the past 30 years and new trends are emerging all the time. Eco friendly promotional gifts, for example recycled pens and biodegradable coasters are becoming more and more popular with mounting pressure on businesses to become more 'green'.

With the threat posed by MRSA and swine flu, amongst others, antibacterial products have suddenly increased in popularity. Many companies are using promotional items such as antibacterial pens and hand sanitisers to demonstrate corporate responsibility to staff and customers.

Another notable trend is the rise in sales of 'retro' products. Pots of retro sweets containing old favourites such as love hearts, fruit salads, gobstoppers and rhubarb and custards are receiving more interest. Lorraine Mollart, Joint Managing Director of Steel City Marketing says "Its human nature to reminisce about the good old days and retro products are a very effective way of generating those warm feelings of nostalgia, which can be a great association for your brand."

Some products have only recently been marketed as promotional items, even though consumers were introduced to them some years back. The Rubik's cube, launched in 1980, was a hugely successful retail item back then, and is now a

great promotional item thanks to the current 80's revival. New products have also been developed based on the original Rubik's cube, for example the Twist USB Flash Drive.

Today, the most popular products include USB Flash drives, paper products, pens and confectionery. However, traditional items like crystal, ties, pocket knives and diaries remain constant throughout the years. With such an immense range of items available, choosing the right gift at the right price can be daunting.

The use of a good promotional gifts directory is so important as it helps generate ideas and facilitates decision-making. This month Steel City Marketing is launching its landmark 30th edition of the Directory. James Biggin, Joint Managing Director of Steel City Marketing explains why the company is so passionate about it "The SCM Directory is unique to the industry as it's produced by the company, and not a catalogue group, ensuring that every single product has been carefully hand selected by us. Rather than being reliant on a set product range or restricted supply base, producing our own Directory gives us complete flexibility to source the best, most exciting and relevant promotional gifts for the UK market. It represents just a snapshot of the thousands of business gifts available, so it's essential we choose the right range of products to engage our customers."

To receive a copy of the new Directory, please contact Steel City Marketing by telephone on 0114 275 4150 or email us at gifts@steel-city.co.uk. For thousands more product ideas visit us at www.steel-city.co.uk.