



The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

November 4, 2011

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), I write to ask that you take into account the impact on our industry if you consider setting any limitations on the marketing efforts or the purchasing plans of Federal agencies.

The promotional products industry plays an important role in the national economy—collectively the industry **provides more than 455,000 jobs and \$16.5 billion annually**. Although promotional products play an important role in making the public and other audiences aware of important initiatives and are essential elements in successful marketing programs, all too often this industry comes under scrutiny when budgets are tight and cuts must be made.

But as you stated when addressing your fiscal policy to students at George Washington University, “we have to use a scalpel and not a machete to reduce the deficit, so that we can keep making the investments that create jobs.” I urge you to keep that message top of mind when considering the promotional products industry. While it might be tempting to limit the purchase of promotional products in order to yield some short term savings, in the long term, this prohibition may unintentionally diminish the good work of Federal agencies.

Time and again, promotional products have proven themselves to be the **most cost-effective way** to reach a very targeted audience in a tangible, long-lasting and memorable manner. Studies show that a company **using a promotional product as its primary marketing piece gains an 85-percent increase in positive brand image** by consumers. You don’t need to look any further than the 2010 Census for proof that promotional products work.

The U.S. Census Bureau achieved its goal of 72% mail-back participation rate and saved \$1.6 billion dollars on the 2010 census. A significant contribution to that savings was the use of targeted marketing in the Bureau’s Integrated Communications Plan. The campaign utilized promotional products in its paid advertising and media, partnership programs, census in schools, and events to achieve its objectives. The high response rate and budget surplus are strong indicators of the effectiveness of integrated marketing and the use of promotional products.

The same products that significantly improved the mail-back participation rate for the U.S. Census make a difference in the lives of American citizens every day.

Our industry is filled with professionals who passionately pursue and fulfill programs that bring a return on investment to charities and hospitals, to families and children in need and to their communities across the country. On a winter day in New York, imprinted blankets distributed to the homeless transform into a message of hope, caring and community. A key chain with a whistle handed out to students at a self-defense class becomes an empowering tool. A t-shirt given to children at a summer outdoor program is a memorable, functional keepsake. When the shirt is decorated with the phone number to call if the child is found lost, the imprinted shirt becomes a prudent safety precaution.

An imprinted blanket, a functional key chain, a promotional t-shirt—they're community. They're life-saving. They're undeniably impactful.

I am happy to talk with you about the effectiveness of promotional products and the vibrant business community I represent. I can be reached at 972-258-3050 or by e-mail at paulb@ppai.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Bellantone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Paul Bellantone, CAE
President and CEO
Promotional Products Association International