



**“My Most
Creative
Sale Ever”**

INDUSTRY SALESPEOPLE SHARE STROKES OF GENIUS

Promo products pros are some of the most creative people we know, so we asked you to share your most brilliant moments. Read how your peers won over big prospects with big ideas, saved sales with a shot in the dark and came up with twists that succeeded beyond anything they'd imagined.

BY JEN ZORGER



A custom USB in the shape of MTV's Moonman helped the Jordan Group LLC (asi/237522) close some cool business.

CHEAT SHEET

Creative Sales

- * A "wrong number" has led to a new client for more than one distributor.
- * Win over prospects who haven't seen their logo on a product with virtual samples.
- * One distributor had standard magnets embossed to create a Braille message.
- * Check *Advantages* showcases and ads for cool new product ideas.
- * In a jam, create your own "imprinted" sample by pasting your client's logo on a product.
- * Some suppliers can create a whole new product to fit your client's needs. Ask!

Dialing the wrong number could turn out to be just right. And believe it or not, you can find the perfect solution for that picky prospect who balks at everything you show him. You also can master the art of upselling the client who only buys pens year in and year out. Thinking creatively and on their feet, these enterprising reps dealt with similar situations and more and were able to seal some pretty sweet deals.

Smooth Talkers

Do you believe in fate? Several salespeople told us about times that chance smiled on them and a mistake led to a new client. When someone called Premier Promotional Products Inc. (asi/298566) thinking it was another promo company, VP Michael Castellano kept her talking until he got enough info to make a sale.

Castellano began asking the random caller about her company and what type of work they did. She turned out to be very easy to talk to. When she told him that her company had a new logo they wanted to put on shirts, he was off and running with the lead.

*sidebar on page 91 >>
continued on page 92 >>*

Creative Case History»

Custom Flash Drive Puts MTV Over the Moon



Product courtesy of The Jordan Group LLC (asi/237522)

MTV wanted a promotion that really rocked to present to VIPs at a recent Video Music Awards (VMAs) show. The task fell to Sheree Jordan, owner of The Jordan Group LLC (asi/237522) to create a custom USB flash drive modeled after the Moonman award that MTV presents to winners at the program. Due to cost considerations, the product had to be produced in Asia, and Jordan only had 30 days to pull it together.

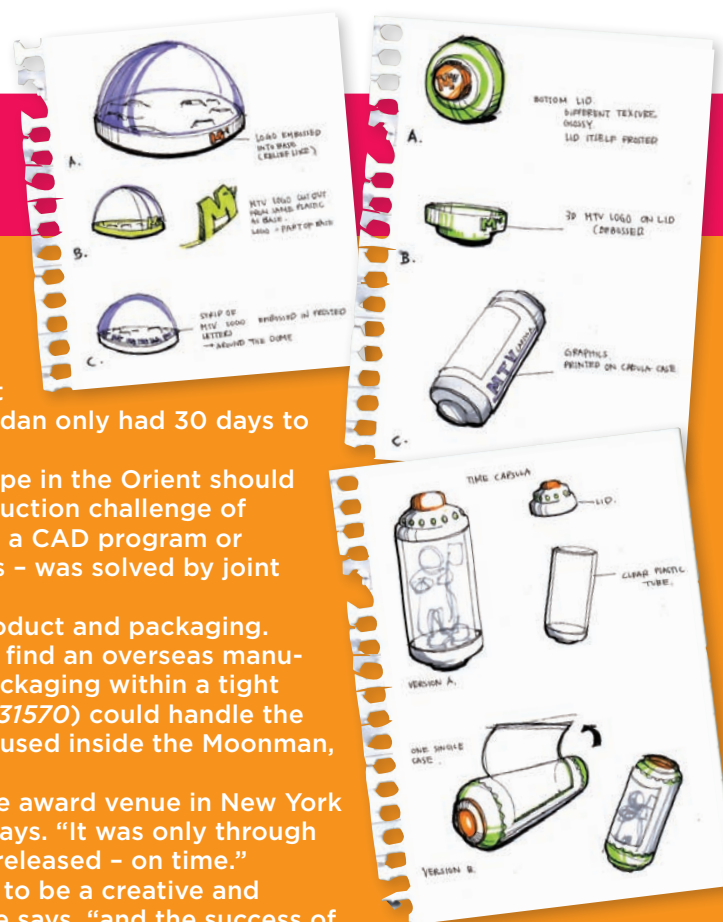
"The standard production time for a project of this type in the Orient should have been a minimum of 90 days," she says. "A production challenge of creating an exact duplicate of the Moonman without a CAD program or blueprints - due to potential trademark infringements - was solved by joint collaboration."

Her team submitted design concepts for both the product and packaging.

Once MTV approved the concepts, the next challenge was to find an overseas manufacturer who could produce both a custom USB and custom packaging within a tight deadline. When Jordan learned that Advantage Industries (asi/31570) could handle the project, she had them make a clay mold. The drive would be housed inside the Moonman, attached to his pull-out head.

"After 30 anxious days to create and deliver this project to the award venue in New York - flying in from China - customs held up the package," Jordan says. "It was only through the negotiations of Advantage Industries that the product was released - on time."

The end result was worth all the trouble. "This project proved to be a creative and rewarding challenge for the entire Jordan Group team," she says, "and the success of this program has resulted in a long-term business relationship."



article continued on page 92

WE'VE GOT YOUR COLORS!

Terrific 2-Tone Hoodie Styles Available in Popular School Color Combinations!



8555 | The Booster Hoodie

NEW!

12 stock color combinations with side accents, contrasting inner hood and y-insert at neck. In a soft and durable cotton/poly blend. Hidden inner pocket with Velcro closure in the pouch pocket holds cell phone, audio players and keys securely! 8555 in Adult XS-XXL and 8555y in Youth L.

Circle 287 on Info Card or visit www.advantagesinfo.com

GAME
SPORTSWEAR, LTD.

8600 | The Rival Hoodie

17 stock color combinations with contrasting inner hood, pocket lining and drawstring. Featuring heavyweight ring-spun combed cotton/poly blend providing maximum durability and comfort. 8600 in Adult XS-XXL and 8600y in Youth M-L.

ASI 55752 UPG: GAMED001
SINCE 50417

1.800.688.4263 (GAME) / GAMESPORTSWEAR.COM

PROFITABLE Seasonal Products

presentation folders | portfolios
binders | key & card holders
and much more

- Gift Card Holders
- Certificate Covers
- Photo Holders

800.523.6673 MI • 800.338.5525 CA
www.admoreonline.com

Admore

Circle 286 on Info Card
or visit www.advantagesinfo.com

FSC Certified SGS-COC-004308

"After five days and 10 phone calls, she bought 500 Cutter & Buck (asi/47965) polos and has been a great client ever since," he says – but he has never dared bring up the fact that she originally meant to call a different distributor.

Ben Adler, president of Top of the Line Promotions LLC (asi/345372), also had a serendipitous event that led to a new client. "I focus on health care and was looking up information for a facility in New Jersey and somehow was redirected to a health care facility in Missouri," he says. "Figuring everything happens for a reason, I called the facility."

It took him awhile to get his first order from the administrator he spoke to, but he did. Now he's working with 18 other facilities she is affiliated with. Would he ever tell her that she was not his first pick to call that day? Not likely. "It reminds me of when I was working in fundraising, and a guy asked me how I got his name, and I told him from a list," he says. "Oh boy, not a good idea."

continued on page 94

Creative Case History»

An Earth-Friendly Promo for Earth-Friendly Vodka

If you're drinking to the planet's health, then your drink of choice just may be 360 Vodka, which bills itself as "the world's first eco-friendly premium vodka." Its maker, Earth Friendly Distilling, turned to Mike Breazeale, president of The Promotion Agency (asi/300608), for help launching the product with a message of sustainability and luxury.



Breazeale suggested coasters made of a special paper embedded with flower seeds, so they can be planted after use, instead of being thrown away. "The brand is built on the eco-friendly foundation, so we were already thinking about being 'green,'" he says. He saw the seeded paper in *Advantages* magazine. "It just clicked. No brainer."

To hold the coasters, Breazeale came up with a table-tent holder made from recycled paper. The holder communicated the green message about the seeded coasters and the vodka and offered drink recipes. The kits went to distributors of alcohol to use as merchandising aids.

"Everyone loved them," Breazeale says, "but as an ongoing item, it is too expensive for them to be included in all bar kits. I think for limited special promotions, we'll do more."



Images courtesy of The Promotion Agency (asi/300608)

NEW

from **JORNIK**
A WORLD OF CREATIVITY

Circle 263 on Info Card or visit www.advantagesinfo.com
Item#: JK-3063

One of the most unique toys ever seen!

Toss The Morph Ball™ up into the air and watch the colors magically flip from white to black! Toss it again and it will switch back!

The Morph Ball™

...Amazing!

150 250 500
2.99 2.85 2.50
(3c)
Unit Price. Additional charges apply.

To see The Morph Ball™ in action visit **1-800-656-7645**
www.jornik.com keyword: morph ASI: 63549 UPIC: JORNIK

“Once, a customer called my company thinking it was another promo company, and I kept her talking until I got enough info to make a sale.”

– Michael Castellano, Premier Promotional Products Inc. (*asi/298566*)



Fancy Footwork

Production Artist Dave Anderson of Flex Systems U.S.A. Inc. (*asi/54597*) was able to save a sale from slipping away by putting together virtual samples for one of his colleagues. “Our sales had been low in the month of November last year, and our salesperson John Keating came to me asking for a 3-D virtual image for a product that his client was giving up on and about to shelve,” Anderson says.

Using Illustrator and Photoshop programs, he created a four-color-process, dome-look version of the prospect’s logo and virtually placed it on several products selected for the project. “The virtuals are the best representation I can possibly show for our products,” he says.

After sending out the virtual samples, Keating made one of the largest single sales he had ever made: more than 10,000 bags, each of which had six decorated products inside – plus fulfillment. “John still calls it ‘the magic virtual,’” Anderson says.

Nancy Clopper, VP of HGX Inc. (*asi/224886*), actually found a way to change a product to fit a client’s needs. She had worked with the company previously on a magnet order for a radio and TV promotion. But now, a new contact from the firm called, asking for magnets with a Braille imprint that could be read by the visually impaired.

“I could not find anyone in our industry who was producing this type of a product,” Clopper says. Desperate to make a good impression on the new contact,

she managed to find a company who could take another supplier’s magnets and emboss them with a message in Braille.

“I had to change the thickness of the magnet to properly allow for the embossing,” she says. “And the three rounds of proofs to ensure we had it correct were quite a task. But in the end, I earned their loyalty and, most importantly, felt good about helping deliver a product to the vision impaired.”

Quick Thinking

Adele Bloom, a part-time rep for Brown & Bigelow (*asi/148500*), found a way to expand the horizons of a client who normally buys only pens – but it took a lot of product research, and time was limited since it was a holiday gift.

“I knew that we needed unisex items for his various clients,” she says. “I kept suggesting things like imprinted BBQ sets, chocolate-covered almonds in crystal, emergency kits for the car, picnic baskets and

continued on page 97

the Original Award Winning Pocket Sprayer™

Solutions for any promotion. Available with 28 different fill products, including...

- Hand Sanitizer Sprays**
 - Alcohol Aloe Scent • Alcohol Citrus Scent
 - Non-Alcohol
- Outdoor Protection Sprays**
 - SPF 15 Sunscreen • Natural Insect Repellent
 - Natural Insect After Bite • Golf Club Cleaner
- Breath Sprays**
 - Peppermint • Spearmint • Citrusmint
- Air Freshener Sprays**
 - Lavender • Vanilla • Berry • New Car scents
- Household Sprays**
 - Glass/Lens Cleaner • LED/LCD Screen Cleaner
 - Odor Eliminator

...skin moisturizers and many more!

- 13 cap colors
- Competitive pricing
- Custom 4-color imprinting at no extra charge

Health and Beauty Care specialties

Circle 228 on Info Card or visit www.advantagesinfo.com

asi/47934 ppai/230484 upic/hbcspec impact/53509 sage/66352 1-877-442-8241 • www.customhbc.com

Creative Case History»

Supplier Puts Tall Order to (Wrist) Rest

Distributors aren't the only ones who pull off creative sales. Fred Leamer, president/CEO of ActNow Media Inc. (*asi/31015*), had to think on his feet to win a large order earlier this year. "In late May, we were contacted by an industry distributor – who chooses not to be mentioned – regarding a keyboard wrist rest. They needed 6,000, and they needed them fast for a client. No other supplier contacted could meet the early July delivery date."

The distributor's client wanted a clear translucent gel rest



Leamer says that no other supplier was even making a wrist rest that fit these specifications. "Keep in mind, all keyboard wrist rests previously offered were fabric, plastic or clear plastic. Client graphics are usually silk-screened on the top surface," he says.

Luckily, Leamer is part owner of a factory in China that was already making similar products, and he and his partner got on top of the project immediately. "I designed the AquaRest product

as a concept and established pricing within 24 hours," he says. "We had rough samples delivered within a week, with production-quality samples delivered within two weeks. The entire order was delivered in less than four weeks."

The AquaRest is now part of the ActNow product line - and it's not the first time the line has grown due to special requests from distributors. "The DuraGel product was developed earlier this year for the same reasons," Leamer says.

wine. He liked these but kept on stalling, and time was going fast."

Finally, she happened upon an ad for silver piggy banks from Redline (*asi/81133*). Her client was a financial advisor, and instinct told her he just might go for it. She got a sample and showed it to him. “He loved them and ordered a bunch,” she says. “He also ordered some high-end pens as well, but it was the banks that did the trick.”

Jonathan Silver, owner of Jonathan Silver LLC, also had to do some quick thinking when he landed an appointment with a big prospect and had little time to prepare. “My excitement over the pending appointment turned to anxiety, as I needed to come up with an idea for what I was going to sell them,” Silver says. Luckily, inspiration struck. The company was a publisher of soft-cover guides, so he took a cover from one of the books and pasted it on the front of a Harry and David Cookie Book.

They loved it. “I remember being asked what the minimum order requirement was for a custom Cookie Book during the meeting, and I made it up, saying it was 2,000 units.” He got the order, and it led to an annual repeat sale for years.

They say you make your own luck. Judging by these stories, it's often true. ▲
Jen Zorger is senior associate editor of Advantages.

[illegible]