

## 3 Rules for Creating Event Swag That Doesn't Suck (2018 Edition)

### Is there a secret formula for event swag that doesn't suck?

Kevin McCracken, cofounder of Social Imprints, thinks so. "A lot of event swag ends up in the trash because it's an afterthought," he says. "When you make it a part of your planning process, you'll come up with ideas that attendees will hold on to — which is the ultimate goal if you're trying to elevate your brand."

The secret sauce goes beyond planning ahead.

When it comes to choosing event swag that doesn't suck, there are three unspoken rules to keep in mind.

## 01

### Nothing says 'throw this away' like useless event swag

Slapping a logo on merchandise will let you check off a box from your long to-do list. But if your attendees have no use for one, you can guarantee it'll end up in the trash. Keep this in mind when giving away these two popular items.

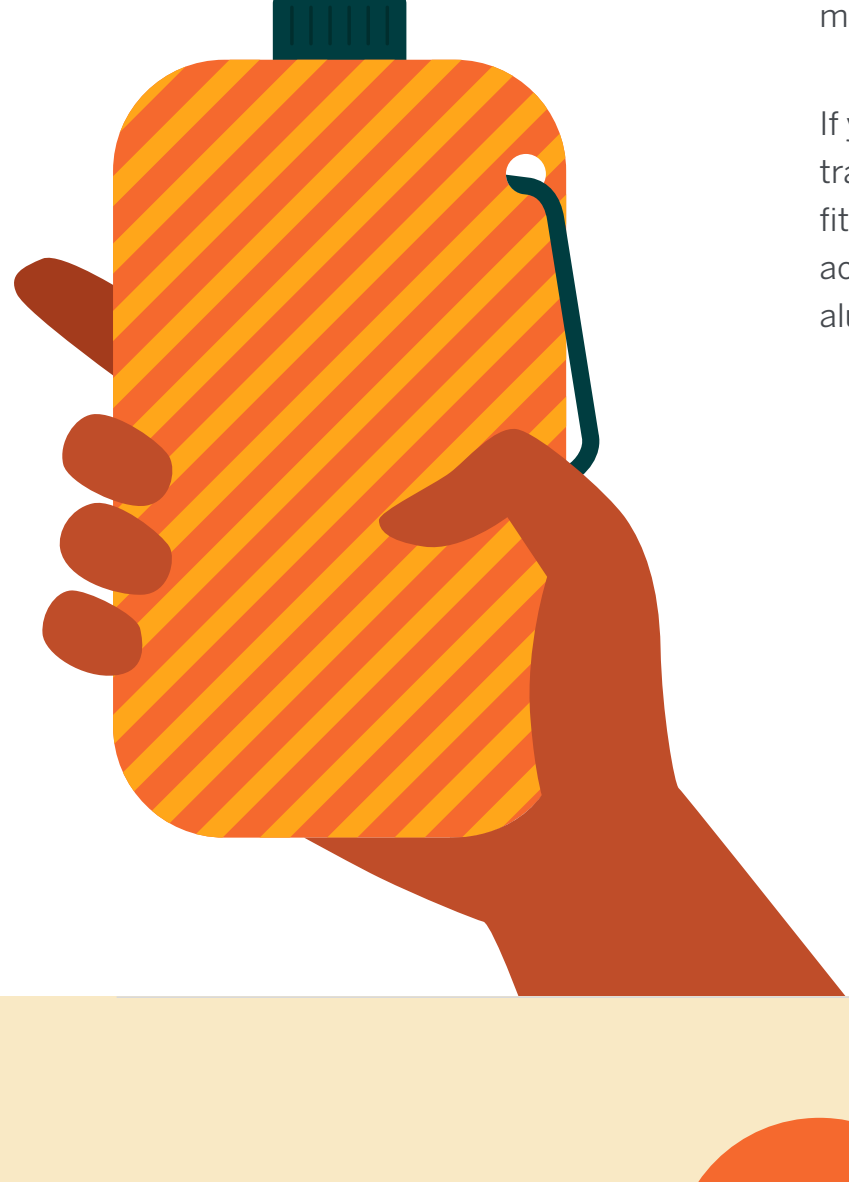
#### Phone Accessories



Mobile phones are an essential part of our lives, and accessories that enhance their experience is a thoughtful way to elevate the event experience. "But unless your audience uses the same exact phone, avoid using device-specific items like chargers and phone cases," McCracken warns.

Instead, consider universal accessories like **portable phone chargers**, **popsockets** or **cord tacos** that store their electronics cords neatly.

#### Water Bottles



Reusable water bottles are easy to come by. So if you're going to hand out water bottles, you'll need to offer attendees something more valuable. "A more valuable water bottle to giveaway, however, doesn't mean spending more money," says McCracken.

If your attendees are always on the go and traveling, then a **collapsible water bottle** that fits easily into their carry-on luggage could actually be preferable to a premium quality aluminum bottle.

## 02

### No one wants to be a walking advertisement for your brand

Ultimately, you want attendees to use your swag in their everyday life and expose your brand to as many people as possible. But a generic t-shirt with a bunch of logos, for example, is more likely to get donated before your attendees wear it in public. The key, according to our expert, is to strike the balance between being branded and fashionable.

#### T-shirts, hoodies, and socks



Branded apparel can be tricky. When done well, attendees will proudly wear a t-shirt, hoodie, or socks with your brand on a regular basis.

"It's always a smart choice to go with custom t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, and socks" says McCracken.

“A contrasting zipper color that matches your branding and a small tag with your logo sewn into the seam ensures attendees wear your swag on a more often.”



#### Laptop sleeves



"Considering how much work is done on laptops nowadays, gifting a laptop sleeve is more considerate than one would think," says McCracken. He recommends subtle branding that gently reminds them who gave them such a valuable gift.

Survey attendees before the event to find out what laptop size they own to make sure it's useful, too.



## 03

### Your swag's quality reflects your brand

It's important to consider the quality and longevity of each item. "You don't want to produce something that doesn't have a long lifespan or gets ruined after one use," says McCracken. "'Remember, you won't always be there to explain your brand. So if your company values quality, make sure it's reflected in your swag.'"

#### Custom keychains



Keychains are useful, but there's only so many a person needs use. McCracken says you'll need to go beyond a printed logo.

Instead, "a custom keychain that incorporates your brand can spark an 'ah-ha' moment."

To create that moment for Airbnb, Social Prints made a custom die cast keychain with a scratch-resistant coating — it was so successful that attendees were selling theirs on eBay.

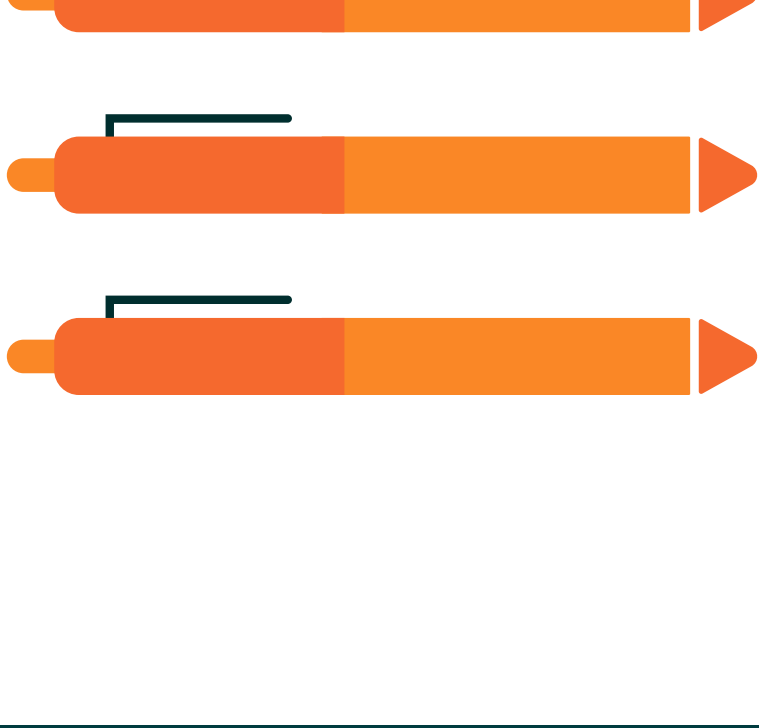
#### Stationery



Even in an increasingly digital world, there's still strong demand for pens and notebooks.

“When done right, branded pens and notebooks will get a lot of mileage with your attendees,” says McCracken.

"A quality pen combined with a field notebook that incorporates your brand colors can spark curiosity from coworkers in the boardroom."



## The Takeaway

Some swag never goes out of style — all you have to do is keep it fresh, useful, and on-brand.

Want to learn more about offering attendees an unforgettable event experience? [Contact us here](#), or give us a call at (866) 902-2531 to speak with our event experts.