



A Guide to Maximizing Your Trade Show Giveaway Budget

Swag Buying

One thing on a long list of necessary tasks to prepare for an event is your promotional items ordering. After that you need to shop, select, order, and ship your trade show giveaways. The easiest thing is to do what you did last time, right? Saves time? Not so fast!

Whether you are preparing for in-person trade shows or hosting virtual events, you want your brand and your products to be memorable. Your promotional giveaways need to be interesting, attract notice, represent your company well, and show up when and where you need them.

Using the same custom tote bags (or water bottles, coasters, t-shirts...you get the idea) from the same vendor as the last few shows may seem like good value and a time-saving decision. Yet you want to maximize your budget for promotional items, so you have the best giveaways, at the best price, for as many events as possible.

In today's uncertain environment, wise use of your giveaway budget is a must for every marketer. We've outlined the best practices to get the most out of your trade show promotional items budget. The most important one we saved for last, so read all the way through!



Wise use of your giveaway budget is a must for every marketer



Use Your Annual Budget to Buy in Bulk

Look for items you can use at multiple shows and then buy them in bulk to reduce the per-item cost. You may still need something new and trendy that pops for a specific show, but take a look at items you tend to bring to every show. You will probably always need those promotional pens with your name and logo!

To save money on swag you can use at multiple events, estimate your promotional items for the full year, and then order ahead in bulk and save. Be sure to ask your vendor about price breaks and rebates.

Bulk purchases make a lot of sense for repeat giveaways, especially if they are small enough for you to store at the office and ship to shows when you need them. If you don't have storage space in your office, you may need to factor in the cost of storage and delivery from your vendor's fulfillment warehouse, which could offset any savings.



bulk purchases make a lot of sense for repeat giveaways, as long as you can store them for low or no cost

Calculate Your Foot Traffic

Know your audience size and expected foot traffic so you're not shipping back tons of leftover promo items (and then storing them for the next time). Shipping unused swag back is a hidden cost that erodes your budget. It's easy to miss when you're planning out the number and quality of giveaways you'll need for a particular trade show. You can use our handy Trade Show Promotional Giveaway Quantity Calculator (find it at www.coreexpand.com/swag-calculator), or follow the instructions below.

To estimate your foot traffic, a good rule of thumb is to take the number of registered participants for the event and multiply that by 16 to 20 percent. Choose the 16 percent if your booth is located off the main foot traffic pathways of the event. If you're on a main aisle, go with 18 percent. If your trade show traffic strategy includes crowd-drawing activities, like live demos or entertainment, then use 20 percent. Now, take that number and multiply it by 50 percent for more general events, or 40 percent for highly



**order efficiently
for the event** by
calculating booth
foot traffic to
determine how
many giveaways
you'll need

Get Competitive Quotes from at Least Three Vendors

Hear me out. I can practically feel eyes rolling as you're thinking "I do NOT have time to email a bunch of vendors, or fill out multiple online forms for each item. And besides my go-to vendor already has our artwork and knows our colors. Nobody has time for all that."

No doubt all of that is true, but you're leaving money on the table. The number one best practice to stretch your budget for trade show promotional items is to employ competitive bidding with your vendors. Many companies require bidding for purchases over a certain dollar amount. Even if yours does not, you should seek a minimum of three bids because you can save 30 percent or more by competitively bidding your promotional items, whether branded or not. In some cases, the difference in price between the lowest and highest quote for the exact same product exceeds 50 percent! Even if you have contracted vendors, you will want to go through this process to make sure your contracted vendors are giving you the best prices and terms.



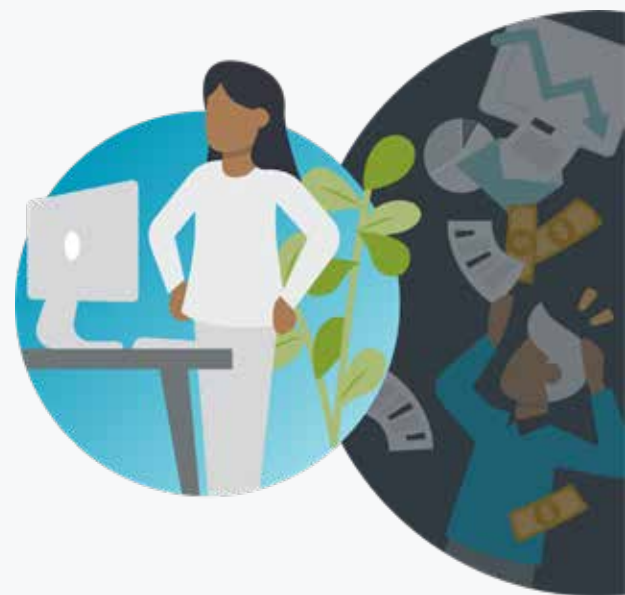
the number one best practice to stretch your budget is to get competitive bids from multiple vendors

Smart marketers are using technology like AgoraQuote to organize and manage vendor quotes so they can take advantage of competitive bidding without the time-consuming process of reaching out separately to each vendor. AgoraQuote makes competitive bidding easy, so you don't spend time emailing and calling multiple vendors or searching the web for price comparisons. You can request a quote through AgoraQuote, with as much detail as you like, from as many vendors as you choose, in the same amount of time it takes to request a quote from just one vendor. Interested vendors respond back and you can see the side-by-side comparison right on your dashboard, enabling you to make smart decisions and stretch your budget further.

There's a Better Way to Manage Swag Orders

In companies of all sizes, the way marketers order swag and trade show giveaways hasn't changed much in over a decade. Typically executed across email, phone calls, and web order forms, the process is inefficient, and wastes time and money. Even worse, important information is gets buried in someone's inbox, inaccessible to new employees or the rest of the team.

AgoraQuote solves these problems through an easy-to-use workflow that saves time and money.



targeted events. This number gives you a solid estimate of the number of people who will potentially visit your booth.

If you hand out giveaways for nearly every booth visitor, then take your booth visitor estimate, add back 10 percent, and that's the number of items to send to the show. If you have giveaways that you're more selective with, then you'll need to consider the percentage of visitors who would be given the promotional item.

When you're planning your promo item buying for a specific event, look at the volume discounts to see if it makes sense to stretch to the next volume tier. For example, if your foot traffic estimate is 800 visitors and you plan to give a custom tote bag to each visitor, you may want to purchase 1,000 tote bags to decrease the per-unit cost. However, with items you send to every event, it makes more sense to purchase them once per year (see Use Your Annual Budget to Buy in Bulk, above).



The image shows a screenshot of a web-based calculator titled "Promotional Giveaway Quantity Calculator". The calculator has four input fields arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left field is labeled "Number of registered attendees*" and contains the value "50,000". The top-right field is labeled "Foot traffic info" and contains the dropdown selection "We're on a main traffic aisle". The bottom-left field is labeled "Who receives your giveaway?" and contains the dropdown selection "About 3 out of 4". The bottom-right field is labeled "How targeted is the event?" and contains the dropdown selection "Highly focused on our market". Below these fields is a large blue button with the text "Quantity to order: 2,970". At the bottom of the calculator, there is a "Pro Tip" in small text: "Pro Tip: Your vendor may have order minimums that are below the quantity you need. Round up as needed in accordance with your vendor's order quantities."

Use the free foot traffic calculator at www.corexpand.com/swag-calculator

Plan Ahead to Avoid Rush Fees

This one is pretty obvious, right? Plan out your event calendar for the year as soon as possible and keep track of expected number of booth visitors to whom you want to give those promotional items.

Are you maintaining brand awareness or rolling out a new product? Whatever you're trying to achieve, order your swag in plenty of time to avoid rush fees, either from design and customization or from shipping or delivery. With current supply chain disruptions due to COVID, it's wise to check with your vendors in advance about expected delays to avoid being caught off guard by long lead times or low inventory for the items you need.

Not only can this create the need for rush charges, you may also be forced to buy a more expensive items to fulfill your needs.



production and shipping rush fees eat up your budget, especially in today's logistics realities

Purchase Discontinued Items to Save

Ask your vendors about their leftovers or for discontinued items that may be available at a discounted price. You may be able to ride the end of a trend when hot-item sales slow or pick up a smaller number of items for a more targeted event. Asking your vendors about what's new is a great way to get inspiration for new promo items. Always ask about their excess inventory at the same time!

Vendor Terms and Specials

Ask your vendor to recommend other cost savings while keeping the quality standards you need. Can you use fewer colors? Different materials? A completely different product idea? A good vendor can be a valuable consultant to help you with cost-saving options you may not even be aware of.

How are you paying? Credit card or p-card? Purchase order? See if your vendor offers any discount for faster payment than normal, and then see if you can make that happen within your purchasing department's guidelines.

The old way

The way marketers order swag and event giveaways hasn't changed much in over a decade.

Information about vendors and past orders is buried in someone's email inbox.

A time-sensitive process is delayed while emails and replies sit in someone's inbox.

Orders are placed with one or two vendors; getting competitive quotes is rare.

The ordering workflow is fractured across disconnected processes and steps.

Few vendors means fresh swag ideas come from marketers, not your vendors.

Lack of control and visibility in the quote request process mean wasting time with vendors who can't meet your needs.

VS

AgoraQuote™

AgoraQuote is a web-based buying that simplifies the process of managing branded products.

Save time

Stop wasting time emailing back and forth with vendors, or digging through emails to find past quotes. With AgoraQuote, everything's in one place.

Save money

AgoraQuote users save an average of 30% by getting quotes from multiple vendors. Using competitive bidding, you'll stop leaving money on the table.

Get organized

Information about quotes and orders is in one place, so you can easily go back to review and run reports on orders and vendors.

Future proof your swag process

With a searchable, reportable archive of past orders, AgoraQuote makes it easy for other members of the team to jump in to order items for events.

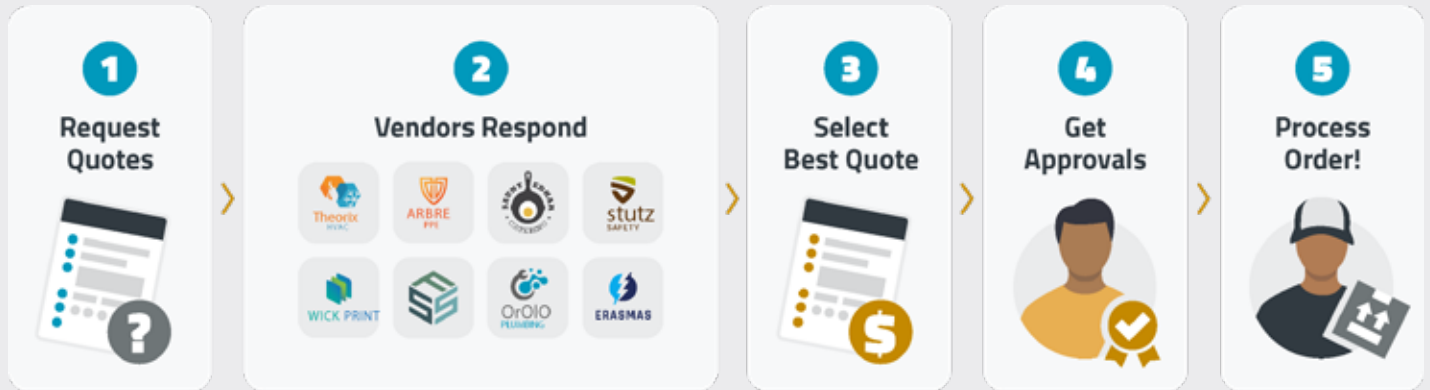
Better fresh ideas in less time

Promo item vendors see new swag ideas before anyone else. No more time spent googling to try to find something fresh for your giveaways.

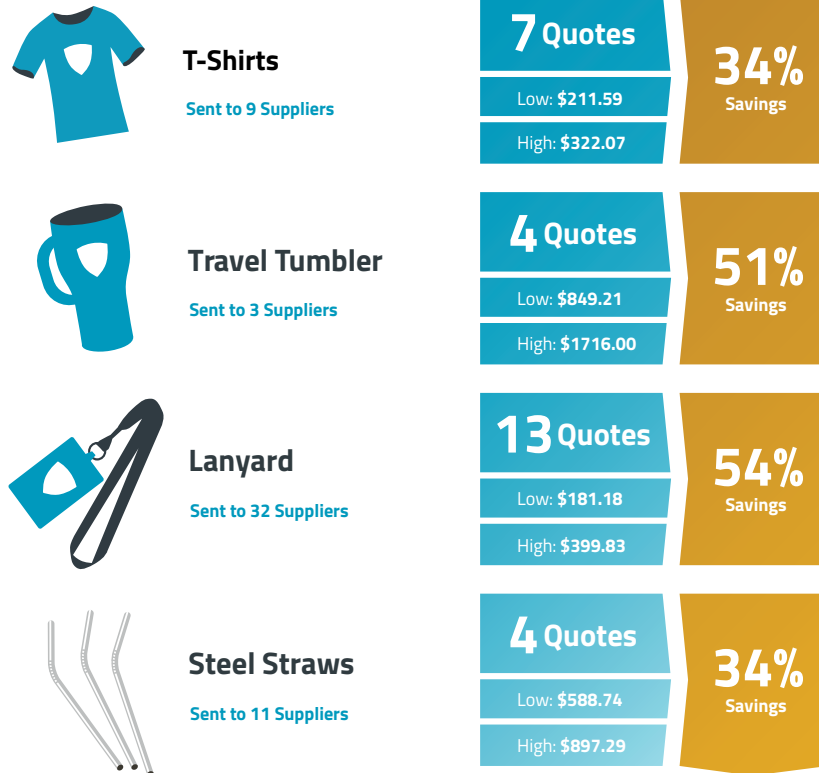
Reduce frustration

Find out before wasting time with a vendor who has no or low inventory of the item you need due to supply chain issues.

How AgoraQuote Works



Check out the numbers for yourself!



These examples show the differences between the highest and lowest quotes actual buyers received for their projects using AgoraQuote.

38%
Savings

About Corexpan

Corexpan was founded on one simple idea: make it simple for buyers and sellers to connect and do business together. Over the past 20 years, our solutions have proven themselves to be potent tools that amplify sales, maximize spend management, and empower massive business growth. Corexpan is a leader in helping buyers and sellers of all sizes to simplify the way they do business online.

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