

# Sustainability is the New Mandate - Changes in the Promotional Products Industry

*Brands are demanding sustainable products for their promotional marketing strategies. Sustainability is not a trend, it's a shift from rampant consumerism.*

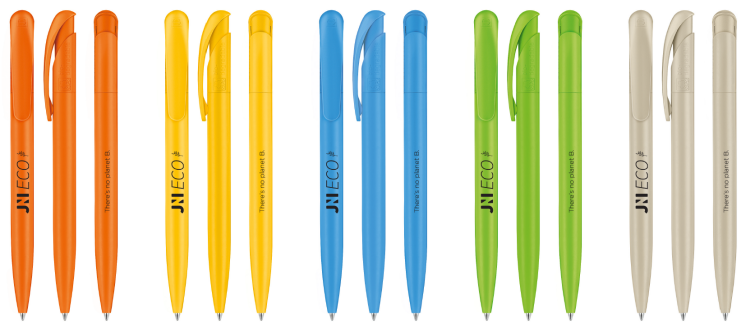
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/EINPresswire.com/ -- With shrinking resources on our planet and increasing costs of raw materials, brands are reacting to their client's demands for more eco-friendly, sustainable and ethically-sourced products as part of their promotional marketing strategies. Sustainability is not a trend that will soon pass due to fickle tastes. It is a permanent shift away from rampant consumerism towards a more ethical, greener approach in the product merchandising industry.

According to a 2016 study, writing instruments were the most popular category in the UK that people had received from a company within a 12-month period, followed by shirts, calendars, bags, drinkware, office suppliers and caps/headwear. With 88% of people surveyed claiming they remember a brand if they receive a promotional product from them, the power of merchandising is all too prevalent ([BPMA](#)). But with the UK's recent aversion to single-use plastic items and a feeling of over-consumption in many areas of life, product manufactures are having to stay one step ahead of the sustainability mandate.

Some suppliers have become very inventive with their eco-offerings. Jack Nadel International ([JNI](#)), a leading global promotional product distributing company, reports that companies large and small are competing for the best, sustainable and ethically sourced products, gadgets and designs the market has seen in years. Using cork, hemp, wood, bamboo and other sustainable materials, products such as biodegradable pens, plants in a wooden compostable cube, wheat straw fibre sunglasses, metal reusable straw packs, cork coffee tumbler, ceramic mugs with wooden lids, copper vacuum bottles and bamboo desk organisers and speakers, are being sourced from all over the globe and providing much-needed employment and revenue for many distant communities.

Elizabeth Venz, CEO International of JNI, says "global clients are reacting to the sustainability mandate in such a way that the old methods are being replaced by millennials looking to change the industry for good and reduce the client's carbon footprint." In addition to the change in



Eco friendly pens

products, new technology is having a vast impact on reducing carbon footprints. JNl has introduced a new single-platform interface that applies an in-location approach to source, warehouse and expedite orders in any territory. From webstore management and reporting to local physical storage, fulfilment and logistics to product sourcing and procurement, customers can now manage all their branded merchandise activities directly in each region. With 23 JNl offices in the USA, JNl's international head office in London oversees global regional offices (Athens, Amsterdam, Sydney, Hong Kong, Delhi and soon Kenya) to keep production within each region and ultimately cut down emissions and wasteful shipping costs and provide a greener, more ethical solution for clients wanting promotional products.

As a result of this initiative, JNl increased pre-tax profit by 47% in 2018 from the previous year and has enjoyed outstanding customer service and 35% growth. "It's all about quality not quantity now," says Venz. An example of how corporate clients are changing their mind-set is a recent order by Netflix of hand-made, multi-use Kanga sarongs/towels made by disabled people in Kenya. "The production helped these communities with employment and it's also a branded gift someone will want to keep. They will remember who gave it to them as it provides more meaning than a cheaper single-use giveaway," says Venz.

One problem is that many product distributors offer so-called green objects but the term can be misleading. For example, some will list a batch of pens as green just because they are made out of bio-degradable plastic. But the same distributor may also offer credible eco-friendly products that bear the FSC label, which means the item has come from a forest and supply chain that is managed responsibly. It shows that even though the industry is making an effort the results are uneven at the present time. That's why the British Promotional Merchandise Association (BPMA) is embarking on an eco/sustainability group developing industry incentives and carrying out research. "It's safe to say, perceptions have changed dramatically over the past year," says Jon Birrell, CEO of the BPMA.

As the sustainability mandate continues to trickle down to bring about more employment for far-reaching communities and turn back the tide on over-consumerism of cheap disposable products, the industry is witnessing economic growth and a more balanced approach to product merchandising.

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