

PROMOTIONAL  
CASE STUDIES  
RED NOSE DAY  
BANDANNA DAY

ORIGIN:  
THE BRAND  
PLATFORM  
BUSINESS



"...how a little red nose worth a few cents  
changed the destiny of an organisation."

# THE BRAND PLATFORM BUSINESS

BY DORRY KORDAHI

**W**orking on *Branded* has prompted me to lift my head from the day-to-day operations of DKM to talk with suppliers and competitors alike about the strategic shift underway in our industry.

*Branded* showcases the future as many see it.

Eight years ago the promotional products and merchandising industry sat firmly at the bottom end of the marketing industry. It was all about cheap coffee cups, cheap water bottles and cheap t-shirts.

When running an event or a campaign, promotional product purchases were left to the last minute, only used to soak up excess marketing budget if there was any. Purchasing decisions were left to the junior office assistant, who rang around for three quotes and went with the cheapest.

The result of this approach: the unfortunate association, in the minds of prospects and clients, of valuable corporate brands with products that looked cheap and were cheap.

This focus on cheap products only confirmed the general perception of the promotional products industry as being at the low end of the marketing profession. It was a self-perpetuating belief that persisted for decades - right through the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

This perception, however, is changing. It's changing on the back of some great ideas, and plain hard work, which has gone into recent campaigns and produced extraordinary results.

There is a new professionalism, and a new creativity.

Marketers are starting to understand the strategic value of promotions and merchandising.

Promotional product agencies are starting to respond by offering a more sophisticated level of service and input.

Suppliers are increasingly aware of their role in designing and supplying high-value brand platforms, as opposed to simply shipping container loads of cheap product in from China.

Take the summer's sensational Boonie Doll campaign for example. That was a very sophisticated product - and I am not just talking about the computer chips and timing devices.



The Boonie Doll was an ideal example of using a brand platform successfully. It captured perfectly the essence of the VB brand and delivered it into the hands and homes of beer drinkers everywhere.

And the publicity was astounding. The Boonie Doll will be remembered long after the TV ads and key sponsors are forgotten.

But remnants of the old world persist.

Last week we received a phone call from the organisers of a major sporting event in Sydney. The event was on the Sunday night, the phone call was on the Wednesday. To ensure the atmosphere was well and truly pumped, they wanted a promotional product to give away as the crowd entered the stadium.

We delivered. We always do.

What they got though was a pretty standard giveaway that appears at sporting events of all codes and significance.

But you have to shake your head and wonder.

What if they had taken a strategic approach and contacted us weeks earlier. What if, given a little more time and some thought, they had been able to give away an item that was unique, that captured the essence of their particular sport and that people would keep and value?

It wouldn't have cost them any extra. But it would have delivered a real punch that had life above and beyond the event itself - just as the Boonie Doll did for VB specifically, and cricket in general.

We have redefined the promotional products business as the brand platform business.

The brand platform business delivers greater reward and greater value to consumers, to marketers, to agencies and to suppliers. It is the business we are all in, whether we know it or not.