

Member Talk Track

HOW TO USE THIS TALK TRACK

Use this as a conversation guide, not a script. Start with the buyer's marketing needs before discussing products. Adapt the language to fit the relationship, program and business goal.

30-SECOND VERSION

A stronger branded merchandise conversation doesn't start with:

"What should we order?"

It starts with:

"What are we trying to accomplish, who are we trying to reach and what should happen next?"

When the goal, audience and moment are clear, branded merchandise can do more than fill a need. It can extend a campaign, strengthen an experience and keep the brand present over time.

START WITH THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

GOAL

What are you trying to achieve - awareness, participation, retention, loyalty, employee connection, event engagement or something else?

AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to reach, and what do we know about what they value, use or identify with?

MOMENT

Where will the branded merchandise enter the experience — before an event, during a launch, after a purchase, at onboarding or as part of an ongoing program?

ROLE

What should the branded merchandise help people do, feel or remember?

MEASUREMENT

What outcome would tell us the program worked - participation, response, repeat use, retention, sharing, recall or another behavior?



WAYS TO REFRAME THE CONVERSATION

Instead of treating branded merchandise as something added at the end, we can plan it as part of the broader marketing experience.

The goal isn't simply to distribute an item. It's to choose something relevant enough to be used, kept or remembered.

Quality and usefulness aren't just design considerations. They shape how the item represents the brand after the handoff.

Branded merchandise becomes easier to explain and justify when we define the marketing objective, then connect the recommendation to that outcome.

WAYS TO PRESENT A RECOMMENDATION

Based on the goal and audience, I recommend that we evaluate the options against four criteria:

- **RELEVANCE:** Does it fit the audience and moment?
- **USEFULNESS:** Does it have a clear role in people's lives or experience?
- **QUALITY:** Does it reflect your brand well?
- **CONNECTION:** Does it support the broader campaign or encourage the next action?

Rather than bringing back a long list of products, I'll develop a focused set of solutions and explain the role each one could play.

We should also consider how the branded merchandise connects with the rest of the experience, including the event, social content, employee communications, loyalty activity or follow-up.

CLOSING THE CONVERSATION

Let's align on the goal, audience and desired response first.

From there, we can build a recommendation that's easier to explain, approve and evaluate.



COMMON BUYER QUESTIONS

“We Just Need Something Inexpensive.”

We can absolutely work within the budget.

The question is how to use that budget in a way that feels relevant to the audience. A lower unit cost isn't necessarily better value if the item is ignored or discarded.

“We Can't Prove the ROI.”

We should evaluate the branded merchandise against the role it's being asked to play.

That could include measures such as participation, redemption, repeat use, event follow-through, employee response or connection to another campaign action.

We shouldn't claim a result we can't measure, but we can build a clearer measurement plan from the start.

“We Only Need a Giveaway for the Event.”

We can meet that need, but it's worth asking what the item should do after the event.

The strongest event merchandise can help people remember the experience, stay connected or carry the brand into their daily lives.

“A Strategic Approach Sounds More Expensive.”

Strategic doesn't have to mean elaborate or costly.

It means making a few choices with intention: the right audience, the right moment, a useful role and a realistic way to measure the outcome.

KEEP THE PLANNING LOGIC SIMPLE

Goal → Audience → Merchandise Role → Distribution Moment → Result → Takeaway

Start with the outcome you're trying to achieve. Let the product choice follow.