

Corporate Meetings & Incentives Magazine

March 2005

Corporate Meetings & Incentives Magazine editor Barbara Scofidio provides a regular column called "News from the Merchandise Side:"

"The merchandise industry is undergoing a shift as more companies realize what an effective motivator the right gift can be. Not only are more companies using merchandise for employee incentives and consumer promotions, but the program design, the awards, and the delivery are all growing more sophisticated.

CMI's annual incentive trends survey, published in January, found 25 percent of our readers using merchandise for dealer/distributor incentives, 11 percent for sales incentives, and 24 percent for non-sales employees. In its annual survey of readers, *Promo* magazine, *CMI's* sister publication, found that U.S. marketers are planning a significant increase in new premium and incentive programs between now and the third quarter. Among the trends that we're seeing on this side of the business:

Custom Gifts are Taking it to the Next Level

Artist-commissioned pieces, gourmet baskets with products not seen elsewhere, custom graphics—Originality, Inc. (www.originalityinc.com) in Oviedo, Fla., creates fresh, imaginative corporate gifts for customers or incentive winners. Recipients know that they're receiving something made just for them, rather than a stock item from a catalog.