

Breathing life into extraordinary promotional label concepts



“I want to run a promotion for my brand.” Saying this in front of your label supplier opens the door to a wealth of possibilities for you to bump sales, educate customers, increase engagement and encourage brand loyalty.

In this article, we’ll help you make sense of this sea of opportunity by:

- Showing you what’s possible with promotional labels

- Narrowing in on a few real-world promotions we've brought to market for clients
- Walking you through the consultative process your label supplier should walk through when selecting the best promotional label product for *your* brand's goals and budget

And off we go!

Today, almost anything is possible with promotional labels

When you think about promotions, probably the first thing that comes to mind are [instant redeemable coupons \(IRCs\)](#).

And, yes, IRCs are the tried-and-true, gold-standard product for moving product off the shelf quickly. We print millions of them every year.

But when it comes to promotions, there are so many more options:

- Simply updating your label graphics to call out a partnership with a non-profit, run a seasonal flavor of a popular product or highlight a limited time offer
- Scratch-and-sniff labels — to promote a new scent or product flavor you're releasing
- In-pack coupons or for future redemption
- Incorporating texture as a key feature of your label — like having a smooth and a stubbly label on your razor packaging
- Adding a recipe that your customers can make using your product
- Leveraging unique label materials (e.g., materials made out of wood, materials that can be written on with chalk, etc.) to further differentiate your product promotion
- Incorporating AR or QR codes into your graphics which consumers can scan to access information about your brand
- Using [digital label printing to vary your graphics label by label](#) (as with the famous Share-a-Coke campaign)
- [Scratch-off labels and pull-away game pieces for sweepstakes promotions](#)
- Hang tags to increase the branding real estate on your packaging
- Custom-engineering a completely new solution to meet your one-of-a-kind promotion concept
- All of the above, [empowered by smart NFC technology](#)

Bringing one-of-a-kind promotions to life



Has your team developed a concept so different from what's been done before — so out there — that you're having trouble finding a label partner that can pull it off?

If so, game on. We love bringing wild ideas to life. Ideas that make us go to the white board, draw up potential solutions until we land on one that makes us say, "That's it."

To help you see what's possible, here are a couple examples of unique promotions we've brought to market:

"Can you package seeds in a label?"

We have a patent for [biodegradable seed label packets](#). Why? Well, because one time a magazine client came to us and asked, "Do you think we can send out seeds in our magazine?"

We'd never done it before, and that's exactly what excited us about the project.

We white-boarded our concept — packing small carrot seeds on the adhesive side of a dry release compostable label — but the client wanted to see physical samples. So we got out our X-acto knives, put together some handmade mockups and sent them to the client. When the samples arrived, the client stuck the seeds in the dirt and, sure enough, carrots grew.

Breaking ground on new smart label applications daily

Most smart phones have built-in NFC readers, [unlocking smart labels](#) as a hugely powerful promotional tool for your brand. Your customer can simply tap their phone to the NFC label and they'll be led to unique content (landing page, video, product use information, etc.).

You can fine-tune what content is shown by location, time of day, product, season — and, because it's all hosted in the cloud, you can update the campaign so that each time a customer taps the label, you could engage them differently.

There are limitless permutations of how your brand can leverage this technology. Here are a few ways we've done it in the past.

- **Building a conversation-starter into your wine bottle** — When a winery wanted to run a campaign to celebrate women's suffrage, we developed unique NFC-enabled labels for 12 different suffragettes. When a customer tapped the label, they learned the story of one of the women.
- **Educating your customers while promoting your products** — A lawn and garden company wanted to educate its customers about when to use its grass seed and other lawn care products. We incorporated NFC labels at the store display level, allowing customers to opt in to regular, educational notifications.
- **Embedding NFC chips into a temporary tattoo** — For a major movie premier, we incorporated NFC technology into temporary tattoos. When a moviegoer tapped their tattoo, the main character would pop up in their selfie camera — and they could take a selfie with them.

Handling high-value sweepstakes games

We've executed many a sweepstakes project for major brands, with grand prizes ranging from \$10,000 all the way up to \$250,000 — some for many years in a row.

And we have many options to make your game one-of-a-kind. We can create game pieces that your customers peel off, or ones that they scratch to reveal the winning code. Or, if you'd like, we can make your game pieces scented. If you can dream it, we can bring it to life.

Incorporating an IRC without sacrificing branding real estate

A few years ago, a personal care brand enlisted our help in engineering an on-package IRC without sacrificing any branding real estate.

But this product came in a small tube — which had limited design space to begin with.

So instead of taking the well-worn approach and placing the IRC on the tube's backing, we increased the product's visual height by adding the IRC to the top.

What is normally an underused area of the product became a billboard that not only served a functional purpose but also seamlessly accented the product design. [You can see the full story here.](#)

Working around your goals, vision and budget

With so many possibilities at your fingertips, your label supplier should have an initial consultation to help you home in on the solutions best suited to meet your specific goals.

They should ask questions like:

- **What's your position in the market, and who is your target demographic?** What works for a premium organic brand probably won't work for the cost leader in the same product category.
- **What, exactly, do you want to accomplish with this promotion?** Educate the consumer, drive loyalty, boost sales by offering savings? Something else entirely?
- **If your goal is savings, do you want to provide the customer savings on *this order or future orders*?** [IRCs](#) are great for immediate redemption, but an in-pack coupon or a direct mail postcard would work for future redemption.
- **Do you want an on- or off- or in-package promotion?** There are products that go on your package (labels, hang tags, etc.), products that are part of your store display (shelf talkers, aisle violators) and products that go in your package (coupons placed in FDA-approved overwrap).
- **Are you interested in experimenting with smart label technology?** And, if so, would you like to do it at the unit level or the display level?
- **What's your budget?** There are infinite possibilities for what your brand *could* do, but your label supplier should be able to select the best one that fits within your budget.

To see how these questions guide you in the right direction, let's consider a hypothetical food brand with national reach: Soy To The World (STTW), a purveyor of premium organic snacks.

Finding the right promotion for Soy To The World

STTW loves telling the origin story of its product ingredients, down to the farm and square foot the soy grew in. Their target customers buy into this story and like to feel good about the products they're buying and the food they're stocking their family's pantry with.

As we talk to STTW, we realize their goal is to drive loyalty, not move products — and, in fact, coupons would undercut the story at the center of their brand.

Instead, it might make more sense to use a smart label to drive engagement and, ultimately, loyalty.

Customers could tap their phone to the NFC-enabled promotional label, opt in to get notifications and then receive a geo-targeted list of organic farms in their area they can visit and support.

By providing educational information about what their customers already care about, STTW is able to establish a meaningful relationship with their customers beyond simply buying and consuming their snacks. And although they're a national brand, they're able to connect with consumers on a regional basis.

Let's bring your promotion concept to market

The goals, vision and desired outcomes for your promotion are as unique as your brand. And if you need help developing a market-ready promotion concept around *your* brand's needs, we can help.

We've been brainstorming, developing and executing promotional packaging projects for decades, and we can help guide you from start to finish.

[Talk to our team today](#), and we'll give you specific, actionable advice fine-tuned to *your* brand's needs — whether that's bringing your concept to market or figuring out where to start.