

Spring 2004, Volume 2
Cotton Promotion Bulletin
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How To Do It

10 Quick and Easy Ways to Promote Cotton on a Limited Budget

By Richard W. Silvia. While major consumer and trade advertising is an important part of getting the cotton message out to the general public, it requires a major commitment of time, energy and a big budget. There are many less expensive opportunities to promote the benefits of cotton fiber and cotton products. The key to great promotions is to maximize your dollar commitment by tying in trade partners and getting as much publicity as possible for your efforts. Try these sure-fire approaches the next time you want to promote cotton to the industry or to your target consumer audience.

More: [Richard W. Silvia's bio](#)

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More: [Anne Martin's bio](#)

How to Protect Your Fiber Mark

By David Weinstein. Here are important questions to ask about the word, design, and/or combination of them you use in connection with your fiber products. From now on I use *logo* for any or all of these things. What options are available to you if, after spending a great amount of time and money developing a product logo, you learn use of the logo cannot occur everywhere, or anywhere, the product is or will be offered? Why would someone else's use of a confusingly similar logo for the same or similar products create problems for you? Where should you look to find whether your use of the mark may or will present liability risks? When should you ask and answer these questions?

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Promoting Cotton on a Limited Budget:

10 Quick and Easy Ways, By Richard W. Silvia

While major consumer and trade advertising is an important part of getting the cotton message out to the general public, it requires a major commitment of time, energy and a big budget. There are many less expensive opportunities to promote the benefits of cotton fiber and cotton products. The key to great promotions is to maximize your dollar commitment by tying in trade partners and getting as much publicity as possible for your efforts. Try these sure-fire approaches the next time you want to promote cotton to the industry or to your target consumer audience.

These techniques work whether or not you have a textile industry, and whether or not you have a logo.

1. Develop a Point of sale display promoting cotton products

Find a retail partner in your country an offer to promote cotton products in their store. Begin a dialog. Offer to supply counter cards, window displays and brochures promoting the benefits of cotton. If your budget allows, develop a newspaper advertising tie-in promoting this sales opportunity.

2. Develop a hangtag program for manufacturers of cotton products.

Develop a hangtag using your cotton logo or mark and offer it to manufacturers of cotton products. You can co-op (absorb a percentage of the cost of the tags) to make it more worthwhile for a manufacturer or retailer to use them. Tie in key retailers in the same market with point of sale displays promoting the hangtag programs

3. Give an award to designers, manufactures, or retailers in your country for new designs or innovations highlighting cotton and its benefits.

Run a contest within the textile or retail industries in your country and award prizes to the most innovative designs or ideas. Throw an awards party and invite the press to maximize publicity. If it is successful, make it an annual

event.

4. Do a fashion show.

Find up and coming designers and ask them to develop fashion items in cotton. Get a top retailer to promote the designers with you. And have the fashion event in their store to maximize consumer response. Invite the press to get top coverage for the designers and the cotton message.

5. Find a Textile, Design, or Fashion focused college, to work with to run a contest for students to develop unique fashions from cotton products.

Offer a scholarship to the winning designer, and a laptop computer to two runners up. Invite the press to the awards ceremony to maximize publicity.

6. Rent a billboard

Highway billboards in high traffic areas are a great way to get the cotton message out. Keep the message simple and prominently display your cotton logo for maximum tie-in effect. Or just use the word 'cotton'.

7. Develop signage at key sporting events

Major soccer, football, baseball or autos racing events offer an excellent opportunity to promote your logo and cotton message to a captive audience. This not only will promote your message to the huge audience in attendance, but also you will benefit from the television coverage that will show your logo as well.

8. Become Television Savvy

Get involved with local education television shows and use this opportunity to highlight benefits of cotton. Develop a strong public relations message. Find a local up and coming celebrity to promote your cotton message. Consumer and early morning talk shows are a perfect way to promote new apparel fashions from cotton. You should also take the opportunity to promote the comforts of cotton for the home in sheets and towels in programs catering to home decorating.

9. Become Magazine Savvy

Take your public relations message to consumer magazines. Magazines are constantly looking for the latest trends and information for their readers. Tie in your cotton message with the latest fashion information and trends. Inform consumers of the latest developments in cotton and how it they will benefit from these cotton innovations. This is a cost effective way to develop publicity, which targets your key audience- women 18-44.

10. Develop a consumer-friendly website

If your web site is strictly aimed at the cotton industry, develop another one aimed at the consuming public. Make it easy to navigate, and fill it with cotton promotion ideas, consumer tips on buying and caring for cotton garments and possibly games and contests. Spice it up with great fashion shots of cotton products and make it fun. Update the site monthly to keep them coming back. This is a great way to get the cotton message directly to the consumer

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Ten Ways to Publicize Your Cotton Promotion Efforts

By Anne Martin

The purpose of public relations is to create an image for you and your cotton promotion efforts. Used effectively, PR can raise awareness, create excitement, give you an edge over alternative products, and put cotton in the forefront of the minds of your target audience.

Public relations includes a variety of marketing tactics that strengthen credibility, enhance image, develop goodwill or influence public opinion. These tactics, such as speeches, special events, newsletters, annual reports and news releases, are targeted to an audience. PR involves communicating who you are, what you do, why you do it, and how you make a difference. By tapping into the tried-and-true techniques of PR, you can reach potential new customers, opinion leaders and decision-makers, and remind existing ones of how cotton will enhance their economies.

PR can be hard to define: Many don't truly know what it is, and some confuse it with advertising. Publicity, the result of good public relations, means your message appears in an editorial context (the editorial parts of a newspaper, magazine, or radio or television broadcast) rather than in an advertisement. With PR, the editor or producer determines whether your news gets covered and if so, from what angle. What people read, see and hear is what the publication or show's editor or producer thinks will interest his reader or viewer. This third-party messaging implies endorsement: Someone other than you is trumpeting the virtues of cotton, which adds powerful credibility to your message.

Ten Effective Public Relations Tactics

Brochures and web sites are effective PR tools, but following are ten other effective PR tactics with which you may be less familiar, and which can elicit great results:

1. Media Relations

Publicity (defined above) is often the result of media relations, such as news releases, press kits, media advisories, news conferences, press tours, and personal letters or phone calls to editors and reporters, all designed to communicate your message to the press. Get to know your press targets personally: PR is all about relationship-building, and a member of the press corps will be far likelier to take your call or read your press release if he or she knows your name.

2. Special Events

Events draw attention to your cotton promotion efforts and bring people together to learn about them. Consider hosting an open house to special members of your constituency; promote your efforts at a trade show, hold receptions that target those who can help you raise awareness for cotton; and give speeches about your efforts. The more frequently your message is communicated in a public forum, the likelier it is to be remembered.

3. Newsletters

Publications like this newsletter contain short articles intended to keep your constituents up-to-date on what your organization and its people are doing. Think about starting your own quarterly or bi-annual newsletter to share cotton information with your audience.

4. News Sheets and Action Alerts

Action Alerts are one or two page communicating urgent or recent information. The intent is to motivate the reader to take a specific action, such as write a letter to a public official or change a purchasing habit. These can be effective tools in your arsenal as you build awareness for cotton.

5. Tip Sheets

These one or two-sided sheets contain advice, instructions, or other information of particular use to your audience. The objective is to show off your expertise in the area of cotton, and share information in an altruistic yet promotional manner. These sheets are usually formatted as bulleted or numbered lists.

6. Letters to the Editor and Op Ed Pieces

Promote your expertise by writing a letter to the editor or an Op Ed piece responding to relevant items in the news. Be ubiquitous as a spokesperson and outspoken advocate of cotton and cotton promotion.

7. Speakers Bureau

Arrange to speak at meetings of professional and trade associations, service clubs, civic organizations, and community groups to raise awareness of cotton among your audience, and those who could potentially assist you in your efforts.

8. Sponsorships

If you don't want to organize a special event, sponsor a relevant event that somebody else is organizing. Make sure your sponsorship is acknowledged on advertising, programs, posters, or other promotional materials.

9. Charitable Contributions

Even though a donation generally has to be very large to make news, a consistent commitment to giving back to your community by supporting causes related to your cotton promotion efforts does much to enhance your image. Be sure your donation is acknowledged in the recipient's newsletter, annual report, or other promotional materials.

10. Thank You Notes and Letters

Directly thanking opinion leaders and supporters for their help, customers for their business, and donors for their contribution will encourage repeat actions, and is good business practice. A small thank you can go a long way to being remembered the next time you reach out to the same individual or organization.

Anne Martin is president of Anne Martin Marketing Communications, a public relations and web development firm specializing in home furnishings and lifestyle clients. She is the recipient of numerous awards for public relations, advertising and newsletter excellence. [More...](#)

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A Recipe for Cooperative Advertising

Developing a co-op advertising program with your key customers is an excellent way to promote cotton to the retailer, and to your ultimate customer, the consumer.

There are many levels of involvement, depending on the budget that you have allocated for the project. Some approaches such as television or consumer magazine advertising can be very expensive. Other projects such as developing in-store promotions can be handled by most budgets. The real goal is to create excitement for cotton products in the mind of your customer.

Cooperative advertising was a mainstay of the synthetic fiber companies for many years as a way to sell more pounds of fiber, and the amount of money allocated for co-op advertising was directly tied to the amount of pounds sold. Today, fiber companies are taking a fresh look at targeting specific programs to build brand awareness, and allocating the budget for each individual program. The old rules with approximately 3% of the selling price allocated for co-op advertising no longer applies. Targeted advertising for brand identification has become the norm.

Obviously you can develop an advertising or promotional program on your own, but the real "win-win" situation occurs when you are able to get a partner to cover part of the costs in an advertising program, or to develop an additional promotion effort to continue to support the growth of cotton. Your initial introduction into co-op advertising may involve some or all of the following:

- Fully paid ads by your organization
 - You can offer to pay for an ad or series of adds for a key manufacturer or retailer if they promote cotton products using your cotton logo predominately in their ad.
 - Develop your own ad and offer to highlight a key manufacturer in the ad if they use and promote cotton and use your cotton logo on their products.
- Partially paid ads by your organization
 - You can offer to pay 25%, 50%, or 75% of the cost of an ad depending on the level of involvement by the manufacturer or retailer. The normal approach is a 50/50 payment option with your organization paying half of the cost of the ad if the manufacturer or retailer pays the other half.

- You can offer to pay for one ad if the manufacturer or retailer pays for an additional ad. The objective of the "one and one" approach is to commit your advertising partner to promote the program on their own, using their own dollars and advertising department, but promoting cotton using your cotton trademark. These approaches can effectively double your advertising effort and dollars.

Here are some time-tested winners to promote cotton products in the marketplace:

- Work with some of your **key manufacturers** to develop an advertising program to promote cotton.
 - Develop an ad to run in key **trade magazines** to promote cotton products, and offer to tie-in your target manufacturers' cotton programs. Require that the manufacturer use your Cotton Mark or Logo effectively on their products and in their own advertising. These approaches will effectively double your advertising effectiveness.
- Find a **retail partner** who will advertise cotton programs in newspapers and circulars and pay for a portion of the advertising cost.
 - This is a great way to reach the consumer at a relatively low cost. By covering a portion of the advertising cost, you can insure that the cotton message will be seen. You might offer to support a one-page supplement of new fashion items from cotton if the cotton logo is predominantly displayed on the page.
- Find a **retail partner** and offer to develop a point of purchase display promoting cotton products.
 - This is an effective use of your advertising budget. Counter cards are inexpensive, and promote your cotton message directly to the consumer. Retailers like it because it because the cotton message helps to promote sales of their cotton products. Try to tie this in at a time that the retailer is developing a promotion specifically for cotton products. Offer to help defray the cost of a window promotion of cotton products if you can display signage promoting your cotton logo.
- Develop a hangtag program
 - Most manufacturers use hangtags to promote the features of their garment, sheet or towel. They are a built-in advertising opportunity aimed at the consumer. Take advantage of this approach and develop your own, aimed at the benefits of cotton.
 - Offer it to your manufacturing partners at your cost. Because you are buying it in a larger volume and offering it to many manufacturers, the volume cost will be lower for the individual manufacturer. You should verify that the product meets your specifications for cotton products. By developing your own hangtag, you will assure

that the cotton message is effectively told.

- This approach works well if you actively support your logo to the consumer, and the added recognition at retail will build brand awareness for cotton products.

Do's and Don'ts!

- **Do** take control of the program as it relates to the use of the cotton logo and the cotton message. Remember it is your money- so spend it effectively!
- **Do** begin with a small program until you are comfortable that co-op advertising works for you. If the program is too unwieldy, it may be too difficult to control, and too difficult to quantify the results
- **Do** be sure that any co-op ads that you pay for have been run! It is too easy to take the retailer or manufacturer's word that the money was spent in the manner agreed to.
- **Do** put everything in writing! Make sure that your retail or manufacturing partners understand what they are expected to do to receive payment for their part in the partnership. If the rules are vague and open to interpretation you will have no one to blame if you are not satisfied with the results.
- **Don't** make the program too complicated! It is difficult to control your cotton message and proper use of your logo unless it is clearly defined, but remember the real goal is to expand the cotton message. Making it easy for your manufacturing or retail partner to comply is an important step.
- **Don't** forget that this should be fun and beneficial to all. True partnerships work best if all parties feel that they got value for their time and effort. Proper planning and attainable goals will lead to growth in cotton awareness and sales of cotton products for all parties involved.

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Fiber Logos are Valuable Assets Entitled to Legal Protection

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David A. Weinstein
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Here are important questions to ask about the word, design, and/or combination of them you use in connection with your fiber products. From now on I use *logo* for any or all of these things. What options are available to you if, after spending a great amount of time and money developing a product logo, you learn use of the logo cannot occur everywhere, or anywhere, the product is or will be offered? Why would someone else's use of a confusingly similar logo for the same or similar products create problems for you? Where should you look to find whether your use of the mark may or will present liability risks? When should you ask itself and answer these questions?

How you respond to these questions can have an impact on your product's success or lack of success. The right to use a logo free and clear of infringement claims by others and use by imitators is essential to success. Routine selection and use without regard to or recognition of favorable or unfavorable business and legal consequences may lead to a product's failure.

Logos, or trademarks as they are known in legal circles, can be among your principal intangible assets. Often they are the primary and, in some instances, the only readily available means the public relies upon to distinguish products containing or made of your fiber from products containing or made of from a different fiber.

EGYPTIAN COTTON owned by the Alexandria Cotton Exporters Association, WOOLMARK owned by Woolmark Americas, Inc, and ALPACA combined with a design owned by Asociacion Internacional de la Alpaca COTTON, are examples of logos that immediately bring to mind specific fibers. They are extremely valuable. The owners of these logos devote a significant amount of money, time, and effort to promote the fibers they identify with the objective of attracting and encouraging the public to purchase products containing or made of those fibers. Generally, the public relies upon such logos as assurance that the products they identify are of a uniform and consistent nature.

Fiber logos are subject to ownership under the area of law dealing with unfair competition, specifically trademark law. The legal rights associated with a logo allow the owner to exclusively

use it and prevent others from subsequently using the same or confusingly similar logo to identify identical or related products.

Selecting a logo

Because a logo usually becomes a valuable asset, you should give a great deal of thought to its selection. If you adopt and use a logo that is confusingly similar to a logo previously used and/or registered by someone else in the United States or elsewhere you may have problems. Your use might be challenged and if a challenge is successful, you will lose more than the right to use the logo. You may lose all the time, effort, and money you devoted to developing a desirable reputation for the product under the logo. Moreover, it is likely you will incur legal expenses to defend and/or settle an infringement claim.

Keeping these possibilities in mind, at the time you are thinking about selecting a logo and before your use, it is prudent to determine whether anyone uses and/or has registered a confusingly similar logo anywhere in the United States or elsewhere you offer or will offer the product. A confusingly similar logo is one used in connection with a product that is the same as or similar to the product under consideration and similar in sound, appearance, and/or meaning to the proposed logo, ignoring differences in spelling.

To learn whether there may be obstacles to registering your logo in a country, it can be worthwhile to have a trademark search conducted before filing and obtain an opinion about registrability. Generally, this is an approach to take that I recommend to my clients. If the search indicates it is unlikely you will be able to register your logo, you save the costs and fees applicable to filing if you decide not to file.

A trademark search can involve looking at government records as well as various publication and organization name listings and other name/logo information sources in every country where you want to use the logo. Avoid selecting and using any identical or closely similar logo that you know to be used by others for the same or related products.

How rights are acquired and where they can be enforced

In the United States the process of acquiring rights to a logo is not complicated assuming the logo is available. Proprietary rights are acquired by simply by using the logo on or in connection with products. Registration or the filing of documents with a governmental body is not required. However, these rights are not nationwide in scope at that time unless the logo is used throughout the country at the time of first use. These rights exist in each geographic area where the products the logo identifies are offered and promoted. They expand geographically as use of the logo expands geographically. Federal registration is an exception to this basis for acquiring rights and

is mentioned below.

As a consequence, the person who first uses a logo in a particular geographic area obtains the exclusive right to use it there for the products the logo identifies and typically has a basis to challenge a later user of a confusingly similar logo for the same or similar products regardless that the later user has been able to incorporate or qualify to do business under the name in that state/area.

The right to exclusively use a logo continues as long as the logo is continuously used to identify the products. Misuse of the logo or failure to stop others from using a confusingly similar logo could jeopardize the owner's rights.

Registration of a logo in the United States does not result in its protection in other countries. Similarly, registration in another country does not result in protection in the United States. Protection for a logo is on a country-by-country basis. Accordingly, it is unlikely you have rights in your logo in a country outside the United States unless you have registered it there, regardless that your products may be distributed in the country. If this is the case, it is possible for someone else to file to register the identical logo in that country before you file to register there and prevent you from using your logo on products you distribute in that country and prevent you from registering it there.

In some instances, it is possible to obtain protection in many countries by filing a single application. Doing this can give you widespread coverage. For example, you can file a European Community application with the objective of obtaining protection in the 25 member countries, rather than filing a separate application for each member country. This is a recommended approach because there are many advantages that arise from it including a sizeable cost savings in filing and attorney fees.

For countries that are not part of a trade union that provides for trademark protection throughout member countries by a single filing, it is necessary to register in each country where you want protection. For instance, is necessary to file separate applications in Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand if you want protection in each of these countries.

Ownership

In most instances in the United States, the actual user of a logo is the owner. In other countries, the registrant is usually the owner and user. An individual who creates the logo does not necessarily own it. Where a party other than the owner uses the logo with permission of the owner, such permission should be documented by means of a written license agreement.

Registration

In the United States, registration of a logo with the United States Patent and Trademark Office is not required to obtain rights and does not create rights. In other countries, the government agency responsible for trademarks handles registration.

Although registration in the United States is not required to gain rights, it is desirable because it gives certain benefits. Federal registration is handled by the United States Patent and Trademark Office in Washington, D.C. and offers significantly greater benefits than does a state registration of a logo. Federal registration is communicated to others through use of the encircled letter "R", ®, or the phrase "Registered U.S. Patent and Trademark Office" in association with the logo. This notice should not be used unless a logo is federally registered. The designation "Tm" is commonly used in association with a logo that has not been federally registered.

In most countries, the application filing date is very important. It can be the measuring date for when rights begin in a country, including the United States. Frequently it is referred to as the priority date. In the event of a conflict between two logos, the priority date can be a determinative factor regarding which logo is infringing.

Depending upon the country where registration is sought, it is possible to obtain a registration in as short a period as a few months after filing an application. In other cases, the registration process can take anywhere from one to two or more years to complete. However, despite the time involved, usually rights begin the date an application is filed.

Scope of rights

Not all words, names, phrases, designs or combinations of them are capable of functioning as protectible logos. The common or generic name by which a particular product is known is free for use by all businesses to accurately refer to their services or products. In addition, a word, name, etc. which describes the nature, function, quality or geographic origin of a particular product initially may not be protectible as a logo if there is no evidence to the effect that it is recognized by the relevant public as identifying and distinguishing a particular product rather than describing a characteristic of it.

Misspelling a descriptive word or name will not normally result in the creation of an otherwise unprotectible logo at the time it is first used. Even when a descriptive word or name does attain the status of a protectible logo, other businesses may continue to use it in a non-trademark sense to properly and correctly describe the product without violating the rights of the business that claims rights to it as a logo.

The protection available to a business with regard to a logo will vary depending upon the distinctiveness of the logo and the way it is used to identify the products. Generally, words, names, and the like that are laudatory or highly suggestive of an attribute of the product it is used to identify, or which are commonly used as elements of logos by others, have little distinctiveness and are considered to be weak logos entitled to a limited scope of protection. That is, such logos may be simultaneously used by unrelated businesses to identify closely similar products without any violation of rights as long as the logos differ in some way and the products can be distinguished.

Words and names that do not communicate any characteristics about the products would be viewed as strong logos entitled to a broad scope of protection. Such logos may be in the form of coined words (KODAK) or arbitrary in the sense that the known meaning for the word is not applicable to the product (i.e. CAMEL for cigarettes).

This type of logo may require more input, from an advertising standpoint, to establish customer recognition for the product at the outset because there is no readily perceivable association between the logo and the product. In spite of this factor, it is highly desirable that a business utilize this type of logo because of the greater degree of protection available.

Infringement

Where the logo of a particular fiber producer is used to identify competitive or related products by an unauthorized user of the logo it is in the interest of the logo owner to challenge such use with a view towards stopping it where circumstances merit such activity. Unauthorized logo users will undoubtedly adversely effect the business of the logo owner in a number of ways and possibly jeopardize the owner's rights in the logo. The sale of products will be lost by virtue of consumers purchasing the infringer's products, relying upon the appearance of the logo in connection with them, in the belief that they come from, are sponsored by or are in some way connected with the owner of the logo.

It is unnecessary to prove that members of the relevant public are actually confused by an infringer's use of a logo. The law only requires a showing of likelihood of confusion. The result of a successful showing of confusion, before a court, may be an injunction prohibiting the infringer from continuing use of the confusingly similar logo and, possibly a money award to the challenging party.

Conclusion

There are many other aspects of using and protecting logos that are relevant but which are not mentioned in this article. It is not necessary to know about or fully understand them to recognize

that logos can and should be protected.

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