

No. 17 - BAMKO

www.bamko.net

BAMKO made one of our largest climbs this year, jumping from the No. 32 spot in 2017 to the No. 17 spot in 2018. We interviewed Phil Koosed, president of BAMKO, to find out how the company grew its sales, as well as his thoughts on outside competitors and the millennial customer.

STANDING OUT

Besides sales numbers, Koosed shared some insights on what made BAMKO a top distributor for 2018. "We are certainly unique in this space," he said. "We are part of a publicly traded company, which makes us one of the most resource-rich and geographically diverse players in the industry. We have back office operations in India and a sourcing operation in China—both staffed entirely with our own employees—that I believe are each the biggest of their kind in the industry."

That setup, Koosed said, was a major advantage for the company. "The structure of our business is different from most distributors, and it offers us significant technological superiority, better product sourcing and cost-effective operations," he said.

SALES SUCCESS

Koosed pointed to a few key factors that led to BAMKO's success in 2018. "We had two great acquisitions in 2017 that were an ideal fit in terms of culture and competency," he said. "More importantly, 2017 was the most successful year for our company culture in its history.

We had more people than ever in dogged, relentless pursuit of becoming the very best versions of themselves. The inevitable byproduct of that sort of grit and personal growth is a company that ends up looking very good in hindsight."

"The reality is that we had so many individuals pushing themselves, and wholeheartedly giving of themselves and to others, that they helped will us to a great 2017," he continued. "From what I've seen so far in 2018, our culture continues to just knock the cover off of the ball, and I'm convinced that will result in tremendous success."

BAMKO's acquisitions also played a major role in its leap up the sales charts. One of them, Los Angeles-based Public Identity, helped BAMKO gain a foothold in the collegiate licensing space. The other, Tangerine Promotions, had even greater impact.

"Tangerine Promotions was itself a top 40 distributor," Koosed said. "Joining forces with Tangerine gives BAMKO a strong base in the Midwest (Chicago), and gives us capabilities in the POP/POS display and merchandise space that are right at the very top in the industry. This offers unique competencies and value add that we can offer to our existing customer base."



No. 23 - BrandVia Alliance

www.brandvia.com

Making a big leap for our 2018 list was BrandVia Alliance, which jumped from No. 31 last year to No. 23 this year. Jim Childers, president of BrandVia Alliance, shared his thoughts on success, technology's role in the industry and the company's goals for 2018 and beyond.

A BIG YEAR

As one of the biggest climbers on this year's list, we were curious to hear how BrandVia Alliance made the jump. "We attribute our success this past year to our clients who took great care of us, giving us additional projects and referring us to fabulous new opportunities within their circles," Childers said. "We are grateful for such strong organic growth. We continue to see our customized tech-based solutions attracting buyers."

"The success is reciprocal, by taking care of our hardworking team, their passion drives them to exceed our client's expectations, and in turn our clients take care of us," he added. "Everyone benefits."

EXPANDING TECHNOLOGY

Owing in part to the company's headquarters in the Bay Area, BrandVia Alliance has embraced the tech change for its promo business. "We continuously work on leading innovations with our proprietary tech platform, and this constant search to be the most innovative in our space gives our teams and our clients a leading edge over other tech platforms," said Childers. "Our tech platform provides access and insight into information that is typically 'inaccessible' in the other out-of-the-box options. Whether it's building a microsite or e-store, we ensure that the outcome is tailored to the client's brand."

MOVING AHEAD

Despite the huge year, Childers explained that BrandVia Alliance doesn't want to stop there. "We want to continue the fantastic upward momentum of 2017," he said. "Our goal is to challenge ourselves to continue to exceed client expectations. Our No. 1 goal is to ensure working with BrandVia is a delight for clients and team members. It is imperative that we continually strive to find new ways that enable our clients to grow their business and our team members to expand their confidence and knowledge-base to experience personal and professional growth."

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2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Company Name	Promotional Product Sales (000)	Total Sales (000)	Employees	Locations	Principal(s)	City, State
1	1	4imprint	\$607,997	\$607,997	915	1	Kevin Lyons-Tarr, CEO	Oshkosh, Wl
2	4	HALO Branded Solutions	\$415,000	\$415,000	480	25	Marc Simon, CEO	Sterling, IL
3	2	Proforma	\$368,900	\$492,000	200	650	Greg Muzzillo, Founder; Vera Muzzillo, CEO	Cleveland, OH
4	3	BDA LLC	\$346,500	\$346,500	500	75	Jay Deutsch, CEO	Woodinville, WA
5	-	Taylor Communications	\$238,000	\$2,000,000	5,000	100	Deb Taylor, CEO	North Mankato, MN
6	-	DiscountMugs.com	\$210,400	\$210,400	1,100	2	Sai Koppaka, President and CEO	Medley, FL
7	5	Integrated Merchandising Systems LLC	\$209,400	\$279,400	392	10	Josh Tobey, CEO	Morton Grove, IL
8	6	Geiger	\$185,500	\$185,500	400	19	Gene Geiger, CEO	Lewiston, ME
9	7	AIA Corporation	\$175,000	\$175,000	80	3	Matt Gresge, CEO	Neenah, WI
10	9	American Solutions for Business	\$170,134	\$284,943	1,035	533	Larry Zavadil, CEO	Glenwood, MN
11	8	iPROMOTEu	\$167,162	\$167,162	89	1	Ross Silverstein, President and CEO	Wayland, MA
12	10	Jack Nadel International	\$122,000	\$133,000	260	27	Craig Nadel, President	Los Angeles, CA
13	13	Brand Addition	\$117,000	\$117,000	370	9	Karl Whiteside, U.S. Managing Director	Saint Louis, MO
14	11	Kaeser & Blair Inc.	\$114,333	\$114,333	120	1	Kurt Kaeser, CEO	Batavia, OH
15	18	G&G Outfitters	\$89,300	\$97,200	325	8	Doug Gardner, President	Lanham, MD
16	16	Boundless	\$84,332	\$84,332	100	8	Henrik Johansson, CEO	Austin, TX
17	32	BAMKO LLC	\$83,700	\$266,810	200	1	Philip Koosed, Founder and CEO	Los Angeles, CA
18	15	A Brand Company	\$83,600	\$83,600	134	11	Fred Parker, CEO	Charlotte, NC
19	19	The Vernon Company	\$76,616	\$76,616	331	3	Chris Vernon, President and CEO	Newton, IA
20	-	Sunrise Identity	\$74,271	\$74,271	122	3	Mitch Mounger, CEO	Bellevue, WA
21	20	The Summit Group	\$66,300	\$66,300	153	4	Michael J. Harper, CEO	Silver Spring, MD
22	25	ePromos Promotional Products Inc.	\$57,800	\$57,800	151	3	Jason Robbins, CEO; Steve Paradiso, President	St. Cloud, MN
23	31	BrandVia Alliance	\$54,900	\$54,900	142	2	Jim Childers, President	San Jose, CA
24	24	Axis Promotions	\$50,506	\$50,506	65	4	Larry Cohen, President	New York, NY
25	29	Genumark	\$48,500	\$52,500	101	5	Mark Freed, President and CEO	Toronto, Ontario
26	30	Zorch International Inc.	\$48,400	\$48,400	50	1	Mike Wolfe, CEO	Chicago, IL
27	28	Overture Promotions	\$47,500	\$47,000	140	3	Jo Ann Gilley, CEO	Vernon Hills, IL
28	26	PromoShop Inc.	\$45,400	\$45,400	110	10	Guillermo Kahan, President and CEO	Los Angeles, CA
29	34	Quality Logo Products	\$42,250	\$42,250	115	2	Bret Bonnet, President and Co-Founder	Aurora, IL
30	35	Chamberlain Marketing Group	\$42,000	\$42,000	124	7	Jerry Chamberlain, CEO	Taylor, MI
31T	-	APISOURCE Inc.	\$36,000	\$36,000	200	2	Cindy Brown, President and CEO	Lanham, MD
31T	36	Mercury Promotions & Fulfillment	\$36,000	\$36,000	65	5	Jon Sloan, CEO and Managing Partner	Sterling Heights, MI



2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Company Name	Promotional Product Sales (000)	Total Sales (000)	Employees	Locations	Principal(s)	City, State
33	40	Touchstone Merchandise Group LLC	\$35,800	\$35,800	85	14	Derek Block, President and Founder	Mason, OH
34	38	Kotis Design	\$34,000	\$34,000	185	4	Jeff Becker, President	Seattle, WA
35	39	Inkwell Global Marketing	\$33,500	\$33,500	56	3	Steven Marder, President	Manalapan, NJ
36	37	Eagle Promotions	\$30,777	\$30,777	176	1	Sean Ono, CEO	Las Vegas, NV
37	42	Boost Engagement/Shumsky	\$30,647	\$30,647	69	1	Dawn Conway, CEO	Dayton, OH
38	-	The Image Group/Target Marketing	\$30,500	\$30,500	88	4	Jon Levine, President	Holland, OH
39	44	Pinnacle Promotions	\$30,000	\$30,000	93	1	David Weintraub, CEO	Norcross, GA
40	46	Zagwear	\$29,816	\$29,816	52	8	Toby Zacks, CEO	Orangeburg, NY
41	43	Stran Promotional Solutions	\$29,900	\$27,900	57	7	Andrew Stranberg, CEO	Quincy, MA
42	41	Barker Specialty Company	\$29,750	\$29,750	85	1	Gerald Barker, President	Cheshire, CT
43	45	Leaderpromos.com	\$27,750	\$27,750	87	5	Stephanie Leader, Owner and CEO	Columbus, OH
44	47	e Group Inc.	\$27,317	\$27,317	30	1	Cynthia Miller, President	Reston, VA
45	-	Boost Promotional Branding	\$26,600	\$26,600	84	3	Teki Hall, CEO	Richmond, VA
46	48	Smart Source LLC	\$26,000	\$127,000	360	40	Thomas D'Agostino Jr., CEO	Atlanta, GA
47T	-	Image Source	\$25,000	\$25,000	46	2	Thomas Goos, President; Brian Haner, CEO	Kirkland, WA
47T	-	The Icebox-Cool Stuff LLC	\$25,000	\$25,000	105	2	Jordy Gamson, CEO	Atlanta, GA
49	-	WebbMason Marketing	\$24,546	\$115,341	375	23	Warner Mason, CEO	Hunt Valley, MD
50	50	HDS Marketing Inc.	\$23,900	\$30,200	86	5	Howard Schwartz, CEO	Pittsburgh, PA

Honorable Mentions

Some companies chose not to report promotional sales figures, typically because of parent company policy. Rather than rank them based on estimates, we have chosen to list them alphabetically here. (Last year's ranking in parentheses where applicable.)

- Artcraft Promotional Concepts (23) Brown & Bigelow (19) Cimpress Cintas eCompanyStore (35) Fully Promoted (14) InnerWorkings Inc. Positive Promotions (17)
- Safeguard/Deluxe Corp Staples Promotional Products

Mergers and Acquisitions

As mergers and acquisitions continue apace in the promotional products industry, the Top 50 can see significant changes year to year—not just in distributors that no longer appear on the list after merging with another company, but in higher placement for distributors that absorb those revenues. In prior installments of this list, we've included footnotes annotating notable acquisitions. Due to the large number of acquisitions in 2017, for this installment we've instead listed them here.

- HALO Branded Solutions acquired American Pacific Promotions in November 2017, Michael C. Fina Recognition in February 2017 and Catalyst Marketing Inc. in February 2017
- BDA LLC acquired Sports Merchandise Global in October 2017 and SwervePoint in July 2017
- Geiger acquired PromoManagers Inc. in August 2017
- BAMKO LLC acquired Tangerine Promotions in December 2017 and Public Identity in August 2017
- ePromos Promotional Products Inc. acquired Motivators Inc. in June 2017
- The Image Group merged with Target Marketing in June 2017
- Stran Promotional Solutions acquired Lindon Associates in September 2017

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