This guide has been designed for ASU staff who purchase ‘swag’ promotional items.

Please confirm all products, pricing and details with vendors.

For additions and improvement ideas for the Sustainable Promotional Materials Toolkit, please email one of the Staff Council Sustainability Committee chairs.
Arizona State University has made an institutional commitment to lead by example through the sustainable operations of its campuses. By demonstrating exemplary practices and sharing solutions, ASU stimulates changes in individual, institutional and corporate behaviors to create a more sustainable world.

- What is the purpose of this swag?
- Does the swag have to be a physical giveaway?
- Could it be consumable?
- Could it be non-material?
- If a physical giveaway, is it reusable?
- What is your budget for these items? (keep in mind, the cheaper the swag, the more likely it will end up in the trash)

**TIP:** If possible, brand items without a year/date so they can be used in the future. Known as making your item ‘evergreen’.

**Branding Considerations**

Promotional items need not meet all of these criteria, but should at least fit one:

- **Sustainable Living** Does it support a sustainable lifestyle or sustainability message?
- **Sun Devil Spirit** Does it build affinity for ASU?
- **Relevant and Useful** Does it have a purpose that makes sense for your intended recipients?
Best practices

If you must give a material swag item, procure it with long-term use, re-use, and sustainable production in mind; offer gift choices that are less likely to be discarded.

Some departments offer up extra supplies and swag to share out.

Product features

Useful Purpose - is the item useful, and not “just stuff”? 

Made with Recycled Materials is always preferred

Made in USA (or, better, made locally) is preferred

Reusable is preferred over recyclable, compostable, or disposable materials

Items made from recycled materials is recommended

If reusable options are not available, recyclable or compostable items are preferred over disposable

Product materials and concerns

Batteries - avoid zinc-based batteries because it’s hard to recover zinc, batteries in general have to be specialty recycled which makes it difficult to safely dispose of

Ceramic - manufacture requires a lot of heat and energy; glaze may have heavy metals; not recyclable

Cotton - choose organic, or cotton blended with another natural material, such as bamboo or hemp (synthetic plastic fibers leach microplastics into the water when washed)

Magnets - not easily recyclable, flexible magnets are even more problematic

SPF products - (sunscreen, lotion, chapstick) mineral sunscreens are better than chemical sunscreens, also avoid ingredients; Oxybenzone, Octinoxate, Avobenzone and Retinyl Palmitate (source)

Stainless Steel is preferred over aluminum but both can be endlessly recycled unlike plastic
Vendors

You can purchase pens, totes, t-shirts or other swag items from an approved vendor. **If the item is being imprinted with any ASU approved logo or wordmark then a licensed vendor must be used** to procure the product. You can visit [clc.com/license-search](http://clc.com/license-search) and search by product category or by location/school.

ASU licensed apparel vendors

The following awarded **internal licensed apparel** (updated 3/21) university-wide contractors are available to provide you with quotes, samples, artwork, availability and delivery.

**ASU Print and Imaging Lab:** [print.asu.edu](http://print.asu.edu)

**Anton Sport:** [antonsport.com](http://antonsport.com)

**BC Graphics:** [myblankcanvas.com](http://myblankcanvas.com)

**College Thread, Greek House:** [greekhouse.org](http://greekhouse.org)

**University Tees:** [universitytees.com](http://universitytees.com)

**X-treme Apparel:** [x-tremeapparel.com](http://x-tremeapparel.com)

You can find complete information on ASU licensing requirements and licensed apparel vendors [here](http://here).
Vendor | ASU Print and Imaging Lab

The ASU Print and Imaging Lab is dedicated to delivering hands-on, educational experiences for Arizona State University students, faculty and staff. In following with the ASU sustainability commitment, the Print Lab is continually looking for ways to produce print and marketing pieces as sustainable as possible. Below are some of their sustainable efforts/products. New product offerings are added regularly, check the website frequently print.asu.edu.

All ASU Print Lab printed materials contribute to a sustainable forestry initiative called Print Releaf, which replants an equivalent number of trees to offset the material consumed by the job. More information can be found at printreleaf.com.

Notebooks and notepads are a great low-cost promotional item with limitless options for personalization that are made from fully-recyclable paper materials.

PVC-Free Vinyl Decals can be custom produced to your desired size, shape, and artwork without the need to create any dies. The vinyl they use is an environmentally responsible alternative compared to traditional self-adhesive PVC films which are made from petroleum and emit toxic compounds.

Bamboo straws, chopsticks and cutlery sets. Can be personalized with department logo or wordmark at bulk quantities. These can be bought as a kit in a portable carrying case or individually.

If you’ve ever printed a poster on foam board, you should really try this sustainable alternative, called Falcon Board. Falcon Board is a multi-purpose corrugated, printable board that’s perfect for posters, it’s 100% recyclable and can be printed full color and cut to any size.
Questions to ask vendors when purchasing material swag:

» Are you able to give quantity estimates on products or is that something that needs to occur on an order by order basis?

» Can you help me understand how you find/procure sustainable items? Do you reach out to your current vendors to see what they can offer?

» Is there a criteria for sustainable products you offer?

» Have you seen any of these products up close and personal?

» Have you had any feedback on the longevity and usefulness of your products?

» Ink used for printing has been an area of concern in sustainability. Do you know if the products utilize safe/biodegradable/sustainable ink on printed materials?

» What about packaging? If these are sustainable, is packaging reduced? Recyclable? Biodegradable?

» If my item typically comes individually wrapped in plastic, can the wrappers be left out of my order?

» If the product or packaging is recyclable - what is the material?
Glossary of terms

**Biodegradable:** Describes material capable of timely decomposition under natural conditions as a result of biological activity. Biodegradable materials can be broken down by microorganisms such as bacteria, enzymes, and fungi or other decomposers.

**Evergreen:** Evergreen is a term used when an item doesn’t contain specifics such as years or event names. Consider if your promotional items can be ‘evergreen’ items.

**Fair Trade:** An alternative approach to conventional trade, based on a partnership between producers and purchasers of products. A fair trade commodity price ensures that farmers and workers get a fair share of the benefits of trade, allowing them to plan and be economically safe. A percentage of the commodity price goes into community development projects in the farmers’ community.

**Greenwashing:** The deceptive or misleading use of advertising and marketing to overstate an organizations’ environmental or sustainable practices.

**Microplastic Pollution:** Microplastics are very small pieces of plastic that pollute the environment. Microplastics are not a specific kind of plastic, but rather any type of plastic fragment that is less than 5 mm in length according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the European Chemicals Agency. They enter natural ecosystems from a variety of sources, including cosmetics, clothing, and industrial processes.

**Organic:** A term signifying the absence of pesticides, hormones, synthetic fertilizers and other toxic materials in the cultivation of agricultural products; “organic” is also a food labeling term that denotes the product was produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act.

**Renewable Energy:** Energy that is derived from natural resources (such as sunlight, wind, water flow, geothermal heat, etc.) and whose supply is naturally replenished.

**SWAG:** Is an acronym for ‘Stuff We All Get’, free promotional items.

**Zero Waste:** A system-wide approach that seeks to maximize recycling, minimize waste, reduce consumption, and ensure that products are designed to be reused, repaired, or recycled back into the environment or marketplace.
TOP PICKS

sustainable material swag

» Reusable silverware
  (bamboo or metal in natural fabric/compostable case)

» Reusable straws (bamboo or metal)

» Recycled canvas tote

» Natural soap bars

» Bamboo toothbrushes

» Recycled notepads or journals

» Herbs/growable planters

» Reusable produce bags

» Tire pressure gauge
TOP PICKS
sustainable
non-material swag

» Tickets to events (e.g. ASU sporting events, Gammage shows)

» Special digital badge to share on social media (e.g. LinkedIn)

» Subscription (e.g. meditation/yoga app, audio books, news outlet, etc.)

» Virtual meeting backgrounds (Dropbox link to ASU Hub collection)

» Professional development opportunities/meetings

» Lunch and Learn with a Dean/EVP (can be virtual)

» Offer secret word (for Sun Devil rewards points)

» Promo codes/coupons
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