



# Get Ready For A Comeback

While several states began reopening restaurants, parks and movie theaters in late April, June remains the tentative expiration for many stay-at-home orders. As more consumers emerge from their homes and more stores, salons and venues reopen, they will look to promotional products to protect customers and promote their business.

In mid-March, stay-at-home orders were issued across the U.S. and Canada to help slow the spread of coronavirus. According to *The New York Times*, 316 million Americans (95 percent of the population) were isolated by the orders. To maintain social distancing, lawmakers ordered bars and restaurants to close dine-in areas, and all but nonessential businesses were closed. Residents in many states were mandated to stay home except for essential activities, such as to shop for groceries or pick up medication.

Thirty million Americans filed initial unemployment claims by May 1, and according to NPR, coronavirus has killed more Americans than those who died in the Vietnam War. With the country shut down, sales within the promotional

products industry slowed along with most other industries. As cancelled events led to cancelled orders, companies saw sales fall dramatically, by 70 to 90 percent by April 1, in some cases. Although COVID-19 has profoundly impacted business, it also highlighted the flexibility and responsiveness of the promotional products industry. Many industry companies quickly restructured their businesses to supply needed personal protective equipment to the medical community and general public alike.

After weeks of shutdown, at least some counties in more than a dozen states began a tiered reopening of businesses by late April and May with some states delaying until June.

Despite plans to reopen across the country, most voters support social distancing efforts to slow coronavirus. According to an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 58 percent of voters said they are concerned the measures might be lifted too soon, risking a second wave of outbreaks, compared with 32 percent who are more concerned the measures might stay in place, risking further economic hardship.

In mid-April, the White House released guidelines for “Opening Up America Again” and listed “protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries” as a core responsibility of the states. This is also one of the key missions of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a part of the U.S. Labor Department. It has limited workplace inspections and as of April 10, no longer enforces record-keeping requirements for COVID-19 cases, except when the employer can obtain clear evidence that an employee’s infection was work-related.

Protecting workers from coronavirus has been left largely to employers. To get back to business, employers will need personal protective equipment such as face masks and hand sanitizer, and signage to promote social distancing and hand washing. Many companies are also looking for ways to let customers know they are open and about additional safety measures, as well as ways to show appreciation to their frontline workers. With the economy beginning to slowly accelerate forward, promotional products can be crucial for companies looking to reconnect with existing clients—and connect with new ones—in a unique and impressionable way.

## Products That Protect And Promote



Signs are crucial for any work environments—they display important messages, direct visitors and tell potential shoppers that the business is open. This 18-inch-by-24-inch, USA-made, **full-color corrugated plastic sign** can be printed vertically or horizontally. Opt for an “H” stand to convert it to a yard sign.

[Galaxy Balloons / PPAI 113835, S8](#)  
[www.galaxyballoon.com](http://www.galaxyballoon.com)

This **multi-purpose wearable** is the perfect accessory for showing off a favorite brand, sports team, company or organization. Made with soft stretch polyester, it can be used as a face mask, neckerchief, bandana, wristband, hood hair tie and more. Clients can customize it on both sides with a PMS-color match imprint. A Prop 65 compliant product, wearing instructions are in each individually-wrapped package.

[Quinn / PPAI 360359, S6](#)  
[www.quinnflags.com](http://www.quinnflags.com)



# The Rise Of Hand Sanitizer

As states lift stay-at-home orders, businesses reopen their doors and consumers continue to take precautions by practicing good hygiene and social distancing, sales of personal protective equipment, such as face masks, gloves, soaps, antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer, will continue to be in high demand.

According to a market research study by Nielsen, sales of hand sanitizer increased by more than 300 percent in the U.S.

between February 22 and February 29, 2020 alone.



Although hand sanitizer is common in households today, it wasn't popular until 2002 when the Center for Disease Control and Prevention revised its hand hygiene guidelines to recommend alcohol-based hand sanitizer as a convenient alternative to soap and water hand-washing for health-care personnel and the public. By 2027, the market for hand sanitizer products is predicted to surpass \$2 billion worldwide, according to market research firm Fior Markets.

Rich Butler, managing director of supplier DermaCare Packaging & Private Label, LLC in Delray Beach, Florida, sees this category as one that will continue to grow. "As things settle down, all companies are going to adopt a hand-sanitizer program," Butler says. "Whether it's hospitality and travel, finance or health care, I think we are in a new reality."

Butler has been in the promotional

products industry for 31 years. "I've had moments of brilliant success, but nothing goes up in a straight line. It's been a very interesting run to say the least," he says. In the early 1990s, Butler first introduced private-label hand sanitizer to the promotional products industry, selling soaps and hand sanitizers in high-quantity orders through his promo line. Prior to 2008, it was commonplace for pharmaceutical companies to use promotional products to advertise a new drug or treatment.

When the pharmaceutical industry changed its code of ethics that year, non-educational and non-practice-related items were prohibited from being sold to health-care professionals. To remain relevant in the promotional products industry, Butler sold educational marketing materials, often incorporating facts and helpful tips for his products. "The PhRMA Code of

2008 killed my business," he says. "Twelve years later, with what's going on with this pandemic, my old business model has had a rebirth. It's ironic. This is the busiest I have been in 30 years."

PPB spoke with Butler to learn more about hand sanitizer and its relevancy in promo and in life today.

## PPB How has this public emergency affected the production of hand sanitizers at DermaCare?

**Butler** It's exploded and everyone needs product. The problem is there are big shortages in the market with alcohol and packaging. All of this just happened so fast. But the fact that I have the experience in the high-volume production, it has enabled me and a new partner to ramp this thing up, and we merged as DermaCare Packaging and Private Label. I have a 30-year run of servicing promotional products distributors, so I'm not the new kid on the block; it's just a new name.

All of the orders that we are getting right now are on our own house brand, PureGel Hand Sanitizer. It's a lot quicker to produce our house label. It's all about what you can deliver and how fast you can deliver it.

## PPB Tell us about how the Food and Drug Administration's changes to the guidelines on hand sanitizers have affected production.

**Butler** Here's the thing about hand sanitizers: they're classified as an over-the-counter drug by the FDA. Most people don't know that. There is a high level of compliance issues that must be adhered to, which is why I don't import hand sanitizers from China. Plus, the Chinese product is at risk of being embargoed, delayed in customs, rejected, quarantined or destroyed. All of our production is here in the states.

Essentially, if you are a distillery or a brewery, you still have to file, get approved and register with the FDA. Once you have



your registration number and you submit your labeling and ingredients, [the FDA is] not going to inspect your facility—it is too busy for that. The FDA has relaxed some of its requirements because of the pandemic. It came out with a temporary policy for the preparation of certain alcohol-based hand sanitizer products to allow for a lot of new companies to enter this space. But that doesn't give a brewery or a distillery free range to make anything; you still have to abide by formulations set forth by the World Health Organization and the FDA. It has to have a least 60 percent to 90 percent alcohol. Right now, we are producing [hand sanitizer] with 70-percent ethanol (alcohol), which complies with FDA and CDC guidance to kill germs.

**PPB What are the requirements for proper hand sanitizer labeling?**

**Butler** First of all, it has to be made in accordance with the ingredients that the CDC says are important. Sanitizers must be manufactured in preparation using ethanol that is not less than 94.4 percent by volume or a pharmacopoeia-grade isopropyl alcohol. There's guidance on all the CDC websites. You have to use purified water, glycerin, hydrogen peroxide—so there is a list of ingredients that have to be adhered to. Then, once it's batched up in a gel or liquid format, you then have to utilize drug fact labeling, which people have seen before on the bottles of name brand sanitizers you'd see at CVS or Walgreens. The label has to be in strict accordance with drug fact labeling or else it's considered misbranded, mislabeled.

It has to have an 800-number for poison control. All shipments have to be accompanied by a material safety data sheet. It tells you how to store the product, what to do if it's ingested and to keep it away from the eyes. But beyond that, the front of the label has the flexibility to say "Compliments of [so-so business.]" That's where private labeling comes in, but I see that more down the road. Right now, it's more "get me what you can get me."



For health-care workers or others who are required to wear face masks for long periods, the **Mask Buddy** is an easy way to prevent sore ears. Two buttons on either side of the one-inch headband allow the wearer to loop the elastic of the face mask around the buttons for a perfect, painless fit. The imprint on the headband can be completely customized.

[SnugZ USA](#) / PPAI 112982, S10 / [www.snugzusa.com](http://www.snugzusa.com)

As your clients reopen, give their customers peace of mind as soon as they step through the door with this **PureGel Spray Touchless Dispenser**.

This battery-operated, touchless hand sanitizer dispenser can be mounted on walls or placed on tables. Clients will appreciate this refillable dispenser as they grow their business and reconnect with partners. All DermaCare Line products are FDA-registered, CGMP-compliant and are made in North America.

[DermaCare Packaging & Private Labels, LLC](#) / PPAI 537995, S1  
[www.dermacarepkg.com](http://www.dermacarepkg.com)





As end users look to avoid high-contact surfaces, give your clients the **Kooty Key**, and they'll never have to worry about touching these surfaces again—even well after the pandemic is over. This lightweight, reinforced nylon hook has a rubberized tip, which can be used with digital touch screens, such as at banks or drive-thrus, and to prop open doors of up to 35 pounds. Made in the USA.

[High Caliber Line](#) / PPAI 205801, S10 / [www.highcaliberline.com](http://www.highcaliberline.com)

As parks and running trails reopen, inspire end users to get active with this 12-inch by 42-inch **Fitness Towel with CleanFreek**. Great for home workouts, clients will want to use this durable, soft, 100-percent cotton terry velour towel to give their logo an energetic boost. And, as end users work hard, the CleanFreek antimicrobial technology works even harder to prevent the growth of bacteria and fungus.

[Pro Towels](#) / PPAI 112755, S10

[www.protowels.com](http://www.protowels.com)

This 20-ounce **Stojo Collapsible Bottle** is a shape-shifting wonder. While plastic water bottles sell out at stores, this bottle holds 20 ounces when full and collapses into a small sphere when empty. This bottle is easy to manage and will come in handy when commuters return to the office. The tethered, leak-proof cap creates a loop handle, and the entire bottle collapses to an easy-to-stow-away 3.3-inches high when not in use. It's dishwasher-safe, and as a member of 1% For The Planet, every purchase benefits environmentally-focused efforts around the world.

[The Allen Company](#) / PPAI 113879, S5

[www.allenmugs.com](http://www.allenmugs.com)



Help mitigate the spread of germs with the **BIC Clic Stic Antimicrobial Pen**. One of the most popular retractable pens in promotional products is available with PrevaGuard—protecting the pen by suppressing the growth of bacteria, algae, fungus, mold and mildew on the pen. The barrel is available in black, navy, blue, red and white with eight trim color choices.

**BIC Graphic NA**  
PPAI 114187, S13  
[www.bicgraphic.com](http://www.bicgraphic.com)



Recognize facilities, departments and employees who are putting their lives on the line to keep the public safe with the **Vega Award**. Combining optical crystal with industry-first bubble glass, the Vega Award is an eye-catching way to say “thank you for your service.” Packaging includes a two-piece black gift box with die-cut EPE foam.

**Crystal D** / PPAI 112326, S8  
[www.crystal-d.com](http://www.crystal-d.com)



While it's impossible to know when daily life will return to normalcy, one thing is for certain: face masks are here for a good while. Keep your clients from hunting down face masks during a pandemic with this Bella + Canvas **Jersey Daily Face Cover**. This 4.2 oz, ultra-soft face mask is contoured to fit different face shapes and sizes. While this mask doesn't meet N95 mask standards, it's comfortable and breathable for those quick grocery store trips.

**alphabroder** / PPAI 156993, S16  
[www.alphabroder.com](http://www.alphabroder.com)



As the world becomes increasingly touchless, clients will appreciate the **TouchWrite Excel Ballpoint Pen**. This pen has a plastic retractable ballpoint pen and a touchscreen stylus, helping to keep fingers off high-contact screens. With a metal pocket clip and black comfort grip, end users can write in black ballpoint ink and send a text in the same motion. Choose from six metallic satin finishes.

**HPC Global** / PPAI 113506, S4  
[www.hpcglobal.com](http://www.hpcglobal.com) PPB

*Kristina Valdez is associate editor of PPB.*