

# YOU CAN SELL ANY PRODUCT TO ANY BUSINESS

Ripe for competition, explore the opportunities that abound in the promo products industry.

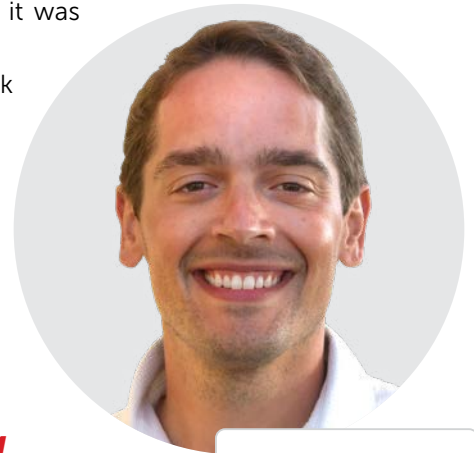
## INTRO

**Joseph Sommer** is president and founder of the promo distributor company, Whitestone, but he initially had his sights set on an industry with a different flavor: He wanted to be a chef. This all changed the summer after high school graduation in 2007.

While working as a summer camp counselor, he was paired with a more experienced counselor who had a successful promo products business he was running from his Blackberry. He was selling everything – jerseys, water bottles, bracelets – for events to large brands. Joseph explains, “I knew it was successful because I saw a six-figure check from Patron tequila.”

After asking the entrepreneur a million questions, Joseph realized he could work from anywhere, with any business and sell any product. The promo products industry had low barriers to entry, lots of support for starting businesses and affordable search engine and order management tools. He compared that to restaurants where there was a large capital outlay and seemingly low probability of success and quickly changed his college major from restaurant management to entrepreneurship.

Joseph launched Whitestone 18 months after college from his one-bedroom Manhattan apartment.



 whitestone

***“As a 23-year-old with just over \$10,000, I was able to three years later have a million dollars in sales and 11 years later just under 50 employees in a \$16 million business.”***

## THE BEST THING ABOUT THE PROMO INDUSTRY

“There is so much opportunity. I don’t know another industry where you can sell a product to absolutely any company but a promotional products distributor.”



## HOW TO GET SET UP FOR SUCCESS

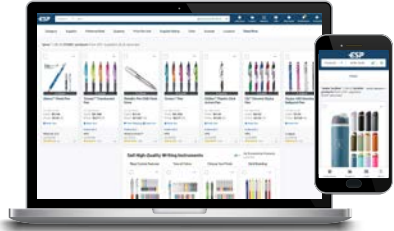
Within three years of joining ASI®, Joseph hit a million dollars in sales, and he doesn’t see this as a coincidence. While Joseph was building business plans and doing market research in college, he learned about ASI. He knew ASI was a partner that could help him get started in promo and provide all the resources he needed to be set up for success, so he joined immediately when starting his own business.

Joseph shares, “I felt very confident I would have success if I took the information they provided and implemented it in my business.” ASI helped him run his business in a variety of ways. He explains, “ASI was there to help me fill in the gaps with educating me on finding vendors.” He was also able to learn about decoration techniques and understand profit margin so he could properly price items.

***“ASI’s brand promise is to help make it easier for distributors to run and operate a successful promotional products business.”***

## MUST-HAVE TOOLS

The first tools Joseph got were: ESP<sup>®</sup>, so he could search for promo products; Connect<sup>™</sup>, so he could report on experiences with suppliers; and ESP Websites<sup>™</sup>, so his customers could access products through his website.



## MOST VALUABLE TOOL

Joseph describes ESP as “the Google for promotional products.” He praises the tool because it allows him to find the products his customers are asking for seamlessly and in seconds.

Another great thing about ESP from Joseph’s perspective is it does all the work for you. It’s easy to sell branded merchandise, even if you aren’t an expert. Whereas people may have limiting beliefs around entering the promo products industry, worrying about finding vendors and products, Joseph shares, “You don’t need to know the first thing about it – you just need ESP.”

ESP also combines with other tools and platforms, as Joseph explains, “ESP is built in the Common SKU, so we have 30 plus ESP licenses.”

*“I don’t think we can operate our business without ESP.”*

## STAYING IN THE KNOW

Joseph’s company meets every Monday and he shares industry news and articles. From the economy to the global marketplace to supply chain issues, they’re kept up to date thanks to ASI. In addition to news, ASI also publishes research, like the State of the Industry, which provides a snapshot of all aspects of the industry, including products, markets, pricing and much more.

*“ASI news and editorial help us stay on trend, stay informed and make business decisions.”*

## BUSINESS SAVINGS PROGRAM

Another ASI benefit Joseph benefits from is the Business Savings Program. He really enjoys working with Certified Marketing Consultants, who not only specialize in lenders, mergers and acquisition, but work exclusively with promo products businesses. They understand the industry, which makes all the difference for Joseph.



## WHY ENTER THE INDUSTRY

*“This is an industry that is ripe for competition. It’s right for growth. It’s very healthy and it is set up for those who want to put in the hard work to have success.”*



**Explore the ASI membership benefits Joseph talked about and more.**

**Explore Now.**

