

PROMISING RESULTS

Promotions Buyer meets 10-year member Co-Prom Ltd

SOURCING FLAVOURED CONDOMS and fart putty are just two of the tasks that help keep life interesting for Jackie Sharp, Director and founder of Co-Prom Ltd.

She set up the business in 1984, at the age of just 21. Soon, the company gained its first client, Revlon. Co-Prom were tasked with supplying desktop items for a promotion to encourage pharmacists to buy more cases of Flex shampoo. Jackie says: "This led to many toiletry companies, such as L'Oréal, Lancôme and Wella using our services. For more than 10 years, cosmetic products were the main part of our business."

Co-Prom went on to gain clients by promoting the company at exhibitions. They offered giveaways, such as champagne for the Bubbling over with ideas campaign, and balloon flights, tied in with their Around the world in 80 minutes advertising.

Jackie says: "We would not just supply a one-off – each store would have a bespoke design, and this tailor-made service is something we continue to offer. We will always supply standard items, but we like to think more creatively."

"In the past, we have sourced manicure sets for a Rimmel promotion. They wanted to theme their promotion for its launch in autumn. So we provided sets in autumnal colours with a tapestry design. Over the years, we have been asked for many weird and wonderful items, such as covermounts for children's books and magazines and rain ponchos for charities. This keeps things interesting and ensures we stay competitive."

The company is now housed in converted outhouses in Chichester, having moved from offices in Ham near Richmond. Jackie explains: "We have grown organically since we were established, and now employ seven full-time staff plus additional seasonal workers. We remain competitive due to low overheads, using reliable suppliers and freight forwarders and testing companies. Several of the people who work here have brand-management experience, which means they understand things from the client's point of view. We travel far and wide to source new products



LOOKS LIKE RAIN: Ponchos from Co-Prom



SHARP END: Jackie is the founder of Co-Prom



and have established very strong relationships with the Far East."

So how does Jackie think the industry has changed? She says: "Clients' expectations are greater. They want higher perceived value and lower costs. Gone are the days that a widget will do – tastes are more sophisticated."

"We have just revamped our website and we are exploring e-commerce. Our strapline is Don't compromise – Co-Promise, and I feel that our service levels and creativity really make us stand out." ●



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