



## Outreach Programs

**Company name:** *Prisonworld magazine*

**What they do:** Founded in 2007, *Prisonworld* is a publication that's dedicated to prisoners and their families and friends. "It's a new and enlightened form of entertainment, bringing information to an uninformed and pretty much uneducated society," says Jenny Triplett, co-founder of *Prisonworld* and co-owner of Dawah International. Dawah is a family-owned and -operated multimedia company that encompasses various forms of media, including print, audio, blogs, e-mail marketing, merchandise marketing, social media marketing and charitable efforts.

"We inform, we educate, we motivate, and we enlighten them and inspire them to go on and become productive citizens," Triplett says. "We are about resources and education, but we also include entertainment, because people are more likely to pick up an entertainment magazine than a self-help kind of thing."

**What promotional products mean to them:** Triplett says there are five reasons that *Prisonworld* invests in ad specialties. The first is fundraising. "Most people cannot fathom prison, but many wonder how they can help. Purchase a product, and the profits go to prison outreach," she says.

Second: brand marketing. "We have created such a brand within the last five years that people are in awe of our little engine that could," Triplett says. "It took off inside the system, and what we found is we needed a way to branch out and connect with those outside the system, which is a huge market of friends and family. It's also for organizations, lawyers, paralegals, activists – people who are just naturally interested in the prison system."

Third: promotional marketing. "We can use the magazine and its content in blog posts, speaking engagements, Facebook fan page giveaways, radio promo-

tions, etc.," she says.

Fourth: gifts. "Most corporate companies have swag bags for events," she says. "We can offer something for those who are accepting."

Fifth: image. "It makes us look good," she says.

**Ad specialties in action:** Triplett, who hosts a weekly radio show for *Prisonworld*, says her organization focuses on promotional mugs from CafePress ([asi/43167](http://asi/43167)) that have attracted a lot of positive attention. "We have a radio-themed mug, and then just the general *Prisonworld* mug," she says. "I'm a collector of mugs, and most places I go, I'll pick up a mug; we found that other people are interested in the same thing. It's a very, very popular product."

Triplett says she recently used mugs to boost *Prisonworld's* Facebook fan page. "I think it was at 800 Likes that we said that if we got to 1,000, we'd give away a mug, and if we got to 1,500, we'd give away another mug," she says. The mugs were so popular that people actually purchased them.

Triplett was sure to make *Prisonworld's* Facebook fans aware that 100% of the proceeds went to prison outreach. "It's not something that we're making a profit from," she says. "We use that money to help."

She also put together a carnival-like promotion for a fundraising event in which 25 mugs were used. "We displayed the mugs and we put pieces of paper inside, and you had to pick the right one," she says. "If the paper had a red X on it, you got a free mug, or you got a 25%-50% discount."

*Prisonworld* is about to celebrate its fifth anniversary, and promotional items have become an integral part of its continued success. "We didn't know what was going to happen, and it's just taken off and blossomed greatly," Triplett says.

## WHAT GOES AROUND ...

When Peacock Virtual Solutions, a company that offers virtual administrative support, moved into a new office last year, one of the first promotional items it purchased was 500 basic pens at 80 cents each. "I'd like to have done something less traditional and more unique, but our budget was limited and the pen seemed like an ideal compromise," says Director of Business Development Josh King. "Initially, we purchased them for our open house event in the spring of 2011. However, since then we've been handing them out along the way at networking events, seminars we've hosted, and to clients who've needed a pen."

One day after a recent team-building exercise, King and members of the Peacock staff stopped into a local bar and grill to unwind and discuss the day's events. Little did King know that he was about to come face to face with one of his company's 80-cent pens.

"Funny thing about pens: People use them regularly," he says. "When we went to pay the bill, we were handed a copy of the receipt to sign, along with one of our pens."

King and his staff chuckled about the odds of running into one of their company's pens at a restaurant. When he asked how the restaurant got hold of the pen, the manager said he had no idea.

But while King initially thought it was neat that his company's pens were reaching potential customers, he later came to see it as a learning experience. "At first, I took it just as a funny coincidence, but now, I think it was a missed opportunity," he says. "The pen just had our logo and business name on it. What if it had a tagline that accurately described our business? Or our website? Or our Facebook page? I'm not sure the value of the pen is quantifiable at this point, because I can't guarantee that anyone has been driven to our business as a result of the receiving it."

Since the unexpected encounter at the bar and grill, King and his staff have purchased other products that they hope will produce measurable results. They include presentation folders and banners for trade shows. The team is now looking into getting name tags that employees can wear to networking events as well.