

NEPPA Spring Expo

In the Game since 1974!

Celebrating NEPPA's 50th Anniversary, the home team gathered at Gillette Stadium on April 8th and 9th, marking five decades of being "In the Game Since 1974"!

The festivities began on Monday night with the Beacon Awards and Dinner at Howl at the Moon/Splitsville. We extend hearty congratulations to our distinguished 2023 award recipients. Supplier of the Year: Gemline; Distributor of the Year: Barker Specialty; Supplier Representative of the Year: Loren Cayer, CAS (SnugZ USA); Multi-line Representative of the Year: Joshua Brooks (Brooks & Brooks); Distributor Representative of the Year: Amanda Clay, MAS (Walker-Clay, Inc.); Rising Star: Erin Kennealey, MAS (Geiger) and Most Valuable Promo Person: Bryan McKatten (Peerless Umbrella).

The following morning, our Education Hour commenced with a journey through the "Evolution of Promo" led by esteemed panelists: Jason Lipsett (VP of Strategic Initiatives, Charles River Apparel), Selim Toby (Owner, Coed Sportswear), Michael Braley (VP of Operations, Gemline), Trina Bicknell (CRO, HPG), David Miller (President, NC Custom), Andy Shape (President, Stran Promotional Solutions), and NEPPA's own Treasurer, Ben MacDonald (VP of Sales, The Ad King, Inc.).

The show floor buzzed with our Sponsors, Volunteers, Distributor Attendees (and their guests), featuring the latest trends alongside retro promo items in our product pavilion.

A special thanks to all NEPPA members, committee members, and volunteers for your unwavering support and for making the event a success. We look forward to seeing you at our next gathering at FENWAY PAHK on May 15th!

Emily Codner, MASI, iPROMOTEu, Co-Chair

Sarah McMahon, MPG Promotions, Co-Chair

Committee:

Anthony Abatzis, ETS Express

Lee Coscia, Themco LLC

Christie Miselis, PCNA

Nicole Ridlon, CAS, iPROMOTEu

A Look Back and a Look Ahead

NEPPA Spring Expo Panel Discussion

The NEPPA Spring Expo featured a captivating industry panel discussion moderated by Emily Codner, MASI, iPROMOTEu. The diverse panel included seven professionals: individual distributor owners, representatives from top 40 distributors, and supplier sales and operations leaders. Together, they offered a wealth of experience spanning 50 years in the promotional products industry.

Panelists

Jason Lipsett, VP of Strategic Initiatives
Charles River Apparel

Selim Toby, Owner
Coed Sportswear

Michael Braley,
VP of Operations
Gemline

Trina Bicknell, CRO
HPG

David Miller, President
NC Custom

Andy Shape, President
Stran Promotional Solutions

Ben MacDonald,
VP of Sales
The Ad King, Inc.

The discussion centered on the evolution of the promo industry and its exciting future. Panelists shared valuable insights gained throughout their careers building and leading successful businesses. Key topics included the impact of print-on-demand technology, the importance of relationship building, the future of family-owned businesses, and the role of mergers and acquisitions in shaping the industry landscape.

The session also provided a nostalgic glimpse into the past. Panelists reminisced about the days of bulky FedEx envelopes, payphones, handwritten messages, and hand-delivering orders – a stark contrast to the contemporary tools and technologies used today. One particularly memorable anecdote involved the creation of a custom armored truck, showcasing the creativity and "can-do" spirit that define success in the promotional product industry.

Overall, the panel served as a testament to the resilience, ingenuity, and dedication of the promotional product industry. These characteristics have fostered a thriving entrepreneurial community, leaving a legacy of growth for future generations.

The panel discussion was met with enthusiastic feedback, with attendees praising the engaging format, knowledgeable speakers, and informative content.

Here are some of the specific audience comments:

"Great panel discussion and questions!"

"Fantastic panel – knowledgeable and informative!"

To see some of the lively discussion visit <https://bit.ly/NEPPAPanel>

Lisa Fosdick, Branded Treats

Professional Development Chair

NEPPA Beacon Awards Presentation

NEPPA's Awards Presentation took place on April 8th at Howl/Splitsville in Foxborough, MA, the night before our Spring Expo at Gillette Stadium.

President Rachel Wright of Leaderpromos opened the awards ceremony introducing Vice President Lori Donovan of S&S Activewear to present our 2023 Beacon Awards. The NEPPA Beacon Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of NEPPA members throughout the year.

NEPPA members vote to determine the "Best of the Best" suppliers, multi-line representatives and distributors.

The Rising Star award is presented to an up-and-coming promotional professional who brings new ideas, dedication and enthusiasm to both his or her company and the industry.

The Most Valuable Promo Person (MVPP) award, is presented to a member who has supported and participated in NEPPA events throughout the year.

Distributor of the Year

Barker Specialty

Supplier of the Year

Gemline

Distributor Representative of the Year

Amanda Clay, MAS of Walker-Clay, Inc.

Supplier Representative of the Year

Loren Cayer, CAS of SnugZ USA

Multi-Line Representative of the Year

Joshua Brooks of Brooks & Brooks

Rising Star

Erin Kennealey, MAS of Geiger

Most Valuable Promo Person

Bryan McKatten of Peerless Umbrella

