



# Stylish,

innovative and unique are not necessarily the first words which come to mind when thinking about the promotional products industry. However, these very same adjectives could easily be applied to one company that is making quite the mark in this very industry.

Since its inception in 2000, Toronto-based Right Sleeve Marketing Inc. (RIGHTSLEEVE) has gone about impressively building a name for itself by cleverly employing sleek, retail branding principles fused with in-house technological innovation to become one of the leading online promotional design agencies in our marketplace.

"When I was researching this industry, I found that it was a largely commoditized business with a lot of small players," says founder and president Mark Graham - who came to the conclusion that there was a great opportunity for a company with a sense of professionalism, style and retail flair that could enter this industry and really differentiate itself.

Graham was able to elevate RIGHTSLEEVE from basement to boardroom in a relatively short period time by pushing the envelope and leveraging his interest in retail branding - where fashion and style are paramount - and introducing it to the corporate arena by building a powerful web site that allows corporate and retail clientele to purchase online as well as manage their promotional spend across the entire organization.

How did this happen, you may be asking?

## SEVERAL YEARS AGO, RIGHT SLEEVE SWITCHED FROM BEING A PROMOTIONAL COMPANY THAT USED TECHNOLOGY TO A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY THAT SELLS PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Rather than approaching potential new clients with the same promotional catalogue that every other distributor would walk through the door with, RIGHTSLEEVE's strategy was to get rid of the catalogue altogether and approach the client with the technological tools they are capable of applying to any given promotional campaign. "Ultimately the customer would be evaluating us on something much larger than a promotional product so it becomes a lot harder for them to shop and compare (our services)," says Graham.

A good example of this would be the work RIGHTSLEEVE does for numerous children's camps to help them streamline their promotional spending on annual campaigns. Whereas before, camp administrators would need to either guesstimate the numbers of items they'd need



MARK GRAHAM (ABOVE) & THE RIGHT SLEEVE TEAM (RIGHT)



for the coming season's group of campers or they would have to go through the lengthy process of conducting their own pre-book with hundreds and hundreds of parents; RIGHTSLEEVE's approach essentially eliminated both of these previously inefficient methods.

Through the implementation of sleek, online retail-looking stores (which they build in-house and host via their website), parents are given the ability to log-in, shop, read products reviews and place orders within a 2-3 week window and then pay via an easy e-commerce checkout system - all which is custom built for that particular camp.

RIGHTSLEEVE then collects and produces these orders and ships them en-masse to the camp along with all the raw data contained in the back-end of the site for the camp to keep on file. "We make it so easy for our customers and we don't charge them for the online store," adds Graham who explains that the company also operates online stores within the financial services, consumer packaged goods, non-profit and healthcare sectors.

Nowadays, RIGHTSLEEVE's client portfolio reads like an blue chip fundraiser, with companies like Disney, Labatt, Expedia, Red Bull, Kraft...the list goes on and extends outside of Canada and well into the U.S.

Graham explains that his company has amassed such an extensive and sophisticated client base due to the unique value proposition it brings to the table. "The three pillars of our organization are promotional media, design and technology," says Graham, stressing his company's strategic online focus - which is based on a sleek web platform - to promote the initiatives of brand-leading accounts. "The web in our business touches literally everything we do when we deal with our customers and is huge competitive advantage for us. The internet has reshaped every sense of our business."

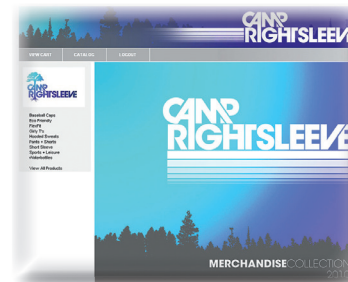
From product reviews to case studies to order tracking and account management, RIGHTSLEEVE's website presence ([www.rightsleeve.com](http://www.rightsleeve.com)) gives clients access to so much information that it really places them ahead of the competition, especially with accounts that care about this type of stuff (hint: the major corporations are the ones that do).



RIGHT SLEEVE'S CREATIVE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Graham explains that several years ago, RIGHTSLEEVE switched from being a promotional company that used technology to a technology company that sells promotional products as they invested so heavily in custom-build web systems, online social media, and back-end operating systems. "All of these things give us such an edge in so many different areas, especially since there are very few other companies doing what we're doing," stated Graham.

Of the notable technological advantages RIGHTSLEEVE boasts, is a comprehensive vendor/customer management system that enables them to seamlessly manage all aspects of their numerous and complex vendor relationships. Although RIGHTSLEEVE outsources all embellishment to its network of established partners, Graham confirms that the power of the company's information system allows them to turn around orders just as fast - if not faster - than in-house embellishers.



AN ONLINE CORPORATE STORE EXAMPLE (ABOVE) & APPAREL FOR CBC'S THE HOUR (RIGHT)



"What's unique about our approach to being online is that fact that we've built the entire system ourselves in-house, and now our web ecosystem give us so much more flexibility."

Aside from flexibility, RIGHTSLEEVE's technological proficiencies have helped the company reap some notable press; in addition to being one of our industry's most actively engaged leaders of social media marketing, Graham's company was the recent feature in Canadian Business' Profit magazine and the winner of Dell's 2009 Canadian Small Business Excellence Award. As the only Canadian company in the promotional arena to have ever won the award, RIGHTSLEEVE was recognized for its innovative use of technology to enhance customer, vendor and employee experience. The award came with \$25,000 in Dell products in addition to being entered into the global competition against the 12 other national winners from around the world.

As a paradigm example of a company which cultivated innovative ways to target our industry - RIGHTSLEEVE's fusion of technology, retail flair and professionalism has helped to swiftly propel them into one of North America's most unique promotional design agencies.