

PRESIDENT & CEO

Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) | Dallas/Fort Worth Area, TX is preferred - will consider remote



Promotional Products Work!®



Promotional Products Association International

PPAI is the trusted leader in the promotional products industry, delivering essential knowledge, resources, and community to ensure the success of its members, those who manufacture, import, and resell promotional products, and the promotional products industry itself by advocating on its behalf in Washington D.C. and to promotional products buyers/advertisers.

Founded in 1903, PPAI is the world's largest, not-for-profit 501(c)(6) association, representing nearly 15,000 member companies in the \$26.1 billion promotional products industry, which is comprised of more than 35,000 businesses and a workforce of more than 500,000 professionals. PPAI operates The PPAI Expo, the industry's largest and most influential trade show, which attracts more than 16,000 professional attendees to Las Vegas. Taking place at Mandalay Bay Convention Center each January, The PPAI Expo is held across more than 250,000 square feet of booth space, with north of 1,000 companies exhibiting. PPAI provides the leading promotional products safety and compliance program, offers prestigious professional development and certifications, and publishes an industry trade journal and leading digital media. The multibillion-dollar industry includes wearables, writing instruments, calendars, drinkware, and countless other items, usually imprinted with a company's name, logo, or message.

PPAI's Mission: Be the voice and force to advance the promotional marketplace for the benefit of our community.

PPAI's [Strategic Plan](#).

PPAI, like most associations, counts on volunteers to drive the Association forward by serving as subject matter experts and PPAI advocates, with the goal of helping the Association fulfill its mission. Volunteers are asked to do so through service on committees and the Board of Directors.

PPAI Membership Profile

The majority of the Association's members are located in the United States. However, PPAI's membership extends beyond the U.S. to firms throughout the world. The Association maintains close relationships with promotional products industry associations serving other countries, in some cases offering joint membership.

Distributors make up 91 percent of PPAI's membership, with suppliers at 8 percent and others making up the final 1 percent. Of PPAI member distributors, 97 percent do \$1 million or less in annual promotional product sales, while 76 percent of suppliers do \$1 million or less.

PPAI Core Values

Defined in 2023 and early 2024, the Association's core values are intended to inform organizational behavior regarding all situations, internal and external. We pursue **EXCELLENCE** through these values:

GROWTH: We grow through our continuous improvement, accountability, and servant leadership. We foster innovation and seek out advancement opportunities that collectively elevate the industry, our members, and our employees, resulting in financial strength.

INTEGRITY: We commit to honesty, transparency, and ethical conduct, cultivating the deepest trust through every interaction and each decision we make for the industry, our employees, and our planet.

COMMUNITY: We enable and create connections to bring exponential value to our stakeholders. We seek out diverse viewpoints and embrace belonging while encouraging teamwork and collaboration.

JOY: We believe in the joy our industry brings to product recipients and are committed to creating that same feeling through the experience of our members and employees. We strive to build a culture, both internally and externally, that results in true joy for all involved.

PPAI Portfolio

PPAI's portfolio consists of an array of products and services designed to help its members succeed while also promoting the power of promotional products.

- **PPAI 100** - The Association's most visible and highly regarded research and recognition program measures the leadership of member suppliers and distributors in eight areas vital to the future of the industry, from sales and sales growth to responsibility, digital practices, and beyond. In the program, 100 distributor companies and 100 supplier firms receive recognition and ranking among The Industry Leaders.
- **Promotional Products Work Campaign** - An engagement initiative aimed at impressing end buyers on the value and possibilities of promotional products, PPAI's flagship public relations effort arms distributors with media assets and ideas to connect with prospects and clients.
- **Professional Development (in-person and online)** - PPAI offers a wide selection of educational programming, from in-person events like the Women's Leadership Conference and North American Leadership Conference to online opportunities, all of which can be used toward the Association's certification program.
- **Affinity Partners** - PPAI partners with a variety of companies that bring added value and savings to our membership, including shipping service discounts, marketing support, accounting/finance services and more.
- **PPAI Media** - PPAI's most frequent engagement point with members involves its coverage of the industry through digital publications and a magazine printed ten times per year. An award-winning source of news, ideas, and research, PPAI Media has seen its audience share triple in the past three years.
- **Awards** - PPAI's member-driven awards and recognition programs celebrate creative excellence along with outstanding individual achievements and contributions.
- **Promotional Products Education Foundation (PPEF)** - A separate 501(c) organization, PPEF offers college scholarships to industry employees and their children. The organization, directed by industry volunteers, is serviced by PPAI through staffing and organizational infrastructure resourcing. The PPAI President and CEO also holds an officer position on the PPEF Board of Directors.

PPAI Events

- [The PPAI Expo](#) - The industry's largest and longest-running trade show, The PPAI Expo is held in Las Vegas each January. It attracts more than 16,000 industry professionals with more than 2,000 booths, offering exhibiting suppliers extraordinary access to the marketplace. The PPAI Expo is consistently rated a top-100 trade show across industries.
- [North American Leadership Conference](#) - The PPAI North American Leadership Conference (NALC) features engaging sessions and exclusive speakers tailored specifically for top-level executives and industry visionaries. An annual event held at a coveted destination in the spring, NALC provides insights and strategies aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the promotional products industry, along with elite partnership and networking opportunities.
- [Women's Leadership Conference](#) - Attendees will join women from diverse professional backgrounds as they exchange empowering business insights and celebrate successes at this yearly summer event held in unique locales throughout the nation. WLC is the place to make connections, toast the PPAI Women of Achievement and broaden horizons on everything from corporate finance to AI and the value of keeping a beginner's mindset.
- [Product Responsibility Summit](#) - Held each fall, this is the must-attend event for any promo professional or company trying to navigate compliance regulations in the industry. Attendees of the event – which rotates to new destinations each year – explore associated business implications, challenges and opportunities across unique areas of interest, connect with fellow compliance and sustainability pros, and chart a course for their companies' continued progress.
- [Leadership Development Conference](#) - With unique educational tracks for regional association volunteers and industry up-and-comers, attendees of this annual fall event in North Texas will gain actionable insights and broader industry perspectives. PPAI's Leadership Development Conference also fosters informal networking, allowing participants to connect with peers from across the country while offering a clarifying experience about the industry's collaborative nature.

PPAI Alliances

The Association maintains strong partnerships and relationships with 23 regional promotional products industry associations which hold memberships in PPAI, as well as some private organizations, most notably [SAGE](#), PPAI's official technology partner.

PPAI Financials

PPAI's [2023 Annual Report](#) shows more than \$22.5 million in revenue, with its two greatest income sources being The PPAI Expo and membership dues.

As of 1/1/24, the organization has assets totalling \$28 million, including the Irving, Texas headquarters, which PPAI owns outright and is currently in the process of renovating.





POSITION SUMMARY

As President & CEO of PPAI, you will be at the forefront of leading and inspiring both the team and the membership base, driving the strategic vision that elevates our mission and expands our impact. In this pivotal role, you will collaborate closely with the Board of Directors to help create and execute the Association's strategy, taking full accountability for its success. Your leadership will be instrumental in managing the overall operations of the Association fostering a culture of innovation, and ensuring PPAI remains a trusted leader and vital resource in the promotional products sector.

Travel is expected to be approximately 25-35%, with the potential for additional travel as needed.

Key Relationships:

The President & CEO reports to the PPAI Board of Directors, a governing body of 11 individuals.

The President & CEO is also responsive to various committees, workgroups, and task forces within PPAI's governance model.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership & Vision:

- Lead the development and execution of a long-term strategic plan that aligns with PPAI's mission, vision, and values. Regularly collaborate with the Board of Directors to refine and assess the strategy to ensure the Association's goals are met, adapting to industry changes and market dynamics.

Executive Management & Operations:

- Oversee the daily operations of the Association, ensuring effective and efficient administration of PPAI's business functions. Provide executive leadership in human resources, managing the hiring, training, compensation, and retention of staff, fostering a culture of excellence and accountability.

Financial Stewardship & Risk Management:

- Ensure the financial health and sustainability of the Association through sound budgeting, investment management, and financial reporting. Implement robust risk management practices and maintain compliance with all regulatory and legal requirements. Regularly report financial status and forecasts to the Board of Directors.

Advocacy, Representation & Public Policy:

- Serve as the primary spokesperson and advocate for PPAI, representing the Association's interests at local, state, and national levels. Engage with government officials, industry leaders, and the media to advance the promotional products industry's position on key issues. Lead the Association's public policy and lobbying efforts.

Membership Engagement & Value Creation:

- Cultivate strong relationships with members and industry partners, ensuring that PPAI's programming, services, and events deliver exceptional value. Develop strategies to enhance member satisfaction and membership growth, including innovative approaches to membership recruitment and retention.

Trade Show & Conference Leadership:

- Provide visionary leadership for PPAI's trade shows and conferences, ensuring they remain premier industry events. Oversee the planning, execution, and continuous improvement of these events to maximize value for attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors.

Board Collaboration & Governance:

- Work closely with the Board of Directors to set policies, priorities, and strategic goals. Provide leadership and vision to both the Board and staff, fostering a mission-driven culture within the organization. Ensure that governance structures are effective and aligned with the Association's strategic objectives.

Industry Innovation & Thought Leadership:

- Lead efforts to identify and implement emerging trends, technologies, and best practices within the promotional products industry. Position PPAI as a thought leader, influencing the direction of the industry and enhancing the Association's reputation globally.

External Relations & Strategic Partnerships:

- Develop and maintain relationships with related associations, private businesses, government entities, and other stakeholders. Represent PPAI at national and international forums, fostering alliances that support the Association's goals and enhance its influence.

Ethical Standards & Compliance:

- Ensure that all activities and operations are conducted in compliance with ethical standards and legal requirements. Report any potential legal or ethical issues to the Board of Directors, including the management of litigation or legal risks associated with the Association's activities.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in a senior leadership role within a similar-sized organization.
- At least 10 years of experience in a senior leadership position leading strategy, growth, teams, and budgets within a nonprofit association or trade association that has a major trade show and education component or a senior executive within the promotional products industry or a senior executive leading teams/portfolio of events in the for-profit trade show sector.
- CAE is preferred.
- Experience developing programs to generate revenue and growth.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Excellent Communicator & Public Speaker
- Visionary & Strategic Thinker
- Entrepreneurial Spirit
- Strong Leader & Consensus Builder
- High Integrity & Transparent
- Politically Savvy & Worldly
- Genuine, Self-Aware & Ethical
- Motivator & Influencer
- Nimble, Tolerant & Resilient
- Inspiring, Collaborative & Diplomatic
- Innovative & Accountable
- Financially Astute & Forward-Facing

TOP PRIORITIES

- **Comprehensive Familiarization and Evaluation**
 - Begin by deeply understanding the Association's internal structure, including staff, Board, committees, budget, and governance. Engage with key stakeholders like major distributors, supplier members, and critical partners such as [SAGE](#) through [The Power of Two](#) relationship. Simultaneously, assess the effectiveness of the team, current goals, and metrics, refining the strategic plan as necessary.
- **Strategic Focus and Organizational Alignment**
 - Identify the key pillars that will drive long-term success and member value. Evaluate the effectiveness of trade show and event strategies and ensure the staff structure is aligned with strategic priorities. Cultivate a culture of idea-sharing while exploring and developing new alternative revenue streams.
- **Advocacy, Leadership, and Integration**
 - Establish and strengthen relationships with industry influencers to solidify PPAI's leadership position as well as extend its reach with adjacent marketing industries. Lead with a servant leadership approach, fostering continuous improvement in strategies, products, and offerings. Ensure active Board engagement, ongoing training, and mentorship while integrating the most contemporary DEI and CSR standards into the core values and strategic plan.
- **Elevating Member Education and Industry Standards**
 - Enhance member education and certification programs to ensure they meet evolving industry needs. Guide the Association in setting industry benchmarks for data sharing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), positioning the Association as a leader in these areas.
- **Sustainable Conference and Event Strategy**
 - Develop a robust, long-term strategy for conferences and events that not only supports industry growth but also establishes a durable revenue model. Expand the promotional products industry's influence within the broader marketing ecosystem, ensuring the Association's offerings remain relevant and impactful.



Mark Gnatovic
President of Retained Search
SearchWide Global
info@searchwideglobal.com
Direct/Cell: 817.789.9879

If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Mark Gnatovic.

SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the event, tradeshow, convention, tourism, and hospitality industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director, and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.