



# **1 PROMO**

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# Who are we?

- Promo 1 is a turnkey event management/promotion company with a rich history of working with corporations, venues, media outlets, non-profit organizations and events to realize their marketing, public relations, and fundraising/revenue goals. It also helps its corporate clients utilize event marketing and sponsorship as a creative way to achieve their sales, marketing, branding and public relations goals.
- Promo 1 has a 40-year history of producing live sporting events, festivals, and special events. Through its sister company, The Festival Group, Promo 1 is the largest promoter of hot air balloon and music festivals in the country, with fifty-five (55) such festivals to its credit. Promo 1's signature events are The New Jersey Festival of Ballooning, which annually draws 175,000 spectators to the largest summertime hot air and music festival in the country, and Rock, Ribs & Ridges, a three-day food and music festival which attracted 20,000+ patrons to its 2025 edition. In 2023, The New Jersey Festival of Ballooning celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary!
- Promo 1 specializes in working with retail partners to maximize sponsorship through vendor-supported programs, which helps the partner self-liquidate its sponsorship fee while enlisting the vendors' co-op marketing, promotional and public relations efforts to benefit the event. The list of retail partners includes QuickChek and Tedeschi/Li'l Peach Convenience Stores as well as Waldbaum's, Big Bear and Big Y Supermarkets.
- Over 6,250,000 people have been guests at festivals, concerts, sporting events and other special events produced by Promo 1 and The Festival Group.

# Promo 1's Principals

- Howard Freeman: Founder and CEO

Howard Freeman, an acknowledged innovator in sports & entertainment marketing, brings fifty (50) years of promotional expertise to Promo 1's event portfolio. The crown jewel was The New Jersey Lottery (formerly QuickChek) Festival of Ballooning, an event that achieved phenomenal growth under thirty (30) years of Freeman's direction. As the Festival's Executive Producer, Howard and his team quintupled attendance at the event, which attracted upwards of 175,000 people and worldwide media coverage each year. The public relations campaign for the 2023 festival garnered almost 900 MILLION measured media impressions and the festival generated over 1,000 room nights for the area's hotels!

As a graduate of The State University of New York at Albany with a Pre-Med major, Freeman is one of the few people in the world who have been awarded the prestigious title of D.H.A - Doctor of Hot Air – a fitting description for the man who has produced more hot air balloon and music festivals than anyone else in the United States. Freeman's passion for sports and promotion led to a career that began with the New York Apples of the fledging World Team Tennis League. Referring to that period from 1975-1978 as his "promotions laboratory," Freeman went on to become Director of Marketing for the New Jersey Nets of the National Basketball Association (1978-1981) and helped to open the Meadowlands Arena in 1981.

In December 1981 Freeman formed Promo 1, an event marketing and sales promotion company which specializes in promoting sporting events and consulting corporations on the best way to use sports and special events as a marketing, sales promotion and public relations vehicle. By negotiating and implementing these strategic alliances, Promo 1 matches corporate sponsors with sports and/or special events with similar demographics to maximize their campaigns. From 1983-1989, Freeman, via Promo 1, served as Director of Sales & Marketing for the Virginia Slims Championship, the richest, highest-attended women's sporting event in the world. During his tenure, the tournament attracted nineteen (19) of the top twenty (20) crowds in women's tennis history to Madison Square Garden.

Freeman also has a long-standing relationship with the United States Volleyball Association. Over a 10-year span in the 80's and 90's, he promoted many international matches featuring the U.S. Men's and U.S. Women's Olympic teams against the world's top volleyball competition. He holds the record for the largest volleyball crowd in the history of Madison Square Garden, 10,598! Freeman also staged the annual Evian Winter Beach Fest, featuring the top professional beach volleyball players in the world, at the Garden. For that event, in true Bill Veeck promotional style, Freeman brought in 240 tons of salt-free sand to cover the Garden floor.

# Promo 1's Principals (continued)

- Howard Freeman: Founder and CEO (continued)

Freeman professes a fascination with the magic and excitement of the live event. Combining the business acumen of an entrepreneur with the wonderment of a child who was touched by hot air balloons in "The Wizard of Oz," Freeman continues to make The New Jersey Festival of Ballooning an event to remember. It has become North America's largest summertime hot air balloon and music festival and one of the largest tourist attractions in New Jersey - one that employs more than 1,200 people with an economic impact of more than \$42.7 million annually. He also believes in "doing well by doing good," as the festival has raised over \$3.2 million for local and regional charities and non-profit groups (including Children's Miracle Network) in the past twenty-nine (29) years.

In 2016 Promo 1 was tasked with custom-building a promotional event to attract new players, shore up the "VIP Retention Program" and generate "heads in beds" for The Rising Star Resort & Casino in Rising Star, IN. Recently Promo 1 also acted as a consultant to The Boston-Portsmouth Air Show. Promo 1 helped the organizers – The Boy Scouts of America Daniel Webster Council and The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire – generate record-breaking crowds for a world-class air show featuring the first area appearance of The Blue Angels in almost 30 years.

In 2025 Promo 1 created a bespoke event for New Jersey Lottery, as the inaugural New Jersey Lottery Rock Paper Scissors Throwdown awarded \$10,000 in prize money and attracted 384 people "throwing hands" at American Dream in Rutherford, NJ.

Promo 1 was also instrumental in bringing special shaped hot air balloons from around the globe to Inner Mongolia for the inaugural Qin Great Wall Balloon Festival in GuYang, China, from August 12-18, 2009, becoming the first Americans to produce and fly balloons in that country. The Festival's opening ceremony attracted more than 100,000 spectators. Mr. Freeman was honored as one of the keynote speakers at the ceremony.

Promo 1 has also served as the event marketing arm of The Star-Ledger, one of the largest daily newspapers in America, producing major events such as the Liberty Jazz Festival; The PSEG Global Green Expo, the largest Earth Day event in the State of New Jersey; The Star-Ledger/TD Bank Road to Personal Wealth Financial Conference<sup>4</sup>, and The Apple Vacations Travel Show.

# Promo 1's Principals (continued)

- Ken Staats: Chief Operating Officer

Ken has a broad background in both the marketing and production sides of live events. Developed over the past thirty-three (33) years, this diverse set of knowledge and skills enables him to bring a unique perspective to his dual role of Chief Operating Officer for The Festival Group's lineup of hot air balloon festivals, as well as for Promo 1 and its roster of events and corporate clients.

Ken is responsible for all aspects of setting up, operating and dismantling two of North America's largest outdoor festivals - The New Jersey Festival of Ballooning and Rock, Ribs & Ridges. With upwards of 175,000 attendees annually, the New Jersey hot air balloon festival effectively becomes, for one weekend, the third-largest city in all of The Garden State. Since joining Promo 1 in 1992, Ken counts over fifty-five (55) outdoor festivals to his list of production credits.

With Promo 1's consulting arm, Ken's marketing and logistical background allows him to provide Promo 1's clients and joint venture partners with creative, efficient and cost-effective custom-tailored promotional programs.

Prior to his current position, he spent five years with Spectacor Management Group, the world's largest management firm for stadiums, arena and convention centers. Ken served as the Director of Marketing for the Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Spectrum in Philadelphia and the Knickerbocker Arena in Albany, New York.

Ken was awarded the prestigious "Merit" award from FILA (Federation International des Luttes Associees) for his work with Promo 1 client NYC 2012 on the 2003 World Freestyle Wrestling Championships at Madison Square Garden.

# Promo 1 Event Credits

## Promo 1's event credits include:

- **Balloon and Music Festivals:**
  - The New Jersey Lottery Festival of Ballooning/QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning in Readington, NJ;
  - “Rock, Ribs & Ridges” Music Festival at Hidden Valley Club (Vernon, NJ) and The Sussex County Fairgrounds (Augusta, NJ);
  - Rising Star Resort Balloon Festival in Rising Sun, IN;
  - The Star-Ledger Liberty Jazz Festival at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, NJ;
  - The Big Y 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Balloon & Music Festival in West Springfield, MA;
  - The Tedeschi/Li'l Peach Music & Balloon Festival in Weymouth, MA;
  - The Vermont Balloon & Music Festival in Essex Junction, VT;
  - The First Annual Qin Great Wall Balloon & Music Festival in GuYang Province – Inner Mongolia, China;
  - The Big Bear Balloon & Music Festival in Columbus, OH;
  - The Waldbaum's Balloon & Music Festival in Shirley, NY.
- **Special Events:**
  - The New Jersey Lottery Rock Paper Scissors Throwdown –East Rutherford, NJ;
  - TD Bank Celebrates America (concert and fireworks extravaganza) – East Meadow, NY;
  - PIX11 Health & Wellness Expo in New York City;
  - The Star-Ledger/Commerce Bank Road To Personal Wealth Conference Series;
  - The Star-Ledger/Apple Vacations Travel Show in Westfield, NJ;
  - The PSEG Global Green Expo at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, NJ;
  - The Boston-Portsmouth Air Show in Portsmouth, NH;
  - The Nice N Easy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Syracuse, NY.
- **Golf Events:**
  - Commerce Championships (Senior PGA golf event) in East Meadow, NY;
  - MassMutual Hole In One Challenge (in conjunction with over twenty [20] Senior PGA golf events);
  - PSCH Celebrity Golf Fundraiser.
- **Tennis and Volleyball:**
  - The \$1,000,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Madison Square Garden;
  - The Evian Indoor (multi-year, four-city tour concluding at Madison Square Garden);
  - USA Cup (multi-year, multi-city tour concluding at The Springfield Civic Center in Springfield, MA);
  - Mizuno Challenge (four-city tour concluding at Bally's Casino in Las Vegas).
- **Corporate Events:**
  - On behalf of clients such as PIX 11 television, TD Bank, The Star-Ledger, Genovese, Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes, Mizuno, MassMutual, Commerce Bank, The Trump Taj Mahal, Rising Start Resort, among others.

# Promo 1 Event Credits Include:



# Celebrities, Musical Artists and Athletes

Its affiliation with the previously mentioned events has allowed Promo 1 to work with a wide range of entertainment celebrities, athletes and musical artists, including:

## Musical artists

- **The Beach Boys**
- **Hall & Oates**
- **Meat Loaf**
- **Doobie Brothers**
- **Charlie Daniels Band**
- **George Benson**
- **Aretha Franklin**
- **Smokey Robinson**
- **Peter Frampton**
- **Tedeschi Trucks Band**
- **Styx**
- **The Jonas Brothers**
- **Jethro Tull**
- **Chuck Berry**



## Musical artists (continued)

- **Hootie & The Blowfish**
- **Barenaked Ladies**
- **George Thorogood & The Destroyers**
- **Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo**
- **Huey Lewis & The News**
- **Kansas**

## Athletes, personalities, featured attractions

- **Lee Trevino**
- **Suze Orman**
- **Jim Cramer**
- **Ken Rosewall**
- **The Blue Angels – U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron**

