

Happy
New Year
January 2015

PRINTtips

Business Cards...

The Indispensable Marketing Tool



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Here's an intriguing question — can you name a digital technology that has the equivalent universality of a printed business card? Lots of digital technologies — smart phones, the electronic Rolodex, social media sites like LinkedIn — provide ways to access, organize, and display the contact information found on a printed business card. But none offer the ease of exchange between any giver and any receiver as does a business card.

A January 2014 survey by DesignCrowd.com of 1000 small businesses in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia revealed that 87% of respondents exchange business cards when meeting someone for the first time. Two-thirds of respondents said they subsequently enter the business card information into a smart phone or Rolodex. So even though the contact information may ultimately be transferred to a digital format, the printed business card is still the best way to get information into the hands of a customer or prospect.

Business Card Appearance

Besides being a very efficient way to provide contact information, today's business card is part of the business or organization's brand strategy. This makes it imperative that the business card design match all other printed materials and the company web site.

In face-to-face meetings, your business card may be the first time a customer or prospect sees



your company's visual image. To make the best impression, the card needs to be of high quality in all aspects – tactile feel (i.e. the quality of the paper); design elements (layout, typography, color palette); and readability (font size, font styles, color of type).

A standard business card measures 2 inches x 3½ inches and should be printed on a heavy card stock. If you intend to write notes on the back of the card, be sure that side does not have a coating, either on the paper itself or one applied after printing (unless the coating explicitly accepts ink, called pencil receptive aqueous coating).

Other options for business cards include foldover, under- or over-sized, portrait rather than landscape orientation, die cut in shapes besides rectangular, and printed on unusual

Business Cards... The Indispensable Marketing Tool (cont.)

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substrates (such as wood or metal). These have been touted as a way to be memorable or to create a conversation. But a recipient who uses a digital organization system will transfer the information then toss the card, negating its long-term impact. Other people find that bulky or odd-shaped cards don't fit well in a manual filing system and may discard them.

Business Card Content

The essential information to include on a business card is still the same: logo and name of company or organization, name of individual, physical or mailing address, and phone number. Technology has also made these elements essential: company web page URL, individual's e-mail address, and mobile phone number.

Trends in Business Card Design & Content

As business cards move from conveying contact information to becoming part of a company or organization's brand identity, new trends are emerging. Here are a few to consider:

- **Branding.** The company logo, tag line or brand promise, typography, and color palette have assumed much greater importance. With so many customers and prospects investigating potential vendors by visiting web sites and social media profiles, it is critical that the visual impression be consistent from print to digital. For an established company that has recently established or updated a web site, there could be a serious discrepancy between the new image and what appears on the business card.
- **Simplicity.** Business cards are moving toward a minimalist design – clean, strong lines; clear, legible fonts (reminiscent of those used on web sites); solid blocks of color and creative use of typography. Avoid a business card that is packed with information, images, and uses too many colors.
- **More simplicity.** Because company details can easily be accessed at the web site with any electronic device, it is no longer crucial to explain the business or the products and services offered. More important is the

individual's information – name, title, direct or mobile phone number, and e-mail address.

- **Two-sided printing.** Today there is so much information and so many images to include on a business card that there may not be enough room on the face. To keep the front side of the card clean and simple, put information of secondary importance on the reverse.
- **QR codes.** The trend in using QR codes on business cards is not clear. QR codes have not proven to be the digital marketing tool they were once thought to be, and there is some evidence that they may be replaced by image recognition technology. If you do use a QR code on the business card, be sure it goes to the right landing page – such as an About page with a video or a form to complete in order to request more information.

Effective Use of Business Cards

The best way to use your business cards is to get them in circulation. Keep cards with you all the time, not just during business hours so you can give them out as appropriate in both business and personal settings. Keep a supply in your car, home, and office so you can replenish as needed. Reorder in enough time to avoid running out of cards. Here are some other ideas:

- Include a business card in correspondence or when shipping a package. It will identify you even before the recipient reads the letter or opens the package.
- When making contact with a prospect or potential customer, ask to trade business cards. If you receive a business card as well as providing one, you will gain control of the follow up actions.
- When presenting a business card, jot something on it to remind the person of your conversation or where you met. If someone asks you for a piece of paper to write a note, offer a business card.

Business Cards... The Indispensable Marketing Tool (cont.)

We Are Business Card Experts

We have been printing business cards ever since we opened for business in 1985, long before there were do-it-yourself desktop publishing and online business card printers. Depending on the design of your business cards and your budget, we can print the cards in a number of ways. We can also design, refresh, or redesign your business cards to reflect current trends. For more information on how we can help you make your business cards effective, give us a call at 513-248-2121.



“Depending on the design of your business cards and your budget, we can print the cards in a number of ways.”

Business Vocabulary

Brand: “The tangible sum of a product’s attributes: its name, packaging, and price; its history; its reputation; and the way it is advertised.” David Ogilvy, author of *On Advertising*.

Color palette: the range of colors used for business branding.

Guillotine paper cutter: a machine consisting of a vertical blade between two uprights that descends at an angle to cut or trim stacks of paper.

Hyperlink: a link from a hypertext file or document to another location or file, typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image on a screen.

Hypertext: text displayed on a computer screen, smart phone, tablet, or other device that references other text. The reader can immediately access the referenced text by clicking on it.

Homonym: a word pronounced the same as another, but differing in meaning, whether spelled the same way or not. Heir and air are examples of homonyms.

Image recognition technology: a cloud-based way to identify objects, people, buildings, places, logos, etc. Requires a smart phone, tablet, or other device with a camera and image recognition

software. Has the potential to transform a picture into a hyperlink to the Internet. Other applications are in the field of security and content management.

Pencil receptive aqueous coating: a special matte aqueous coating that is receptive to pencil, ink, and laser printing.

QR code: Quick Response code. A two-dimensional or matrix barcode displayed as a machine-readable optical label containing information about the item to which it is attached. The QR code consists of black square dots arranged in a square grid with a white background.

Sensory marketing: a marketing term for engaging all the customer’s senses to learn about a product. Expands the sensory interaction from sight and sound to include touch, smell, and taste. Based on the principle that the more senses an object affects, the more likely it is to be remembered.

Tactile: of or connected to the sense of touch.

URL: acronym for uniform resource locator, a specific character string constituting a reference to a resource. Also known as a web address.

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Make the Most of Networking Contacts

For anyone who uses networking to generate sales leads or participates in public events like trade shows, business cards are a must. But passing out business cards at the event will not necessarily produce sales leads or appointments unless there is good follow up. Here are some tips for making the most of networking and trade show contacts.

- **Make a connection.** The object of networking is not to collect business cards, but to begin building a relationship with the prospect. Make whatever time the prospect gives you memorable – ask questions, listen to the answers, and be genuinely interested in whatever the prospect chooses to share with you.
- **Follow up after the event.** Take no longer than a week to contact the prospect after the event. Use whatever means the prospect

prefers – e-mail, social network, phone – to refresh the conversation started at the networking event. And don't forget to actually send the additional information or make the introduction if that is what you promised to do.

- **If appropriate, engage with social media.** In addition to using traditional follow up methods, check out the prospect's social profile. Then if appropriate, connect on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or other media so you can send a message containing something of value to that person and take the conversation to a higher level.
- **Maintain contact.** Periodically and regularly contact the prospect, always offering something related to the initial conversation (such as a journal article) or to the individual (such as a newspaper clipping about them). Stay in touch, however briefly.