



## Seven Printed Items Every Business Needs

*“If you have brochures or other business materials, hand them out liberally. Think of them as emissaries that will spread your message. Repetition reinforces name recognition, brand identity, and it builds confidence.”*

Jay Conrad Levinson / Guerrilla Publicity

In the past, all sales and marketing materials were printed. Later, the Internet added new ways to reach customers and prospects, and later still provided a way to interact with them, sometimes in real time. Over time, Internet-based marketing replaced some printed materials, enhanced others, and also provided new marketing tools.

Despite the popularity and success of these new marketing techniques, there remain some basic printed items that all businesses need:

- The *corporate identity package* consisting of 1) business cards, 2) letterheads & envelopes, 3) note paper, 4) mailing labels, and
- *Sales material* consisting of 5) a company brochure, 6) note pads, and 7) a direct mail piece.

### The Corporate Identity Package

A basic corporate identity package – sometimes called a *stationery system* – is an efficient way to establish brand identity and to provide basic contact information to customers and prospects. A good identity system has several specific parts; the overall layout, the fonts, the color palette, and the paper; all work together to create the brand identity. Considering the importance of making a positive and lasting impression on customers and prospects, it is best to have the entire system – business cards, letterheads and envelopes, mailing labels, and note paper – professionally designed and printed.

When you hand a business card to someone, you are establishing a personal connection, which the recipient can recall later. You are also putting a face to a name – the corporate brand now has a live person attached to it. Even



better, handing out business cards doesn't require anything from the recipient except the willingness to accept the card.

A business card is actually a very economical form of advertising – if you give out five business cards every day of the week, including Saturday and Sunday, a purchase of 500 cards will last for almost four months. And it costs the same to print a professionally designed business card as an ordinary one.

Here is the essential information to include as part of any business card:

- **Business identification.** This includes the business name and logo. If you want the primary connection of the customer or prospect to be with the company, then make this the most prominent feature and include business contact information such as address, general purpose telephone number, and web site URL.
- **Individual contact information.** This includes the individual's name and title, direct phone numbers (land line and mobile), direct e-mail address, and alternate physical address if the individual does not work at the business location. By convention, phone numbers are listed in the order of preference for contact (*i.e.*, if you prefer to be contacted by cell phone, list that number first).

By making the individual's contact information the most prominent on the card, you'll be making the primary connection with the individual rather than the company.

- **Optional information.** If the card is not too crowded, or if it is a fold-over card, additional information such as business tag line, mission statement, photograph or other graphic element, and list of products and services can be included.

The design of the other three elements of the corporate identity package, letterheads and envelopes, note paper, and note pads, should match the business card.

The purpose of letterheads and envelopes is to visually express the company's identity and to make a good first impression. As with business cards, this is best achieved with professional design and printing. As desktop color inkjet printers have improved, it is tempting to forego printing a supply of letterheads and envelopes and instead to print as needed. While this strategy may seem easier than keeping an inventory of printed materials, it is likely more expensive. Figuring the cost of an inkjet color cartridge at \$55 and a yield of 700 color pages, the per-sheet cost is about 8 cents before considering the cost of the paper itself.

Whenever you need to send out something in either a large envelope or a package, you'll need a mailing label. This is another opportunity to reinforce your branding by making sure the design matches the other elements of your corporate identity system and is often the recipient's first impression of your business. It is important that it includes your logo and that the colors match the letterhead, etc.

Note paper and/or note cards are many times preferable to using letterhead for writing short letters and thank you notes. They are more personal, especially if hand-written. By having them also match your other stationery items, they give your personal note a very professional appearance.

### Sales and Marketing Materials

The success of any business depends heavily on its sales and marketing effort. A company's sales staff needs to have *collateral material* to augment and reinforce prospecting and face-to-face sales activities. The basic elements are a company brochure, a direct mail piece, and note pads.

- The **company brochure** introduces the company's product or service and provides the distinctive features and benefits that distinguish it from the competition. It also provides background

information about the company and includes the company contact information. Common elements are the date the company was founded; a listing of locations, names, photographs, and brief biographies of founders and key personnel; company contact information; the mission statement; and a brief corporate history.

- The **direct mail marketing piece** can take several forms; a post card, a self-mailer, or a traditional multi-page letter with response device. If designed properly, a newsletter can also be a direct mail marketing piece. Its purpose is to introduce something – the company to prospects, or products and services to both customers and prospects. It also serves as a reminder to customers of the relationship between the customer and the company. Direct mail marketing pieces should always include a call to action and create a sense of urgency.
- **Note pads** are an advertising specialty give-away item that reinforce the company's brand, while at the same time make your contact information easy to find. Branded notepads are a great item to give away at trade shows or to leave behind after a sales call.

Visually, all sales and marketing materials need to be consistent with the corporate identity. This means more than just using the company name and logo. Typography, copy writing style, and color palette should reinforce the corporate identity by conveying the same "look and feel".

Just like the business stationery package, the sales and marketing materials need to be professionally designed and printed. This is especially true when the material is in the form of a folded brochure. To ensure that the brochure lies flat after folding, the width of the individual panels must be adjusted slightly. In addition, folding by machine produces a tighter fold with sharp creases.

### See us for Design, Copywriting, and Printing

Part of our professional expertise lies in our design and prepress department. To schedule an appointment to talk about your corporate identity or sales collateral material, call 513-248-2121 for an appointment.

# a vocabulary of the graphic arts

# worlds

**Brand identity:** how a business wants its brand name, communication style, logo, and other visual elements to be perceived by customers.

**Brand image:** what customers actually think about a brand. A gap between brand identity and brand image means the company is out of touch with market sentiment.

**Bulk mail:** a common term for Standard Mail and First Class Mail that is presented to the USPS in lots of at least 200 or 500 pieces.

**Call to action:** words that urge the target audience member to take immediate action. Examples include *call now* or *click here*. A sales piece without a call to action is considered incomplete and may be ineffective.

**Copywriting:** the art and science of writing words to promote a product, a business, a person, or an idea.

**Direct marketing:** a form of marketing that communicates directly with the target audience.

**EDDM:** an acronym for *Every Door Direct Mail*, a direct mail advertising program for businesses from the United States Postal Service.

**Mail panel:** the area of a mail piece containing the outbound address, return address, and postage payment method (postage stamp, meter mark, or indicia).

**Mission statement:** a summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual.

**Prospect:** in selling, an individual, company, or organization that has been qualified as a potential customer.

**Sales collateral material:** the collection of written and published material used to support the sales of a product or service. Also called *sales aids*.

**Sense of urgency:** a sense that immediate action is required.

**Stationery system:** a company's business cards, letterhead, and envelopes. May also include mailing labels and note paper.

**Style sheet:** a summary of the visual and editorial conventions to be followed in preparing business documents for printing.

## T H E i d e a

### The Company Mission Statement

A company's mission statement succinctly tells why the company exists and what its values are. Within the business, a mission statement provides a framework for making decisions. Outside the company, the mission statement quickly orients prospects, customers, and vendors to the company culture.

Most mission statements come from the answers to a series of questions such as "*what business are we in, and why and what do we want to provide for ourselves, our customers, and the larger community.*" Some mission statements are brief while others are as long as several paragraphs. Regardless of form, the wording of the mission statement needs to be clear and thoughtful.

In small companies, the mission statement may be crafted by the owner, or it may be a collaborative effort that includes people both inside and outside the business. It is useful to have someone not involved with the creation process read the mission statement for grammar, syntax, and appropriateness of the language.

When the mission statement has been adopted, display it in the public area of the company's location, place it on the web site, and include it on printed material. Then review it periodically to see if it needs revision.

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# TRICKS & tips

## The Company Brochure

Even in an increasingly digital world, brochures remain one of the most effective ways to market your products and services. Brochures are used by businesses of all sizes and are a perfect way to let new customers know exactly what you do and remind existing clients of all that you have to offer.

A popular brochure format is formed by tri-folding an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper, creating six panels.

- **Panel 1** is the front cover. It is the first thing the reader sees, so the copy and images must be compelling enough to get the reader to open the brochure. Sometimes this panel is used as a teaser and may not include the company name or logo.
- **Panel 2** answers the reader's question "What's in it for me" – in other words, how will using the product or service solve a problem, improve life, make things fun, or otherwise create a recognized benefit.
- Having established the benefits in Panel 2, Panel 3 can be used to describe the features and specifications.
- **Panel 4** can continue the features and specifications from Panel 3 and may also provide ordering information.
- **Panel 5** presents evidence about the product or service. It could be a testimonial from a satisfied customer or performance statistics.
- **Panel 6** is the back cover. Use it to create a sense of urgency (such as *limited time offer*), to present the call to action (such as *redeem this coupon for a discount*), and to describe the next step (such as *call now*). It is also possible to incorporate a mailing panel into Panel 6.

## Q.

*I'm trying to decide between using direct mail or e-mail to inform customers about my new product. Can you guide me to what will be most effective?*

## A.

This is a tough question to answer. Let's start with some statistics about e-mail. According to Pingdom, a website and performance monitoring company in Sweden, almost 69% of all email messages are spam. Of the 3.3 billion e-mail accounts worldwide, 75% are registered to consumers and 25% to businesses.

Gloria Mark, an informatics professor at the University of California, Irvine, says one of the main problems with e-mail is that there isn't an "off" switch, meaning you don't need to be on it to receive messages. E-mail piles up, waiting for your attention. What this adds up to is a glut of e-mail messages in the inbox which increases the likelihood that the recipient will delete the e-mail without opening it. In fact, according to HubSpot, e-mail open rates are only about 25%.

Contrast this with a tangible direct mail piece. According to the most recently-published results of the USPS Household Diary Study, 85% of direct mail is at least skimmed over before being discarded or saved. (The Household Diary Study is an annual survey of about 5300 randomly selected households that examines the volume and type of mail that U.S. residents receive. The study has been conducted annually since 1987.)

Moreover, direct mail marketing read and response rates have been on the rise for the past ten years. One of the main reasons a person doesn't read a direct mail piece is because of the volume received in a day. Since the amount of direct mail has decreased over the last decade, the average number of households reading their mail has increased. The Household Diary Study also indicates that about 35% of people say they will respond to a direct mail piece at some point.

*questions and answers*