



The Power of your Business Cards

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Contents

Introduction and Importance of Business Cards

Designing Tips for Your Business Cards

Using Your Business Cards Effectively

Introduction and Importance of Business Cards

In textbook terms, Business cards are cards bearing business information about a company or individual. They are shared during formal introductions as a convenience and a memory aid.

However, in the modern business world, due to its complexity and dynamism, the importance of business cards cannot be restricted to this narrow definition. In fact, how they may be used in an innovative and creative manner reflect upon achieving that important competitive advantage for your company.

Due to its small size, business cards are disregarded as an ineffective tool. In fact, a business card can be one of the most cost-effective and efficient method of marketing and it delivers millions of information in the form impressions, image and business in a small amount of space. The smaller size actually benefits you, as it allows for carrying tiny billboards in your pocket. If your mini-billboards are properly maintained and utilized, they can be an extremely profitable marketing tool.

One of the key aspects of business cards is to keep your business cards up to date and new. Whenever you change an email address or phone number, it's imperative that you have new set of business cards printed as soon as possible since business gained through this form is far important than the cost incurred for printing new cards. Just imagine you run into the one of the top corporate persons of the nation and he asks for your card and you have a card with the old information printed. This means you have just lost that important fortune 500 break-in contract that your company would have had.

In addition to having attractive, up to date and appealing business cards, you also need to possess an adequate card holder which will enable you to store your cards in an attractive manner. This will prevent you from giving that edges crumbled business cards to your clients. Similarly, you need to have this card holder to store cards offered to you which handled haphazardly will communicate an ill feeling from you towards their businesses.

Using business cards can be extremely advantageous for bringing in future sales and referrals to your business. A contact of a friend might be doing something at work that needs a service or product similar to what you provide, and what better place for your friend to easily access your contact information than your business card? Give everyone you know, and all of your clients a few cards, and let them know what you are doing at work. Consistently using well-designed business cards can be one of the most efficient and effective marketing strategies for you and your business. Make sure you always have one at the ready!

Designing Tips for Your Business Cards

In order to have your business card in your customers top coat pocket at all times, you need to have the process of creating an attractive and clean business card as the #1 goal you need to accomplish. This goal can be approached in many ways, it starts with the design process of your card.

Your business card should be colorful, accurate, legible, and stylish. Accurate information is extremely important. When designing your cards, have everyone you know proof your design to ensure the information is up-to-date and correct. It is unprofessional to scribble down the new phone number at your office on your old cards just to save a hundred bucks. Don't use a crazy font or type so small that it takes someone with a microscope to read it. Go into a dim-lit room and make sure you can read your information under the worst conditions, this will ensure that whoever you hand your cards out to will be able to read your information.

High contrast and colors are important, but in using colors think about how they psychologically affect people. Black is the color of authority and power, white implies innocence and purity, red is the most emotionally intense color and should only be used as an accent, blue elicits peaceful and tranquil feelings, green and brown symbolize nature, yellow grabs attention and improves concentration power, purple represents royalty, luxury, and sophistication. Different shades of these colors mean different things as well. Light brown implies genuineness and dark green symbolizes masculinity, conservatism, and wealth. This is not to say that you should hire a cognitive psychologist when designing your business cards just that color is something to keep in mind.

Adding color to your business card primarily and optimally portray your company's identity. It is another way of maximizing the appearance and image of yourself and your professional activity. Just as colors add elegance and vividness to our lives the same happens in the case of your business card. Since the business card is your business's identity as well as a branding for your company, it is crucial that this is designed and laid out in a highly professional way which suits your company. Printing the cards in color add value to it.

Adding colorful images and photos of yourself or your product and anything that symbolizes and signifies your business always improve the look and feel of your color business cards. This also makes your prospective clients to remember you and your products as your color business cards are able to successfully create an association between you your product in their minds which is very much necessary for the success of your business.

Though adding images and photos in your color business cards add to their look and feel it should be noted that this can work if only it is done in a professional way, since if done oppositely, the results will be negative and ridiculous. Apart from that, adding images is advantageous in many ways as your image on your business card builds trust and it always helps your customers to visualize a face to your business and this will be preferred rather than dealing with a faceless entity. This also helps in instant recognition and your photo or image in color business cards add an extra dimension to your otherwise plain business card with some text in it.

Using Your Business Cards Effectively

Better business cards start with a change in thinking about what a business card is. Yes, it has your name and contact information, but why can't it be more? Why can't it do more to promote your business? Addressing these questions and trying out the solutions in business environment will reap you unexpected and lucrative benefits. Basically, what you need in order to utilize your business card effectively is to think of out of the box.

1. Be Creative

This point can be well described using the following story. When Joe Girard, the world's greatest salesman, was selling cars he would frequently go to Detroit Lions football games. Even though he could afford more expensive seats, he chose to sit in the upper deck and whenever the Lions scored, he would throw business cards off the top deck onto the expensive seats below that offered a discount on a new car that was only good the following day.

So the point of the story is that whatever your business you can think and come up with ways to put across your business card for your benefit. Thinking of this ways before your competitors does is the only way that set you apart and leading the race. Creativity can be well highlighted in the following example. You can ask people to visit your website and give them a discount for subscribing to the newsletter. (This serves two purposes, you get a client base to inform about your new products and services at the same time your prospective customers became aware of your web presence)

2. Remember the 1 to 1 ratio

The 1 to 1 ratio is the easiest formula you'll ever need to know. If you talk to someone for more than 1 minute, they should have 1 of your business cards in their hand. That is the 1 to 1 ratio. Basically that means that you need to find a way to talk about what you do, and get your business card in their hand within the first minute of the conversation. Think of it as an elevator conversation. This prospect will be getting off of your elevator soon, so you have a short time to get that business card into their hand.

3. Make it stickier

Just like those websites we like to visit again and again for useful information, it's helpful if you can do the same thing with your business cards as well.

4. Back of the Card

The back of your business card is perfect for adding value. Add something that would be useful to people who get your card. Make it something they'll want to hold on to.

- Restaurant owners: Add a tipping chart on the back of your card.
- Hard-to-find business: Add a small map with directions.
- Have a big event coming up? Add a calendar or reminder.
- Real estate agents: Add a measurements chart.

- Add a kitchen tip or tool and turn your card into a refrigerator magnet.
- You can offer a discount to people purchasing your products if they present your business card while purchasing.
- You can have a small survey at the back of your business card and ask the people to fill it up and submit back to you or your shop and they are eligible for some discount or prize based on a draw on those surveys. At the same time, when they come to return you those survey cards, don't forget to give them a new business card without any survey.

5. Good deed marketing

You can also market your business by doing good deeds and leaving your business card behind as the evidence. Pay for someone's parking, toll, or cocktail and merely leave your card behind or with the attendant. Purchase that cup of coffee or newspaper for the person in line behind you and make sure your card is left for them to keep. This is sure to create a positive impression of you and your company.