

Empowered Business Cards

Do you view your business card as a simple formality, or a powerful sales, networking, and marketing tool that can embed your person and brand in customers' minds, motivate callbacks and generate sales?

Unfortunately, most professionals are in the former group. They print business cards that are less inspiring than tiring. And chances are you're in this group.

1. Maximize "you"

People do business with other people, but many business cards spend more space on the company and brand than the person handing them out. Make sure your name is big and bold, along with your contact information to help establish customer relationships. Your company's logo should be smaller than your own photo.



2. Picture yourself outside the box

OK, so your assistant finally wrangled you in a corner for that mug shot your designer has been asking for, and you look like a raccoon caught in a garbage can. If you want to get a mug shot taken, break the law. If you want to convince customers to do business with you, take a shot of you in action, in a positive light. Don't constrain it in square borders; instead, have it take up half of your card or the entire background. No photo at all is better than a pre-coffee photo snapped in a dim corner of your office.



3. Add your tagline

A great tagline tells customers what you do, how it benefits them and serves as a memory hook. Don't forget to include one on your business card.



4. A call to action

A great offer (something other than “free consultation”) will entice customers to take the next step in the purchasing process. Put your offer on your business card, front or back and tell customers what they need to do next to take advantage of it.



5. Added value

Customers keep things that have value. If you want prospects to keep your business card handy, give them something useful: a discount, a sports schedule, a checklist or brief how-to guide. All of these can fit succinctly on the back of your business card. Make it relevant to your customer base, and your business cards won't be threatened with File 13.

6. Stand out

If your business cards look like everyone else's, you're missing the boat. Experiment with different sizes and shapes: square, jumbo square, slim and custom die-cut business cards. Try contrasting colors, bold text and symbols. Make your business card stand out and command attention.



7. Add technology

QR codes and augmented reality can help you instantly engage customers via mobile devices – right from your business card! If you want to appear progressive and cutting edge, do not miss the opportunity to incorporate technology into your business cards. Use it to promote a viral video, collect email addresses for follow-ups and more. Also, don't forget to include your social media handles so customers can connect with you online.



8. Great printing

Considering printing your business cards on your desktop printer or local copy center? Think again. Not only is the quality of ink and paper suspect – and as such reflective of your own quality – it's more expensive. You can print premium business cards on professional paper stocks cheaper than doing it alone, and you won't have any of those perforated edges cheapening your brand – and personal – image.



9. Ever-changing cards

If there's one thing I don't understand, it's why professionals never change their business cards – or, if they do, it's a couple of times per decade. I know printing in volume is cheap, but printing business cards in general is cheap – dirt cheap, in fact.

Use business cards to help promote seasonal and special offers by printing a few versions every year. You don't have to change your branded image, or even the front of your business card; but mixing up your business card with different deals on the back and perhaps a slight logo alteration (a Santa cap on your logo, for example) will help add a touch of personality and attention-getting prowess – not to mention targeted marketing – to your marketing efforts.



10. Be creative

Come up with fun and unique ways to engage your prospects and get more attention for your company. If you're going to a business conference, for example, hand out business cards with relevant and fun trivia questions on the back. Or, offer a fun game, story, or fast facts. Make them into humorous trading cards, or make a quick scavenger hunt. The goal is to get prospects sharing and talking about your business, so they'll remember you when they get home and when it's time to buy.

- Paul M. Ventura

