

Value-Added Tips for Designing Your Marketing Materials

Having effective printed materials is important to any business. Studies show that the vast majority of small businesses use print communications to market themselves more than any other method. However, no one wants to waste valuable time and money on a printed piece that fails to represent the organization well or accomplish its goal. The following design basics and printing guidelines will help you to create a cost-effective printed piece.

Readability through Typography

To say there are 10,000 typefaces available would be a conservative estimate. As a design rule, uniformity is always the best bet. Too many typefaces on a page only make your printed piece hard to read. Also, remember that typefaces can possess many characteristics – masculine to feminine, delicate to wild or any number of other qualities. A formal document has the greatest impact with a conservative typeface; an informal document with a more fun, casual one.

Some other quick tips to remember:

- Larger type is not always easier to read.
- Very short and very long lines of text are hard to read.
- Large amounts of type in capital letters, italics and reverse type slow the reader by 10 percent.
- Readers tend to prefer Serif typefaces when reading large blocks of type.
- Adding space between lines will give your piece a lighter, more airy appearance than setting the lines with little space between them.

Making an Impact with Color

Don't overlook the effect of color in your printed pieces. Studies show that people are 55 percent more likely to be interested in a piece with color than one without it. Color also increases motivation by accelerating learning, retention and recall by up to 80 percent. Just adding one color to your piece can give it new dimension.

Creating an Effective Layout

Design doesn't just make your printed piece attractive – it makes it work. Some basic guidelines that will assist you in the layout of your newsletter, brochure or other printed piece include:

- Leave some white space. A page crowded with text, designs and graphics is unattractive and hard to read.

- You can complement your design and highlight important points by boxing stories, using rules, adding graphics and putting headlines in bold type.
- People read unjustified type (type with a ragged right edge) just as fast as justified type.

Choosing the Right Paper

The color intensity of ink and photographic images are affected by paper surfaces. Using bright papers improves the image's contrast range because the paper reflects more light. Also consider using colored paper. In a study comparing the use of colored paper versus white paper, those using color reported a 46.3 percent increase in sales.

Your print communications provider can help you make the correct paper choice for your printed piece and has samples of the paper stocks available.