

Business Cards, Brochures and Letterheads

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To market any business effectively a combination of promotional materials and functional documents is needed, your home business is no exception. Business cards, flyers, brochures, promotional posters, letterheads and invoices all represent the brand image of your company and need to be designed with care. Depending on your budget you might have your desktop publishing done by a professional or do it yourself at home. Both the professional and amateur routes have their advantages, here are some easy to remember guidelines when deciding on what to do about your desktop publishing needs.

If youre Going to do it yourself

Hiring a professional desktop publisher to produce your business stationary isnt always an option. If youre on a tight budget youll likely choose to do it yourself; if you do here are some tips to keep your work looking as professional as possible.

1.) Use The Right Software

If you have no experience in DTP using the right software will make all the difference to your work. Microsoft Publisher which comes as part of the Microsoft Office 2003 package is the most common application. Office 2003 is available for both PC and Mac; the program has hundreds of templates for everything from business cards to brochures and even websites. If you are into open source or are looking for a cheaper option than Office, consider downloading Open Office at openoffice.org which also has a powerful publishing component.

If you just cant find the template you were after in your software, give Microsofts template website a try at <http://office.microsoft.com>.

2.) Buy High Quality Paper

Cheap low quality paper is one of the first signs of home publishing, use high quality paper for all your materials that clients will be receiving. Be careful of choosing paper thats too light in weight, choosing paper with a slightly heavier weight than normal print paper gives the document any professional feel.

3.) Stay Away From Perforations

You can now buy perforated A4 sheets of cardboard made for your printer, once you have printed a sheet of business cards the individual cards break out of the frame. This makes for quick and easy business card creation, the downside is that the perforations also make the cards look really sloppy. If youre hell bent on making your own cards, shop around for the non perforated versions that come out with a smoother edge.

Give it some serious thought before creating your own business cards. There are numerous online card services that deliver right to your door for a reasonable price. Printing 500 cards at home is also time consuming and costs alot of ink, once youve factored it all in the professional option could actually work out cheaper.

If You Do Decide To Go Pro

Hiring a professional doesn't always need to be expensive. Target your research at home based desktop publishers and online services. There are many out there who have standard packages for developing a logo, business card or brochure. If you'd like to cut down on costs at the printers ask your designer to keep the colours simple (say around four).

Remember that your company's brand image is very expensive to change, once you've decided on a logo, colour scheme and general look from your company you'll need to stick with it for quite a while. If you have the start-up capital available we recommend getting it all done at once. Getting your logo, business cards, invoice and promotional materials designed together will give your company a professional feel that is unbeatable.