

Resources for making design
your strategic marketing partner

design⁴ IMPACT

For
networking,
business
cards can
be essential.

Do Your Business Cards Work?

**Simple ways to make your
business card memorable
when you hand it to someone.**

Do you think you can just slap some words on a business card and hand it out? There are many, more effective, ways to get people to remember you.

Recently, at a networking function that I attended, I was given at least two dozen business cards. Most of them, I threw out. Why? Because, if there's one thing I don't need, it's a stack of cards representing people I don't remember and, therefore, wouldn't do business with.

That's the problem with handing out and accepting business cards at conventions, seminars, and trade shows. It seems to be productive, but is actually 90% ineffective.

It's a phony, lazy substitute for the real work you should be doing at such events:

- Identifying people who can help you achieve your professional goals.
- Finding out how you can help them achieve their goals.
- Convincing them that you have the resources to help them.

- Making them want to have a professional relationship with you.

Those are substantial, useful objectives that require you to be alert, aggressive and focused. Successful networking takes all of your best energy and intelligence — it can't be done by sipping coffee, chatting about sports and swapping bits of cardboard.

So why have a business card?

For networking, business cards can be essential. But that doesn't mean they will be useful if you don't remember to tote them around in your wallet or pocket.

And if you do, it makes sense to design them so they help you accomplish the most important of your networking goals: conveying — as simply as possible — the idea that you can help the person to whom you give it.

A Good Example

One card I got at the networking function did a pretty good job of that. It was a simple card layed out like a little space ad:

IGNITE YOUR ADS!

Writing That Launches Sales ...
Watch Your Profits Soar!

Greg Gogetter
Copywriter & Sales Consultant

It's not especially original — and it is in no way clever — but it does make a promise of



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benefit in an efficient, effective way. That's about all you can accomplish with a business card. If your card tries to do more than that, it will probably fail.

A Bad Example

I saved another card, but for very different reasons. Although it was given to me by a very smart and engaging person, it is badly designed. It reads:

CHICKEN-SCRATCH PHOTO STUDIO

The Complete Source ★ No Sitting Fees
 ★ Studio Photography ★ Portrait Photography
 ★ Stock Photography ★ Wedding Packages
 ★ Airbrush Work ★ Family Photography
 ★ Glamour & Modeling Photography
 ★ 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed
 ★ Portraits Ready Same-Day

Of course, the name of the business isn't really Chicken-Scratch Photo Studio. I can't tell you what it's called, because the name is printed in some artsy, chicken-scratch type that I can't interpret. The name of the proprietor is similarly artsy and illegible. Even if I wanted to contact him/her, I can't figure out who I should ask for.

This card fails on two counts:

First is the question of credibility. I don't believe that one person (even one *studio*) can provide expert service in all those areas. Second is the card's design. The copy is an interesting explosion of different shapes and figures and text going in three different directions. I have no idea what to read first, nor which copy is the most important.

In short, it's a perfect example of the kind of design I wouldn't want for my direct-response business.

Make your card count!

When designing your business card, less is more. Here is my advice:

1. Decide whether you are going to use your card for networking/identification purposes or as a lead-generating device.
 - A. If it's just the latter, make your card as simple as possible. Your name in all caps, top and center. And below that, with initial caps only, your contact information. The card stock should be white or beige on moderate to excellent quality stock. The type should be in some dark color.
 - B. If you want to use your card for networking/identification purposes, design it like a tiny direct-response space ad that sells one, and only one, benefit or skill. Convey this in one or two lines of copy, each with no more than 10 words.
2. Always keep the graphics simple. The purpose of color and design is to emphasize the copy, not to show how creative you are.

If I had to rewrite and redesign the Chicken-Scratch Design Studio card, it would look something like this:

PHOTOGRAPHIC ART THAT SELLS	
Pictures That Double Response Rates	
NAME	
Address	
Phone Number	Email

It took me 2½ minutes to come up with that — most likely less time than was spent on the original card. But it gets the job done, don't you think?

Summing Up

Remember, the main thing is to do the selling yourself... then use the card to reinforce your main message. Good networking!

Get started now

Contact dave@fiveoclockworld.com to find out how Dave Keizur Graphic Design can help you use design, and a combination of newsletters, e-mail and website, to create a low-cost platform to consistently promote yourself and your business.



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