



May 2008

# PRINTtips



**Graphics  
Printing  
Mailing  
Under One Roof**

**TechneGraphics, Inc.**  
Park 50 TechneCenter  
2002 Ford Circle  
Milford, OH 45150  
(513) 248-2121  
Fax (513) 248-5141

**Web site:**  
[www.techgra.com](http://www.techgra.com)

**File Transfer site:**  
[www.tgidirect.net](http://www.tgidirect.net)

**FTP site:**  
[ftp.techgra.com](ftp://techgra.com)

**Email:**  
[info@techgra.com](mailto:info@techgra.com)

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## Ten Ways Post Cards Can Work For You

**C**onsider the common post card. Though small in size, post cards deliver a big message, and do so economically.

Compared to a brochure or a flyer, a post card takes less time and less effort to produce and so is more affordable. This makes post cards an important marketing tool for any organization or business.

Whether your objective is business promotion, product or service advertising, brand identity, donation solicitation, invitation, or service or event reminder, a post card gets the job done efficiently and effectively.

Why do post cards consistently outperform other forms of advertising? The reason is simple – the message is in plain view and therefore difficult to ignore. Even if the reader doesn't intend to get involved with the post card, a strong headline or graphic will catch the eye unbidden.

Although most post cards are used for direct mail marketing, they also have other uses. A post card can be used as a notice on a bulletin board, as a handout at a trade show or meeting, and for inserting into publications or other distributed material.

Here are ten other ways to use post cards:

### #1: Direct prospects to your web site

Using a post card to direct prospects to your web site provides a major benefit: the post card can be designed with a single purpose. Because you aren't trying to convey a lot of information about your company, products, or services, you



can more effectively use design elements of white space, headlines, graphics, photographs, and typography to sell the reader on seeking more information. This is a much easier task than trying to provide all the information the reader needs to make a buying decision.

### #2: Present a personalized message or offer.

One-to-one marketing – personalizing a mail piece with specific information about the recipient – is much more feasible technically with post cards than with a traditional direct mail marketing package. Particularly if the personal information appears on the same size of the post card as the address, it can be more economical than you may think to take advantage of this proven marketing technique.

### #3: Feature a single product or service.

A brochure or catalog that describes all phases of your business offerings is a fundamental piece of sales collateral material. A post card works in conjunction with this material by allowing you to focus attention on the 20% of products or services that provide 80% of your sales. A series of post

## Ten Ways Post Cards Can Work For You (continued)

*“... reach a hesitant or reluctant prospect...”*

cards featuring the fastest selling or least expensive or most useful products or services individually provides more impact on customers and prospects.

### **#4: Convince prospects to move ahead.**

Use a post card as one more way of following up on a previous contact to request an appointment or urge the customer or prospect to move ahead in the sales process. A post card provides an alternative to phone calls and e-mail to reach a hesitant or reluctant prospect, and allows for a personal, handwritten message.

### **#5: Test an offer.**

Whether you are using a traditional direct mail marketing piece (envelope containing a multi-page letter that states the offer, a response device, and a lift letter) or a folded self-mailer, the effort, time and cost involved in creating, printing, and mailing the piece is substantial. Using a post card to test various offers is a cost-effective way to determine which offer generates the greatest response rate.

### **#6: Conduct a survey.**

Surveys are a proven method for getting customers involved with your business or organization, and a post card provides two options for surveying customers. A foldover post card is just the right size for a short survey, or you can direct customers to your web site to complete a survey online.

### **#7: Remind people about an event.**

Post cards can be an important part of building attendance at an event such as a fundraising activity or an annual meeting. Promote the upcoming event and give potential attendees the courtesy of advance notice by sending a *save-the-date* post card ahead of the invitation. After the invitations are issued, use a post card to follow up with non-respondents or to remind attendees of the date.

### **#8: Provide something of value.**

A post card can serve as a redeemable coupon or discount certificate to reward customers or encourage prospects to make an initial purchase.

Ask customers and prospects to present the post card at the time of purchase.

A post card can also be used as a mini information sheet or formatted into a newsletter. Our graphic designers know some clever ways to make even a small post card hold a lot of information, and to design it for easy comprehension and readability.

### **#9: Highlight a staff member.**

A sales adage says that people buy from people. Help your customers get acquainted with your customer service staff, salesmen, and the other workers who make the products or provide the service your customers purchase. A post card allows you to provide a photograph of a staff person (especially important when customers place orders via phone, FAX, e-mail, or the Internet and never visit the business) as well as interesting information that would not necessarily come up in a routine business transaction.

### **#10: Remember a customer's significant event.**

Instead of a greeting card to mark a customer's birthday or other important personal event, send a post card. You might also consider commemorating business events, like the anniversary of the date of first purchase.

### **Post cards promote success**

Post cards are a valuable part of the marketing toolkit for businesses and organizations. Post cards are so versatile that they can be applied to many different selling and customer relations purposes. They can be used by themselves or as part of a comprehensive sales process.

Of course the effectiveness of a post card is greatly influenced by the design and layout. We are experts in using headlines, text, photographs, illustrations, and white space to effectively execute your design. Please contact us at 513-248-2121 for an appointment to discuss your next post card project.

*“Post cards can be an important part of building attendance at an event...”*

## Consider the Mail Panel

**A**lthough it may seem obvious to consider what the reader will see first when deciding on the design of a post card, we've noticed instances where the side of the post card containing the mail panel was apparently considered less important than the reverse. So we want to suggest a different layout. If you remember that mail arrives sorted with all addresses facing the same way, you'll understand our point.

The first view the reader will have of your post card will be the mail panel and whatever design elements are present on that side. Often the beautifully designed layout and full color printing are on the reverse of the mail panel and may be missed entirely if the side with the mail panel is unappealing or uninteresting.

Be sure you get off to a good start by designing the mail panel side to capture the reader's attention in the first critical seven to ten seconds.

We have several layouts that demonstrate our point that we'd be glad to show you. Just contact us at 513-248-2121 at your convenience.



*"... first when deciding on the design of a post card..."*

**Q.** *I'm tired of 4x6 inch and 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch post cards. Can you suggest other sizes?*

**A.** Yes, we can. We like 6 x 9 inches (half an inch higher and wider than the popular 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch post card) because it "sticks out" from within a stack of mail. An even more compelling size is a giant post card measuring a full 6 1/8 x 11 1/2 inches. And because the USPS considers any size between 4 1/4 x 6 and 6 1/8 x 11 1/2 inches to be letter-sized mail, all three sizes of post cards – popular, oversized, and giant – mail at the same postage rate. Do remember that you will have to use a stock with a higher base weight to satisfy the USPS standards for thickness, stiffness, and tear strength.



*"... because it "sticks out" from within a stack of mail."*

PRRSRT STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit #271  
Milford, OH

513-248-2121  
Fax 513-248-5141  
www.techgra.com  
info@techgra.com

TECHNE  GRAPHICS INC.  
2002 Ford Circle  
Milford, OH 45150

Please Route to the Printing Buyer

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Work For You**



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## Consider a Photograph

**F**or an eye-catching post card that customers and prospects will respond to, consider incorporating photographs into the design. A well-composed and correctly-lit photograph can effectively augment the message of the text by creating an emotional connection to the reader. And readers can more quickly comprehend what is being said if a visual image is added to the words.

A good source for photographs is a library of stock photography. This is a collection, sometimes very large, of images taken by professional photographers and offered for use royalty-free. Users purchase stock photos and download them from the Internet, either singly or in collections.

Two stock photography libraries that we can recommend are iStockPhoto.com (<http://www.istockphoto.com>) and Shutterstock (<http://www.shutterstock.com/>). Both use the micropayment model so the prices for individual photos are very reasonable.

