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PRINTtips

Simple Changes Make the Common Uncommon



Graphics

Printing

Mailing

Under One Roof

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How many common printing items – newsletters, post cards, brochures, note pads, note cards, thank you notes – do you routinely use for communicating with customers and prospects? How long has it been since you looked at those items with a fresh eye?

If you were to lay everything out on a table, would the company name, logo, and contact information be consistently displayed on each item? Do fonts change from item to item? Is the company's web site on each piece? These consistencies are the elements of **brand identity** and are important no matter what your company size or location or how many items you routinely print.

But while it is important to maintain consistency and predictability for your brand identity, it can be refreshing to move away from conformity in the size and shape of common printing items. In this issue of Printtips we'll offer a few simple changes that will make common printing items eye-catching and unique.

Newsletters

We've said it before (and will continue to remind you) that staying in touch with your customers and introducing your company to prospects via a monthly direct mail piece is the foundation of a strong sales program. Regularly reviewing your products and services with your customers promotes what marketers call **top of mind awareness** and helps prevent hearing a customer say, "I didn't know you did that". Regular mailings to prospects promotes name recognition as well as acquainting prospects with your product and service line.



As you can tell, our first choice for regular monthly direct mail is a newsletter – particularly one that showcases your expertise in your company's business line. We also know that many companies that begin a newsletter fail to follow through largely because of the significant amount of time needed for research, writing, designs, and layout.

In response, we suggest several simple changes to the traditional newsletter, all of which lessen the burden of research and writing copy:

- **News-in-brief.** Written like a letter in paragraph form, the news-in-brief style is a series of short news articles, mini-stories, one-sentence comments and other succinctly-stated information that a reader can quickly browse.
- **Mini newsletter.** A flat (*i.e.*, before folding) size of 7 x 12 ½ inches, then a right angle fold to produce a finished size of 3½ x 6¼. The right angle fold yields eight "pages" that can be designed with a front cover and a mailing panel. It will also fit inside a business envelope as a stuffer.

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“Most companies seem to prefer one of two standard sizes for brochures”

“... each page will have to be placed in the proper location and orientation...”

- *Envelope stuffer:* A flat size of $6\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, then a double parallel fold to produce a finished size of $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$. The fold doesn't create panels, so the newsletter unfolds to become two pages.

Post cards

If you don't think you can generate enough copy for a newsletter, or if you want to supplement your newsletter with additional mailings highlighting a specific product or service, then a post card is a good choice. Standard post card sizes are 6×9 , $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ and 5×8 . However, there are other sizes that offer advantages:

- *USPS card size:* Because of their physical dimensions, the United States Postal Service defines 6×9 , $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ and 5×8 post cards as *letter mail* which can be mailed at either first class, first class presort, or standard mail rates. But for 4×6 post cards, it offers a special rate called *card rate* that can be mailed either first class or first class presort at lower postage than standard mail. What this means is that a 4×6 post card gets delivery priority, address services at no additional charge, and a lower postage rate – a real bargain.
- *Unusual dimensions:* There are two factors to consider when deciding on the dimensions of a post card: the number that can be cut out of a standard press sheet, and the postage amount. For example, a $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ post card is an even cut out of an $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ press sheet and allows for certain production efficiencies. That size also fits the definition of letter mail. But there are other sizes that offer those same benefits, such as $9 \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ or 5×7 . A post card measuring 6×11 mails at the letter rate but appears as a giant post card.

Brochures

Most companies seem to prefer one of two standard sizes for brochures: an $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet folded in thirds to create six panels or pages or an 11×17 sheet folded in half, resulting in four pages. While these are good sizes, a few simple changes can produce something different:

- A legal-sized sheet ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 14$), printed on both sides, trimmed to 4×14 and folded in a gatefold creates a finished size of 4×7 with eight panels or pages – two more than a trifold $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$. This size of brochure also fits into a #10 commercial envelope. The gatefold provides another advantage because it can be designed with two images (one each on the left and right) or with one crossover image. When open, the gatefold dramatically reveals a panoramic page. In addition, the back page is large enough to accommodate all business contact information.
- A legal-sized sheet can also be used to form a 16-page brochure in booklet form. After folding, stitching, and trimming, the finished size of the booklet is $4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It can be made with a self-cover or the cover can be printed separated and attached when the interior pages are stitched.

Preparing the layout for this brochure requires a pagination guide, as each page will have to be placed in the proper location and orientation on the sheet. To prepare a pagination guide, fold a legal-sized sheet in half (to $8\frac{1}{2} \times 7$) and in half again (to $8\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$). Finally, make a third, right angle fold (to $4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$). Number the pages – you will have to reach inside some of the folds to reach the page. When numbering is complete, unfold the sheet to reveal a diagram of where and what orientation each page has on the sheet.

Note pads

Note pads are popular as a promotional item to give to customers and prospects as well as for personal use. The two standard sizes are $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches (half of a letter-sized sheet) and $4\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ (one-quarter of a letter-sized sheet). However, other sizes for note pads can be interesting:

- A letter-sized sheet trimmed in thirds to $8\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$ inches produces a good shape for a list – long and relatively narrow. A pad measuring 7×10 inches can be cut from a legal-sized ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 14$) sheet, producing a size associated with social stationery. This is a popular size for *From*

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the desk of pads. Or use half of a legal sheet – 8½ x 7 – for an almost square note pad offering a lot of room for note taking.

- If you hold meetings at your facility, consider having custom-printed tablets measuring 8½ x 11 and printed with your company's logo and contact information for each customer or prospect attending the meeting. Besides being a convenient way to take meeting notes, the pad becomes a promotional item advertising your company.

Thank you notes

Following up on a meeting or sales call with a personalized piece of mail is an effective technique for expressing appreciation, summarizing the results of the meeting, or getting details down in writing. The standard for thank you notes is cover weight paper folded at the top or side like a greeting card. For a more unusual presentation, here are two ideas:

- *Correspondence cards*: a single ply (rather than a foldover) in a heavier card stock and personalized with the writer's name or monogram creates a more informal, almost social tone to the correspondence. This is particularly effective when the card is hand written.
- *Foldover notes*: Printing on one side of a letter-sized sheet and folding in a *French fold* – two right angle folds – creates four pages that can be preprinted with a message or company information. A French fold has the advantage of printing on one side of the sheet, yet when folded, presenting information as if printed on both sides.

New ideas - our specialty

Our experience with all types of printing projects helps us generate new ideas. If you are considering a new project, or if you would like some fresh ideas for an old one, call us at 513-248-2121 today!

"... a personalized piece of mail is an effective technique for expressing appreciation..."

Note Pad Tips

Note pads are a versatile and appreciated promotional product that can be printed for a specific event or for general use. Follow these tips to be sure your pads are as useful as they are attractive.

- *Select the right paper.* People use pens and pencils to write on pads. Select a paper made for writing (bond, writing or text) and with an appropriate finish. Avoid coated papers, papers with a prominent finish, and papers too vividly colored.
- *Advertise with subtlety.* Keep your logo and contact information out of the way of the note-taking section.

- *Leave room for the notes.* Design the note pads to provide adequate space for the purpose – taking notes. This is particularly important for small (4 ¼ x 5 ½ inch) note pads.
- *If using a screen or grid behind the note-taking area, keep it light.* Avoid images that will compete with the notes.

Our design department will be happy to refresh the design of your company's note sheets or help you with your first order. Contact us for more information.



"Follow these tips to be sure your pads are as useful as they are attractive."

Begin With the End in Mind



“...good idea to size the piece to fit in a standard envelope.”

If you intend to mail your brochure, invitation, thank you card, or other material, it is a good idea to size the piece to fit in a standard envelope. For although it is possible to have envelopes custom-manufactured in a special size, the process is expensive and not feasible for less than 10,000 envelopes.

Here are the dimensions of some standard envelope sizes:

- #10 commercial ($4\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$): use for $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet folded in thirds
- Monarch ($3\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$): use for $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet trimmed to $7\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ and folded in thirds

- A2 announcement (square flap) or $5\frac{1}{2}$ baronial (pointed flap)($4\frac{3}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$): use for $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet folded in quarters
- A6 announcement (square flap) ($4\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$): use for $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet trimmed to $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ and folded in half
- Booklet (flap on 9 inch side) (6x9): use for $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ sheet folded in half

There are many other envelope styles and sizes. If you have a project in mind, call us at 513-248-2121 to review the options.



“A bleed is any printed element on the page that extends beyond the edge...”

Q. *What is bleed and how does it affect my printing costs?*

A. A bleed is any printed element on the page that extends beyond the edge of the sheet. A *full bleed* means the printed elements extend beyond all four edges of the sheet.

Even though it looks like we have printed to the edge of the sheet, we actually have trimmed

away the paper and an extra one-eighth inch of the image so it looks like we printed to the edge of the sheet. This process is called *trimming to the bleed*.

To include a bleed in the design, the image must be extended by one-eighth of an inch (0.125) past the trim line, and the press sheet must be larger than the finished size of the printed piece. Depending on the finished size of the piece, this may mean we get fewer finished pieces out of a standard press sheet. If you would like to include a bleed as a design element, let us know and we'll advise you how.