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PRINTips

Printed Brochures . . . How To Make Them Effective



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Consider the elegant simplicity of a printed brochure – it is a concise, attractive, and versatile compilation of information about a company, product, service, event, or location. It can be handed out during a person-to-person sales call or distributed as direct mail; made available in a literature rack or on a table at a trade show; sent in response to an inquiry or left behind on a cold call. It can be economically printed in both small and large quantities. As a sales tool, a brochure is appropriate for almost any selling situation.

Planning a brochure

A brochure is made up of three elements: the copy; the design; and the physical specifications. All are equally important for creating an effective brochure.

Copy

The copy is the brochure's message – the words that are used to persuade and inform. Since the most effective copy is written with a specific audience in mind, the first planning step is to define the target audience. Both the content and writing style will be different depending on whether the brochure is intended for technical staff such as engineers or mechanics, for executives such as CEOs and marketing managers, or end users/consumers.

The writing style and content may also be different depending on when in the sales cycle the brochure will be used – as a direct mail



piece to generate leads; as sales collateral and a leave-behind during sales calls; or in response to inquiries from leads generated by a web site, trade show, or exhibit.

The copy itself tells the story of the company, product, or service in an unfolding narrative with a beginning, middle, and ending. It includes all the important selling points (like features, benefits, and specifications), the unique selling proposition, and answers to frequently-asked questions. And it is told from the target audience's point of view.

The tone of the copy can be formal or conversational, but the writing must be clear with a minimum of industry jargon. When appropriate, write as if you are speaking directly to just one member of the target audience as this tends to personalize the writing and promote response.

Printed Brochures... How To Make Them Effective (Continued)

"Before copy is finalized, make sure it is consistent with other sales and marketing materials..."

"The cover needs an eye-catching photograph, headline, or combination..."

"Always keep enough printed brochures on hand so they are available to prospects who visit your business..."

Include a call to action – a specific instruction on what to do next and the information needed to complete the action – as part of the copy. Though commonly placed at the end of the text, a call to action can be put anywhere in the brochure and can appear more than one time. Near the call to action include full contact information – address, phone, FAX, url, social media locators, and QR code.

Before copy is finalized, make sure it is consistent with other sales and marketing materials, and proofread for factual errors, typos, errors, punctuation, grammar, and syntax.

Design

Design is what gives your brochure its visual appeal. Design elements include typography, color palette, photographs and images, white space, underlying organizational structure, and the arrangement of elements on the page.

The front cover of the brochure is the most important design element. It is the first thing that the target audience will see, and it determines whether the prospect will continue reading. The cover needs an eye-catching photograph, headline, or combination, not the company logo and contact information. Save that for the back cover or panel.

Be aware that the reader will look first at photographs and images, then headlines, charts and graphs, captions, and finally the body copy. Use pull quotes, shaded boxes, and drop capitals for emphasis and to guide the reader's comprehension. Make features into a bulleted list. The reader should be able to pick up the majority of the content by scanning the photographs and skimming the headlines and captions.

How a brochure is folded affects the order in which readers will see the information unfold, so compartmentalize the presentation. Be sure each panel stands alone but also is connected visually to the rest of the brochure.

Physical specifications

For the most economical price, design the brochure so it can be printed on standard size paper – 8.5 x 11, 8.5 x 14 or 11x17 inches – and use a standard fold:

- **C fold:** commonly used for trifold brochures, a C fold uses two parallel folds to create six panels. Seen from the side, forms a letter C. Also known as a letter fold.
- **Accordian fold:** two parallel folds that go in opposite directions creating six panels. Seen from the side, forms a Z shape. Also known as a Z fold.
- **Half fold:** a single fold creating four panels.
- **Right angle fold:** two folds at right angles creating eight panels. Can be either horizontal or vertical.
- **Spiral fold:** two or more parallel folds that fold in on each from either left or right. Seen from above, the folds spiral inward. Also known as a roll fold or barrel fold.

A popular stock for brochures is 100# text. It is thicker than paper used in copiers or for letterheads but less thick than card weight. It takes a fold well and will stand up to repeated handling. If the brochure is being printed in full color, we recommend using a coated stock.

The printed brochure: a versatile sales and marketing tool

Always keep enough printed brochures on hand so they are available to prospects who visit your business, to sales people making calls, and to respond to requests for more information. If you would like a quotation for printing, please call us at 513-248-2121. We also offer copywriting and design services as well as analysis of your existing brochures for possible makeovers.

Test Your Proofreading Skills

An important step in creating an effective brochure is proofreading the final layout. Here's a simple test to determine your proofreading skills.

Count the number of "F"s in the following sentence. Count them only once, and do not go back and count them again:

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT
OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC
STUDY COMBINED WITH THE
EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.

Did you count six "Fs"? Most people easily find three (finished, files, scientific). If you spotted four (of), you're an above average proofreader. If you found five or six (two more of's), you are an excellent proofreader.

There is no catch. We miss the "F" in the word "of" because the brain tends to see it as a "V" instead of an "F".



*"...test to determine
your proofreading skills."*

Q.

Are there different types of brochures?

A.

Yes, and they are distinguished mainly by their content.

- **Company brochure:** provides information about the company itself – in other words, it relates the company story. Content includes company history, what the company does and how it does it, defines its target market and customers, provides proof of its capabilities in the form of testimonials and references from satisfied

customers, and describes the added value that the business brings to its customers.

- **Product or service brochure:** provides information about a specific product or service or a related group of products and services. Content includes product/service description, features, benefits, unique characteristics, specifications, and often a photograph.
- **All purpose brochure:** combines the content of a company and product/services brochure but in an abbreviated form.

"Yes, and they are distinguished mainly by their content."



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Save Time with Text Extenders



"A text extender can handle something as simple as a phone number or as complex as multiple paragraphs of HTML code."

If you often type or cut and paste the same block of text (such as your signature or several paragraphs of a standard response) you may be interested in a text extender – a program that automatically pastes a string of words or paragraphs when you type a short code. A text extender can handle something as simple as a phone number or as complex as multiple paragraphs of HTML code.

For example, if you use different e-mail signatures, you can assign a shorthand code like “xsig”, “ysig” and “zsig” to each of three

different signature blocks. Then when you type “xsig”, the text expander will paste in the entire signature block associated with that code.

A text expander can be used for many things, such as a photo, a logo, boilerplate paragraphs, special characters, or words with accent marks.