

THE ULTIMATE PRINT GUIDE

FOR RUNNING A SMALL BUSINESS



A WHITE PAPER

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The Ultimate Print Guide For Running a Small Business

Executive Summary

Packaging matters, from bags to give-away items, your brand (and your brand message) should be a clear part of everything your customers touch.

Starting or running a business includes deciding which branding and marketing materials are right for moving your business forward and building trust and value with your brand. This guide is here to help you. It will reveal what every business should consider for standard print resources to keep on hand or to use to create great print marketing campaigns.

The print materials can be divided into different areas of consideration.

Brand It! – *the standard stuff*

These are the things every business should have, like business cards and signage.

Set, Camera, Lights! – *visual resources*

Great marketing materials always start with great visuals. When it comes to having professional photos of your assets, whether that's products, people, or other things, remember that the quality of your images is just as important as the business itself.

Take it to Go – *everything your customers take with them*

Packaging matters, from bags to give-away items, your brand (and your brand message) should be a clear part of everything your customers touch.

The Big Announcement – *what your customers should know*

The informative materials you create to educate your customers about the features, benefits, prices, sales, and much more, will all help increase your sales and exposure. From direct mail campaigns to newsletters, these print pieces make a huge difference.

You're the Expert – *everything that shows your industry expertise*

Make sure you have case studies, testimonials, product spec. sheets, and any other print pieces that show your knowledge on your business, your product's information, and how your customers solve their issues with your help.

Meet the Press – *think publicity and PR items*

There are tons of ways to think about publicity, with everything from making press kits to conference packets. Look at your print materials from the perspective of the public perception.

Onboard Like a Pro – *consider your employees' needs as well*

Sometimes, we think of our employees' print needs last. However, considering your employees as part of your target audience helps you give them the knowledge they need to be your best brand ambassadors.

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Brand It!

What's in a Name?

Your name is everything; which means it should be everywhere. The start to great branding is having a great logo. It is often the first thing a business creates and should never be underestimated. Your logo and branding is what represents you when there's no one there to explain your product or service.

"I strive for two things in design: simplicity and clarity. Great design is born of those two things."

Lindon Leader – designer of the FedEx and Hawaiian Airlines logos

Point Out the Obvious

Marking your business with signs, banners, and other forms of branding will help customers know who you are, where you are, and what you have to offer them. Make sure your brand is stamped all over the physical location of your business.

Signs

If your business includes foot traffic, the right kind of signage can make all the difference. Make sure your customers know where to go, where to park, and what door to enter, especially if any of these are not obvious.

Window Clings

Not just for storefronts, window clings can help when there is no place for external signage. They are great for announcing specials or new products, and they're an easy way to block harsh sun or add some privacy.

Vehicle Wraps

Your vehicle is your mobile banner when you wrap it with your logo along with your best products' features and benefits.

Car Magnets

Using car magnets gives you mobile advertising when you need it and yet is easily removable for the times when it is not appropriate. Sometimes, it is easier for your employees or salespeople to add a magnet to their vehicle while they're representing your brand and then remove it without committing to being a permanent billboard.

Put it in Writing/Print

Even if you're a digital company, there are print pieces that are must-haves for every business.

Business Cards

A business card does more than give your name, address, and phone number to your potential customers; it says who you are visually. From your logo to the paper it's printed on, business cards provide an opportunity to stand out and be memorable.

Stationery

In a digital world, you still need stationery. The impression that you can make with a beautifully printed letter on traditional, or non-traditional stationery is totally up to you.

Envelopes

Pre-printed envelopes are a staple for every business. Whether they are color or black and white, a printed envelope makes a statement of professionalism and establishment.

Appointment Cards

For service businesses, appointment cards are a great way to get your name in the hands of your customers. Print them business-card size and they can do double duty. Or, design a postcard-sized card that has added visibility on a fridge or tack board.

Forms

From receipt tickets to order forms, duplicate to quadruple copies, forms with your brand and customized for your business show your customers that you believe in quality and service.

Menus

There are infinite ideas for unique menus that make your food and drink, or list of services, shine. Unique materials or shapes will make your menu stand out.

Business Card Tips – from Entrepreneur.com

1. Enlist the help of a professional.
2. Keep it simple.
3. Keep it the standard size, unless adventurous fits your brand.
4. Be deliberate about the information on your card – too much can look cluttered.
5. Don't confuse brand identity with advertising. Keep the back of your card simple or blank.



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Set, Camera, Lights!

To promote your products and services and create great marketing materials, you must have great images representing the products, services, and the people who make your business successful.

Never skimp on great photos. If you're starting out and don't have much of a budget, a great logo is your priority. However, professional-looking photos should be number two. There is nothing that ruins the possibility of great-looking print materials more than bad images.

Employee Photos

Your team is your greatest asset. Put them in their best light with professional-looking photos that you can add to your website and other marketing materials.

Product Photos

The quality of your photos shows customers the quality of your work. Great product photos will enhance the design of any flyer, brochure, or postcard. Your business is unique, so be sure the images of your products are too.

Services Images

If your industry is service-based, it sometimes might be cost-effective to purchase stock photos representing the types of services you provide. However, having your own employees and customers in these photos (taken professionally) may be just the advantage you need over your competition.

Stock images

Sometimes the only way to say what you need to say visually is to use stock images. When that's the case, choose high-quality images. Remember, even though there are lots of free resources, opt for quality of message and photo content over price.



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Take it to Go

Think of the kinds of things that you send home with your customers. Whether it is promotional items or the packaging for your products, these print pieces represent your brand and deserve consideration.

Bags

Bags are a great way to feature your brand. Multiple people will see your bag and your branding on it. The type of bag that you choose makes just as big of an impression as your products going into it.

Packaging

The look and feel of the packaging of your product is your audience's first impression. Great design can increase the interaction between your customer and your products.

Labels

Labels are the perfect way to add your brand to everything. If you're starting and don't have the budget for custom-printed bags, try labels. Labels are a versatile way to customize almost anything.

Handouts

Get your information out to your customers through handouts. They can be informative, creative, and serve multiple purposes, from mailers to face-to-face interactions at your store or events.

Magnets

Who doesn't like magnets? They are an effective way of keeping your brand in plain sight of your target audience. People keep magnets, so take advantage of that by creating everything from business card magnets to calendars.

Calendars

Even though we all have our digital calendars in our pockets these days, the physical calendar is still something we hang on our wall. Give your customers the opportunity to think of you as they plan their week.



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Instruction Manuals for Products

If your product or service must come with a manual, having it professionally designed and printed shows your customers that you care about them after the sale. Make a good impression with continued good service and a manual that looks like you took the time to develop it.

Aftercare Brochures and Flyers

What do I do now? If your customers are asking this question after your service, an aftercare brochure would be a great addition to your brand. Customers will feel more at ease with instructions for getting the best results possible.



University Animal Hospital routinely sends their furry patients home from surgery with an aftercare brochure explaining how to care for your pet for the type of surgery or procedure it underwent. They take an additional opportunity to send an aftercare postcard two days later with additional tips for care.

The Big Announcement

Telling your customers the big news is always a good reason for a direct mail campaign. What's the big news? Everything! Announce a sale, expose insider secrets, or launching a new product or service. It doesn't matter what it is, it deserves some pomp and circumstance!

Direct Mail

Consumers like direct mail, so get something in the hands of your customers so they can make a physical connection to your brand. Research shows that direct mail works because it reaches your audience effectively and allows for greater focused results.

Some great ideas for direct mail are:

- Sales Letters
- Catalogs
- Newsletters
- Postcards
- Tri-fold and Quarter-fold self-mailers

Quick Tips for Direct Mail

- Focus your topic on a direct, measurable outcome.
- Narrow your mailing list to your target audience based on your desired outcome.
- Find a quality list broker to purchase a targeted mailing list to supplement your current list.
- Measure your results with analytics.

Door Hangers

Neighborhood campaigns are highly effective, and door hangers are the perfect, non-intrusive, inexpensive way to put your message on every house in your targeted neighborhood. Most cities have a few guidelines of where you can place door hangers, so check with your city government regulations.

Catalogs & Magalogs

Whether you print a traditional catalog or combine your products with articles, editorials, and interest pieces to form a magalog, these items make perfect direct mail pieces and are effective items to hand out at events or place in purchase bags.

You're the Expert

Create resources that show your expertise in your industry. These resources are great for your mailing campaigns, in-person handouts, newsletters, and case studies (among many other things).

Design Tips for Great Results

- Picture the people you want your advertisement to reach. They should see themselves in your design.
- Your images should be powerful enough to express the message of your ad, even if your audience doesn't read the text.
- Don't limit yourself to photographs. Get smart with your visual assets, like using infographics.

Create your resources

- ✓ Flyers
- ✓ Brochures
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Case Studies
- ✓ Articles
- ✓ Rack Cards
- ✓ Product Spec Sheets
- ✓ Menu of Services
- ✓ Food/Drink Menus

A national service organization, with branches in every state, needed a newsletter solution that could make an impression of the highest caliber. They worked with their local printer to come up with a replicable newsletter design that the organization could customize each month. Then they sent the digital file to their printer who not only printed each issue, they also mailed it to the nearly 5000 members.

Meet the Press

Any time your name gets out there, it is press coverage. Think of creating materials just like a PR manager would promote a celebrity or a news reporter would cover a story.

Media Kit

Not just for reporters, a media kit is a great way to package your business in a neatly bundled story. This will not only give you a quick way to tell others about you, but it's also a perfect tool to help focus your marketing message.

Things to include for the perfect media kit:

- Flyers
- Brochures
- Business Cards
- Case Studies
- Newsletters
- Testimonials
- Annual Report
- A promotional item like a magnet or pen
- Product Samples (think about packaging)
- An article about how/why your company was created and its mission.



Gini's Sweet Treats started as a love for cookies and ice cream. Owner, Jan P., named the food cart after her nana, and though starting the business was hard, she made sure that her media kit was beautiful. She hand-delivered it to all the local stations and news outlets, every local blogger got a digital copy, and on opening weekend, her name was everywhere.

Onboard Like a Pro

People are your best resources. Every company knows that without the greatest employees on the planet, companies wouldn't be able to provide the best products and services that they do. Onboarding new employees is always something to consider. Having great resources for them can put your company ahead of the rest.

Consider the following:

- Employee manuals
- Name tags, plaques, door signs
- Learning tools
- Reference binders
- Banners, posters, signage
- Mission Statement
- Employee recognition

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“Why is internal marketing so important? First, because it’s the best way to help employees make a powerful emotional connection to the products and services you sell.”

– Colin Mitchell,
Harvard Business
Review

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Conclusion

Every business is different, and every company has unique needs. However, one thing is universal: branding is everything.

It's important to understand the perspective of how customers, the public, and employees interact with your brand and determine which resources are necessary. Hopefully, with this guide, you can make sure that your needs are met leaving you room to think outside of the box for special occasions knowing your bases are covered.

Some key takeaways:

1. Get design help – great design is everything.
2. Print pieces play multiple roles in your overall marketing.
3. Everyone matters. From employees to your target market, they all interact with your brand.

About Your Sponsor

When you need help designing or printing, we are here to help. Whether you have an in-house design team and just need printing, or you come to us for all your design needs too, we are ready to offer you the best service in the industry.

Choosing your local printer as your go-to option means having a printer who knows you and your brand and understands what is right for your business needs. Our community is what matters, and we are happy that you are a part of it.

Let us know how we can best serve you. We are one phone call or email away and are excited to create and print your assets, no matter what they are. It is our privilege to provide excellent products and services to you, our valued customer.

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