



First Impressions Count! Lasting Impressions Sell! Bet Your Business Card On It.

It's the trade show of the year, and you're poised to meet, greet and network up a storm because the precise buyers for your product or services are here. Business card? Check. Sales brochures? Check. Product samples, informational literature, or other appropriate peripherals? Check.

But wait. Let's go back to item #1 – both in the list above and the all-important first step in creating a strong, lasting and favorable impression. In other words, what you looked like or said may not be remembered when potential customers are back home, but your business card will be in the pile he'll sift through to separate the wheat from the chaff; the business she'll want to follow up on.

What's your card saying about you? Here are some of the most common mistakes you've no doubt seen and reacted to negatively. Tossing the card into the wastebasket is inevitable.

Paper too thin. Card is wimpy and bends or crumples in your hand or briefcase. And screams cheap. Might be an indicator of your other business practices and products.

Pre-printed perforated cards you run through your computer printer. More cheap impressions, plus your card may look like dozens of others because of the limited pre-printed designs available.

There's much more. Boring. Bad choice of type face and size. Too much or too little information. No focal point, muddy graphics – the list goes on.



This well-designed, double-sided business card for Shalimar Alpacas feature:

1. A strong sense of alignment.
2. Oval shapes in the logo are carried over to other areas of the layout.
3. Consistent theme with use of color gradients (purple to white).



This is an example of an amateurish business card design. Some of the problems are:

1. Poor color choice for industry.
2. Too many different types of fonts.
3. No alignment of elements in the layout.
4. Poor quality of graphics.
5. Excessive use of highlight color.

Your business card is often the first – and perhaps only – impression prospective clients may see. Will it encourage them to find out more about you and your business? Having a good logo design and a clean layout leaves them with a favorable first impression that you're a credible, professional businessperson.

Following are 13 easy ways for you to do what the professional designers do – insider secrets about business cards that go right to your first impression and bottom line.

1. Create a focal point or central place that draws a reader's eye.
2. Allow white space to help balance the layout. Don't fill up the card with text.
3. Use a clear, strong logo that looks good when reduced in size on your business card.
4. Use a highlight color sparingly. Make sure colored elements highlight the one main message you want to convey.
5. Be sure the highlight color you choose is appropriate to your business. For example, using green on a lawn care business card would be far more appropriate than, say, red or orange.
6. Limit your selection of type fonts to no more than two, which may also include their "families." For example, a font family includes styles such as bold, italic, or bold italic versions.
7. Format your text to be smaller, more compact, and more professional-looking.
8. Choose appropriate fonts for your business, avoiding trendy, or overly embellished versions.



Some effective features of this well-designed business card for Tuscany Valley Alpacas are:

1. A strong logo and tag line.
2. Good use of white space.
3. On the back side, a full-color photo that bleeds off three edges.

9. Avoid using all capital letters because they are more difficult to read, and look unprofessional.
10. Use a grid to align text and objects.
11. Don't use illustrations that are too detailed or delicate, as they may look muddy when printed at a small size.
12. Stay away from amateurish-looking or dated clip art (unless you are going for the "retro" look). Find good-quality resources.
13. Select a beefy cover stock for your paper. Sometimes 80# cover is not enough. You can get a free swatch book from

your printer or paper representative. The swatch book will allow you to examine and feel the various sheets for finish, thickness, stiffness, opacity (translucence), and color.

Impress your clients with your cards as though your business depended on it! Cards are small in size but huge in importance to your business success. Start employing these design tips to ensure that your cards are doing the biggest possible job for you. **N**

Karen Saunders is the owner of MacGraphics Services, a unique design firm for today's entrepreneur. Whether you outsource your promotional pieces or are a do-it-yourselfer, Karen takes the mystery out of marketing. Learn the Top 5 Mistakes that can cost you money – sign up for her FREE e-course, available for a limited time. To take advantage of this e-course and find out how easy it can be to attract more clients, macgraphics.net/FreeStuff.php. You can also contact her at Karen@macgraphics.net.