

**"MARKETING"**

**SAY IT WITH A CARD**

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## "MARKETING" SAY IT WITH A CARD

**Y**our business card. That little piece of real estate is, or should be, as much part of your business "personality" as your own. Not only does your business card contain your contact information, it's an introduction and a reminder for later. When someone is going through the stack of cards on their desk, rolodex or folder and they come across your card, they should recognize it and by virtue of that, recognize you.

That little 3½ x 2 inch piece of paper should be very important to you and your business. If you're a small business owner, self employed or have discretion as to how your card looks then you have an enormous impact on your business image. Here are some things to consider:

- 1. Empty space** – keep a fair amount of it. Too much information is as bad as too little. Invariably, the card will look crowded and dense. A good idea is to write down everything you would like to put on your card and then prioritize it.
- 2. USE BOTH SIDES** – there's a whole other 3½ x 2 space to use. Consider putting slightly less relevant information on the back of your card. Your fax number for example, unless you think it's critical. Your blog address, mailing address...yes, your mailing address...how many people write to you based on your card? More people are going to call or email you...
- 3. MAKE IT LEGIBLE.** Use a clear font and a good contrasting color. If it's too



## "MARKETING" A SIMPLE G-A-M-E PLAN

small, it's going to be a pain to read. Don't try and be clever. To be brutally honest, it's annoying.

**4. USE A GOOD STOCK.** Yes, the economy makes it hard to spend money on some things where we know we can save, but you often get what you pay for, especially when it comes to business cards. Use at least a 12pt card stock. Do consider the return on investment. Plastic business cards may be cool, but they're expensive. Can you justify that cost?

**5. GLOSSY OR NOT?** If you're going to get a UV (glossy) finish, consider the color of the card. Glossy cards have a nice, waxy feel to them, but they tend to show fingerprints easily on darker colors. Another thing to consider is that if you are trying to save money, think about using a lighter color card.

Unless you're going to a custom printer, most card colors are printed onto the paper. Depending on the quality of the cutter, this can lead to cards looking "worn at the edges" as soon as you get them, especially with a UV finish. A lighter color, or white, doesn't show this. I've designed cards with a white border just to prevent this problem. A matte finish can look very classy. but so can gloss. UV tends to "weather" better.

**6. INCLUDE A PHOTO?** It's up to you but ask yourself why. First, it takes up space. Second, it needs to be a good one. Third, it should be you and not you and family, you and pets...you get the idea. Do you want people to remember



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you? Well, your winning personality should take care of that. Use photos with caution. If you're ordering 1,000 business cards, remember that you should try and resemble the photo as you get to the end of the stack. Planning on changing your hairstyle/color? Consider your cards...

**7. WHAT SHOULD BE ON IT?** This very much depends on the audience. I have clients who use different cards depending on the situation. The "Dave Segrove" rule of thumb is as follows:

### **FRONT**

- Name
- Title (optional)
- Credentials (optional, depending on legal requirements. If you have a whole bunch of certifications, consider that having an alphabet after your name may impress some people but it may intimidate others)
- Telephone
- Email
- Web address (optional – could go on the back)
- Photo (optional – see sermon above)
- Logo
- Quote or catchphrase (optional)

### **BACK**

- Address
- Fax
- Blog



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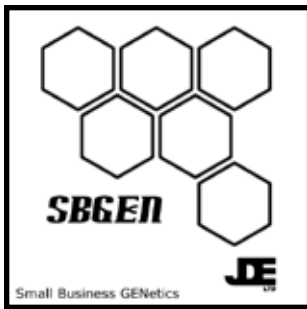
- Alternate phone
- Web address (if not used on the front)
- Alternate website (if you have another)
- Space for notes or appointment(s) (optional)
- Industry required logos (such as Equal Housing etc)
- Map to your business location (useful for retail)
- Hours of operation (retail)

As you can see, there is much to choose from. Considering that you should leave breathing space, pick carefully.

**8. THE BACKGROUND.** While a uniform color looks nice, a graphic can be quite eye-catching, as long as it doesn't interfere with the foreground.

**9. WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED?** This is just my opinion but you've read this far...

- "I appreciate referrals". Who the heck doesn't? So why waste valuable space by putting that on your card?
- Photos that are not relevant should also be avoided.
- Clever sayings that are not part of your mission statement, slogan, motto or catchphrase, tagline etc. If you have the space, perhaps something else to fill it?
- Oversized or strangely shaped cards. There is a little more room for the latter, provided they fit into a standard business card slot in a rolodex or



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folder. If your card is too big, where might it end up?

**10. HOW CAN YOU GET IT CUSTOMIZED?** Work with a designer. Yes, I know it involves a cost, but many designers are not that expensive. I know I'm not, and I really mean that. A good designer will work *with* you, *learn* about you and *what your business message needs to convey*. He or she should provide mock-up designs and tailor them until you're happy. Listen to the designer. Work *with* them. Ask to see their portfolio and only move forward if you have a good feeling about them.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I do design a lot of business cards. I do believe in being different for each client. You're unique, so your card should reflect this. There are many ways to skin a cat the saying goes (though I have never understood why a cat), and the same applies to business cards.