

Business Card Breakthroughs

By Diana Ratliff

IMPORTANT STUFF TO KNOW AND LEGAL MUMBO-JUMBO

Non-"Legalese" Version:

I'm an author and researcher, and I think business cards are horribly underutilized. That's it. I'm not a printer nor am I the world's greatest networker. Please don't make any critical financial decisions based on the information in this book.

As far as I know, everything was correct at the time of this writing, but I cannot predict how anyone will respond to a particular business card (or business card use) and I have no control over the websites mentioned herein.

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PRINTERS I RECOMMEND

Over the years, I've done a lot of research into business card printing companies, particularly those that conduct business online. At the time of this publication, I can heartily endorse the following

THREE:

1. BizCardGuru.com

An amazing variety of business card designs to choose from. You can also order many formats of business cards – magnetic business cards, business card stickers, metal or plastic business cards, and so on.

2. FindBusinessCards.com

Very easy to use design interface AND great prices. Use the code DEAL15 at checkout to save 20% on your order!

3. OvernightPrintSite.com

Another one that's very easy to use, offers unusually thick cards, and you can order as few as 25 cards!

If you need to contact me, email is best:

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INTRODUCTION

It's tough to imagine a marketing tool that's more versatile, portable, affordable, and readily accepted than a business card. When you can get 1,000 quality cards for less than \$100USD (sometimes MUCH less), the "bang for the buck" is considerable. Add that low cost to the personal nature of the medium, and you have a VERY attractive marketing option.

However, a recent survey concluded that more than 90% of business cards wind up in the trash the same day they're received. Less than 1% of them are kept over thirty days.

Dr. Lynella Grant, author of "The Business Card Book" (500 pages long but a good, comprehensive resource), gives eight reasons why people keep business cards:

- as a link to a potential customer or client
- as a link to a resource or supplier
- as a link to a colleague
- for social or non-business reasons
- to use for referring business (to pass on to someone else)
- to update information they already have
- reluctance to part with it because "you never know..."
- the person or their card is likable, unusual, or useful.

As you can see, the information and design of the card play a large role in determining whether or not a card will be kept. Knowing that cards are kept for specific reasons can help you design cards that

your own customers and prospects are likely to keep.

But the PRESENTATION of the card — what you do with it after it comes back from the printer — is equally important.

Believe me, bad taste, ignored etiquette and missed possibilities impact the mileage you'll get out of your cards, too.

And even if your CARD isn't particularly unusual or useful, your words and actions can certainly go a long way towards making YOU likable. The way you present yourself, the words you use when you hand someone your business card, the actions you taken when giving or receiving cards — these are all subtle cues that influence how welcome your business transaction might be.

How you handle business cards you receive FROM OTHER PEOPLE is also vitally important. Even if you never hand out another single card yourself (and I'm NOT recommending that!), you can generate a lot of interest in your business by cleverly using other people's cards. That's in this book, too.

So grab a cup of coffee or a soda, relax, and enjoy. As you read, consider how well specific tips would work with your industry, your business, your client base, and your own personality — but allow your imagination free rein, too. (After all, if what you were CURRENTLY doing with business cards was working well for you, you wouldn't have purchased this e-book!)

I welcome your comments and suggestions! Please forward them to <mailto:diana@businesscarddesign.com>

Thank you for allowing me to participate in your success!



Cordially, Diana

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

No matter who designs or prints your business cards, it's smart to begin the process by talking to other people. Your friends. Your customers. Business associates. Members of your networking group. Your board of advisors. And yes, people whose card you find appealing. (Make a habit of collecting business cards you admire; one of my favorites is pictured above.)



Find out what information these people would like to see on your card. Ask if there's a format they'd find particularly useful (such as a magnetic card, or a card with a QR code on it that connects to your website or Facebook page.) Brainstorm about innovative ways to use business cards. Study cards you like and try to adapt the most successful elements for your own design.

Don't be afraid to innovate — and don't be afraid to start over. Given the affordability and importance of business cards, it's a false economy to keep handing out ugly, outdated or ineffective cards. (It's a false economy to hoard them as well. Print plenty! Generally speaking, the more you print the more money you save.)

And as you plan for new cards, remember your employees! Anyone who comes into contact with customers should have business cards AND be instructed in their use.

The Most Important Design Step...

Open your mind to a new way of using business cards – a new way to look at what may seem to be a tired but essential tool.

Maybe — just maybe — a business card can be more than just a tiny scrap of paper with your contact information. That may be how the “average” businessperson uses it, but your goal is to be above average. To stand out. To be noticed. To be remembered.

And to maximize any tool that can land you new customers and more profit. Right?

Based on my experience, the most important step, one that is often done hurriedly (if at all), is to think about how your card will be used.

Huh? You’re probably wondering, “What’s to think about? You put your name and company and contact info on your cards and hand them out to whoever might want them. So what’s this lady talking about?”

Let me explain.

Analyzing who will receive your card, what purpose it’s intended to serve, and how the customer might use it makes a profound difference on the style, content, and quantity. You downloaded this report because you want your card to work hard for you. Business cards are so common they’re often underutilized, but they’re a marketing tool with vast potential if you take the trouble to design and use them strategically.

So — are you going to use your card to introduce yourself? To post on bulletin boards? To give to others and ask them to refer people

back to you?

What would you like your cards to do — increase your customer base or funnel new distributors your way?

(These are NOT rhetorical questions – I challenge you to actually write down the answers!)

Are your cards usually given to CURRENT or POTENTIAL

customers? If your card is a marketing tool, often given to

strangers, you need to add more wording about your product

benefits. Maybe you want to put a QR code on the card, like

this one of mine, to make it easy for someone to connect with

you on Facebook, or to sign up for your email list.

Someone who is already "sold" on your product is probably more interested in expanded contact information.

Under what situations would someone who has your card refer to it? If you're a plumber, and the odds are you're going to be called at any time day OR night, your card needs to be easy to read and easy to find. Perhaps a magnetic or adhesive card would be right for you, or one with glow-in-the-dark lettering.

Or perhaps your average client is in sales and travels a lot (planes, trains or automobiles). Will he/she be able to read your phone number while driving 70 miles an hour or under dim lights on a plane between stops, when he/she needs to speak to you NOW?

And think about:

- What image do you want to portray?
- How do you want people to FEEL when they get your business card? (For example, people buy cosmetics because they want to feel



beautiful, pampered, and confident.)

- What action do you want people to take when they get your card?
- What information do you need to include? (Believe it or not, an address is often unnecessary.) And
- How can your business card make people want to do business with you?

I realize this may be a new way of thinking about business cards for you. Visualize a “mini-billboard”, not just an entry in your contact management software, and you’ll have a better idea of what I mean.

Oh, and one last point. I’m often asked if Internet entrepreneurs, or people who are really active in social media, need business cards. The answer is an emphatic “Yes!”

Fewer people are investing in stationery or letterhead. You need ONE REALLY GOOD PIECE to show off... and to give to people you meet at church, in line at the grocery store, or at your daughter’s recital. People may WORK online, but they LIVE offline. It’s “penny wise but pound foolish” to neglect offline marketing.

Ready? Let’s focus on more specific design tips.

DESIGN IDEAS

It's TOUGH to sit down and design a business card. If you're a creative person, you probably have TOO MANY ideas. If you're not, you don't have ANY. It's certainly frustrating for many people, which no doubt explains the prevalence of ugly, generic black-on-white cards. Such cards are the easy way out.

You'll find many design ideas described below.

However, first I want to address one of the most frequently asked questions I get, which is how to use personal photos on business cards. It's very common in certain industries such as real estate, and among speakers, entertainers, and counselors. Savvy marketers know, though, that just because it's common, doesn't mean it's SMART.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages of using photos on business cards. (I'm speaking primarily of personal photos, not background photos or images.)

PHOTOS ON BUSINESS CARDS:

Let's look at the advantages first:

- A photo makes a card unique;
- A photo is helpful to give someone who's never met you (so they can pick you out in person, or visualize you while you're talking on the phone/email);
- A photo may honestly be the single best way to illustrate your product, or some aspect of it (like flawless skin for a makeup salesperson);

- A photo may complement other marketing methods in which a celebrity or character (say, Ronald McDonald) is well recognized;
- Cards with photos tend to be kept longer;
- Cards with photos tend to be placed on top of any pile of cards.

There are disadvantages, too:

- A photo "dates" you/your product;
- People judge others based on their looks; you may be perceived as being too old or too young, the "wrong" gender or race, or simply someone who has lousy taste in ties.

Unfortunate, but true.



- Getting a good quality photo of you is an additional expense and hassle;
- Photos can distract from the message/purpose of the card;
- A personal photo can present a security/safety issue (I recently advised someone to use stock photos of children on her cards, rather than pictures of her own grandchildren, for just that reason.)
- If you have an extensive or changing product line, it's impossible to show all your current products on your card.

So what's right for you?

Yes, industry conventions play a part, but of more importance (in my opinion), is how you're intending to use your card. (Yes, we're back to that again!)

For example, I now have on my refrigerator a really classy-looking card from a realtor. I certainly won't forget what he looks like, because the photo is full-body (not just a headshot). His last name is

"Rose", so the red rose in his lapel adds a bright spot of color to the card.

But if I'm looking for the right house for me, I honestly don't CARE what the realtor looks like. I want to know more about their experience, their education, how well they follow up and what specialized services they might offer (like updated email listings of new homes that meet my criteria.) There's no room for that on his card because his picture takes up most of the space.

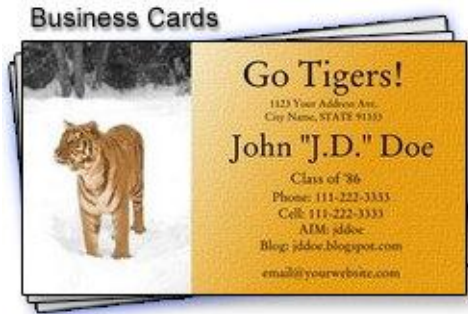
Below is a realtor's card that is very appealing and, in my opinion, a lot more useful as a marketing tool.



Consider, too, how easy it is for prospective customers to get photos in other ways. There's limited room on a business card, but virtually unlimited space on a website. If someone really wants to see what you look like, or view an up-close picture of your Wonder Widget, perhaps a business card that leads people to your site is a better choice.

The bottom line? Is your card more EFFECTIVE (customer-

focused) by having your smiling face on it? If not, leave it off. You can certainly find other colorful, engaging options.



Okay, back to the design tips:

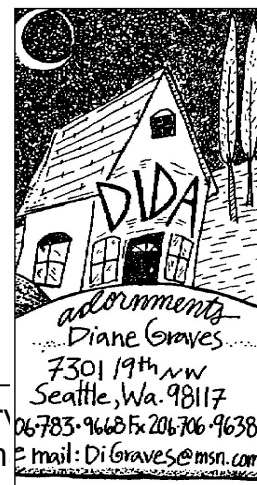
1) Don't expect one card to do it all. So many people today fulfill more than one job function, run more than one business, or simply want to separate their business and personal lives. It's impossible to fit EVERYTHING on one card, so why try? Create cards to fit your various roles. In fact, one of the fastest growing trends in business card printing is the desire for Personal Networking Cards... cards that have nothing to do with your business, but that are created to reflect your family, your interests and hobbies.

Tip: such personal cards are also great to use when you'd prefer to hide a company association. Maybe you're going to a trade show to check out the competitors – it's probably better if you DON'T carry your traditional company card!

2) Choose card color carefully. Cards printed in most blues, browns, and oranges don't copy or fax well. So are cards printed on very dark, very bright or fluorescent backgrounds. It's impossible to write on a black or very dark business card, too.

3) Printing vertically instead of horizontally adds a distinctive touch (although cards are more difficult to read when stored in most business card organizers, which present cards horizontally.)

4) White out. Leave plenty of white space



(blank area) on the card. If the card is too busy, it won't get read. Overcrowding a business card is the single most common design mistake, according to printers.

5) Add color. Using a single color (such as black or brown ink) on colored card stock is an inexpensive way to make standard cards more visually appealing.

6) You're not getting any younger ... and neither are your customers. Make sure the fonts are large enough to be read by the "bifocal" crowd. Try for a 10-point minimum font size, although you can drop to 8 points for clear, legible fonts such as Arial for small amounts of text.

7) Use fold-over cards to create "mini-brochures." Put your customary contact information on the front and back of the folded card. Use the inside to describe your products and primary benefits. These are also sometimes called folded cards or bi-fold cards, and you can usually have folded cards printed with blank insides, grayscale insides or full-color insides.



8) Browse through business card templates such as those available at the printers I recommend (mentioned elsewhere in this report) to spark your imagination. I used this technique myself to good effect when creating my "Unforgettable" card. I simply

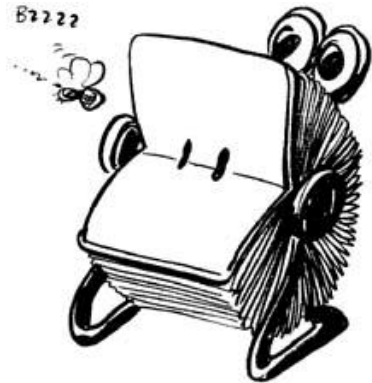


browsed through the designs until an idea struck. It's been a VERY successful card.

9) Reward frequent shoppers with a card designed especially for them. You can print small boxes along one edge of the card, and then mark a box when a purchase is made. (Even simpler, initial the card or use a distinctive hole-punch.) Give the cardholder a discount or gift when the entire card has been marked.

10) Face up. Can't think of anything useful or clever to put on the back of the card? Try printing the same information on both sides. That way your card is never "face down."

11) Rolodex? If many customers and contacts use Rolodexes, have your cards printed to fit. Print contact information along the top edge, so that you can punch holes along on the bottom edge without cutting out essential information.



This is another very common mistake.

Another option, if you have many customers who use Rolodexes (yes, some people still do), is to print business card stickers; these are available at <http://guru.ecardbuilder.com>. You can hand these out like regular business cards, but since the backside is peel-and-stick, recipients can stick them onto Rolodex cards.

12) Do your own printing and save if you customarily use less than 20 cards a month, or if you want to create cards for special functions (such as a tradeshow). Use the special pre-perforated papers that are available (I recommend Avery brand paper) and the best

quality printer you can find (the higher the dpi [dots per inch], the better). A word (well, a few words) of caution about making your own cards:

Many people are less-than-thrilled with the results when they make their own business cards or receive the so-called "free" cards they ordered. Sometimes cards just don't turn out as well as they'd hoped.

Often, the reactions they get when they hand out their cards are



disappointing. In my opinion (and people have been paying me for info on how to improve your image and attract more business using business cards since the late 90's) creating your own

business card is fine (and fun!) for personal use, but not a good idea for most businesses (except in very specific situations.)

Let me explain.

To begin with, in business, image is EVERYTHING. Your business card makes a powerful statement about your professionalism and credibility. It should inspire trust and reassure prospects that you're serious about your business, not some "fly-by-night" operator.

Laser-printed business cards on flimsy paper with perforated edges simply do not convey an image that attracts business. In fact, they can actually cost you business.

And there are other costs as well. If you make your own cards, you still need to buy card stock or perforated business card paper. You'll need ink. You may even buy business card software, templates, or a good clipart collection. And don't forget the amount of time it takes!

Free or homemade business cards can be used successfully,

however, when your prospects would not expect high-quality, expensive-looking cards. Perhaps you need special business cards for a drawing at a tradeshow or special event. Perhaps you don't actually need business cards as such, but want to hand out coupons or bookmarks or tickets. Business card paper can work very effectively in those cases.

TIP: You can get as few as 25 business cards for \$1.98 at OvernightPrintSite.com! Beautiful cards, so no worries about giving a negative impression – but not much expense or wasted cards, either.

13) Printing techniques. Blind emboss and foil stamping can significantly enhance your card at a surprisingly modest price. Ask your printer to show you samples.

14) Extra-thick cards are certainly more noticeable (although harder to fit in standard card holders) and convey the message, "We plan to be around for a long time!" These might be a smart choice if you're in a volatile industry, one where stability, trust and dependability are critical assets.

15) Two businesses, one card. I've seen double-sided cards with two different businesses owned by the same person (one business on each side of the card). This may work for you if the businesses are related. (If they AREN'T related, you run the risk of appearing too "cheap" or successful to afford a card for each.)

16) Limit the number of fonts on any single card. They tend to confuse the reader and make your card look busy. Stick to one or two, and use bold or italics for emphasis. Use script fonts sparingly, especially capital letters; they're difficult to read if overused.

LOGO TIPS

A professionally designed logo adds distinction, eye appeal, and can effectively "make" or "break" an otherwise ho-hum business card. A good logo helps a customer both relate to your business and trust it.

It may well be worth your time and money to go to a professional graphic designer to have a custom look created for ALL your marketing or promotional materials.

However, it IS possible to do-it-yourself, very nicely, if you take the time to do it right. Your logo should be a permanent reflection of your business, so don't create one in haste!

Factors to Consider When Choosing Logos

The primary factors that influence the effectiveness of logos are color and shapes. Scientists haven't yet determined why, but they HAVE documented the reality that people react differently to colors and shapes.

If you use these characteristics appropriately in your company logos, your ad copy, your newsletters, and your presentations, you'll have a distinct advantage over the competition.

Keep the following information in mind.

COLOR

Take a careful look at the characteristics in the chart below, as they relate to color. Notice how certain colors are perceived very differently by each sex. Color also has very diverse cultural connotations (this chart reflects U.S. perceptions) and is also linked to

special events and moods.

Use this to your advantage! What is the target audience for your particular product or service? What do you want them to feel about your company?

Here are some examples. Would pink packaging be appropriate for an energy-boosting bar targeted to men?

No; not only do men not remember or prefer that color, they also associate it with being calm and relaxed. Would a red logo be suitable for an investment counselor? No; red not only signifies danger, it has negative connotations, too (“red ink,” “in the red.”) Gray, green and blue are better choices.

Be mindful of color intensity, too: hot pink is more energetic and provocative, while a pastel pink is considered more feminine and relaxing.

Make sure the colors you use convey an appropriate message about you and your business. You'll be seeing "green" all the way to the bank!

BLUE

Males: low visibility, low retention, high preference, associations: reliable, intelligent, secure

Females: low visibility, low retention, low preference, associations: depressing, businesslike, leadership

PINK

Males: low visibility, low retention, low preference, associations: calm, relaxing, feminine

Females: low visibility, low retention, high preference, associations: therapeutic, feminine

BLACK

Both: low visibility, low retention, high preference, association: rich (male), sensuous (female)

WHITE

Both: high visibility, low retention, low preference, association: pure, clean

RED

Both: high visibility, high retention, high preference, association: danger, bargain (both), excitement (male)

YELLOW

Both: high visibility, high retention, low preference, association: sun, outdoors (both), warm, intimate (female)

BROWN

Both: low visibility, low retention, high preference, association: rich, earthy

GREEN

Both: low visibility, low retention, low preference, association: money, leisure

ORANGE

Both: low visibility, high retention, low preference, association: healthful, warm

GRAY

Both: low visibility, low retention, high preference, association: security

*This information on the chart above was obtained from a chart on Guerrilla Marketing Online – but THEY don't know where THEY got it, so neither of us can give proper credit.

SHAPE

Try this exercise. Think of a simple geometric shape. Now grab a piece of scrap paper and draw it.

I'll bet you drew a triangle.

No? Then it's probably an oval.

Again, no one knows really why, but the vast majority of people, when asked, will draw a triangle or oval when asked to draw a simple shape. It's a safe bet to assume that people somehow LIKE or RELATE TO these shapes. There's some sort of positive association, anyway.

Once you have an "eye" for it, you'll be amazed at how many Fortune 500 companies incorporate these shapes into their logos. Shouldn't you?

By the way, there are several excellent logo generation services on the 'Net that are free. As of this writing, Cooltext.com is a good one I've used.

CONTENT IDEAS

Once you have a general idea about the style and design of your card, you'll need to choose the actual text and/or graphics. That's not as easy as it sounds, especially if you're now viewing your card as a marketing tool.

Give too much information, and your card won't get read. Too little information, and your card will become useless. Inappropriate information — and your card may cause confusion, or even cause offense.

The most important principle to keep in mind here is that you have only seven square inches to make your statement. The most



important items on typical cards are your name, your company name, and your phone number. Think carefully before you add anything else. Who will get the card? Would they use the

additional information? How, and in what situation?

17) List the name you prefer to be called (such as "Ed" or "Edward.") Add your middle name or a photo if your first name is unisex (such as "Pat" or "Chris") or likely to be unfamiliar to someone from another country. Official designations (such as MD or JD) should go after your name.

18) Position, please? Unless your industry is very formal and

title-conscious, consider leaving your job position or official title off your card. If someone asks, simply respond, "I'm the person responsible for assuring your satisfaction with our business."

19) Titles such as Mr., Mrs. or Ms. are generally considered inappropriate to put on business cards.

20) A humorous title can make your CARD stand out and make YOU seem more approachable. How about "The Boss," "Computer Guru," "Head Honcho" or "People Pleaser?" Dave Thomas, the late CEO of Wendy's restaurant, used cards with the title "Wendy's Dad."

21) Thank you. A welcome but unusual idea is to create business cards that simply say "thank you for your business."

22) Print two sets of cards with differing titles: one with a broader, more general title (Attorney at Law) and one with your specific area of expertise (Personal Injury Specialist). Distribute cards to match the situation you're in and the personality or needs of the receiver.

23) Logo or no? If you're known for a distinctive logo be sure to put it on your card. If not, save the money and the room. Use a distinctive but legible typeface instead. (I'd say the White House is pretty well known, wouldn't you? I have this card in my collection. By the way, I find it interesting that Ms. Clinton's card was larger than the standard card. It measures 3 7/8" wide by 2.5" high.)



24) Add credibility by describing your years of experience,

mentioning your credentials or noting awards received.

25) Testimonials. Print names (and/or logos) of satisfied customers on your business card. You can even include specific contact people. That makes it easy for potential customers to have the testimony of a third person about your business.

26) Create curiosity rather than giving contact information. For example, say you're in a network marketing company and are looking for business partners. Your card could simply say: "I believe you have what it takes to succeed in my business. When you're ready to make a career change, call me at this toll-free number." Then give your name and number. No company name, no logo, nothing else. You want the person to CALL and get that information from you in person.

27) Abbreviations cheapen your card. Avoid them if you can. If you DO use them, be sure they're correct and commonly understood.

28) Acronyms and jargon specific to your industry should also be avoided on your card — unless it's a card you've created specifically to pass out to industry insiders.

29) Telephone numbers. Use bold text or a larger font size to highlight your primary telephone number. Since most people (in the US, anyway), read from top to bottom and left to right, your phone number is most easily read if located in the lower right-hand corner. Label your numbers (phone, fax, pager) to eliminate confusion.

30) Which number? If you're not sure which one of your telephone numbers to use (toll-free, cell phone, pager, direct line, company line, et cetera), pick the one that is most often answered by a real, live person. Your caller will appreciate being able to talk to

someone who can GIVE him the other numbers, if necessary.

31) Free calls. If you have a toll-free number, put it on your card, and label it as such.

32) “Site” these facts. If you have an e-mail address or web site, put them on your card. With the increasing popularity of the Internet, more and more consumers are contacting companies via the Web. Even if you do most of your business online, a business card is an excellent offline marketing tool. You DO need one, good printed piece in your marketing arsenal!

33) Discount card. Your customers will keep your card handy if you ask other merchants to offer discounts to anyone who presents the card. List participating businesses on the back. Odds are, they’ll probably pass out your cards too.

34) Use as reminders. Imitate doctors and dentists. On the back of your card print, “Your next appointment is _____”, and fill in the date by hand.

35) Protect yourself. Place the trademark or service mark symbol, a small “TM” or “sm”, next to the company name on your business cards. You can use the symbol even if you have not federally registered the mark or name.

36) Endorsements of related but non-competing companies can be effectively added to your card. If you're a Realtor, for example, you could recommend a carpet cleaning company, painter, landscape service and so on. Again, these companies will often gladly display or distribute your card in return.

37) Put a direct response offer on your card. Use the word

"FREE" if at all possible, such as "Return this card for a FREE (gadget, report, quote, makeover, analysis)." Make sure the word "Free" is large and bold, then leave this card everywhere your target market frequents, making sure that the offer is clearly visible.

38) Attract attention. If you use a folded card, use the front for a graphic or catchy slogan. Put traditional contact details on the back, and list product benefits and services inside.



39) Cards can be coupons, too. Offer a discount or gift when designated cards are returned to your store. You can print in a set discount or generic offer, or use a "fill in the blank" approach.

40) Use slogans. If your company slogan or motto describes a distinctive difference between you and your competitor, make sure it's on your card. (Note the phrase "distinctive difference." Your slogan or tagline should be as carefully crafted as your card. Make sure it conveys a clear benefit or explains the purpose of your business, if it's not evident from your name.)

41) Get personal. There are times when you network outside your industry or simply wish NOT to reveal your company affiliation. A personal card is the answer. It also gives you an excuse to create a card that's fun, original, and colorful —something that may not fit your business persona.

42) Easy. Add a bulleted list to the back of your card showing how easy you are to do business with:

- * "Credit cards and competitor's coupons accepted" (easy to PAY)
- * "Located next to ____ in the heart of ____" (easy to FIND)

- * "Walk-ins welcome. No appointment required." (easy to BUY)
- * "Express check-in and check-out." (easy to BUY)
- * "Pharmacist on duty around the clock." (easy to get EXPERT ADVICE)

43) Describe what you do. Some occupations are misunderstood, uncommon, or difficult to describe. For example, what exactly does "Estate Planning" MEAN? What does a "Business Coach" DO? If you've been asked that question about your business, consider putting a bulleted list describing the exact nature of the services you offer on the back of your card.

44) Use labels to attach information to the back of your card. Yes, it looks more professional to have this information PRINTED on your card, but stick-on labels (e.g. a 1" by 2 5/8" address label) work well for limited amounts or "in-a-hurry" additions.



Better yet, [order Capture Cards](#), a new type of business card that was introduced in 2007. Capture Cards have two or three removable labels on the back of the card and can be used in many creative ways. They're

very affordable, too.

45) "Keeper" cards. Add useful business or community information to your card. It's more likely to be kept. You can include schedules, phone numbers, reminders, helpful hints, and much more. Adding important (or unusual!) holidays can be both fun and informative. Your best source for these holidays is "Chase's Calendar

of Events," available from most libraries.

Look for humorous or industry-related holidays such as "National Compliment Day" (Jan. 26) ... "Stress Awareness Month" (April) ... "Someday We'll Laugh About This Week" (Jan. 3-9) ... "Women's Healthy Weight Day" (Jan. 21) ... "Clean Out Your Computer Day" (second Monday in Feb.) ... and much more. (These holidays can also be a good excuse for a special sale or promotion. You may also find good cross-promotional opportunities here when you contact various event planners.)

46) Here are 175 MORE ideas for the back of your business cards. Suggestions with an asterisk (*) after them require that you create a form on the back of the card for the cardholder to fill in.

Note that while it looks more professional to have this information actually printed on your card, as mentioned earlier, it isn't necessary or even always desirable. You can use address labels; those 1" by 2 5/8" address labels mentioned earlier work well. You get more flexibility that way, too, by not having the backs of all your cards filled in with the same information.

a copy of the FRONT of your card
acronyms
acupressure chart
additional locations
admission pass
advertising rates
amortization schedule
appointment times*
area churches
area telephone prefixes
artwork
automobile accident procedures
awards or honors received
before/after photos
Bible verse
biography
biorhythm chart
birthdays & anniversaries*
BMI (body mass index) calculator
body measurements*
books/articles published
branch offices
brand names you sell
business philosophy
calendar
calorie or fat gram counter
calories burned while exercising
car care checklist
caricature
cartoon
charities you support
checklist of symptoms
children's developmental
milestones
child's immunization record*
city offices (health, public works,
utilities)
class schedule*
Code of Ethics
college readiness checklist
color wheel, complementary colors
common HTML tags
common misspellings
company history
comparison chart
contact information for local
government agencies
contact information*
contest rules
copy of your email signature file
cost-cutting ideas
coupon or discount offer
courses you teach
CPR instructions
credentials
credit cards accepted
currency conversion rates
definitions
degrees obtained
Dewey Decimal system
disclaimer
distributors
emergency phone numbers
emergency preparedness checklist
employee names
energy-saving tips
entertaining or useful websites
envelope sizes
fabric care instructions
fabric yardage conversion chart
family clothing sizes*
favorite quotation
floor plan
flower meanings
food group pyramid
foreign language phrases
frequently asked questions
fuller description of what you

do/who you do it for
fun places to go in town
game (Tic-Tac-Toe, Hangman,
dot-to-dot picture)
game schedule for local sports team
goals
graduation requirements
growth chart
guarantee
heart rate chart
hobbies
hours of service
household safety tips
how to change a tire
how to jumpstart a car
humorous anecdote
image of a million-dollar bill
ingredient substitutions
instructions for Heimlich maneuver
joke or riddle
large print version of data on front of
card
list of emoticons
loan payment information
local pharmacists
major clients
meeting schedule
membership card
menu
merchants who offer related
services
merchants who all give discount
when card is shown
metric conversion chart
mileage-destination chart
mini-resume
mission statement
most popular products
moving checklist
nail sizes
national holidays
paint/wallpaper names, by room*
periodic table
personal medical information*
pet peeves
phone card
phone numbers for time, temperature,
weather
photo
planting guide
political organizations
prescriptions*
product comparison chart
product price list
product uses
public speaking tips
quantity discount list
reasons to purchase NOW
receipt*
recipe
recommended systems/minimal
standards
record of child's height/weight by
age*
reflexology chart
retirement readiness checklist
return or refund policy
ring sizes
rubber-stamped design
ruler
rules and regulations
screw sizes
seal of approval
song lyrics
stain removal guide
State/Country elected officials
stress relief tips
subscription rates

survey	chains
table of weights & measures	train or bus schedules
taxi services	translation of your card into a foreign language
temperature zone map	trivia related to your business or industry
Ten Commandments	U.S. Presidents
Ten Warning Signs of Cancer	U.S. states and capitols
terms and conditions	URLs for Internet search engines
testimonial	vision test
thought-provoking question ("Can you afford college?")	weight loss record*
time zone chart	wind chill index
tips percentage table	wine list
tire tread depth gauge	work or industry experience
toast or blessing	your signature
toll-free phone numbers for airlines	zip/postal codes
toll-free phone numbers for car rental agencies	zodiac signs
toll-free phone numbers for hotel	

UNUSUAL CARDS

If your goal is to stand out in a competitive field, consider having business cards made which are distinctive in material, size, or formatting. You can have a lot of fun with these, too, particularly if your presentation is innovative as well.

Note that many unusual cards are hard to file, difficult to carry or awkward to use. Carefully consider whether the attention-getting aspect (and expense) of a non-standard card is worth the possibility that it may not be kept.

47) Need a BIG card? Put your contact details on a standard 3” by 5” index card.

48) CD Cards. These high-tech “cards” are almost weightless but work like a CD-ROM and hold up to 20MB of data, enough for full-fledged presentations.

49) Create business greeting cards by enlarging your standard business card to create the cover.

50) Downsize. A small 2” by 2” card is also unique but fits in standard containers.

51) Trading cards. Try creating cards modeled after sports trading cards, with staff pictures on the front and important statistics on the back, such as career highlights, records held and current title.

52) Ace it. Try using an “ace” from a deck of cards (attach contact info using a label or [sticker business card](#)).

53) Other materials. Business cards can be made of plastic, metal, and wood as well as paper. Select a substance that complements

your business or industry. For example, a furniture refinisher could very effectively use a wood business card.

54) Calling cards. Old-fashioned yet elegant, a simple calling card customarily includes just your name centered on the card in a lovely font. You then personalize it (write on it) with contact information as needed.

55) Impress someone important by giving him or her a small electronic personal organizer. Program it ahead of time with your contact information and other useful data or contact details.

56) Check this out. Don't have your cards with you? Want to create an immediate impression? Then take out one of your business checks. Write a check to the customer in the amount of \$1.00. These "cards" are kept, but seldom cashed.

57) [Business Card Magnets are, well... attractive.](#) Some printers and advertising specialty companies will print your business card on magnetic backing. You can also buy pre-cut magnets in business card size; you "peel and stick" your card onto the magnet. This is terrific if you're an appliance or automobile repairperson. Simply stick the magnetic card right onto the appliance! (If you work on computers, use a business card sticker instead of a magnet, because of the danger of erasing data.)



58) Add value to your magnetic business card by adding a calendar or notepad. There are all sorts of promotional specialties

available that utilize business cards!

59) Use electronic business cards on the Web or in your e-mail. You can use vCard (.vcf) technology or attach a graphic, hyper-linked card. I've seen this less often lately, however, probably due to the very real concerns about opening email messages with attachments.

60) Signature files or "sig" files consist of 4 to 6 lines of text giving your contact information and/or product benefits. They are easily attached to the end of e-mail messages. Many people print out their email, which makes it doubly important to have your contact information included.

61) Advertising specialty companies offer many ways to use business cards to create unusual and appreciated gifts. For example, you can put a business card inside a letter opener.



62) "Sticky" Business Cards. You're probably familiar with Post-It(R) notes, those handy slips of paper that stick anywhere with removable adhesive. Did you know that you can have [personalized pads printed in business-card](#) size? Use them to "stick" information in mailings, books and magazines. They're also great customer giveaways.

63) Use unusual business card cases. Add to the impact your card makes by using attractive or unusual holders. You can even learn a magic trick to go along with your business card presentation! You can find quite a variety of business card cases on my website, at



<http://www.businesscarddesign.com/business-card-holders.html>

64) Other unusual cards: Phone cards ... Holograms ... Edible cards ... Pop-up cards ... Heat-sensitive cards ... Perfumed cards ... Musical cards ... Bookmarks

WORKING WITH PRINTERS

Choosing a printer is one of the toughest parts of creating terrific business cards. Should you use someone local, or an online printing service? Is it best to stick with a full-service printer, or someone who specializes in business cards? What are your options? What questions should you ask a printer?

One of the first choices you'll make is whether to use a local or online printer. Just a few years ago, online printing services were scarce; now there are hundreds of them. Even many traditional brick-and-mortar printing companies are developing customer websites.

So what are the pros and cons of ordering business cards online?

Advantages of Ordering Business Cards Online:

- Convenience

The entire print ordering process, from designing the card and ordering, to having the cards delivered to your doorstep, can be done without leaving your home.

- Immediate Feedback

You don't have to wait for a proof; you know exactly what your card is going to look like (applies primarily to template-based services.)

- Price

The cost of online printing can be significantly lower. Online printers usually process a higher volume of business card orders. Their cost per order is low, enabling them to pass on the savings to you.

- Speed

Online printers generally have extremely fast turnaround times. This is possible because their production pipeline is highly automated and streamlined.

Disadvantages of Ordering Business Cards Online:

- Less chance to develop a personal relationship

A printer who comes to know your business and clientele is worth his or her weight in gold. And it may be harder to reach someone online when you have a question.

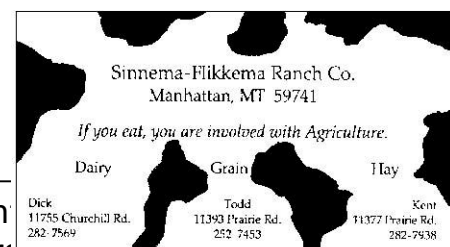
- Harder to compare

There are so MANY online printers that it's hard to compare accurately. Price isn't everything, especially since we're talking about your company image here. Some printers are less-than-clear about the card stock they use or the printing process they use, both of which affect quality (12pt stock and offset printing is usually preferable.)

So... no matter who you use, here are some printing tips that you might find helpful:

65) Shop carefully for a printer. Ask friends for recommendations (especially if they have a card you like.) View samples. Ask for (and contact!) references. Get price and delivery estimates in writing. And consider the pros and cons of working with a local printer versus ordering online.

66) Ask your local printer for advice. He or she may not have many ideas for ways to USE your business cards, but if you've chosen wisely, you can



certainly get some excellent advice on card stock, colors, fonts, logos, and the like. He or she may be able to recommend a graphic artist, too.

67) Talk to other industry experts. If you'd really like to understand the printing industry, the terms used, and get helpful advice without being made to feel like a dummy, I recommend two resources.

First, subscribe to Margie Dana's "Print Tips" at <http://printbuyersinternational.com/category/print-tips/> Some tips are geared towards printers, some towards consumers, but they are invariably helpful and written so that NON-printers can understand them.

Ms. Dana is a former print buyer who now operates a successful printing consulting business. Her mission is to "help printers communicate better with customers, and help businesspeople work more effectively with the printing industry."

Second, you might want to join (it's free!) the Ink on Paper Basics eCommunity at <http://www.printplanet.com>. The forum's goal is to help writers, designers and others expand their knowledge of the technical aspects of the printing and publishing industry. While some topics were over MY head when I visited, others were not, and the experts seemed very willing to answer basic questions. It's worth a try.

68) Look for "up charges." When comparing prices, make sure you're comparing apples to apples. A printer who advertises that you can get 1,000 cards for a phenomenally low price may also (in the fine print) tack on set-up fees, charge for printing on the back side of the card, assess higher-than-usual shipping/handling charges, and the like. Add the options you want and THEN compare prices.

69) Print your letterhead at the same time and with the same printer. You'll save both time and money while ensuring consistency of color and design.

70) Order in bulk. It's much cheaper than continually re-ordering small quantities. (Although given the good deals you can get, don't AVOID ordering simply because you may not use all the cards.)

71) Proofread. Double-check your card for typos, misspellings, and extra marks just as carefully as you would any other marketing document. Don't expect the printer to proofread for you. If you're not absolutely certain about the correct spelling or use of a word, find out! One VERY common mistake I see is "loose" (weight) instead of "lose".

ENHANCING EXISTING CARDS

What if you have three gazillion boring-but-accurate cards left from your last order, or are an employee with no say in how your business cards look? Never fear, there are STILL ways to increase the attractiveness and usefulness of existing cards.

72) Punch a hole in a blank area if you really want to attract attention to your card. Use a standard hole punch, or purchase one in an unusual shape (found at office supply stores and craft stores). Make sure you have an answer for the inevitable question, "Why is there a hole in your card?" ("It's to illustrate the gap in your coverage that my company can fill" ... or something similar.)

73) Use scissors that cut patterned edges (scallops, zigzags, and waves) to trim the side of the card. Or get a special corner punch to make a corner more interesting.

74) Laminate something eye-catching, memorable, or useful to the back of your card. I've seen a shamrock laminated to a card, and actual coins (enough to make a phone call... back when you could find pay phones around town.)

75) Address changed? Consider printing labels such as "Thanks to your patronage, we've moved to a bigger location! Come see us at (your new address)." Stick them to the back of your cards. (However, it's possible that someone may not remember that your new information is on the back. It really is better to order new cards.)

76) Call attention to a boring card by putting a tiny sticker on it. You can find a large variety at teacher supply stores. A simple gold star

can be very effective.

77) Liven up dull, black-and-white cards with an inexpensive rubber stamp. An artist I know stamped a classy Victorian heart in red ink on an ordinary card. It looked great, and somehow, the red ink of the stamp appeared to go behind the black printed ink.

78) Highlight your phone number the old-fashioned way (with a highlighting pen) if you did not do so at the design stage.

79) Use self-adhesive address labels to attach information to the back of your card. Yes, it looks more professional to have this information PRINTED on your card, but stick-on labels (such as a 1" by 2 5/8" address label) work well for limited amounts or "in-a-hurry" additions.

OTHER PEOPLE'S CARDS

The goal of getting someone else's card is to DO something with it (unless you're a [business card collector](#). In that case, merely HAVING the card may be enough!)

But for most of us, it's often difficult to remember why we kept a particular card, or what we were going to do with it later. Following up with information we're asked for or connecting again with prospects we meet is an important business task that's often neglected. (Be sure to read the section on organizing business cards for more help on this, as well as the new referral section.)

This section also includes tips on using other people's cards to attract attention.

80) Jot memory triggers on the back of the cards of people you meet. "Computer whiz" ... "red hair" ... "loves to tell jokes" ... "Notre Dame fan." It will help you remember that person.

81) Jot "action to take" information on the back, too. Are you supposed to call for a catalog? Make an appointment? Send samples? Make sure you remember what to DO after you meet someone.

82) Go to the bathroom. When you want to be discreet about writing notes on the back of newly acquired business cards, go to the restroom. Lock yourself in a stall and write!

83) Discreetly fold the corners of cards you receive if you can't write on them without being obvious. Perhaps a fold in the upper left corner means, "VERY interested!"; a fold in the upper right corner means "lukewarm prospect"; a fold in the lower left corner means

"don't bother". Whatever works for you!

84) Trade. Find someone whose business complements yours. Offer to trade cards and referrals. Locally, I know an awning salesman who traded cards with a man who cleaned awnings. Result? More business for them both!

85) Host a web card exchange. Allow business people to create and post electronic business cards on your web site as a community service.

86) Send it back. When you come across the card of a businessperson you'd like to deal with, save the information on the card for your files. Then send the original card back to the card owner with a note on the back such as: "We need to talk!"

87) Grab a bowl-full. Does your business depend on a steady stream of new contacts, particularly other business people? Ask your favorite restaurant to set out a goldfish bowl, in which patrons can drop their business card to win a drawing for a free prize (supplied by you). Or seek out restaurants that already have fish bowls for business cards. Ask the manager if you can have the cards after the drawing.



88) You first. When you meet a good prospect, and you want to give them your card, ask for theirs first. They'll probably ask for yours, as well — it's the courteous thing to do.

89) Ask for more. A very flattering tactic is to ask for 2 or 3 of another person's cards. Explain that you want the extra cards so that

you can give them to others.

90) Rank it. Write a tiny "A", "B" or "C" in a corner of cards you receive as a way to rate the prospect. Rank them from A to C, from "hot prospect" to "lukewarm lead."

91) Copy and enlarge a prospect's card and use it to create gifts of notepads, bookmarks, and personalized stationery.

92) Refer. Keep a supply of vendor's or associate's business cards. Attach a label to the back that reads "Referred by (your name/your business)." Display them in your office or give them to likely customers. It's a win-win-win situation, since your customers will appreciate the tip and your vendors/associates will appreciate your referrals.

93) Save cards with characteristics you like. Use the ideas in your next printing.

94) Call owners of cards you like. "I have one of your business cards, and feel that it was very well done. Would you tell me, please, who designed and printed the card?" It's not only a great way to get valuable information, it also offers you a chance to make a connection with someone.

95) Carry blank cards with you. When you meet someone who doesn't have a card with them, write their contact information on the blank card. This is a terrific way to use the perforated card samples you sometimes get from paper companies.

ORGANIZING TIPS

Getting someone's card is only half the battle. You have to be able to FIND it again.

96) File them your way. If you remember cards by company name, file them by business. If you tend to remember people's names, file them by name. In other words, you don't have to use the systems or criteria imposed on you in various organizers or filing systems; figure out what works for YOU.



97) Don't file every card. Ask yourself if you're likely to contact that person again, and if it would be hard to find the contact info elsewhere. If not, pitch it!

98) Ingenious holder. When you carry a lot of cards, or want a disposable cardholder, use a plastic audiocassette case. Break off the inner tabs, and Voilá! A display case.

99) Organize your cards with a scanner designed for that purpose, such as CardScan from Corex or the Seiko Smart Business Card Reader. It will scan information from business cards directly into your contact management software.

100) Develop a system for carrying and collecting business cards. For example, you could make it a habit of keeping your business cards in your right pocket and those you collect in your left.

101) A simple organizer. A cigarette case or coin purse with compartments can be used to temporarily organize business cards.

102) Update your file regularly. Pick an afternoon and start

calling (or sending notes to) the people on the cards. Put a paper clip on the last card done, so you'll know where you left off. This tip not only allows you to add or correct contact data, it gives you another reason to contact previous customers or prospects.

103) Write the date on the back of cards you receive, and where (location or event) you received it.

104) Several networking events in a row? If you don't have time to organize collected cards immediately after a networking event such as a tradeshow or seminar, you can still keep the cards straight. Put the collected cards into an envelope immediately afterwards and label the envelope with the name, date and location of the event.

105) Be careful when storing cards in plastic business card pages. Some cards stick to the plastic over time. Here's why, and what to do about it, from master business card collector (since 1972!) [Jack Gurner](#).

"Business card holder pages are mostly made of vinyl. This type of plastic is really bad for long-term storage, especially for other plastic items. The reason cards stick to vinyl pages is that the thermography process uses plastic pellets that are dusted onto the wet ink during printing. Heat is applied and the pellets melt which creates the raised print. So, your paper business cards actually become a combination of paper and plastic. The two plastics react with one another and cause sticking. There is no way to prevent this except to use storage pages made of polypropylene instead of vinyl. The only type of storage that is worse for business cards is the "magnetic" style photo album."

(Tip from Diana: If you don't see the word polypropylene on the label, look for the words "archival safe".)

BUSINESS CARD ETIQUETTE

“Etiquette” is a word used less and less in the United States as both business and personal interactions become more casual and less rule-oriented. Still, the concepts underlying the word — courtesy and consideration — are ALWAYS appropriate in business situations. A few minutes' review of the information below may save you a great deal of embarrassment.

(See the following section on "International Usage" for more tips on etiquette in other countries.)

106) Leave your cards at home when attending purely social events. If you meet a likely prospect, ask permission to contact them at his or her place of work, or mail him or her a card later.

107) Keep your cards looking new by using an attractive card case. No one is impressed by a dirty, dingy, or crumpled business card. Whether you realize it or not, cases make non-verbal statements about your professionalism, your tastes, and your character. For example, someone with an elegant, unusual case is probably someone who takes their business and image very seriously. (And by inference, takes YOUR



seriously, too.) You can find a nice selection of business card cases at <http://www.businesscarddesign.com/business-card-holders.html>

108) No-no's. Don't give your card to CEOs and senior executives unless you're asked for one. (Unless you're in an equivalent social/business position.) Don't pass out cards to the whole room, and

never pass them out during meals.

109) Have cards handy so that you don't make someone wait while you dig for your card in your purse or wallet.

110) Create rapport. Business cards given to virtual strangers don't carry the same impact as those given after rapport has been established. If possible, offer your card after you've had some time to get acquainted.

111) End a business conversation in a pleasant and upbeat manner by suggesting an exchange of business cards.

112) Present your card so the receiver can read it — face up, turned towards the recipient. You'll be seen as very considerate and polite.

113) Don't offer your card to potential clients unless they request it, or you may be seen as extremely pushy. There are subtle ways to get them to ASK for your card (such as asking for theirs, first.)

114) Take a second look at cards you're given, treat them with care, and put them in an appropriate holder immediately. You wouldn't want to do business with someone who casually crammed YOUR card into his or her back pocket, would you?

INTERNATIONAL USAGE

Businesspeople in countries outside the United States often have more formal business card conventions than a savvy U.S. businessperson is imprudent to ignore.

In addition, the fact that a business card may need to be translated into another language may cause logistical problems. Many of these issues need to be addressed at the design stage.

However, business card customs vary too. Make sure you investigate them in advance!

115) Present correctly. Japanese usually give and receive cards with both hands. Don't use your "unclean" left hand in Muslim countries or Malaysia. Do as other cultures do.



116) Taboos. In Asia, be careful not to run out of cards, or to give a Japanese card to a Korean or Chinese businessman (or vice versa). This is considered extremely rude. (There are OTHER social taboos unrelated to business cards as well; be sure to ask an expert about those, too.)

117) Adapt. When using business cards in foreign countries, check local usage, language and business card preferences. Allow enough time to re-print cards if necessary.

118) Print two-sided business cards if you do business in other countries. Put English on one side and the primary language of the

other country on the opposite. Use the same logo and colors.

119) Hire a translator. An exact word-for-word translation of your slogan or product benefit statement may not turn out the way you planned. Hire a local translator, who can understand the message you're trying to convey and not just the words.

120) Check the hidden messages your card conveys in other countries through the images and colors you use. Some countries have taboos about animals, or associate certain colors with certain industries.

121) Translate the name. Does your company name convey an important message about your product or service? If so, be sure it's translated on your card. Add the English version of the name in smaller print.

122) Understand titles. In Japan, business cards are an important indicator of rank and status. Use your most formal cards and your highest-sounding title.

123) Adjust sizes. Make sure your cards fit into the standard filing systems used in other countries, or they may not be kept.

124) Add your picture to your card if your first name is not likely to indicate your gender to someone from another country. It's embarrassing if you don't know whether to ask for "Mister" or "Miss" on the phone, or know what title to use in correspondence.

CREATIVE PROSPECTING

This is the FUN part of the book! Truly effective salespeople and master networkers know how to get their cards into the right people's hands and then get them to DO something with it (call, visit, order, request information) afterwards.

You may think some of the following ideas are silly, but they've worked for other entrepreneurs. And as Thomas Edison said, "Hell, there are no rules here — we're trying to accomplish something."

125) Fly by. Can't get to decision-makers? I read of someone who attached a business card to a paper airplane and flew it into the elusive prospect's yard. I don't know if they got that person's business, but at least they got their attention!

126) Display boxes. Some restaurants and retailers have wall-mounted boxes that display 10, 12, or even 60 different business cards. You can rent a compartment in which to place your cards. (This is a business-card-related business to try, too; purchase business card displays, stands, rent them out and collect the money! Visit <http://www.businesscarddisplays.info> ; tell Dean that Diana referred you!

127) Write on. Before giving someone a business card, write a brief message such as * "Thanks!" * "Best Wishes!" * "10% off!" * or even just your name ... in a blank space on the card. This personalizes the card and adds to the likelihood that it will be kept.

128) Package it. Send your card in a jewelry box ("For a gem of a deal") or another relevant specialty container.

129) Roll the dough. If you've punched a hole in your card, roll up the paper money you're leaving as your tip at a restaurant. Then insert it into the hole. The waiters and waitresses will certainly notice it, remember you, and may even show your card to other customers.

130) Breakfast clubs. Network with non-competing business owners at breakfast once a week. Trade cards, business tips, and referrals while you enjoy a tasty meal.

131) Present them with class. Attach your business card to a bottle of champagne, a box of candy or a bouquet of flowers for special customers.

132) Reunions. Will you be going to a school, military, or retirement reunion? Get an updated address list from the event organizers, and send everyone a card with a note telling them what you're doing these days.

133) Work out. If you belong to a fitness center or health club, ask if you can put cards on the counter or bulletin board.

134) If you overhear a conversation relating to your field of expertise, don't be shy about butting in and handing the speakers your card. "Excuse me ... I couldn't help but hear your discussion about dog grooming. I do mobile pet grooming and would be glad to answer any questions."

135) Compliment well-dressed strangers on their appearance. As you do, introduce yourself with your card. In fact, have cards handy any time you begin conversing with a stranger. You never know when you'll find common business ground.

136) Errorrrrrs. Notice a typo on your cards? If you MUST use it,

find a way to turn it to your advantage. Offer a discount if a prospect finds the mistake, or turn it into a marketing campaign. (“OOPS! While no one is perfect, we take customer satisfaction seriously. If we ever make a mistake with your order, we promise to ____.”)

137) School career days. When your son or daughter announces, “It’s career day!” at school, volunteer to speak. If you give a handout or little treat to the kids, include your business card.

138) Reserve your seat at public gatherings by leaving your business card on it when you step away. Leave more than one, and maybe someone will pick up the extra!

139) Members remember. Members of clubs and associations you join should know what you do and have a copy of your card.

140) Family members should have extra copies of your business cards, too.

141) Smile. When you offer a business card, be sure to offer a sincere smile as well. Who wants to do business with a grouch?

142) Motivate employees to help you find customers by creating contests and incentive programs. Print or stamp employee’s names on the back of company business cards. Encourage them to pass them out like crazy to potential customers. Your employees receive prizes (or are entered in a drawing for a prize) for cards that customers bring in.

143) Enclose a card with every piece of outgoing mail. You never know who’s going to open it.

144) As you shop, leave your card with terrific salespersons you encounter. “I was very impressed with your attitude. If you’re ever looking for a career change, call me.”

145) Rental returns. Enclose a card when you return rented goods ... everything from videotapes to automobiles. (Especially if it's a luxury model!)

146) Post your card prominently and often on community bulletin boards. Try to place your card near the top and centered horizontally. It's most likely to be seen in that location. (If you do this frequently, be sure to print brightly colored cards, or no one will ever notice yours.)



147) Bathroom “booth.” If you prefer to attend a trade show or conference as a visitor rather than as an exhibitor, don't let the lack of display space stop you. Remember that restrooms also receive heavy traffic. Put a stack of your cards there (perhaps in a disposable cassette-holder display case, as mentioned in the Organizing section).

148) When you announce improvements to products or services, be sure to include an up to date business card with the announcement.

149) Keep extra business cards in your purse, jacket pocket, briefcase, wallet, car glove compartment, desk, gym locker, and so on. You never know when you'll need a card so have one handy at all times. (Did you read about the man who landed an account while vacationing in Hawaii? He had a laminated card in his swim trunks!)

150) Set daily goals. Put 5 or 10 cards in your purse or pocket each morning. Set a daily goal of giving all of them away.

151) Other parents. Your children's friends' parents should not only know who you are, they should know what you do. Make sure they

have one of your cards.

152) Advertise. Many newspapers have business card classified sections, and rates are usually very reasonable. You can also offer an appropriate fee to print your card on church bulletins, menus, club newsletters, and so on.

153) Tip it. When you dine out, leave your card with your generous tip. Write “Great service!” or “Nice smile!” on the card. (Never underestimate the contact circles of restaurant personnel.)

154) Personal notes. When a colleague or prospect receives recognition or media attention, send your card with a brief congratulatory note. Include the featured article or newspaper clipping if you can.

155) Name, please? Suppose you’re waiting for a table at a restaurant, signing in at the doctor’s office, or coming to pick up your car at the repair shop. When the receptionist asks for your name, hand her your card instead. This is also a great idea when you have a name that seems to be hard for others to understand. My last name, for example, is RatliFF, which doesn’t seem all that unusual to me. But unless I make a point of spelling it out, people often write my name down as RatliSS.

156) Build goodwill. When you see a nice car parked before a meter whose time is about to expire, add a coin to the meter. Then slide your business card under the windshield wiper with a message on the back: “Hate to see you get ticketed!” or even “You owe me!” (Check local laws first, though; this is illegal in some cities.)

157) Another “good deed”. Staple your business card to a dollar

bill and pay the toll for the car behind you at tollbooths, bridges, and parking lots.

158) Smiley face. When you hand someone your card, ask if they have a pen or pencil handy. (Loan them one of yours if they don't.) Now say to them "Draw a smiley face next to my name, so you will recognize me when we meet next time!"

159) Use two hands and sloooooowly, carefully, give someone your business card. The psychological impact is enormous. ("Hey, this must be important!")

160) Toss up. Suppose you're sitting in the stands at the "big game" when your team makes a crucial score. While others are jumping, yelling, and throwing popcorn, YOU can throw a handful of your business cards into the air. (Imagine ... a big snowstorm is predicted for tomorrow, and you have a snowplowing service.) However, use this idea sparingly. You may have to clean UP all those cards if you get too carried away!

161) Tuck your cards into books and magazines your prospects are likely to read when you visit bookstores and libraries. A handyman could put his cards in home repair manuals, an accountant in tax preparation materials, et cetera. The most effective locations are usually the Table of Contents or Index sections of the book.

162) Tradeshow follow-up. A few days after a tradeshow or networking event, contact the people whose cards you've collected. Remind them where you met, mention a product or service of yours that might be of interest to them, and tell them where to find more information (such as your web site.) VERY FEW people actually bother

to follow up after tradeshow, so this is an effective marketing method in and of itself.

163) Give TWO business cards to interested parties. Ask them to give one to a friend or co-worker.

164) Break the ice by passing out business cards in elevators. Make a joke of it and others might just play along!

165) Stick business card magnets to your car for an unusual but effective mobile advertising display. Print a larger magnetic sign at a local sign shop, with text such as "Ratliff Realty. Take my card!" Stick some of your magnetic business cards around the sign. People who park next to you can simply grab one.

166) Ask for referrals from satisfied customers. Give them a few cards, and offer a reward for referring friends and family to you. This is an under-utilized prospecting method, very effective when you hand people your card along with the sales slip.

USING OLD BUSINESS CARDS

One of my ezine subscribers once asked, "Now that I have my NEW cards, what do I do with the OLD ones?" I asked a bunch of people once, and got an amazing variety of responses. Some funny, some serious, but all of them are better options than just throwing old cards away! Here they are:

167) Use your old business cards as bookmarks and note pads, especially if the cards have blank backs.

168) Tape them together to make shims (perhaps to balance wobbly tables.)

169) Using the back (blank) side of the card, create address books, a grocery list template, outlines, favorite quotes --- anything that might change frequently --- and store as you normally would in a business card holder. Each item can easily be taken out and replaced with another card.

170) Mini index cards. (You can tape two cards together so that you have two blank sides.)

171) Name tags.

172) Blank entries for drawings.

173) Use them as flash cards.

174) Create your own instructional card game.

175) Use as TO: FROM: gift cards.

176) Write something you want to remember/memorize on the back, and place them in strategic locations at home, work, in the car, et cetera.

177) If the contact info is still current, use them to drop in fishbowls at trade shows.

178) Line birdcages.

179) Use them as wallpaper. (I've actually SEEN this in two restaurants!)

180) Decoupage attractive cards onto the top of an old table for "a beautiful, one-of-a-kind piece of furniture."

181) Cover photo albums with cards and clear contact paper.

182) Cover wooden or cardboard storage boxes, picture frames, lampshades, your dog, your cat, and your spouse...

183) Donate them to preschools, babysitters and the like for various crafts.

184) Do parents bring kids to your office? Let the kids play with your old cards while you talk.

185) Make puzzles with them. Position an even number of cards on a blank page of removable adhesive so that you appear to have one large, unbroken sheet. Draw on it, or write a message. Then remove the cards from the adhesive sheet, jumble them up, and you have a puzzle!

186) Use the blank sides of the cards to make card games. Kids can draw their own "matches" or "suits". Great for memory games like "Concentration." The cards are small and also easy to replace.

187) Donate them to your favorite business card collector. Someone will be glad to take them off your hands! (Read more about the fascinating hobby of business card collecting, and join the discussion forum at <http://www.ibccsite.com>)

MISCELLANEOUS USES

Everywhere I turn, it seems, someone is using a business card in a different way. When you consider that your card is also a form of identification, many possibilities come to mind.

188) Use obsolete cards to enter contests and raffles. Write your current phone number on the card, since you're more likely to get a call than a letter.

189) Child ID. Give your children a card to tuck in lunch boxes, backpacks and pockets. If he or she (or an emergency worker) needs to call you, they'll be able to find your phone number.

190) Register. Tape your card to warranty, registration, and subscription forms.

191) Business card "bouquet." Try using business cards in a centerpiece or favor. Use photo holders or plastic picks used by florists to insert the cards into an arrangement. A clever idea for a centerpiece at a networking function (put everyone's card in the centerpiece.) Or you could use the idea at a tradeshow — fill the "bouquet" with YOUR cards, and have booth visitors swap your card for theirs in the holder.

192) Name badge. Your business card can function as your nametag. Insert it into a clear plastic name badge holder. In a pinch, use double-sided tape and simply stick your business card to your outfit.

193) Give a gift of business cards to recent graduates or job-hunters you know.

194) Laminate your business card and punch a hole in one

corner to make a durable luggage tag.

195) Key chains are another idea; check with advertising specialty companies, or laminate your business card and buy your own chain or clip.

196) Signature files or “sig” files consist of 4 to 6 lines of text giving your contact information and/or product benefits. They are easily attached to the end of e-mail messages, and function as your “virtual” business card. Many people print out their email, which makes it doubly important to have your contact information included.

BONUS: Business Card Referral Strategies

Referrals are the Holy Grail of personal marketing; we know that referred customers are the best customers of all. They buy more. Pay sooner. Complain less. Stay longer. And are the cheapest to acquire!

But it wasn't until early 2008 that I researched referral processes and systems as thoroughly as I'd previously researched business cards. There's a great synergy between the two topics – one of the primary purposes of business cards is to GET referrals – so it seemed like a good idea to add a new section to this book, specifically devoted to using business cards to get referrals.

Some of the ideas here are mentioned earlier in the book, but not in this context. And a few of the ideas mentioned herein are rather complicated or lengthy to explain – they're not mere tips, they're actually entire ezine issues – but boy, do they WORK!

So here goes – Business Card Referral Strategies!

Find businesses to which you can offer your service as a service to THEIR clients, and make sure you position it that way. For example, you're a veterinarian and you know that for a dog or cat to stay at the nearby kennel, they need updated shots. You can create a special business card for those kennel operators to hand out, which say "Go to XYZ Vet Clinic" and you can get in today for your shots. It makes you look good, and makes the kennel owner look good, to provide such convenient service.

Create business-card-sized "Invitation" cards, especially if you market some sort of membership-based service (country club, gun

range, fitness center, et cetera). Ask members to hand out a couple of “Invitation cards” for a free one-day membership or free trial, to encourage their friends to come to the club or facility.

You can do something similar for service-type businesses. I read about a chiropractor who asks satisfied clients to give business-card-sized cards out to their friends with neck or back pain, which are good for free 10-minute chair massages.

Make sure vendors you work with have your business cards.

They’re great “connectors” between businesses and it helps their own business to do favors for their clients.

ASK for referrals on the back of your business cards. Make sure people know how important referrals are to your business. Say something such as “If there’s anyone you know who would benefit from our product or service, give us their name and address and we’ll send them a free catalog.”

Or even simply “Our business is built 100% by referrals – we want to spend our time serving you, not marketing our products. Please recommend us to your friends!”

Give your best, most enthusiastic clients multiple copies of your business card and ask them to refer their friends. Put a number on each card that is coded to that person. When someone hands you that “coded” business card, thank the client who referred them with a free gift or discount.



Whew! You DID it! You made it through the whole book! Your brain (hopefully) is full of ideas now, some of which are certain to make YOUR business card the envy of your competitors.

PLEASE ... next time you order business cards, try one of the printers below. They DO give me a small commission for referring you, which is why I can give away this book for free.

1. BizCardGuru.com

An amazing variety of business card designs to choose from. You can also order many formats of business cards – magnetic business cards, business card stickers, metal or plastic business cards, and so on.

2. FindBusinessCards.com

Very easy to use design interface AND great prices. Use the code DEAL15 at checkout to save 20% on your order!

3. OvernightPrintSite.com

Another one that's very easy to use, offers unusually thick cards, and you can order as few as 25 cards!

